

criminals. In proof of this, witness an act, in force as late as 1835, which authorized any two Justices of the Peace, without any medical certificate, "to issue a Warrant for the apprehension of a lunatic or mad person, and cause him to be kept safely locked in some secure place directed and appointed by them, and, if they deem it necessary, to be *chained*."

The first of the old British North American colonies to make special provision for its insane was New Brunswick, by the conversion, in 1835, of a small, wooden building in the city of St. John, originally erected as a cholera hospital, into an asylum for lunatics. This institution, the first of the kind in Canada, continued in operation for a little over thirteen years, under the medical supervision of Dr. George P. Peters, a native of St. John but a graduate of Edinburgh University.

Dr. Peters had no previous experience in the care of the insane, but, being energetic and deeply interested in the welfare of his charges, did exceptionally good work considering how he was handicapped. That he was in advance of his day and fully recognized the importance of special training for the proper treatment of mental diseases, a fact so often lost sight of by governments and their appointees, is evidenced by his urging, though vainly, the Legislature to get a physician from England, one trained in the best schools of psychiatry, to take charge of the new asylum. The difficulties he had to encounter were many, not the least being one that is equally common to most of us at the present day, that of finding suitable nurses. On this point he quaintly reports:—"I find it very difficult to secure proper attendants, especially for the female patients. Those who apply for the place are coarse and ignorant, their only qualification for the position being good muscular development, and absence of all proper sensibility."

The following record preserved in the Sessions of the Peace minute-book gives a good idea of the results attained by Dr. Peters during the first thirteen and a half months of his incumbency. Of the thirty-one admissions, it says, "There have been discharged—cured, six; improved, five; to friends, not improved, two; died, four. Of the remaining 14, one is much improved, two perceptibly improved and 11 without any visible improvement." Some of the details of the itemized accounts, contained in the same volume, are highly suggestive of the times and of the methods of treatment, in which blood-letting and restraint must have played a considerable part, and bathing and light been luxuries.

"W. McBay for twelve hogsheads of water (for one month), one pound, fifteen shillings.