Dr. Boyd, of the Somerset Asylum, who has written on this subject, justly observes, that a difference ought to be made between an *Asylum* and a *Prison* and adduces the following cogent reasons for an immediate change.

“ In the second place, allowing criminal lunatics the same amount of liberty which is considered requisite for the comfort and successful treatment of the other patients, affords the former many opportunities of effecting their escape ; thus leaving society open to violence and wrong at the hands of individuals, who are quite aware of the fact of having a plea to shield them from the penalties attached to crime. The Commissioners of Lunacy have brought this subject under the consideration of the Home Secretary, and from their fifth report, it appears that there were 304 criminal lunatics in confinement, last year, one of whom contrived to escape no less than six times from a licensed house.

“ In the third place, there are instances on record of criminals, who have either escaped the hands of justice by feigning insanity, or been acquitted of crime on the ground of insanity, who have frequently appeared in full mental vigor, and finding themselves imprisoned for an indefinite period, become desperate and induced to exert all their energies in creating disaffection in the minds of the other patients and materially interfering with the successful treatment of these and with good order in the Asylum.”

The force of these objections to the present loose system of associating criminal lunatics of every degree, with those who have committed no crime, is so obvious that we do not think the proposed measure can meet with serious opposition.

Notes on Lunatic Asylums in Germany and other parts of Europe.—

By W. F. CUMMING, M. D. London : 1852.

[From the London Journal of Medicine, March 1852.]

The author, to use his own words, “ having for a long time interested himself in the subject of insanity, and visited the asylums of many countries both in Europe and the East, was desirous of becoming acquainted with the Institutions of Germany, and of seeing if the me-

taphysical character of the people manifested itself in peculiar forms of derangement, or in peculiar methods of cure." The valuable pamphlet now before us owes its origin to this circumstance.

Dr. Cumming states that physical restraint is still much used in the best continental asylums, and that in general arrangement, the asylums of this country are superior in most respects to those of other lands. Regarding the asylum of Sieburg, seven miles from Bonn, he writes;—"The internal accommodations are very inadequate; and this is especially the case in the apartments for the violent, which were over-crowded and not over-clean. In them I saw several patients of both sexes, under restraint, and notably two, who were enclosed in a sort of wooden sentry-box, with only their necks and heads exposed. I was not a little struck with this apparatus, which looked more like a Chinese punishment than a means of medical treatment; but on asking Dr. Focke the history of so strange a practice, I had the mortification of learning, that the model of the apparatus had been brought by Dr. Jacobi from England, many years ago, and that they had always retained the name of 'English chairs.' I trust that no such instrument of durance is to be found in England at the present day."

There is one point on which Dr. Cumming insists which we think of great importance; namely, the urgent necessity of increasing the number of resident medical men in attendance upon the inmates of our asylums. No general or routine system can be applied to all, with a hope of cure; and it is recovery, not mere subordination, which ought to be aimed at. While Hanwell (says Dr. Cumming) with its 1000 Lunatics, has only two physicians resident in the Asylum, Sieburg with its 200 patients, has four medical officers; and Sonnenstein and Leibus, containing respectively 240 and 146 lunatics, have each three physicians. It is impossible that any one man can render himself so thoroughly conversant with the mental condition of 500 patients, so as to be able adequately to direct their physical treatment. We commend this little work to our readers. It is elegantly and forcibly written and contains much interesting and practically useful information.—*London Journal of Medicine*, March, 1852.