

**Some observations respecting the management of the Pauper Lunatic Asylum, at Wakefield / by C. Crowther.**

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# SOME OBSERVATIONS

RESPECTING THE

## MANAGEMENT

OF THE

## PAUPER LUNATIC ASYLUM,

AT WAKEFIELD.

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BY C. CROWTHER, M.D.

LATELY SENIOR PHYSICIAN TO THAT INSTITUTION.

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*Justique tenorem*

*Flectere non odium cogit, non gratia suadet.*

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WAKEFIELD:

PRINTED BY A. HURST, AT THE JOURNAL-OFFICE.

1830.

# SOME OBSERVATIONS

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## MANAGEMENT

OF THE LUNATIC ASYLUM AT WARFIELD.

## PAPER LUNATIC ASYLUM

AT WARFIELD.

BY G. CROWTHER, M.D.

LATELY, SENIOR PHYSICIAN TO THAT INSTITUTION.

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THE welfare and general happiness of a state depend so much upon every station in life being appropriately filled, and upon the impartial administration of public justice, that whatever relates to these subjects has of late years excited an attention and inquiry unknown in former times.

The scrutinizing eye of the Public has cleansed the filthy cell of the maniac, and broken his chain; it has punished the negligent and delinquent Physician to the insane, and compelled him to treat such patients with the same care and attention as sane individuals; it has exposed the general character of the Magistrate, whose conduct is not strictly what it ought to be; and is in this Island the most efficient instrument to controul the wanton exercise of power and to check the injustice committed by that class of society.

With this view of the present order of things before my eyes, after having resided in Wakefield, and practised medicine for more than twenty years, with as much success and credit to myself as any of my predecessors in this place; on the opening of the Pauper Lunatic Asylum, I offered my services to that institution gratuitously, and was appointed Physician, conjointly with Dr. RICHARDSON. I undertook the office with a zealous desire to do good; and, for eight years and several months, have attended the Asylum with a regularity and assiduity never exceeded in any similar institution.

To this fact the reports of cases in my own hand writing, in the books belonging to the Asylum, bear unerring testimony.

I performed the duties of the office gratuitously, with the expectation of rendering it more honourable, and of thereby securing the aid and co-operation of the Visiting Magistrates necessary for its due execution. On inspecting the list of the Visiting Magistrates who govern the Asylum, I found many,



who, in point of rank, character, and intelligence, stand very high in the county, amongst whom were some who professed to be zealous advocates of general reform.

From such governors I could not anticipate either partiality or injustice.

An excellent set of rules for the management of the Asylum was put into my hands, including every thing desirable.

The following is the second rule relating to the Director:—  
 “He will give up his whole time to the institution, without  
 “any other occupation or engagement. He will act as  
 “secretary, treasurer, steward, and apothecary.”

A few months after the opening of the Asylum, the Director applied to the Visiting Magistrates for permission to visit, and have the care of insane patients out of the Asylum; and, in violation of the rule so recently issued, this request was granted.

On this occasion, I thought it my duty to remonstrate. Such permission I conceived to be adverse to the proper management of the Asylum, it afforded the Director an excuse for absence whenever he thought proper, and necessarily made him hostile to such Physicians as did their duty, because his success in obtaining insane patients out of doors must depend upon his skill in

*L'art de se faire valoir,*  
 at the expense of the attending Physician.

The permission given to the Director to attend private patients was revoked in consequence of my application, but it excited the wrath, and piqued the pride of one of the leading Magistrates present to a high degree; and it is well known that some Magistrates, like higher potentates, will neither forget nor forgive.

On opening the Asylum, the Physicians agreed to divide the patients in the following manner: One to attend the male, the other the female side of the house, purposing to change sides every two or three years. The late Dr. Richardson first attended the females; on account of ill health he was soon obliged to resign. Having then attended the men for a very short period only, I thought it best to continue my attendance upon them for some time longer. At the expira-



tion of several years, I applied to Dr. Richardson's successor to change sides with me, in order that I might have an opportunity of attending every description of case. I believe it was at the instigation of the Director and Matron, that he refused to change sides with me; and on making application to the Visiting Magistrates, to interfere in the affair, they, without bringing the parties together, and giving me a hearing on the subject, refused my request, because, as I understood, that the Matron threatened to resign in case I should attend the women. Had I received a stipend, I should, at that time, have thought it necessary to resign; but finding, that though the same Magistrates whom I had formerly displeased by a remonstrance, were adverse to me, yet as my fellow-townsmen, Mr. J. P. HEYWOOD and Mr. EGREMONT gave me their support, and were most anxious that an investigation should not take place, lest it might disturb the well-being of the institution, I passed over this act of apparent injustice, and continued my attendance with unabated zeal.

At a meeting of the Visiting Magistrates, in July 1827, I was informed by Mr. HEYWOOD, that Mr. HIGGINS had made some observations on my practice at the Asylum, unfavourable to my professional character. At the next quarterly meeting, in October, I attended, with a view of affording the Magistrates an opportunity of investigating the nature of the faults imputed to me. Mr. Higgins, however, being absent, nothing could be done. I therefore determined to send a printed letter to each of the Visiting Magistrates, a little before the ensuing quarterly meeting in January 1828, explaining to them the circumstances alluded to by Mr. HIGGINS.

At a meeting held on the 10th of January, 1827, Sir F. L. WOOD, Bart. G. W. WENTWORTH, THOS. DAVISON BLAND, GODFREY HIGGINS, BENJAMIN DEALTRY, J. P. HEYWOOD, and J. EGREMONT, Esquires, were present.

After the usual business of the day was over, Mr. HIGGINS addressed Mr. HEYWOOD on the subject of my letter. He accused him of impropriety of conduct in communicating to me the observations made respecting me at the previous meeting, in July 1827, contending that the meeting was a private one, and that no one had a right to communicate what had occurred there.

Mr. HEYWOOD acknowledged that he had made me acquainted with the charges preferred against me by Mr.



HIGGINS, and told him that he should have failed in his duty towards me as a friend if he had acted otherwise, but denied that the meeting was a private one, or the communication confidential. Mr. HIGGINS repeatedly told the Magistrates present that he was perfectly satisfied with my conduct respecting the treatment of the patients.

Sir F. L. Wood disapproved of my having sent a printed letter to the Magistrates, and was of opinion that no notice ought to be taken of it.

In this opinion the five first-named Magistrates concurred, the only dissentient being Mr. EGREMONT, (Mr. HEYWOOD having previously left the Asylum,) who found himself more than once called upon to express his dissent at the Director being allowed to speak to the Magistrates upon the subject, while I was not suffered to be present; and the following verbal message was communicated to me by Mr. EGREMONT: "We have made no charge against Dr. CROWTHER, and therefore do not deem his presence, or any further explanation, necessary."

This message immediately determined me to resign, although I did not for some weeks execute my purpose. After the meeting just alluded to, Mr. HIGGINS said to a friend of mine, that he had no fault to find with me respecting the Asylum; and, upon being informed that the message which I had received would occasion my resignation, he replied that, if I did so, he would be the first to propose a vote of thanks to me for my services. This I notice, the more particularly, on account of a letter which I afterwards received from him of a very opposite tendency. The idea of receiving thanks from Mr. HIGGINS was more unpalatable to me than his censure. It indicated on his part an apparent disingenuousness.

I wrote to Mr. HIGGINS the following letter, to announce my resignation, and received the answer annexed.

Wakefield, 16th February, 1828.

Sir,

*For eight years and three months, during the most valuable part of my life, I have devoted more than five hours of my time, upon an average, every week, to the business of the Pauper Lunatic Asylum.*



*During all this time, I have been opposed and thwarted by a Director, whose object it has been to become the Autocrat of the Asylum, to govern me and govern you.*

*Where there has been any difference between us, and an inquiry has been requested, you have usually decided in his favour, without ever hearing me.*

*Although by an unfounded insinuation my feelings have been wounded, you have, nevertheless, thought it beneath your notice to inform me that you had discovered that you had been mistaken or had been misinformed. Because you have made no direct charge against me, you have, for vindicating myself by writing to the Visiting Magistrates, censured me. Surely it is not to be admitted that a meeting of those Magistrates is to be any thing like a secret tribunal, where an individual, actuated by incorrect information or personal pique, may whisper away the reputation of the attending physician, and condemn him unheard.*

*Influenced by such views of my situation, and by the reasons which I have assigned, I write to inform you, that, after mature deliberation, I have this day resigned an office, which, I conceive that I can no longer hold, consistently with the dignity due to it, or the respect due to myself.*

*You have, formerly, with great credit to yourself, contributed much to expose the culpable negligence and gross misconduct of some Physicians who have had the care of the insane. You ought not, therefore, to be displeased with me, if, at my leisure, I should make an Appeal to the Public; and with the same freedom state your conduct, and that of such of the Magistrates as have acted with you, in so treating a Physician who has faithfully discharged his duty at the Wakefield Pauper Lunatic Asylum.*

*Although I have resigned my office, I purpose continuing to discharge its duties until you appoint a successor.*

*I am,*

*Godfrey Higgins, Esq.*

*Yours, &c.*

*Skellow Grange.*

*C. CROWTHER.*

*Sir,*

*On my arrival at home this morning, I had the honour of your letter, the receipt of which, as a gentleman, I think it right to acknowledge.*



*It is not my custom to render an account of my conduct, as a Justice of Peace, except to the Court of King's Bench; but I will so far step out of my usual course as to inform you, that whatever you may have heard, I am quite satisfied that I have never, with regard to you, been either mistaken or misinformed. Respecting my conduct as a Magistrate, I trust all further correspondence betwixt us will be discontinued. I have the honour to remain, sir,*

*Skellow-Grange,  
3rd March, 1828.*

*Your humble Servant,  
GODFREY HIGGINS.*

With an accusation hanging over my head, no power on earth could have induced me to resign, but when I was exculpated by the same individual, in the same place, and in the presence of the same gentlemen before whom the accusation against me was made, this difficulty was removed.

After Mr. HIGGINS had, in the presence of Mr. HEYWOOD and several other Magistrates, accused me of having treated my patients improperly, or injudiciously; after having, in the presence of the same gentlemen, avowed that he was perfectly satisfied with respect to my practice at the Asylum, was it honourable, was it consistent with his former declaration, after my resignation to say, that "I am quite satisfied that I have never, with regard to you, been either mistaken or misinformed."

It may be useful to state, or suggest, the measures which the governors of a public hospital would be likely to pursue, on finding that a considerable mortality had occurred in a public institution which they superintended; and to compare this with the conduct of the Visiting Magistrates of the West Riding Asylum towards myself. The inquiry would perhaps be most clear and satisfactory, if pursued in the following order.

I. Is there any thing in the situation or construction of the building unfavourable to the health of the patients?

II. Is there any circumstance peculiar to the patients admitted, or to the manner in which they are discharged, likely to augment the mortality?

III. Have the Physicians regularly attended to their duty, and are they competent to fill the office which they hold?



On inquiring respecting the salubrity of the situation and the peculiar structure of the building, the investigators would learn that the Asylum has been frequently visited by dysentery, a disease which has been fatal to many patients. They would likewise learn that it has broken out at the Asylum, when not prevalent elsewhere, and that when it was epidemic in the neighbourhood, the Asylum was free from it. These facts would induce them to believe that dysentery was generated within the walls.

On walking over the house a disagreeable fetid odour, a malaria might be perceived which could easily be traced to the privies.

The Asylum, from the centre to the extremities, is stuck full of privies, which ought to have been water closets. In fact, they now are water closets without water, which are worse than common privies, because the latter, if freely exposed to strong currents of atmospheric air, lose much of their malignant influence, while, in the former, the foul air generated ascends through the pipe of the water closet and pervades every part of the house.

To render these water-closets innocuous would require a stream of water to pass through them daily, sufficient to turn a mill, but it unfortunately has happened that a great scarcity of this useful article has existed at the Asylum for ordinary consumption.\*

You cannot cram into an Asylum, built to accommodate only one hundred and fifty patients, two hundred and fifty-six, without rendering it unwholesome. To the crowded state of the building, therefore, must part of the mortality be attributed.

With regard to the second head of inquiry, it must be obvious to any man possessing common sense, that in any hospital of whatever description, under the most skilful treatment, the number of cures, or of deaths, must depend upon the nature of the cases admitted. Where a very great majority of the patients consists of recent cases with con-

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\* Dysentery has again visited the Asylum during the present month, October, 1829, although great expence has been incurred in altering the privies.



stitutions unimpaired by previous disease, and not far advanced in life, a very large majority will be discharged cured ; but when, on the contrary, a very large majority of the patients admitted are cases of long standing, with diseased organization and exhausted constitutions, the mortality must be very considerable.

In most hospitals the incurable patients are discharged, after having remained on the books a definite time ; but, in Pauper Lunatic Asylums they remain until set at liberty by death, unless discharged on account of being harmless, or by desire of friends who are able to support them.

Out of 533 men, admitted in eight years, only 28 have been so discharged. From the ninth report (for the year 1827,) it appears, that out of 114 patients who were admitted that year, 44 only were recent cases, who had not been ill more than three months : 41 were old cases, who had been ill from one to several years ; and 29 were patients who had been previously insane. The overseers of the poor, in order to evade the penalty of the law, often represent old cases to be recent ones, on which account the real number of recent cases, is in reality smaller than what is stated in the report.

From some districts, particularly Sheffield, about four out of five, I speak from memory, are incurable cases. By examining the case books it will be found that some were moribund and others nearly so, on admission.

Under the third head of inquiry, the Magistrates may easily ascertain whether or not the Physicians have attended regularly to their duty, but it is impossible for any one, except a Physician well versed in hospital practice, to judge of their medical skill. No part of the duty of a Physician requires more care and skill than attending insane patients.

Instead of pursuing some such plan as I have suggested, what have the Magistrates done ? In the first instance, at a quarterly meeting of the Visiting Magistrates at the Asylum, Mr. HIGGINS, in my absence, brings an accusation against me, without either communicating with me, or giving me any intimation of his intention to accuse me. On receiving an account of this transaction from a Magistrate present, I attended at the next quarterly meeting, with a view of exculpating myself, and found my accuser, Mr. HIGGINS, absent. I wrote, therefore, to all the Visiting Magistrates a long



explanatory letter, and being unable to spare time to write twenty-three copies of it, I got it printed. On taking into consideration my letter, Mr. HIGGINS, it is true, instead of renewing his accusation, repeatedly expressed himself satisfied with my professional conduct at the Asylum; but, in reply to a civil letter, he with four others, concurred in refusing to hear me.

Many, I know, think that an appeal of this kind ought to have been made immediately after the event, that by delay it loses the freshness and raciness that give it interest. Had I applied to a court of justice, or had it been a simple quarrel between two individuals, this would have been the case, but such an apparent want of impartiality, and the ill treatment of an individual, who has filled a public office with care and assiduity, can never fail to excite public attention as long as the parties live, and the nation cares for its public institutions, and for the due administration of justice. The lapse of time which has occurred since my resignation, enables me to confirm by arithmetic, what I have endeavoured to prove by reasoning, *i. e.* that under any medical treatment a very considerable mortality must occur at the Asylum. Since my resignation the ratio of mortality has increased; at the end of 1827, according to the printed reports, the deaths amounted to 24, nine-tenths per cent. of the patients admitted. At the end of 1828, it amounted to 26 per cent. I do not impute any fault to my successors, the mortality may, from various causes be greater one year than another; but as long as a large number of incurable cases is admitted, it must continue to be considerable.

In all ages and in all countries men, vested with authority, have been liable to abuse it, and although, in modern times, the general character of the unpaid Magistrate has improved, yet five justices, forming a majority at a meeting of the Visiting Magistrates, have been found, who would only hear one side of the question.

Under such Governors no office can be honorary. I therefore acted with impropriety in endeavouring to make the situation of Physician to the Asylum and House of Correction an honorary office. I am now convinced that it ought to be stipendiary. Physicians, in general, are not rich, and cannot therefore afford, gratuitously, to give up so much time as the situation requires.



At present, I am of opinion that it might be made evident that the Director of the West-Riding Pauper Lunatic Asylum receives from the county, in one form or another, more than £800 per annum; and the physicians, on whom devolves the most difficult part of the work, and the entire responsibility, as far as regards the treatment of disease, nothing. At Lancaster, the sum of £300, and at Wakefield, £52 per annum, is given to a chaplain for an hour and a half's employment in a week, requiring little exertion. What then ought to be given to the Physician? The sum paid to the Director is nearly sufficient for both the Director and Physicians, but it ought to be very differently distributed.\*

Supposing that the board, or committee of management, of the Leeds Infirmary had behaved in the same way towards one of the Physicians attending that Hospital, as the Visiting Magistrates have done to me, an appeal would instantly have been made to the subscribers or trustees at large, who would have done justice between the parties; but from the decision of the Visiting Magistrates there exists no redress.

What then is the situation of a Physician to an Asylum or a Prison, governed by Magistrates? For any imputed fault he is liable to be charged before judges from whom, with respect to medical matters, there is no appeal. He is liable to be accused and judged without being confronted with his accusers. He is liable, without just cause, to lose what is more valuable to him than any thing on earth besides—his professional reputation. The duties of the office are irksome,

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\* Since I wrote the above, I understand that the attending Physicians have applied for, and obtained, a stipend of £75 per annum each, for their professional attendance at the Asylum, which I am of opinion is too small a sum. From the observations which I have made, and the experience which I have had, I think that £150 per annum ought to be given to the senior Physician, with a view of insuring his attendance when he gets into full practice; and £100 per annum to the junior Physician. For the Director giving up his whole time, £200 per annum; and £50 for the Matron would be amply sufficient with the present allowance of House-Room, Provisions, and Servants, &c. to secure the Talents best adapted to the situation. A small annuity of £20 per annum ought to be granted to a dissector, with a view of insuring all the advantages that can be derived from morbid anatomy. By constantly employing one person, the morbid appearances would be more accurately observed and more minutely recorded, than when that business is performed by several individuals. The danger which the anatomist encounters from wounds in dissections, entitles him to a pecuniary reward.



and often dangerous\*; and can only be rendered tolerable by a desire to do good and obtain knowledge. To be long and frequently immured in the infectious atmosphere of an asylum or a prison,—amid the most revolting and disgusting scenes of crime and misery; amid the groans of the dying and the fœtor of the dead,—can never be made an agreeable employment to any human being.

From the following circumstances, some idea may be formed of the competency of the Visiting Magistrates to form a correct opinion of the duties of a physician.

One of this body told me, some years ago, that Apothecaries must know much more about the practice of medicine than Physicians, because they are so much more among drugs.

Another hinted to me that the exhibition of medicine in insanity was useless, and that that disease was to be cured by moral treatment only.

Out of twenty-three or twenty-four, who form the committee that governs the Asylum, and are called Visiting Magistrates, very few have taken any active part besides the seven whose names I have mentioned.

Sir F. L. WOOD has the reputation of possessing more talent, more intelligence, and more influence, than the generality of country 'squires, and is said to be the centre round which the four other Magistrates who voted against me, generally move. To him, therefore, I chiefly attribute the unhandsome and unjust treatment which I have received from the Visiting Magistrates.

*“ Omne animi vitium tantò conspectius in se*

*“ Crimen habet, quanto major, qui peccat, habetur.”*

I am aware that the statement of facts which I have made cannot in any way benefit me; and that no class of men has the reputation of being more vindictive than the individuals who have abused the authority with which they have been invested.

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\* Two medical men have fallen by the hand of the maniac within a short period: one at Norwich, and another at Hull.



*"Hominum natura est, quem læserit, odisse."*

The only objects which I have in view are, to expose to the public the unjust treatment which I have received, and to prevent the repetition of such conduct towards my professional brethren.

The duties of a Director of a Pauper Lunatic Asylum very much resemble those of a Governor to the House of Correction. The chief difference is that the Director is also Apothecary to the Institution.

The five visiting Magistrates, or a majority of them, who have been uniformly opposed to me, have, by alterations which they have made in the Rules, and by their general conduct towards me, endeavoured to make the Director Archiator, and to treat the Physician as if he were only fit to bear the blame for the mortality which should occur.

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"TO THE COMMITTEE OF MAGISTRATES APPOINTED TO  
"SUPERINTEND THE PAUPER LUNATIC ASYLUM, AT  
"WAKEFIELD.

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"Gentlemen,

"As I understand that at a meeting of the Magistrates, held at the Asylum in July, 1827, some observations were made, reflecting on my conduct as a Physician to that Institution, I think myself called upon to make some remarks upon that subject, and on other matters relative to the management of the Pauper Lunatic Asylum.

It was noticed, that a greater mortality had occurred amongst the men than amongst the women; that a larger quantity of medicine had been given to the former; and yet that the majority of cures was in favour of the latter. In any hospital, the number of cures and deaths will depend, not on the relative number of male and female patients, but on the intenseness or severity of each individual case admitted. In the West Riding of Yorkshire, the large manufacturing towns and the adjacent villages supply a great proportion of the deranged patients. The men residing there earn high wages, indulge in drunkenness, and wear out their constitutions by excesses of every kind. Derangement occurs, as the last link in a chain of diseases resulting from such excesses. From



Morbid Anatomy we learn, that a cure in such cases is impossible, because the brain and other viscera are irremediably injured. The following is a list of the number of male and female patients, who were in the Asylum on the 1st of August, 1827, from Leeds, Sheffield, Huddersfield, and Bradford:—

	MALES.	FEMALES.
Leeds - - - - -	22	11
Sheffield - - - - -	11	5
Huddersfield - - - - -	4	1
Bradford - - - - -	3	4
Total - - - - -	40	21

From which it appears, that the manufacturing towns, where men are chiefly employed, supply nearly twice as many male as female patients. Can it then be a matter of surprise that fewer cures and more deaths occur amongst the men than amongst the women?

The Eighth Report of the Asylum, published on the 4th of January 1827, is not correct, with respect to the number cured either of men or women; but the mis-statement is greater as it regards the women. For the sake of comparison, it will be convenient to reduce the Report into hundredth parts. The sum total of patients admitted, to the end of the year 1826, is 917; of these, 454 have been discharged. The Report is so drawn up as to induce the reader to suppose that these 454 patients have been discharged, cured; by minutely examining it, he may, indeed, discover that 18 out of this number have been discharged by desire of their friends, or by order of the Magistrates, but it is utterly impossible for him to know that 52, besides these 18 patients, have formerly been discharged in a similar manner, making in the whole 70, and thereby reducing the number of patients cured from 454 to 384; nor is it possible for him to ascertain that only 28 of the patients discharged by desire of their friends were men.

According to the published report, it will appear to the general reader that  $49\frac{5}{10}$  per cent. of the patients admitted have been discharged cured, amounting to  $44\frac{6}{10}$  per cent. of the men, and  $54\frac{5}{10}$  per cent. of the women, making a difference of 10 per cent. in favour of the women. If, however, we correct the fallacy, and deduct the 28 men discharged by desire of their friends, from the 209 reported to be cured, there will only remain 181 actually so; and by deducting in



the same manner, the 42 women discharged by desire of their friends, from the 245 reported to be cured, there will remain 203 women discharged cured.

The amount of women cured will thus

be reduced to	- - - - -	45	$\frac{2}{10}$	per cent.
And that of the men to	- - - - -	38	$\frac{6}{10}$	per cent.

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Thus, by the correction of one mis-statement, the majority is reduced from ten to six and six decimal parts per cent. in favour of the woman. Were we to pursue this subject farther, and examine more minutely the number of women discharged cured, it is probable that the majority might be much more reduced. The real number of men and women discharged cured conjointly is 41.8 decimal parts per cent.

The minds of many of the Magistrates have, I understand, been impressed with the idea that the administration of medicine is useless, or even prejudicial in cases of insanity. It is rather difficult to make the subject well understood by those who have not studied the science of medicine professionally; nevertheless, I feel it to be my duty to submit the following observations to the Visiting Magistrates, for their due consideration.

Mental derangement is occasioned by irritation of the brain, sometimes moral causes, sometimes bodily ailments gives rise to this irritation. In a great number of the cases that were produced by moral causes alone, bodily disease of other organs as well as the brain, is the consequence of long continued insanity. It is a fact generally admitted, that the mind itself, the immortal principle, is incapable of disease. On the brain depend all the phenomena of life. It is not only the source of intellect, of sensation, and volition, but it regulates the circulation of the blood, respiration, digestion, and all the secretions of the human body. Its texture is extremely delicate, so much so, as to render it probable that high maniacal excitement cannot long continue without either greatly impairing the functions of some of the different organs dependent upon it, or materially injuring its structure; this, however, is not a subject left to be decided by reasoning alone. From morbid anatomy we learn that in ninety-five cases out of a hundred of the deranged patients examined after death, the structure of the brain is materially injured by chronic inflammation of its investing membranes, or by an effusion of water into its ventricles. It must be evident to every individual



possessing common sense, that water in the ventricles and chronic inflammation of its membranes, can neither be obviated nor cured by moral treatment.

From the parliamentary reports respecting lunatics, it appears that no class of patients has been so grossly neglected in this country as the insane in large hospitals, this apparent neglect has originated in the idea that the use of medicine in cases of insanity was unavailing. Since, however, more care and attention have been bestowed upon the insane, and medicines have been administered to them in the same manner as to patients labouring under other diseases, many more cures have been effected. From the experience which I have had at the Asylum, I am convinced, that insanity is as much under the control of medicine as any other disease, where equally important vital organs are affected. There is, perhaps, more care and medical skill required for the cure of this disease than for that of many others, because the patients are unable to describe their ailments; information must, therefore, be obtained by strict and repeated observation. The idea that the physician who has no other practice besides attending insane patients, is the best qualified to attend the insane, is unphilosophical and incorrect. Insanity is often complicated with a host of other diseases, on which account he who is most conversant with general disease, will always be most competent to attend the insane. It is upon this principle that Mr. TRAVERS, one of the first oculists in London, writes "No one except the thorough surgeon can make the complete oculist."

The only cases of derangement where medicine is unavailing are those that occur without ostensible bodily disease, which are few in number, or those where the structure of organs essential to life has been materially injured. In the latter instances, you may often smooth the passage to the grave by medicine when you cannot cure the patient. When the bodily disease has been removed and the mind continues to be deranged in consequence of morbid association of ideas, or of habit, nothing contributes so much towards the cure of insanity as moral management or employment, bodily or mental, suited to the patient's case; but it must be obvious to any reflecting mind, although entirely ignorant of the practice of medicine, that disorders of the digestive organs, of the brain, and of various parts of the body that precede or accompany insanity, can neither be prevented nor cured by moral management. The occurrence of bodily disease soon



after a patient has become sane, generally produces a relapse of derangement. I have seen an instance where toothache has produced this effect.

Few practitioners in this country have been more successful in curing the deranged than Dr. WILLIS and his family. From a perusal of the account of his medical practice published by his nephew, and a personal examination of patients who have been under his care, I am convinced that no physician has given larger quantities of medicine in insane cases than he has. Supposing, however, that all argument and reasoning on this subject should be put aside; there is one glaring fact, which unquestionably proves the point in question, namely the immense disparity in the number of cures effected in Madhouses, conducted by medical men, compared with the cures effected in those, which have not the advantage of medical superintendence. This disparity in favor of medical treatment is equally as great on the continent as it is in this country.

On my appointment as one of the Physicians to the Asylum, I was presented with a set of rules, intended, as I supposed, for the government of the institution,—these have been altered at the suggestion of the Director, and notwithstanding that alteration, have frequently been departed from by him, more especially in the giving of articles of diet not allowed in the diet table. In the management of a public hospital, it is better to have no rules than to suffer them unhesitatingly to be transgressed.

The yeast dumplings added to the diet table in the alterations made some years ago, were a real improvement to it, but no physician who has attended to the influence of diet or disease, would order an hospital of invalids to be fed on meat pies, or what is still worse, on pork or bacon, which, however, form no part of the diet table. It has been asserted, that these indigestible articles have only been given to such male patients as were well, that is, to such as were not taking medicine: but a great number of these patients who are called well, labour under chronic diseases of the brain and other organs, and are, therefore, unfit to be fed on food that is difficult of digestion. When improper food is given by pounds, and medicine to counteract disease by grains, it is very easy to predict which will preponderate.

If any Magistrate interested in the welfare of the Asylum will, either alone, or accompanied by, a scientific hospital



Physician, meet me there, and examine the male case books and patients, he will be convinced that 38 per cent. of such patients could never have been cured without much labor and scientific skill. If he or they will take the trouble to pursue the matter farther and examine the female case books and patients resident in the house, they will then be enabled to form a just comparison.

Where, in conducting a public hospital, there is a semblance of wrong, it surely is a fit subject of inquiry whether or not just cause for censure exists, but common courtesy requires that this should be done openly, and the party accused made acquainted therewith.

I am, your's truly,

C. CROWTHER.

Wakefield, 26th Dec. 1827."

Is there any thing in this letter calculated to give just cause of offence to the most fastidious Magistrates? Ought a Physician, whose character and conduct have been assailed at a public meeting, in silence to suffer his reputation to be injured? Because he has not been directly accused by the visiting Magistrates, has he acted incorrectly in sending them an exculpatory letter, relative to the accusation brought against him? Would not any honourable and feeling mind have derived pleasure and satisfaction from such a letter? Mark the conduct of the visiting Magistrates! In answer to a civil letter they exculpate their Physician, professionally, from blame; and five of them send him an uncivil—an insulting message.

"We have made no charge against Dr. CROWTHER, and do not deem his presence, or any further explanation, necessary!" Is there not a degree of littleness in this answer unbecoming the Governors of any public Institution?

It has been suggested to me that the Magistrates sent me the message so often alluded to, in order to prevent the recurrence of similar complaints in future. Notice the injustice of the case! By hearing only one side of the question, they give encouragement to misrepresentation; and when proof of the existence of such misrepresentation is laid before them, they treat it with insult.



The visiting Magistrates, by altering the excellent Rules and Regulations made when the Asylum was opened, in favour and at the suggestion of one of the stipendiary officers of the Institution, and by acting partially on many occasions, have sown dissensions between the different officers; and then they have censured the individual whom they have injured, and ascribed to him the dissensions which they themselves have occasioned. Had they ever seriously turned their attention to the subject, it might have occurred to them, that the Physician, who acted independently and without reward, who had constantly a spy upon his conduct, in the individual who exclusively engrossed their attention, would not be likely to neglect the duties of his office; nor would any one, under such circumstances, continue long to hold an office which he was not qualified to fill. The public will not be losers by any disagreement between the parties. It is only when the Physician and Apothecary conspire to tickle the ears of the Governors that Madhouses become neglected. From the result, one is led to imagine that my letter had given pain to the visiting Magistrates; and that by way of compensation for not being able to fix a stigma upon my character, they have agreed to send me an insulting message. Mr. HIGGINS refers me for redress to the Court of King's Bench; but I prefer citing him and his associates before the tribunal of public opinion.

If the candid reader should be of opinion that I have on this occasion expressed myself too warmly, let him, for one moment, put himself in my situation; let him, after more than eight years gratuitous toil in a public Hospital; after having been privately accused of improperly fulfilling the duties of his office, and publicly acquitted of this accusation, receive such a letter and such a message, and he would not, unless his head, by one of those awful visitations of Providence which attack men in advanced life, had become a ruin, unless his sensibility had been rendered torpid by disease, fail to express his sense of the injustice with which he had been treated, in language adapted to his feelings.

*Wakefield, 22nd December, 1829.*

FINIS.