

his stomach he will sink. He was therefore to be fed in the old orthodox manner. He was seized by two or three keepers as they were called, his mouth was wrenched open with an iron spoon or blunt chisel, frequently to the damage of several of his teeth, his nose was held tight, and the fluid poured down the throat of the half suffocated patient, who not understanding the necessity for these extreme attentions would only become more alarmed, suspicious, and determined in his opposition.

Even when the stomach pump was used as it would be when professional aid was sought, the same difficulty existed as to the opening the mouth, and to keep it open a gag was used, which was secured by strings tied behind the head. Usually, however, the feeding process was trusted to the attendants, and it was not an unusual occurrence for patients to leave an asylum minus a few teeth.

To obviate these barbarities the late Dr. Balmanno invented his nasal apparatus. It was regularly used by him, and his successor Dr. Hutcheson, and has since been adopted in some of the English asylums. I am not certain whether it is used in the general hospitals of this country; but in certain cases of tetanus, and in stricture of the œsophagus it might be useful. Mr. Marshall, the medical superintendent of female patients at Colney Hatch, has found it answer all the purposes it is intended for, and I believe it has been tried at the Northampton General Lunatic Hospital.

I have known patients kept alive for weeks, and ultimately saved by means of this instrument, and in one instance a gentleman who had obstinately refused all nourishment and medicine for a protracted time until he was upon the point of sinking, submitted quietly for several days to the introduction of the tube, sitting up in bed voluntarily, and requiring no holding of the hands or head. He had made a vow to starve himself, and kept it rigidly until a few doses of medicine set his brain right, and a short argument, in addition to a sharp appetite, convinced him of the folly of his proceedings. As a general rule however, I have found that in cases of refusal of food, where perversity and sullenness of temper are exhibited, the introduction of the tube once or twice is sufficient. The patient finding himself baffled in his determination, at once succumbs, disliking the inconvenience he is putting himself to. In other cases where there are physical causes to account for the anorexia, medicine may be administered by this instrument, for which purpose a small elastic india rubber bag is provided sufficiently capacious to hold a good sized draught. This is supplied in the case, and fits the tubes tightly.

Mr. Wilkes' paper reminded me of Dr. Balmanno, and of his being the physician who first invented and used the nasal apparatus among the insane, and it occurred to me that many who may have employed it were not aware of this fact. Dr. Balmanno did much in his day to improve the condition of the lunatic, and no one had he lived would have taken a warmer interest in the great progress that has since his time been made in this department of medicine than he would have done. I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

THOMAS PRICHARD, M.D.

Abington Abbey, Northampton.

Medical Certificates.

Dear Sir,—I believe every medical practitioner who has been called upon to fill up a certificate according to the form 16 and 18 Vic., c. 96, has felt the difficulty of doing so correctly. For my own part I have never yet seen one which did not require amendment. The trouble thus occasioned would be removed if the letters of reference, a, b, c, d, e, were less microscopic; and if the directions were marginal, and printed in red ink.

The Commissioners generally return imperfect certificates for correction: but it seems this is not invariably done: but surely the doctrine that the Commissioners are not responsible for the correctness of certificates under which insane persons are confined, [see Commissioners Circular, Feb. 14th, 1855,] and that the responsibility, when they make no objection, still rests with the "Superintendents and others" is unsound. At all events, it is both inconvenient and dangerous.

I remain, dear Sir,
Yours truly,
A SUPERINTENDENT.

To the Editor of the Asylum Journal.

Dear Sir,—Allow me call the attention of superintendents to an India rubber chamber utensil, which Messrs. Macintosh of Manchester have made at my suggestion, and which I think will be very useful for violent and excited patients, who could not be trusted with those made of metal or earthenware.

One of the multifarious uses to which gutta percha has been applied has been the manufacture of these articles, but practically we find, that besides the difficulty of keeping them sweet, from the impossibility of using hot water to them, they are easily broken when made of the ordinary strength, and if made heavier they become serious weapons in the hands of excited patients.

The India rubber utensils seem to be calculated to meet all these objections, for while of sufficient strength to resist the ordinary rough usage of an asylum, they are useless as offensive weapons, and boiling water may be employed to cleanse them.

The price charged at present is rather high, but Messrs. Macintosh consider that they shall be enabled to offer them at a lower rate if there is any demand for them.

Yours faithfully,
JAMES WILKES.

Stafford County Lunatic Asylum.

Trial and Conviction of a Husband for the ill-treatment of his Lunatic Wife.

At the Devon Spring Assizes on the 17th ult., before Mr. Justice Crowder, John Rundle was charged with abusing, ill-treating, and wilfully neglecting, Amelia Rundle, his wife, a lunatic.

Mr. Stock stated that the prosecution was instituted by the Commissioners in Lunacy; and that they were fully determined to prosecute in all cases of a similar