

treatment of the insane, for it unfortunately is generally found necessary in the early and acute stages of mental disease to deprive the patient to a greater or less extent of his liberty; and thus there is introduced a disturbing element not usually met with in the treatment of ordinary disease. Self-control in the insane being usually in abeyance, other control—personal, mechanical, chemical, or structural—must necessarily be substituted for it to prevent accident, for it is an undoubted fact that a very large proportion of patients sent under care and treatment to hospitals for the insane are only so sent by relatives or the public authorities when it is found that they are dangerous to themselves or to others. When all the conditions here alluded to are provided for in the projected hospital, it will be seen in what respects, if any, it differs from some existing asylums or hospitals for the insane in construction and government, or in the means afforded by them for systematic or clinical instruction in mental diseases; for many of the existing admirable institutions it is well known are already open to such members of the general body of the profession as choose to avail themselves of their clinical teaching, as well as to medical students; whilst the able physicians who act as their medical superintendents already give systematic instruction in mental diseases in every medical school in the metropolis.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

Malling-place, Kent, Jan. 19th, 1884. JAMES ADAM, M.D.

* * If any proof were required of the urgent need of a hospital such as that which we understand to be projected, it would be found in the above able but mistaken argument. The writer, an accomplished alienist, does not even recognise the existence of a stage of self-conscious worry or weakness before the development of insanity, during which the patient is not only willing but anxious to be treated. Alienists rarely see patients in this stage, yet it is thus early, before they are certifiable, that they need hospital treatment and can be "cured."—ED. L.

THE NEED OF SPECIAL TREATMENT FOR THE "NERVOUS."

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—Under the above heading there appears a short and quasi-editorial note in your journal of last week (p. 146), involving a misconception which perhaps it would not have been worth while to notice had it been of merely personal interest; but as the whole matter is one of wider scope and more permanent significance than could be inferred easily from one case, I think it desirable to trouble you with the following brief rejoinder. It is not necessary to defend the "eminent English specialist" referred to, inasmuch as he had no responsibility whatever in the case, and was only incidentally consulted by letter. But his opinion happened to be (and I therefore took it to be a representative opinion) that a woman in a state of prolonged lethargy or "trance," and with no other evidence of insanity than the fact that without "care and treatment" she would probably die of starvation, was not in a position in which she could properly be certified as of unsound mind, and thereby be placed in an asylum. Obviously, there might be cases in which the answer to this question might be of more pressing importance than in the case I reported in THE LANCET; and I alluded to one in which, the patient being under age, I had certified a girl on account of mere hysterical anorexia, and had her treated in Gartnavel Asylum, with the best results. Such cases as this last are not very uncommon, and the proper way of dealing with them is a matter in which the whole profession has a legitimate interest. My own opinion is simply that there is a difficulty in dealing with such cases as frankly insane. But, rather than let such a patient die, I would feel justified in certifying her of unsound mind, as at present advised.—I am, Sir, yours truly,

Glasgow, Jan. 22nd, 1884.

W. T. GAIRDNER.

* * What does Professor Gairdner mean by "frankly insane"? There are no voluntary patients in England, as Dr. Gairdner probably knows, and "hysterical anorexia" is not a certifiable disease. If by anorexia Professor Gairdner means refusal to take food, that may have been evidence of insanity; but the case must have been admitted on his general opinion, not for anorexia.—ED. L.

"ENLARGEMENT OF THE BURSA PATELLÆ IN CLERGYMEN."

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—In your issue of the 12th inst., I notice a letter from Dr. Wherry of Cambridge expressing his surprise that cases of "housemaid's knee" should occur among the clergy. For the last few years I have been attending the members of the French Jesuit College here, and I have found affections of the bursa patellæ by no means uncommon; these vary in severity from a simple corn-like hardening of the skin covering the patella to the most acute inflammation of the bursa ending in suppuration. Evaporating lotions are often very serviceable in reducing the inflammation, but of course incision frequently becomes necessary, and in some cases large quantities of pus are discharged. Recovery is generally rapid and complete, but occasionally a low chronic state of inflammation in the joint has supervened and has been very troublesome. Complete rest with the application of belladonna plaster, followed by painting with tincture of iodine, have always been successful in producing an ultimate cure. There are about 100 members of the college, the majority of these being students varying from eighteen to twenty-two years of age, and the average number of cases of affections of the bursa patellæ has been about five per annum. I am, Sir, yours truly,

F. H. V. GROSHOLZ, M.K.Q.C.P.I., &c.

Aberdovey, Jan. 15th, 1884.

DR. ROGERS AND THE WESTMINSTER UNION.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—I have much pleasure in handing to you a resolution passed at Derby by the Midland Branch of the British Medical Association on January 10th, 1884.

I remain, Sir, yours faithfully,

Nottingham, Jan. 17th, 1884.

A. W. MARSHALL.

"That this meeting of the Midland Branch of the British Medical Association desires to express its sympathy with Dr. Rogers in the contest which he has had with the guardians of the Westminster Union, and at the same time to congratulate him upon the somewhat tardy justice which has recently been meted out to him by the Local Government Board in reinstating him in his position as medical officer of the Union." (Signed)

W. WEBB, M.D., President.

A. W. MARSHALL, M.D., Hon. Sec. and Treasurer.

LIVERPOOL.

(From our own Correspondent.)

THE FOURTEENTH ANNIVERSARY OF HOSPITAL SUNDAY IN LIVERPOOL.

ON Sunday, the 13th inst., the weather was most favourable for church-goers, and Hospital Sunday continues as a firmly established and favourite institution in Liverpool. Bishop Ryle showed his interest in our local medical charities by preaching sermons both morning and evening on behalf of the fund, and the collections still continue to show the same munificence which has from the first marked Hospital Sunday collections in this neighbourhood. Up till the 23rd inst. the sum of £6900 had been paid into the bank, which sum will be further augmented by a few collections not yet received, and the proceeds of Hospital Saturday will, it is believed, bring the total up to its usual average of £10,000.

HEALTH OF LIVERPOOL.

The extraordinary mildness of the present winter has evidently a very marked effect upon the death-rate. At the meeting of the Health Committee on the 17th inst. the medical officer of health reported that the deaths for the week ending the 12th inst. were 260, being a decrease of 94 on the corrected averages of the last ten years, and 106 less than in the corresponding week of last year, making the rate of total mortality equal to 23.6 per 1000 of the estimated population.

THE INFIRMARY FOR CHILDREN.

The annual meeting of this most useful charity was held on the 22nd inst. The report for the year 1883 showed that