position of medical superintendents from any chance of pension. The very fact of so large an amount as two-thirds of their pay, and allowance being allowed them after fifteen years' service, would cause Boards of Governors at once to reject any claim to pension in their case. An attendant might by chance be given £40 a year on retirement, but the chances of a physician obtaining £400 from a board, constituted as public asylum board, would be, after a few years, if the power of refusing was left to them, simply hopeless.

Dr. DUNCAN suggested that a petition be drawn up to the Chief Secretary, praying that the Bill be taken into consideration by the Government as to whether they would not insist on retaining the power of having some voice in the superannuation of their own officers.

Dr. COURTENAY seconded the proposition, which was agreed to.

PELLAGRA.

In the neurological Section of the annual gathering of German Naturalists and Physicians, held at Wiesbaden, Sept., 1887, Dr. Tuczek, of Marburg, presented an able and elaborate report on the nervous disturbances witnessed in Pellagra, of which we hope to make further use, but in the meantime it may be stated that Dr. Tuczek based his report on a study of Pellagra in northern Italy, which he had made during the months of April and May, 1887. About three hundred and fifty patients had come under his notice, and eight autopsies. Amongst the psychoses observed in Pellagra, melancholia stood first, and in particular the variety named melancholia with stupor. In respect of other cerebral symptoms, *e.g.*, vertiginous attacks and twitchings, like those seen in cortical epilepsy, Dr. Tuczek was able to confirm the statements made by numerous Italian writers on Pellagra. He was also able to confirm the observations on cord symptoms, viz., paræsthesias, motor and sensory palsies, vaso-motor disturbances. Of three hundred cases he found the knee-jerk exaggerated in two-thirds of the number; the exaggeration amounted to the most intense form of patella clonus in some of the cases. In twenty-three of these cases there was ankle-clonus as well, and in general, exaggeration of the tendon reflexes of the upper limbs, also more or less distinct of the other symptoms of spastic spinal paralysis. In seven cases the knee-jerk was wanting; in none of these cases was there ataxy. In the remaining cases there was either diminution, or no essential change in the tendon reflexes. Difference in the liveliness of the knee-jerk on the two sides was frequently observed. The author showed in photographs the chief types of psychosis in Pellagra, also the skin-affections. He showed, by means of preparations, the trophic lesions of the tongue: and he then discussed the post-mortem appearances in Pellagra. In all eight cases there were degenerative affections of the spinal cord, in two cases of the posterior columns only; in the other cases combined disease of the posterior columns, and of the hinder portions of the lateral columns. Preparations were shown. The clinical and anatomical investigations speak in favour of the toxic theory, which points to the prolonged use of diseased maize. Dr. Tuczek drew attention to the analogous toxæmias, Ergotism and Lathyrism, and laid stress on the point that, as in other forms of toxæmia, so in "Maïdismus" or the "Maïdic psycho-neurosis" the nervous disturbances were not exactly progressive.

AMERICAN PROBLEMS OF PSYCHIATRY.

[Having admitted Dr. Kiernan's paper into our Journal (July, 1887), we consider it only fair to place the following criticism on record which appears in Mr. Wines's "International Record of Charities and Correction." *Audi alteram partem.*—EDS.]

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"The 'Journal of Mental Science' for July publishes an article, by Dr. J. G. Kiernan, on 'American Problems in Psychiatry,' illustrated by a study of Cook county insanity statistics. It is a strange mixture of truth and exaggeration, or misstatement, and characteristic of its author. It is a matter of regret to us, as we presume it will be to the neurologists of the United States generally, that the Cook County Hospital, which has been managed by a Committee of the County Board, of which several of the members and the warden of this hospital appointed by that Committee are under indictment for corruption in office, should have been selected as a typical American institution, to be held up to the view of English readers in the year which witnesses the meeting of the International Medical Congress in our national capital. The degree of conscientious adhesion to truth exhibited by Dr. Kiernan in his allegations may be judged by his quotations, as where he represents the Illinois Commissioners, for instance, as having said that 'Dr. Spray deserves credit for having *entirely* dispensed with the use of restraint,' when they said '*almost* entirely;' or where he charges that 'the Illinois county insane are to-day chained, naked, and filthy, in dungeons with only an opening in the door-top for air, light, and heat, through which food is pitched as to a dog,' giving the State Board of Charities as his authority. This charge, which was never true of the insane of Illinois as a class, but only in exceptional instances, is not true 'to-day' of any insane man or woman in any county poorhouse in the State. But the subject deserves no further notice at our hands. His slurs upon the Illinois Board of Charities were fully refuted in our issue of July, 1886."

FORGING CERTIFICATES OF CHARACTER.

Edwin Jones, late porter in the employment of the Worksop Poor Law Guardians, was charged with having on the 6th of October offered his services to the Guardians on the production of a forged certificate of character.—The Clerk to the Guardians (J. S. Whall) prosecuted, and said that the prisoner, among other applicants, presented one from Dr. Jepson, Medical Superintendent of the City of London Asylum. He produced documents which he said were original ones. Dr. Jepson was present, and would give evidence before their worships that he had never written such a certificate in his life, and that the man, instead of being in the asylum four years, had only been in it six weeks, and instead of leaving of his own accord, he was discharged for abstained leave. The following was the certificate produced :—

City of London Asylum, January 15th, 1886.

I herewith beg to state that Edwin Jones has been here four years. He is an excellent attendant, kind to the patients, steady, sober, intelligent, and trustworthy; and not afraid of work. He leaves of his own accord, and I am sorry to lose him.

OCTAVIUS JEPSON, M.D.

Dr. Jepson swore that he never wrote the letter or any portion of it.—Mr. Beevor: It appears you have attempted a great fraud upon the Guardians of the Worksop Union. You will have to pay a fine of £10 and costs, or in default of payment go to prison for two months.

PENSIONS OF MEDICAL SUPERINTENDENTS.

On the 9th December a meeting was held at the County Hall, Derby, of the representatives of nine out of 16 Boards of Guardians in the County, in order to discuss with the Visiting Justices of the County Asylum the question of the cost of maintenance of the patients. The meeting originated in the action of Chesterfield, the largest Union in Derbyshire. Dr. Murray Lindsay was present, and was able to show that the cost of patients in the asylum, so far from being excessive, as alleged, was a halfpenny per week less than the average of all the asylums (8) of nearly equal size. The maintenance charge has been reduced

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