

JOHN ARLIDGE

ON THE STATE OF
LUNACY AND THE LEGAL
PROVISION FOR THE
INSANE

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John T. Arlidge

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PREFACE

The writer of a book is usually expected to show cause for its production, – a custom which, however commendable as a sort of homage to his readers for challenging their attention to his lucubrations, must often put the ingenuity of an author to the test. Indeed the writer of this present treatise would feel some embarrassment in accounting for its production, did he not entertain the conviction that he has, in however imperfect a manner, supplied a work on several important subjects which have never before been so placed before the public, and which, moreover, occupy just now a most prominent position among the topics of the day.

In the last Parliament, up to the period of its dissolution, a Special Committee of the House of Commons was engaged in examining into the condition of lunatics and the laws of lunacy; and the present Government has re-appointed the Committee, in order to resume the inquiry preparatory to the introduction of new enactments into the Legislature. The subjects treated of in the following pages relate to the same matters which have engaged the attention of Parliament, and elicited the special inquiry mentioned, viz. the present state of Lunacy and of the legal provision for the Insane with reference to their future wants.

In order to a better appreciation of the existing provision for the insane, and of its defects, the author has introduced certain preliminary chapters on the number of the insane, on the increase of insanity, on the inadequacy of the existing public provision for the insane, and on the curability of insanity. In reviewing the character and extent of the provisions for the insane, the course adopted has been to regard them in reference to their effects on recovery, and to discover the conditions inimical to it, whether without or within asylums. Hence the evils of private treatment and of workhouse detention of lunatics, particularly of the latter, have largely claimed attention. The condition of pauper lunatics boarded with their friends or with strangers demanded special notice, as did the long-complained-of evils of sending unfit cases to the county asylums, often to the exclusion of recent and curable ones, which might by proper treatment be restored to health and society. Turning to the consideration of our public asylums, considered as curative institutions, the disposition to extend them to an unmanageable size, and to substitute routine for treatment, has called for animadversion, as an error pregnant with numerous evils to their afflicted inmates. Another error pointed out is that of appointing too small a medical staff to asylums; and in proving this, as well as in estimating the proper size of asylums, the experience and opinions of both English and foreign physicians are copiously referred to.

The future provision for the insane forms an important chapter, which, in order to consider the several schemes proposed, is divided into several sections, viz. concerning the propriety of building separate asylums for recent and for chronic cases – of constructing distinct sections – of distributing certain patients in cottage homes – of erecting separate institutions for epileptics and for idiots.

The registration of lunatics has appeared to the author's mind of so great necessity and value that he has devoted several pages to unfold his views and to meet probable objections; and, in order to render the plan effectual, he has propounded as a complementary scheme the appointment of District Medical Officers, and entered into detail respecting the duties to be imposed upon them.

Viewing the Commission of Lunacy as the pivot upon which any system of supervising and protecting all classes of lunatics must turn, it became necessary to examine into the capability of the

present Board for its duties; and the result of that examination is, that this Board is inadequate to the effectual performance of the duties at present allotted to it, and that it would be rendered still more so by the adoption of any scheme for a thoroughly complete inspection and guardianship of all lunatics. This conclusion suggests the proposition to enlarge the Commission, chiefly or wholly, by the appointment of Assistant Commissioners, charged particularly with the duties of Inspectors.

The concluding chapter, on asylum construction, may be considered supplementary. Its chief intent is to develop a principle generally ignored, although (unless the arguments in support of it fail) one of great importance if asylums are to serve, not as simple refuges for lunatics, but as instruments for treating them.

This *résumé* of the heads of subjects discussed in the ensuing pages will, on the one hand, show that the present is not to be reckoned as a medical treatise, but as one addressed to all who are interested either in the legislation for Lunatics or in their well-being and treatment; and, on the other, make good, it is trusted, the assertion that it occupies an untrodden field in the literature of insanity, and that its matter is good, even should its manner be thought not so.

Assuming the publication of the book to be justifiable, it only remains for the author to add that he has not undertaken its composition without bringing to the task thirteen years' study and practical experience among the insane, treated in private houses, in licensed houses, and in public asylums, together with the fruits of observation gathered from the visitation of most of the principal asylums of France, Germany, and Italy.

In conclusion, he hopes that this small volume may in some measure contribute towards the amelioration of the condition of the insane, who have such especial claims on public sympathy and aid.

J. T. A.

Kensington, July 1859.

PRELIMINARY OBSERVATIONS

The number of the Insane, and the legal provision requisite for their protection, care, and treatment, are subjects which will always recommend themselves to public attention and demand the interest alike of the political economist, the legislator, and the physician. To the first, the great questions of the prevalence of Insanity in the community, its increase or decrease, its hereditary character, and others of the same kind, possess importance in relation to the general prosperity and advance of the nation; to the second devolves the duty of devising measures to secure the protection both of the public and the lunatic, with due regard to the personal liberty, and the proper care and treatment, of the latter; to the last belongs the practical application of many of the provisions of the law, besides the exercise of professional skill in the management and treatment of the insane.

Moreover it will not be denied that, owing to the intimate manner in which he is concerned with all that relates to the lunatic, with all the details of the laws regulating his custody and general treatment, as well as with the institutions in which he is detained, with the features of his malady, and with all his wants, the physician devoted to the care of the Insane is well qualified to offer suggestions and recommendations to the legislator. Hence the present pages, in which the aim is to examine the present state of lunacy; the advantages to be gained by early treatment; and the adequacy of the existing legal provision for the Insane; and to offer some suggestions for improving the condition, and for amending the laws relating to the care and treatment, of this afflicted class of our fellow-creatures.

The whole subject of the efficiency of the Lunacy Laws and of their administration, occupies just now a prominent place in public attention, owing to the rapid multiplication of County Asylums and the constantly augmenting charges entailed by them; to the prevalent impression that Insanity is rapidly increasing; to recent agitation in our Law Courts respecting the legal responsibility of the Insane and the conditions under which they should be subjected to confinement, and still more to the proposed legislation on the matter during the present Session of Parliament. It would be a great

desideratum could the Lunacy Laws be consolidated, and an arrest take place in the almost annual additions and amendments made to them by Parliament; but, perhaps, this is next to impracticable, owing to the attempts at any systematic, effectual, and satisfactory legislation for the Insane, being really of very recent date, and on that account subject to revisions enforced by experience of its defects and errors. However, the present time appears singularly suited to make the attempt at consolidation, so far as practicable, inasmuch as the appointment of a special committee of the House of Commons on the Lunacy Laws, furnishes the means for a complete investigation into existing defects, and for receiving information and suggestions from those practically acquainted with the requirements of the Insane, and with the operations of existing enactments.

To fulfil the objects taken in hand, and, in the first place, to sketch the present state of Lunacy in this country, it will be necessary to investigate the number of the Insane, and the annual rate of their increase; then to examine the extent of the present provision for them in asylums and of probable future wants. This done, after a brief essay on the curability of insanity, as a means of judging what may be done to mitigate the evil, we shall review the present provision for lunatics, point out its defects, and suggest various remedial measures, calculated in our opinion to improve the condition of the Insane, diminish the evil of the accumulation of chronic cases, and render asylums more serviceable and efficient.

In carrying out our design, we shall be found in some measure occupying ground already taken up by the Commissioners in Lunacy, and by some able essayists in the Medical Journals. We do not regret this, although it may deprive us somewhat of the merit of originality of conception and elucidation, as it will strengthen our positions and enhance the value of our remarks. Fortunately, too, we coincide generally with the opinions from time to time put forth by the Lunacy Commissioners, to whom so great merit is due for their labours in the interests of the insane, and for the character and position our County Asylums enjoy in the estimation of our own people and of foreign nations.

To attempt the character of a reformer when the affairs of Lunacy and Lunatic Asylums are in such good hands may be deemed somewhat ambitious; yet as sometimes an ordinary looker-on may catch sight of a matter which has eluded the diligent observer, and, as the views and suggestions advanced are the result of mature and independent thought, aided by experience of considerable length, and very varied, the undertaking may, we trust, be received with favour.

At all events, we flatter ourselves that the representation of the state of Lunacy in England and Wales; the estimate of its increase and of the provision made for it; the evils of workhouses as primary or permanent receptacles for the Insane; the ill consequences of large asylums, and some of the legal amendments proposed, are in themselves subjects calculated to enlist the attention of all interested in the general welfare of our lunatic population, and in the administration of the laws and institutions designed whether for its protection or for its care and treatment.

Chap. I. – Of the Number of the Insane

This inquiry must be preliminary to any consideration of the provision made or to be made for the Insane. In carrying it out, we have chiefly to rely upon the annual Reports of the Commissioners in Lunacy along with, so far as pauper lunatics are concerned, those of the Poor-Law Board. However, these reports do not furnish us with complete statistics, and the total number of our insane population can be only approximately ascertained. The Lunacy Commission is principally occupied with those confined in public asylums and hospitals, and in Licensed Houses, and publishes only occasional imperfect returns of patients detained in workhouses or singly in private dwellings. On the other hand, the Poor-Law Board charges itself simply with the enumeration of pauper lunatics supported out of poor-rates, whether in asylums or workhouses, or living with friends or elsewhere. Hence the returns of neither of these public Boards represent the whole case; and hence, too, the chief apparent discrepancies which occur when those returns are compared.

To show this, we may copy the tables presented in Appendix H of the Report of the Commissioners in Lunacy for 1857, p. 81.

*Increase of Lunatics of all classes during the last five years, according to Commissioners' Reports			3932
	1852	1857	
Paupers	12,982	16,657	
Private Patients	4,430	4,687	
	17,412	21,344	
**According to returns published by Poor Law Board during same period			6535
	1852	1857	
County and Borough Asylums	9,412	13,488	
Licensed Houses	2,584	1,908	
Workhouses	5,055	6,800	
With friends or elsewhere	4,107	5,497	
	21,158	27,693	**

This very considerable difference of 2603 patients between the two estimates is mainly due – as reference to the summary (at p. 53) proves – to the omission, on the part of the Lunacy Commissioners, of those resident in workhouses and “with friends, or elsewhere,” reckoned in the Table of the Poor-Law Board. This explanation, however, is only partial, for, after allowing for it, the two estimates are found to diverge very considerably. Thus, on adding the numbers in the categories last named, viz. $5055 + 4107 = 9162$, in 1852, – and $6800 + 5497 = 12,297$, in 1857 to the total given by the Commissioners in each of those years, viz. to 17,412 and 21,344, respectively, we obtain a total of 26,574 in 1852, and one of 33,641 in 1857; a variation of 5416 in the former, and of 5948 in the latter year, from the results given in the Table presented by the Poor-Law Board. Much of this wide difference is explicable by the Board last mentioned not having reckoned the private patients, who amounted in 1852 to 4430, and in 1857 to 4687. Still, after all attempts to balance the two accounts, there is a difference unaccounted for, of 986 in 1852, and of 1261 in 1857.

No clue is given in the official documents to the cause of this discrepancy, and we are left in doubt which estimate of our lunatic population is the more correct. The excess occurs in the Commissioners' Returns; for on adding together, in each year in question, the numbers reported by the Poor-Law Board, as detained in County and Borough Asylums and in Licensed Houses, we find that the totals respectively are less than the whole number of paupers as calculated by the Lunacy Commissioners, by the precise difference we have made out, viz. 986 in 1852 and 1261 in 1857. Of the two returns before us, we accept that of the Lunacy Commission, viz. that there were, including those in workhouses, and with friends or elsewhere, 26,574 reported Lunatics in 1852, and 33,641

in 1857; and account for this larger total by the fact that the Poor-Law Board Returns apply only to Unions and omit the lunacy statistics of many single parishes, under local acts, and some rural parishes under 'Gilbert's Act,' – containing in them together above a million and a half people more than are found in unions. Moreover, the Poor-Law Board returns do not include County and Borough Patients. Looking to these facts, the excess of 986 in 1852, and of 1261 in 1857, over and above the totals quoted from the Summary of the Poor-Law Board, is not surprising; indeed, taking the average usually allowed of one lunatic in every 700, the number in one million and a half would be above 2000; that is, more than half as many again as 1261; a result, which would indicate the Commissioners' total to be within the truth.

We have just used the term 'reported lunatics,' for, besides those under certificates and those returned as chargeable to parishes, comprised in the foregoing numbers, there are very many of whom no public board has cognizance. Most such are private patients supported by their own means, disposed singly in the residences of private persons, throughout the length and breadth of the country, and, with few exceptions, without the supervision, in reference to their accommodation and treatment, of any public officer. The Lunacy Commissioners justly deplore this state of things; lament their inability, under existing Acts, to remedy it, and confess that not a tithe of such patients is reported to them, according to the intention of the law (16 & 17 Vict. cap. 96. sect. xvi.). It would appear that less than 200 such cases are known to them; and it would not be an extravagant or unwarrantable estimate to calculate their whole number at about half that of the inmates of Licensed Houses, viz. at 2000. This number would comprise those found lunatic by Inquisition, not enumerated in the Commissioners' summary, although under the inspection of the "Medical Visitors of Lunatics." According to the returns moved for by Mr. Tite "of the total number of Lunatics in respect of whom Commissions in Lunacy are now in force," there were, on the 27th July, 1858, 602 such lunatics, and 295 of them were, according to the Commissioners' tables, detained in asylums or Licensed Houses, leaving 347 not reckoned upon. In addition to this class of the insane there is an unascertained small number of persons of unsound mind in the horde of vagrant paupers, alluded to occasionally in the Lunacy Commissioners' Reports.

The number of Criminal Lunatics in asylums is noted in the returns, but that of those in jails is not reckoned. Although this is comparatively small, owing to the usual custom of transferring prisoners, when insane, to asylums, yet, at any one period, a proportion sufficient to figure in a calculation of the whole insane population of the country will always be found. Nay more, besides such scattered instances in County Prisons, there is a very appreciable number in the Government Jails and Reformatories, as appears from the returns presented to Parliament (Reports of the Directors of Convict Prisons, 1858.)

The prisons included in these reports are: – Pentonville, Millbank, Portland, Portsmouth, Dartmoor, Parkhurst, Chatham, Brixton, Fulham Refuge, and Lewes. In the course of 1857, 216 persons of unsound mind were confined, some for a longer or shorter period, others for the whole of the year, in one or other of those prisons. Making allowance for those of the 216 who by removal from one prison to another (a transfer apparently of common occurrence, the rationale of which we should find it difficult to explain), might be reckoned twice, it may be safely stated that at least 150 were in the prison-infirmaries in question the whole year. In fact, the Infirmary of Dartmoor Prison has wards specially appropriated to insane patients, and actually constitutes a criminal asylum of no insignificant magnitude. For instance, the report tells us that on the 1st of January, 1857, there remained in that prison 102 cases; that 41 were received during the year; 37 discharged (where, or how, we are not told, except of 3, who were sent to Bethlem Hospital); and 106 remained on the 1st of January 1858.

It is also worth noting that in this Dartmoor Prison Infirmary, 38 epileptics remained on January 1st, 1857; 22 were admitted, 13 discharged, and 47 remained on January 1st, 1858. The total of epileptics coming under notice in the infirmaries of the several prisons in question, in the course of 1857, amounted to 135. The remarks on some of these cases of epilepsy by the medical officers, are

sufficient to show that the convulsive malady has seriously affected the mental health, and that they might rightly be placed in the category of the insane.

However, having no wish to enhance the proportion of the subjects for Lunatic Asylums, we will deal only with those enumerated as mentally disordered. These amounted, according to the preceding calculations, in the Government Prisons, to 150, and it would seem no exaggerated estimate to assert that an equal number may be found in the various other prisons and reformatories throughout the country. To put the matter in another form, 300 lunatics are to be found in English prisons at any date that a census may be taken. Consequently this sum of 300 must be added in calculating the total of insane persons in this kingdom.

To establish still further the proposition with which we set out, that our public statistics of Insanity are incomplete, the history of every County Asylum might be adduced: for, notwithstanding very considerable pains have been taken, on the proposition to build a new asylum, to ascertain the probable number of claimants, and a wide margin over and above that estimate has been allowed in fixing on the extent of accommodation provided, yet no sooner has the institution got into operation, than its doors have been besieged by unheard-of applicants for admission, and within one-half or one-third of the estimated time, its wards have been filled and an extension rendered imperative. Such is a *résumé* of the general history of English County Asylums, attested in the strongest manner by that of the Middlesex, the Lancashire, and the Montgomery Asylums; and confirmatory of the fact of the augmentation of insanity in the country at a rate exceeding, more or less, that collected from county returns and public statistics. It is, moreover, to be observed, that the official statistics represent the total of lunatics existing on one particular day, usually the first of January, in each year, and take no account of those many who are admitted and discharged within the year, and who rightly should be reckoned in an estimate of the total number of the insane belonging to that period.

The average daily number resident in asylums would be a more correct representation of their insane population than the total taken on any one day, although it would fail to show the lunacy of the year.

Lastly, to illustrate the point discussed, to indicate how imperfect our present estimate of the prevalence of insanity most probably is, and to show the difficulties and defects of any ordinary census, we may appeal to the experience of the special commission charged by the legislature of Massachusetts to examine the statistics of Lunacy and the condition of Asylums in that State, as recorded in their report, published in 1855.

“In 1848” (they write, p. 18), “a committee of the Legislature, appointed to ‘consider the whole subject connected with insanity within the commonwealth,’ ascertained and reported the number of insane in this State to be 1512, of whom 291 were able to furnish the means of their own support, and 1156 were unable to do so, and the pecuniary condition of 65 was not ascertained.

“In making that survey in 1848, the Commissioners addressed their letters of inquiry ‘to the municipal authorities of every city and town in the commonwealth.’

“These public officers had direct means of knowing the number and condition of the pauper insane, and probably this part of the report was complete; but they had no other facilities of knowing the condition of those lunatics who were in private families, and supported by their own property or by their friends, than other men not in office, and could only speak of those who were within their circle of personal acquaintance. Consequently the report included only a part of the independent insane who were then actually in, or belonged to, the State.”

“In 1850 (p. 11), the marshals, the agents of the national government who were appointed to take the census, visited every family; and, among other items of information, they asked for the insane and idiots in the household.

“By this personal and official inquiry, made of some responsible member of every family, the marshals obtained the account of only 1680 insane persons and 791 idiots, which is but little more than two-thirds of the number ascertained by this Commission.

“Making all due allowance for the increase of population, and consequently of the insane and idiots, these figures undoubtedly show far less than the real amount of lunacy and idiocy at that time, and render it extremely probable that many concealed the facts that the law required them to state to the marshals.”

Thus the marshals discovered the number of insane to be in 1850 nearly double that returned in 1848, and from their apparently searching inquiry, it might have been presumed that they had made a near approximation to the truth in the figures they published. However, the most pains-taking and varied investigations of the Special Commissioners in 1854, prove the marshals to have much underrated the number, for the result arrived at was, that in the autumn of the year just named, there were 3719 lunatics, of whom 1087 were idiots, in the State of Massachusetts.

The partial explanation of the divergence in numbers, viz.: – “that it is probable that many of the families refused or neglected to report to the marshals the insane and idiots who were in their households,” – is of itself an indication of one of the impediments to a correct enumeration of the insane members of a community, even when such is attempted under favourable circumstances. It is one likewise which, however operative in the United States, where the public asylums are open to, and resorted to by, all classes of the community, must be still more so in this country, where family pride endeavours in every way to ignore and keep secret the mental affliction of a member, as though it were a plague spot. Besides this, in no English census yet taken, has the enumeration of the insane constituted a special subject of inquiry.

This illustration from American experience, coupled with the considerations previously advanced, suffice to demonstrate that the published statistics of insanity in England and Wales are incomplete and erroneous, and that the machinery hitherto employed for collecting them has been imperfect. The corollary to this conclusion is, that the number of lunatics mentioned in the public official papers is much below the real one. However, the facts and figures in hand justify the attempt to fix a number which may be taken to represent *approximately* the total insane population of this kingdom.

In their last Report (1858), the English Commissioners in Lunacy state that, on January 1st, 1858, there were confined in asylums, hospitals, and Licensed Houses, 17,572 pauper, and 4738 private patients, exhibiting an increase of 915 pauper and of 51 private cases upon the returns of the year preceding.

Pauper lunatics in workhouses are stated (10th Annual Report of the Poor Law Board, 1858) to have numbered 6947, and those receiving out-door relief 12,756; making a total of 20,703. By the kindness of Mr. Purdy, the head of the Statistical Department of the Poor-Law Office, we are enabled to explain that it is the custom of the office to reckon pauper lunatics in Asylums and Licensed Houses among those receiving out-door relief; consequently the sum of 12,756 comprises both those patients provided for as just specified, and others boarded with their friends or elsewhere. We, however, learn further, from the same excellent authority, that, owing to the imperfection of the periodical returns, only a comparatively small portion of the pauper insane confined in Asylums and Licensed Houses is included in that total. Indeed, the fact of its being very much smaller than that of the lunatics in Asylums and Licensed Houses, clearly enough shows that the latter are not reckoned in it except partially.

Considering that the Poor Law Board obtain no record of the pauper insanity in one million and a half of the population of England and Wales, nor of the number of insane belonging to counties and boroughs, – for this reason, that their cost of maintenance is not directly defrayed out of the poor-rates, there must necessarily be a much greater number in workhouses at large than the 6947 mentioned, and no inconsiderable proportion of poor lunatics dispersed abroad in the country not enumerated in the 5500 counted as existing in January 1st, 1857. On these grounds, we assume 8000 as an approximative figure to represent the total of insane poor not under confinement in Asylums

and Workhouses, believing fully that it will be found, on the publication of the returns for this year (1859), within the mark.

Private patients not in Asylums, or Licensed Houses, often confined without certificates, and the majority unknown to the Lunacy Commissioners, we have put down, at a moderate estimate, at 2000. The present state of the law does not enable the Commissioners or others to discover these, often, we fear, neglected patients: and, on the other hand, the operation of the laws regulating asylums, and the feeling evoked by certain public trials of individuals confined in Licensed Houses, have, together, combined to render them more numerous, by inducing friends to keep them at home, to send them abroad to Continental institutions, or to place them under the care of private persons or attendants in lodgings.

This completes our enumeration; and the figures stand thus, on the 1st of January, 1858: —

	<i>Pauper.</i>	<i>Private.</i>	<i>Total.</i>
In Asylums and Licensed Houses	17,572	4,738	22,310
In Workhouses	6,947	...	6,947
With Friends, or elsewhere	8,000	2,000	10,000
In Prisons, Vagrants, &c.	300	...	300
	32,819	6,738	39,557

To extend the estimate to the commencement of the present year (1859), we require to add the gross increase of lunatics during 1858 to the total just arrived at: 39,557. What this increase may be cannot be decisively stated; but to anticipate the estimate of it, which we shall presently arrive at, viz. 1600 per annum, the result is, that *on the 1st of January* 1859 there were in England and Wales, in round numbers, 41,000 persons of unsound mind, or, to employ the legal phraseology, lunatics and idiots.

It perhaps should be explained, and more particularly with reference to those detained in workhouses or supported by their parishes at their own houses, that besides idiots, or those congenitally deficient, a very large proportion of them is composed of weak and imbecile folk, who would, in olden times, have been considered and called “fools,” and not lunatics, and been let mix with their fellow-men, serve as their sport or their dupes, and exhibit their hatred and revenge by malicious mischief and fiendish cruelty. But, thanks to modern civilization and benevolence, these poor creatures are rightly looked upon as proper objects for the supervision, tending and kindness of those whom Providence has favoured with a higher degree of intelligence. This act of philanthropy, effected at a great cost, elevates at the same time, very materially, the ratio of insane persons to the population, and thereby gives cause of alarm at the prevalence of mental disorder, and makes our sanitary statistics contrast unfavourably with those of foreign lands, where the same class of the sick poor has not been so diligently sought out and brought together with a view to their moral and material well-being.

Chap. II. – On the Increase of Insanity

The only data at hand to calculate the gross increase of the insane in this country, year by year, or over a series of years, are those contained in the Official Reports of the Commissioners in Lunacy and of the Poor-Law Board. These, as we have just shown in the preceding chapter, are incomplete as records of the state of lunacy, since they take no notice of numerous patients not in recognized asylums. Moreover, the annual summary of the returns made by the Commissioners of insane patients confined in Asylums and Licensed Houses, represents a compound quantity, made up of the increment by accumulation in past years, and of the fresh cases admitted in any particular year, and remaining at its close. The same is true of the figures supplied by the Poor-Law Board. Now, though these summaries are useful to show the rate of accumulation of the insane in the various receptacles for them, annually or over any fixed period, they do not tell us how many persons are attacked by madness in any year, or other space of time; or, in other words, they do not inform us whether there is an actual increase, or a decrease in the annual number of persons becoming insane.

This question of the simple increase or decrease of insanity cannot be correctly answered. It is elucidated in some measure, so far as licensed institutions for the insane are concerned, by the tables of admission for different years furnished by the Reports of the Lunacy Commissioners; and it may be assumed to be partially answered by the returns of the number of lunatics in workhouses published by the Poor-Law Board, after an allowance made for the diminution caused by deaths which have taken place in the twelvemonth; but no means whatever exist of discovering the number of persons annually attacked with mental disorder, who do not fall under the cognizance of the public boards.

With the materials in hand, let us in the first place examine the results which follow from a comparison of the Lunacy statistics of the Commissioners, instituted at intervals of more or fewer years. By this course we shall attain, not indeed an estimate of the progressive increase of our insane population, but a valuable comparative return of the number of those enjoying the advantages of asylum care and management in different years. The summary presented in each annual report shows that there were in

		<i>Males.</i>	<i>Females.</i>	<i>Total.</i>	
1843 —	Private patients	1,989	1,801	= 3,790	} 11,272
	Pauper patients	3,532	3,950	= 7,482	
1853 —	Private patients	2,331	2,099	= 4,430	} 17,412
	Pauper patients	5,916	7,066	= 12,982	
1858 —	Private patients	2,508	2,230	= 4,738	} 22,310
	Pauper patients	7,985	9,587	= 17,572	

From these tables it therefore appears that the accumulation of insane persons in Asylums in the ten years between 1843 and 1853, equalled 6140; and in the five years between 1853 and 1858, 4898; or progressed at the rate of 614 per annum in the ten years, and of 979.6 (or in round numbers 980) per annum in the five years under review, or upwards of 50 per cent. faster in the latter space of time.

In their Twelfth Report (1858) the Commissioners in Lunacy attempt to calculate the probable demands for asylum accommodation on the 1st of January 1860, from the increased number of lunatics in the space of one year, from January 1st, 1857, to January 1st, 1858, amounting to 915. But as we have pointed out in a paper in the “Journal of Mental Science” (vol. v. 1859, p. 249), the conclusion drawn from such data must be fallacious. For instance, a calculation on the result of one year’s statistics is evidently worth little. There are many causes at work in asylums which materially affect the relative number of admissions and discharges, and consequently produce an inequality in the rate of increase viewed year by year. Moreover, where the same plan of calculation has been adopted

in determining what asylum accommodation was necessary, experience has soon exhibited the fallacy, and both the admissions and the demands for admission have far exceeded the total reckoned upon. To arrive at a nearer approximation to the truth, the augmentation in the number of lunatics ought to be noted for a space of several years; and to make the deduction more satisfactory, the increase of the general population, the conditions of the period affecting the material prosperity of the people, and its political aspects; and, lastly, the mere circumstance of the opening of new asylums, – a circumstance always followed by an unexpected influx of patients, need be taken into account.

In the preceding considerations only the returns of lunatics in Asylums, Hospitals, and Licensed Houses are discussed; but, as we have seen, there is an almost equally large number detained in workhouses, or boarded with their relatives, or other persons, at the expense of their parishes, whose increase or decrease is a matter of kindred importance. On reviewing the returns of their numbers at periods when they have been taken cognizance of by the Lunacy Commission, we find that there were in workhouses and elsewhere, together, in

1843			9,339
	<i>In Workhouses.</i>	<i>With Friends and elsewhere.</i>	
1847	4,490	3,465	= 7,955
1857	6,800	5,497	= 12,297

exhibiting an increase of 4342 in the ten years between 1847 and 1857, and a decrease in the four between 1843 and 1847 of 1384, owing, doubtless, to the opening of new asylums during that space of time. The returns of the two classes of Pauper Lunatics together being both so infrequently made, and, as before shown (p. 8), open to criticism on account of their incompleteness, we shall attempt to arrive at a more correct estimate of increase than that just made. In the first place, with respect to Union Workhouses, the Summary of Indoor Paupers, published by the Poor Law Commission (10th Report, p. 196), affords the necessary data. According to this tabular statement, we find, that, there were on the 1st of January in each of the ensuing years the following numbers of pauper lunatics: —

1847	4,490
1849	4,842
1850	4,659
1851	5,029
1852	4,744
1853	4,954
1854	5,459
1855	5,960
1856	6,480
1857	6,488
1858	6,947

These columns show, that since 1847 the minimum number of insane, at a corresponding date in each year, occurred in 1850. Once indeed since, but at a different period of the year, viz. on July 1st, 1851, the number fell to 4574, or 75 less than at the date before named. Two or three years excepted, the increment has been progressive; at one time, indeed, much more rapidly so than at another. The fluctuations observable are, in the first place, due to the opening of new, or the repletion of existing, asylum accommodation; and in a lesser degree, to the rise or fall of pauperism in the community at large, or to an increased mortality at times, as, for example, in 1849, when cholera prevailed – an event which in part, at least, explains the smaller figure of insane inmates in 1850.

But whatever the fluctuations observable year by year may be, there is a most distinct increase in the space of any five or ten years selected from the list, suggestive of the unwelcome fact that, notwithstanding the very large augmentation of asylum accommodation and the reduction of numbers by death, the rate of accumulation has proceeded in a ratio exceeding both those causes of decrease of workhouse inmates combined. Thus, to take the decennial period between 1847 and 1857, we discover an increase of just 2000, or an average annual one of 200; and, what is remarkable, as large a total increase, within a few units, is met with in the quinquennial period between 1853 and 1858, and consequently the yearly average on the decennial period is doubled; viz. 400 instead of 200. This doubling of the average in the last five years would be a more serious fact, were it not that in 1853 the number of workhouse inmates had been reduced upon 1851, and had only slightly advanced above that of 1849.

Rejecting the maximum rate of accumulation, we will calculate the average of the last three years cited, from 1855 to 1858, a period during which there has been no notable cause of fluctuation, and no such increase of population as materially to affect the result, and for these reasons better suited to the purpose. In this space of time the increment equalled 987, or an average of 329 per annum; which may fairly be considered to represent the rate of accumulation of lunatics in Union Workhouses at the present time.

The absence of returns of lunatics in the workhouses of parishes under local Acts, is an obstacle to a precise computation of them; however, on the assumption that the proportion of lunatics in those workhouses to the population (1,500,000) of the parishes they belong to, is equal to that of those in Union Workhouses to the estimated population (18,075,000) of the Unions, and that the average increase is proportionate in the two cases, this increase should equal $\frac{1}{12}$ th of 329, or somewhat more than 27, per annum; making the total average rate of accumulation in workhouses at large 356 annually.

Unfortunately, no separate record is regularly kept of those poor insane persons who are boarded with friends or others, and their number has been only twice published, viz. in 1847 and 1857, when, as seen in a preceding page, it was, respectively, 3465 and 5497. These two sums exhibit an increase of 2032 to have accrued in the ten years included between those dates, or an average one of 203 per annum.

We have, above, calculated the average annual increase on those in Union Workhouses and those with friends, at 434 annually; and consequently that of the latter being 203, the yearly increase of the former stands, according to the returns employed, at 231. However, we have proved that the average increase, in Union Workhouses, has reached in the last three years the amount of 329, and in workhouses at large 356, which, added to 203, produces 559, or in round numbers, 560, as the sum-total of accumulation of pauper lunatics not in Asylums, Hospitals, or Licensed Houses. Adding the annual rate of increase of the insane in Asylums, viz. 980, to that among paupers, unprovided with asylum accommodation, 560, we obtain the total accumulation per annum of 1540 lunatics reported to the public boards. To this sum there should rightly be added the accumulative increase among insane persons not known to those boards, and which, in the absence of any means to ascertain its amount, may be not extravagantly conceived to raise the total to 1600.

We come now to the second part of our present task, viz. to discover the comparative number of new cases in several past years, so as to obtain an answer to the question, – Has there been an increase of the annual number of persons attacked with lunacy during that period? for previous figures leave no doubt there is an augmented ratio of insane persons in the population of the country. At the outset of this inquiry an insuperable difficulty to a correct registration of the number arises from the circumstance that, during any term of years we may select, the accommodation for the insane has never, even for one year, been fixed, but has been progressively increased by the erection of new, and the enlargement of old asylums. This occurrence, necessarily, very materially affects the returns made by the Commissioners of the number of admissions into asylums and Licensed Houses. Even

if the comparison of the annual admissions into any one County Asylum only, were of value to our purpose, the same difficulty would ensue by reason of the enlargement of the institution from time to time, and of the circumstance that, as it progressively filled with chronic cases, the number of admissions will have grown smaller. Likewise, the farther that the inquiry is extended back, the more considerable will this difficulty in the desired computation be. In short, it may be stated generally, that the proportion of admissions will vary almost directly according to the accommodation afforded by asylums, and the inducements offered to obtain it.

On the other hand, the consequences of the variations in asylum accommodation upon the total of admissions are to a certain extent compensated for by the fluctuations they produce upon the number of lunatics not provided for in asylums; for this reason, that where a County Asylum opens for the reception of patients, the majority of these are withdrawn from Licensed Houses and workhouses, and thereby a reduction is effected in the number of inmates of those establishments.

After the above considerations, it is clear that an estimate of the number of insane persons in any year, as gathered from the statistics of those brought under treatment in asylums or elsewhere, can be only an approach to the truth. Still it is worth while to see what results follow from an examination of the Returns of Admissions, as collected by the Commissioners in Lunacy. It would be of no service to extend the inquiry far backward in time, on account of the rapidity with which asylum accommodation has been enlarged; we will therefore compare the admissions over the space of four years, viz. 1854, 1855, 1856, and 1857, during which the changes in asylums have been less considerable.

Table of Admissions.

1854 —	County and Borough Asylums	4,620
	Hospitals	868
	Licensed Houses	2,161
	Total	7,649
1855 —	County and Borough Asylums	4,342
	Hospitals	828
	Licensed Houses	2,196
	Total	7,366
1856 —	County and Borough Asylums	4,538
	Hospitals	777
	Licensed Houses	2,091
	Total	7,406
1857 —	County and Borough Asylums	4,781
	Hospitals	790
	Licensed Houses	2,324
	Total	7,895

There is a remarkable degree of uniformity in the sum of admissions in each of these four years; and if each several sum could be taken to represent the accession of new cases of insanity in the course of the year, there would appear no actual progressive increase of the disease in the community during the four years considered. The average of the admissions for that period is 7579; those therefore of 1854 and 1857 are in excess, and those of 1855 and 1856 are within it. The widest difference is observed in 1857, when a sudden rise takes place, which, by the way, is not explicable by the greater provision of asylum accommodation in that year than in the three preceding. Yet this increase is not so striking when viewed in relation to the totals of other years; for it exceeds the average only by 316, a sum little greater than that expressing the decrease of 1855 upon the total of 1854.

It is difficult to decide what value should be assigned to these results, deducible from a comparison of the yearly admissions, in determining the question of the increase of insanity, viewed simply as that of the comparative number attacked year by year, — it would, however, seem a not unreasonable deduction from them, that the proportion of persons attacked by mental disorder

advances annually at a rate little above what the progressive increase of population is sufficient to explain. If this be so, the increase by accumulation of chronic and incurable cases becomes so much the more remarkable, and an investigation of the circumstances promoting, and of those tending to lessen, that accumulation, so much the more important.

There are, as heretofore remarked, very many insane persons who are not sent to asylums or private houses, at least to those in this country, and whose relative number yearly it is impossible, in the absence of all specific information, to compute. Although the agitation of the public mind respecting private asylums, and the facility and economy of removing insane persons abroad, may have latterly multiplied the number of such unregistered patients, yet there is no reason to assume that their yearly positive increase is other than very small.

The pauper lunatics living in workhouses have as yet been omitted from the present inquiry. Their yearly number is affected not only by the introduction of fresh cases, but also by removals to asylums and by deaths; or, in other words, it is a compound quantity of new inmates received and of the accumulation of old. However, the returns above quoted (p. 13) show that between 1855 and 1858 there was an increase of almost exactly 1000, or, as before calculated, an average of 329 annually. The Poor Law Board Report unfortunately gives no returns of the annual admissions; hence we do not possess the means of discovering what proportion of the growing increase observed is due year by year to the accession of fresh inmates. The advancing growth in numbers of those pauper insane receiving out-door relief is not clearly discoverable: from the few data in possession, as before quoted (p. 14), about 200 are annually added.

It appears pretty clearly, then, that there are at least 1600 reported lunatics added to the insane population of the country yearly, and of this increase only 60, or 1 in 26.66, are supported out of their own resources in asylums; the remainder, with some few exceptions, falling upon the rates for their entire maintenance.

It would therefore be difficult to exaggerate the importance of the question of the provision for the insane poor in this country, both to the political economist and to the legislator. There are certainly more than 1300 persons yearly so affected in mind as to be unfit or unable to take care of themselves, and to obtain their own livelihood, and who, under this distressing infliction of Providence, demand the care and charity of their neighbours, and the succour of the State, properly to protect and provide for them. To perform this duty at the least cost, compatible with justice to these afflicted individuals, involves a tax upon the community of which few persons have any adequate conception. Supposing, by way of illustration, that the number mentioned required the accommodation of an asylum, the cost of providing it, according to the system hitherto in vogue, would nearly equal that incurred in the establishment and maintenance of the Middlesex County Asylum at Colney Hatch, or a sum of £300,000 for land, buildings, and fittings (equal, at 5 per cent. to a yearly rental of £15,000), and an annual charge of £30,000 for maintenance. The example of Colney Hatch, chosen for illustration, is a very fair one, and the figures used in round numbers are actually within the average expenditure in and for the establishment of County Asylums in this country, as may be seen on reference to Appendix D. (Commissioners' Report, 1854), and to the table of asylums in course of erection, printed at p. 2 of their Twelfth Report (1858).

On applying these results to the total number of pauper lunatics in Asylums, which, according to the return on the 1st of January 1858, amounted to 15,000, the sum of £4,500,000 (not including interest) will have been expended in providing them accommodation, and an annual charge incurred of £450,000 for their care and maintenance. All this, too, is independent of the cost on account of those maintained in Licensed Houses, in workhouses, and in lodgings with friends or others, the amount of which we do not possess sufficient information to determine.

The Commissioners in Lunacy, in their elaborate Report in 1844, took the population of England and Wales at 16,480,082, and reckoned on the existence of 20,893 lunatics on the 1st January of that year, of whom 16,542 were paupers. The latter, they calculated, stood in the proportion of 1

to 1000 in the population, or, more correctly, 1 in 997; and the total lunatics as 1 to 790. On the 1st of January 1857, they found the pauper lunatics to be in the proportion of 1 in 701; whilst pauper and private together equalled 1 in 600, to the estimated population, 19,408,364. Adopting the figures arrived at in the preceding discussion, viz. that there are 41,000 insane persons in this country, and assuming the population on the 1st of January, 1859, to have been 19,800,000, the proportion of the insane would be as high as 1 in 483 persons.

This much-enlarged ratio of insanity to the population admits of several explanations, without a resort to the belief that the disease is actually and fearfully on the increase. As before said, we regard the accumulation of chronic and incurable lunatics to be the chief element in raising the total number, and this accumulation is favoured by all causes operating against the cure of insanity; by the increased attention to the disease, and by all those conditions improving the value of life of the insane, supplied, at the present day, in accordance with the improved views respecting their wants, and the necessity of placing them under conditions favourable for their health, care and protection. On the operation of these causes, favouring the multiplication of insane persons in the community, we shall, however, not at present further enter, but proceed to inquire how far the existing provision for the insane is adequate to their requirements.

Before entering on this inquiry, a few words are wanting to convey a suggestion or two respecting the collection of the statistics of pauper lunatics. It is most desirable we should be able to discover, from the official returns of the public boards, with precision, what number of insane persons is wholly or partially chargeable to the Poor Rates, what to Borough, and what to County Rates. The returns of the Poor-Law Office ought not to be marred by the omission of the statistics of parishes, which by local or special acts escape the direct jurisdiction of the board. If the central board be denied a direct interference in their parochial administration, it ought to be informed of the number of their chargeable poor, including lunatics. It is equally unsatisfactory, that the pauper registry kept by the Poor-Law Board is not rendered complete by the record of all those chargeable to counties and boroughs, as this could be so readily done by the clerks of county and borough magistrates.

An amendment, too, is desirable in the practice of the Poor-Law Office of reckoning together in their tables pauper lunatics in asylums among the recipients of out-door relief with those boarded with their friends or elsewhere, whence it is impossible to gather the proportion of such class. This technicality of considering workhouse inmates as the only recipients of *in-door* relief, to the exclusion of asylum patients who are in reality receiving it in an equal degree, although in another building than the workhouse, is an official peculiarity we can neither explain nor approve; and it appears to us most desirable that lunatic paupers in asylums should be arranged in a distinct column, and that the same should be done with those living with their friends or others. By the adoption of this plan the questions of the number of the pauper insane, of their increase and decrease, whether in asylums or elsewhere, and of the adequacy of accommodation for them, could be ascertained by a glance at the tables. We would likewise desire to see those paupers belonging to parishes not in union and under Local Acts, and those chargeable to Counties and Boroughs, tabulated in a similar manner.

A practical suggestion, connected with the statistics of insanity, we owe to Mr. Purdy, viz. that section 64 of the "Lunatic Asylums' Act, 1853" (16 & 17 Vict. cap. 97) should be amended by the insertion of a few words requiring the clerks of unions to make the returns of the number of chargeable lunatics on a specified day, as on the first of January in each year. This practice was formerly enjoined, and probably its omission from the Act now in force was accidental. The present enactment requires that the clerks of unions "shall, on the first day of January in every year, or as soon after as may be, make out and sign a true and faithful list of all lunatics chargeable to the union or parish;" and the only alteration required is the addition of two or three words at the end of this paragraph, such as: – 'on the first day of January of that year.' The want of a fixed date of this kind, Mr. Purdy says, imposes great trouble in getting the clerks to make their returns with reference to the same day in the several unions and parishes.

Chap. III. – state of the present provision for the insane in asylums. – its inadequacy

In their Report for 1857, the Commissioners in Lunacy have presented us with a memorandum of the present accommodation afforded in County Asylums, and of that in course of being supplied, and have attempted further a calculation of the probable requirements on the 1st of January 1860. The former may be accepted as nearly correct, but the latter affords, as before noticed, a rough, and not sufficiently accurate, estimate.

Their statement is, that on the 1st of January, 1858, 16,231 beds were provided in public asylums; that, by the projected enlargement of existing institutions, 2481 others would be obtained, and, by the completion of eight asylums in course of erection, there would be added 2336 more – a total of 4817, on or before January 1860. Of the increase in additional buildings, 1000 beds, or thereabouts, would not be ready at so early a date as that named; and in calculating existing provision, need be deducted from the total of 2,336; consequently the accommodation in County Asylums would, according to the Commissioners, in this year, 1859, reach 20,000, and in 1860, 21,048.

The County Asylum accommodation on January 1st, 1858, expressed by the sum of 16,231, exceeded the total of pauper lunatics returned as actually partaking its advantages at that date, viz. 14,931, by the large number of 1300; showing a surplus to that amount, including beds, in infirmary wards. What may be the precise number of the last, or, in other words, of those generally inapplicable to ordinary cases, labouring under no particular bodily infirmity, we cannot tell, but we feel sure that 1000 of them would be available; in fact, the whole number by classification might be rendered so. Be this so or not, the Commissioners have omitted any reference to this present available accommodation, in calculating what may be necessary in 1860.

On the other hand, they have rather over-estimated the future provision in asylums, by adding together that in the Beds., Herts., and Hunts. Asylum now in use, viz. 326, with that to be secured in the new one, viz. 504, instead of counting on the difference only, 178, as representing the actual increase obtained, – for the intention is to disuse the old establishment as a county institution.

To proceed. The Commissioners calculate on an addition of 4817 beds to the number provided in January 1858 (according to our correction, in round numbers, 4500), and proceed to say, that “if to this estimate ... we apply the ratio of increase in the numbers requiring accommodation observable during the last year, some conclusion may be formed as to the period for which these additional beds are likely to be found sufficient to meet the constantly increasing wants of the country, and how far they will tend towards the object we have sought most anxiously to promote ever since the establishment of this Commission, namely, the ultimate closing of Licensed Houses for pauper lunatics. On the 1st of January, 1857, the number of pauper lunatics in County and Borough Asylums, Hospitals, and Licensed Houses, amounted to 16,657. On the 1st of January, 1858, this number had increased to 17,572, showing an increase during the year of 915 patients; and of the total number 2467 were confined in the various metropolitan and provincial Licensed Houses.

“Assuming, then, that during the next two years the progressive increase in the number of pauper lunatics will be at least equal to that of the year 1857, it follows, that on the 1st of January, 1860, accommodation for 1830 additional patients will be required; and if to this number be added the 2467 patients who are now confined in Licensed Houses, there will remain, to meet the wants of the ensuing year, only 520 vacant beds. It is obvious, therefore, that if Licensed Houses are to be closed for the reception of pauper lunatics, some scheme of a far more comprehensive nature must be adopted in order to provide public accommodation for the pauper lunatics of this country.”

This conclusion must indeed be most unwelcome and discouraging to the rate-payers, and to the magistracy, in whose hands the Government reposes the duty of providing for the due care of

pauper lunatics in County Asylums. To the latter it must be most dispiriting, when we reflect on the zeal and liberality which have generally marked their attempts to secure, not merely the necessary accommodation, but that of the best sort, for the insane poor of their several counties. It is, indeed, an astounding statement for the tax-payer to hear, that, after the expenditure of one or two millions sterling to secure the pauper lunatics of this country the necessary protection, care, and treatment, and the annual burden for maintenance, that a far more comprehensive scheme is demanded. No wonder that the increase of insanity is viewed as so rapid and alarming; no wonder that every presumed plan of saving expense by keeping patients out of asylums should be readily resorted to.

The value of the conclusion, and of the facts whereon it rests, certainly merit careful examination; and after the investigation made as to the number of the insane, and their rate of increase and accumulation, such an examination can be more readily accomplished.

To revert to the figures put forward by the Commissioners, of the number of beds existing in asylums on the 1st of January, 1858, and of that to be furnished by 1860. They reckoned on 16,231 beds at the former date, and on the addition of 4817 by the year 1860, or a total of 21,048. We have, however, shown, that in January 1858 there were 1300 vacant beds, and that there was an over-estimate of the future increase by about 300, leaving, without reckoning the number in progress, 1000 to meet coming claims. This sum being therefore added, gives a total of 22,048 to supply the wants of the pauper insane between the 1st of January, 1858, and the completion of the new asylums in 1860. Using the average increase adopted by the Commissioners, viz. 915 per annum, there would be at the commencement of the year 1860, 1830 applicants for admission, to be added to the 2467 confined in Licensed Houses, whom the Lunacy Commissioners are so anxious to transfer to county institutions, making in all 4297. But according to our corrected valuation, there would be in the course of 1860, room for 5817 patients, that is, a surplus accommodation for 1520.

It must be admitted as incorrect on the part of the Commissioners, in the Report just quoted, to calculate on the whole number of beds obtained by new buildings, as available in January 1860, when, in all probability, 1000 of them will not be ready much before the close of the year; still, after making allowance for the increased number of claimants accruing between that date and the opening of the new asylums, there would, according to the data used, remain vacancies for some thousand or more, instead of the 520 reckoned upon by the Commissioners.

Our review, therefore, is thus far favourable, and suggestive of the possibility of a breathing time before the necessity of a scheme of a “far more comprehensive nature” need be adopted. But, alas! the inquiries previously gone into concerning the number and increase of the insane render any such hope fallacious, and prove that the Commissioners have very much underestimated the number to be duly lodged and cared for in asylums; unless indeed, after having secured the transfer of those now in Licensed Houses to County Asylums, they should consider their exertions on behalf of the unfortunate victims of mental disorder among the poor brought to a close. Such an idea, however, is, we are persuaded, not entertained by those gentlemen, who have, on the contrary, in their Reports frequently advocated the provision of asylums for all the pauper insane with few exceptions, and distinctly set forth the objections to their detention in workhouses.

In fact, every well-wisher for the lunatic poor, is desirous to see workhouses disused as receptacles for them, and it naturally appears more important to transfer some of their inmates to proper asylums than to dislodge those detained in Licensed Houses, where, most certainly, the means of treatment and management available are superior to those existing in workhouse wards.

But our efforts on behalf of the insane poor must not cease even when those in workhouses are better cared for, since there then remains that multitude of poor mentally disordered patients scattered among the cottagers of the country, indifferently lodged, and not improbably, indifferently treated, sustained on a mere pittance unwillingly doled out by Poor-Law Guardians, and under no effectual supervision, either by the parish medical officers or by the members of the Lunacy Board. Some provision surely is necessary for this class of the insane; some effectual watching over their

welfare desirable; for the quarterly visits required by law (16 & 17 Vict. cap. 97, sect. 66) to be made to them by the overworked and underpaid Union Medical Officers cannot be deemed a sufficient supervision of their wants and treatment. These visits, for which the noble honorarium of *2s. 6d.* is to be paid, whatever the distance the medical officer may have to travel, – are intended by the clause of the Act to qualify the visitor to certify “whether such lunatics are or are not properly taken care of, and may or may not properly remain out of an asylum;” but practically nothing further is attained by them than a certificate that the pauper lunatic still exists as a burden upon the parish funds; and even this much, as the Commissioners in Lunacy testify, is not regularly and satisfactorily obtained. A proper inquiry into the condition of the patient, the circumstances surrounding him, the mode of management adopted, and into the means in use to employ or to amuse him, cannot be expected from a parish medical officer at the remuneration offered, engaged as he is in arduous duties; and, more frequently than not, little acquainted with the features of mental disease, or with the plans for its treatment, alleviation, or management.

Even in the village of Gheel in Belgium, which has for centuries served as a receptacle for the insane, where there is a well-established system of supervision by a physician and assistants, and where the villagers are trained in their management, those visitors who have more closely looked into its organization and working, have remarked numerous shortcomings and irregularities. But compared with the plan of distributing poor demented patients and idiots, as pursued in this country, in the homes of our poorer classes and peasantry, unused to deal with them, too often regarding them as the subjects of force rather than of persuasion and kindness, and under merely nominal medical oversight four times a year, Gheel is literally “a paradise of fools.” Indeed a similar plan might with great advantage be adopted, particularly in the immediate vicinity of our large County Asylums.

But to return to the particular subject in question, viz. the proportion of insane poor in workhouses and elsewhere who should rightly find accommodation in asylums, a class of lunatics, as said before, not taken into account by the Commissioners in their estimate of future requirements.

We let pass the inquiry, what should be done for the 8000 poor imbecile and idiotic paupers boarded in the homes of relatives or others, and confine our observations to the 7947 inmates of workhouses. Now, although we entertain a strong conviction of the evils of workhouses as receptacles for the insane, with very few exceptions, – a conviction we shall presently show good grounds for, yet, instead of employing our own estimate, we shall endeavour to arrive at that formed by the Lunacy Commissioners, of the proportion of lunatics living in them, for whom asylum accommodation should be provided.

The principal and special Report on Workhouses, in relation to their insane inmates, was published in 1847, and in it the Commissioners observe (p. 274), that they believe they “are warranted in stating, as the result of their experience, that of the entire number of lunatics in workhouses, – two-thirds at the least – are persons in whom, as the mental unsoundness or deficiency is a congenital defect, the malady is not susceptible of cure, in the proper sense of the expression, and whose removal to a curative Lunatic Asylum, except as a means of relieving the workhouse from dangerous or offensive inmates, can be attended with little or no benefit. A considerable portion of this numerous class, not less perhaps than a fourth of the whole, are subject to gusts of passion and violence, or are addicted to disgusting propensities, which render them unfit to remain in the workhouse... But although persons of this description are seldom fit objects for a curative asylum, they are in general capable of being greatly improved, both intellectually and morally, by a judicious system of training and instruction; their dormant or imperfect faculties may be stimulated and developed; they may be gradually weaned from their disgusting propensities; habits of decency, subordination, and self-command may be inculcated, and their whole character as social beings may be essentially ameliorated.”

In their Ninth Report (1855), speaking of those classed in the Workhouse In-door Relief Lists, under the head of Lunatics or Idiots, they observe: – “These terms, which are themselves vague and

comprehensive, are often applied with little discrimination, and in practice are made to include every intermediate degree of mental unsoundness, from imbecility on the one hand, to absolute lunacy or idiotcy on the other; and, in point of fact, a very large proportion of the paupers so classed in workhouses, especially in the rural districts, and perhaps four-fifths of the whole, are persons who may be correctly described as harmless imbeciles, whose mental deficiency is chronic or congenital, and who, if kept under a slight degree of supervision, are capable of useful and regular occupation. In the remainder, the infirmity of mind is for the most part combined with and consequent upon epilepsy or paralysis, or is merely the fatuity of superannuation and old age; and comparatively few come within the description of lunatics or idiots, as the terms are popularly understood.”

Lastly, in the Eleventh Report (1857), the class of pauper insane, whose detention in workhouses is allowable, is indicated in the following paragraph: – “They (workhouses) are no longer restricted to such pauper lunatics as requiring little more than the ordinary accommodation, and being capable of associating with the other inmates, no very grave objection rests against their receiving... But these are now unhappily the exceptional cases.”

These extracts are certainly not precise enough to enable us to state, except very approximatively, what may be the estimate of the Lunacy Commissioners of the numbers who should be rightly placed in asylums. That first quoted appears to set aside one-third as proper inmates of a curative asylum, and amenable to treatment; and then to describe a fourth of the remaining two-thirds, that is, one-sixth, as proper objects of asylum care. On adding these quantities, viz. one-third to one-sixth, we get as the result, one-half as the proportion of workhouse insane considered to be fit subjects for asylums.

The second quotation by itself is of little use to our purpose, except in conjunction with the third one and with the context, as printed in the Report from which it is taken, relative to the general question of the evils of workhouses as receptacles for the insane. So examined in connection, the published statements and opinions of the Commission, lead to the conclusion that the great majority of the insane in workhouses should rightly enjoy the advantages of the supervision, general management, nursing, and dietary of asylums.

However, to escape the possible charge of attempting to magnify the deficiency of asylum accommodation, we will, for the time, assume that only one-half of the lunatic inmates of workhouses require asylum treatment; even then we had some 4000 to be provided with it at the beginning of 1858, and should have at the least 4500 by January 1860.

Having now reduced the estimate of the demands for asylum care to figures, it is practicable to calculate how far those demands can be met by the existing provision in asylums and what may be its deficiency.

On the one side, there will be, at the most moderate computation, made as far as possible from data furnished by the Reports of the Lunacy Commissioners, 4500 inmates of workhouses, who should, on or before January 1st, 1860, obtain asylum care and treatment. On the other, there will be, as above shown, about 1000 beds unoccupied at the date mentioned, after accommodation is afforded to the pauper residents in Licensed Houses, and to the number of insane resulting from accumulation and increase in the course of two years from January 1858. The consequence is, that in January 1860, there will remain some 3500 pauper lunatics unprovided for in proper asylums.

In the course of the preceding arguments, we have kept as closely as possible to data furnished by the Lunacy Commissioners' Reports, and withal have made out, satisfactorily we trust, that the provision supplied by existing asylums and by those now in progress of erection, is inadequate to the requirements of the insane population of this country. The idea of its inadequacy would be very greatly enhanced by the employment of the statistical conclusions we have arrived at respecting the number of the insane and their rate of accumulation, and by the reception of the views we entertain against their detention, with comparatively few exceptions, in other receptacles than those specially constructed and organized for their care and treatment. The truth of our opinions we shall endeavour

to establish in subsequent pages; and respecting the rate of accumulation of pauper cases, we feel confident that 1800 per annum is within the truth. To meet this increase, both the asylums in existence and those in course of erection are undoubtedly inadequate, and, as the necessary result, workhouse pauper inmates must continue to multiply.

If the opinion were accepted that public asylum accommodation should be provided for all the pauper poor, not many more than one-half are at present found to be in possession of it, that is, 17,000 of the 33,000 in the country. Hence it would be required, to more than double the present provision in asylums for pauper lunatics, to give room for all and to meet the rapid annual rate of accumulation.

Chap. IV. – on the curability of insanity

An inquiry into the curability of insanity forms a natural pendant to that concerning the provision required for the insane, and is at the same time a fitting prelude to an investigation of the insufficiency and defects of the present organization of asylums: for it is important to satisfy ourselves as to what extent we may hope to serve the insane, by placing them under the most advantageous circumstances for treatment, before incurring the large expenditure for securing them.

Now it may be most confidently stated that insanity is a very curable disorder, if only it be brought early under treatment. American physicians go so far as to assert, that it is curable in the proportion of 90 per cent., and appeal to their asylum statistics to establish the assertion. The Lunacy Commission of the State of Massachusetts (*op. cit.* p. 69) thus write: – “In recent cases the recoveries amount to the proportion of 75 to 90 per cent. of all that are submitted to the restorative process. Yet it is an equally well-established fact, that these disorders of the brain tend to fix themselves permanently in the organization, and that they become more and more difficult to be removed with the lapse of time. Although three-fourths to nine-tenths may be healed if taken within a year after the first manifestation of the disorder, yet if this measure be delayed another year, and the diseases are from one to two years’ standing, the cures would probably be less than one-half of that proportion, even with the same restorative means; another and a third year added to the disease diminishes the prospect of cure, and in a still greater ratio than the second; and a fourth still more. The fifth reduces it so low, as to seem to be nothing.”

Dr. Kirkbride, Physician to the Pennsylvania Hospital for the Insane, in his book “On the Construction and Organization of Hospitals for the Insane,” says (p. 2): – “Of recent cases of insanity, properly treated, between 80 and 90 per cent. recover. Of those neglected or improperly managed, very few get well.”

This is certainly a very flattering estimate, and, inasmuch as it is founded on experience, cannot fairly be questioned. However, before comparing it with the results arrived at in this country, there are some circumstances which call for remark. In the first place, American public asylums are not branded with the appellation ‘pauper,’ they are called ‘State Asylums,’ and every facility is offered for the admission of cases, and particularly of recent ones, whatever their previous civil condition. Again, there is not in the United States the feeling of false pride, of imaginary family dishonour or discredit, to the same extent which is observed in this country, when it pleases Providence to visit a relative with mental derangement, – to oppose the transmission to a place of treatment. From these two causes it happens that in America the insane ordinarily receive earlier attention than in this country. Lastly, the United States’ institutions, by being more accessible, admit a certain proportion of cases of temporary delirium, the consequence of the abuse of alcoholic drinks, of overwrought brain and general excitement, – causes more active in that comparatively new, changing, and rapidly-developing country than in ours. But such cases, which for the most part get well, do not find their way into the asylums of this kingdom. Such are some of the circumstances influencing favourably the ratio of cures in America, which need be remembered when comparing it with that which is attained in our own land.

The proportion of recoveries above stated, is calculated upon cases of less than a year’s duration. Let us see what can be effected in England under conditions as similar as practicable, though not equally advantageous. The most satisfactory results we can point to are those obtained at St. Luke’s Hospital, London, where the cures have averaged 62 per cent. upon the admissions during the last ten years. At this and likewise at Bethlehem Hospital, the rules require that the disorder be not of more than one year’s duration at the time of application for admission, and that it be not complicated with epilepsy or paralysis, maladies which so seriously affect its curability. Such are the conditions favourable to a high rate of recoveries enforced by rule. On the other hand, there are at St. Luke’s

not a few circumstances in operation prejudicial to the largest amount of success possible. Its locality is objectionable, its general construction unfavourable, its grounds for exercise and amusement very deficient, and the means of employment few. But apart from these disadvantages, so prejudicial to its utility and efficiency, there are other causes to explain its ratio of success being less than that estimated by our American brethren to be practicable. Though the rule excludes patients the benefit of the hospital if their disease be of more than a year's duration, yet from the great difficulties attending in many cases the inquiry respecting the first appearance of the insanity; its sometimes insidious approach; the defect of observation, or the ignorance, and sometimes the misrepresentations of friends, resorted to in order to ensure success in their application to the charity, older cases gain admission. Again, of those admitted in any year, there are always several whose disorder is known to be of nine, ten, or eleven months' duration, and at least a fourth in whom it is of six months' date and upwards. Further, although the rules exclude epileptics and paralytics, yet at times the history of fits is withheld by the patients' friends, or the fits are conceived to be of a different character, or the paralysis is so little developed as not to be very recognizable; and as in all ambiguous cases, – whether it be the duration or the complication of the mental disorder which is in doubt, the Committee of the Hospital give the benefit of the doubt to the patient, – the consequence is, that several such unfavourable cases are received annually. On referring to the statistical tables of the institution, these “unfit” admissions are found to amount to 10 per cent.

We have thought these details desirable, on the one hand, to account for the difference in the ratio of cures attained in St. Luke's compared with that fixed by American writers; and on the other, to show that though the rate of recoveries at that London Hospital is highly gratifying, it might be rendered yet more so if certain impediments to success were removed, and that similar benefits could be realized elsewhere if due provision were made for the early and efficient treatment of the malady.

Were we at all singular in the assertion of the curability of insanity, we should endeavour to establish it by an appeal to the statistics of recoveries among recent cases in the different English asylums; but instead of advancing a novel opinion, we are only bearing witness to a well-recognized fact substantiated by general experience. This being so, it would be fruitless to occupy time in quoting many illustrations from Asylum Reports: one will answer our purpose.

At the Derby County Asylum, under the charge of Dr. Hitchman, a high rate of cures has been reached. In the Third Report that able physician writes (p. 5), – “It cannot be too often repeated, that the date of the patient's illness at the time of admission is the chief circumstance which determines whether four patients in a hundred, or seventy patients in a hundred, shall be discharged cured. Of the 151 cases which have been admitted into the asylum during the past year, eleven only have been received within a week of the onset of their malady; of these eleven, ten have been discharged cured, – the other has been but a short time under treatment.” In his Sixth Report (1857, p. 22), the same gentleman observes, – “The cures during the past year have reached 60 per cent. upon the admissions; but the most gratifying fact has been, that of twenty patients, unafflicted with general paralysis, who were admitted within one month of the primary attack of their maladies, sixteen have left the asylum cured, – three are convalescent, and will probably be discharged at the next meeting of the Committee, and the other one was in the last stage of pulmonary consumption when she came to the asylum, and died in three weeks after her admission.”

After this review of what may be effected in restoring the subjects of mental disorder to reason and society, to their homes and occupations, by means of early treatment, it is discouraging to turn to the average result of recoveries on admissions obtained in our County Asylums at large. This average may be taken at 35 per cent., and therefore there will remain of every 100 patients admitted, sixty-five, or, after deducting 10 per cent. of deaths, fifty-five at the end of the year. This number, fifty-five, might fairly be taken to represent the annual per centage of accumulation of the insane in asylums, were the data employed sufficient and satisfactory. But so far as we have yet examined the point,

this proportion is larger than a calculation made over a series of years, and may be approximatively stated at 35 per cent. on the admissions.

How great would be the gain, alike to the poor lunatic and to those chargeable with his maintenance, could this rapid rate of accumulation be diminished, by raising that of recoveries, or, what is tantamount to it, by securing to the insane prompt and efficient care and treatment! How does it happen that this desideratum is not accomplished by the asylums in existence? what are the impediments to success discoverable in their organization and management, or in the history of their inmates prior to admission? and what can be done to remedy discovered defects, and to secure the insane the best chances of recovery? Such are some of the questions to be next discussed.

Chap. V. – on the causes diminishing the curability of insanity, and involving the multiplication of chronic lunatics

In the preliminary chapters on the number and increase of the insane in this country, we limited ourselves to determine what that number and that increase were, and entered into no disquisition respecting the causes which have operated in filling our asylums with so many thousands of chronic and almost necessarily incurable patients. Nor shall we now attempt an investigation of them generally, for this has been well done by others, and particularly by the Lunacy Commissioners in their Ninth Report, 1855; but shall restrict ourselves to intimate that the increase of our lunatic population, mainly by accumulation, is due to neglect in past years; to the alteration of the laws requiring the erection of County Asylums for pauper lunatics generally; to the collection and discovery of cases aforesaid unthought of and unknown; to the extension of the knowledge of the characters and requirements of the insane both among professional men and the public; and, lastly, to the advantages themselves of asylum accommodation which tend to prolong the lives of the inmates.

Such are among the principal causes of the astounding increase in the number of the insane of late years, relatively to the population of the country, some of which fortunately will in course of time be less productive. Those, however, which we now desire to investigate, are such as directly affect the curability of insanity, either by depriving its victims of early and efficient treatment, or by lessening the efficiency and usefulness of the public asylums.

The history of an insane patient is clearly divisible into three portions: 1st, that before admission into an asylum; 2nd, that of his residence in an asylum; and 3rd, of that after his discharge from it. The last division we have at present nothing to do with; and with reference to the causes influencing his curability, these group themselves under two heads parallel to the first two divisions of the patient's history; viz. 1, those in operation external to, and 2, those prevailing in, asylums.

A. Causes external to Asylums

The chief cause belonging to this first class is that of delay in submitting recent cases to asylum care and treatment. This delay, as we have sufficiently proved, operates most seriously by diminishing the curability of insanity, and thereby favours the accumulation of chronic lunatics. It takes place in consequence either of the desire of friends to keep their invalid relatives at their homes; or of the economical notions of Poor-Law Officers, who, to avoid the greater cost of asylums, detain pauper lunatics in workhouses. Other causes of incurability and of the accumulation of incurables are found in injudicious management and treatment before admission, and in the transmission of unfit cases to asylums. To discuss the several points suggested in these considerations will require this chapter to be subdivided; and first we may treat of the Detention of Patients in their own homes.

§ Detention of Patients in their own homes

Although the immense importance of early treatment to recent cases of insanity is a truth so well established and so often advocated, yet the public generally fail to appreciate it, and from unfortunate notions of family discredit, from false pride and wounded vanity, delay submitting their afflicted relatives to efficient treatment. Unless the disorder manifest itself by such maniacal symptoms that no one can be blind to its real character, the wealthier classes especially will shut their eyes to the fact they are so unwilling to recognize, and call the mental aberration nervousness or eccentricity; and as they are unwilling to acknowledge the disorder, so are they equally indisposed to subject it to the most effectual treatment, by removing the patient from home, and the exciting influence of friends

and surrounding circumstances in general, to a properly organized and managed asylum. Usually a patient with sufficient resources at command, is kept at home as long as possible, at great cost and trouble; and if he be too much for the control of his relatives and servants, attendants are hired from some Licensed House to manage him; the only notion prevailing in the minds of his friends being that means are needed to subdue his excitement and to overcome his violence. There are, in fact, no curative agencies at work around him, but on the contrary, more or fewer conditions calculated to exalt his furor, to agitate and disquiet his mind, and to aggravate his malady. The master of the house finds himself checked in his will; disobeyed by his servants; an object of curiosity, it may be, of wonder and alarm; and sadly curtailed in his liberty of action. The strange attendants forced upon him are to be yielded to only under passionate protests, and probably after a struggle. In all ways the mental disorder is kept up if not aggravated, and every day the chances of recovery are diminished. Perhaps matters may grow too bad for continued residence at home, or the malady have lasted so long, that the broken-up state of family and household can no longer be tolerated, and a transfer from home is necessitated. Yet even then removal to an asylum, – the only step which can hold out a fair prospect of recovery, is either rejected as quite out of the question, or submitted to usually after still longer delay, – a “trial” being made of a lodging with a medical man or other person, probably with an asylum attendant. By this plan certainly the patient is saved from the presence and excitement of his family, and placed under altered conditions, calculated to exercise in some respects a salutary influence on his mind; still many others are wanting, and no guarantee is attainable of the manner in which he is treated; for as a single patient, and as is usually the case, restrained without certificates, he is almost invariably unknown to the Commissioners, and virtually unprotected, even though a medical man be paid to attend him occasionally. At last, however, except for a few, the transfer to the asylum generally becomes inevitable, and too often too late to restore the disordered reason; and years of unavailing regret fail to atone for time and opportunity lost.

The same unwillingness to subject their insane friends to asylum care and treatment pervades, moreover, the less wealthy classes, and even the poorer grades of the middle class of society. Madness, to their conceptions likewise, brings with it a stigma on the family, and its occurrence must, it is felt, be kept a secret. Hence an asylum is viewed as an evil to be staved off as long as possible, and only resorted to when all other plans, or else the pecuniary means, are exhausted. If it be the father of the family who is attacked, the hope is, that in a few days or weeks he may resume his business or return to his office, as he might after ordinary bodily illness, without such loss of time as shall endanger his situation and prospects, and without the blemish of a report that he has been the inmate of a madhouse. If it be the wife, the hope is similar, that she will shortly be restored to her place and duties in her family. Should progress be less evident than desired, a change away from home will probably be suggested by the medical attendant, and at much expense and trouble carried out. But too frequently, alas! the hopes are blighted and the poor sufferer is at length removed with diminished chance of cure to an asylum.

For the poorer members of the middle class, and for many moving in a somewhat higher circle of society, whom the accession of mental disorder impoverishes and cuts off from independence, there are, it is most deeply to be regretted, few opportunities of obtaining proper asylum care and treatment. In very many instances, the charges of even the cheapest private asylum can be borne for only a limited period, and thus far, at the cost of great personal sacrifices and self-denial. Sooner or later no refuge remains except the County Asylum, where, it may be, from the duration of his disorder, the patient may linger out the remainder of his days. How happy for such a one is it – a person unacquainted with the system of English County Asylums, might remark – that such an excellent retreat is afforded! To this it may be replied, that the public asylum ought not to be the *dernier ressort* of those too poor to secure the best treatment and care in a well-found private establishment, and yet too respectable to be classed and dealt with as paupers entirely and necessarily dependent on the poor’s rate. Yet so it is under the operation of the existing law and parochial usages, there is no

intermediate position, and to reap the benefits of the public asylum, the patient must be classed with paupers and treated as one. His admission into it is rendered as difficult, annoying, and degrading as it can be. His friends, worn out and impoverished in their charitable endeavours to sustain him in his independent position as a private patient, are obliged to plead their poverty, and to sue as paupers the parish officials for the requisite order to admit their afflicted relative to the benefits of the public asylum as a Pauper Lunatic. In short, they have to pauperize him; to announce to the world their own poverty, and to succumb to a proceeding which robs them of their feelings of self-respect and independence, and by which they lose caste in the eyes of their neighbours. As for the patient himself, unless the nature and duration of his malady have sufficiently dulled his perception and sensibilities, the consciousness of his position as a registered pauper cannot fail to be prejudicial to his recovery; opposed to the beneficial influences a well-regulated asylum is calculated to exert, and to that mental calm and repose which the physician is anxious to procure.

In the class of cases just sketched, we have presumed on the ability of the friends to incur the cost of private treatment for a longer or shorter period; but many are the persons among the middle classes, who if overtaken by such a dire malady as insanity, are almost at once reduced to the condition of paupers and compelled to be placed in the same category with them. As with the class last spoken of, so with this one, the law inflicts a like injury and social degradation, and at the same time operates in impeding their access to proper treatment.

No one surely, who considers the question, and reflects on the necessary consequences of the present legal requirement that, for a lunatic to enjoy the advantages of a public asylum, towards which he may have for years contributed, he must be formally declared chargeable to the rates as a pauper, – can deny the conclusion that it is a provision which must entail a social degradation upon the lunatic and his family, and act as a great impediment to the transmission of numerous recent cases to the County Asylum for early treatment.

It will be urged as an apology for it, that the test of pauperism rests on a right basis; that it is contrived to save the rate-payer from the charge of those occupying a sphere above the labouring classes, who fall, as a matter of course, upon the parochial funds whenever work fails or illness overtakes them. It is, in two words, a presumed economical scheme. However, like many other such, it is productive of extravagance and loss, and is practically inoperative as a barrier to the practice of imposition. If it contributes to check the admission of cases at their outbreak into asylums, as no one will doubt it does, it is productive of chronic insanity and of permanent pauperism; and, therefore, besides the individual injury inflicted, entails a charge upon the rates for the remaining term of life of so many incurable lunatics.

If, on the contrary, our public asylums were not branded by the appellation “Pauper;” if access to them were facilitated and the pauperizing clause repealed, many unfortunate insane of the middle class in question, would be transmitted to them for treatment; the public asylum would not be regarded with the same misgivings and as an evil to be avoided, but it would progressively acquire the character of an hospital, and ought ultimately to be regarded as a place of cure, equivalent in character to a general hospital, and as entailing no disgrace or discredit on its occupant.

The Commissioners in Lunacy, in their Ninth Report (1855, p. 35), refer to the admissions into County Asylums, of patients from the less rich classes of society reduced to poverty by the occurrence of the mental malady, and hint at their influence in swelling the number of the chronic insane, owing to their transfer not taking place until after the failure of their means and the persistence of their disorder for a more or less considerable period. This very statement is an illustration in point; for the circumstance deplored is the result of the indisposition on the part of individuals to reduce their afflicted relatives to the level of paupers by the preliminaries to, and by the act of, placing them in an asylum blazoned to the world as the receptacle for paupers only; an act, whereby, moreover, they advertise to all their own poverty, and their need to ask parish aid for the support of their poor lunatic kindred.

On the continent of Europe and in the United States of America we obtain ample evidence that the plan of pauperizing patients in order to render them admissible to public asylums, is by no means necessary. Most continental asylums are of a mixed character, receiving both paying and non-paying inmates, and care is taken to investigate the means of every applicant for admission, and those of his friends chargeable by law with his maintenance. Those who are paid for are called “pensioners” or boarders, and are divided into classes according to the sum paid, a particular section of the asylum being assigned to each class. Besides those pensioners who pay for their entire maintenance, there are others whose means are inadequate to meet the entire cost, and who are assessed to pay a larger or smaller share of it. Lowest in the scale of inmates are those who are entirely chargeable to the departmental or provincial revenue, being devoid of any direct or indirect means of support. Probably the machinery of assessment in the continental states might not accord with English notions and be too inquisitorial for adoption *in toto*; but at all events, on throwing open public asylums for the reception of all lunatics who may apply for it, without the brand of pauperism being inflicted upon them, some scheme of fairly estimating the amount they ought to contribute to their maintenance should be devised. For the richer classes a plan of inquisition into their resources is provided, and there seems no insuperable difficulty in contriving some machinery whereby those less endowed with worldly goods might, at an almost nominal expense, have their means duly examined and apportioned to their own support and that of their families. Overseers and relieving officers are certainly not the persons to be entrusted with any such scheme, nor would we advocate a jury, for in such inquiries few should share; but would suggest it as probably practicable that the amount of payment might be adjudged by two or three of the Committee of Visitors of the Asylum with the Clerk of the Guardians of the Union or Parish to which the lunatic belonged.

In the United States of America, every tax-payer and holder of property is entitled as a taxpayer, when insane, to admission into the Asylum of the State of which he is a citizen. He is considered as a contributor to the erection and support of the institution, and as having therefore a claim upon its aid if disease overtake him. The cost of his maintenance is borne by the township or county to which he belongs, and the question of his means to contribute towards it is determined by the county judge and a jury. Most of the asylums of the Republic also receive boarders at fixed terms, varying according to the accommodation desired; hence there are very few private asylums in the States. In the State of New York there is a special legal provision intended to encourage the early removal of recent cases to the asylum; whereby persons not paupers, whose malady is of less than one year’s duration, are admitted without payment, upon the order of a county judge, granted to an application made to him, setting forth the recent origin of the attack and the limited resources of the patient. Such patients are retained two years, at the end of which time they are discharged, their friends being held responsible for the removal. Their cost in the asylum is defrayed by the county or parish to which they belong.

We have said above, that the requirement of the declaration of pauperism is ineffectual in guarding the interests of the rate-payer against the cost of improper applicants. Indeed, the proceeding adopted to carry it out is both absurd and useless, besides being, as just pointed out, mischievous in its effects.

In the interpretation clause of “the Lunatic Asylums’ Act, 1853,” it is ordered that a “Pauper shall mean every person maintained wholly or in part by, or chargeable to, any Parish, Union, or County.” Hence when insanity overtakes an unfortunate person who is not maintained by a parish or union, it is required that he be made chargeable to one, or, as we have briefly expressed the fact, that he be pauperized. To effect this object, the rule is, that the patient shall reside at least a day and a night in a workhouse. This proceeding, we repeat, carries absurdity on the face of it. Either it may be a mere farce privately enacted between the parish officers and the friends of the patient, to the complete frustration of the law so far as the protection of the rate-payers is contemplated; or, it may be made to inflict much pain and annoyance on the applicants by the official obstructiveness,

impertinent curiosity, obtuseness, and possible ill-feeling of the parish functionaries in whose hands the law has practically entrusted the principal administration of the details regulating the access to our public asylums.

It is no secret among the superintendents of County Asylums, that by private arrangements with the overseers or guardians of parishes, cases gain admission contrary to the letter and spirit of the law, and to the exclusion of those who have legally a prior and superior claim. We have, indeed, the evidence of the Lunacy Commissioners, to substantiate this assertion. In their Ninth Report (1855, p. 34) they observe, – “In some districts a practice has sprung up, by which persons, who have never been themselves in receipt of parochial relief, and who are not unfrequently tradesmen, or thriving artisans, have been permitted to place lunatic relations in the County Asylums, as pauper patients, under an arrangement with the guardians for afterwards reimbursing to the parish the whole, or part, of the charge for their maintenance. This course of proceeding is stated to prevail to a considerable extent in the asylums of the metropolitan counties, and its effect in occupying with patients, not strictly or originally of the pauper class, the space and accommodations which were designed for others who more properly belong to it, has more than once been made the subject of complaint.”

Desiring, as we do, to see our County Asylums thrown open to the insane generally, by the abolition of the pauper qualification, it is rather a subject of congratulation that cases of the class referred to do obtain admission into them, even when contrary to the letter of the law. But we advance the quotation and assertion above to show, that the pauperizing provision of the Act is ineffective in the attainment of its object; and to remark, that the opportunities at connivance it offers to parochial officials, must exercise a demoralizing influence and be subversive of good government. If private arrangements can be made between the applicants for an assumed favour, and parish officers, who will undertake to say that there shall not be bribery and corruption?

Sufficient, we trust, has been said to demonstrate the evils of the present system of pauperizing patients to qualify them for admission into County Asylums, and the desirability of opening those institutions to all lunatics of the middle classes whose means are limited, and whose social position as independent citizens is jeopardized by the existence of their malady. This class of persons, as before said, calls especially for commiseration and aid; being so placed, on the one hand, that their limited means must soon fail to afford them the succour of a private asylum; and on the other, with the door of the public institution closed against them, except at the penalty of pauperism and social degradation.

What we would desire is, that every recent case of insanity should at once obtain admission into the public asylum of the county or borough, if furnished with the necessary medical certificates and with an order from a justice who has either seen the patient or received satisfactory evidence as to his condition (see remarks on duties of district medical officers), and obtained from the relatives an undertaking to submit to the assessment made by a commission as above proposed, or constituted in any other manner thought better; or the speedy admission of recent cases might otherwise be secured by prescribing their attendance and that of their friends before the weekly Committee of the Visitors of the Asylum, by whom the order for reception might be signed on the requisite medical certificates being produced, and the examination for the assessment of the patient's resources formally made, with the assistance possibly of some representative of the parish interests, – such for instance as the Clerk to the Board of Guardians.

In the County Courts the judges are daily in the habit of ordering periodical payments to be made in discharge of debts upon evidence offered to them of the earnings or trade returns of the debtor; and there seems no *a priori* reason against the investigation of the resources of a person whose friends apply for his admission into a County Asylum. It is for them to show cause why the parish or county should assume the whole or the partial cost of the patient's maintenance, and this can be done before the Committee of the Asylum or any private board of inquiry with little annoyance or publicity. Rather than raise an obstacle to the admission of the unfortunate sufferer, it would be better to receive him at once and to settle pecuniary matters afterwards.

We must here content ourselves with this general indication of the machinery available for apportioning the amount of payment to be made on account of their maintenance by persons not paupers, or for determining their claim upon the Asylum funds. Yet we cannot omit the opportunity to remark that the proceedings as ordered by the existing statute with a similar object are incomplete and unsatisfactory. These proceedings are set forth in *sects. xciv. and civ. (16 & 17 Vict. cap. 97)*. The one section of the Act is a twin brother to the other, and it might be imagined by one not “learned in the law,” that one of the two sections might with little alteration suffice. Be this as it may, it is enacted that if it appear to two Justices (*sect. xciv.*) by whose order a patient has been sent to an asylum, or (*sect. civ.*) “to any Justice or Justices by this Act authorized to make any order for the payment of money for the maintenance of any Lunatic, that such Lunatic” has property or income available to reimburse the cost of his maintenance in the asylum, such Justices (*sect. xciv.*) shall apply to the nearest known relative or friend for payment, and if their notice be unattended to for one month, they may authorize a relieving officer or overseer to seize the goods, &c. of the patient, whether in the hands of a trustee or not, to the amount set forth in their order. *Sect. civ.* makes no provision for applying to relatives or friends in the first instance, but empowers the justice or justices to proceed in a similar way to that prescribed by *sect. xciv.*, to repay the patient’s cost; with the additional proviso that, besides the relieving officer or overseer, “the Treasurer or some other officer of the County to which such Lunatic is chargeable, or in which any property of the Lunatic may be, or an officer of the Asylum in which such Lunatic may be,” may proceed to recover the amount charged against him.

Concerning these legal provisions, we may observe, that the state of the lunatic’s pecuniary condition is left to accidental discovery. The justices signing the order of admission (*sect. xciv.*) have no authority given them to institute inquiries, although they may learn by report that the patient for whom admission is solicited is not destitute of the means of maintenance. Nor are the justices who make the order for payment (*sect. civ.*) in any better position for ascertaining facts. There is, in short, no authorized and regular process for investigating the chargeability of those who are not actually in the receipt of parochial relief on or before application for their admission into the County Asylum, or who must necessarily be chargeable by their social position when illness befalls them. Again, according to the literal reading of the sections in question, no partial charge for maintenance can be proposed; no proportion of the cost can be assessed, where the patient’s resources are unequal to meet the whole. Lastly, the summary process of seizing the goods or property of any sort, entrusted to those who are most probably the informers of the justices, namely overseers and relieving officers; and, by *sect. civ.*, carried out without any preliminary notice or application, and without any investigation of the truth of the reports which may reach the justices, is certainly a proceeding contrary to the ordinary notions of equity and justice.

§ Detention of Patients in Workhouses

In the case of the insane poor, whose condition, circumstances, and social position have been such that whenever any misfortune, want of work, or sickness has overtaken them, the workhouse affords a ready refuge, the requirement of pauperization to qualify for admission to the County Asylum is in itself no hardship and no obstacle to their transmission to it. Probably the prevailing tactics of parish officers may at times contribute to delay the application for relief, but the great obstacle to bringing insane paupers under early and satisfactory treatment in the authorized receptacle for them – the County Asylum, is the prevalence of an economical theory respecting the much greater cheapness of workhouse compared with asylum detention. The practical result of this theory is, that generally where a pauper lunatic can by any means be managed in a workhouse, he is detained there. If troublesome, annoying, and expensive, he is referred to the County Asylum; this is the leading test for the removal; the consideration of the recent or chronic character of his malady is taken little or no account of.

In fresh cases the flattering hope is that the patients will soon recover, and that the presumed greater cost of asylum care can be saved; in old ones the feeling is that they are sufficiently cared for, if treated like the other pauper inmates, just that amount of precaution being attempted which may probably save a public scandal or calamity.

To the prevalence of these economical notions and practice may be attributed the large number of lunatics detained in workhouses (nearly 8000), and the equally large one living with their friends or others. Now it is very desirable to inquire whether these theories of the superior economy of workhouses compared with asylums as receptacles for the insane, are true and founded on facts. This question is in itself twofold, and leaves for investigation, first, that of the mere saving in money on account of maintenance and curative appliances; and secondly, that of the comparative fitness or unfitness, the advantages or disadvantages, the profit or loss, of the two kinds of institutions in relation to the welfare, the cure, and the relief of the poor patients placed in them. These questions press for solution in connexion with the subject of the accumulation of lunatics and the means to be adopted for its arrest, or, what is equivalent to this, for promoting the curability of the insane.

On making a comparative estimate of charges, it is essential to know whether the same elements of expenditure are included in the two cases; if the calculated cost per head for maintenance in workhouses and asylums respectively comprises the same items, and generally, if the conditions and circumstances so far as they affect their charges are rightly comparable. An examination we are confident, will prove that in no one of these respects are they so.

In the first place, the rate of maintenance in an asylum is calculated on the whole cost of board, clothing, bedding, linen, furniture, salaries, and incidental expenditure; that is, on the total disbursements of the establishment, exclusive only of the expenditure for building and repairs, which is charged to the county. On the contrary, the “in-maintenance” in workhouses comprises only the cost of food, clothing, and necessaries supplied to the inmates (see Poor-Law Board Tenth Report, p. 144). The other important items reckoned on in fixing the rate of cost per head in asylums are charged to the “establishment” account of the workhouse, and are omitted in the calculation of the rate of maintenance. Reference to the Tables given in the Poor-Law Board Returns (Tenth Report, p. 61, sub-column *e* and a portion of *f*) will prove that the expenditure on account of those other items must be nearly or quite equal to that comprehended under the head of “in-maintenance” cost.

We have no means at hand to calculate with sufficient precision what sum should be added to the “in-maintenance” cost of paupers per head in workhouses, but it is quite clear that the figures usually employed to represent it, cannot be rightly compared with those exhibiting the weekly charge of lunatics in asylums. At the very least half as much again must be added to a workhouse estimate before placing it in contrast with asylum cost.

Since the preceding remarks were written, Dr. Bucknill has favoured us with the Thirteenth Report of the Devon Asylum, in which he has discussed this same question and illustrated it by a special instance. To arrive at the actual cost of an adult sane pauper in a union-house, he gathered “the following particulars relative to the house of the St. Thomas Union in which this asylum is placed; a union, the population of which is 49,000, and which has the reputation of being one of the best managed in the kingdom. The cost of the maintenance of paupers in this union-house is 2*s.* 6*d.* per head, per week, namely, 2*s.* 2*d.* for food and 4*d.* for clothing. The establishment charges are 1*s.* 0½*d.* per head, per week, making a total of 3*s.* 6½*d.* for each inmate. The total number of pauper inmates during the twelfth week of the present quarter was 246; and of these 116 were infants and children, and 130 youths above sixteen and adults. A gentleman intimately acquainted with these accounts, some time since calculated for me that each adult pauper in the St. Thomas’s Union-house cost 5*s.* a week. Now the average cost of all patients in the Devon Asylum at the present time is 7*s.* 7*d.*, but of this at least 2*s.* must be set down to the extra wages, diet, and other expenses needful in the treatment of the sick, and of violent and acute cases, leaving the cost of the great body of chronic patients at not more than 5*s.* 7*d.* a week. Now if a sane adult pauper in a union-house costs even 4*s.* 6*d.* a week,

is it probable that an insane one would cost less than 5s. 7d.? For either extra cost must be incurred in his care, or he must disturb the discipline of the establishment, and every such disturbance is a source of expense.”

This quotation is really a reiteration of Dr. Bucknill’s conclusions as advanced in 1857, in an excellent paper in the ‘Asylum Journal’ (vol. iv. p. 460), and as a pendant to it the following extract from this paper is appropriate; viz. “that the cost of a chronic lunatic properly cared for, and supplied with a good dietary, in a County Asylum, is not greater than that of a chronic lunatic supplied with a coarse and scanty dietary, and detained in neglect and wretchedness as the inmate of a union workhouse.”

Another most important circumstance to be borne in mind when the cost of workhouses and asylums is contrasted, is that in the former establishments more than two-thirds of the inmates are children. Thus the recipients of in-door relief on the 1st of January, 1858, consisted, according to the Poor-Law Returns, of 74,141 adults, and 50,836 children under sixteen years of age. Now as the rate of maintenance is calculated on the whole population of a workhouse, adults and children together, it necessarily follows that it falls much within that of asylums, in which almost the whole population is adult. This very material difference in the character of the inmates of the two institutions may fairly be valued as equivalent to a diminution of one-fourth of the expense of maintenance in favour of workhouses; and without some such allowance, the comparison of the cost per head in asylums and union-houses respectively is neither fair nor correct.

Again, there is another difference between asylums and workhouses, which tells in favour of the latter in an economical point of view, whilst it proves that the expenditure of the two is not rightly comparable without making due allowance for it along with the foregoing considerations. This difference subsists in the character of the two institutions respectively; namely, that in the asylum the movements of the population are slight, whereas in the workhouse they are very considerable by the constant ingress and egress of paupers; driven to it by some passing misfortune or sickness, it may be for a week or two only or even less, and discharging themselves so soon as the temporary evil ceases to operate or the disorder is overcome: for the poor generally, except the old and decrepit who cannot help themselves, both dread a lodging in the workhouse, and escape from it as soon as possible; in fact, even when they have no roof of their own to shelter them, they will often use the union accommodation only partially, leaving it often by day and returning to it by night. All this implies a large fluctuation of inmates frequently only partially relieved, whether in the way of board or clothing; and consequently when the average cost per head of in-door paupers is struck, it appears in a greater or less degree lower than it would have done had the same constancy in numbers and in the duration and extent of the relief afforded prevailed as it does in asylums.

The effect of the fluctuations in population in union-houses ought, we understand, to be slight, if the “Orders in Council” laid down to guide parochial authorities in the calculation of the cost of their paupers, were adhered to; viz. that for all those belonging to any one parish in union, who may have received in-door relief during the year or for any less period of time, an equivalent should be found representing the number who have been inmates throughout the year; or the total extent of relief be expressed by estimating it to be equal to the support of one hypothetical individual for any number of years equivalent to the sum of the portions of time the entire number of the paupers of the particular parish received the benefits of the establishment. We do not feel sure that these plans of calculating the cost per head are faithfully and fully executed; the rough method of doing so, viz. by taking the whole cost of “in-maintenance” at the end of the year and dividing it by the number of its recipients, and assuming the quotient to represent the expenditure for each. Whether this be the case or not, these daily changes among its inmates, the frequent absence of many for a great part of the day and the like, are to be enumerated among the circumstances which tend to keep down expenditure of workhouses; and which are not found in asylums.

There is yet another feature about workhouses which distinguishes them from asylums, and is of considerable moment in the question of the comparative cost of maintenance in the two: this is, the circumstance of the population of workhouses being of a mixed character, of which the insane constitute merely a small section; while, on the contrary, that of asylums is entirely special, and each of its members to be considered a patient or invalid demanding particular care and special appliances. Therefore, *a priori*, no comparison as to their expenditure can justly be drawn between two institutions so dissimilar. Yet even this extent of dissimilarity between them is not all that exists; for the union-house is so constituted by law as to serve as a test of poverty; to offer no inducements to pauperism, and to curtail the cost of maintenance as far as possible. It has properly no organization for the detention, supervision, moral treatment and control, nor for the nursing or medical care of the insane; and when its establishment is attempted it is a step at variance with its primary intention, and involves an extra expenditure.

Consequently, before overseers or guardians can with any propriety contrast the workhouse charges of maintenance with those of asylums, it is their business to estimate what an adult pauper lunatic costs them per week, instead of, as usual, quoting the cost per head calculated on the whole of the inmates, old and young, sane and insane.

Once more, even after a fair estimate of the cost of an adult insane inmate of a workhouse is obtained, there is still another differential circumstance favourable to a less rate than can be anticipated in asylums; for this reason: – that in the former institutions the practice is to reject all violent cases, the major portion of recent ones, and, generally, all those who give particular annoyance and trouble; whilst the latter is, as it rightly should be, regarded as the fitting receptacle for all such patients; – that is, in other words, those classes of patients which entail the greatest expense are got rid of by the workhouses and undertaken by the asylums.

Dr. Bucknill has well expressed the same circumstances we have reviewed, in the following paragraph (Report, Devon Asylum, 1858, p. 13): – “In estimating the cost of lunatic paupers in asylums, the important consideration must not be omitted, that the charge made for the care and maintenance of lunatics in County Asylums is averaged upon those whose actual cost is much greater, and those whose actual cost is less than the mean; so that it would be unfair for the overseers of a parish to say of any single patient that he could be maintained for a smaller sum than that charged, when the probability is that there are or have been patients in the asylum from the same parish, whose actual cost to the asylum has been much greater than that charged to the parish. I have shown, that the actual cost of chronic patients in an asylum exceeds that of adult paupers in union-houses to a much smaller extent than has been stated: but if all patients of this description were removed from the asylum, the inevitable result must be that the average cost of those who remained would be augmented, so that the pecuniary result to the parishes in the county would be much the same. The actual cost of an individual patient, if all things are taken into calculation, is often three or four times greater than the average. Leaving out of consideration the welfare of the patients, it would be obviously unfair to the community, that a parish having four patients in the asylum, the actual cost of two of whom was 12s. a week, and of the other two only 4s. a week, should be allowed to remove the two who cost the smaller sum, and be still permitted to leave the other two at the average charge of 8s.”

The conclusion of the whole matter is, that *cæteris paribus*, *i. e.* supposing workhouses to be equally fitting receptacles for the insane as asylums, the differential cost of the two can only be estimated when it is ascertained that the items of maintenance are alike in the two, and after that an allowance is made for the different characters of their population and of their original purpose; that is, in the instance of workhouses, for the very large number of juvenile paupers; for the great fluctuations in the residents; for the mixed character of their inmates, of sane and insane together, and the small proportion of insane, and for the exclusion of the most expensive classes of such patients. Let these matters be fairly estimated, and we doubt much if, even *primâ facie*, it can be shown that

the workhouse detention of pauper lunatics is more economical than that of properly constructed and organized asylums.

Should we even be so far successful as to make Poor-Law Guardians and Overseers perceive that the common rough-and-ready mode of settling the question of relative cost in asylums and workhouses, by contrasting the calculated rate per head for in-door relief with that for asylum care, is not satisfactory; we cannot cherish the flattering hope that they will be brought to perceive that, simply in an economical point of view, no saving at all is gained by the detention of the insane in workhouses. Those Poor-Law officials generally are so accustomed to haggle about fractional parts of a penny in voting relief, to look at an outlay of money only with reference to the moment, forgetful of future retribution for false economy, and to handle the figures representing in their estimate the economical superiority of the workhouse for the insane, when they desire to silence an opponent; – that the task of proving to them that their theory and practice are wrong, is equivalent to the infelicitous endeavour to convince men against their will.

Still, however unpromising our attempt may appear, it is not right to yield whilst any legitimate arguments are at hand; and our repertory of them, even of those suited to a contest concerning the pounds, shillings, and pence of the matter, is not quite exhausted; for we are prepared to prove, that asylum accommodation can be furnished to the lunatic poor at an outlay little or not at all exceeding that for workhouses.

Now this point to be argued, the cost of asylum construction, is not, like the foregoing considerations, chiefly the affair of Poor-Law Guardians and Overseers, but concerns more particularly the County Magistrates, inasmuch as it is defrayed out of the County instead of the Poor Rate. But although this is the case, there is no doubt that the very great expense of existing asylums has acted as an impediment to the construction of others, and has seemed to justify, to a certain extent, the improper detention of many insane persons in workhouses: for, on one side, asylums are found to have cost for their construction and fittings, £150, £200, and upwards per head, whilst on the other, workhouses are built at the small outlay, on an average, of eighty-six such establishments, of £22 per head. The “Return” made to the House of Commons, June 15, 1857, “of the cost of building Workhouses in England and Wales, erected since 1840,” shows indeed a very wide variation of cost in different places, from £13 per head for the Congleton Union House; £14 for the Erpingham; £16 for the Stockton and Tenterden, to £47 for the Kensington; £50 for the Dulverton; £59 for the City of London; £60 for St. Margaret Westminster; and £113 for the Paddington. This enormous difference of expenditure on workhouse lodging, – for, unlike asylum costs, it does not include fittings, extending from £13 to £113 per inmate, – is really inexplicable, after allowing for the varying ideas of parish authorities as to what a workhouse should be, and for the slight differences in the cost of building materials and labour in some parts of the country than in others. Either some workhouses must be most miserable and defective habitations even for paupers, or others must be very extravagant and needlessly expensive in their structure.

There is this much to be said in explanation of the contrast of cost in different workhouses, that in those belonging to large town populations, infirmary accommodation becomes an item of importance and involves increased expenditure, whilst in those situated in agricultural districts, this element of expense is almost wanting. Moreover it is in town workhouses generally that lunatic inmates are found, who, if not in the infirmary, are lodged in special wards, often so constructed as to meet their peculiar wants, and therefore more costly than the rest of the institution occupied by the ordinary pauper inmates. This is the same with saying that where workhouses are used as receptacles for the insane, it greatly enhances the cost of their construction.

It will be evident to every thinking person that the costs of asylum and of workhouse construction are not fairly comparable. The asylum is a special building; an instrument of treatment; peculiarly arranged for an invalid population, affording facilities for classification, recreation, and amusements; and fitted with costly expedients for warming and ventilation; whereas the workhouse

is essentially a refuge for the destitute, necessarily made not too inviting in its accommodation and internal arrangements; suited to preserve the life of sound inmates who need little more than the shelter of a roof and the rude conveniences the majority of them have been accustomed to. Now these very characteristics of workhouses are among the best arguments against the detention of lunatics within these buildings; but of these hereafter.

There is doubtless a permissible pride in the ability to point to a well-built asylum, commanding attention by its dimensions and architectural merits, and we would be the last to decry the beauties and benefits of architecture, and know too, that an ugly exterior may cost as much or more than a meritorious one; yet we must confess to misgivings that there has been an unnecessary and wasteful expenditure in this direction. Nevertheless it is with asylums as with railways, the present race of directors are reaping instruction from the extravagances and errors its predecessors fell into.

The change of opinion among all classes respecting the character and wants of the insane and their mode of treatment, is of itself so great, that many of the structural adaptations and general dispositions formerly made at great cost, are felt to be no longer necessary, and the very correct and happy persuasion daily gains ground, that the less the insane are dealt with as prisoners, and treated with apprehension and mistrust, the more may their accommodation be assimilated to that of people in general, and secured at a diminished outlay.

All this suggests the possibility of constructing asylums at a much less cost than formerly, and of thereby lessening the force of one of the best pleas for using workhouses as receptacles for the insane. The possibility of so doing has been proved both theoretically and practically. In an essay 'On the Construction of Public Asylums,' published in the "Asylum Journal" for January 1858 (vol. iv. p. 188), we advocated the separation of the day- from the night-accommodation of patients, and the abolition of the system of corridors with day- and sleeping-rooms, or, as we briefly termed it, "the ward-system," and showed that by so doing a third of the cost of construction might be saved, whilst the management of the institution would be facilitated, and the position of the patients improved. By a careful estimate, made by a professional architect, with the aid of the necessary drawings, for a building of considerable architectural pretension, it was calculated that most satisfactory, cheerful, and eligible accommodation could be secured, including farm-buildings, and fittings for warming, ventilation, drainage, gas, &c., at the rate of £90 per head for patients of all classes, or at one-half of the ordinary cost.

Experience has shown that chronic lunatics, at least, can be accommodated in an asylum at a lower rate, in fact, at little more than half the expense that we calculated upon.

Like other County Asylums, the Devon became filled with patients; still they came, and after attempts to cram more into the original edifice, by slight alterations, and by adding rooms here and there, it was at length found necessary to make a considerable enlargement. Instead of adding floors or wings to the old building, which would have called for a repetition of the same original expensive construction of walls, and of rooms and corridors, the Committee, with the advice of their excellent physician, wisely determined to construct a detached building on a new plan, which promised every necessary convenience and security with wonderful cheapness; and, for once in a way, an architect's cheap estimate was not exceeded. Instead of £200 or £250 per head, as of old, accommodation was supplied at the rate of £38: 10s. per patient, including fittings for all the rooms and a kitchen: – a marvel, certainly, in asylum construction, and one which should have the effect of reviving the hopes and wishes of justices, once at least so laudably entertained, to provide in County Asylums for *all* pauper lunatics of the county.

It is only fair to remark, that, as Dr. Bucknill informs us (Asylum Journal, 1858, p. 323), this new section of the Devon Asylum is dependent on the old institution for the residences of officers, for chapel, dispensary, store-rooms, &c. "It is difficult," writes Dr. Bucknill, "to estimate the proportion which these needful adjuncts to the wards of a complete asylum bear to the expense of the old building; they can scarcely, however, be estimated at so high a figure as one-eighth of the whole."

But, as a set-off against the increased cost per patient involved in supplying the necessary offices described by Dr. Bucknill, we may mention that there are twenty single sleeping-rooms provided in the building, and that a greater cost was thereby entailed, than many would think called for, where only chronic, and generally calm patients, were to be lodged.

These illustrations of what may be done in the way of obtaining good asylum accommodation for pauper lunatics at no greater rate, we are persuaded, than that incurred in attempting to provide properly for them in workhouses, furnish a most valid reason for discontinuing their detention in the latter, and the more so, if, as can be demonstrated, they are unfit receptacles for them.

The possibility of constructing cheap asylums being thus far proved, the question might be put, whether the internal cost of such institutions could not be lessened? We fear that there is not much room for reform in this matter, if the patients in asylums are rightly and justly treated, and the officers and attendants fairly remunerated. In producing power, an asylum exceeds a workhouse, and therein derives an advantage in diminishing expenditure and the cost of maintenance. On the other hand, the expenditure of a workhouse is much less in salaries, particularly in those given to its medical officer and servants, a form of economy which will never repay, and, we trust, will never be tried in asylums. Warming, ventilation, and lighting are less thought of, little attempted, and therefore less expensive items in workhouse than in asylum accounts. With respect to diet and clothing, workhouses ought to exhibit a considerable saving; but this saving is rather apparent than real, and certainly in the wrong direction; for lunatics of all sorts require a liberal dietary, warm clothing, and, from their habits frequently, more changes than the ordinary pauper inmates; yet these are provisions, which, except there is actual sickness or marked infirmity, the insane living in a workhouse do not enjoy; for they fare like the other inmates, are clothed the same, and are tended or watched over by other paupers; the saving, therefore, is at the cost of their material comfort and well-being. Excepting, therefore, the gain to be got by the labours of the patients, there is no set-off in favour of asylum charges; in short, in other respects none can be obtained without inflicting injury and injustice. On the other hand, workhouse expenditure need be raised if the requisite medical and general treatment, nursing, dietary, employment, and recreation are to be afforded; which is the same as saying, that workhouses, if receptacles for the insane at all, should be assimilated to asylums, – a principle, which, if admitted and acted upon, overturns at once the only argument for their use as such, viz. its economy.

The perception on the part of parochial authorities, that something more than the common lodging and attendance of the workhouse is called for by the insane inmates, has led to the construction of “Lunatic Wards” for their special accommodation, a scheme which may be characterized as an extravagant mistake, whether viewed in reference to economical principles or the welfare of the patients. If structurally adapted to their object, they must cost as much as a suitable asylum need; and if properly supervised and managed, if a sufficient dietary be allowed, and a proper staff of attendants hired, no conceivable economical advantage over an asylum can accrue. On the contrary, as Dr. Bucknill has remarked (*Asylum Journal*, vol. iv. p. 460), any such attempts at an efficient management of the insane in small and scattered asylums attached to Union Workhouses, will necessarily increase their rate of maintenance above that charged in a large central establishment, endowed with a more complete organization and with peculiar resources for their management.

Dr. Bucknill returns to the discussion of this point in his just published report (*Rep. Devon Asylum*, 1858, p. 11). He puts the question, “Would a number of small asylums, under the denomination of lunatic wards, be more economical than one central asylum?” and, thus proceeds to reply to it: – “The great probability is that they would not be; 1st, on account of the larger proportion of officials they would require; 2nd, on account of the derangement they would occasion to the severe economy which is required by the aim and purpose of union-houses as tests of destitution. Where lunatics do exist in union-houses in consequence of the want of accommodation in the County Asylum, the Commissioners in Lunacy insist upon the provision of what they consider things essential to the proper care of insane persons wherever they be placed. The following are the requirements

which they insisted upon as *essential* in the Liverpool Workhouse: – a sufficient staff of responsible paid nurses and attendants; a fixed liberal dietary sanctioned by the Medical Superintendent of the asylum; good and warm clothing and bedding; the rooms rendered much more cheerful and better furnished; the flagged court-yards enlarged and planted as gardens; the patients frequently sent to walk in the country under proper care; regular daily medical visitation; and the use of the official books kept according to law in asylums. If the direct cost of such essentials be computed with the indirect cost of their influence upon the proper union-house arrangements, it will require no argument to prove that workhouse lunatic wards so conducted would effect no saving to the ratepayers. The measures needed to provide in the union-house kitchen a liberal dietary for the lunatic wards and a restricted one for the sane remainder, to control the staff of paid attendants, to arrange frequent walks into the country for part of the community, while the other part was kept strictly within the walls; – these would be inevitable sources of disturbance to the proper union-house discipline, which would entail an amount of eventual expenditure not easily calculated.”

If, on economical grounds, the system of Lunatic Wards has no evident merit, none certainly can be claimed for it on the score of its adaptation to their wants and welfare.

Indeed, the argument for workhouse accommodation, on the plea of economy, loses all its weight when the well-being of the insane is balanced against it. For, if there be any value in the universally accepted opinions of enlightened men, of all countries in Europe, of the requirements of the insane, of the desirability for them of a cheerful site, of ample space for out-door exercise, occupation and amusement, of in-door arrangements to while away the monotony of their confinement and cheer the mind, of good air, food and regimen, of careful watching and kind nursing, of active and constant medical supervision and control, or to sum up all in two words, of efficient medical and moral treatment, – then assuredly the wards of a workhouse do not furnish a fitting abode for them.

The unfitness of workhouses for the detention of the insane, and the evils attendant upon it, have been repeatedly pointed out by the Commissioners in Lunacy in their annual reports, and by several able writers. We were also glad to see from the report of his speech, on introducing the Lunatic Poor (Ireland) Bill into the House of Commons, that Lord Naas is strongly opposed to the detention of the insane in workhouses, and therein agrees with the Irish Special Lunacy Commissioners (1858, p. 18), who have placed their opinion on record in these words: – “It appears to us that there can be no more unsuitable place for the detention of insane persons than the ordinary lunatic wards of the Union Workhouses.” This is pretty nearly the same language as that used by the English Commissioners in 1844, viz. “We think that the detention in workhouses of not only dangerous lunatics, but of all lunatics and idiots whatever, is highly objectionable.”

To make good these general statements, we will, at the risk of some repetition, enter into a few particulars. On the one hand, the presence of lunatics in a workhouse is a source of annoyance, difficulty, and anxiety to the official staff and to the inmates, and withal of increased expense to the establishment. If some of them may be allowed to mix with the ordinary inmates, there are others who cannot, and whose individual liberty and comfort must be curtailed for the sake of the general order and management, and of the security and comfort of the rest.

Some very pertinent observations occur in the Report of the Massachusetts Lunacy Commission (*op. cit.* p. 166), on the mixing of the sane and insane together in the State Almshouses, which correspond to our Union Workhouses. They report that the superintendents “were unanimous in their convictions that the mingling of the insane with the sane in these houses operated badly, not only for both parties, but for the administration of the whole institution.” Further on, the Commissioners observe (p. 168), “By this mingling the sane and insane together, both parties are more disturbed and uncontrollable, and need more watchfulness and interference on the part of the superintendent and other officers... It has a reciprocal evil effect in the management of both classes of inmates. The evil is not limited to breaches of order; for there is no security against violence from the attrition of

the indiscreet and uneasy paupers with the excitable and irresponsible lunatics and idiots. Most of the demented insane, and many idiots, have eccentricities; they are easily excited and disturbed; and nothing is more common than for inmates to tease, provoke, and annoy them, in view of gratifying their sportive feelings and propensities, by which they often become excited and enraged to a degree to require confinement to ensure the safety of life... The mingling of the state paupers, sane and insane, makes the whole more difficult and expensive to manage. It costs more labour, watchfulness, and anxiety to take care of them together than it would to take care of them separately.”

These sketches from America may be matched in our own country; and they truthfully represent the reciprocal disadvantages of mixing the sane and insane together in the same establishment.

Even supposing the presence of insane in workhouses involved, on the one hand, no disadvantages to the institutions, or to the sane inmates; yet on the other, the evils to the lunatic inhabitants would be condemnatory of it; for the insane necessarily suffer in proportion as the workhouse accommodation differs from that of asylums; or, inversely, as the economical arrangements and management of a workhouse approach those of an asylum. They suffer from many deficiencies and defects in locality and organization, in medical supervision and proper nursing and watching, in moral discipline, and in the means of classification, recreation, and employment.

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.

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