

the medical men employed by them, would be still open to them against the unfavourable decision of the Government officials. The sole important change would be the removal of responsibility of detention from those to whom the public can justly or unjustly impute interested motives to those whose opinion may be good or bad, but whose position would render it unquestionably impartial.

To whom these duties shall be deputed, or how they shall be discharged is beyond the scope of our present intention even to indicate. It has been proposed that resident Medical Inspectors shall be appointed in each provincial district; but, in this, the prime desideratum of impartiality is surely lost sight of. If these duties should devolve upon the Commissioners of Lunacy, of course, the mode of their visitation will need be greatly altered. It is not only that they will have to pay attention to the mental state of the patients in preference to matters of architectural arrangement and domestic economy in the asylums they visit; but they will have to acquire the confidence of the public in their powers, to discriminate between a sound and an unsound mind. We entirely disagree with the views, and disapprove of the strictures which Dr. Huxley has expressed in reference to the medical constitution of the Commission. In our opinion it is the weakness of the medical element, and not its excess, which has been detrimental to that body. At least, it is certain, that if the responsibility of sanctioning the detention or discharge of every private patient in every private asylum be imposed upon the Commissioners in Lunacy, if they are to interpose a trustworthy authority between a suspicious public and the medical men, who for the benefit of the insane are empowered by law to deprive them of liberty, then the Commissioners in Lunacy must possess and exercise an intimate knowledge of the phenomena of insanity, which late circumstances indicate to have been hitherto thought the very last thing needful.

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*The Establishment of Sea Side Residences for the Insane.*

We are sorry to learn from our esteemed associate Dr. Dickson, that all the prejudices and difficulties which we had to overcome, in establishing even for a time a sea-side

residence for our patients at Exmouth, have been experienced by him in the attempt to obtain a license for a private lunatic asylum at Southport. We trust that the Justices at Quarter Sessions will be too impartial to permit the selfish opposition of a few interested persons, whose sympathy with their suffering fellow-creatures is guided by that most sensitive electrometer, the breeches pocket, to shut out the insane from the cheerful and invigorating influences of a residence by the sea side. We have already stated in this Journal how entirely we lived down all the fears and prejudices arrayed against us at Exmouth, and we sincerely trust that Dr. Dickson will be able to do the same. The following choice specimen of mural literature was posted about Southport, for the humane purpose of raising the mad-dog cry :—

*“Private Lunatic Asylum.*—An establishment of this sort is contemplated in Southport; the site to be either two houses in New Bath-street, or Sea View (Mr. Hargreaves’s house). As such an establishment as this tends to lessen the value of property in its vicinity, to exercise an unfavourable influence on schools, and to produce a depressing effect on all around it, you are requested to sign a petition against it, to the Magistrates, at Kirkdale, which lies for signature at Mr. Welsby’s Office, Nevill-street.”

*The Ganglionic Nervous System.* By JAMES GEORGE DAVEY, M.D., formerly Superintendent of the County Asylums at Hanwell and Colney Hatch. 8vo., pp. 309. Churchill.

The press of matter having a more direct bearing upon our specialty compels us very unwillingly to abbreviate our review of this interesting and important work to a mere notice. Dr. Davey combats the anatomical views of Dr. M. Hall and Mr. Grainger, and very ably maintains the opinion that there is no necessity for any distinct division of the spinal nervous system for the production of the excito-motory phenomena. His peculiar views are, that the exercise of the functions of the chord are due to the influence of the ganglionic system, and that the external and internal excito-motory phenomena are alike dependent