

freer access ought to be granted by law for the admission of such patients. He says (though we don't know quite what he means), "Seeing then, that the classes of lunatics above pauperism feed the classes below them, and that this will assuredly go on, so long as that they are only admitted on sufferance to the advantages of county establishments; could the wisdom and humanity of counties also making ample provision for the former be questioned? so that all such, who may choose the care of public institutions, may by right demand it. In my opinion, nothing could be easier to accomplish, nothing more easy to regulate, and nothing less oppressive to the rate-payer, who is constrained to pay for his poorer neighbour, but who in the hour of his own mental affliction incurs the risks and perils of uncertainty. The law at present is permissive, not compulsory; that is, it allows of the reception of others, than paupers, into county asylums, when there is room."

*The Report of the Somerset County Lunatic Asylum.*

Dr. Boyd's report is always most interesting and valuable, more so indeed to medical men than any other report with which we are acquainted. This, of course, arises from his pathological researches, and the care with which he communicates the results of them to his professional brethren through these reports. The following is Dr. Boyd's *résumé* of his medical treatment:

"The medical treatment has been the same in most respects as described in former reports. In epilepsy the tincture of sumbul has been given in several instances, one female, aged thirty, after taking this drug in drachm doses seven times diluted with water twice a day for about three months, had a cessation of the fits, and she was discharged having been altogether free from fits for six months. In a second case, that of a male mute, who has also taken the same drug, there has been a gradual diminution in frequency, and for the last four months a cessation of the fits. In several other cases, submitted to the same treatment, a minor degree of relief has been afforded. It very seldom happens that any objection is made by the epileptics to taking the sumbul. It has also been given with decided benefit in three cases of neuralgia and in hysteria, and in delirium tremens it has been administered in larger doses, and with good results.

"Cod-liver oil is another remedy which has been very much used during the year in cases of marasmus which are so frequently combined with all forms of insanity. The most remarkable instance in which almost immediate relief appeared to be derived from this oil was that of a female with melancholia, transferred from another asylum with scrofulous swellings and sores in the neck, who was discharged recovered at the end of four months. Two cases where pul-

monary tubercles were suspected have also been benefited by taking the oil, and one male with general paralysis in an emaciated state has become greatly improved in condition, although he has nearly lost the power of utterance. In the latter part of the year there were more cases under treatment of what has been termed general paralysis than at any previous period, twelve males and two females, half the males and both the females in a perfectly helpless state. No treatment has afforded any permanent relief in this disease. In a few instances the bodily condition has been for a time improved after admission by care and attention to diet. The 'Liquor Hydrargyri Bichloridi,' has been given in many cases, and the nape of the neck and spine blistered. Some instances have occurred in which patients in a very helpless state, confined to bed, have rallied for a time after the blistering process has been adopted, combined with rest. It is only in the last stage of this disease that rest can in general be obtained, for previous to it, these patients are very restless, and many of them are not to be kept in bed, but are knocking at the door, and in the day-time constantly undressing themselves. Perfect rest in cases of general paralysis, which I have found so often to depend on inflammation of the spinal cord and membranes, would be most desirable, if it could be obtained, in the earlier stages of the disease. Convulsions or fits, in many respects similar to epileptic fits, have attended some of the cases of general paralysis, especially in the last stage.

"The shower bath has always been more or less used in this institution in cases of excitement, more frequently in summer, and generally with immediate benefit. One man subject to frequent and severe outbreaks of maniacal excitement has it almost daily on those occasions, and has often said it did him good. Another man with dementia, subject to periodical fits of restlessness, also finds relief from it. Two or three of the chronic cases amongst the females also find benefit from its use, and in acute melancholia it has occasionally been decidedly beneficial.

"Packing in the wet sheet has proved of great utility in producing sleep where opiates, given in as large doses as deemed prudent, had failed. It has been tried this year for the first time, after the method witnessed by Dr. Madden, at Boppard on the Rhine. In several instances the relief was immediate: where excitement, restlessness, and want of sleep had continued for several days, resisting all anodynes, they have fallen off in a few minutes in the 'pack,' and although the sleep there has not been of very long continuance in any instance, still the patients afterwards became more manageable and more disposed to sleep."