LECTURES
ON THE
CONSTRUCTION AND GOVERNMENT
OF
LUNATIC ASYLUMS,

SUPPLEMENTARY TO CLINICAL LECTURES DELIVERED IN THE MID-
DLESEX LUNATIC ASYLUM AT HANWELL.

BY JOHN CONOLLY, M.D.,

PHYSICIAN TO THE ASYLUM.

LECTURE V.

*Attendants, appointment and qualifications of; their daily duties;
arrangements for night-watching in an asylum.*

If I may rely on my own observation, no subject connected with the management of the insane, either in asylums or in private practice, has received less adequate attention than the selection of proper attendants, their proper treatment, their just government, and their instruction in the various, and peculiar, and exhausting duties, which necessarily devolve upon them. The important and delicate task of regulating the conduct of persons of unsound mind, of controlling excitement, restraining waywardness, or removing mental depression, is unavoidably confided to persons of limited education; but these are too frequently chosen with little regard to their disposition, temper, or intelligence: they are permitted to commence their duties with as little preparation as if their office were merely that of a servant, and are governed either with severity and injustice, or without the consideration and indulgence requisite to support their patience, and to encourage them to be considerate and indulgent to those on whom they attend, and who are wholly in their power.

The idea of the attendants being selected without reference to the medical superintendent of an asylum is so extremely absurd, that nothing but its being entertained and acted upon by the governing bodies of asylums would suggest any allusion to it. The patients of any asylum in which this regulation prevails are generally deprived of the principal means of recovery, for the attendants are at the head of the remedial means employed by the physician. To compel him to treat his patients with the aid of attendants in whom he can have very little confidence, and for whose fidelity, or even for whose kindness, he has no security, is as injudicious as it would be to oblige him to employ drugs of an inferior quality, selected by persons unacquainted with the articles of the *materia medica*. Of all his remedial means, they are the most continually in action: all that cannot be done by his personal exertion depends upon them. The character of particular patients, and all the patients of a ward, takes its colour from the character of the attendants placed in it. On their being proper or improper instruments—well or ill trained—well or ill disciplined—well or ill cared for,—it depends whether many of his patients shall be cured or not cured; whether some shall live or die; whether frightful accidents, an increased mortality, incalculable uneasiness and suffering, and occasional suicides, shall take place or not. Painful, therefore, is the situation of the physician to an asylum who is liable, at every visit, to find forty or fifty of his patients put under the care of new attendants; separated from those to whom they were attached, and who had become acquainted with their peculiarities; and subjected to the rude dominion either of attendants without experience, and whom he sees at once to be without capacity for the duties he requires of them, or, what is worse, of attendants trained in asylums where the system of restraint is in full operation, and who are consequently versed in all the neglect, the harshness, and the concealment, which can inflict suffering on the patients, and which must cause disappointment of all his designs.

The occasional acquisition, under such a system, of a good attendant, is merely a happy accident; and the physician can even then never feel sure that the attendant will be allowed to remain. Sometimes attendants will be discharged for faults which the physician would occasionally pardon in those from whom so much is expected; and sometimes they will be retained when he knows them to be unworthy of trust, or even guilty of cruelty. No attendant should, in short, be appointed or dismissed without reference to the physician, and his full approval. His experience teaches him the qualifications indispensably required in them.

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As a general rule, the attendants, when entering on their duties, should not be more than thirty years of age, or rather, five-and-twenty. Male attendants who are older, if they have been in the army, or accustomed to responsibility, often prove valuable; but I have scarcely ever known a female attendant prove efficient who commenced her duties after thirty, and some of the best whom I have known, and whom many years of trial have now proved, began their duties before they were twenty. Activity and good spirits are required, and these qualities do not increase with years. The temper of older persons, unaccustomed to the insane, is easily ruffled; they have often been depressed by the events of life, and either give way to the oppressive influences of an asylum, or try to keep up their energies by stimulants. This is particularly the case with female attendants who enter late on such duties; and altogether—and putting humanity as much out of the question as it generally is where attendants are selected in the manner I have mentioned—there is no cherished fallacy greater than that of supposing that plain, middle-aged, ill-dressed women, are more moral, or more orderly in their habits and life than young, active, well-dressed nurses. The best attendants, both male and female, are to be found in the class of persons who are qualified to be upper servants, and their services may always be commanded in an asylum where a fair remuneration and a prospect of comfort are held out to them.

But the first requisite for an attendant, if conjoined with a moderate share of understanding, is benevolence. I fear this is a quality often wholly omitted in the inquiry into the character of attendants. Certainly, many have been observed by me in such situations, and entrusted with the care of private patients, whose physiognomy and whose voices proclaimed at once their want of such a quality; men chosen apparently on account of their possessing the frame of a prize-fighter, and sharp-tempered women with merely capacity enough to be under-housemaids. Yet these attendants constantly live with the patients, and must be entirely relied upon for the performance of the various duties which are presently to be mentioned. There is generally, of course, in asylums, a rapid succession of attendants so ill-qualified as these; and sometimes for a whole year, or for successive years, some particular wards are thus kept continually unsettled and ill-managed. Irregularities, accidents, injuries, and confusion, then present themselves daily to the physician's observation, and he is powerless to remove them. It cannot be concealed or denied that where such regulations prevail, and such attendants are appointed, the patients have not all the advantages which the public have a right to expect should be extended to them, and that a great duty is neglected. The great object of establishing and perpetuating a system of kindness, which nothing can disturb, and which generates the confidence of the patients, and acts as the most powerful and salutary of all restraints, is thus defeated.

The duties of an attendant in an asylum begin early in the morning, are incessant during the day, and end late. Those who are merely attended by them through the wards, and see them neatly dressed, and apparently at leisure to answer every curious or every idle question, can by no means appreciate the labour necessary to produce the cleanliness, or the continued watchfulness required to maintain the order, which are generally so much the objects of admiration in the wards of such institutions. The regulation of their daily duties at Hanwell is perhaps as useful as any of which any account can be easily referred to; but its adaptation to asylums in other parts of the country, or in other countries, must be regulated by the judgment of different superintendents. Habits of life, and climate, are the principal circumstances necessarily modifying such arrangements.

At six o'clock A.M. they are expected to unlock the doors of the patient's bedrooms; most of the patients being wearied with ten hours passed in bed, or in solitude, and anxious for liberty. A few patients, unfit to be at large, cannot be let out so early, or until the attendants have time, after attending to the washing and combing, and to the breakfasts of the other patients, to pay them the especial attention which they require. Until lately, the insane were not more favourably situated as regarded the means of preserving personal cleanliness than the soldier in barracks; but washing-rooms, fitted up in the manner already described, are now attached to almost every ward at Hanwell, and the attendants can more easily perform the required duty of ascertaining the state of the skin of each patient, so as to report any soreness, discoloration, or other change, to the resident medical officers at the morning visit, together with the state of health of any

particular patient, or anything altered in the state of the appetite, or remarkable in the evacuations, or any other accident. Without this observation, some feeble patients may sink day by day almost unnoticed, whom timely attention will revive. Medicines are frequently to be given, or baths administered, early in the morning, and it is very essential that this should not be omitted when ordered.

Soon after getting up, or at half-past six, the female patients who are employed in the laundry are to be collected and taken thither by the laundrymaids; but this duty will be done by the laundrymaids in a very rude and irregular manner unless some of the assistant female officers are stirring in the wards at that hour. Patients who object to going to the laundry will sometimes be forced to go against their will, although their disinclination may arise from a feeling of weariness or exhaustion. The importance of the duties of the laundry being regularly performed may be productive of some disposition to over-work the patients employed in it; but when any patient strongly objects to going, the case should be referred to the medical officer, whose visit should always be made soon after nine o'clock.

At seven A.M. the attendants ought to go to the kitchen, or wherever the distribution can most conveniently be made, for the bread, butter, &c., required for the patients of each ward during the day. The punctual and orderly performance of this duty wholly depends on the regularity of the house-keeper, whose representations as to any departure from order and punctuality should always meet with immediate attention. At this hour also, any attendant who has had leave of absence for the night is expected to be in the wards; but if eight were the hour for this appearance, it would be much more easily and much better attended to, nor would any particular inconvenience arise from the alteration, and the attendant would still be ready to go to chapel, or to attend to the breakfasts of the patients. Each ward having at least two attendants attached to it, the patients are never supposed to be left unattended.

Morning prayers, occupying about a quarter of an hour, are read in the chapel at Hanwell at eight o'clock, before the patients have breakfasted. Nine o'clock would be a preferable hour, as by that time both patients and attendants would have breakfasted, and be readier to attend. The hour would also be more convenient to the chaplain, who is not usually a resident officer in asylums; and it would also deprive the other officers of any reasonable excuse for not attending. It is expected that not fewer than five female and four male attendants should accompany the patients to chapel; and in my own opinion, every officer of an asylum, not especially prevented, and all the members of their families, and their servants, should also attend. The effect of this on the patients would be very satisfactory, and the attendants would be encouraged, by example, not to slide into negligence as to collecting the patients, and attending to their dress and behaviour in chapel. Merely requiring a numerical list of those who attend, leads to deception; and if there is service at all, it ought to command the respectful observance of all the residents of the asylum every day in the week.

The patients at Hanwell breakfast as soon as the morning prayers are concluded. This meal ought to be frequently superintended by assistant officers, and great care should be taken that those patients who are yet left in their bed-rooms are not forgotten. The breakfast of such patients should also be taken to them by an attendant, and not by other patients.

As soon as the breakfast is concluded, the more active duties of the ward attendants must commence. Every bed-room has to be cleaned out, and all the galleries and day-rooms are to be made neat. The bed-frames, and in many cases, the bedding, various articles of clothing, and in asylums where straw is used, all the straw, and everything uncleanly or broken, and all accumulations of litter and rubbish, must be diligently removed. Every window must now be opened, in almost all weathers, at least for a time; and many windows have of course been opened long before, or, in the summer season, all the night. In warm and dry weather, it is even unnecessary, in many cases, to shut the windows during the night, especially in the dormitories; and if the shutters of the bed-rooms in the refractory wards are closed, the windows ought certainly to be left open, to prevent the irritability of the patients being very much increased. The attendants ought thoroughly to understand that no excuses will ever be admitted for uncleanliness, or for any bad smell, in any part of the asylum; and that if the floors require daily washing, they must be dried as quickly as possible; and no pails, or mops, or brushes, or gas-keys, or steps, or any mischievous moveable thing, be left in the way of the patients. Many

accidents are thus prevented; to prevent which, restraints were formerly much and very needlessly employed.

A partial and very convenient clearing of the wards may be effected at the time these active occupations commence, by the male patients who are employed out of doors, or in the shops, and the female patients who are employed in the work-rooms, being now collected by the superintendents of the different kinds of employment, and taken away to their occupations. The duty of collecting them should be performed in an orderly, tranquil, and encouraging manner. Of the patients not employed out of the wards, some remain, and materially assist the attendants in their heaviest work; others get out at once into the airing-courts.

At half-past nine, or ten, at the latest, the infirmaries, and the sick in all the wards, should be made ready for the morning medical visit. The sick diet-lists, made out every day, should be ready for inspection or alteration in each infirmary; and everything required for the sick for the day, as far as can then be foreseen, should be ordered in writing. An attendant from each infirmary, or, what is better, a head attendant from each side of the asylum, should take the lists and orders at once to the store-rooms and kitchen, accompanied by two or three patients, and the wine, porter, broth, or other extras, should be there immediately delivered to them, or at the time for which any order is given.

All the wards should now be visited, not only by the medical officers, but by those to whom the order and cleanliness of the wards, and the domestic superintendence of the attendants, is especially entrusted. It is from their care that the medical officers have to expect that neatness and cleanliness everywhere prevail; and at this hour the whole house should be ready for inspection, and all the attendants should be neatly dressed. This is the department of the matron and steward, and their assistants. After this time, no patients should be found in their bed-rooms, except those who are sick or very feeble, or are too much excited to be interfered with. Attempts should be made to get every patient up; and those who are excited and negligent of cleanliness should be moved out of one bed-room to another, to permit the room in which they have slept to be cleaned. Unless very much excited, the patient should be dressed and taken out. As soon as possible after this time—not later than eleven in temperate weather, earlier in summer, and about noon in winter—every patient who can walk should be taken out of doors, or persuaded to walk about, one of the attendants of each ward always going with them. A very violent patient, if permitted to walk about, should have an attendant on each side of him, and they should endeavour to keep him in good humour. Very few are so violent as not to be benefited by being out for a short time every day.

At eleven o'clock, when the patients who are active and tolerably well, are out of doors, walking, or occupied with amusements partaken of by the attendants; some in the airing-courts, and all the quietest and best behaved in the larger fields or grounds, the boundaries being carefully watched, and all the ground vigilantly overlooked by the attendants; the other patients, those at work, for instance, and those in the house, and disabled from work or from walking, are variously attended to. The out-door workers have beer, and the women employed in the laundry have beer and bread and cheese; and the feeble and sick have some excellent broth, or porter, or wine; and the due administration of the refreshments is a duty which ought to be most scrupulously performed by the attendants, and in many cases superintended by assistant officers.

Considerable difficulty is always found in effecting a proper superintendence of the patients in the grounds; and it never can be affected unless some of the officers are frequently to be seen there. No time is more favourable for conversing with several of the patients than when they are walking about; and if the officers never go into the exercising grounds the attendants are naturally inclined to conclude that this part of their own duty also is of little consequence, and the patients are allowed to wander about, to quarrel, dispute, or come to blows, or to escape over the fences, or to lie in the heat of the sun, or on the damp grass. These things call for the continual exercise of the attention, both of attendants and officers. There is no time of the day in which the attendants can be said to have nothing to do. The inattention of a few minutes, and the neglect of some ordinary and common precaution, may be the cause of occurrences of the most lamentable kind.

The most convenient dinner hour for the patients in an asylum not intended for the richer classes is one. An hour before that time, (or at twelve o'clock,) the attendants should

take the trays, beer-cans, and dishes, to the kitchen, or wherever the distribution of the dinners and the beer takes place. In this, as in everything in which patients can be properly engaged, they are assisted by them, and also, in carrying the dinners &c., at one o'clock, from the kitchen to the different wards. This duty always seems to be a pleasant one to the patients, and is performed with much alacrity and cheerfulness, and it scarcely ever happens that they are interrupted in it by the patients of any of the wards through which they have to pass.

When speaking of the diet of asylums, the attentions required from the attendants during the dinner hour of the patients were particularly mentioned. By such attentions, all accidents and ill behaviour may generally be prevented. Those who visit the male wards at Hanwell at dinner-time, may see, in different day-rooms or galleries, from thirty to fifty insane persons sitting down to dinner, with quite as much order as so many sane labourers: but this gratifying effect is produced by systematic and constant care to provide them with good food, equally distributed, and comfortably served; and by their having sufficient space, and every attempt at irregularity being prevented by timely admonition, or, if required, the timely removal of the disorderly. It is most desirable that the officers of an asylum should manifest the interest they take in a meal so essential to the comfort of the patients, by frequently visiting the wards at such times; their presence seems always to give satisfaction to the patients, and it also prevents some negligences, especially as regards the sick or those not dining at the table with the rest. The attendants are always inclined to delegate the duty of carrying the dinner and beer of such patients to some other patient; but this ought by no means to be allowed. Without frequent superintendence, also, such patients will have their dinners taken to them without knife or fork, or spoon, or salt; and the habit of attending to all these points should be strictly kept up. Carelessness as to individual patients soon leads to general negligence; general discomfort follows, and the proper character of an asylum, and a proper influence on the habitual feelings of the patients, cannot be maintained. The greatest results desired in an asylum depend very much upon very small attentions, perpetually exercised.

An hour is allowed for the dinner of the patients, and by two o'clock everything is removed from the tables; the floors of the dining-rooms are swept, some of the patients are employed in cleaning all the dinner utensils; the patients return to the workshops or workrooms in which they are employed, or to the garden and farm, the superintendents of which have already dined; and the ward-attendants have themselves leisure to dine. I think it most important to the comfort of the attendants that they should have a dining-room on each side of the asylum, separate from the wards, and that one-half of them should dine at two o'clock, and the other half at half-past two. If they have conscientiously performed the duties of the preceding seven hours, they have well earned the half-hour's relief from the wards thus obtained. Their dining-room ought, in every respect, to be a pattern of neatness; a head attendant should be charged with keeping proper order in it; and their dinners ought to be good, and carefully sent up. Whatever dissatisfies attendants entails some evil consequences on the patients; and if they are expected to be good-humoured and forbearing, they must be made reasonably comfortable. The plan of requiring them to dine in the wards, at the same table with the numerous patients for whom they have carved, is quite inconsistent with their comfort, or even with their health. They are heated and wearied, and cannot eat their dinner in such circumstances; it is therefore put by for an irregular meal at some irregular hour, and the neglect of some daily duty or other is the general consequence.

During the dinner-hour of the attendants, no ward should be left entirely without an attendant; and at five minutes after three o'clock all the attendants should again be in the wards. Soon afterward, if the weather is dry and not too hot, the patients should be out of doors again, in the airing-courts or the grounds; and they should remain out from an hour to two hours, discretion being used in regard to particular patients in different seasons of the year, and also to their various inclinations, but with a constant endeavour to promote some activity in all. In the summer, the great heat of the afternoons is unfavourable to the patients; but in such seasons they should always be out of doors for an hour or an hour and a half before their bed-time; as by this an opportunity is afforded to ventilate the galleries more perfectly, and the patients are recreated, and return into the wards better disposed to rest.

The extremest difficulty is generally found in enforcing re-

gular attention to the exercise of the patients employed in the workshops; but, if possible, all of them, including the tailors and shoemakers, always the most disinclined to move, should be induced to walk into the grounds for an hour every afternoon or evening.

It is not desirable to allow the patients who work on the farm or in the gardens to be employed later than five o'clock. At that hour they should be collected, and conducted to their respective wards by the out-door attendants, whose duty it should then be to report anything particular in the conduct or the apparent health of those who are more under their observation than that of the ward attendants. These patients have, of course, had sufficient exercise, and their greatest pleasure at this time is to sit down to tea, and then to read, or play at draughts, or cards, or bagatelle, or to rest and do nothing until supper-time. Many of them are disposed to be extremely regular in their attendance at the morning and evening prayers, and it is desirable that the hours of these religious services should be regulated with a view to their so being.

At five or at six o'clock the evening service should take place in the chapel; the patients being conducted thither as in the morning. After this service, a portion of the attendants, not exceeding one-third, should be permitted to go out for the evening. Each attendant should have this permission twice in the week.

If the evening service is performed at five, the female patients should have their tea and bread-and-butter afterward. The male patients should sup at seven; the attendants being as careful as at dinner respecting the division and distribution of the bread, cheese, and beer, allowed for this meal, and the conservation of order and good humour. This welcome meal usually disposes the men to go tranquilly to bed; and it is rather difficult to decide as to the preference to be given for a similar meal to the female patients instead of tea. To many of the women, however, the afternoon's tea is more satisfactory; and even some of the men would, I believe, prefer tea in the evening to their ordinary supper; and in some cases, the health of the patients requires this substitution.

After every meal, the attendants should be carefully accustomed to lock up all the knives, forks, spoons, dishes, &c., as soon as they are made clean. The inconveniences arising from any neglect of this duty are innumerable.

Soon after seven, many of the patients like to go to their bed-rooms, and to bed. The regular hour for doing so is eight, an hour doubtless felt by many to be much too early, particularly in summer time; but a later hour would be incompatible with the relief of the attendants, which, it may easily be supposed, is absolutely necessary to them after fourteen hours of activity, during which they have scarcely sat down for a quarter of an hour at any one time, and have been from time to time agitated or excited, or had to contend with various difficulties, only to be estimated by those who occasionally devote even one hour to any one ward. These duties are also performed in an atmosphere which no ordinary system of ventilation can prevent from a deterioration productive of sensibly depressing effects. It becomes, therefore, indispensable to the effective performance of these duties day after day, that the attendants should have an opportunity of being at least one hour in the open air in the evening, before their supper hour, or before their own bed-time. By persuasion and proper management, the indisposition of some of the patients to go to bed so early as eight, may generally be overcome. It is a general rule in some asylums, that the clothes of the patients should be taken out of their bed-rooms at night, and wrapped up, and placed on the outside of the bed-room door. This is a necessary precaution as regards suicidal patients, who are disposed to tear their clothing, and convert it into the means of self-destruction. For the same reason they are sometimes only supplied with the ticking bed-clothing, in which blankets are sewed, and no sheets, or caps with strings, are allowed them. The same rule as respects the clothing must be observed when patients are violent, or dirty, or slovenly, or destructive, and in the habit of carrying knives, scissors, &c., about in the pockets of their dress. Such patients accumulate and hide under the bedding a variety of litter, which ought carefully to be removed. But there are a great many orderly, clean, and tranquil patients in an asylum, to whom these general rules are not found to be applicable; and as this leads first to its disuse in the rooms of such patients, and then to its neglect in other rooms where it is really required, the regulation ought to be understood to apply to certain cases only, and if acted upon generally in the cases of patients recently admitted, should in many cases be dispensed with after a short

acquaintance with their habits. The same discretionary application of the regulations as to closing windows and window-shutters, must, of necessity, be often entrusted to the attendants. As a general rule, every bed-room window should be shut at night in cold weather; but there are patients in whom the sense of heat is so distressing, that even in the coldest night they seem to require the admission of the external air into their bed-rooms. The window-shutters should be carefully closed wherever there are patients disposed to injure the windows, or to make disturbing noises. In other cases, the patients who prefer not having the shutter closed, should be permitted to have it open; and some of them thus make a good use of the early light of the mornings in summer.

One of the most important parts of an attendant's duty at locking-up time, is to ascertain that each patient is present in his bed-room, and then to lock every door. The galleries should afterward be kept free from unnecessary intrusion, and, with the exception of one moderate light in each gallery or passage, all the lights should be put out. When all this is done, the night attendants should enter on their duty, and all the rest be at immediate liberty.

It is difficult to make satisfactory arrangements for night-watching. If attendants sleep in any of the dormitories, they do not obtain sufficient rest, and no advantage arises from their discomfort as regards the numerous patients not in dormitories. If a certain number of the attendants take the night-duty in turn, they of course enter on this duty at the close of their ordinary duties, and more disposed to sleep than to watch. If there are especial attendants for the night-watching alone, they can either have no employment in the day, or there is no more security for their watchful attention during the night than there is for the same vigilance in those who have been employed during the day. Yet the general watching of a large asylum during the night is of great consequence to many of the patients: some require food, cordials, medicine, cooling drink, or various medicines; some become suddenly violent, and require timely attention, or become dangerous to others; epileptic patients are constantly liable to severe attacks of their malady; the paralytic, and those disposed to apoplectic seizures, are subject to sudden and serious accidents; and the suicidal require to be frequently visited in the night. At Hanwell, two attendants sit up every night on the male side of the asylum, and two on the female side. They are allowed tea, coffee, butter, and sugar, in addition to the ordinary rations of the day; and they enter on their duty at eight o'clock in the evening; at which hour all the other attendants close the duties of the day by sending in their evening report to the medical officers, stating the number of beds in their ward, the number of patients actually in the ward, the number of the absent, and also the seclusions, admissions, discharges, deaths, or other circumstances since they entered on that day's duties. They are then free from particular duties and responsibilities until the following morning at six. The first duty of the night-attendants is to examine the lists, left in the infirmaries, of those patients who require especial attention in the night. Each list should contain the name of the patient, the number of the ward, the number of the bed-room, and the number of the bed, in which the patient is. The list of things ordered for the night should be immediately compared with the things actually provided, so that any deficiencies may be made up before the officers and other attendants have gone to bed.

At nine o'clock, the male and female attendants have supper in their respective halls; and care should be taken to make this a comfortable meal to them after the toil of the day. At ten o'clock, the attendants who have been out for the evening should return to the asylum—perhaps somewhat earlier in the winter; but no advantage arises from abridging their allotted time of relaxation in the fine evenings of summer; and the head attendant should prevent any irregularity which may cause them to go to bed supperless on their return. There is a great want of consideration in any rules which either exact their return at an unreasonably early hour, or omit all provision for their comfort when they do return. The attendants have often to visit friends who live far from the asylum, and who are too poor to entertain them: if, in addition to this, they are to return to a cheerless home, it is extremely unlikely that they will feel attached to it, or pursue their peculiar avocations in the asylum with the cheerfulness and good-will essential to their efficiency as the instruments of comfort or of cure to the patients. Their days and hours of leave should be days free, if possible, from anxiety; and every arrangement should be made that can insure their entrance of the gate of the asylum, when they return, in

a cheerful state of mind, refreshed by a short intermission of their duties, and fitter to go on with them. Every officer of common sense and common feeling must know how necessary all this is for himself; and it is most strange that it should be so often thought undeserving of attention as regards the attendants. The regulations of a prison can but produce in them the feelings of a turnkey, and such are not the feelings required in the attendants on the insane.

The great duty of the night-attendants is to visit the different wards several times in the night, and to administer the nourishment required by the weak and sinking, and the medicine ordered for the sick. Although their principal attention is generally required in the infirmaries, it should be faithfully extended to the wards in which the restless and refractory patients are placed, and not withheld from any part of the asylum. There is much inhumanity in any regulation debarring insane patients who are restless, or depressed, or sleepless, from the comfort of a little tea, because they are not in wards appropriated for the sick. Any resident officer who frequents the wards late at night will learn that there are many of the patients to whom a cup of tea, or of broth, or of sago, or sometimes a glass of water, or sometimes a few kind words, act as a sedative better than poppy or mandragora, and contribute also to the great end of producing satisfaction in the day, as well as solace in the night. I have repeatedly witnessed the good effects of such attentions, and have known violent and noisy patients tranquilized for the night by being allowed water to wash their hands and face, and water to drink, and by having the bed made up afresh, and a cool dress put on, and a kind and cheerful good night wished to them by kind-hearted attendants. To withhold all this, as if it were so much weak indulgence of the capricious, is to treat the insane as criminals, not as patients, and cannot be too strongly reprobated.

The officers of asylums who visit the wards after the patients are in bed, must show by their example how anxious they are to comfort the restless and to avoid disturbing those who are asleep. The attendants should wear list shoes, and the doors should be unlocked with the least possible noise. In addition to the light left in each gallery, each night attendant should be provided with a lantern, and no candles should be taken into any bed-room except so protected. Patients who will not lie down should have cloth boots on, fastened by a small lock; and those who will only lie on the floor, should be placed in rooms of which the whole floor is a bed. I have lately been informed by Mr. Gaskell, so well known as the resident medical officer of the Lancaster asylum, that the uncleanly habits of almost every patient in that large institution have been got the better of by means of the regular visits of the night attendants, who, it seems, have few or no day duties in the asylum. If any accident or unusual circumstance takes place, the attendants should be able to ring a bell communicating with the medical officer's bed-room.

In order to ensure watchfulness during the night, and to give the attendants the means of proving it, I long since recommended the introduction of night-clocks into the asylum at Hanwell. The dial-plate of these clocks turns round once in twelve hours; and at each quarter of an hour, or half-hour, or hour, the attendant is able to depress the one of the forty-eight pegs which is exactly at the top of the dial plate at that time: but these clocks were immediately neglected. A physician to an asylum should have authority to enforce attention to such matters, both in the attendants and officers. In a small asylum he may himself see that all such duties are performed; but in a larger he requires help, and power to command it.

A little before six in the morning, the night attendants call up all the rest; they make out reports, in writing, of the state of the wards, or of particular patients, during the night, and of all especial occurrences; and then their duty ceases; and they are not expected, at Hanwell, to take any share of the ordinary ward duties of the day until after twelve o'clock. Young, active, and healthy attendants do not suffer from the recurrence of these night duties once in twelve or fourteen nights; and, generally speaking, I have found them very faithful in the performance of them.

Such are the ordinary daily and nightly duties of the attendants on the insane in an asylum. There are also some duties which occur only on certain days in the week; and there are many general attentions required which are, in reality, the whole mental or moral treatment of insanity carried into practical effect. These, in their relations to the patients, and to the qualifications and government of the attendants, and to the general constitution of an asylum, and the character of its officers, still remain to be considered.