

It would, however, be unfair to England, with her enormous population, to contrast her monster institutions with those on the other side of the Tweed; but it may well be that we still have a lesson to learn which we have not sufficiently studied in this respect. In any case, the greatest merit is due to Sir Arthur for what he has done in his own land, where the habits of the people appear to favour the treatment of the insane outside asylums to a larger extent than is supposed to be possible in England.

In saying this we do not overlook the valuable services of other members of the Board—Sir James Coxe, Dr. W. A. F. Browne, and Sir J. D. Wauchope.

The esteem in which his judgment and experience has been held was shown by his appointment in 1880 to be a member of the Commission on Criminal Lunacy (England), over which Mr. Leonard Courtenay, M.P., presided.

As a member of a Departmental Committee on Irish Criminal Lunatics, to which he was appointed in 1885, and as Chairman subsequently of a Commission to investigate Irish Lunacy Administration altogether, his well-matured opinions have been of the greatest value.

Doubtless the Bill to which we look forward will to no small extent be due to the wisdom and counsel of Sir Arthur Mitchell.

Justly has the Government conferred marks of honour upon Sir Arthur in recognition of his many services.

In 1886 the order of Companion of the Bath was conferred upon him by Mr. Gladstone, and in the following year that of Knight Commander of the Bath by Lord Salisbury. His researches in archæology are well known. He was appointed Professor of Ancient History in the Royal Scottish Academy, and H.R.S.A. in 1878; also Rhind Lecturer in Archæology about the same period. We have reviewed in this Journal his remarkable work, "The Past in the Present," of which both Mr. Gladstone and Mr. Bright have made use in their speeches.

But we must stop, for it occurs to us that happily we are not writing Sir Arthur's obituary. On the contrary, we look for many contributions from his pen in future years, the result of his ripe experience and judgment.

Correspondence.

MR. ERNEST HART ON HYPNOTISM.

To the Editors of "THE JOURNAL OF MENTAL SCIENCE."

GENTLEMEN,—At a time when there is a danger of the important subject of hypnotism being disparaged, and when some appear disposed to ignore what is true therein in consequence of the frauds committed in its name, in common with most nervous affections, it may be well to recall the unobtrusive but important work done with regard to hypnotism by the Committee of the British Medical Association, and the valuable discussions which took place at Leeds, Birmingham, and Bournemouth, when facts were stated and opinions expressed which left no doubt upon the minds of those who were present that the phenomena of hypnotism were not only genuine, but of very considerable value. Among the many able opinions to which utterance was given, none appeared to me more emphatic and lucid in their character than those expressed by Mr. Hart at Bournemouth, and therefore I ask you to be good enough to reprint them:—

"Mr. Ernest Hart said he had given the subject much attention for many years. It was easy to say that hypnotic phenomena must be phantasms of the imagination; that was what anyone would say without knowledge or investigation. He, however, had proved that the phenomena could be verified in various ways, both by physical influence and by suggestion. It was the same kind of influence as that which acted upon a hungry boy looking into a cookshop who thought he would like a jam tart. He felt a watering in the mouth and a

hollowness in the stomach. This was the influence of suggestion producing a flow of saliva and gastric juices without his knowing how it came. In this the will had nothing whatever to do with the phenomena; they were subjective. It was quite easy to make anyone sleep; this was a subjective state produced either by the mental condition of the patient, or by his induced physical condition. Hypnotism was accepted by all the world. Somnambulism was also accepted. Professor Benedikt had ridiculed the idea that persons hypnotized would obey orders of a very complex kind. It was known that a simple order such as to jump out of the window would be followed by an endeavour to do it. They had seen dozens of times, no doubt, that a mesmerist could impose his announced will upon a hypnotized or mesmerized subject. No one who had real knowledge of the facts would deny that. Now because Professor Voisin said he could by word of mouth produce post hypnotic effects which were more complex operations, surely it was not philosophical to say that because it was more complex it was impossible or untrue. For anyone to say such things were impossible was to say that which was beyond their knowledge. To have that knowledge it is necessary to see the things such as had been shown to him by close observers—not by M. Voisin, but by Professor Charcot and his students, men of the closest observation and the most extreme scepticism. It did not follow that hypnotic suggestion might not be more harmful than useful, or that it might possess therapeutic value, but he could assure them if they investigated the phenomena it would be seen that they were real.”

In regard to the fraudulent simulations of nervous phenomena one cannot but recall the extraordinarily successful deceptions which have been practised upon hospital physicians, even those of the greatest distinction. Many will remember the famous case of a patient in a Metropolitan hospital who cleverly simulated a form of paralysis a few years ago, and took in the very elect. This ingenious person went from hospital to hospital imposing upon a succession of eminent neurologists, meanwhile doing justice to the excellent dietary provided by the various charities for so “interesting” a case, the patient laughing in his sleeve at the acute diagnosis of a disease which in reality had no existence. Further, it is a fact well known to ourselves that a distinguished surgeon at one of our hospitals pretended to have an epileptic fit in one of the wards, and while the bystanders, lay and professional, were commiserating his condition, which they regarded as only too real, he became suddenly well and laughed in their faces.

I am, yours truly,
A UNIVERSITY GRADUATE.

London, December 13th, 1894.

Obituary.

JAMES WILKES, Esq., LATE COMMISSIONER IN LUNACY.

We record with regret the death of Mr. James Wilkes, at the ripe age of 83, who for so many years held the office of Commissioner in Lunacy, to which he was appointed upon the recommendation of Lord Shaftesbury in 1855. He received his medical education at the General Hospital, Birmingham, and at King's College, London, and became a Member of the College of Surgeons in 1835, and a Fellow in 1854. In 1841 he was elected Medical Superintendent of the Stafford County Asylum, where he remained until his appointment to the commissionership. He resigned his office as a paid commissioner in 1878, but up to the time of his death retained a seat at the Board as an honorary member, and, while health and strength remained, attended regularly and rendered valuable public service. In this, as in all stages of his career, he was remarkable for the highly conscientious and painstaking discharge of the duties which devolved upon him.

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