

insanity (malaria, etc.), on the forms it assumes, and on the endemic diseases with which he has to contend, are of the utmost interest. Chief among these is beri-beri, to the consideration of which affection he devotes a large portion of his report.

The pioneers of science and civilisation, scattered over our colonies and possessions, can send us not only much that is new, but also much that is instructive, and we should do our utmost to keep them in touch with us, not for their advantage only, but for our own.

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*Lunatics at Large and the Public Press.*

The daily Press, or at least a certain section of it, oscillates between two extremes in its views of the treatment of lunatics.

If some half-cured lunatic succeeds in attracting popular attention, the Press loudly advocates legislation that will prevent "incarceration" in an asylum, or, if a discharged patient commits a crime, it is equally forcible about "lunatics at large," and the wrongfulness of letting insane persons out of asylums.

The "lunatics at large" of which complaint is thus made, it should be remembered, are largely the outcome of the recent legislation, which was mainly based on these illogical outbursts of the Press.

The difficulties in placing a sick person with mental disorder under treatment resulting from the recent Lunacy Act, leads to many of these becoming "lunatics at large," until their lunacy is placed beyond all dispute. This is often arrived at by the uncertified lunatic committing some overt act, such as assault, homicide, suicide, or homicide followed by suicide, and thus proving that he needs or has needed treatment.

The number of "lunatics at large" thus created is probably considerably increased by the periodical recertification of lunatics under the recent Act, which may lead to the discharge of patients, who although manifesting no certifiable symptoms while under detention, develop their lunacy very shortly after discharge. Many of these "lunatics at large," therefore, are not under control, not from want of evidence of their insanity, but because this evidence is not within the personal observation of a medical man at the time when he is called on to certify.

The Medical Certificate evidently does not cover the ground, and it is obviously desirable that there should be some other procedure whereby a known lunatic could be placed or detained under care, when from any reason the written evidence of a medical man is not available.

The crimes which result from this defect of the law appeal by their striking character to the popular mind. They are, however, of little importance in comparison with the mass of mental suffering, prolonged even to lifelong lunacy, produced by the hindrances to treatment which the law entails in demanding written evidence (as on oath), from a medical man, as the only means whereby a sick person can be appropriately treated.

The "liberty of the subject" has been the popular cry on which this lunacy legislation has been based, with the object of preventing the most improbable possibility of a sane person being sent to an asylum. In this zeal for liberty many hundreds of sick persons are annually deprived of the liberty of obtaining the medical treatment they require, obtaining in exchange only the liberty to commit suicide or homicide.

The public should be clearly instructed that the annually recurring and possibly increasing horrors from the crimes of "lunatics at large" are the price it pays, under the existing lunacy law, for protection from an illusory danger to the "liberty of the subject." "Oh, liberty! liberty! how many crimes are committed in thy name."

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*The Evil of Irresponsible Criticism.*

Perusing certain remarks made recently by a Mr. Berdoe in a lay paper, anent a therapeutic enquiry by Dr. Berkley at the City Asylum, Baltimore, and weighing these after a consideration of criticisms to be found in the *British Medical Journal* of September 18th and September 25th last, the thoughtful ratepayer—especially of the Metropolis, where Mr. Berdoe's superfluous energies find a vent—may well pray to be saved from his friends. Everywhere, and especially, probably, in the Metropolis, any painstaking investigation having for its object the determination of means whereby mental disorders may be arrested before they pass into the interminable night of chronic dementia, would be cordially approved of by those who contribute to the maintenance of county asylums, which look to become vast