

In connection with the lamentable occurrence at the Tooting Asylum, in which an inmate of the Asylum died from the effects of a broken jaw, the injury being received in the course of a struggle with an attendant, the jury exonerated the attendant (Hodgson) from all blame. The circumstances of the case were that the patient, who had before shown himself of a violent disposition, made a sudden attack on a warder named Hodgson, and it is alleged that in the struggle which ensued the lunatic received the injuries which led to his death. Evidence was also given showing that the medical authorities were not acquainted by the attendants with the details of the encounter, and did not at first find out the character of the injuries from which Wright was suffering.

The jury stated that they considered the patient received the blow while the attendant was acting in self-defence. As a rider they made two suggestions to the authorities of the institution: 1. That all cases of accident or encounter between patients and attendants, whether serious or not, should at once be reported by the attendant in charge of the ward in which the accident occurred to the superintendent of the institution, with a view to all the residential doctors being acquainted with the facts of the case; and (2) that in all cases of violent patients they should be kept under more strict observation and also away from the other patients of the institution.

Surely all the blame does not rest with the poor insane man now dead. Adequate assistance should be at hand in the acute wards, so that a patient who becomes violent can be efficiently restrained without its being necessary to fello him in self-defence. There can be but one opinion also, as to the right course to have pursued subsequently. The full circumstances should at once have been reported to the medical superintendent.

Under the will of the late Sir Peter Nicoll Russell, of Queensborough Terrace, Porchester Gate, and late of Sydney, the Prince Alfred Hospital, Sydney, will receive £3,000, and the Hospital for Sick Children at Sydney £1,000.

Sir Alfred Beit has given £500 towards the building fund of the proposed Finchley Hospital. The Committee now have to raise something less than £2,000 in order to be in a position to claim the site which Mr. E. Homan has promised to purchase at a cost of £1,000, provided sufficient funds are raised for the erection of the building.

The Governors of the Manchester Children's Hospital, Pendlebury, have received from the residuary legatees under the will of Mr. Godfrey Ermen the welcome donation of £12,000. This sum, in accordance with the wishes of the donors, is to be applied in providing the new dispensary and out-patients' department, one of the objects for which the Governors have been appealing to the public. The name of the late Mr. Godfrey Ermen is to be associated with the new building.

The Women's Medical Institute has requested a subsidy from the St. Petersburg town council for the founding of an eye clinic. A similar request previously made had been refused, but the need is so urgent that this time it is expected that the council will consent, on the condition that the clinic is opened for the St. Petersburg population in accordance with the requirements of the town medical adviser.

Professional Review.

AN INTRODUCTION TO MIDWIFERY.

Those who are thinking of offering themselves for the examination of the Central Midwives' Board, may be glad to have their attention directed to "An Introduction to Midwifery," a Handbook for Medical Students and Midwives, by Dr. Archibald Donald, Gynaecological Surgeon to the Royal Infirmary, Manchester, published by Messrs. Charles Griffin and Co., Ltd., Exeter Street, Strand, price 5s.

The present edition of the book has been brought out with special reference to the requirements of the Midwives' Act, and the author says in his preface:—"Since the last edition was brought out an Act of Parliament has been passed 'to secure the better training of midwives and to regulate their practice.' In accordance with that Act in a few years from the present time it will be illegal for any woman to attend women in childbirth "habitually and for gain," except under the direction of a qualified medical practitioner. Under the Act a Central Midwives' Board has been formed, which regulates the issue of certificates, the course of training, and the practice of midwives. This edition has been carefully revised in the light of the Midwives' Act, and every care has been taken to make clear the conditions under which the midwife may take responsibility and those in which she must call in a medical man. Some extracts from the rules framed by the Central Midwives' Board for the regulation, supervision, and restriction within due limits of the practice of midwives will be found in an appendix.

It will thus be seen that the book is quite up to date, an important point when new conditions are being inaugurated.

In regard to the Duties of the Midwife we read:—"The duties of the midwife are intermediate between those of a monthly nurse on the one hand, and those of a qualified medical practitioner on the other. In this country she is allowed to attend cases of natural labour, and to take charge of the patient during the lying-in period, so long as that period is unattended by serious symptoms; and it is evident that a careful study of the science of midwifery, as well as good practical training, is necessary to her, in order that she may recognise when danger threatens her patient. She must be thoroughly trained in the management and feeding of infants, and be able to recognise the signs of the important diseases which may develop during the first ten days. In addition to discharging these responsible duties, she will often be called upon to act as monthly nurse, either because she undertakes in certain cases the double duty of midwife and nurse, or because the chief responsibility of the case is taken over by a medical man. It follows, therefore, that every midwife, besides being well trained in her special duties, ought also to have a sound practical knowledge of monthly nursing."

We agree with the author, and are glad to note he makes the point that "a woman who has gone through a training in general nursing will be more likely to make a good midwife or monthly nurse than one who starts without such a training. The time which is usually devoted to the training of the midwife is too short to admit of much instruction in nursing, but there are certain duties in connection with general nursing which it is essential that every midwife should be able to perform."

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)