

unfortunates. The Governor of Pennsylvania, on the strength of a report of a commission which enquired into the treatment of the insane in that State, makes a similar recommendation. The commission brought to light many instances of cruel treatment and unjust detention in private asylums. Private asylums are still numerous in England, where, though no serious abuses in them appear to exist, the tide is setting against them. The Senation novel has painted them in sombre hues, and it is not impossible that the pictures may have affected the public imagination. Exaggeration of the abuses which exist in asylums for the insane is liable to do serious mischief. It creates an intense horror in the minds of persons subject to mental affliction of what they conceive they would be called upon to suffer if confined in one of these houses; and brooding over evils which have their seat chiefly in the imagination may prove extremely injurious. It often happens that the only chance of cure is in the patient being put, in the insipient stage, under regular treatment; and any exaggeration which prevents his being sent to an asylum where such treatment is best applied, cuts off the hope of restoration to health. In Canada the asylums under Government control are perhaps as free as possible from abuse. In England there are dual boards charged with the administration of the Lunacy Acts. Here instead of local boards, which formerly existed, we rely on individual inspection. The local boards always kept the medical superintendents in hot water, and sometimes intrigued from unworthy motives to displace them. Since they were abolished and inspection by a public officer has been relied on, the trouble which formerly disturbed the management has disappeared, and these establishments are so conducted as to avoid censure and give general satisfaction. It is a question whether insane persons should be allowed to be sent away to a foreign country; for though no known abuse has arisen from it, the practice is one under which it is conceivable serious wrongs might be committed.

THE Sanitary Association of Toronto has recommended the appointment of an Inspector of Plumbing. That much bad work is done by plumbers, and that it causes serious and sometimes fatal sickness, by allowing sewage gas to escape into dwelling-houses no one thinks of denying. For this defective work the plumber is not always primarily to blame. Builders of "Jerry" houses frequently refuse to pay for better work. When repairs have to be made individual owners of houses, as a means of guarding against excessive charges when it is not possible to enter into any formal contract, sometimes impress upon the plumber the necessity of getting the job out of his hands at the lowest cost. Some who pass themselves off for plumbers do not understand their trade; and against such competent workmen desire the protection which would arise from some measures being taken that would prevent the two classes being confounded. Some time ago a number of the better class of master plumbers asked the City Council to pass a regulation under which only competent workmen could be employed after they had obtained a license which would operate as a certificate of efficiency. The attention of the Ontario Legislature was called to the subject last session, but no remedial measure was proposed. Precautions against defective plumbing need to be taken; whether in the form of inspection, or by obtaining the certificate of a respectable plumber that the work, as on a new house, was properly done, matters little so that the desired end be attained.

"THE Canadian Pacific Railway" may be individualized as a drop in the shower of pamphlets which the construction of a great public work was sure to bring down. It shows in even a more marked degree than General Hewson's pamphlet on the same subject the jealousy of the engineer and the bias of the politician. The Canadian Pacific Company could have no other motive in the selection of engineers than to get the best men for its purpose; and the salaries which the pamphleteer assures us it pays, though capable of exciting envy, show that this was its aim. The final selection of Kicking Horse Pass instead of the Yellow Head, in favour of which an Order in Council had been passed in 1872, is condemned and the blame is unreservedly thrown upon the chief engineer. The motive for the change, we are asked to believe, arose out of the fantastical determination to blot out the line previously laid down by a political leader who had gone out of office. Men every day do extravagant and irrational things from party motives; but it is inconceivable that a company without party bias could have done what is here attributed to it. Whether the choice of a pass through the mountains was the best that could have been made is a question which the author of the pamphlet might fairly raise; but it is one which cannot be settled in the absence of authentic information sufficiently full to found an intelligent opinion upon. That the work of construction has been well and substantially done, is the general testi-

mony of those who have seen the more accessible parts of the road over which travellers are in the habit of passing. The pamphleteer insinuates that work of a different character is to be found between Sudbury Junction and Neepigon. After disclaiming all special and personal knowledge, protesting that he has "never seen a table of curves and grades," the writer gives details to prove that he knows all about the curves; and a few pages further on he repeats the disclaimer: "I have no means of obtaining special information." The bridges on this part of the road he condemns. A writer who has no means of obtaining special information can scarcely be an infallible guide however desirous he may be to state nothing but the truth.

BUT even with his confessedly imperfect knowledge, the writer of the pamphlet may have done the public a service by directing attention to various points connected with the construction of our transcontinental railway. What is wanted is that the Government should lay before Parliament a plain statement of the condition and prospects of this great public work. The writer of the pamphlet defends the construction of the road to British Columbia on political grounds; and it will be difficult to show that he is wrong when he contends that there is no other ground of justification, though on points of detail he has probably fallen into error. In assuming that Mr. VanHorne ever intended to convey the idea that lumber could be carried from British Columbia overland to Montreal, he must have misconceived the meaning of the engineer. The trade with China, which it will be possible to draw over the line, he does not believe worth a struggle. However this may be, the writer cannot be wrong in reminding us that it is not safe to put our faith in after-dinner oratory which complacently assumes that all that is necessary for the support of the road and a connecting line of steamers to Asia is the cheering reflection that we shall soon be able to travel from Louisburg to Hong Kong without ever being out of the sound of the British drum. Something more substantial to base any rational expectation upon is needed. In a short time the road will be finished; and when that happens, the public wants to know what is the prospect before it—whether the road is likely to be run at a profit or a loss; whether it can be reasonably expected that there will be traffic enough to enable the company to keep it open, or whether it is likely to come back into the hands of the Government. Even in the latter event, the country would almost certainly have gained by placing the construction in the hands of a company. The author of the pamphlet rejects the opinion of both political parties, which coincides with that of non-partisans, that public works can be better conducted by a company than by the Government. This opinion is deeply rooted, and so far no sensible reaction against it has come.

It is too late to argue against the route on which the road is being built across the Selkirk range. To protest against the use of this route is one of the objects of the pamphlet, which, to have been of any use in this particular, should have made its appearance a year ago. The appeal to the public on this point is an anachronism. The construction of a bridge across the St. Lawrence at Lachine comes under censure as an act of "wickedness." It would have been more to the purpose to give some strong reasons why it should not be built. The proposed eastern extension to Louisburg, or a port in the State of Maine, being in the future, is a fair subject of discussion. To this extension the writer objects, contending that it would bring no gain of distance and time in the voyage to Europe that would compensate for the cost. Everything regarding this line has for some time past been subject to dispute, and until the surveys are completed the several points raised by the combatants cannot be settled. But if a road by the shortest line from Montreal to the ocean is to be built, the argument against its ending in the State of Maine is not conclusive. If political objects required a line north of the lakes, it does not follow that there is any political necessity for the building a second line within Canadian territory to the Atlantic Ocean.

MR. PARNELL'S announcement that dynamite was henceforth to give place to constitutional effort has been followed by constitutional effort on a considerable scale. He and his coadjutors have been too discreet themselves to preach murder; but not one of them has ever by word or deed sincerely attempted to repress it, while they have throughout consorted with its avowed advocates and drawn their funds from its American treasury. It has done their work and has by them been virtually countenanced. By their speeches and through the press of their party they have assiduously cultivated the diabolical hatred of the English race from which their knowledge of the Irish character must have told them that these crimes would infallibly result. Plots which aim not at the assassination of an unpop-