gates, and walls ; but I *am* an advocate for wholesome bodily restraint as a curative means. I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

A MEDICAL SUPERINTENDENT.

Dec. 26, 1841.

*** The writer has verified his letter by his name and address in a separate note.

BALLS AT ASYLUMS FOR THE INSANE.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—Again I have been present at one of these monthly festivities in the Lincoln Asylum, attended, as before, by inhabitants of the town, several of whom were young and delicate females, moving in most respectable circles of society. The association of the sane with the insane, free from any personal control, under circumstances most exhilarating, forms a peculiar feature in the Lincoln Asylum balls, and presents a *practical* contradiction of those prejudices which have so long been fostered, by exhibitions of shackled limbs behind barred gates and in gloomy cells, impressing the beholder with alarm and horror, and inculcating notions of the *necessity* of a vigorous and severe management.

It presents, also, incontestable evidence of the *capacity* of the insane for social enjoyment, as well as agreeable excitement, and of the efficacy of these without instrumental restraint, or other severities. Even the famed Miss A., whose case was so industriously advertised in the county and other journals, by the opponents of the non-restraint system, as an argument against that system, I have witnessed, now, on several occasions, relieved both from instrumental and solitary confinement, a partner in a dance, or walking in the streets and neighbourhood with a single attendant.*

Finding that similar entertainments are coming into practice in other asylums, I would direct the attention of their managers to the advantage of regular periodical monthly parties, to be looked forward to by the patients as a reward for self-control ; and also to the benefit of introducing some respectable neighbours. By varying the latter occasionally, a considerable advance will presently be made towards breaking down the barrier which has been so jealously maintained between the sane and the insane, to the incalculable disadvantage of the latter, of whose sympathies, susceptibilities, and capabilities, the great mass of the public are almost as ignorant as the instrumental restrainers themselves, their allies—the joiner

and the blacksmith ; and their patrons, Drs. Clutterbuck, Johnson, and Co.

When, Sir, I shall learn to distrust the evidence of my own eyes—when my ears shall understand expressions of pleasure to be those of sorrow—when I can believe that the joyous, happy scenes I have lately witnessed were but a dream, then, but not till then, shall I return to my past belief in the ferocious, implacable, and *untameable* character of the mad, and in the *efficacy* of straps, chains, and solitary cells.

It should be understood that the male and the female patients are never in the same apartment, but female *visitors* do not refuse to dance with male *patients*, and male *visitors* dance with female *patients*. I am, Sir, yours respectfully,

A CONVERT.

Lincoln, Jan. 1842.

EVIDENCE IN FAVOUR OF THE NON-RESTRAINT SYSTEM.

“ ONE of the most refractory and distressing cases now in the house, is that of an unfortunate female (Miss A.), the judicious and humane management of which, I fearlessly assert, can never be accomplished, by any means at present known, without recourse to instrumental restraint.”—*See Mr. Hadwen's letter in THE LANCET, September 12, 1840, p. 906.*

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—The name of Miss A. having been repeatedly brought forward in your pages by the opponents of the non-restraint system, as an instance of the impracticability of carrying out that system with patients who are peculiarly disposed to commit acts of violence, I beg your insertion of the following extracts from the journals of the Lincoln Asylum respecting her, and some other patients of a similar description, who have been treated for several months past without any recourse to seclusion, a system lately abolished in the Lincoln Asylum, as restraint had been long before.

From the House-Surgeon's Journal.

“ 1841, Dec. 9. C. A. (Miss A.) walked out on the Burton-road, returning by Riseholme Bar. She was accompanied by nurse Ringham and A. B., a patient, both of whom inform me that A—— conducted herself with great propriety : she herself informed me that she had enjoyed the walk, and should like to repeat it on some future occasion.

“ 1841, Dec. 17. C. A. continues orderly and quiet ; in fact, she is becoming one of the most tractable patients in the north gallery. She appears to pay great attention to what nurse Ringham says to her.

* A letter relating to the present condition of this patient follows this letter.

"1841, Dec. 18. C. A. continues orderly and quiet: she walked out with nurse Ringham in the afternoon, who reports that her conduct was extremely good. I have myself been much struck with the decided improvement which has taken place in this patient since the non-seclusion system has been adopted; and I have read with much satisfaction the report of Dr. Elmhirst, on the improved condition of the north-gallery patients generally (see below), which may justly be attributed to the introduction of this system of treatment.

"1841, Dec. 22. C. A. and S. C. had a walk out in the morning, being accompanied by nurse Ringham, who took them to the cathedral; the latter patient was much affected by the music, and pointed out to the nurse the stall usually occupied by the Rev. —, her late master.

(Signed) "WM. SMITH."

From the Physician's Journal.

"1841, Dec. 16. The female north gallery presents now the calm and quiet appearance that the one on the other side of the house has long done. This fully convinces me that the system now pursued by our present house-surgeon is the one which, ere long, will become general in institutions of this kind, however numerous its opponents may be for some short time to come.

"1841, Dec. 22. Mrs. C. and Miss A. have this moment been in the board-room, having just returned from a walk. They went into the Minster, where the former pointed out the stall, and afterwards noticed also her late master's house. Miss A. asked me to give her a glass of wine. They were both neatly, nay, even well dressed, and seemed to have enjoyed their outing very much.

(Signed) "R. ELMHIRST."

I cannot help contrasting these results of the humane system with the state of the same patient under restraint and under seclusion, as respectively exhibited in the following official reports:—

Miss A. under Restraint.

"Nurse Corston came to my room this morning, at half-past nine o'clock, and told me that the kitchen-girl was ill in bed, and that she could not remain in the gallery if C. A. was allowed to get up, as in the event of an outbreak the other nurses would not dare to give assistance. I directed Corston to place C. A. under restraint. On entering the gallery about five minutes afterwards, I found this patient in her bed-room, quietly putting on her clothes, and she appeared orderly. The nurses of the front gallery and the charwoman, together with nurses Corston and Page, were in and about the room, ready to use the instruments of restraint, as soon as the patient had finished

dressing herself. The charwoman was called away. Everything being ready, the patient was held by two nurses. The belt was then put on loosely. The moment I attempted to secure the wrists a struggle commenced, the wrist-locks being seized by the patient, and locked at each attempt I made. The nurses were roughly used, the patient kicking them on their bodies, &c. She attempted to bite them, as well as to tear their clothes, and was with the greatest difficulty prevented doing so. She kicked me several times on the shins, which prevented me securing her hands so quickly as I otherwise would have done. At length she was thrown down and overpowered. One or two nurses holding her by the feet, the others by the arms and body, the wrists were secured; and the hobbles being applied, she was allowed to get up. She then made such a terrific noise as to alarm the other patients in the gallery, several of whom continued, for a length of time, to rave about ill-usage, and to labour under considerable excitement. I had never before witnessed such a scene, and never should have done if assisted by adequate nurses. The patient had a violent paroxysm of rage about twelve o'clock."—*See House-Surgeon's Journal*, April 9, 1840.

Miss A. under Seclusion.

"Miss A., during the last two days, has not left her room, or even dressed herself: she spends great part of the day standing in her night-dress, looking through the wicket of her door. When the nurses go near her, in order to put on her clothes, she becomes extremely violent: her appearance is much altered for the worse, probably owing to the continued confinement in a small, ill-ventilated apartment, where she is compelled to inhale an atmosphere loaded with exhalations from her own urine and fæces. The heat communicated from the laundry-fire must also tend to render this apartment peculiarly ill-adapted for the reception of a patient who frequently does not leave her room for fifty hours together."—*See House-Surgeon's Journal*, August 14, 1840.

Many other cases to the same effect could be cited if necessary. I have the honour to be, Sir, your faithful and obedient servant,

ROBERT GARDINER HILL.

Lincoln, Dec. 27, 1841.

*** As this is a simple record of alleged facts, we shall admit no controversy on the subject, unless they can be successfully contradicted.

GOUT. — MR. WANSBROUGH'S PREVENTIVE AND REMEDY.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—The following is my "Recipe," which I am induced to publish for the benefit