

**Observations on the admission of medical pupils to the wards of Bethlem Hospital, for the purpose of studying mental diseases / by John Webster.**

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# OBSERVATIONS

ON THE

OF

## ADMISSION OF MEDICAL PUPILS

TO THE

### WARDS OF BETHLEM HOSPITAL,

FOR THE PURPOSE OF

### STUDYING MENTAL DISEASES.

By JOHN WEBSTER, M.D., &c.,

One of the ~~Governors~~ Governors.

LONDON:

PRINTED BY T. BRETTELL, RUPERT STREET, HAYMARKET

1842.

TO

ALDERMAN SIR PETER LAURIE, KNT.,

PRESIDENT OF THE ROYAL HOSPITALS OF  
BRIDEWELL AND BETHLEM,

&c. &c. &c.

THE following observations are respectfully dedicated, as a sincere token of esteem for the upright character of a zealous and able Magistrate; to mark the high estimation entertained towards him as an efficient President of Bridewell and Bethlem Hospitals; and also to express the Author's great regard for a Gentleman of much private worth, who has always shewn himself the friend of judicious improvements.

56, Grosvenor Street,

May 1842.

LONDON:

1842.

R35289



## OBSERVATIONS, &c.

AT the Quarterly General Court of the Governors of Bridewell and Bethlem Hospitals, held in January last, at which you were present in the Chair; after the Annual Reports of the Physicians had been read, I drew attention to the propriety of granting a more free admission than heretofore, to members of the medical profession, for the purpose of studying in the wards of Bethlem Hospital, the various forms of mental diseases, met with in the numerous patients of that excellent Institution. But no notice having been previously given, of any motion on the subject, the question could not be discussed. However, as the proposition then casually mooted, appeared to be rather favourably received; and as it is, to my mind at least, a subject of the highest importance, both to society at large, and to the medical profession, as well in respect of the benefits it would confer on the former, as from the superior knowledge which medical practitioners would thus acquire, regarding a most important class of diseases; I now beg leave to address to you, as the President of Bridewell and Bethlem Hospitals, the following brief observations, with the view of explaining more fully than I could otherwise do, the various bearings of a question, in which I feel much interest; trusting, that the arguments now brought forward, in support of the proposed innovation, may have some effect in proving, to yourself and likewise to the Governors, that, so far from any injurious effects being likely to arise, from permitting a freer admission of medical students, into the wards of Bethlem Hospital, than is at present allowed, many benefits would, on the contrary, by such a proceeding, ultimately ensue to the profession, of which I am a member, and, through them, to all classes of the community.

Believing at the same time, although many improvements have been already effected at Bethlem Hospital, especially since your accession to the Chair as President; nevertheless, there still remains room for further ameliorations. Entertaining also a hope, that the change I now advocate, respecting the admission of medical pupils, would meet with your approval, provided it were made sufficiently manifest, that the utility of the Institution would not thereby be diminished, or the comfort of its inmates, or their ultimate



recovery interrupted; I therefore feel less hesitation in thus continuing a discussion on the point, being confident, should the proposition fail, after due consideration, in obtaining your sanction, and that of the Governors generally, it will as much arise from the difficulties attending the carrying into effect the proposed change, as from any inherent objections really affecting such an innovation, although admitted to possess several advantages.

In order to place the question at issue in a proper light, it appears useful, previously to examine into the actual state of medical education generally pursued in this country; especially respecting the study of mental diseases; because, if the means for acquiring information, on such an important malady as insanity, be as defective, as I believe them to be actually, the necessity for some alteration, in the present system, becomes consequently more imperative. Undoubtedly, throughout the whole range of medical science, it must be acknowledged, that nothing can well be more limited, than the means of obtaining practical knowledge, which the medical profession at present possess, in this department of study; notwithstanding its obvious importance to the community. Since not only are the opportunities for investigating mental diseases, of a very partial description, but the subject of insanity, does not even form an essential part of the stipulated courses of lectures, required by the various licensing medical corporations, from the candidates for their diplomas. Indeed, excepting by the teachers of medical jurisprudence, mental diseases are seldom alluded to, much less properly investigated; and even when the subject of insanity is actually noticed in these lectures, the inquiry is only of a secondary or legal description, and neither embraces sufficiently the pathology of this extensive class of diseases, nor the curative treatment which the physician ought to pursue. In fact, the investigation of diseases of the mind, their nature, and the remedies best adapted for their cure, if not wholly neglected, are very partially investigated, by the general medical student. And this serious defect in medical education, will continue to prevail, until the different medical colleges require from the aspirants for their much coveted honours, not only previous attendance upon lectures on insanity, but also clinical instruction at an hospital where lunatic patients are admitted; whose doors ought therefore to be freely opened, under proper regulations, to those students who may be anxious to obtain information. In consequence of the difficulties at



present impeding the diffusion of knowledge, on this important subject, and as it does not constitute an essential part of medical education, the study of mental diseases at the present day, is too much neglected, excepting by a very limited number of medical practitioners, who confine themselves to that department of their profession, and therefore do not usually practise in any other class of diseases. This division of labour, as it may be called, is found to be advantageous in the Metropolis, and in large towns; but any restriction regarding the knowledge of insanity, is by no means useful to the public generally, and acts injuriously on the great majority of medical practitioners in the country, who should be as well versed in the treatment of mental diseases, as in those of the chest, or of any other part of the human frame. Many are undoubtedly quite competent for the treatment of mania; but my wish is, to make that knowledge universal in the profession. But although impressed with the importance of the subject, should any pupil, during the usual period of his preparatory studies, wish to obtain experience and information on insanity, the path to knowledge is so beset with difficulties, that notwithstanding all the zeal he might otherwise have, the student would find it almost impossible to attain his object, unless through personal favour, or at a very great expense; neither of which alternatives, are desirable means for acquiring knowledge, in a liberal profession.

In support of the views just stated, regarding the existing difficulties attending the proper mode of studying mental diseases, and the importance to the medical profession, of making some alteration in the present system, I can scarcely produce stronger evidence, than the following judicious remarks of Sir William Ellis, the late resident physician of the County Asylum at Hanwell, who says in a recent publication, "It is perfectly inconsistent with common sense to suppose, that a man shall intuitively know how to treat insanity. We have seen, that although in the greater number of cases it is attended with the same general result, yet it assumes most varied forms, and great care and discrimination are required in the treatment; indeed, it is universally acknowledged to be a most difficult and mysterious disease, and yet it is almost the only one on which the medical student receives no particular instruction. In his attendance on the hospitals, he will, in all probability, have met with almost every other variety of disease which afflicts human nature; at all events, his lectures will have supplied



him with some information as to their treatment; but I believe that my friend and colleague, Dr. (now Sir Alexander) Morison, of Cavendish Square, is the only lecturer in London expressly on insanity.—Indeed, excepting as being incidentally touched upon in the lectures on forensic medicine, it appears almost entirely neglected in the course of a medical education; and, as the subject does not form a branch of examination, the pupils naturally employ their time in those studies which will be directly available, and assist them in the obtaining their medical certificates; the result is, that professional men, in other respects well educated, commence practice almost in a state of total ignorance on the subject. This is an evil from which every individual, whatever be his rank and fortune, is liable to suffer in his own person, and in that of his friends; and a man of ingenuous mind can hardly be placed under more painful circumstances, than to find the father or mother of a family in a state of insanity, entrusted to his care, and to feel conscious that upon him depends the restoration of the patient to reason and happiness, whilst his want of acquaintance with the disease renders him unfit for the task, and he knows not where to apply for advice. This is by no means an imaginary evil, it is one of frequent occurrence, and numerous are the instances where amiable and valuable members of society are consigned for life, to a perpetual banishment from their friends in the gloom of a madhouse, solely from ignorance on the part of the medical adviser. This ought to be remedied.” Words cannot better express the whole question at issue, and I hope, that an authority of such weight, will have its due influence, as well with the medical corporations, as with the managing committees of all the insane asylums in the empire.

The importance to medical practitioners of being thoroughly conversant with the pathology and curative treatment of mental affections, is now so generally admitted as scarcely to require, on the present occasion, any illustration; whilst the frequency of this calamitous disease in England, makes it more necessary to have physicians experienced in mania; seeing the advantages accruing, not only to the poor sufferer, when deprived of the blessings of reason, but also to the relatives and friends of the patient, when such a malady is judiciously treated, renders the professional assistance of well qualified practitioners, of the greatest value under such distressing circumstances.

Besides the advantages accruing to patients affected with



insanity, when the nature and treatment of that malady is thoroughly understood; the difficulties so frequently experienced in commissions of inquiry, regarding the mental condition of an alleged lunatic, must, at the same time, not be overlooked; particularly when the important consequences are considered, which often result from the jury's decision, whereby the property and future condition of the unfortunate individual is often materially affected. On legal investigations of that description, considerable difference of opinion frequently prevails among the witnesses, and also the counsel engaged on the trial; whilst gentlemen of the long robe, and the medical men often disagree, regarding the true diagnostic symptoms of insanity; and even whether the party on trial is quite *compos mentis*, or actually insane. In such cases, especially if complicated by metaphysical, legal, or medical ingenuity, it sometimes becomes a very difficult matter for the jury to bring in a just verdict. As a proof, that exhibitions of the kind do take place, reference need only be made to the occurrences occasionally met with in commissions "*de lunatico inquirendo*," in which so great a difference of opinion is exhibited, that it might be almost said, the witnesses appeared as much in the character of advocates anxious to support a particular side, as to explain the facts of the case, they were called upon to elucidate.

These are a few of the disadvantages consequent upon the imperfect knowledge, often prevailing respecting mental alienation; and although individual physicians may make the study of insanity, the object of their especial attention, so as to be well versed in the subject, they are only exceptions to the general rule, constituting, it must be acknowledged, an unsatisfactory state of matters, whether as it respects the public, or the medical profession. The latter of whom would, I feel assured, most willingly avail themselves of every favourable opportunity, to increase their knowledge on such important questions; whilst the public will assuredly allow, that the sooner effectual measures are taken, to correct this anomaly in medical education, by facilitating the investigation of mental diseases, in the wards of public establishments for the insane, all parties would be great gainers; as such an arrangement would confer important benefits upon every class of the community.

Considering no doubt can reasonably exist, regarding the advantages which would ensue to medical men, and to society at large, by improving the present defective state of medical education, in relation to insanity, the only question there-



fore, now requiring investigation, is the best way for effecting the requisite alterations. On this head, the same method which is pursued in the study of other branches of medical science, apply with equal force to this particular class of diseases; namely, the student must acquire practical knowledge and experience in mania, through the medium of lectures; and also learn properly to apply the doctrines he has been taught, by attendance at the bedside of patients affected with mental diseases; as, in that way, the future practitioner can alone properly qualify himself, for the arduous duties, he must afterwards undertake. To attempt effecting that object, by any other mode, would only lead to disappointment, tend to perpetuate ignorance, and prevent real improvement. Reading will, no doubt, considerably assist the student in investigating affections of the mind; but that method of study will not be sufficient, for without actual observation of this disease, when variously affecting the human constitution, any knowledge otherwise obtained, is neither so available in practice, nor will prove so useful to the patient, as experience acquired from personal attendance upon insane patients; especially, when that mode of study is pursued, under the guidance of experienced teachers, and those accustomed to instruct their junior brethren, in the wards of an hospital. From these remarks, it follows, that the most useful method to adopt, for improving the knowledge of medical men in mental diseases, would be, in the first place, to open the doors of our great public hospitals for the reception of the insane, as, for instance, St. Luke's, Hanwell, and Bethlem, to medical students under proper regulations, should they feel desirous of investigating insanity, in the extensive fields for study, which these institutions contain. It would likewise prove of much use, if the medical corporations, prior to granting their diploma, were to exact attendance at such hospitals for a limited period, and also attendance at lectures on the nature, pathology, and curative treatment proper for that class of maladies. However, if this recommendation should be adopted, the expense entailed upon the medical student ought not to be considerable, lest the object proposed might thereby be materially interfered with, or even perhaps defeated.

Bethlem Hospital, from being pre-eminent for its excellent arrangements, and having extensive wards, containing generally from 310 to 340 patients, is an institution admirably adapted for the purpose of obtaining instruction; and being principally intended for the reception of insane pa-



tients, who are considered of a curable description, although not exclusively so, since there are likewise incurables and criminal lunatics; that Hospital, therefore, possesses many advantages for the purposes of study, over other establishments, in which every description of patients, whether curable or otherwise, are received. The attendance of medical students, in the wards of such an extensive hospital as Bethlem, where a great variety of insane patients are constantly under treatment, and where from five to six new patients are admitted every week, would therefore be most useful; particularly if compared with other lunatic asylums, containing paralytic, epileptic, and incurable lunatics or idiots, almost indiscriminately. Of course, cases of that melancholy description, are by no means unimportant to the medical student, and ought likewise to be investigated by the diligent inquirer, in order to alleviate if possible their sufferings, however hopeless any prospect of their cure may appear. But as the majority of medical practitioners are more likely, in the course of their professional practice, to be called upon to treat the less severe, and curable varieties of insanity, than cases of a chronic description, knowledge of the ordinary forms of recent disease, is, therefore, most important; and considering it will be admitted, that few institutions are better adapted for studying mania in every variety, than Bethlem Hospital, such reasoning applies with peculiar force to that institution. Besides these advantages, it ought to be recollected, that the medical officers of the establishment, being men of great experience and acquirements in their particular departments; and as there is a resident apothecary in constant attendance upon the patients, as also a matron, who, to great kindness of manner and firmness of character, possesses other qualities eminently adapted for the superintendant of female lunatics, with functionaries for each department,—nothing is really wanting at Bethlem Hospital, to make the establishment in every way useful to the public, but a more free admission of medical students to the wards of the hospital, whereby the ultimate benefits accruing to society, may be extensively disseminated.

Objections may, perhaps, be taken by the governors, lest the excitement and noise occasioned by the attendance of pupils in the wards of Bethlem, unlike any other lunatic asylum, might produce injurious effects upon the patients, especially upon the females. Undoubtedly indiscriminate admission, or permitting crowds of visitors at irregular



hours, would not be judicious; and, even in some instances, might be attended by injurious consequences to individual patients, when affected by mental alienation; but in the great majority of cases, no serious injury could arise from the physicians being accompanied, during their professional visits, by a few medical pupils; indeed, the danger appears to my mind to be very slight, if not imaginary. In general hospitals, especially in those of the metropolis, although some of the patients are suffering from acute diseases, and others have recently undergone serious operations, nevertheless a number of individuals often accompany the physician or surgeon, during their visits to the wards, for the purpose of studying the disease, and of witnessing the medical treatment pursued; besides, from the attendance of pupils in the surgical wards, or at the performance of operations, as now permitted, it can scarcely be asserted, that the patients have suffered any injury by such circumstances. On the contrary, it will be allowed, that much good has thereby resulted to the medical profession and to society, from the superior education and practical experience young men thus obtain, as it qualifies them to act more successfully as practitioners, when the health of individuals is committed to their care.

If the same exclusive system now prevailing at St. Luke's, Bethlem, and at almost every other hospital for the insane, were also followed at the general hospitals in the kingdom; the injurious consequences inflicted upon society, by such an absurd proceeding, would be most disastrous, in consequence of the imperfect education which the medical practitioner must then receive; because, if admission to general hospitals, for the purpose of studying disease, were denied to students, they would then be debarred from pursuing in the best manner, that part of their education which can only be learned at the bedside of patients, and from clinical instruction. If the point be therefore granted, that great benefits result to the community, from the admission of pupils to the wards of hospitals, whether general, lying-in, fever, or of whatever description; it must be conceded upon similar principles, that insane institutions if supported by the public, and especially when they are endowed, like Bethlem Hospital, with large revenues once public property; they certainly ought to be made subservient to the good of the community, quite as much as St. Bartholomew's, Guy's, or the County Hospitals. Public utility must always counterbalance individual inconvenience; and seeing the many practical benefits and advan-



tages arising from the system now followed at these receptacles for the sick, a somewhat similar plan should be acted upon at every public lunatic asylum.

So far from considering, that the judicious admission of pupils, and of young men who are about completing their preliminary studies, to the wards of Bethlem Hospital, would prove injurious to the inmates, I believe, if properly regulated, such permission would even sometimes act advantageously. This opinion is founded upon the supposition, that the regular visits of the physicians, although accompanied by pupils, would in some of the patients tend rather to distract the attention from their false reasoning, whilst in others it would appear as if bringing them in contact with the external world, and so produce a more favourable impression upon their disordered imaginations. Besides the appearance thus given to the establishment, of being somewhat like an ordinary hospital, for the restoration to health of its inmates, instead of a common mad house, in which all contact with the world outside its walls is generally cut off, might have a favourable impression; especially as it is a well known observation, that the fear of being placed in a lunatic asylum, often exerts an injurious influence upon the minds even of the insane; to say nothing of the very disagreeable associations, which it produces upon friends and relatives.

Formerly, it was the general practice, to exclude lunatics as much as possible, from all contact with their fellow-men, and even in many instances, to consign such unfortunate beings to beds of straw, to chains, and in dungeons. Happily, however, in this country at least, such cruelties are now almost unknown, especially in the Metropolitan districts, where a more humane, as well as a more successful mode of management, is at present pursued. At the same time, as a writer observes, the more lunatics are congregated together in the same place, so will the advantages appear, of exercising their remaining intelligence, by slight occupations or distractions; for if left entirely to themselves, insane patients are very apt to be seized with some fixed, and generally erroneous ideas; whereby they are apt to become indifferent, and to impose little or no restraint to indulgence in their false impressions. But when their train of false ideas are interrupted by other impressions, and if the lunatic be called upon to take a more or less active part in some intellectual occupation, the mental faculties of the insane, may be thus considerably awakened, and their judgment even improved, so as to promote the patient's



recovery. Seclusion from all communication with our fellow men is very apt to produce insanity ; and although it is often desirable, to separate those afflicted with mental alienation from their immediate relations, and to remove them to new situations, quite different from those they were accustomed to frequent, previous to the appearance of their mental malady ; it is equally well-known, that by occupying the attention of the insane, with objects and pursuits opposed to the false ideas usually engaging their minds, a new impetus may be given to their trains of thought, and so free the patient for a moment from his disease, whereby the intellect may acquire additional force, and so establish their ultimate convalescence.

In illustration of the principle, that a little occupation to the mind when judiciously employed, instead of allowing patients deprived of reason, to brood constantly over their delusions, are followed by beneficial results, better evidence cannot be furnished, than the results obtained in the French hospitals, at Hanwell, and also from Bethlem, where this system of occupying the patients has been introduced. At Bicêtre, a teacher of music was appointed in 1839, and reading, writing, as well as dancing are now taught ; whilst workshops have been established ; in short, every effort is made, to engage the attention of the lunatic, in some innocent or agreeable occupation. The same system has been found beneficial in other lunatic establishments, and especially at Bethlem Hospital ; where, under the judicious management of the matron, Mrs. Hunter, many of the females are now engaged in various occupations, which are both an amusement, and conducive to their restoration to health ; whilst in the male wards, a similar plan is about being carried into more extensive operation than hitherto, and will act beneficially. Important facts like these, strongly prove the advantages of the modern system, instead of that of coercion, or non-occupation of the patients. Of course, when an insane person is either dangerous to others, or might inflict injury upon himself, then the propriety of giving occupation to such patients, does not apply to the same extent, and restraint may in that case become necessary. But enough has been now stated to shew, that intercourse with others, whether through the medium of physicians and medical students, or by engaging the patients' minds in some intellectual or manual occupation, so far from producing any injurious consequences on the insane, quite a contrary effect will often ensue.



Considering the present improved treatment of patients at Bethlem Hospital, compared to what prevailed in even very recent times, it therefore becomes the more desirable, that a knowledge of the system of management now pursued in this, as in other well regulated insane establishments, should be as extensively diffused as possible, for the benefit of the public, and the medical profession. Thus, in 1811, Dr. Black remarks, when speaking of Bedlam, that "Separate confinement in their cells, straight waistcoats, and in the ferocious maniac, handcuffs and chains, soon render them (the patients), tractable and obedient." Dr. Black also says, "that a very small number even of the incurables, are kept as wild beasts, constantly in fetters." Again, when Mr. Wakefield visited Bedlam on the 1st of May, 1815, according to the parliamentary report, he states amongst other circumstances, that, "One side-room contained about ten female patients, each chained, by one arm or leg to the wall; the nakedness of each patient being covered by a blanket gown only, and the feet even were naked. Many of these unfortunate women were locked up in their cells, naked and chained, on straw; with only one blanket for a covering. On the men's side of the house, in a side room, six patients were chained close to the wall; five handcuffed, and locked to the wall. All were naked, except as to the blanket gown, or a small rug on the shoulders, and without shoes. The room appeared like a dog kennel. Chains are invariably substituted for the straight waistcoat. Some were lying stark naked upon straw; and about one fifth were in this state, or chained." What a sad picture this account furnishes of the cruel usage, and injurious treatment pursued not many years ago, towards the unfortunate maniacs; and it is not surprising, if some of the patients, as Dr. Black states, were ferocious, and kept constantly in fetters; indeed, such harsh measures were quite sufficient to render any one furiously insane, and to convert curable into incurable lunatics. Fortunately, however, for poor afflicted humanity, an improved mode of treatment has since then been adopted; and if either Dr. Black or Mr. Wakefield, were again to visit Bethlem in the year 1842, they would doubtless be as much pleased with the far more humane system now pursued, as they would also be highly gratified with the beneficial results it produces. Numerous illustrations of the improvements recently adopted, in the curative treatment of the insane, at this establishment might be stated, were it necessary to pursue the investigation any



farther; but as the object proposed in these observations, was to point out the advantages of giving additional facilities for studying insanity, rather than to investigate the most judicious mode of management, or the various remedies proper to be employed in treating that disease; the examples just given of the system formerly pursued at Bethlem, as in other hospitals, but which is now fortunately obsolete, have been brought forward as arguments, in favour of opening the doors of that institution more widely than heretofore. Believing, that the more extensively sound principles regarding the management of the insane are diffused, the greater benefits will be conferred on suffering human nature; and should the observations contained in these pages, fortunately attract attention to the question now discussed, one of the objects contemplated will have been attained. And although I am not so sanguine as to expect, that old prejudices and customs, however injurious they may sometimes act upon society, can be suddenly removed; still, the wants of the community, and the general benefit of mankind, will ultimately triumph over every difficulty; and thus render our great public institutions, for the reception of the insane, not only useful to their afflicted inmates, but make them conducive to the interests of the whole community.

Although the principle of permitting pupils to visit the insane patients in Bethlem Hospital, along with the physicians, has already been partially established, nevertheless, the application of this rule is of too limited a description to be of considerable benefit, as only three are allowed; and the expense being much beyond the pecuniary means of most medical students, the number is not always complete. Whilst at St. Luke's, notwithstanding one of the objects proposed at the foundation of that charity, according to the original address in 1751, was "of introducing more gentlemen of the faculty, to the study and practice of one of the most important branches of physic;" still medical pupils are not now admitted at that hospital, having upwards of 200 lunatic patients, however eminently qualified the present medical officers may be, for conveying instruction to young men, on the management and curative treatment of mental diseases. But a new era will, I hope, soon arrive, when more liberal sentiments regarding lunatic asylums, being made subservient to the advancement of medical education, may prevail, particularly at public institutions like St. Luke's and Bethlem Hospitals.



Having exceeded the limits originally intended in the observations contained in the preceding pages, respecting the proposition of admitting medical pupils to the wards of all public insane asylums, for the purpose of study, I shall refrain, for the present, from any additional remark; trusting that the arguments I have advanced may produce their due influence, in leading to a dispassionate examination of the question at issue. But if the reasoning employed, should unfortunately fail in accomplishing the object contemplated, I shall, nevertheless feel satisfied that, at least, I have endeavoured to perform, according to my ability, what appeared to be a duty, incumbent upon me as a governor of these hospitals to undertake; in order to extend towards the unfortunate class of society, who are afflicted with mental alienation, the advantages of having always attendants competent to alleviate their complaints; as also to obtain for the profession, of which I am a member, greater facilities for acquiring knowledge, than they at present enjoy; but who, in justice to the responsibility they have to incur, are fully entitled to possess every available opportunity, for the acquisition of professional experience, which public institutions can bestow; more especially in those endowed by the state, or supported at the public expense. The obtaining of such privileges would prove of great benefit to the public ultimately; and any improvement of the kind would only be just to the medical profession, considering the duties they have to perform; whilst the best interests of all classes of society would be essentially advanced, by their possessing medical practitioners of superior education. But as these qualifications can best be acquired, by attendance in public hospitals for the reception of insane patients, it is hoped, a more free admission into their wards will therefore be permitted, particularly as very few evils could arise in consequence. Farther, the great usefulness of these benevolent establishments, which contribute to the glory of England, would be thus materially promoted; at the same time, the proposed change would indicate the philanthropy of the present age, and its advanced civilisation.

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#### POSTSCRIPT.

Since the preceding remarks were written, it is reported, that the present talented resident Physician of the Middlesex County Lunatic Asylum, Dr. Conolly, proposes de-



livering a course of lectures on mental diseases to medical pupils from the different London hospitals. This important announcement, when carried into effect, will prove, doubtless, of much advantage to the younger members of the medical profession, and will constitute also a new epoch in the management of the Metropolitan Lunatic Asylums; since, such a course of lectures makes these useful institutions, in addition to their present purposes, likewise subservient to the advancement of knowledge, respecting a disease of great interest to all those who are engaged in the study and practice of medicine.

Besides the advantages of the intended lectures, such an excellent proposal is both highly creditable to Dr. Conolly, and to the visiting justices sanctioning the proposition; and it affords an important practical illustration of the principles enforced in the previous observations. The example set at Hanwell ought to be followed at other public institutions for the reception of lunatics; and were the wards of Bethlem and St. Luke's Hospitals opened to the admission of medical pupils, at a moderate fee, and lectures also given, the objects now contemplated in these pages, would be amply accomplished. At the same time, the improved modes of treatment recently pursued in these extensive insane establishments, would be made more generally known than at present, whilst old prejudices, or any defects still existing in the management of the above institutions, would be ameliorated by the increased publicity thus given, as also by the more general surveillance of the public, and the medical profession.