

6. *Asylum Treatment of Epilepsy.*

“With this malady (epilepsy) every form and grade of mental alienation is associated, from the gay mania and exalted delusions of the general paralytic downwards to the intellectual inanity of the idiot or solitary.

“Epileptics (apart from peculiar proneness to what have been called vicious habits and propensities) require constant and unremitting observation, on account of their liability to injuries by falling during the paroxysms, and tendency in the stages of delirious excitement to beat themselves against the walls or furniture.

“The curability of epilepsy is again asserted, as it has been in an intermittent way, since the times of Celsus and Galen. The writer of this report has little hope or expectation that a specific remedy for this hitherto intractable disease will be discovered, remembering the eulogiums formerly passed on digitalis, oil of turpentine, and nitrate of silver, and lately, on the cotelydon umbilicus and phosphorus.

“The tincture of sumbul root, recommended with much modesty and candour by Dr. Boyd, of the Somerset Asylum, has been given in several cases without benefit. In many hospitals for the insane, in the south of France especially, the concentrated juice of the galium mollugo, or heath-bed straw, a common British plant, is a favorite and highly commended remedy.

“The superintendent hopes to give this specific (as it is asserted to be) a trial during the summer.”—*Dr. H. O. Stevens, Second Annual Report of the Medical Superintendent of the City and County of Bristol Lunatic Asylum, 1863.*

7. *Opening of the Cumberland and Westmoreland Asylum at Garlands.*

Dr. W. P. Kirkman (since translated to the Kent Asylum) presented his first report to the visitors of the Cumberland Asylum at the January sessions, 1863. Dr. Kirkman passes the following opinion on the building :

“Generally speaking, the building is well adapted for most of the purposes required. It would almost have been impossible, however, to avoid deficiencies and errors at first, which betray themselves in process of time. A serious item is the inadequate amount of day accommodation ; in consequence of which one apartment on each side, constructed as a dormitory for four persons, has already been adopted as a day-room. Such features as this, of course, tend to

become aggravated by the increasing number of inmates, and at some early period will demand a remedy. Analogous also is the narrowness of the corridors, which, although different from the day-rooms, in that the patients do not pass so long a consecutive time in them, yet by want of space for free motion often cause a congestion in the passage of the patients to and fro, and so occasion probability of quarrelling. I am happy in being able to commend the building as well ventilated, both from internal space and means for air-currents without sensible draughts. The average cubic space per patient is 456 and 475 feet by day, and 500 and 616 by night, respectively, in the associated dormitories and single sleeping-apartments. The decision of the committee, in selecting so healthy a site, on an elevated position, will make its wisdom felt throughout the whole future of the asylum.

“The soil is for the most part light, suitable for barley. There is also a fair breadth of heavy land, fit for oats and wheat; and an extent of pasturage just adapted for cows, which we ought to have, and the want of which is daily felt.”

8. *Dr. Wing's Excursion to Llandudno.*

In June, 1862, Dr. Wing removed thirty-five of the private patients of the Northampton Asylum to lodgings in Llandudno, in North Wales, for change of air. “This trip was undertaken with the unanimous approbation of the committee of management, and received also the unqualified approval of the Commissioners in Lunacy.* All returned home without a single accident of the most

* “OFFICE OF COMMISSIONERS IN LUNACY,
“19, WHITEHALL PLACE, S.W.;
“4th June, 1862.

“SIR,—The Commissioners in Lunacy direct me to thank you for the letter in which you inform them that you have obtained at Llandudno, in North Wales, comfortable lodging accommodation for thirty-five patients belonging to the Northampton Lunatic Hospital, the governors of that institution having humanely resolved to give these poor persons the benefit of sea-air and a change of scene for a short period. The Commissioners observe the very proper precautions you have taken to prevent any possible irregularity or eccentricity on the part of any of the patients, by providing fifteen attendants to wait upon them during their stay at Llandudno, and they cannot regard as at all serious or likely to be persisted in such threatened opposition on the part of the Town Commissioners of Llandudno as you refer to in your letter. So long as the patients conduct themselves with propriety no pretence can possibly be urged for excluding them from what they are as fully entitled to as any other persons, and to the unrestricted enjoyment of which their affliction gives them a special and additional claim. The Commissioners may remind you that a plan precisely similar to that which you have adopted was carried into effect by Dr. Bucknill a few years ago. He took from the Devon Asylum a party of forty-two patients (which he changed from time to time, always retaining that number) to Exmouth, and although some alarm was felt by the residents