

LUNATIC ASYLUMS (IRELAND).

RETURN to an Order of the Honourable The House of Commons,
dated 25 February 1859;—for,

COPY "of a LETTER addressed to the Chief Secretary for *Ireland* by Dr. Nugent,
Inspector of Lunatic Asylums, in reply to STATEMENTS in the REPORT of the
Commissioners of Inquiry into LUNATIC ASYLUMS in *Ireland*:"

"RETURNS showing the Date of the First Publication of such LETTER:"

"And, showing the Date at which the First Issue of the COMMISSIONERS' REPORT
was made, by whom made, and the Number of Copies then Circulated."

Office of Lunatic Asylums, Dublin Castle,
4 March 1859.

Sir,

IN reply to your communication of the 1st instant, transmitting a copy of an
Order of the House of Commons, dated 25th ultimo, calling for a copy of the
letter addressed by Dr. Nugent to the Chief Secretary for Ireland, in answer to
statements in the Report of the Commissioners of Inquiry into Lunatic Asylums
in Ireland, together with the date of the first publication of such letter, I have
the honour to submit the information required, and to append a copy of the
letter in question.

To Colonel Larcom, c. b.,
&c. &c. &c.

I have, &c.
(signed) *John Nugent.*

— I. —

COPY of a LETTER addressed to the Chief Secretary for Ireland by Dr. Nugent,
Inspector of Lunatic Asylums, in reply to Statements in the Report of the
Commissioners of Inquiry into Lunatic Asylums in Ireland.

LUNATIC ASYLUMS, IRELAND, COMMISSION.

OBSERVATIONS on the Report of the Commissioners of Inquiry into Lunatic
Asylums, &c., &c. (Ireland), in a Letter to the Right Honourable Lord
Viscount Naas, M. P., Chief Secretary, &c., by J. Nugent, M. D., Inspector of
Lunatic Asylums.

To the Right Honourable Lord Viscount *Naas*, M. P., &c. &c., Chief Secretary
for Ireland.

Dublin Castle, Office of Lunatic Asylums,
5 October 1858.

My Lord,

THE Commissioners appointed by Royal Warrant to inquire into the state of
Lunatic Asylums in Ireland having published their Report, and as portions of it,
if left unnoticed, might lead to erroneous conclusions in the minds of those whose
knowledge of the subject would be confined to the information contained in that
Report, I respectfully beg leave to submit certain observations thereon, which
may tend to a more correct estimation of the general working of these institutions.
In doing so, it is far from my intention to attribute any but the fairest motives to

those gentlemen in the mode of conducting their investigations, as well as of framing their Report; but as a public officer, and one of the heads of a department, I deem it a simple duty to the Governors and staff of Lunatic Asylums, and to the office with which I am connected, to adopt the present course. I feel the less hesitation, from the fact that the inadequacy of the laws relating to Lunatic Asylums had been so frequently urged by the Inspectors on the attention of the Legislature, and that it was with the full concurrence, perhaps I may be permitted to say at the suggestion, of this department that the Commission of Inquiry was applied for by a late Chief Secretary.

Establishment of
asylums.

The Commissioners, after stating the object of their appointment, enter into a history of the establishment of Lunatic Asylums in this country—a history to the correctness of which I cannot but cordially assent, inasmuch as it had virtually appeared in Parliamentary Reports addressed to his Excellency the Lord Lieutenant, from time to time, by the Inspectors of Lunatic Asylums. It omits, however, all comment on the cost of expenditure in the erection of buildings, the purchase of land, the debts accruing to the Treasury, and various other important details of a pecuniary nature—an omission in part compensated for by the information furnished in our last Report. Still, had the Commissioners superadded to that information, it would, perhaps, have rendered their production more valuable as a whole, and have afforded the Executive more materials for its guidance in matters of legislation.

Merits of asylums
overlooked by
Commissioners.

I must confess that I was disappointed on observing that the Commissioners, whose office might be regarded as judicial, had overlooked the merits of, and confined themselves to depicting, and in no weak colouring, such faults and imperfections as they could discover in Irish Asylums; and whilst losing few opportunities of stating facts that could tell against them even by implication, had withheld explanations, which, if given, would have modified, and in some cases perhaps imparted a totally different aspect to their representations.

I feel the difficulty of my position in dissenting on any point (still more on many) from the opinions put forward by five Commissioners, being fully aware that an importance attaches in the public mind to the result of a Commission of Inquiry under a Royal Warrant, to question which may appear presumptuous in an individual. I trust, however, that an experience acquired by a twelve years' constant and anxious attention to the duties of my office, ought to render me as conversant with the details of Irish Lunatic Asylum management, as could a cursory visit of five or six weeks the two English members of the Commission, who, by habit and professional occupation, were perhaps the best acquainted with the immediate subject of inquiry, and who, I apprehend, from the date of their return to the sphere of their own particular duties, up to a week or so prior to the joint signature of a Report since counter-reported on by one of their associates, could have no personal knowledge of proceedings at this side of the water. And as during the year in which the three other Commissioners were engaged from time to time in prosecuting their inquiries (in consequence of an accident that befel my estimable colleague, Dr. White, whose long and truly useful services cannot be too highly appreciated), the whole inspection, responsibility, and control of Lunatic Asylums, public and private, of the insane in gaols, poorhouses, &c., together with a weight of official business that may be estimated from a correspondence of over seven thousand letters, and the preparation of a Report (eighth) quite as ample in practical details as that of the Commissioners, pressed on me, assisted therein alone by the two zealous and intelligent clerks attached to this office, I trust I may be pardoned if I now stand forward, not to palliate certain defects which I know to have existed, and to which the Inspectors had in great measure already directed attention, but to uphold the character at large of our public establishments for the insane—a character which derives its existence not merely from our native reports, but from the unprejudiced testimony of English writers of high and philanthropic repute—and to show that in the Commissioners' Report a fair equipoise has not been regarded: in other words, that it has the appearance of being one-sided. For this reason, in the following pages, after analyzing and replying to certain portions of the Commissioners' Report (as the main object of their appointment was, that they might afford the basis of a system on which Government might move Parliament to legislate), I shall, without, I trust, being deemed presumptuous by your Lordship, submit my views, and when I disagree with the Royal Commissioners, state my reasons for doing so; taking care also, when both coincide, to note the identity of their opinion with that of the

Duties of in-
spectors.

Reasons for this
letter.

the Inspectors—a duty which the Commissioners have rendered necessary by the avoidance of any reference thereto. In fact, three-fourths of what, to persons unacquainted with the official publications of the Inspectors, might appear to be now for the first time brought under public notice, have been already discussed in their Reports.

Had the Commissioners made three simple acknowledgments, which in justice to Irish Asylums might have been conceded, I should be quite contented, for the faults enumerated might then be regarded as exceptional; but when nothing favourable is said, such faults may be looked upon as indications of a system of bad management.

Facts ignored by Commissioners.

1st. Had they stated (which in truth they might have done) that Irish asylums were eminently successful as curative establishments, as evidenced by the number of recoveries and paucity of deaths in them, thus, to say the least, placing them on an equality with any similar establishments in Europe—superior, perhaps, to most—as appears from returns furnished by the Commissioners themselves, one of which gives the number of patients in Irish Asylums on 1st January 1852, at 2,700, to which were added during the quinquennial period ending with 1856, 6,197, raising the whole number under treatment to 8,897. Assuming that the curable cases bore to the incurable the same proportion as the numbers of these denominations at present in asylums bear one to the other (a very legitimate analogy), the number of the former under treatment must have amounted to 2,717, while no less than 2,436 were discharged cured in the period referred to.

Cures effected in asylums.

2d. Had they stated that, in their scrutinies into the various details of district asylums, into the mental condition of patients, whether in public or private establishments—into the mode and practice of restraint, and into the manifold complaints and accusations which, no doubt, must have been addressed to them by letters signed or anonymous (but each requiring notice, however disagreeable the task)—not one instance of defalcation was discoverable, not one inmate out of 4,000 unjustly deprived of liberty, not a single case of violence, cruelty, or abuse came under their notice, with the exception of one of restraint at Armagh, the necessity for which is maintained on authority to which I shall refer hereinafter.

Freedom from abuse.

3d. Had they stated as indications of the unceasing care and attention bestowed by subordinates on the inmates of public asylums, the wondrous immunity in them from accidents and deeds of violence, considering the excitability of our race, doubly developed in the maniac; as a striking instance of which I may observe that only four cases of suicide, and not one of a homicidal nature, are recorded as having taken place within five years, notwithstanding that in that period no less than 2,000 lunatics, committed to gaols on sworn depositions as “dangerous” to themselves or others, had been transferred thither, and that at the date of their statistical returns there were 551 of this class still remaining.

Paucity of accidents.

Were these admissions made, I should not, perhaps, feel it necessary to trouble your Lordship with the present communication.

Having made these preliminary observations, I will now, with your Lordship's permission, apply myself, as proposed, to the subject-matter of the Commissioners' Report.

The first point deserving of attention is the accommodation in asylums of paying patients, which the Commissioners recommend. The Inspectors, whilst disapproving on principle of the maintenance in district asylums of persons paying annual stipends, have not considered it advisable to oppose the practice, owing to the want of suitable establishments for their reception, although feeling with the Commissioners that their presence in an asylum with limited accommodation amounted to an injustice to the insane poor of the district, for whom the asylum was specially intended. In view, however, of the proposed increase of accommodation (to the best method of effecting which I shall refer in due course), I see no objection to the recommendation of the Commissioners, subject to the restrictions originally pointed out by the Inspectors.

Paying patients.

The Commissioners, observing on the biennial reports of the Inspectors as not being in accordance with the Act 7 Geo. 4, c. 74, state, that these reports should be annual, naming even the day on which they ought to appear, the 1st of

Inspector's reports.

February; but with all respect to their opinion, I would observe, that the Act under which the Inspectors hold office, the 8 & 9 Vict. c. 107, makes no mention of the subject. The 23d clause states generally, and without reciting the previous Act, its date, or title, that the duties of the Inspectors-general of Prisons shall be performed by the Inspectors of Lunatic Asylums in regard to the latter institutions; and the next clause specifies in detail what those duties are, without even any allusion whatever to reporting.

Biennial.

But laying aside anything like special pleading, what are the facts? In our biennial Reports we give the full statistics of each year separately and in detail; the admissions, discharges, and deaths; number resident in asylums, gaols, and poor-houses; particular occurrences, faults of commission or omission, expenditure, &c. Our object in reporting biennially could not therefore be to avoid labour, for the same tables are to be arranged, and the same inquiries to be made. Of the two, perhaps more work is thereby entailed on the office. The Inspectors, anxious to have a greater group of facts on which to observe, and not restricting themselves to figures, but desirous to afford matter of interest and for the advancement of science in regard to the department with which they were connected, chose the practice of reporting biennially as most conducive to the attainment of those ends. As the Commissioners' Report has been signed by two gentlemen who are also Commissioners in Lunacy in England, I may be pardoned for stating that the five biennial Reports of the Inspectors contain more materials for the advancement of mental science, as is testified not alone by writers and reviewers familiar with the subject in this country, but also in England, than the ten *annual* reports of the Commissioners there; notwithstanding that in Ireland there are but two inspectors, whose duties are relatively more extensive, and the total annual cost of whose office does not amount to 2,500 £, whilst in England, besides the unpaid, there are six paid Commissioners, with a large staff, the aggregate of whose expenditure is six times greater.

Not disapproved
by Government.

The first biennial Report of the Inspectors was published during the Viceroyalty of the Earl of Clarendon, as was also the second, when the Chairman of the Commissioners was Under-Secretary. No objection was then made; on the contrary, I believe that these Reports gave satisfaction. Four different Viceroys have since governed this country, to whom we had the honour of presenting our Reports, and no intimation was ever conveyed to the Inspectors of the illegality of their procedure in the matter.

I may also be permitted to remark, that the Report of the Royal Commissioners themselves affords a fair illustration of the onerous nature of such a task as the preparation of a Parliamentary Report, inasmuch as the period originally allowed for its production, seven months, having proved too short, it was found necessary to extend it from time to time, until fully two years have been occupied in its compilation.

Misconceptions of
Commissioners on
the subject of law.

Being on the subject of law, although anticipating a little my proposed plan, I may here observe that the Commissioners are incorrect in their version of the Private Lunatic Asylums Act. For example, they state that the fees to be paid on taking out a license for a private asylum must "in no case exceed 5 £, with 10 s. for the stamp;" which, if correct, would go to show that the Government had, for a period of 14 years, been illegally exacting from the proprietors of licensed houses sums of money which in the aggregate amount to nearly 2,000 £. Fortunately, however, for the Treasury, there exists a misconception in the minds of the Commissioners, who have assumed as the maximum what in the clause is expressly fixed as a minimum. Had the Commissioners referred to a return of the fees received since 1842, which was furnished by the Inspectors, and may be found in the Commissioners' Report, Vol. I., App. p. 126, Table 2, they would not, doubtless, have fallen into this error.

As to the bearing of the Act 19 & 20 Vict. c. 99 (Irish Asylums Superannuation Act), I apprehend the Commissioners labour under a misconception. The same may be said as regards their views on the spirit and practice of the Act 8 & 9 Vict. c. 107 (Central Asylums Act); and in recommending that resident physicians of asylums should compound medicines, they must have overlooked the charter statute, 31 Geo. 3, c. 34. But to these points I shall again take the liberty of adverting.

Inspectors *ex-officio*
Governors.

With regard to the Inspectors being *ex-officio* governors of asylums—as it is a matter so nearly connected with my own personal position, I shall refer to it but briefly, and with some hesitation, merely observing that whilst their taking part in

in the proceedings of Boards of Governors has been generally approved of as productive of many benefits, the objection of the Commissioners is unsupported by a single fact.

The Commissioners disapprove of the existing Privy Council "Rules and Regulations" for the management of Lunatic Asylums. In this I cannot but concur, agreeing with them that these rules are "in many respects unsuited to the existing state of things," and that "a new code is of urgent necessity." But, as stated in our last Report, with reference to them, we forbore "urging details which in due course should be the result of a comprehensive legal enactment." Still, I cannot help remarking, that wherever an infraction of any of these rules occurred, that infraction appears to have been fully noted by the Commissioners in their Report.

Privy Council rules.

The alteration proposed by the Commissioners in the mode of appointing governors of asylums, viz., that two-thirds should be nominated by the grand juries of the district, and the remaining third by the Executive, does not seem judicious. In the first place, it, *in limine*, establishes a distinction by the recognition of two parties on the Board, which might be calculated to disturb that general harmony that has hitherto characterised the proceedings of Boards of Governors, and in the second place, it would lead, in great part, if not wholly, to the exclusion from the Board of the hierarchy and nobility, than whom as governors none are more useful or more liberal. But it is liable to a third, and, I think, stronger objection, that, as the duties required of a governor render essential an acquaintance with several matters having (if I may so express myself) a metaphysical bearing, and which can only be acquired by a frequent attendance at the Board-room, this *annual* election by the grand jury might prove detrimental to the interests of the insane themselves.

Appointment of Governors.

Commissioners' recommendations objectionable.

I am far from undervaluing the right of rate-payers to participate in the management of lunatic asylums through grand juries as their representatives; but this control may be said to be in their hands already, 70 per cent. of the governors being grand jurors of their respective counties.

No doubt many of them are not as assiduous as they might be in their attendance; and even an influential member of the Commission, without wandering beyond his own personal experience, could testify to the fact that a gentleman of acknowledged public talent and high social position, might reside for years within easy access of an asylum of which he was a governor, without ever finding himself inside its walls, until he visited it in another capacity to report upon its defects.

Even the reason assigned by the Commissioners for their mode of selection does not seem very logical. One-third of the members, they say, are to be nominated by the Government, "in order that an opportunity may exist for securing the services of persons who, from the attention they have given to such establishments, may be likely to be useful members of the Board." But as the remaining two-thirds are to be selected from year to year by grand juries, the former, constituting the minority, must necessarily be out-voted by the latter, however uninformed on asylum affairs, upon all occasions on which a difference of opinion may arise.

The present system of appointing governors by the Lord Lieutenant, I believe to be far better. Such also appears to be the opinion of several of the most influential of the witnesses examined, among whom I may mention the names of Sir George Hodson, Sir Robert Ferguson, and the Rev. Grey Porter, each of whom has devoted much attention to the affairs and management of Lunatic Asylums. At the same time a revision of the existing Boards would be desirable, so as to secure to each barony at least one, and to large and wealthy baronies two representatives, in addition to those to be taken promiscuously from the district. Non-attendance for a period of twelve months should be sufficient, as most properly suggested by the Commissioners, to vacate the appointment.

Inspectors' suggestions.

The Commissioners, after giving it as their opinion that more frequent meetings of governors would be desirable, observe that, "when a quorum does not assemble, the whole business to be transacted has to be adjourned for a month." This is not exactly the case—the usual practice being to summon a special meeting for a few days after, in accordance with the third of the Privy Council Rules. By reference to the Tables appended to the Commissioners' Report (Vol. I., App. A, Table 10), and to those attached to the Inspectors' Eighth Report (App. p. 52), it will be seen that, with one or two exceptions, no month elapsed

Misconception of Commissioners as to frequency of Board meetings.

at any asylum during the years 1855-6, without a meeting having been held; the number held in each year amounting actually to 25 in one, and ranging from 13 to 20 in the others. I refer to this the more particularly, as showing the laudable anxiety and interest of local Boards in the well-being of these establishments, occasionally exhibited at much personal inconvenience, both in consequence of loss of time, and the distance which some governors have to travel.

Special and visiting committees.

The Commissioners would further seem to ignore the existence of visiting committees. So far as permanent committees are concerned, the Commissioners are right, such committees being considered objectionable by the majority of governors, inasmuch as the whole control and management of an asylum might ultimately vest in them. Committees for special purposes have existed at various times, in almost every asylum in Ireland, and even at present there is one each at Cork, Kilkenny, Belfast, and Richmond Asylums, the members of which latter are the Earl of Meath, Sir George Hodson, and Mr. Waldron, M.P. Deputations from grand juries cannot well be expected to be very regular in their inspection; still, I believe, there is scarcely an asylum in Ireland, adjoining an assize town, that is not visited by some members of the immediate grand jury, though not by all the grand juries of the district.

Medical arrangements.

A difference of opinion exists between the Commissioners as to medical arrangements. I coincide in the views of Dr. Corrigan regarding the propriety of having visiting physicians, but dissent from the joint recommendation of the Commissioners, "that the resident physician should not perform civil duties," particularly if the number of patients placed under his charge does not exceed 200, or 250, at the outside; for I really do not see (if aided by a visiting or consulting physician) what employment the resident can have to occupy his whole time as a public salaried officer, unless he superintends the general domestic economy of his establishment. The subdivision of duties, with an unneeded multiplication of persons to perform them, materially increases expense, without producing any equivalent benefit; particularly as the services of an apothecary, which the Commissioners would "wish to see discontinued in small asylums," become a necessity so long as the office of visiting physician is retained, as the resident physician, to whom they would leave the compounding of prescriptions (in nine cases out of ten not being a licentiate apothecary), is prohibited from making up any but his own, under the penalty of a heavy fine—a legal difficulty which must have escaped the notice of the Commissioners.

Disagreement of Commissioners.

Legal difficulty overlooked by Commissioners.

Appointment of officers should rest with Executive.

I am strongly of opinion that the appointment of the superior officers—the two physicians and matron, as well as the clerk and storekeeper, ought to be left, as heretofore, in the hands of the Lord Lieutenant. The Commissioners admit that the preponderating evidence they received was unfavourable to its being given to the governors, adducing themselves no sufficient reasons to counterbalance the testimony. On the contrary, if the selection be left to the Boards, the Commissioners see a double difficulty, namely, "local contentions, and the influence of private feelings," the bane of Irish society—whereas, if it be retained in the hands of the Government, their only apprehension seems to be that political influence might lead to injurious results. An experience of twelve years induces me to doubt the correctness of their apprehensions on the latter head.

No injustice to ratepayers thereby.

Abstractedly regarding the good of Lunatic Asylums, it appears to me that as the Executive has a far larger sphere from which to select, it would be much more likely to obtain efficient officers; and, although it may thus seem to assume a patronage in the distribution of local rates, it should not be forgotten that while the public asylums of this country, by free grants from the State (and exemption from interest on moneys advanced to them), have, up to this, benefited to the extent of over 320,000 £, no interest is charged on the half-yearly advances for their maintenance, amounting annually to 80,000 £, nor on the sums already advanced, or to be advanced for the erection or structural alteration of these institutions. So that the country, on striking a balance of accounts after payment of the above officers, is a gainer by fully 16,000 £ a-year.

Chaplains.

With reference to the appointment of chaplains to asylums, a subject to which, from a conviction of its importance, the inspectors directed the attention of Government, and which unfortunately gave rise to legal proceedings between the Executive and the governors of a northern asylum, who, on principle, opposed their admission—I anticipate that no such "compulsion," as apprehended by the Commissioners, will need to be exercised, as from my knowledge of the feelings of the influential Board referred to, I am satisfied that as soon as all doubt shall have

have been removed by statutory enactment, no gentlemen will be more disposed to give a fair opportunity for its practical development than the governors of the Belfast Asylum.

As to building separate places of worship for Protestant and Roman-catholic congregations, I withhold an opinion, restricting myself to the bare statement, that at the Central Asylum at Dundrum, at the Eglinton at Cork, at Kilkenny, and elsewhere, no objections have been ever made to the inspectors, by officers or patients, against the use in common of chapels for divine service. At Richmond, in consequence of the erection of a screen between both places of worship, though under the same roof, the portion allocated to either is much too small, particularly that for the Roman-catholics.

Separate places of worship.

It is most gratifying to find that the Commissioners have added the weight of their advocacy to the recommendations of the Inspectors, on the propriety of increasing the salaries of officers, and the wages of servants belonging to public asylums, the inadequacy of which has been frequently adverted to in the Inspector's Reports. But it is to be hoped that there is no necessity for further legislation in order to secure to them the superannuation allowance accorded to them by the Act 19 & 20 Vict. c. 99. I am aware that in the interpretation clause of that Act, the name of the clerk and storekeeper appears to have been accidentally omitted from the list of persons comprised in the word "officer;" but as his being considered so is not "repugnant to the spirit" of the Act, and as his position is already clearly defined by the Privy Council Rules, which are possessed of statutory power, I apprehend the provisions of the superannuation law may be applied to his case. In fact, one of his class has recently retired on a pension.

Salaries of officers.

Superannuation.

DISTRICT ASYLUMS.

On the subject of admission to asylums, the Commissioners complain that no regular system prevails. In my opinion, the governors are the best judges as to the selection of patients, the more so when it is considered how very restricted is the accommodation afforded by many District Asylums; on which account they are justified in preventing, as far as possible, the admission of hopeless cases, which prove a lasting burthen on the establishment, to the exclusion thereof of others of an acute character. That idiots are admissible, and admitted when considered suitable cases, in consequence of the existence of dangerous tendencies, is proved by the fact that they are to be found in every asylum in Ireland.

Admissions; Governors should select cases.

With regard to the proposition, that it should at all times be competent for the resident physician to admit cases provisionally, I would observe that the practice is already recognised under the fifth Privy Council Regulation. At Waterford, and also at Ballinasloe, the Board, in order not to lose time, delegates its authority on the subject of admissions to the manager and visiting physician conjointly.

On the structural defects in some buildings, it is needless for me to descant. To do so, would be to repeat what the Inspectors have frequently expressed on the subject in their Reports. I may, however, remark, that no one can more regret the absence of baths and lavatories, as in consequence thereof, that first of all essentials in an asylum, cleanliness, cannot be adequately secured. The Inspectors have always been unremitting in their endeavours to obviate this want, and latterly the governors have been actively interesting themselves in the matter; but the prospect of impending legislation, and the consequent uncertainty about the subdivision of districts, and the pecuniary arrangements between counties likely to ensue thereon, have in great measure retarded the intended improvements, as at Limerick, where, at the time of the Commissioners' visit, nothing could be worse than the condition of the privies and yards adjoining the female refractory division, owing to want of water—a state of things necessarily reacting on the patients. It is but just to add, however, that in this case improvements had already been ordered by the Board, which were in process of construction at the time, and have since been fully completed.

Structural defects.

At page 13, the Commissioners state, "at times we have found the water-closets systematically kept locked, and never used by the patients." As the Commissioners visited no asylum for the purpose of inspection more than *once*, it is difficult to understand how they could find them "systematically" shut or open, but, above all, "never used." For my part, I could almost wish that water-closets opening on corridors and dormitories in lunatic asylums were hermetically closed.

Water-closets.

At the Richmond Asylum, to which the Commissioners particularly refer, the erection of water-closets in an old building, in the construction of which no provision was made for such conveniences, and no sufficient sewage secured, has not been found satisfactory, in consequence of which the governors are now engaged, at very great expense, in remedying the defects, and at the same time procuring an ample supply of water.

Recommendations.

In any future asylums that may be constructed, I trust that lavatories, baths, and water-closets will be made appendages to the main structure, and that the sewers from these shall run in straight lines from the buildings, not forming a complicated net-work under or around the foundations.

Employment of lunatics.

There is another point, namely, that regarding the employment of "unfortunate lunatics," on which I feel bound to dissent from the views of the Commissioners. Regretting that even temporarily the necessity should arise for their being engaged in the works referred to, and feeling that, in imitation of the good example set before me by my late colleague, my humble endeavours have ever been directed to benefit the inmates of Lunatic Asylums, I confess that I do not see on what principle a lunatic, because he simply labours under a delusion—if possessed of rude bodily health, youth, and strength—should not, while in a public institution, where he is well fed, clad, and housed, getting three ample meals every day (one with a liberal allowance of animal food), voluntarily assist the attendants, as was the case, at a species of labour which, were he sane and at large, he would undertake at a recompense not greater, perhaps, in actual value, than that which is afforded to him by his maintenance in the asylum.

Interior arrangements.

At page 14 in their Report, the Commissioners treat of the interior state of Lunatic Asylums and their domestic economy, in a manner which justifies three inferences being drawn, viz.:—First, that a poor-law test in regard to admissions had found favour with some Boards; secondly, that the cheerless character of the asylums, arising from the want of a more ample supply of furniture, pictures, &c., had acted injuriously on the minds of the patients; and, thirdly, that the scale of dietary was simply equal, or perhaps a little superior to what the inmates had been accustomed to before their admission.

Dietary.

With reference to the first, and as a matter of simple justice to the members of asylum Boards, I must say that, having attended considerably over 260 meetings, I never noticed the existence of such a sentiment; on the contrary, as regards the patients themselves and their creature comforts, the greatest liberality prevails. That the second inference would be unwarranted, the statistics of cures effected in Irish District Asylums (and to which I have before adverted) satisfactorily proves; at the same time I think the character of the furniture might be improved. And as to the third, the food tables of each asylum, as given by the Commissioners, testify to the generosity of the dietaries, especially when it is considered that five-sixths of the patients are of the poorest and humblest class in life. Even the Commissioners, when expressing their opinion that there is not enough of vegetables, the cheapest of all food, used in asylums, supply unexceptionable testimony of its excellence in other respects.

The Commissioners, referring to the manner in which some articles of food were served to the inmates of the Maryborough Asylum, describe their meals as "frugal." If speaking comparatively, the description would not be perhaps unfair; but that the frugality of the fare in that institution may be the better appreciated by your Lordship, I subjoin the following extract from the dietary of the establishment:

"Full diet—breakfast, males and females, 8 oz. patent oatmeal, made into stirabout, with 1 pint new milk. Dinner, males, 12 oz. bread or $3\frac{1}{2}$ lbs. potatoes, with 1 lb. beefsteak and 1 pint beer; females, 10 oz. bread or 3 lbs. potatoes, with 1 lb. beefsteak and 1 pint beer. Supper, males and females, 6 oz. bread, with $\frac{1}{4}$ quart of new milk."

In connexion with this subject, the Commissioners remark that they cannot reconcile the returns furnished to them of the consumption of food in asylums with the dietary tables, as, "if the former be correct, the patients cannot receive the amount of food proposed to be allowed them." It is to be regretted that, before shadowing forth such an imputation, they did not obtain sufficient explanation, when, perhaps, it might be found that the difference was not so irreconcilable as at first sight, being doubtless accounted for by the variety of diets as ordered from the ordinary scale by the visiting physician.

Inferior bedsteads.

When observing that the governors and managers "*seem aware* that the lightly constructed

"constructed bedsteads are liable to be broken up by the patients, and to become dangerous weapons in their hands," the Commissioners express in very negative terms the strong and reiterated complaints made by every Board of the articles alluded to—complaints which have occasionally found their way to the executive.

Care should be taken, the Commissioners observe, that lunatics are never employed in any work for private profit, stating that in one instance they found the lunatics occupied on the grounds of the resident manager. This arose from the fact that a sufficiently large farm was not attached to the asylum, so as to afford that full occupation to the inmates which is essential to their recovery, the great majority being of the agricultural class—the governors feeling unwilling to purchase additional land, or enter into any expense pending the question of separating an adjoining county from the district.

Insufficient agricultural occupation for lunatics.

Observing on the management of the sick, the Commissioners would appear to hold contrary opinions. In one paragraph they disapprove of patients being treated in single sleeping apartments, which they denominate "cells," as being cold and confined; while in other cases of disease, described as "loathsome," they object to their being "kept in an associated dormitory." The inspectors are not aware of the existence of "loathsome" diseases in any Irish asylum. I presume either dysentery or diarrhoea is meant—two maladies treated in associated dormitories, and in none other, in every metropolitan and provincial hospital; and I certainly cannot conceive that because they are so treated, they must be "necessarily neglected."

Management of the sick.

The Commissioners, when commenting upon hospital accommodation, state that some of the infirmaries belonging to the old institutions were converted into common dormitories. Now, as they never existed, they could not well admit of being changed. No infirmaries were constructed in the old asylums. The Commissioners would have been correct in saying that, from the pressure of cases, workshops and storerooms had been gradually transformed into sleeping apartments. They specially find fault with the uses to which the infirmaries were devoted at the period of their visits to the Richmond, Omagh, and Killarney Asylums; but I trust that your Lordship on reading the explanation will say, that the Governors of these asylums acted very properly in their use of them.

Hospital accommodation.

The Commissioners complain that the infirmary at the Richmond was full of ordinary cases. So it was. There was not a *single* vacancy in the asylum, which, at the time, contained over 600 beds, all occupied, and the gaols of the district were still crowded with lunatics. The contractors employed to improve and enlarge the infirmaries with the moneys granted by the Treasury for that purpose, were to commence operations in the spring (some months after the date of the Commissioners' visit); and were the buildings to remain idle in the meantime? They are now finished (and have been so since May last), and are reserved altogether for the sick.

Richmond.

At Omagh the Commissioners state that the infirmary was used as a straw-house or granary; and, I may add, an admirable one it made. The asylum there was built for 300 patients, and at the time of the Commissioners' inspection, not having been long in operation, it scarcely contained the one-half of its number, whole corridors being untenanted, so that if a malignant epidemic broke out, persons attacked by it could be separated from the rest of the inmates as effectually as if they did not inhabit the same structure. Under these circumstances the governors did not consider themselves justified in misapplying the public rates by maintaining an infirmary staff, absolutely doing nothing, at a cost of at least 100 *l.* a year. The same may be stated as regards the Killarney Asylum, which, by order of the Board, was kept well aired by the temporary residence in it of the clerk and storekeeper.

Omagh.

At Belfast Asylum the Commissioners state that they found that the infirmaries were used as common dormitories. But the fact is, that in consequence of a number of mechanics being employed at the time in effecting alterations in a contiguous portion of the building, invalids confined to bed could not be placed in them by day. On the second visit of the Commissioners, without the *post hoc* however being the *propter hoc*, the hospital wards had been restored to their proper service.

Belfast.

The Commissioners find fault with the omission to keep wine and prescription books, and in so doing instance the Cork and Limerick Asylums, which, it is presumable, were the strongest and possibly the only cases they could adduce. But

Wine and prescription books.

Council rules overlooked by Commissioners.

while animadverting on these instances of neglect, as conflicting with the Privy Council regulations, to which the Commissioners enjoin a rigid adherence, a reference to the rules themselves would have shown that the physicians of these asylums were perfectly justified in dispensing with the keeping of those books; for by an amended rule passed on the 13th of April 1844, and which will be found in the Appendix to the Commissioners' Report (Vol. II., p. 531), the physician is empowered "to direct, *either orally or in writing, as he shall think proper*, the course of moral and medical treatment of the patients." By a further reference to the Tables attached to the Commissioners' Report (Vol. I., p. 46, Tab. 7), it will be seen that the total expenditure under the head of "wine, porter, and beer," at the Limerick Asylum, during the year 1856, both for patients and servants, amounted to 4*l.* 0*s.* 10*d.*, and for medicines and medical appliances, 16*l.* 4*s.*, making together 20*l.* 4*s.* 10*d.*, which would be at the rate of about a farthing per week per head, on both those items combined; and at Cork, with 450 inmates, the corresponding item of 39*l.* 15*s.* 5*d.*, would, on a similar calculation, amount to about three-eighths of a penny weekly per head. The aggregate of these sums, viz., 60*l.*, the total cost for medicine, wine, and other stimulants, in two establishments containing between them over 800 inmates, cannot but be looked on as extremely moderate, especially considering that in a metropolitan hospital, with less than a third of the number of patients, a similar expenditure does not fall short of 1,100*l.* annually; no doubt a most necessary outlay, but which contrasted with the above figures stands out in bold relief. I may, therefore, be pardoned if I observe that what the Commissioners condemn as a fault, "indicative of great negligence," does not contravene the Privy Council Rule in the slightest degree; and I cannot but express my surprise that they did not take the trouble of more minutely investigating the cause of this assumed "negligence" before characterising it as the result of "inefficient inspection."

Restraint.

The Commissioners justly dwell on the necessity of a strict compliance with the 23d of the Privy Council Rules, which requires that instruments of restraint should be kept in the possession of the manager until required for use, and that every case of restraint or seclusion should be recorded in the "Morning Statement Book," instancing a case of negligence in that respect which came under their notice at the Armagh Asylum. The inspectors have had occasion, on some of their visits to district asylums, to notice infractions of this rule; but, at the same time I must say, that no case of restraint involving cruelty in a public asylum ever came under their observation. As this subject is one of vast importance in relation to the management of lunatic asylums and the treatment of patients, I trust your Lordship will pardon me for reproducing from our last Report the sentiments of the inspectors thereon, and which are contained in the following extract:—

Eighth Report, p. 12.

Views of inspectors on restraint.

"With reference to physical coercion or mechanical restraint:—In the majority of asylums it is employed in a mitigated form; in others it is seldom or never had recourse to. On this mooted subject we do not interfere, unless, as has occasionally happened on inspection, we considered that the appliances might be partially if not altogether removed. The question is one more properly for the judgment of the Local Medical Superintendents; and as we believe they are alike influenced by the most humane motives, and a desire to do what is best for the safety of their patients, we would deem it unadvisable on our part to lay down any fixed rules in reference to a system on which enlightened practitioners are at issue, and which rules could not easily be enforced. In our opinion, however, one most urgent and almost insurmountable objection exists to mechanical restraint, arising from the contingency of its being surreptitiously employed by attendants, in order to avoid trouble, unless due precautions are adopted by the resident manager."

Case of restraint at Armagh Asylum.

I certainly must confess that the Commissioners' Report of what came to their knowledge in Armagh Asylum gave me no less regret than surprise, and I immediately wrote to the physician of that institution for an explanation of the circumstances; in doing which I considered myself justified, as one of the heads of a public department, and without any desire to shield neglect or abuses, or to hold myself responsible for the acts of others, the prevention of which no amount of official anxiety can at all times insure. I thought it but fair, and I am satisfied that neither your Lordship nor the Commissioners will condemn me for seeking elucidation touching so grave a charge; for I know none more injurious to any institution

institution or derogatory to the character of any person, however indirectly impugned, than one which embraces cruelty towards a fellow-being deprived of reason. I subjoin a copy of the answer to my letter:—

“ My dear Sir,

“ THE purport of your letter, received this morning, I was not altogether unprepared for, as I had learned that the Report of the Commissioners, so far as our asylum was concerned, was not likely to be favourable. With reference to the patient reported to be tied down and padlocked, it is but right to state that the individual alluded to is one of our *most dangerous and frantically violent* epileptic cases. After an attack, his state of violence is such, threatening not only to destroy himself but every one that comes in contact with him, that it is absolutely necessary to confine him at once to bed, and according to the degrees of his violence to restrain him with a strait waistcoat, or to strap him to his bed; and not unfrequently, owing to his superhuman strength, at these times, enabling him to tear the waistcoat to tatters, we have to increase the restraint, fastening his legs together by straps and leather muffs, which we secure by a very small padlock and key. Now, this is the mode of restraint under which the Commissioners found the patient when they visited the asylum, and frequently since then it has been necessary to restrain him in precisely the same way.

“ Armagh, August 25. Explanation of visiting physician.

“ We have no padded room in this asylum; and if we had, both the manager and I are of opinion that it would not meet the requirements of such a case. I have been upwards of seven years physician to this asylum, and during the whole of which I have not known a violent epileptic to do harm to himself or others, or even to suffer from sores or injury to the arms or legs; and all this I consider to be owing to the judicious restraint adopted.

“ As to a patient being in bed six months, there are three in the house who are bed-ridden; one, an old man from contracted limbs; the other a case of anæmia, with great general debility; the third is a poor idiotic old man, who has not bodily health to permit his sitting up. As to patients not having been seen by me, I visit the asylum three times in the week regularly, and oftener when occasion requires, and at each time I ascertain who may be in their beds from illness, and often visit them separately. I enter in a book kept for that purpose what ailments they labour under, who may be restrained either in or out of bed, and the reason and kind of restraint. Besides this, I see the patients at each visit in their respective wards or day-rooms.

“ With regard to my not having seen the patient reported on, I had not seen him on the day of the Commissioners' visit (but had on the day before), as they were at the asylum before me.

“ Our asylum has been now thirty-four years in operation, being the first district asylum established; and I believe that no institution in the kingdom has been more judiciously, more humanely, or more successfully conducted.

“ Believe me to be, &c.

“ Thomas Cuming,

“ Visiting Physician to the Armagh Asylum.”

Now, were I, to-morrow, on visiting a public asylum, to find a patient confined as reported by the Commissioners—although from the fact of his personal cleanliness being attended to, and even the particular construction of the bed, I could not possibly deem that patient neglected—I certainly should not conceal my apprehensions that the restraint was too great; but if a gentleman conversant with the case, of acknowledged abilities, high professional standing, and the most humane character, told me that he considered it absolutely necessary I should hesitate before interfering with the treatment adopted, or assuming the responsibility of any accident that might ensue from such intervention.

Inspector's remarks thereon.

The Commissioners report that at the Carlow District Asylum “a man suffering from dropsy was tied down to his bed and locked up in his cell” without the knowledge of the visiting physician. I may here anticipate an inaccuracy of meaning as to “cells.” They are single sleeping-rooms on the ground-floor, the doors opening on them having apertures about six inches by four for the purpose of inspection, and closed for the most part with a small spring bolt. The case, as reported by the visiting and resident physicians, stands thus:—“M. D., admitted “26th December 1856, labouring under Bright's disease of the kidney, was at “once placed in bed under medical treatment, his diet, bread, tea, eggs, strong “broth during the day, occasionally boiled meat for dinner. On the 17th “February 1857, the Commissioners visited. On the 23d his head became “involved, and mercury was largely given; in a week he began to improve and “the dropsical symptoms gradually disappeared. By the middle of April he was “able to go about the grounds. He had been pointed out on two occasions to “the notice of the inspector (in August and October), the bodily health continuing “good. His insanity increased in November, when symptoms of general paralysis “supervened, in consequence of which he was placed in a water-bed, and care- “fully attended until the date of his demise, the 1st of December.”

Case at Carlow.

Explanation of visiting physician.

Dr. O'Meara, the visiting physician, in his communication on the subject, states:—"I had the honour to accompany the Commissioners. D—— was in a single-bedded boarded room, lying on his right side, very much swollen from dropsy. The centre of his bed had been recently wetted by the patient; in other respects it was perfectly clean. A wide web belt was buckled at one side, and went across the bed, *leaving a considerable space between it and the body when reclining.* He had been six weeks in bed on the day in question, labouring under dementia, very much swollen from dropsy, taking purgatives and diuretic medicines, passing all his excretions under him from the commencement, yet there was not a sign of excoriation on any part of him. That our duties were efficiently performed, and his medicines duly administered, we have presumptive proof in the history and favourable termination of his bodily diseases; and as regards the belt, it was placed there by the warder without any authority whatever, and merely for the purpose, he says, of preventing the patient from rolling out of bed in his absence."

"When the Commissioners visited the asylum, we had a larger number of lunatics than usual confined to bed, many of them regardless of the calls of nature; they were all carefully examined, and there was not an individual in the house suffering from the slightest excoriation or appearance of a sore. This fact speaks of the care bestowed upon their charge by the attendants; and had not the resident physician been prevented from going round to inspect in the usual manner, by being occupied in the preparation of books for the Commissioners, this solitary oversight could not have occurred."

Bed at Omagh Asylum. Incorrectly described by Commissioners.

In the Omagh Asylum the Commissioners state they found a bed in use for the "refractory patients," the description of which is of so ambiguous a kind, and being also restricted to one extract inaccurately taken from the evidence, as possibly to leave an unjust impression of its character in the mind of a casual reader, from the supposition that it was employed as a means of punishment. To remove all doubt as to the meaning of the term, perhaps, I had better observe, for your Lordship's information, that noisy and troublesome lunatics are classified under the head of "refractory," but who at the same time may be quite harmless, as must have been evident to the Commissioners. The resident physician was examined as to its utility; but as no marginal reference is given in the text of the Report, to his evidence on the subject, it may escape your Lordship's attention, to prevent which I shall take the liberty of quoting it here. "This bed is only used at night *for violent patients who are in the habit of getting up, breaking out, and breaking windows.* It is sufficiently high to allow the patient to turn and draw up his limbs, and to do every thing except sit up. When lying, there is a space of fourteen inches between the patient and the bars. No person was ever injured in it. It was my own introduction; it occurred to me when every means failed with a patient. We tied her to keep her in her room and prevent her from destroying herself, or getting out of the window, and then we adopted this plan and found it most successful. She was able to go home in about six weeks after she was placed in it." I may observe that the patient in whose case this bed was tried, used, when placed in a padded-room, as was the case at first, to strip herself naked, indulging in the most disgusting practices when alone in it. Subsequently, on returning to the asylum, suffering under a most violent attack of mania, and while passing along the corridor, observing the bed, moved by one of those impulses indicative of reason even in the wildest moments of insanity, and momentarily conscious of the benefit she had derived from its use, she insisted on at once occupying it. As illustrative of the fact that, though the casual visitor may regard this bed with distrust or dislike (and I candidly confess that I do not much admire its appearance), it is not looked upon with such feelings by the inmates themselves; I may instance a case which came under my own observation during a recent visit to the asylum. A female patient, labouring under the delusion of being at night surrounded by persons who endeavoured to carry her off by force, begged of me to give directions to have her placed in the bed. I suggested to the resident physician to do so, and I have since learned that the delusion was gradually subsiding.

Its real use.

Clinical instruction.

As regards clinical instruction, and the benefits likely to accrue from a well-regulated system of lectures on insanity, while anxious to uphold, as far as practicable, the Privy Council Regulations on the subject (and which had been passed through the instrumentality of Lord St. Leonards, who took such a deep interest in matters of lunacy), I would observe, in answer to the Commissioners, that

that the carrying out of these regulations depended altogether on the Boards of Governors.

For some years clinical clerks had been attached to the Richmond Asylum, at an expense of board and residence; latterly at a commuted allowance for board, but still having residence. The Governors finding that the medical staff of the institution had to be increased, and that, too, at a very great expense, did not deem themselves justified in appropriating a portion of the public rates to the support of parties from whom the institution derived no equivalent benefits, and whose connexion with the establishment was productive of no practical results in a scientific point of view. No doubt two of the physicians well versed in the subject, Drs. Mollan and Banks, announced their intention of giving lectures on the treatment of insanity; but these lectures not being numerous attended, little encouragement was given for their further continuance as teachers. At Belfast, also, similar lectures were announced; but no person attended. Lectures.

If the experience acquired in lunatic asylums by the attending physicians is to be practically brought into operation—as I think should be the case—I hope that Lord Elcho, Mr. Headlam, Mr. Cowper, or whoever else may bring in a Bill for the improvement of medical education, will introduce a clause rendering it obligatory on candidates for employment in the navy, army, or colonies, to attend a course of lectures on insanity. If such be done, I am quite sure that the Governors of the Richmond Asylum, as well as those of the Cork and Belfast Asylum, will be most happy to allow students to visit these establishments, under certain restrictions; but I do not think it quite fair that the ratepayers of any district should be put to the expense of affording board and lodgings to students totally unconnected with their institution.

WORKHOUSES.

With reference to workhouses, and their unfitness as places of residence for lunatics, there cannot exist a difference of opinion; and the sentiments of the Commissioners on this point are simply a re-echo of those so frequently promulgated by the inspectors in their reports. But though due care and attention to their comforts are not bestowed on the insane in poorhouses, through the medium of regular attendants, it is but justice to the authorities to add, that the deficiency is mainly attributable to the strict law of union discipline, which, not recognising paid servants in workhouses, forbids their employment; consequently the demented and idiotic classes are dependent on the *charitable* offices of the pauper inmates of these institutions. If at any time it may become necessary to have recourse to workhouse accommodation for lunatics, I should, with all deference, object to the same establishment being converted to the double purpose of a poorhouse and an asylum; and, indeed, I doubt whether it could be satisfactorily effected. Land must be taken, and it is admitted that the adaptation of a building to objects totally different from those for which it was originally designed, is nearly as expensive as the erection of a new establishment. Different kitchens, wash-houses, out-offices, inclosures—all would be required. Workhouses.

The Commissioners propose that a workhouse should be selected where there is a probability of permanent spare accommodation. I cannot help thinking that a strict observance of this rule might result in a sacrifice of convenience to many lunatics and epileptics, in seeking to provide a suitable place of residence for whom its facility of access should be the most important consideration. For example, the poorhouse of Berehaven, which is situated in a remote part of the county of Cork, may be no longer necessary as a workhouse; is it to be selected before such a central locality as Dunmanway? But the Commissioners' proposition that the management or supervision of workhouse asylums should be divided between two distinct bodies, the Board of Governors and the Board of Guardians—the former to control and the latter to visit and inspect, is one, in my opinion, fraught with difficulty, and which, if acted upon, might lead to a collision of authority, than which nothing could be more to be deprecated. Under whatever arrangement, I would limit the staff of a chronic hospital—be it a converted workhouse or a new erection—to a resident physician, clerk, head nurse, the ordinary domestic servants and attendants; one of the latter, on an average, to every 20 patients. Thus, taking everything into account, I calculate that the cost of maintaining a number of lunatics in one of these plain structures would be Commissioners' method of selecting workhouse accommodation liable to objection.

Staff of workhouse asylum.

lower,

lower, by at least a third, than the expense of their maintenance in a district asylum.

*Vide Eighth
Report of Inspectors,
p. 26.*

With regard to "provincial asylums" and their inapplicability, the Commissioners fully support the previously published opinions of the inspectors.

DANGEROUS LUNATICS.

Committal of
lunatics to gaols;
when advisable.

With reference to the committal of dangerous lunatics to gaols, I deem its continuance advisable under certain exceptional circumstances, as when depositions to a serious offence against life or property are duly laid, in order that (the law thus taking cognisance of the act), the party on recovery may be re-transmitted to prison, to stand his trial; in ordinary cases, however, when minor charges are made, or the apprehension of danger simply is sworn to, it certainly would be more judicious to send the person direct to the asylum, it being satisfactorily proved that it was a case chargeable to the district, and that there was accommodation in the asylum.

Causes of abuse.

One of the principal causes of abuse growing out of the Acts 1 & 2 Vict., c. 27, and 8 & 9 Vict., c. 107, arose from the economy to their families with which persons committed as dangerous lunatics were conveyed to gaols, and thence transferred to asylums, under the escort of the police, and at the cost of the county; to obviate which, in case the power of committal to asylums should be granted, as recommended, I would propose that no magistrate should take advantage of the services of the police, unless the parties deposing to the insanity deposed also to a want of means on the part of the immediate relatives, to convey the lunatic to the asylum.

Recommendation
of inspectors.

It is quite clear, however, that until adequate asylum accommodation is secured, the transmission of lunatics to gaols will continue a necessity, there being always a certainty of room therein, however much the association in them of the sane and insane is to be regretted.

Committal of
lunatics to Dublin
gaols.

Apart from the general consideration of the question, there is one feature of it intimately connected with the interests of the ratepayers of the City of Dublin, to which I beg to invite your Lordship's attention. For many years the local taxation for the maintenance of persons not natives of the metropolis, who had been committed to the city gaols as dangerous lunatics, and thence transferred to the Richmond Asylum, formed the subject of discussion at corporate meetings, frequently ending in remonstrances addressed to the Government. So important was the question regarded, that a deputation from the town council waited on the Royal Commissioners, soon after their assembling in Dublin, in order that through their interference this injustice might be remedied. The Commissioners promised to direct their particular attention to the subject. The result of their investigations is given at page 21 of their Report, where they represent the evil as incidental to all large cities, and state that they "obtained returns from the police authorities of Dublin of the number of dangerous lunatics committed within the 'Metropolitan Police District, during the five years commencing with 1852, distinguishing the localities from which such persons had come. From these it appears that of 539 persons committed in that period, only 48 are described as 'not belonging to Dublin.'" Now, according to their own showing, it is plain that the Commissioners laboured under a misconception, at the very beginning, in seeking for returns, not merely applying to the metropolitan borough—the area of city taxation—but extending to the entire *Metropolitan Police District*, the latter including some of the most populous towns in the county Dublin. Hence, instead of limiting the number—as should have been the case—to those *actually committed to city prisons*, numbering 428, and who alone could become chargeable to the city, they include in their returns 111 others, who were committed to the county gaol at Kilmainham, and were, consequently, totally beside the question.

Injustice to rate-
payers.

Commissioners'
returns incorrect.

As regards the returns themselves—which should have been 428 instead of 539—the Commissioners do not seem to have applied in the proper quarter, and consequently have fallen into a very serious error, to rectify which I beg to state that the actual number of persons committed to city gaols, as dangerous lunatics, in the quinquennial period ending with 1856, amounted to 428, *of whom 268 were not natives of the metropolis.*

From these single facts your Lordship cannot fail to perceive that the town council had ample justification for their complaints, and that the inspectors were warranted

warranted in stating, in their last Parliamentary Report, "Such are the induce-
 "ments, and such the tendency for idlers and mendicants,* amongst whom the
 "insane may be largely numbered—as well as for persons on business avocations
 "—to congregate in large towns, that they become filled with an extraneous
 "population; we find, for instance, in Dublin a far greater proportion of lunatics
 "committed as dangerous than obtains with a similar number of inhabitants in
 "rural districts; and hence it becomes liable for the maintenance of those who,
 "properly speaking, have no claims upon its charity. We believe that fully one-
 "third of the inmates whose support at the Richmond is defrayed by the city are
 "utter strangers, and a tax of near 2,000 l. a year is thus imposed on the rate-
 "payers. Forty-nine females, from different parts of the country, have been com-
 "mitted to Grangegorman within the period of this Report; and on two occasions
 "during the last year, when analysing the number of lunatics confined there, we
 "found, that out of 16 seven were from different distant counties—one of them so
 "remote as Kerry. A foreign sailor, for instance, becoming dangerously insane
 "on board a vessel in the port of Dublin, is quite as chargeable on the city for
 "the period of his detention, were it even to extend over forty years, as a native
 "of the liberties, descendant of a family resident therein for generations. This
 "abuse cannot be said to exist throughout the country to an extent which could
 "prove locally prejudicial, a sort of reciprocity being practically established
 "between one county and another; the injustice to the metropolis becomes,
 "therefore, more evident, and the necessity for applying a remedy more pressing."

Vagrants.

Opinions of
inspectors.

THE HARDWICKE CELLS.

The Commissioners, referring to this establishment, which, at the period of
 their visit thereto, in 1856, was altogether under the control of the Poor Law
 Board, represent it as disgracefully conducted, "the wretched inmates in a most
 "unsatisfactory state, and reflecting much discredit on all concerned in its
 "management." This certainly is plain speaking; but it occasionally happens
 that the strength of the language weakens the force of the argument. From a
 perusal of the remarks of the Commissioners, to the effect that "happily the
 "attention of the Lord Lieutenant was called to its condition," and "the result
 "was, that in 1857 the lunatics were removed by order of Government to Lucan,"
 their opinion being "previously solicited by the Lords of the Treasury," the
 inference would naturally be, that the Commissioners had been mainly instrumental
 in effecting the transference. But such inference would be entirely erroneous,
 inasmuch as their removal *had been decided on long prior* to the appointment of
 the Commission itself.

Hardwicke cells.

Removal of patients
therefrom not
attributable to
Commissioners.

The Hardwicke cells and Island-bridge establishments originated in a removal
 to them of the old House of Industry patients. The Island-bridge branch, con-
 taining for a time a large number of lunatics belonging to and supported by the
 district, was closed four years ago on the report and recommendation of the
 inspectors, who, so far back as 1848, represented both establishments as most
 unsuitable places for insane patients. The Dublin Hospitals' Commission, of
 which Lord Talbot de Malahide was chairman, in order to enlarge the area of
 the Whitworth Fever Hospital, recommended the abolition of those cells or
 dormitories, to which were attached two large day-rooms and two airing courts.

Early in 1856, Colonel Larcom, the Under Secretary, and one of the Poor Law
 Commissioners, intimated to the inspectors the proposed arrangement, desiring
 them to obtain a commodious residence, in a healthy situation, and with sufficient
 land. The inspectors accordingly visited various localities for this object; had
 much personal and official communication on the subject with the Under Secretary,
 and he with the Treasury. It was ultimately agreed on, as the most advisable
 plan, to commit the lunatics in question to the care of Dr. Stewart, late Governor
 of the House of Industry at Lucan Spa; the inspectors having first visited and
 reported on the healthfulness of the situation and the interior accommodation, as
 well as certain alterations to be effected in the building itself and the formation of
 airing grounds. It is most agreeable to find that the Commissioners were so
 pleased

How removed.

* From Returns furnished me by Mr. Corry Connellan, Inspector-general of Prisons, it appears
 that the number of persons committed as vagrants to the two City of Dublin Prisons in the year
 1852, amounted to 10,971.

pleased with the condition presented by the patients on their visit to Lucan Spa House early in 1857. Still, as a matter of justice to the authorities under whom they had been previously placed, it may be observed that, setting apart the very superior locality and far better arrangements of Lucan Spa House, while the inmates of it were under the superintendence of the same head officer and servants, the same beds, bedding, linen, clothes, furniture, &c., and a very similar dietary, were in use as when the Commissioners inspected them in the House of Industry. I may further remark, as the *best proof* that these incurable lunatics were not altogether so much neglected during their residence in the Hardwicke cells, the fact that the mortality amongst them in 1856 was *only six per cent*, or *fully three per cent*, under the ordinary average in asylums generally.

EXPENDITURE—ACCOMMODATION—LEGISLATION.

Expenditure.

I estimate the total cost of maintenance for the lunatic poor in Ireland, when a regular system of accommodation will have been established, and provision afforded for 6,250 patients, at about 110,000 *l.* a year—a sum which, levied on the whole grand jury rateable property, would be 2½ *d.* in the pound sterling. Were these 6,250 simply paupers in union workhouses, the expense of their support would be in round numbers *very nearly* 55,000 *l.*, of which one-half would be payable by the owners in fee; but as the grand jury tax is altogether levied on the occupying tenant, the whole 110,000 *l.* will become an immediate burthen on the farming classes. Hence your Lordship will perceive that, as the law stands, when, on the increase or enlargement of asylums, the insane inmates of poorhouses are drafted to them, the occupying tenantry will be doubly taxed for their maintenance, independent of the terminable charge of 14 years for repayments to the Treasury in liquidating the cost of erecting the institutions themselves. Both expenditures combined may, by an approximate supposition, be set down (as I shall endeavour to show in the sequel) at 139,000 *l.* annually, for a period varying from 11 to 14 years.

I have averaged the general rate of maintenance at 2½ *d.* in the pound, but, unfortunately, when it comes to be analysed, it will appear that not only the rateable basis differs in districts, but that whilst it is in the direct ratio as to population, it is inversely as to wealth; in other words, the poorer and more inhabited the county, the greater the assessment for the building and support of lunatic asylums. For example, taking the counties of Mayo and Meath: Griffith's valuation of the former is 300,000 *l.*, its population 274,000. Meath has a population of only 140,000, whilst its valuation reaches 549,000 *l.* Assuming, for argument's sake, the existence of one asylum lunatic in every thousand, and his cost of maintenance 17 *l.* a year, Mayo would have to pay 3½ *d.* in the pound, and Meath would escape at *less* than a third of that rate.

Accommodation.

Having thus generalised on the subject of expenditure, I will now advert to the proposed increase of accommodation for the insane in regard to *lunatic asylums, properly so called*; and as their fiscal bearings more immediately interest the public, I shall endeavour to explain to your Lordship, with as much minuteness and brevity as possible, how individual counties will be affected by the alteration of districts and the erection of new institutions. The Commissioners recommend, first, that "Donegal should be separated from Derry." This arrangement had been long since suggested by the inspectors. The Londonderry district originally comprised the counties of Derry, Donegal, and Tyrone. The last named was severed from it in 1852, and united to Fermanagh. Derry will thus have to support the whole institution as its own, further repaying to the two detached counties their quota of the first cost of building, whereby an additional tax will be imposed on Derry for a period of 14 years, and which will be the more felt, inasmuch as the grand jury and governors belonging to it are adverse to the separation. The fresh charge arising therefrom, including the sole maintenance of a staff, the cost of which was before divided with Donegal, will be three-eighths of a penny on Griffith's valuation, but, in return, Derry will have an asylum altogether to itself, without the need of those expensive and possibly unsatisfactory additions which should be made did Donegal continue in partnership. Donegal, on a valuation of 225,000 *l.*, could have an asylum for 220 patients at a probable cost, including the purchase of 24 acres of land, of 15,800 *l.*, the repayment of which, extended

Donegal.

extended over 14 years, would amount to 1½d. in the pound, exclusive of the Derry reimbursement, say the one-fifth of a penny. I calculate the value of ground at 2l. 10s. per acre, on a general average, in the localities where asylums would be likely to be erected, the term of purchase 25 years, and the cost of building, fixtures, boundary walls, &c., at 65 l. per head. I am aware that the latter sum is very considerably below the charge in all the establishments heretofore erected for the insane; but a less costly style of architecture is intended, the per-centage of single apartments (a large item of expenditure) would be smaller, the dormitories would be more spacious; and it should also be borne in mind, as in the formation of railroads, so in extensive structures of every kind, economy goes apace with experience. In England, within the last few years, the expense of building Lunatic Asylums has been diminished in a remarkable degree, probably by more than one-half.

2. The separation of Wexford from the Carlow district has long been advocated by the inspectors as a matter of absolute necessity. Wexford can erect its asylum for 230 inmates, at a total of 16,500 l.; repayment to the Treasury, deducting, say 2,600 l. for moneys to be returned by the Carlow District, will be, annually, about five-eighths of a penny, whilst it would entail on the contributory counties of Kildare and Carlow a charge of not quite a half-farthing in the pound during the period of liquidation. Wexford.

3. The Commissioners think the future wants of the Belfast district can be best met by a separate asylum at Downpatrick. The wants exist and are already felt. The population of Down and Antrim is 680,000, at the same time, the full accommodation in the asylum reaches only 340 patients; and, be it recollected, that the Belfast district is a manufacturing one, daily increasing in its wealth and inhabitants. The gaols are crowded, and, according to the returns of the Commissioners themselves, a large lunatic mass is unprovided for. The necessity, therefore, instead of being prospective, may be regarded as actual and immediate. An asylum for 230 patients, at 16,500 l., would, on the rateable income of the county, be about five-eighths of a penny, not, however, deducting the amount to be repaid by Antrim, and which is uncertain at present. Down.

4. With regard to the proposed subdivision of the Metropolitan district, it appears liable to objection, considering that the great proportion (over 400) of the inmates at the Richmond, are chronic, demented, and idiotic cases, which might be judiciously removed to one of those less costly institutions, suggested by the inspectors originally, and now recommended by the Commissioners. I am disposed to think that an establishment with accommodation for 640, is ample for the care and treatment of acute and curable cases of mental disease, and for the safe custody of dangerous and other lunatics, requiring special supervision. As the Mullingar Asylum suffices for the wants of its district, the separation therefrom of Meath, with a view to its annexation to Louth, for the present, at least, appears unadvisable. It is, moreover, very doubtful whether the project would be looked upon with favour by the ratepayers of the former county. Louth and Meath.

5. The same reasons that induced the inspectors, so far back as 1848, to recommend the separation of Wexford from the Carlow district—namely, want of adequate room, together with the great remoteness of portions of the county—obtain, in regard to Clare, a large and semi-insular county. An asylum in a central position, near Ennis, for 230 lunatics, would cost, as at Wexford, about 16,500 l., which, repaid by fourteen annual instalments to the Treasury, and taking a fair claim on Limerick into account, would be two-thirds of a penny in the pound on the ratepayers. The gaols of Clare and Limerick are always much incommoded by the residence in them of insane prisoners, who cannot, from the crowded state of the district asylum, obtain admission into it. Clare.

6. The Commissioners propose the detachment of Cavan from the Armagh district, to “provide for its immediate necessities.” The propriety of some change is obvious, but it becomes a question whether the mode proposed by them is the most advisable. The population of Armagh, principally a manufacturing one, and living in large and thriving towns, considerably exceeds that of either of the two agricultural counties with which it is at present united. The area of Cavan is no doubt greater by 230 square miles than that of Armagh, which is nevertheless richer, and better able to support an institution to itself alone. An Armagh, Monaghan, and Cavan.

asylum for Monaghan and Cavan together, for 230 inmates, at 16,500 *l.*, deducting, in round numbers, 3,000 *l.*, to be restored by Armagh, would leave the cost on the two counties, for fourteen years, the five-ninths of a penny, and on Armagh, for the same time, a farthing in the pound sterling.

Tipperary.

7. Tipperary, a large, populous, and wealthy district, certainly requires additional lunatic accommodation. The asylum at Clonmel contains a far greater proportion of inmates, belonging to the South Riding (fully two-thirds) than to the north. The prisons of the county are congested with insane of both sexes. The grand jury at Nenagh seem less interested in the mode of meeting this inadequacy than might be expected, considering the small share of accommodation the North Riding possesses at the asylum. The maintenance of lunatics averages, every item included, one penny in the pound on the whole county.

Mayo.

8. The erection of an asylum at Castlebar, for Mayo, was proposed, in the year 1846, by my late colleague, Dr. White. Geographically regarded, no county in Ireland stands more in need of a separate institution. It is one of the most extensive, and, connected as it is with the Ballinasloe district, its nearest confines to the asylum are fully thirty miles, while the more remote exceed ninety. An institution for 220 patients, taking into account repayments, and costing 15,800 *l.* altogether, would be under three farthings in the pound, on the annual valuation, for fourteen years; but the expense of maintenance would, as before stated, be comparatively great.

Aggregate cost of buildings.

If to this aggregate sum for the establishment of new asylums, as just submitted, and amounting to 97,600 *l.*, there be added 10,000 *l.*, as a contingent estimate for Tipperary, and 16,000 *l.* to be expended on certain of the old asylums for baths, lavatories, chapels, infirmaries, and on plain additional structures for idiots, epileptics, and the like, we shall have a total *prospective* cost of 123,600 *l.*, through which I calculate provision can be afforded for fully 2,400 patients. At present the debt of Ireland to the Treasury, for moneys advanced under the head of building, is 282,000 *l.*; which if increased by the prospective cost, the total would be 405,000 *l.*, or 29,000 *l.* for a terminable period in half-yearly instalments to the Treasury.

Classification of lunatics.

I have thus endeavoured to place before your Lordship the monetary position in which an organised system of lunatic institutions will probably be found to stand, with reference to the public at large, and to the ratepayers, who may be called upon for its maintenance. The new buildings should be so constructed as to insure a total separation of congenital and epileptic idiots, as well as of individuals utterly demented, who, having secured to them every creature comfort suitable to their condition, will, nevertheless, be supported at a still lower charge than curable or acute cases, or than lunatics simply labouring under delusions, incurable, but yet intelligent. In a moral or a sanitary point of view, I know nothing more to be objected to than the commixture of the idiotic classes and the general inmates of an asylum.

Difference between Commissioners' returns and those of Inspectors explained.

To render the subject of the proposed accommodation more intelligible to your Lordship, I have reserved for this, as the most appropriate place, any remarks on the difference between the returns of the Commissioners, referred to at page 2 of their Report, and those of the Inspectors as to the insane at large. The Commissioners give a total of 3,352, stating that, in the directions issued to the parties engaged in making out the returns, care was taken to specify that the "poor" should alone be included. Now, as the epithet "poor" has an indefinite meaning, and as the constabulary, although a most intelligent body of men, might not always agree in the definition of the term, we thought it better to obtain the returns simply of the insane and those mentally affected, irrespective of social position. The Inspectors' returns, therefore, amount to 4,841. The Commissioners hope that there will be no necessity to provide accommodation in asylums for this large number. The Inspectors never calculated on it. In their seventh Report, referring to the number of insane at large in 1854-5, the Inspectors state, "*We are by no means to be understood as indicating a necessity for accommodation to anything approaching the above amount; we merely put forth the fact of the extent to which mental disease, in every phase, prevails, as well as those affections which may be regarded as connected with it.*" Every person who is bodily unwell, is not a fit object for in-door hospital treatment; so also in regard to disordered mental manifestations, such as silliness, foolishness, temporary dulness or excitement

ment after epileptic seizures, &c. Basing a calculation on what I observe in poor-houses, I should be inclined to think that about one case in three of all persons mentally affected, both at large and in workhouses, might be legitimately placed under proper control, and on this I would fix an approximate accommodation for 2,400 patients.

The lunatic population of the country may be classified under two denominations, viz. : those whose support and maintenance are dependent on the public funds or rates, and those who, possessed of means, are either resident in private asylums—with their immediate families—or placed singly under the care of others. The former, who are located in district asylums, workhouses, gaols, and in the central asylum at Dundrum, come more immediately, and for the most part, under the authority of the Lord Lieutenant; the latter, under that of the Lord Chancellor. Thus two separate jurisdictions exist, and the question presents itself, whether the double management could not be more effectually and more economically carried on by one central Board. I believe it can, and so far coincide with the Commissioners. But when the relations of this Board with the executive, with grand juries, and the public at large, come to be considered, I respectfully dissent from the recommendations of the Royal Commissioners, which, if passed into a law, would arm the "Central Board," composed of two physicians and a lawyer, with an authority that may well be called despotic. Legislation.
Double jurisdiction.

The Commissioners propose "to assign to the Central Board the duty of ascertaining, in the first instance, whether additional asylum accommodation was required for any district, and how it might be best provided. The Board should transmit their opinion to the Lord Lieutenant and the governors of the asylum of the district concerned; and should the Board of Governors not proceed within a limited period to provide additional accommodation in the manner in which the Central Board recommend, it should be then lawful for the Lord Lieutenant, on the requisition of the Commissioners, to require the Board of Governors to provide such additional accommodation *in such manner as the Commissioners may have set forth.*" It may be gratifying to the pride of the Central Board to be armed with such power as that proposed, over the hierarchy, nobility, and gentry of Ireland, from whose ranks governors of asylums are selected; but I apprehend, so far from working well, it would be the means of producing endless embroilments, which, in case of the governors offering any determined opposition, must inevitably end, as ended the recent discussions between the English Commissioners in Lunacy, and the Visitors of the Colney Hatch and Hanwell Asylums, by the Commissioners being obliged to give way at the eleventh hour. Nor does this proposition of the Commissioners appear consistent with a complaint uttered in a previous part of their Report, where they dwell on "the injustice of excluding rate-payers, or those who represent them, from a voice in the determination of questions in which they are so deeply concerned." Proposed Central Board.
Power to be conferred on it.

Formerly asylums were undertaken without grand juries being consulted as to extent or expenditure. Were the recommendations of the Royal Commission acted on, in case of disagreement between the "Central Board" and grand juries, the position of the latter would not be improved, for their knowledge would be of no avail—in which dilemma they might well conceive, that "if ignorance is bliss, 'twere folly to be wise." Instead of the Central Board having executive powers at its own command, it seems to me more beneficial for the lunatic department generally, and more calculated to secure a harmonious working, that it should rather serve as the agent of Government; and that while the statute law should be simplified as much as possible, ample authority should be afforded to the Board to carry into effect a comprehensive system of management, under strong and congruous rules framed by the Lord Lieutenant in Council, the explanation and adaptation of which should rest with the Central Board.

When it is proposed to erect a new asylum, or to divide a district, such appearing advisable, I would suggest that intimation thereof be conveyed by the Commissioners to the grand juries of the district; that each grand jury be called on to express its reasons for or against the proposition; and that the Commissioners report thereon to the Lord Lieutenant for his decision; that if an asylum is to be built, the grand juries be informed thereof, and that the grand jury of the building county employ its own architect to draw up plans, specifications, &c., &c., for the perfect accommodation of the number of patients for whom it is intended; all of which

Creation of
districts and
erection of
asylums.

which are to be submitted to the Commissioners for their approval. I would further suggest, that when approved of by them and their architect, the Lord Lieutenant may issue from the Consolidated Fund such sum, at once, as will be sufficient for the purchase of a sufficient quantity of ground (under the provisions of the Act 1 & 2 Geo. 4, c. 33), and a further sum not exceeding one-eighth of the whole sum necessary for the building, in the name of a committee of five, selected from the grand jury panel; that by this committee the works be commenced, and that at each assizes the committee may apply, through the foreman of the grand jury, for a further sum, on a report from one of the Commissioners as to the extent and condition of the works executed. I would propose that Government should have the power to appoint a Clerk of Works, to be resident on the premises, who should report monthly to the Central Board, his salary to be paid out of the moneys advanced by the Lord Lieutenant in Council. The asylum, when reported as finished and furnished by the Commissioners, should be handed over to five trustees—namely, the Lord Lieutenant of the county, the Bishop of the diocese, the Roman-catholic Bishop, and any two others selected by his Excellency. With regard to structural alterations in old asylums, when the sum for effecting them would amount to, or exceed 1,000 £., or the purchase of additional ground to a like sum, I would authorise the governors of an asylum to apply through the Commissioners for the required funds to the Lord Lieutenant in Council; or should the Commissioners deem an increase either of land or building necessary, a similar mode of procedure, as in the original erection of asylums, should be adopted.

Asylums to
be vested in
trustees.

Division of
districts, and
adjustment of
accounts.

Now, as to the dissolution of partnerships, when it becomes necessary, as between counties, cities, &c., I propose that an adjustment should be made by law to obviate references or arbitrations, which seldom satisfy either party. It would be as follows, or something similar:—After a connexion of 20 years, one-fourth; of 35, one-half; of 50, or any subsequent period, three-fourths of the sums *solely* expended on building should be deducted from the whole, and on the difference repayments made to the severed county or counties, by 28 half-yearly instalments—the full cost of the land (in due proportion) to be similarly refunded. As to furniture, a very small item, an equitable adjustment can easily be made.

The Commissioners, under the head of workhouses, speak of the partial or total transformation of them, in some few localities where they are less needed as such, into receptacles for insane paupers; to do which will require the intervention of an Act of Parliament, while the ultimate issue resolves itself into one of economy. If the asylums mentioned in a preceding part of this letter be erected, they will, I anticipate, in the generality of cases, be always ample for the requirements of their respective counties, whilst the old ones, with a diminished area belonging to them, will, with plain additions, for the most part, be probably found sufficient for the wants of their immediate districts. The taking of more land may, however, become essential, so as to afford out-door employment, and even thus diminish expense; for, unlike workhouse grounds, those attached to institutions for the insane, are always certain to be cultivated by a fixed number of inmates, and are consequently found to be highly remunerative.

Fiscal affairs
of asylums.

I now come to a second branch of the fiscal legislation for asylums, that of their maintenance. It appears to me that the existing system, as based on the 6 Geo. 4, c. 54, and 11 Geo. 4, c. 22, should be continued as recommended formerly by the inspectors, and now by the Commissioners; the mode, however, of applying for advances, by local Boards, might be much improved. At present they address their applications to the Privy Council, and by a circuitous route these applications come before the inspectors for examination. If irregular, a correspondence takes place between this office and the asylum authorities, so as to rectify inaccuracies, and thus much time is lost, and occasionally inconveniences arise. I think the *first* communications should be addressed to the Commissioners on monetary, and, indeed, on all other matters, so that when necessary they can be briefly and satisfactorily reported on for the information of the Executive. Your Lordship will have perceived that, as far as my opinion goes, I am adverse to the granting such powers as the Commissioners propose to a Central Board, composed of only three members, and with an anomalous quorum of two, from whom even there is no provision for an appeal. Unless grand juries act as directed, the Commissioners themselves will act in their place. Should a

Central

Central Board be established, as I think would be most useful for the public service, (but not with that unlimited and direct authority proposed to be given to it by the Royal Commission), unless a secretary must, as a matter of course, be appointed to it, I believe an adequate staff of clerks, among whom the various duties of the office could be apportioned (for example, one for private lunacy correspondence, one for fiscal business and the examination of accounts, &c.), would be found more economic and efficient. The report would attach an obligation to the Commissioners to forward their observations to grand juries once a year; but as the resident physicians or managers ought to report annually to the governors and grand juries of the district, on the condition of their respective asylums, the fulfilments of such an obligation can tend to no practical good. A general report to his Excellency the Lord Lieutenant would seem to me the more consistent duty of Commissioners.

Staff of Central Board.

When on the subject of gaols, I expressed to your Lordship my belief that the system of committing lunatics as dangerous to prison, cannot be altogether superseded—it may be modified—but while asylum accommodation is not fully equal to the wants of the country, there must be some receptacle for the class in question. The manner in which magistrates should carry out the provisions of the Act can be regulated as contingencies may necessitate, by orders in Council, quite as satisfactorily as by a statute which would require another to alter it. As under the head of gaols, and that of poorhouses, I have dwelt already on details connected with these institutions, and having reference to the Commissioners' Report, I will not trouble your Lordship with further observations on them in their legal bearings.

In thus submitting to your Lordship my views generally on legislation, I have restricted them to the propositions as published by the Royal Commissioners, but the subject may be envisaged under a totally different aspect; and though I may be opposed to the constitution of a Board of three—two physicians and a lawyer—one on a larger and more influential basis may be worthy of much consideration by your Lordship. I allude to a Central Board, of which the Lord Chancellor would be Chairman, with four unpaid Commissioners, one of whom might be a Judge of the Court of Queen's Bench (for criminal lunacy), and two others members of the Privy Council, with three paid Commissioners, two of them to be physicians, the third a barrister. A board so constituted, must, *per se*, command full control, and an unquestionable authority throughout the kingdom.

Inspectors' opinion as to constitution of Central Board.

I do not agree with the Royal Commissioners in thinking the services of a lawyer necessary for the object of inspection—it strikes me rather as the reverse—although it might be very useful to have one permanently on the Board, but who would not be debarred from practice. The more particular duties of this legal Commissioner would be to take cognisance of, and sit on all important cases "*de lunatico inquirendo*," with one of the medical Commissioners, when the question of insanity was mooted; in other and minor cases, as suggested by the Commissioners, the assistant barrister of the city or county could adjudicate. I throw out the suggestion of *this* Central Board with diffidence, and briefly, feeling that it involves matters not immediately within my province, but mainly appertaining to the Lord Chancellor's jurisdiction, and the more particularly in regard to committees and the supervision of lunatics under the Courts.

PRIVATE ASYLUMS.

Private Asylums.

In the general spirit of the legislation proposed by the Commissioners for the control of private asylums, I fully concur. The inconvenience and disadvantages arising from the existing mode of issuing licences under the 5 & 6 Vict. c. 123, had been a constant theme of disapproval with the inspectors. I cannot, however, assent to the proposition of the Commissioners, as I think that the authority of the Lord Chancellor should not alone extend to the revocation of licences, as proposed, but that the power of granting them should equally rest with him; both to be exercised on the recommendation of the Central Board, whose duty it should be, in the first instance, to obtain satisfactory evidence that the party applying for a licence was possessed of means, and that he was not entering on an unfair speculation, to the prejudice of his future patients.

Licences.

The house, premises, grounds, furniture, and general accommodation should also be approved of by the Commissioners, with plans drawn by a competent architect.

The number of dormitories should be fixed, and all preliminaries satisfactorily arranged.

Fees on licences ;
misconception of
Commissioners as
to their amount.

The Commissioners would do away with fees payable on licences, alleging as one reason their " insignificant amount "—a mistake arising from an erroneous interpretation of the Act, as already remarked. So far from abolishing, I should be disposed to increase them, and would consequently suggest that there should be a charge of 10 *l.* for the stamp, and 1 *l.* for every patient admitted into an asylum ; but I do not consider it equitable that a charge should be made for every person *proposed* to be received, whether he comes or not, as is the case at present. If proprietors wish to establish private asylums, it is altogether of their own free will ; and the greater the preliminary outlay, the less probability of needy adventurers. And it further appears to me, that all the expenses incidental to the visitation and control of private asylums should be liquidated by their owners, who cause the necessity thereof.

On every point I would render the law stringent, commencing *before* the patient touched the threshold of the asylum : for example, I think the physicians certifying to insanity should state their reasons on the face of the document ; that the alleged lunatic should be apprised of the object of their visits, as at present the interviews of medical men assume not unfrequently the character of a morning visit. It is also to be regretted that the families of lunatics lend themselves to a deception in the mode of conveying their insane relatives to asylums, occasionally decoying them on a false pretence, in most cases withholding from them the name and character of their destination, a proceeding which generates an injurious and fixed distrust in the minds of the sufferers, who in too many instances are subsequently treated with great forgetfulness. There is much to find fault with from time to time in private asylums ; *but the public outside is not altogether exempt from blame.*

Cases directly opposite to the above are, in some rare instances, to be met with, and for which there is no provision. I refer to individuals who having previously laboured under marked mental disease, and apprehending a repetition of attack from premonitory symptoms, desire to place themselves under salutary control before the outbreak of the disease. It might be well to admit such into private asylums for a specified period, say not more than two months at a time, on written application from the parties themselves to the Central Board.

Commissioners' censure of private asylums.

Stringent, however, as the clauses of an Act should be to prevent abuse, I cannot in justice subscribe to the implied doctrine of the Commissioners, or to their unqualified censure of all the private asylums in Ireland. They would seem to think that an undertaking not founded on philanthropic motives would induce the parties embarking in it to act unjustly or dishonestly for the sake of private profit. If this be true, professional men, of every denomination, come more or less under the same category. The professional owner of a private asylum devotes " his time, his labour, and his skill," furthermore, his means and his anxieties, to a particular object ; and I see no reason why he should be debarred from deriving a livelihood from the prosecution of an honest industry. If lunatics who, residing with their families, would probably become a perpetual burthen, sources of anxiety and danger (often too, I fear, objects of gross neglect), return home from private asylums restored to health—and the recoveries in them average a very fair proportion, whilst the mortality is less than half what is usually considered favourable—surely the professional man under whose care they were placed, and who assumed the responsibility of their charge, deserves remuneration. Knowing besides that some medical proprietors, at the desire of the inspectors, have expended large sums in additions and alterations—one case I might adduce in which an entirely new asylum was erected at a cost of 4,000 *l.*—and also aware that patients have been supported for years by the charity of others, I deem it but a matter of justice to state as much.

Character of private asylums.

The Inspectors in their Reports have designated certain houses not simply as " necessities," but as " necessary evils,"* and have expressed their strong disapprobation of any thing like " trading on the misfortunes of human nature ;" but I cannot coincide with the Commissioners when they intimate that they would gladly see all existing private licensed houses in Ireland, " superseded," however much I may regret that some few of them bear evidence to a want of attention, not alone

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* *Vide* Eighth Report of Inspectors, p. 24.

to neatness, but occasionally even to cleanliness and to comforts, as reported by the Inspectors to magistrates at quarter session.

The Commissioners refer to a laxity in enforcing the provisions of the Act in regard to private asylums, pointing to certain instances in confirmation of their statement. The first refers to an omission on the part of a proprietor who had allowed the quarter sessions to elapse without taking out his licence. The Commissioners, it appears to me, would be doing but an act of simple justice in adding that the omission in question was purely accidental, and would not have occurred if the proprietor had, as usual, sent his book before the magistrates, the reports in which were invariably most favourable to his establishment, and that they themselves had obtained the knowledge of this omission, on reading therein a memorandum written by one of the Inspectors, within three days afterwards, 16th October, in which he directed the proprietor to forward the amount of licence to the Clerk of the Peace, with a copy of his entry to the magistrates, at next quarter sessions, requesting the licence to be charged for from the proper period; which was done, as a matter of course, and even without the personal attendance of the proprietor. The Commissioners themselves were aware of the licence being granted at the Christmas sessions. As to the other instance of an omission in this respect, I am quite ignorant, unless it be to a case so far back as 1854, when the Inspectors were prevented from instituting legal proceedings from a conviction that the neglect was not with the intention of evading the law.

Laxity in enforcing the law.

Cases referred to accidental.

They also speak of a deficiency of certificates in regard to admissions in some few cases. The Inspectors were quite aware that four or five patients had been placed in private asylums under exceptional circumstances, which in their opinion rendered the usual certificates unnecessary. The first was a gentleman confined as a "dangerous lunatic" by a warrant of the Secretary of State for the Home Department—the second, a person transferred directly from the Dundrum Asylum by order of the Lord Lieutenant, the opinion of the law officers of the Crown in Ireland having been taken as to its legality. The third was a Chancery patient, quite demented, and who, while confined in a district asylum, coming in for a small annuity, was transferred to a private licensed house by order of the Lord Chancellor. Two others were transferred from one private institution, on its closing, to another. In these four last cases the Inspectors thought it useless to put the friends of the parties to the expense of getting fresh medical certificates, they being in fact unequivocally insane, and their transference being effected with the cognisance of the Inspectors—themselves medical men.

Deficiency of certificates.

The Commissioners further state, that they found two females had slept for a considerable period in a portion of the house set apart for males. Even so, I doubt whether it amounts to an infraction of the law. But, without wishing to go behind the simple fact, I have to observe, that the ladies in question occupied apartments in the immediate residence of the proprietor and his family, with whom, in their more lucid intervals, they always associated. There were two very old, debilitated, and utterly demented gentlemen, whose infirmity required particular care, and who lived also in the proprietor's house, but apart from the family. If in error here, the Inspectors erred from good intentions, and a desire to give the semblance of a home to parties who had been long neglected by their relatives.

There is a very numerous class of lunatics in the better ranks of life, with regard to whom the provisions of the law should be of the strictest kind—namely, the individuals placed with unlicensed persons receiving payment therefor. Clauses 36 and 37 of the present Act for the Regulation of Private Asylums in Ireland, require that no person shall be placed in unlicensed house for whose care and maintenance payment is received, without due notice of his reception, accompanied by the necessary medical certificates, being transmitted to the Inspectors within three months, under pain of the proprietor of such house being deemed guilty of misdemeanor. These stipulations have, however, become, as have similar ones in England, a dead letter; chiefly in consequence of the impossibility of detecting practices doubly enveloped in secrecy, viz., on the part of the friends of the lunatic and on that of the receiver. That the law is thus evaded your Lordship will readily perceive, when I state that the cases in which the requisite notices have been furnished to the Inspectors are confined to one solitary instance.

Lunatics placed singly with unlicensed persons.

It were well if the abuse consisted merely in the evasion of a clause of a statute, an offence in itself not trivial; but from what I have observed myself, I fear it is otherwise, as the worst cases in private asylums fall far short of what I have

witnessed in regard to individual patients whom I have been called upon to visit.

Alterations required in the law.

I should suggest, as the most effectual means to obviate this evil, that a fine of not less than 10 *l.* or 20 *l.* should be inflicted on both the party sending to and receiving any lunatic in a private house, on a stipend, unless due notice thereof, together with copies of medical certificates, be furnished to the Central Board within a fortnight—a notice of removal likewise to be duly supplied. It might be further advisable to oblige the recipient to register; and, if only for one patient, at a fee of 5 *l.*

Swift's Hospital.

In preceding Reports the Inspectors have restricted their notice of St. Patrick's or Swift's Hospital, to simply giving statistical details, that institution having a particular charter, and being thus in great measure, if not entirely, beyond the control of their office. Should Parliament think fit to interfere with chartered rights, I think it would be desirable to place it under the same control, in every respect, as other benevolent institutions for the insane. One thing is quite evident, that as a curative hospital, and notwithstanding that it is under the professional care of two of the most eminent physicians in Ireland, its table of recoveries is by far the most limited of any in this country, scarcely amounting to four per cent. on the number under treatment in the year. This unfavourable state of things is referable to the fact that few but chronic, or almost incurable cases have been admitted into it, whilst the locality itself is utterly unsuited for so large an establishment. It appears to me that if the premises were disposed of (and from the situation in which they are placed, contiguous to the Royal Hospital, Railway Terminus, and Barracks, they would be sure to command a high price), that a sum of money would be realised sufficient to purchase ground, in an eligible site, on which an asylum, replete with modern improvements, might be erected, and devoted as much as possible to the reception of cases admitting of the probability of cure. No doubt testamentary and other donations would be likely to increase a fund in the furtherance of the greatest, perhaps, of all charities, that which "administers unto a mind diseased," and tends to restore the highest privilege conferred by the Deity on man—the exercise of reason.

Recommendation of Inspectors.

Gratified as the Inspectors cannot but feel that their views on the question of benevolent institutions should have received the countenance of the Commissioners, I regret they did not include in the list of the recommendations that which I have ventured to offer for the removal of the present establishment to a more commodious and healthful situation.

Being on this immediate subject, I cannot forbear directing your Lordship's attention to the fact, that little more than 100 years ago the possibility of finding in all Ireland as many as 50 idiots and lunatics seemed such a matter of doubt to the founder of this institution, that he directed the difference to be made up of incurables labouring under bodily diseases; whilst in this letter, which I have the honour to address to your Lordship, an accommodation for no less than 6,250 of the two first classes, forms the subject of consideration.

CENTRAL
ASYLUM.

CENTRAL ASYLUM.

It is agreeable to find that the Central Asylum, which four successive Governments have entrusted to the control and management of the Inspectors, should be fortunate enough, if not to obtain praise, at least to escape censure. The Commissioners state that the "rules were framed by the Lord Lieutenant in Council for its conduct and management." This is not quite accurate; the rules emanated altogether from this office, were submitted in due course to Lord Clarendon, and approved of without an alteration by his Excellency in Council. Looking to the extended scope of the Commission, and to the acknowledged abilities of its members, I anticipated that the subject of criminal lunacy in its social and legal bearings would have been fully and satisfactorily discussed; for even to one not "learned in the law," acquainted with the working of the Act 8 & 9 Vict. c. 107, under which the Central Asylum was established, there may appear ample room for improvement.

Accommodation.

Touching the increase of accommodation at Dundrum, as proposed by the Commissioners, I do not at present feel competent to express an opinion, beyond recommending the construction of a large day-room, and four cells for refractory patients, by which arrangement one of the present sitting-rooms could be converted into a dormitory for six. The consideration of the enlargement referred to

to in the Commissioners' Report, depends on the Executive, and on what class of persons may be regarded as *bond fide* coming within the category of "Criminal Lunatics;" for if every person accused of an offence (be it even such as the stealing a cap valued at a few pence, or breaking a pane or two of glass), and acquitted on the ground of insanity, is to be considered a criminal lunatic, and as such removable to the Central Asylum, it must inevitably go on increasing, year after year, to an indefinite extent.

By reference to the statistics of this office, I find that in 1845 there were in Ireland of every possible denomination of lunatics coming under the term "Criminal," in gaols and asylums, 105; in 1846, 112. At these periods crime was more than double what it fortunately is at present, whilst the population was nearly two millions greater. Now we have upwards of 180 of the same class.

Is it that mental disorders have really assumed a new phase, allying themselves with crime? Or that there being a criminal asylum, as it is called, for lunatics, a loose system of regarding offences, great and small, with reference to insanity, is gaining ground? The advocate of the latter opinion might point to a recent trial at which a farmer, well to do in life, but intemperate and ill-conditioned, and who had deliberately fired at and killed his neighbour, with whom he had a misunderstanding about some land, was acquitted on the plea of his labouring under a strong homicidal mania, the proofs of which would seem to consist in his having at one time stabbed a calf in a fit of passion, at another crossed a flooded stream on horseback, and on a third occasion fired at some breakfast-ware in his own parlour. This man, while in prison, feigned insanity, but was an indifferent mimic; and, I need scarcely inform your Lordship, that the verdict of the jury acted as a spell on the delusions, such as they were, under which he laboured.

Class of cases considered "criminal lunatics."

The Commissioners, quoting the evidence of the Inspectors, state, that "in the selection, preference is given rather to cases of heinous crime than of aggravated lunacy, not, however, to the exclusion of persons showing violent and dangerous symptoms." They also state, that "a practice exists of sending back criminal lunatics, who have not recovered their reason, to the asylum of the district from which they originally came." This appears to be a mistake on the part of the Commissioners: no such practice exists or has existed, inasmuch as no person has been sent back to the asylum of his or her district, nor would such a proceeding be permissible until the penal period of confinement had terminated in a residence at the Central Asylum, and when even the epithet "criminal" would have legally ceased to exist. It is quite true the 61st rule, submitted to the Lord Lieutenant in Council, makes this provision, that "as lunatics charged with minor offences may be transferred from district asylums to the central, they shall, at the discretion of his Excellency, and on the report of the Inspectors, be subject to be sent back to the institutions from whence they came." The object was to disembarass the Central Asylum of cases of minor offences, though of aggravated lunacy, on the *cessation* of violent and dangerous symptoms. The Act 8 & 9 gives the Lord Lieutenant in Council the power to make such rules as he pleases, and these rules have statutory force. As he admits, so he may discharge. The institution is purely a Government one. Nor, with great respect to the Commissioners, do I see on what principle or under what circumstance any individual is to be regarded as a criminal after the expiration of his sentence. For example, suppose a person is sentenced to seven years' imprisonment, and gets insane at the close of the fourth year, he is then transferred to the Central Asylum. In three years his term of penal servitude expires, and he ceases to be a care or burthen on the State. The law, in fact, expressly orders his discharge. The Inspectors arrange for his reception in his own proper district asylum (as in two instances, a few months ago, in Ballinasloe). Surely that man is *not* a criminal lunatic, and the act of sending him to a public institution belonging to his own county is not inconsistent with the letter of the law or spirit of the constitution.

Selection of cases.

State of the law.

The Commissioners speak of the moral guilt of lunatics and its gradations, until it rises to the full stain of crime. The word criminal, in regard to insanity, is perhaps improperly applied, still as an epithet to distinguish, it may be used; but the substance or essence, as represented by the word *crime*, is totally different in signification. The Commissioners, although urgent in their disapproval that any incurable inmate, because his case is hopeless, and he himself may be harmless, should be remitted to association with lunatics who are not

"Moral guilt" of lunatics.

criminal, do not refer to what should appear in their eyes equally an injustice—namely, the association of an insane person charged with an offence, but for which offence he has not been as yet tried, and of which he is therefore innocent in the eye of the law, with criminal lunatics. They are altogether incorrect in attributing the hopelessness of a case as a cause for its being sent to a district asylum. As Government places so much confidence in the Inspectors as not to interfere except on their suggestions, I deem it but a duty to the office to rectify the mistake. There are at least 50 incurable lunatics and some idiots at Dundrum, whose comforts will be sedulously looked after there during their lives.

The Commissioners “think that the law should explicitly define who is to be detained in the criminal asylum.” With the greatest diffidence on a subject of metaphysical import, I would not generalise. Each lunatic’s case, though belonging to the same group or category of offences as amongst the sane, presents such varied aspects that it should be judged of by itself, and left immediately to the decision of the Lord Lieutenant as head of the Executive, aided by the opinion of the law officers of the Crown in Ireland on the report of the Inspectors.

As pertinent to this immediate subject, as well as to show the difficulty that might arise from any attempts at generalization, I may quote the sentiments of the Inspectors, as stated in their Report of 1855:—

“Whilst on the subject of criminality, and its legal modifications in regard to lunatics, we would most respectfully observe, that in our opinion it would be very desirable in all important cases, as when a party is acquitted, on the plea of lunacy, of murder, or of a serious attempt on the life of another, that the antecedents to the act should at the time be judicially investigated. Once insanity is established—and it generally happens to be the first point urged in defence—the case closes; and those exciting causes, or incidental circumstances, likely to modify the judgment of the court in regard to a prisoner thoroughly responsible for his conduct are left unquestioned. Thus the lunatic labours under a disadvantage in one respect; for, though acquitted of a moral crime, he may still become the penal sufferer by a more lengthened confinement. Amongst other instances under our cognizance, as illustrative of this view, we shall refer to three: the first, that of a man in the Central Asylum, who, it was proved, whilst labouring under maniacal excitement from jealousy towards his wife, in consequence of her supposed freedom of conduct, committed homicide. On recovery from his insanity he was brought to trial, when the fact was proved. This person is now quite sane, and has been so for some years. The second instance we may adduce in the person of a man who, in a scuffle, inflicted a wound, which ultimately caused death; he was acquitted on the plea of being deranged at the time of the occurrence. The third is one of a peculiar character, for the individual in question, acquitted also on the plea of insanity, complains that he has thereby been most unfairly and harshly treated; that he never was deranged; that the offence he committed was the result of the hardship and injustice he suffered at the hands of another, and of his consequent anger and excitement; and that had he been tried regularly and found guilty, he would have escaped with a comparatively short imprisonment.

“The records alone of the fact of trial, and the cause of acquittal, exist in these and similar cases; but it would be most satisfactory if such records were coupled with the official information of attendant circumstances, in order that, when submitting them to the consideration of the Lord Lieutenant, we might be enabled to furnish ample materials for his Excellency’s decision, and to satisfy ourselves we were justified in stating them. So long as an asylum—no matter under what denomination, be it even that of criminal—is made the receptacle of our unfortunate fellow-creatures, who, in the hour of grievous mental derangement, have committed offences, in themselves the most appalling, or of those who, subsequent to sentence, may lose their reason altogether, so long its inmates have a claim on our kindest sympathies; it ceases however to fulfil its object if, through a mistaken benevolence, or from want of a scrutiny into the particulars of each case, it should become the residence of parties for whom it was not legitimately intended, or should an immunity for the undeserving be secured within its precincts.”

In closing my observations on the Central Asylum, I feel pride in being able to state that after an expenditure of 20,417*l.* 1*s.* 3*d.* minutely examined by the Audit Commissioners, the only error that appeared was one involving the small sum of one shilling and one penny. But it would be disingenuous were the inspectors to take credit to themselves for what, perhaps, may be more properly attributed to the officers of that institution.

I have not hitherto mentioned the name, or made direct reference to my present associate in office, as Dr. Hatchell cannot be held accountable for any faults or defects charged against, or connected with, the control and management of Lunatic Asylums in Ireland. At the same time it affords me great satisfaction to state, that so far as he considers his experience qualifies him in forming an opinion he fully coincides in the general tenor of the present communication, as well as in the justice of any encomium that could be bestowed on the very satisfactory

factory manner in which the varied and onerous business of this department has been conducted by the two zealous and efficient gentlemen attached to it as clerks.

I have also carefully abstained from introducing anything that was not relevant to the matters discussed in the Report, or that could possibly give umbrage to the gentlemen whose signatures are affixed to it, and for whom personally I entertain every sentiment of respect; and if my observations have run to a greater length than I had anticipated, the nature of the subject, and the interest your Lordship must necessarily feel in it, will, I hope, be deemed sufficient excuse. Trusting that the legislative results of the inquiry, and the opinions elicited thereby, may, through your Lordship's support and influence, be such as to satisfy the public mind on a question of the deepest social importance,

I have, &c.
(signed) *John Nugent.*

— II. —

RETURN showing the date of the first Publication of the foregoing LETTER.

COPIES of the Letter, printed at the private expense of the writer, were circulated on the 14th October 1858, chiefly among parties connected with Lunatic Asylums in Ireland.

— III. —

RETURN showing the date at which the first issue of the Lunatic Asylums (Ireland) Commissioners of Inquiry Report was made, by whom made, and the number of copies then circulated:—

1. The first issue of the Report, complete, with Evidence and Appendices was made on the 2d of October 1858.*
2. That issue was made by me, as Secretary.
3. The number of copies then circulated was fifty.

Note.—On my application by letter, dated 11th October 1858, to the Secretary of the Treasury, asking, on special grounds, that the Lords Commissioners would authorise the issue to me (for distribution by direction of the Commissioners of Inquiry) of additional copies of the Report, their Lordships were pleased to direct the Comptroller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office to transmit to me fifty additional copies, which I received, and duly issued, in the first week of November 1858.

(signed) *W. J. Barry,*
Late Secretary to the Lunatic Asylums Inquiry
Commission.

1, Charles Street, Berkeley Square,
14th March 1859.

* Copies of the Report (without the Evidence and Appendices), were transmitted to the Secretary for the Home Department for presentation to both Houses of Parliament, on the 30th of June, and presented on the 19th of July to both Houses; a delay of some days having been occasioned by the absence from London of the two English Commissioners, whose signatures had to be affixed to the Report subsequently to its transmission.

LUNATIC ASYLUMS (IRELAND).

COPY of a LETTER addressed to the Chief Secretary for *Ireland*, by Dr. *Nugent*, Inspector of Lunatic Asylums, in reply to STATEMENTS in the REPORT of the COMMISSIONERS of INQUIRY into LUNATIC ASYLUMS in *Ireland*; also, RETURNS showing the Date of the first Publication of such LETTER; and the Date at which the first Issue of the COMMISSIONERS' REPORT was made, &c.

(*Mr. Fagan.*)

Ordered, by the House of Commons, to be Printed,
22 March 1859.
