Mr. Justice Cave said the rule must be discharged. It was clear that section 49 of the Lunacy Act, 1890, empowers the Commissioners to order a patient to be discharged. But it was argued that the section not only empowers but requires them, under certain circumstances, to order the discharge. The general management of lunatics was in great measure intrusted to the Commissioners, and most elaborate provisions were made enabling them to exercise care of, and control over, lunatics. It would be most extraordinary if the Legislature, after making all these provisions, had with a single stroke of the pen given a power to supersede the decision of the Commissioners to two medical men with regard to whose qualification no rule was laid down; for the section could not be read as enabling the Commissioners to select the medical men who should make the examination. They were merely to be ordinary medical men against whose qualification as medical men there was nothing to be said. It was argued that upon receipt of certificates from two such men the discharge of the lunatic must be ordered. He could not conceive that that would be the intention of the Legislature. He was therefore not satisfied that it was the duty of the Commissioners to order the discharge. Then if the Commissioners had a discretion he entirely repudiated any suggestion that their discretion could be reviewed by the Court. The rule must be discharged.

Mr. Justice Grantham concurred.

Court of Session.

Lord Kinnear and a jury sat in the Court of Session on 22nd April for the purpose of enquiring whether Christopher Seton is insane or not. The application was presented by James Wallace Seton, Edinburgh, a brother of the ward.—Dr. Clouston, Superintendent of the Royal Morningside Asylum, stated that Christopher Seton was brought to the asylum on 6th April, 1887, under a warrant by the Sheriff. Witness reported to the Commissioners that Mr. Seton was suffering from mania. At that time Mr. Seton believed that he was heir to one of the Scottish Earldoms. He was violent in his conduct, dangerous to others, and by reason of his morbid exaltation of mind, was quite unable to look after himself or his affairs. At present he was not so acutely insane as he was when admitted to Morningside, but he still entertained the same general kind of delusions. He now believed that Craig House, where he lived, and which was part of the asylum, belonged to him, and all that it contained. He heard voices that did not exist. He was incoherent, and was unable to carry on rational conversation or to take a rational interest in reading. In the opinion of witness Mr. Seton was absolutely incapable of taking care of himself or of looking after his affairs. His mental condition was worse as regards the prospect of recovery than when he entered the asylum. Physically he was in excellent health.—Dr. Middlemas, Assistant Superintendent Craig House, corroborated.—James Wallace Seton stated in evidence that he was the only surviving brother of the ward, who was never married.—The jury retired to see Christopher Seton, who was in one of the adjoining rooms, and on their return answered that in their opinion Christopher Seton was insane, and that his brother was his nearest agnate, or male relative.

This trial took place under the process of cognition, which is now very rarely put in action. There have been three cases in Dr. Clouston's experience, all at the instance of the nearest male relative on the father's side for the purpose of replacing the *curator*. No abuse was alleged in any of the cases referred to.

THE MAINTENANCE OF PAUPER LUNATICS.

The President of the Local Government Board received a deputation from the County Councils Association in reference to the growing burden imposed upon the rates by the increase of the number of persons confined in lunatic asylums. The deputation consisted of Sir John Hibbert, Lord Thring, Mr. Hobhouse, M.P., Sir E. Edgcumbe (Dorset), Mr. M. F. Blackiston (Clerk to the Staffordshire County

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Council), Mr. F. C. Hulton (Clerk to the Lancashire County Council), Mr. C. B. Hodgson (Clerk to the Cumberland County Council), Mr. Trevor Edwards (Solicitor to the West Riding County Council), and the Rev C. Royds, Mr. J. Brierley, Mr. B. Carver, and Mr. T. Scholfield, members of the Lancashire Asylums Board. The deputation recommended that the grant of 4s. a week at present given to Boards of Guardians to pay for pauper lunatics in County Asylums, Registered Hospitals, and Licensed Houses should also be given for chronic pauper lunatics (whom they defined as harmless lunatics), who are maintained in workhouse wards under special regulations and to the satisfaction of the Commissioners in Lunacy; that, as it is not desirable that idiots (idiots and imbeciles from birth or early age) should be treated in a lunatic asylum, the 4s. grant should, wherever idiots are kept at the public expense, be payable in regard to such idiots to the authority maintaining them to the satisfaction of the Commissioners in Lunacy; that each County Council should be required to appoint visitors of those idiots in respect of whom the 4s. grant is made, and who are kept in places other than lunatic asylums; and that it is not desirable to express an opinion on the question of extending the 4s. grant to idiots boarded out or maintained at home. Mr. Chaplin, in reply, said he was not prepared to give a definite answer as to whether he could advise the Government to bring in a Bill to give effect to the recommendations. He required time to consider the matter more fully, and especially to enquire how the Boards of Guardians throughout the country would be affected if the proposals of the County Councils Association became law.

CHILDHOOD SOCIETY.

Sir Douglas Galton writes to the *Times* of 1st March last as follows:—

When the Royal Commission on the Blind, &c., recommended special care for "the children feeble-minded but not imbecile," their evidence was derived from the scientific enquiry now intrusted to this society. So also the departmental committees on Poor Law schools and on reformatories received most important evidence as to the *status* of the children from the same voluntary source as well as from official sources. This society has been formed to continue and extend the work hitherto promoted by various connected committees; its objects are to supply information concerning mental and physical conditions of children in relation to education, such as indicate the special needs of certain groups. It is also prepared to report on children in schools and institutions, whether in London or in the provinces, as well as to give addresses on the study and classification of children.

To enable the society to carry on a useful scientific public work and continue research as to conditions of childhood under various conditions of environment funds are urgently needed. It is estimated that the expenses of reporting on 50,000 children, say in 25 towns, and giving addresses in each on the study and classification of children might be met by a fund of £1,000. Such enquiry would enable the educational authorities to know the numbers of children in various physiological groups and the exceptional cases existing within their area; the special needs indicated; and the effects of local environment. It seems strange that such knowledge has not been demanded in past years; but with the rapid extension of public education the matter cannot be deferred without danger of making mistakes.

The society invite all who are interested to enrol themselves as members and appeal to those who have means to contribute to their funds.

CARE OF THE FEEBLE-MINDED.

An appeal has lately been made for support of the National Association for Promoting the Welfare of the Feeble-Minded, which was formed 18 months ago with the object of combining, encouraging, and establishing all over the country homes for this purpose. It is working in cordial co-operation with the managers

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