ence, that they followed each other and became pronounced in more rapid succession. The delusions were the same for which the patient had been placed in the asylum twenty-seven years before, and it becomes an interesting question how far the patient was free from the delusions during the twenty years he remained unexcited.

OCCASIONAL NOTES OF THE QUARTER.

*Dr. Bucknill on American Alienists.**

At the Third General Meeting of the British Medical Association, held at Sheffield, on the 3rd of August last, Dr. Bucknill, by permission of the Council of the Association, made a further statement on the subject of the accusations made in "The Lancet" against the superintendents of American asylums, and especially against Dr. Nichols, of the Washington Asylum. Dr. Bucknill said:—

This was an age of international reciprocity in regard to many matters, and he thought it should be no less an age for reciprocity among the members of the scientific and medical professions under any circumstances in which an expression of sympathy might be deemed advisable (hear, hear). He wished on the present occasion to ask the kindly feeling of his medical brethren in this country on behalf of one of their own tongue and race who was now practising on the other side of the Atlantic. We were prepared to criticise American medical men honestly and fairly, and to invite a similar meed of criticism in return. But there was one point to which he wished to call their particular attention—they must be extremely cautious of the accuracy of what they read of their American professional brethren in the American press. The licence of the American political press was not generally known in this country in its attacks on private and professional characters. In America, when a man was said to be "too bad to live" and "too wicked to die," it generally meant that he voted with the opposite political party to that represented by the newspaper which said so (laughter). And if a medical man who had charge of a public institute in any way got into trouble which became the subject of enquiry, either before a civil or a criminal court, the newspapers of America were not prevented by any of the usages of the country from making the most severe comments upon the defendant during the trial, and not only upon him, but upon the judge, the jury, and the witnesses. They wrote such things habitually

* See "British Medical Journal," August 12, 1876.

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as would subject the editors of newspapers in this country to be cited to appear before the court, and probably punished either by fine or imprisonment. A man might be abused in the American press—and such attacks were constantly made—who might be a most honourable man, and highly esteemed by all who knew him. Therefore, if the comments made by the American press were copied into the journals of this country, they were apt to mislead their readers very much, and ought to be received with due caution. In this country, if a medical man connected with or having charge of a public institution was charged with malpractice and extreme misconduct in carrying out his official duties, it was tolerably fair to presume that there was some basis for the charges made, because, if such were not the case, the proprietor of the newspaper could be quickly proceeded against under the law of libel. Recently, an injustice such as he had alluded to had occurred in America, the subject of the attack being Dr. Nicholls, the Superintendent of the Government Asylum for the Insane at Washington, and an old friend of his (the speaker's). Dr. Nicholls had been the subject of a political persecution in the shape of a secret committee of inquiry of the Congress. Some of the incidents of that inquiry leaked out during its progress, and were published in the "New York World," and from thence quoted in the columns of some of the journals* published in this country. Now, if those charges had been to some extent proved, yet the mode of proceeding adopted would have been altogether unjust to their American brother; but, when he told them upon the authority of Dr. Marion Sims, with whom he had had an opportunity of conversing upon this matter, that the investigation had resulted in the full acquittal of Dr. Nicholls, the committee finding that the charges made against him were entirely unfounded, he thought they would agree with him, that this was a case in point, which demonstrated the necessity of English journals being extremely cautious before quoting and circulating charges made against professional gentlemen practising in America (hear, hear). He felt certain that their American brother would in this matter, so far as he had been in any way unjustly accused, have the entire sympathy of the members of the Association with him (hear, and applause).

Intemperance and Insanity.

The causes that have produced the insanity in the 310 persons admitted are of great interest, socially and medically. We have a difficulty at the outset in finding out any cause of the disease in some cases, and in others to settle which is the real cause out of a number of events that all may have tended to produce the malady. When a man with a strong

† Erratum; for "some of the journals," read "a journal."

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