

of consideration with lunatic asylums—I refer to hospitals for the sick.

To what extent are these structures required, and how are we to get them?

I venture to bring these questions before the Association, because the subject of hospital accommodation is of undoubted importance to the profession and to the public, and is one on which physicians may possibly be afforded occasions of giving an opinion.

It must be admitted, in spite of the boasting in which we are prone to indulge regarding the improved state of the world in these later days, and the increased well-being of society, that our social condition renders hospital provision, at least, as great a necessity as it was when men spoke more modestly of themselves and their times than we do. The poor we have always with us, they do not cease out of the land, and no doubt we may say that they never shall,—all optimist and communistic theories to the contrary notwithstanding. Even in our own country, largely filled as it has been, within the memory of living men, with fresh young blood; free as it is, as yet, from the semblance of what has been regarded by some as the oppression of class, a hospital population is springing up all around with wonderful rapidity, and that not from amidst unprovided strangers only, but also from among those born in the midst of us, and who have been surrounded from their infancy by the advantages of a land where labor is always in request, and sure of its reward; where all that is required of any man, in order to secure independence, is devotion to honest work. From among these there come numerous applicants for hospital relief and shelter, persons who have not made provision for one week's sickness. It is not necessary to discuss here the causes of this spectacle, the early rise of pauperism in the midst of us, but this much may be said, that with pauperism existing everywhere in the land, and with its sources well known to all, there does not seem to be, on the part of sick poor, an excuse for their condition sufficient to touch and cause to flow those springs of benevolence which are latent in the community.

When hospitals and refuges were founded and endowed by wealthy individuals in times past, the condition of the poor was more

pitiable than it is now, their prospects seemed absolutely hopeless, and to provide for their succor in their time of sickness was a worthy aim in the eyes of all; on the other hand, in our days, and in this community at least, we are not so satisfied of the powerlessness of the poor. Nay, by many who are giving daily proof that they are not selfish and hard-hearted, the poor are thought to have their place made too soft for them; indolence and dissipation are thought to be receiving their most direct encouragement from the charitable, and it is difficult to present the claims of an hospital to our wealthy neighbors on the score—the beneficence of the object.

And yet, let the cause of poverty be what it may, vice or misfortune, the act of lightening its weight, of lessening its attendant suffering, is, when discrimination is used, certainly an act of beneficence, and though our aid to a strong and healthy idler may lawfully be limited to good advice, to the same man when he is sick, or maimed, our help must be of a more substantial kind.

It may be allowed that private benevolence, though it has done much at various times, and in various places, has never been equal to the help of this sort which has been required, and it may hardly be expected that it ever can be; its efforts are necessarily limited and fitful, while the evil to be met is on every hand, and is always growing.

Hospitals to serve the purpose required of them should be numerous, placed within easy reach of those who need their service, not so few and far between as to render it necessary for sick people to make long and painful journeyings in order to get to them. It is not too much to say that every town of eight or ten thousand inhabitants should have a well appointed hospital for itself and its environs. The great usefulness of these institutions thus scattered over the land surely cannot be questioned, whether we regard the relief to suffering which they are fitted to afford, or the centres of useful information to the public which they would form, and this Association may surely add the very valuable opportunities for observation and experience to our own profession which would thus be multiplied.

To be thus numerous and to be efficiently