

occupied by this class of patients, sadly to the detriment of more worthy and promising cases thus denied their occupancy.

Your Board are aware that I have expressed the opinion, in which you have not differed, that applications for this class of patients should not have precedence of others, for admission of persons free from the habit. It is my belief that the general promulgation of the fact that such persons shall not have equal facility of entrance here as those of a different character, and that whilst they may be allowed to remain in our gaols, if committed to them, whilst lunatics who are heads of families, and whose restoration to reason not only is infinitely more probable, but also more important, will be taken in preference, would have a salutary effect. It would awaken the public mind to the knowledge of the extensive prevalence of the evil, and of its fearful consequences; and it would arouse the attention of parents and guardians, and lead them to enquiry as to the means of preventing the contraction of the habit. In hardly any instance is it found that parents have any suspicion of its existence, when they place the victims in the asylum; indeed very many of them appear to be totally ignorant of the very existence of such a habit; and nothing can be more painful and embarrassing to an asylum physician than correspondence by letter with such persons, when the conviction is established on our minds that the insanity of their beloved one is associated with the destructive habit, and that in all probability it has been produced by it. They press us for a full and free declaration of opinion, and our views of the case; not unfrequently, indeed, they go further, and ask what we think has been the cause of the malady. If we pronounce an unfavorable opinion, and from the motive of delicacy avoid assigning our reason for this adverse view, they deem us rash, or stupid, or, perhaps, ill-tempered. They reiterate their inquiries, and we reply, perhaps, in ambiguous terms, clear enough however to intimate the fact, if they have already suspected it. Should they understand us, then of course they hold that it is our province to remove the evil; and should we confess the difficulty involved in this requirement, they conclude that we are unfit for our position; for they have, perhaps very recently, learned that there are numerous professors of medicine who proclaim their competency completely to cure all such troubles. So indeed there are, and