care and treatment of the naval lunatics. The sea view for the wards is unrivalled, the site is open and healthy, and the vicinity of the town offers many means of cheap amusement and instruction for the patients.

The buildings require considerable alterations and additions to fit them for the modern requirements of lunacy treatment. We feel sure that everything necessary herein will be sanctioned by the distinguished Director-general of the Naval Medical Department (Sir John Lidell), who takes the greatest personal interest in the welfare of the insane sailors.

Scotch Superstitions in Lunacy.

Dr. Mitchell, Deputy Commissioner for Lunacy in Scotland, in a paper published in the fourth volume of 'The Proceedings of the Antiquarian Society of Scotland,' "On Various Superstitions in the North-west Highlands and Islands of Scotland, especially in relation to Lunacy," has collected some curious and recent instances of Highland faith in the healing powers of some "holy wells" attached to ancient shrines, gifted like

> "Saint Fillan's blessed well,
> Whose springs can frenzied dreams dispel,
> And the crazed brain restore."

Our limits confine us to one extract from Dr. Mitchell's paper:

"In our own day (he says), belief in the healing virtues of the well on Inch Maree is general over all Ross-shire, but more especially over the western district. The lunatic is taken there without consideration of consent. As he nears the island, he is suddenly jerked out of the boat into the loch; a rope having been made fast to him, by this he is drawn into the boat again, to be a second, third, or fourth time unexpectedly thrown overboard during the boat's course round the island. He is then landed, made to drink of the waters, and an offering is attached to the tree. Sometimes a second and third circumnavigation of the islands is thought necessary, with a repetition of the immersions, and of the visit to the well. There is an unwillingness to tell a stranger of the particular cases in which this superstitious practice had been tried, but several came to my knowledge. About seven years ago, a furious madman was brought to the island from a neigbouring parish. A rope was passed round his waist; and with a couple of men at one end in advance, and a couple at the other behind — like a furious bull to the slaughter-house — he was marched to the loch side, and placed in a boat, which pulled once round the island, the patient being jerked into the water at intervals. He was then landed, drank of the water, attached his offering to the tree, and, as I was told, in a state of happy tranquillity went home. 'In matters of superstition among the ignorant, one shadow of success prevails against a hundred manifest contradictions.'*

"The last case of which I have heard came from a parish in the East of Ross, and was less happy in its issue. It was that of a young woman, who is now in one of our asylums. This happened about three years ago.

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* Le Clerc.

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Another case was reported in the 'Inverness Courier' of 4th November, 1852, and is quoted at length by Dr. Rees, in his paper on "Saint Maelrubha," already referred to. (See 'Proc. Soc. Ant. Scot.,' vol. iii, p. 288.)*

TEMPLE OF ST. MOLONAH.†

Near the Butt of the Lewis there is a small, unpretending ruin, whose architecture shows it to be of considerable antiquity. It is called by the people the Teampull-mor, and also the Temple of St. Molonah, or St. Mulvay.‡ Lunatics are brought from many parts of the north-west of Scotland to this ruin.§ By this, however, I do not mean that it is a yearly occurrence, or that it is a frequency in any way to be compared with that which once held good at St. Fillan's, when, as has been affirmed, two hundred insane persons were carried thither annually.‖ The patient walks seven times round the temple, is sprinkled with water from St. Ronan's Well, which is close at hand, is then bound and deposited for the night on the site of the altar. If he sleeps, it is believed that a cure will follow; if not, the powers are unpropitious, and his friends take him home, believing it to be the will of Heaven that he shall remain as he is. The water was formerly brought from the well in an old stone cup, which was left in the keeping of a family regarded as the descendants of the clerk of the temple. One man, who had been taken there, and whom I saw, had the good fortune to sleep, and was cured; he afterwards married, and had a family. Seven years ago he again became insane, and I found him labouring under dementia. I heard of several others, in our own day, who had been sent to St. Molonah—some from the mainland of Scotland—but no happy issue was reported.

MELISTA.

There is an island called Melista, separated by a narrow sea-way from the coast of Uig, without any permanent population, but to which, in former times, people resorted for the two or three summer months to look after the cows, which they transported to it for the sake of pasturage. Tradition says of this island that no one was ever born on it who was not from birth insane, or who did not become so before death. In the last generation three persons had the misfortune, for the first time, to see the light of day on this unlucky spot, and all three were mad.¶ Of one of them, who is remembered by the name of Wild Murdoch, many strange stories are told, It is said that his friends used to tie a rope round his body, make it fast to the stern of the boat, and then pull out to sea, taking the wretched man in tow. The story goes that he was so buoyant that he could not sink; that they "tried to press him down into the

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* In reference to this notice, I may mention that, some fifteen or twenty years back, a farmer from Letter Ewe is said to have brought a mad dog to the well on the island. It drank of the waters, and was cured; but the desecrating act is said to have driven virtue for a time from the well.

† In Gaelic, Maolonfhadh.

‡ St. Malochus.

§ A Lewis gentleman, reading this paper in manuscript, writes on the margin, "I know two persons who were brought to the temple. The result was favorable, but one has had a return of the malady. It is said that a visit to the church has no efficacy for a return of the disease."

‖ Heron's 'Journey,' i, p. 282.

¶ This was asserted to me over and over again, but I think it improbable that this small island was the birthplace of all the three.

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water;" that he could swim with a stone fastened to him; that when carried to the rocky holms of Melista or Greinan, round which the open Atlantic surges, and left there alone, he took to the water and swam ashore; and that, when bound hand and foot, and left in a kiln, by a miracle of strength he broke his bonds and escaped. It was thus they are said to have treated him during his fits of maniacal excitement; and there are many still alive who saw it all, and gave a helping hand. Not single was this poor man's misfortune. To his insanity was added the calamity of living among an unenlightened people, a thousand years removed from the kindly doctrines of the good Pinel. The further story of Wild Murdoch will astonish no one; he murdered his sister, was taken south, and died in an asylum, or, as the people say and believe, in the cell of a gloomy prison, under which the sea-wave came and went for ever.

I am not here detailing what happened in the middle ages. It is of the nineteenth century—of what living men saw—that I write.

Retirement of the Medical Superintendents of the Gloucester and Salop and Montgomery Asylums.

Two members of this Association, who have for many years held office as Medical Superintendents of the Gloucester and Salop and Montgomery County Asylums, have, during the past quarter, retired (with pensions) under the provisions of the 12th section of the Lunacy Amendment Act, 1862.

Dr. Williams was elected Superintendent of the Gloucester County Asylum in September, 1846, and he during his long period of service commanded the esteem and respect of the visitors of the asylum and of the Commissioners in Lunacy, and the Gloucester Asylum—although, from no annual report being published, it is less known than many others—has always stood deservedly high in the opinion of qualified judges.

Moreover, Dr. Williams was for many years actively connected with this Association, having been elected joint-secretary with Dr. Hitch in 1847, and in 1851, general secretary, which office he held until 1855.

Dr. Williams took an active part in arranging the important meeting of the Association held in London in 1851 during the first Great Exhibition. This influential meeting met by adjournment for three successive days (July 17, 18, 19), visiting the Colney Hatch, the Idiot Asylum at Highgate, the Surrey County Asylum, and the Royal Hospital of Bethlehem.

We grieve to state that Dr. Williams's resignation is owing to continued ill health, the result of a serious accident occurring to him three years ago in the discharge of his professional duties.

The 'Gloucestershire Chronicle' (June 6), in recording Dr. Williams's retirement, says that "the proximate cause of Dr. Williams's retirement is an injury which he received three years ago during the dis-

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