

with mysterious looking wickets, attended by a sombre porter in livery, the clank of whose keys chilled the heart of the hearer; fearful shrieks and laughter issuing from the building; inmates lying helpless in dark rooms covered with filth—chained to rings in the floors, or roaming through long passages with their arms fastened by hand-cuffs; these, and many other things, went to make up the idea entertained by most persons regarding "*Bedlam*." Nor will we deny that there were circumstances connected with the management of lunatic asylums at that time to warrant these apparently extravagant opinions. To the friends of one who was pronounced insane, the verdict came pregnant with more poignant anguish than if they had been told to expect his immediate dissolution. They thought shudderingly of long years of close confinement; of physical restraint; of harsh treatment perhaps from iron-hearted keepers, and could scarcely indulge a hope that he might at some future period be restored to them with an unclouded reason. What a revolution, however, has, within a few years back taken place in everything relating to the confinement, treatment, and management of the insane? The treatment of diseases of the mind has now become the most important of the specialities. Physicians of superior talent are now devoting all their energies to this branch of medical science, and are even working out the question of asylum building in all its details, so that the style of edifice most conducive to the comfort and safety of the patient may be determined. There is no doubt that questions such as these belong more to the province of the physician than the architect; for, in the treatment of insanity, the construction of the building, and the laying out of the grounds attached to it, enter largely into the probabilities of the mental health of the patients being restored.

In Canada we have two institutes for the reception and treatment of the insane—the Provincial Lunatic Asylum at Toronto, and the Beauport Asylum in the vicinity of Quebec. Two more, however, are absolutely demanded, and that immediately.

The Toronto Asylum is a fine edifice, built, we believe, according to a modern plan, and including in its internal arrangements many of the recent improvements introduced into the construction of similar institutions. It is made to accommodate 250 patients. It contains, however, according to recent reports, 370 inmates. Now, it is admitted by the best authorities on insanity, that there cannot be anything more inimical to the successful treatment of the insane than an overcrowded asylum. The idea of a building, therefore, calculated to receive 250 persons of unsound mind, receiving an augmentation of its numbers by 50 per cent. is most distressing to contemplate. How Dr. Workman, the present superintendent, manages alone, we cannot conceive; and that there should be a