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Numerous works have been written on mental diseases, yet are they rarely read, excepting by those medical men who are more particularly engaged in the treatment of these affections, and unfortunately even by them with very little advantage. Several of these publications are only remarkable for their authors' ingenuity in metaphysical disquisitions and inquiries into the causation of causes, wandering through the intricate mazes of an interminable labyrinth, to materialise the mind. Other treatises are merely verbose prospectuses of private establishments, and contain an ad captandum collection of cures. Fortunately for mankind, there are works of a much higher grade, in which the authors have conferred everlasting benefits on society. Such must be considered the labours of Haslam,
Arnold, Pritchard, in this country, and Pinel and Esquirol, Hoffbauer, Heinroth on the continent; in which we find the most valuable practical information, both as regards the moral and the physical management of the insane.

While it is thus difficult for the medical student to obtain satisfactory written information on mental alienation, he can learn but little from oral precepts, since in the lectures on the practice of medicine, which he attends in our several universities, these diseases are but slightly dwelt on, and in his clinical pursuits he has no opportunity of walking lunatic asylums. Thus are the junior members of the medical profession engaged in practice, with scarce any knowledge of the nature of insanity, or the treatment of the insane; while their constant occupations, which barely leave them leisure for such indispensable reading as is required to keep them on a level with the progress of the science, prevent them from studying a disease which they are seldom called upon to attend, and is considered as the special province of those practitioners whom the public dignify by the appellation of "Mad Doctors;" and, even amongst these privileged
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persons, the treatment of mental disease appears to be grounded on certain dogmatic principles; bleeding, blistering, purging, vomiting, and head-shaving, being considered immutable remedial agents, aided by the strait waistcoat, the sleeve, the muff, the handcuff, or the leg-lock, with an occasional plunge in cold water, or a shower-bath, when the patient is unruly, and sane enough to consider himself most barbarously ill used. With this view of the subject, we find that in certain lunatic institutions the unfortunate inmates are bled in the month of June, and are prescribed an emetic "all round" every quarter. The science of "mad doctors" seems to consist in the art of obtaining as many patients as they can in private asylums, and to keep them as long as possible. In public establishments, where numbers do not yield any profit, the unfortunate incurable Toms o' Bedlam are discharged upon the world to commit murder or arson, or amuse the rabble, until elsewhere provided for, in this world or the next. Of those who perish in these Bastilles so little notice is taken, that in a late investigation of one of our most renowned asylums, it appeared that only 221 cases of death had been reported, whereas 364
patients had been relieved by death, in their oubliettes. It was on this occasion that a medical gentleman deposed, "that when a patient disappeared and was never more heard of, he was said to have been removed, and that when a patient was killed, the body was hurried away to prevent a coroner's inquest!!" In fact, the horrors recorded of the Spanish inquisition were tender mercies compared to the diabolical crimes perpetrated in mad-houses. In an auto da fé, the victim was consumed at once in a blaze—in a lunatic's cell he is consumed by a slow fire.

Since these abominations were made known in 1815, no doubt the condition of the unfortunate lunatics has in some degree been ameliorated, inasmuch as these atrocities are only resorted to by stealth, and with some degree of apprehension, where detection is probable; but as, in the present state of lunatic asylums, their detection is not easily obtained, hundreds of unfortunates at this very hour are immured in their dismal prisons, condemned to a moral death in lingering agonies. The criminal, the debtor, the sick, are all protected from oppression. The insane alone, who dares not complain, and whose complaints are
considered the ravings of a demented poor creature, has no protection. Prisons are inspected, and placed under a salutary surveillance; the madhouse is only visited as a matter of form, and not unfrequently with apprehension of personal danger!

I am well aware that my proposal to place these establishments, whether public or private, under the immediate control of government, and submit them to the surveillance of responsible officers, will be considered an infringement of rights, of privileges, of patronage.

The momentary grace of mortal men,
Which we more hunt for than the grace of God!

That any attempt to rescue the lunatic from misery will be called centralisation. Nay, if another Howard presumed to visit these abodes of wretchedness and forgotten beings, he would be considered a meddling busy-body. Such is the thirst for power, that those who hold it, 'bid'

"The law make courts'y to their will,"

and rather than surrender it into wiser hands, render themselves criminal by their incapacity, and unwillingly, and no doubt (it is to be hoped)
unwittingly, become the accomplices of guilt. On this subject I cannot better express myself than by quoting the following passage from a most intelligent and experienced writer, Dr. Brown.*

"No arraignment is made of the intentions of the curators of the insane, but I do arraign the whole system of error which they have sanctioned. I call for a verdict of guilty, and a sentence of total subversion, on the pernicious absurdities which continue to be practised in their name and authority. Were men of enlightened minds, liberal education, and kind disposition, alone appointed or permitted to attend the insane, these abuses would disappear. To accomplish this, it would become necessary that all asylums should be public, and under the control of government. The great object of such a change would be, that all the privileges of those immediately entrusted with the insane should be patent to the public, and to legal authorities, and under the management of a body whose sympathies are all engaged in favour of the patient, rather than of his attendents."

* Lectures delivered before the managers of the Montrose lunatic asylum. Ed. 1837.
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It was while pondering over the heavy volumes written on insanity, and the various legal enactments for the protection of the insane, in various countries and codes, that I was struck with the conviction, that an epitome of these verbose labours, concise and portable, might be a desideratum with the junior members of the medical profession. Under this impression, in an aphoristic form, I have submitted to the public the following pages, in which I have compiled the most important points of what has been written on the subject, to which I have added the result of my own observations during several years' residence amongst the insane. Part of this experience has been dearly and bitterly purchased, when subjected to insult and persecution, which can only be paralleled by that experienced by my lamented predecessor;* and as experience thus obtained is proverbially considered valuable, I humbly indulge the hope, that this work may prove useful not only to the profession, but to those persons who may be directly or indi-

* The late Sir W. Ellis, who, like me, was compelled to resign the situation of medical superintendent of the Hanwell Asylum.
rectly concerned in the management of the insane. I shall feel myself most amply rewarded for all my past labour and sufferings, if any of my suggestions can tend to meliorate the condition of the many helpless and unprotected victims of patronage and speculation, who might well address the curious visitor in the words of Martyn:

How shall I bid thee welcome to a place
Where joy yet never entered?—to a place
Where horrors only reign! groans are our music,
And sorrows our companions.

I am well aware that my suggestions for the melioration of the lunatic's condition will be opposed in various quarters. I trust that this opposition will, in the ratio of its virulence, convince the public of their necessity. With their approbation, I then may scorn hostility, and exclaim with Lear—

The little dogs, and all,
Tray, Blanch, and Sweetheart, see, they bark at me.

42, St. John's Wood Road,
Regent's Park, December 1839.
The annexed plan for a Pauper Lunatic Asylum has been drawn in conformity with my preceding suggestions. The detached buildings are all connected in their front by an arcade, under which the patients can take exercise in bad weather—a shelter which is the more desirable, since they cannot have a change of clothes when wet. The rear of each building opens on a garden planted with shady trees, under which the patient can rest: under the arcade runs an area, with passages for the service of the establishment: at the extremity of each passage is a room for receiving the provisions from the kitchen, cutting them up, and forwarding them for distribution to the several wards, which will be kept much cleaner by this arrangement. In this basement will also be the coal cellars, various store-rooms, the dead-house and the coffin store,—the exposure of which invariably proves an unpleasant object to the many melancholic inmates which such an institution must contain.

A continuation of the arcade connects the dwelling of the medical officers with the infirmary. The clerks’ offices are attached to the steward’s quarter, and stores for extra comfort, materials for needle-work, &c. &c., to those of the matrons.

The convalescents, who would mostly be employed in the various labours of the institution, are lodged near their workshops, the kitchen, laundry, kitchen garden, &c. To avoid smoke and dirt, the smith’s shop, gas-house, engine-house, &c., are placed in the extreme rear of the building, with a back road leading to them.
To avoid intermixture amongst the patients, each building will have a visiting room attached to the day room, for the reception of visitors on certain days.

The centre gate, with a porter’s lodge on one side, and a receiving office on the other, is destined for the general service of the establishment; to be closed at certain hours, and the key given to the steward. The lateral entrances are for the service of the officers of the establishment.

As much inconvenience arises from the officers’ dinner being cooked in the common kitchen, a kitchen should be attached to each of their houses: as, from the nature of such institutions, their officers can rarely absent themselves, every arrangement that can make their home comfortable should be adopted. Nothing could be more absurd and injurious to the welfare of such an establishment than their officers being made to dine in common with each other; and so far from forwarding harmony amongst them, such a mistaken arrangement would infallibly produce incessant discord.

An asylum constructed according to this plan, instead of bearing the appearance of a prison, a barrack, or an hospital, would present the view of an enclosed village and its cheerful surrounding gardens. The detached buildings would only consist of a ground and first floor, and their windows, instead of being barred and grated, would be equally secure with iron work in the cottage style.

N.B.—The right wing is for the male patients; the left for the female. The committee room, which has been omitted in the plan, might be in the rear of the chapel; the ice-house in the gardens of the infirmaries.