

*The Lunatic wards of the Scotch Poor Houses.*

“It is a matter for regret, that while in England an enlightened policy tends to abolish the treatment, or rather the detention of lunatics in poor’s houses, the legislature only last year sanctioned the permanent introduction of this system into Scotland. That any insane person should be legally recognised as incapable of amelioration, is certainly a dangerous and retrograde movement. However demented a lunatic may be, he suffers from neglect, and improves under careful attention and training. The so-called incurable class supplies many of the best and steadiest workers to the asylum farm and workshops, and by their industry they enable the establishment to keep the rest of the patients at a lower rate than would be otherwise possible. Some parochial boards do not seem to understand that the rate they pay for their patients in an asylum does not represent the *actual*, but the *average* cost of maintenance. In many cases this rate does not cover half the outlay, while in others the patients may be almost self-supporting. Of course, the latter might be kept more cheaply in a poor’s house; but the asylum could not then keep the rest at the same rate as formerly. What is saved on the one class will be lost on the other,—diet, rent, and clothing, will be as high items in the poor’s house as in the asylum, and the economy is very problematical of keeping up lunatics in forced and dreary idleness in the middle of a large city, instead of allowing them to be engaged in profitable labour in the country.”

*Condition of Patients on admission at the Montrose Asylum.*

“I have frequently in former reports directed attention to the impropriety of placing persons in the asylum in a moribund state: an example of the evils of this practice occurred last year, when a man actually died in the cab at the door. Instances of the unnecessary use of mechanical restraint are still not unfrequent—especially when patients are sent under charge of policemen and sheriff-officers. A somewhat odd mode of transport was adopted in the case of a man who for a period of fifteen years had been insane, and had sat on his haunches with his knees drawn up to his chin, until the joints became immovable. Being unable to walk, he was packed in a box, which was securely roped, and conveyed to the steamboat in a carrier’s cart. In this solitary confinement he remained, until the vessel reached its destination. On his arrival at great credit the various duties assigned them. During the war twenty-two of them gave proof of their patriotism by enlisting in the army of the Union. So large a number of persons leaving service in so short a time, caused some inconvenience and irregularity in the usual uniform operation and discipline of the house.”