

A certain number of persons, incapable of reasoning and undesirous of the labour of thinking, accept such books as truth, simply because they are heretical; but that is just the tone of mind which is so mischievous, and which is almost as fatal to the true advance of knowledge as any amount of superstitious belief.

It may not be inappropriate to call to mind the remarks of one of the greatest thinkers on the orthodox side with reference to the use of reason, viz., J. H. Newman, who in the 13th of his "University Sermons," says:—

"Where the exercise of reason much outstrips our knowledge, where knowledge is limited and reason active, where ascertained truths are scanty and courses of thought abound, there indulgence of system is unsafe and may be dangerous. *In such cases there is much need of wariness, jealousy of self, and habitual dread of presumption, paradox, and unreality, to preserve our deductions within the bounds of sobriety, and our guesses from assuming the character of discoveries.*"

The real power and greatness of mind of the writer are evidenced by the modesty of his tone and his sense of the dangers awaiting the over confident. These are qualities but little respected by the many, who much prefer positive opinions to the ridicule and criticism so easily let loose by less careful teachers.

One turns with relief to "modern scepticism" in medical matters, as to a field where the honest exercise of doubts has earned a rich harvest. It is no question of idle speculation or display of individual vanity, but the free use of experience demolishing errors which have long had an evil influence in practice. Medical men have for centuries been the slaves of habit and conventionality, and the progress of medicine as a science has been retarded in consequence. It is the soaring free from such trammels that makes Dr. Gull's speculations of such interest, opening a new field for the energies of the profession. "Scepticism" in physic may produce positive results, and is but another name for inquiry and free exercise of reason on matters within range of our knowledge.

The Census.

The returns of the census, though incomplete, are so far public as to be available for some statistical purposes. They are of some use as showing the rates of lunacy to the popu-

lation, and may help to explain the apparently great increase. The greatest increase in population has been in the Northern Division, where the addition has been at the rate of 22.82 per cent.; while the lowest in the list is the South-Western, where the per centage is but 2.40. The decennial increase per cent. in the eleven Registration Divisions is given as follows:—

1. London	...	...	...	15.97
2. South-Eastern	...	...	...	17.25
3. South-Midland	...	...	...	11.35
4. Eastern	...	...	...	6.63
5. South-Western	...	...	...	2.40
6. West-Midland	...	...	...	11.11
7. North-Midland	...	...	...	9.11
8. North-Western	...	...	...	15.23
9. York	...	...	...	18.84
10. Northern	...	...	...	22.82
11. Welsh	...	...	...	9.66

It will be thus seen that it is the agricultural counties which lag behind, and which are the exceptions to the general rule of increase; indeed, it is only the surprising activity and energy of life in the great industrial regions that make up the increase in numbers in the country, for several of the counties hardly move on. We cannot, therefore, be surprised at the increase of lunatics in Middlesex, or Lancashire, or York, when we see the great strides the population has made.

On the other hand, the poverty, both in numbers and in kind, has an influence on the lunacy of the agricultural counties. For instance, Dr. Bacon has, in his Annual Report of the Cambridge Asylum for 1871, shown that, though that county has advanced by about 10,000 since 1861, the real increase in population in the last 20 years is very small—only 958 in all. This may be called standing still in reality, and it is not wonderful to find that the relative proportion of lunatics to the population is high. Taking the eastern counties as a group—*i.e.*, Norfolk, Suffolk, Cambridgeshire, and Huntingdonshire (excluding Essex, as influenced by its proximity to London), it will be found that in Norfolk the population has decreased by 4,203 since 1851; that in Suffolk it has increased by 11,534; that in Cambs. it has increased by 958; and in Huntingdonshire has decreased by 511.

It is also remarkable and important to notice that there has been a great decline in the *male* population in three out of these four counties. Thus in Norfolk there are 4,642 *males* less than in 1851; in Cambs. 938 less; and in Hants 616 less than in 1851; while in Suffolk, where the increase is only at half the normal rate for the whole country, the males have increased to 4,256 since 1851, whereas the females amounted to 7,008—nearly double. It is clear, therefore, that the most important element in the population has declined, and this fact has a great influence on the fate of the more helpless. The infirm and lunatic are sure to remain as a greater burden, and to swell the proportion unduly. Probably the explanation is to be found in the low wages and the tendency to migrate on the part of the younger and able-bodied men, but anyhow the fact is worth notice.

Homicidal Impulse.

In the Annual Report of the Suffolk Lunatic Asylum, Dr. Kirkman mentions an event which shows how impossible it is to foretell, and how difficult to guard completely against, the desperate and suddenly rising impulses of insanity. Familiarity with the insane, under the modern humane system of treatment, tends perhaps to make us forget what a constant danger they are, and how little they are really to be depended upon.

It may be well to introduce here the notice of a patient who was admitted from a recent seizure of suicidal melancholia. It was a first attack of only six days' duration. He was placed in an associated dormitory, watched over by the head attendant, ever close to his room. As the Assistant Medical Officer, Dr. Harris, was passing through the wards at twelve o'clock at night, the man suddenly jumped up from his bed, broke through a glazed door, seized him violently by the throat, and nearly succeeded in doing him serious injury. The act was impulsive, but sufficiently alarming to un-nerve any man; and if Dr. Harris had not possessed more than ordinary presence of mind, such as it is difficult to imagine untutored attendants to possess, he might have received injuries which would have embittered his future life.

Another case of a similar nature, though attended by more terrible results, occurred early in March (1872) at the Surrey County Asylum (Tooting). A male patient, Edmund Dainty,