

*The Essex County Asylum.*

Dr. Campbell states:—"During the past twelve months, fifty-four of the patients who were in poor circumstances, on leaving the asylum received assistance from the Benevolent Fund, established for the relief of the destitute insane, on their discharge; and I beg respectfully again to press on the attention of the public the necessity of a more liberal support to a charity, the benefits of which cannot be estimated in removing one of the most common occasions of relapses, namely, the difficulty which such persons, when first liberated, frequently have in procuring employment, and the anxiety and hardships to which this difficulty must subject them, and which must operate with more than usual severity in the then delicately balanced state of their nervous system."

There appears to be, and there can be no question that, in a considerable number of pauper patients convalescing from disease in an asylum, the cure is confirmed and relapse prevented, by pecuniary help afforded on the first exit from the asylum; but, as we have seen, the manner in which this help is given, differs in different asylums. We shall not attempt to determine which of the two is preferable; whether it is better for the visitors to put in force the powers of the statute, and thus to tax property at large in the county for the purpose; or whether it is better to establish a voluntary fund, and in this manner to tax only the liberal and benevolent. As a rule, perhaps it is better not to resort to individual benevolence to raise funds for any purpose provided for by the laws of the land. The fact of its having been so provided for may be taken to intimate that the benefit contemplated is a general one, and, as there are so many worthy objects of charity which are not so provided for, it would seem undesirable to run the risk of diverting contributions from them for an object for which all the real property of the land is taxable.

*Report of the Royal Edinburgh Asylum for the Insane.*

Dr. Skae's report is enriched by the description of a few interesting cases, drawn with much vigour. In one of these, a case of suicidal impulse, associated with persistent watchfulness which defied narcotics, after describing the ingenious attempts to evade the vigilance of the attendants and procure some means of self-destruction, Dr. Skae says that the patient became tranquil and slept at night when mechanical restraint was imposed by means of the "polka." What is the polka? "When she saw there was no chance of effecting her purpose she slept quietly. Again and again