

of the treatment of insane persons, and that it was, in fact, owing mainly to his perseverance that the existing legislative provision was made. The patients were taken from the cells in which they were closely confined, and placed in purified, airy rooms, and their food critically adapted to their physical state; in fact every thing done, which the constant attention of a person devoted to his purpose could effect. The effect of this new course of life on the patients was soon apparent. Many who had long been confined as confirmed lunatics were found to be labouring under derangement arising from physical causes, and yielding to physical remedies; several have completely recovered who, but for this treatment, would probably never have exhibited another gleam of reason. So much good, I conceive, could never have been effected by the mere occasional visits of a physician, however skilful. The state of the asylum, and the success with which it has been conducted, are shown forth in the approbation of the Grand Jury who visited the asylum, 10th June, and whose presentment is herewith appended."

Extract from Presentment of the Grand Jury of the Home District, 4th April, 1842

The Jurors aforesaid further present, that they have visited this temporary Lunatic Asylum; and have derived equal satisfaction from an examination into its management and condition. Here, too, order and cleanliness prevail throughout, while the soothing and humane system of treatment, which the improved science and enlightened benevolence of the present day, have substituted for the rigorous and coercive regulations by which such institutions were formerly governed, has been productive here, as it has been everywhere else, of the most beneficial and gratifying consequences; conducive alike to the present quiet and comfort, and to the ultimate recovery and restoration to society of the unfortunate patients confined therein.

In illustration of this pleasing fact, the Jurors beg to report, that from the returns exhibited to them by the Medical Superintendent of this establishment, it appears that since it was opened fifteen months ago, there has been admitted 76 Patients, of whom forty have been discharged cured; three do. relieved; three have died of corporeal diseases; leaving at present in the Asylum thirty—of whom sixteen are Idiots and incurable, and five are convalescent.

were placed under the care of a medical gentleman, Dr. Rees,* who had made insanity his study, and who discharged the duty he had undertaken with ability and zeal.

"I shall not be so unreasonable as to attempt to detain you here by giving any account of the statistics of insanity in this, or other countries. Those who have read some of the reports on the management of Lunatic Asylums published in Europe, and in the United States of America, will not readily forget the affecting descriptions of the almost magical improvement produced in the patients by the adoption of the kind treatment which has, in modern times, been substituted for the harsh system of constraint, and intimidation formerly in use. Some of these, (I speak more particularly of reports which have been presented to the Legislature of the State of New York,) are among the most deeply interesting documents which I have ever read. One fact I recollect to have seen stated in them which is indeed encouraging: It is, that in one of the institutions of that State, as well as in the well-known private establishment in England, conducted by Dr. Burrowes, the average number of patients restored to the use of their reason is about ninety-two in a hundred. But then this calculation is confined to cases where there has been no delay in applying the proper treatment—when three months have been suffered to elapse the result is more doubtful; if a much longer time is lost, the case seems to be in general almost hopeless. It appears as if the continued derangement of the mental powers occasions some corresponding disorder in the functions or structure of the material frame, which prevents the current of thought from returning to its accustomed channels.

"We see then that in a vast proportion of the cases it must depend upon the patient receiving the proper treatment without delay, whether he is to continue through the rest of his life a bewildered maniac, or to be speedily restored to himself and his family, a useful, and rational, and perhaps a happy being. And this being so, what a satisfaction is it to reflect that from the day when the doors of this Asylum shall be opened there will be a retreat where all those who may be thus afflicted can have instantly the advantage of all those means which science and humanity have provided in this enlightened age for affecting their restoration, if by the blessing of God it be possible. If they, or their friends shall be in circumstances to support the charge of their maintenance, they will be received on those terms, if they shall be too indigent to have that in their power, then they will be supported at the public charge; and whether the afflicted person shall be rich or poor, there will be no essential comfort, no useful luxury, no aid which science and skill can furnish—no necessary recreation for the mind, or healthful employment for the body with which wealth could, under such circumstances, furnish

* Dr. Rees was the first Medical Superintendent, and received, as the law then required, his appointment from the Crown under the high recommendation of Drs. Widmer & Dunlop, the original Commissioners.