

THE following Extract from Dr. Stabb's paper in the *Journal of Psychological Medicine*, January, 1848, contains a description of the present state (1847) of the finest Asylum in France, and perhaps in the world. This document will shew what *can* be done for Lunatics:—

“La Salpêtrière is an institution containing 5000 females, of whom, on an average, from 1400 to 1700 are insane poor of all ages (formerly of old age only). Attached to the Asylum are three resident physicians,—M. Lelut being the principal; and two physicians-in-chief non-resident, MM. Falret and Mitivier.

“I was taken to every part of this colossal establishment by M. Battelle, who, with an earnestness that could spring only from a heartfelt interest in the subject, explained minutely the actual state of everything connected with the department for the insane, as well as the successive steps by which the whole had been brought to its present *state of perfection*,—a designation which I think is justly merited. For if much remains to be done, or is rather being done, in exchanging old things for new, in parts of this princely pile of the days of Louis Quatorze; there is nevertheless at the present moment an ample provision of means—perhaps superior to that of any other Asylum in the world—for the curative treatment of the recently insane, and for the care and comfort of those afflicted with chronic insanity. And it is somewhat worthy of mention, that the saloons of the indigent insane are adorned with marble, polished oak, and spotless white draperies—yet it need not excite a word of cavil, for, as my excellent conductor observed, solid oak and marble would last for centuries, and such Asylums were not built for a day.

“With regard to the inmates of this institution, as of Hanwell, it may be said such happy influences surround them, that their insanity is veiled from the passing observer: and when amongst them the question arises involuntarily in the mind, Are these really insane? In La Salpêtrière the insane are placed in five distinct divisions of the buildings, which are for the most part new, and under the direction of M. Battelle, so arranged as to present a succession of apartments equally remarkable for size and elegance, and admirably adapted to the comforts of the patients. For the sake of classification the divisions are appropriated as follows:—One for insane epileptics; one for the chronically insane; and two for the insane under treatment, or the curable. For those under temporary excitement there is enclosed a large grassy court, with Swiss cottages disposed around, containing one room each. To each division is attached an extensive airing court, with trees, small gardens and grass plots, for exercise and amusement. For the use of the whole establishment there are large kitchen gardens within the walls, which are cultivated by the insane of this Asylum, assisted by others from the Bicêtre. Within the buildings are found large dormitories of superlative cleanliness, well lighted and ventilated—the floors of oak, beautifully waxed. The beds are arranged on a raised platform on either side, leaving a wide passage through the centre of the ward; the bedding is remarkable for snow-white-linen, heavy blankets, and numerous thick mattresses. The windows of the dormitories are large, and open in six compartments; they have curtains, and are unguarded by iron sash, bar, or wirework, excepting in certain wards having an exterior aspect. It is said that the window panes are never broken by the patients, and the small high window is never introduced here.

“The dormitories open by glass doors into convenient day-rooms, where I found the patients at various times, busily occupied with the needle—chatting and singing.

“The general arrangements are so intended as to divest the minds of the inmates of any feeling whatever of imprisonment. And whether occupied within doors, or enjoying the fresh air without,