

1. The vaccine matter, inoculated from arm to arm, is incomparably more efficacious than the matter preserved between glasses.

2. The vaccine matter taken from re-vaccinated adults is susceptible of producing fine inoculable pustules, in the same manner as the matter taken from children.

3. With adults, it is not indifferent whether the matter is deposited under the epidermis or more deeply. The latter mode should be adopted when re-vaccination is performed.

4. The practice of re-vaccination, as ordered by the authorities, is not, as might be supposed, useless; it is, on the contrary, a very important hygienic measure, the execution of which should be carefully watched.

5. People who have had the small-pox should be re-vaccinated as well as those who have been subjected to the cow-pox inoculation.

6. The local phenomena in re-vaccination are not remarkable, provided the men on whom true or false pustules appear be exempted from any duty on the fifth day. The constitutional effects are unimportant.

THE LUNACY COMMISSIONERS AND PRIVATE ASYLUMS.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR,—The letters of your Norwich correspondents have given rise to various impressions of the meaning of the Commissioners' letter. I send you a copy of it, and your readers may judge for themselves. I may add that I have reason to believe, from Dr. Copeman's conversation with me, that the word "suggested" was used by him in the sense of "pointed out," not as implying that the Commissioners also "recommended" the course named in the last half of their letter. The Commissioners sent a letter in similar words to the patient's brother. I think the wisdom of the Commissioners will not be held in high esteem, as they decline to do the thing requested in the first part of their letter, and in the last "point out" how their objections may be evaded. Here is the letter:—

"Feb. 23rd, 1859.

"I have submitted your letter of yesterday's date to the Commissioners in Lunacy, by whom I am directed to say that they decline to consent to the transfer of Mr. — from the Heigham Retreat to the Grove Asylum, Catton. The removal, therefore, must take place upon a fresh order and medical certificate, if his friends are determined to send him thither.

"I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

"JOHN FORSTER, Secretary.

"H. Landor, Esq., Heigham Retreat."

I think it fair to add that, although they point out how, in military phrase, their flank may be turned, they do not imply that that course would be more pleasing to them than the other. I shall take this opportunity of giving you some of the results of my ten years' experience of the Commissioners, for whom I entertain no very high regard and no very deep respect, as I think their general proceedings are characterized by a disregard of equity and a usurpation of power not granted by the Acts of Parliament. They make demands upon the superintendents and proprietors of asylums which they are not authorized by law to make. They require them to compile papers, and make reports on various subjects, statistical or otherwise, but they are only entitled to demand such papers relating to patients as may be in the possession of superintendents; they have no right to compel them to compile them. Take, for instance, the subject of baths, which occupied their attention at the time of a late popular outcry. They demanded, illegally, written answers to their questions. I did not comply with this order. They therefore summoned me to the Board, and there the law gave them power to compel me to answer any question relating to the patients under my charge. By section 65 of the 8 & 9 Vict., they can have all papers in possession, and no more. They can examine *viva voce*, and get whatever information is to be got, and that is all. Another of their usurpations is where they take upon themselves to recommend the removal of patients from one asylum to another, and they intimate to the relatives of the patient that they think it desirable the patient should be removed. They lay themselves open to an action for damages by this attempt to remove a patient, and injure a proprietor's interests; for the Act provides only one way by which the Commissioners can discharge a patient, and that is by the 77th clause. It is only by taking advantage of (if not by fomenting) popular feeling that they dare so to act; for they well know that in the present state of popular prejudice against private asylums no proprietor can hope for a favourable

verdict at the hands of any jury, and that a proprietor dare not, therefore, incur the cost and the risks of legal proceedings.

No man has done more, or more unjustly, than their chairman to foster this state of feeling, and then take advantage of the feeling so excited to obtain more and more stringent Acts of Parliament. The matter will, however, remedy itself, for the inevitable course of too stringent repression is sure in the end to defeat its own intentions.

If the members of the Association of Officers of Asylums, instead of meeting to pass resolutions, and seek interviews either with Secretaries of State or parliamentary committees, would subscribe a sufficient sum to fight the Commissioners in the courts of law, and obtain from first-rate counsel sound opinions on the right construction of the clauses of the various Acts of Parliament, and then take advantage of the first aggression of the Commissioners to oppose them, they would be doing themselves and their patients also a sound service, and in time they would, by a ventilation of the truth, remove present popular prejudices.

If they would procure the insertion into the forthcoming Act of a clause to make the Commissioners liable for costs of all trials where they cannot obtain a decision in their favour, or where they unjustly bring an action, or where one is justly brought against them, they would at once stop all usurpations, still leaving them ample power to punish offenders.

The public are much mistaken on this matter, and I wonder that any high-minded man can remain in this branch of the profession, subject to so much misconstruction at the hands of the public, and so much injustice at the hands of the authorities. The end of this state of things must be, that the Government will have to take possession of all private asylums by purchase, and provide for their efficient management out of the funds they produce, but giving no part or share in the profits to the managers. For the sake of the profession, and also for the benefit of the patients, this is the proper course to take. It is evident, from Mr. Walpole's statistics, that insane people, of a condition to pay their own expenses, do not now enter into asylums, partly, no doubt, owing to popular feeling on the subject, but far more owing to the fact, that the great publicity given to their names by all the forms and visits the law requires, is offensive to the feelings of relatives. This is the reason why hundreds of patients are in lodgings round the metropolis as single patients, never certificated, under no observation, unknown except to their relatives and their doctors. Hundreds more are distributed in private care all over the kingdom, not even called insane, that word being carefully eschewed; and all this to avoid the meddling interference of authorities, and the publicity necessarily attending that interference. This state of things requires more judicious remedies than repressive Acts or severe penalties.

Could paupers have increased in public asylums one-third—that is, from 12,000 to 15,000—while in the same time private insane patients have only increased by 200—that is, from 4500 to 4700—if the regulations provided by law had not been most offensive to the more sensitive class of the educated—so offensive that they risk penalties and evade law rather than comply with the course the wisdom of Commissioners has prescribed? I think not! and I think that the denunciations of the Chairman against proprietors have already borne their right fruit in taking out of the control of Commissioners the great majority of the annual increase of insane amongst the middle classes.

I hope the Committee now investigating this subject will come to a right conclusion, and do justice to both the insane and the proprietors of asylums; provide for the proper treatment of the one, and place the others (if private asylums are continued) in the proper position they ought to hold with the public.

I remain, Sir, yours truly,

HENRY LANDOR,

Late Resident Proprietor of Heigham Retreat, Norwich.

April, 1859.

HOSPITAL FOR SICK CHILDREN IN EDINBURGH.—The proposal to establish in Edinburgh an Hospital for Sick Children is at present engrossing a large share of public attention there. The pages of the *Edinburgh Medical Journal* have for many years occasionally pointed out the importance of such an institution, but little or no public interest seems to have been taken in the matter until a few weeks ago, when several letters on the subject by Dr. J. Smith, of that city, appeared in the columns of the *Daily Scotsman* newspaper, and attracted considerable attention. Since that time, subscriptions have been set on foot, and other measures adopted for carrying out this project, and at present there is every appearance of its speedy and successful accomplishment.