

medical practitioners, and from time to time to remand him." A number of persons have been sent to asylums under this provision, and, when examined by medical practitioners, pronounced to be sane. It appears to me that the medical examination should never be delayed longer than is necessary, and that this power should be rarely exercised, at any rate in the larger towns, where no difficulty should exist in procuring the attendance of two medical practitioners.

*Statement to be filled up by Medical Practitioners.*

Section 5, subsection (7), and also section 34, direct that the "statement" of the patient's antecedents shall be filled up and signed by the certifying medical men. These are usually strangers to the lunatic, and unable to do more than write the word "Unknown" opposite to each particular. Valuable information would be gained if the statement were filled up by a relative or friend where practicable, or, in default of this, by the police. In England the statements regarding pauper lunatics are prepared by the Relieving Officer.

*Proceedings by Friend, &c., of Lunatic.*

Section 25, subsection (2), provides for examination by two medical practitioners both separately and conjointly. This arrangement would appear to remove what has always been regarded as an important safeguard against improper incarceration in an asylum. Subsection (5) states that an order for admission may be made by the Resident Magistrate and two Justices of the Peace, and directs Form 1 of the Schedule to be used. The form requires alteration for this joint order.

*Recovery of Maintenance-Moneys.*

Section 39 imposes the duty of "recovering maintenance-moneys" upon the Superintendents of the asylums. I cannot help feeling some doubt as to the propriety of this arrangement. Attempts to evade payment are very frequent, and the task of prosecution is foreign to the scope of a medical man's work, and may tend to strain the friendly relations which should exist between him and the relatives of his patients. The amount received for maintenance last year was very small, and should be capable of great increase if proper inquiries were made by the police into the circumstances of lunatics and their relatives, and orders for adequate payments made by the Resident Magistrates.

*Habitual Drunkards.*

Section 43 relates to the confinement in asylums of habitual drunkards. At present no proper accommodation exists for them, and their presence in asylums embarrasses the Superintendents and irritates the lunatics. Section 47, which imposes a penalty for refusal to work, &c., is not likely to be enforced, as the punishment would often fall upon relatives already impoverished by the drunkard's conduct.

*Order for Discharge.*

Section 175. The absence of the Resident Magistrate sometimes causes delay in the discharge of a patient who has quite recovered.

In connection with the subject of legislation, allusion may here be made to a regulation prohibiting Medical Superintendents of asylums from examining their patients *post mortem*. In England they are enjoined by the Commissioners in Lunacy to make such examinations whenever practicable, and in this way many injuries have been discovered and traced which had not even been suspected during the life of the patients. I am not aware that the greatest enemies of asylums have ever imputed to Superintendents the suppression of such discoveries. On the other hand, it is not unusual to find in their published annual reports full details of every such examination. No advance in cerebral pathology can be expected under existing circumstances, for the asylum physician only can be expected to make this subject his special study, the ordinary medical practitioner having, moreover, no opportunity of comparing the appearances after death with the symptoms exhibited during life.