

any one to institute on behalf of a husband, who was incapacitated by insanity from giving his assent to it, a suit for the dissolution of the lunatic's marriage. The question was touched upon, though not decided in the case of *Mordaunt v. Moncreiffe*, before the House of Lords, and it became necessary, therefore, to determine whether or not there was a distinction between the case of a lunatic being made a respondent in a suit of dissolution of marriage and that of a committee of a lunatic bringing such a suit on the lunatic's behalf; and whether or not, to the proposition that a lunatic may be sued in such an action, it was a corollary that a lunatic may sue. The demurrer was argued before the President in March last, and on the 6th of April he delivered judgment, being of opinion that the decision of the House of Lords in "*Mordaunt v. Moncreiffe*" was by necessary implication binding upon him, that the insanity of a husband or wife was not a bar to a suit by the committee for the dissolution of the lunatic's marriage. From this judgment the respondent appealed, and the appeal now came on for hearing before the full Court as above constituted.

Dr. Deane, Q.C., and Mr. Byford, appeared for the respondent in support of the appeal; Mr. Inderwick, Q.C., and Mr. Searle for the petitioner.

Lord Coleridge, on the conclusion of the argument, said that if anything could be gained by further consideration of the case, and if the judgment of the learned President had been less able and exhaustive, he should be disposed to give it that further consideration. But it was clear that the case fell within the principle of the judgment of the House of Lords in "*Mordaunt v. Moncreiffe*," on which alone the learned President based the decision which was now under review, and as that was the judgment of the highest authority, he was bound to follow it. He therefore thought that the judgment of the learned President ought to be affirmed.

Sir R. J. Phillimore concurred; and the appeal was dismissed.

The President, in the course of the argument, took the opportunity to point out a curious anomaly in the law regulating the procedure of the Court in matters of appeal. If he had decided the case, he said, in the opposite way to that which he had done, the appeal from his judgment would have been taken to the Court of Appeal; but having decided it, the appeal was to the full Court. He did not think that that was a satisfactory state of the law.—*The Times* June 28, 1880).

OBITUARY.

DR. WILLIAMS.

A former Secretary of our Association has recently passed away, in his 66th year. William White Williams, M.D., F.R.C.P., born April, 1815, died at his residence at Cheltenham on the 6th of August. His health had been impaired for some time, but it was not until the occurrence of a paralytic seizure, a few days before his death, that alarm was excited.

He was a Gloucestershire man, and became Medical Superintendent of the asylum for that county in 1845. After 18 years' service, but mainly in consequence of the ill-health resulting from an injury to his hand, inflicted by one of the patients, he resigned, had a pension conferred upon him, and was appointed Consulting Physician. He belonged to the school of Conolly, from whom he derived his taste for medical psychology and his practice of the non-restraint system. He continued to take an active interest in medical science, and especially in asylum affairs, up to the time of his death, and was extensively consulted in mental cases. Of a modest and retiring disposition, he did not seek, although he had, an extensive acquaintance; but he found his pleasure in a limited circle of close friends, who valued him for his kindly heart, great intelligence and pure life, and to whom it was his delight at all times to show a ready and a genial hospitality.

He has left a family of two sons and one daughter, his elder son being the energetic and successful Superintendent of the Sussex County Asylum.

In the office of Honorary Secretary of this Association, held from 1847 to 1855, the late Dr. Williams succeeded Dr. Hitch (his predecessor also at the Gloucester County Asylum), who was the first secretary and the earliest promoter of the Society, and who still survives, at a very advanced age.

M. BROCA.

When in a recent number we chronicled M. Broca's elevation to the Senate, we little thought that in so brief a space of time we should have to lament his death, at the comparatively early age of 56. The loss to science, more or less nearly allied to our own department, is simply irreparable. He was, by his brilliant researches into the function of the convolution which bears his name, directly associated with medical psychology.

"He was born in 1824, at Sainte-Foy (Gironde), the birthplace also of Gratiolet, and was the son of a physician.* In 1866 he became a member of the Academy of Medicine, and in 1867 was promoted to a chair at the Faculty as a teacher of clinical surgery.

"The natural bent of Broca's mind received an additional impulse by the foundation (in 1860) of the Anthropological Society, in which he met his old friend Gratiolet. From that moment the activity of Broca's intellect seemed to have found its proper channel. Anthropology is a compound of so many other sciences—in which anatomy, natural history, ethnology, archæology and philology take an equal part—that the intervention of a grasping and encyclopædic mind like Broca's is almost invaluable to form the connecting link between so many different branches of human knowledge which, at first sight, would seem to lie widely apart. An excellent mathematician, a first-rate anatomist, a good Greek scholar, Broca combined in himself that diversified knowledge which the subject requires, with the synthetical tendencies which condense these disseminated forces and make them converge upon a single point.

"On Tuesday, the 6th inst. (July), he fainted in the Senate House; on the ensuing Wednesday he felt sufficiently recovered to resume his labours; but towards midnight on Thursday he was suddenly seized with a fit of dyspnoea, rose from his bed, and expired in ten minutes. Strange to say, the post-mortem examination gave no clue to the mystery of his unexpected death, all the organs being apparently sound. We shall probably not be far from the truth in attributing the catastrophe to cerebral exhaustion, arising from too protracted a course of severe intellectual exertion.

"At the banquet which his friends offered him on the occasion of his election to the Senatorial dignity, Broca observed, in returning thanks, that if he believed in ancient superstitions he ought to expect some great misfortune, as the penalty for too complete and long-continued prosperity. That misfortune came in the form of sudden death; but in the very bitterness of their grief his friends can scarcely regret that he should have been spared the protracted sufferings of chronic disease, and that he should have disappeared from sight in the fulness of his glory."

The *British Medical Journal*, after saying that M. Broca was below the ordinary stature, but had a remarkably large head, states that at the autopsy the brain was not found to be so large as anticipated, but the frontal lobes were greatly developed. The brain and its membranes weighed nearly 500zs. avoirdupois. The writer refers his death to angina pectoris.

He was buried in the cemetery of Mont Parnasse, the funeral service being performed by a Protestant pastor, and eight orations being pronounced over his grave.

* We are indebted to the notice in the *Lancet*, July 24, by Prof. Ball, for the facts stated in this obituary.—[Eds.]