

our old friend Pecksniff—"A poor first floor to us, but a boon to them. Very neat, very airy. Plants, you observe; hyacinths! books again. Such trifles as girls love are here. Nothing more. Those who seek heartless splendour would seek here in vain." And with regard to the medical superintendents of lunatic asylums, to keep the death-rate low, to make the wards feel warm and look pretty, and to be able to record that no patient has been in seclusion or under restraint, seems to be not perhaps the only, but certainly the chief, object of their ambition; and this we hold to be a mistake. Moreover, we are quite convinced that if, instead of requiring a return of the number of times patients have been placed in seclusion or under restraint, the medical officers were obliged to declare whether compulsion, carried out by physical force, had been used with respect to any patient, the reports would furnish a contrast calculated to startle those who believe in the efficacy and wisdom of the present system. It is very nice to hear that a thousand lunatics are in excellent discipline, and have been entertained with magic lanterns and music, and also that the strait-waistcoat is unknown in the establishment; but in the interest of humanity we would compound for an occasional case of restraint if we could observe signs of a more scientific, enterprising, and successful method of curing the disease. The great hindrance to this, as it appears to us, is the want of opportunity and leisure for the medical men to study and treat each separate case individually. We have in some places massed together from 1,000 to 1,700 lunatics, a custom which for many obvious reasons we regard as unwise and detrimental both to the patients and the medical men themselves; while in the smaller asylums there is a want of stimulus and ambition apparent; for the superintendent feels that if he cures few it will hardly be known, and that if he cures many he will derive neither fame nor profit from it. We should be glad to see more attention paid to this point in the next report of the Commissioners. The public asylums or hospitals might be arranged in three groups, according to their degrees of success in this respect. In each case the percentage of cures effected ought to be prominently stated, and such percentage should be calculated both on admissions and on the number of resident inmates. Moreover, as a matter of fairness, it should be stated how many in each hospital are chronic or presumably incurable patients.

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*Are Insane Persons Sick Persons?*

It is somewhat startling to find that there should be any doubt respecting the proper answer to this question. But so it is: Mr. Elliott, one of the Lambeth police magistrates, having been recently asked to give his opinion upon the question whether lunatics were entitled to sick allowance as members of a friendly society:—

Mr. Elliott said the point which Mr. Murphy had drawn his attention to a few days back was not one he could give a magisterial decision upon, as there was no case before him. He had, however, fully considered the question, and could not find that it had been decided by any court that incapacity to work caused by insanity was not a ground for relief under the provisions in the rules of a friendly society, which entitled a member to a weekly allowance in case of incapacity from sickness. He did not think also that the Poor Law cases quoted by Mr. Tidd Pratt bore out the strong opinion expressed by him in his circular forwarded to the different societies—"That in no case of insanity the managers would be justified in giving relief to a member so afflicted." In a note to his book on the Friendly Societies Act, he also said, "that by sickness is meant a state of bodily disease, being a derangement of the functions of the body." Such might be so; but it was still well-known, or should be, that insanity frequently arose from such derangement and was caused by it, and in such case, at all events, he imagined, upon a medical certificate, relief would rightly be given. He was sorry to give an opinion contrary to Mr. Tidd Pratt, but on the face of the fact that many cases of lunacy were caused through some kind of sickness, he could not concur. The point, no doubt, was one of great importance to those societies, and as a doubt seemed to be felt on the subject, and the opinion expressed by so high an authority as Mr. Tidd Pratt, he should recommend, in a case where a magistrate had jurisdiction, an application for an order on the treasurer of the society be made for relief, and then, if desired, the opinion of a superior court could be obtained in deciding the question.

We do not think that any one acquainted with the nature of insanity would now assert that it is not, however it may have been caused, always a bodily disease. If it be a derangement of a man's bodily functions entitling him to sick allowance, when his limbs are convulsed or paralyzed in consequence of disease of his spinal cord, it is no less a derangement of his bodily functions when the functions of mind are deranged in consequence of the disease of the higher nerve centres which minister to them. In the one case as in the other, the disease is equally bodily. There are certainly no scientific grounds for refusing sick allowance to a lunatic on the pretext that he is not bodily ill. There may, however, be valid reasons for making a special provision in the rules of friendly societies with respect to cases of insanity, seeing that the long continuance of the disease in many instances would be a tax on the funds of the society which they could hardly bear.