

One chapter only in this strange story remains unwritten—the *lay revolt against mediæval alienism*. Abundant material may be found in the first volume of Calmeil's "De la Folie," in "Le Monde Enchanté," by Balthasar Bekker, and above all in the "Cautio Criminalis, seu de processibus contra sagas" (1694). In this work Spée analyzes with great power, and ever and anon with an epigrammatic indignation worthy of Michelet, the whole judicial machinery of sorcery prosecutions.

I venture respectfully to suggest that in the history of modern alienism a place should be found for such quotations as these—

"Non intercedo justitiæ: non obsisto: nolo ut sint crimina impunita: sed id solum volo quod legifer noster Christus suo ore sancivit, non evellenda esse zizania si periculum sit ne forte cum iis et triticum evellatur" (p. 63).

Dealing with "the speculative theologians" who instigated the prosecutions, he says—

"Quid foris gereatur (*sic*), quis squalor carcerum sit, quod vinculorum pondus, quæ instrumenta torturarum, quæ lamenta pauperum, et similia, nullâ experientiâ didicerunt" (p. 65).

In the following passages Spée dramatises a scene in the torture-chamber; the victim is stretched on the rack, and is at length unconscious of the voice of the priestly questioner—

"Ecce, inquit sacerdos, nunc somno solvitur, ubi alia tractamus: cum id ageretur ut se reum diceret, tunc ad omnes quæstiones obdormiebat. Quid de maleficio dubitabimus? Non poterat eas pœnas nebulo perferre, nisi demon ei sensum sopivisset?" To which he adds, "Praclarum vero facinus ac sacerdote dignum!" (p. 172).

Again: "Age, stulta mulier et vesana; quid toties vis mori, cum semel possis? Sequere consilium et ante omnem pœnam dic te ream et morere!" (p. 397).

I remain your obedient Servant,

A. WOOD RENTON.

St. George's Club, Hanover Square, W.,  
Sept. 11, 1888.

To the Editors of THE JOURNAL OF MENTAL SCIENCE.

District Lunatic Asylum,

Sligo, 4th March, 1889.

GENTLEMEN,—Referring to your comments in the January number of the Journal anent the remarks in my report for the year 1886 as to the stimulants used in this asylum, I beg to direct your attention to the following extract, more particularly the last sentence thereof, taken from the "British Medical Journal" of the 5th January last:—

"ALCOHOL IN BELPER WORKHOUSE.

"There seems to have of recent years been a considerable increase in the amount of alcohol consumed in the Belper Workhouse. The guardians having had their attention called to this, asked the medical officer for an explanation. This request called forth an amusing and spirited defence of the liberal prescription of alcoholic liquor to sick inmates. The medical officer declares that if there had not been this generous administration of intoxicants, the rates would have been reduced in two ways. There would have been a saving to the rates in the direct charge for the liquor used, and there would have been a saving by the premature removal of the poor people to 'that bourne from whence no traveller returns.' 'They would die, and, in the words of the immortal Mr. Scrooge, 'materially reduce the surplus population.'" The medical officer insisted that his position was 'unique in its impregnability.' He gives, as the Hon. F. Strutt remarked at the meeting of the guardians, no statistics. A few cases, however, are narrated in proof of the necessity for alcohol. One case was that of a man brought in insensible from exposure. It does not appear to have

occurred to the medical officer that there are other restoratives and restorative appliances besides alcohol. External heat, hot coffee or milk, or other liquid, aromatic spirit of ammonia, chloric ether, and compound cinnamon powder, have all been found useful in such conditions. Alcohol itself might be given in a medicinal mixture, or in such combinations as compound tincture of cardamoms, or simply in hot water. While we do not desire to question in the slightest the judiciousness of the prescriptions of intoxicants at Belper, and we are glad to note that the medical officer orders these remedies only to the sick, we cannot too strongly urge the utmost caution and deliberation in the therapeutic employment of beer, wine, and spirits in workhouses. There are so many abuses liable to arise where alcoholic drinks are freely ordered in institutions that, wherever possible, other medicinal preparations ought to be preferred if as suitable for the case. In some very large workhouses and infirmaries very little liquor is consumed, and as no deleterious effect has been observed from the treatment on the rate of mortality, the very sparing employment of alcoholic intoxicants given even as a medicine can be confidently commended to all engaged in the poor-law medical service."

Speaking from an experience extending over fifteen years, during which period I have been connected with three different asylums, and from an antecedent experience as medical officer to a workhouse, I cannot help having very strong suspicions that in any institution in which stimulants are distributed with a lavish hand a large proportion does not find its way to those for whom it is intended.

I hope you will be able to insert this letter in the April number of the Journal.

Faithfully yours,  
JOSEPH PETIT,  
Resident Medical Superintendent.

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*Obituary.*

**ALEXANDER MACKINTOSH, M.D. ST. AND., L.F.P.S. GLASG.**

The Medico-Psychological Association has lost one of its earliest and oldest members by the death of Dr. Alexander Mackintosh, Honorary Consulting Physician to the Glasgow Royal Asylum, which took place at Glasgow on 20th January last. He was born, and for the most part educated, in Glasgow. After a period of service in the Army, including, we believe, the superintendence of a colonial military hospital, he was appointed Lay Superintendent of the Dundee Royal Asylum in 1830, and in 1833 became Surgeon-Superintendent of that Institution. This office he filled "to the entire and unqualified satisfaction of the directors" until he was appointed in 1849 Physician-Superintendent of the Glasgow Royal Asylum. The duties of this office he discharged with equal success and acceptance until failing health led to his resignation in 1874, when he was created Honorary Consulting Physician to the Institution he had so long and so ably superintended, and in acknowledgment of his faithful and invaluable services was awarded a pension equal to two-thirds of his salary.

Dr. Mackintosh very early adopted enlightened and humane views as to the treatment of the insane. He advocated and practised the so-called "non-restraint system." He was among the first to recognize the great value of manual labour as an antidote to excitement or an outlet for it, and the Dundee Asylum under his energetic management was remarkable for the amount and the variety of the industrial work done by the patients.

His administration at Gartnavel was hampered by the debt which so long burdened the institution, but his conduct of the asylum was such as to secure at once the entire approval of the directors and the full confidence of the public.

A high sense of duty was perhaps the prominent feature of his character, and he expected a like feeling in others. Hence in his asylum management he was