

As the whole current of the teaching of this book is in the direction of a purely material explanation of phenomena of this description, we have thought it due to the author and to the reader to cite this exceptional observation. It is probable that the latter, not having been, like Dr. Clarke, in actual contact with the case, will not be impressed in the same forcible manner; for it is scarcely possible to convey to another the same impression as we ourselves have received, and to produce, therefore, the same conviction of its meaning.

---

*Aus meiner Psychiatrischen Wirksamkeit, Eine Adresse an die Practischen Aerzte.* Von Dr. C. M. BROSIUS. Berlin: 1878.

*Die Asyle Bendorf und Sayn bei Coblenz und die damit verbundene Colonie für Gehirn, und Nervenkrankte nebst Bemerkungen über Curmittel bei Irren.* Von Dr. C. M. BROSIUS, Director der Asyle, &c. Berlin: 1875.

Dr. Brosius, the editor of "Der Irrenfreund," has written a short account of an institution which derives part of its interest from its situation in the most beautiful part of the Rhine scenery, the unrivalled panorama of Coblenz; as the doctor says, "ein Stück Gegend voll Anmuth und Lieblichkeit." It is a private institution for a small number of patients, to whom Dr. Brosius has devoted his time and skill during the last two-and-twenty years.

The chief interest, however, arises from the carrying out of Dr. Brosius's leading idea, which is to place suitable cases in private dwellings in the neighbourhood of the asylum; the latter being always ready in the event of a patient becoming unmanageable. The patients are all of the opulent class. There is also a small house in which some patients sleep, but take their meals in the asylum. During 1870-74 twenty-two patients were admitted to this miniature colony, apart from the asylum. On a small scale such a system answers admirably. It is when the size is large, and anything like a real Gheel is approached, that difficulties and abuses are encountered. "Looking at the fact," says the author, "that many of the insane live, and also are cured, partly in their own families and partly at a distance from them, out of an asylum, no one will contend that the latter is the only possible mode of

providing for the insane. Even the worst cases in some instances may be successfully treated out of an asylum. It is only necessary that the house possesses special arrangements, the personal service special qualifications, and that the insane inmate and his attendant be subjected to special oversight. Although the distinction between a single house and an asylum may be one of name, it is a satisfaction to the friends of the patient that it is not *called* an asylum, and that there are no other lunatics under the same roof. The possibility of greater rest is also a real advantage. Apart from the question of cost, then, "if the physician has a quiet house properly arranged, and with all the requisite arrangements for possible occurrences, and a skilful person in charge, he has a little asylum in that house which possesses its peculiar advantages. And yet it is a part of the asylum apparatus. We cannot any longer speak of it as 'free' care; the private house is not in opposition to the asylum." Well carried out, the asylum and cottage system in combination, possesses doubtless immense advantages; always, assuming, however, that if the patients are placed in families, the latter are not allowed to suffer from the language or conduct of their charge—a point too often overlooked in discussing this question or carrying it out into practice.

Dr. Brosius's remarks on treatment are judicious. On non-restraint he says, "Without well-ordered single rooms and a good kitchen the personal restraint formerly in vogue cannot be abolished. Restraint or no restraint is a question of the management and resources of the asylum; hence in the last instance it becomes a money question . . . In a few cases only can I attribute the improvement of the mental disorder, which usually, after some months, gradually takes place, to the action of physic. The physician of an asylum, in which many different influences act upon the patients, may not ascribe the result in a case of recovery to pharmaceutical means alone. If we possessed a sovereign suddenly operating remedy against mental diseases, asylums for the cure of the insane would be almost superfluous. Their value lies not in the dispenser of drugs, but in the complexity of the various resources which are not usually at our disposal outside the asylum."

Dr. Brosius has a right to speak of non-restraint, seeing that he translated, in 1860, Dr. Conolly's work on "Mechanical Restraints" into German; a fact which has not, we believe, been chronicled in this Journal.

This oversight we now repair, and give the title of the work "*Die Behandlung der Irren ohne Mechanischen Zwang, von John Conolly; Deutsch mitgetheilt, von Dr. C. M. Brosius. Lahr: 1860.*"

In the preface to this translation Dr. Brosius says, "In addition to being the translator, I myself stand in a friendly relation to the book. Although not yet in the position, through a large decisive experience, to defend the English system, I find myself induced, both by my own observations in my private asylum and by the declarations of various alienists, to pursue the experiments of abolishing mechanical restraint in the treatment of the insane. Time will decide whether this abolition can be regarded as absolute, and as a principle. In large and small asylums on the Continent the experiment of non-restraint is scarcely made extensively enough, so that its results give a factitious support to the almost general opposition and mistrust which exist in regard to it among us. People will never solve the question of restraint or non-restraint by phrases and theoretical criticisms; that will only be effectively done by decided facts, and by a wide experience extending over many years. To that end may the German alienists make an earnest trial to dispense with mechanical restraints in their treatment of the insane. It would be sad if prejudice and the practice of centuries should hinder us, now in the last half of the nineteenth century, forsaking an old way for one which appears to have been found in England to be a better one. Even a negative result, even a failure of the experiment, must be a lasting profit to science . . . So long as this book, then, attains its object—the bettering the condition of the insane, in fact, of asylums—I shall be amply rewarded for the trouble which the translation has cost me."

This desire of our author has been granted. At a meeting of the German physicians in Carlsruhe, in 1858, Dr. Brosius was alone in defending non-restraint in the section for Psychiatry. Twenty years have seen an entire change in the feeling of the alienists in Germany, and it is even said that some among them are warmer defenders of the system than ourselves.

There are several points of interest in the "*Aus meiner Wirksamkeit*" to which we should like to refer, but the limits of space forbid.