

51. Where these are wanting, there is no protection against the existence of abuses even under good forms of government. Much less under the present forms is it possible to be satisfied of the non-existence in many cases of graver faults than any which are confessed, merely from their not appearing in answers made by officials who are not under the check of regular and efficient inspection, and who, if they are responsible, have a strong reason for silence, or, if they are so little responsible as to be relieved from fear of blame, must be ill situated for the acquisition of any certain or intimate knowledge of the conduct of their subordinates. Inspectors.

It is suggested that in all cases there should be general inspectors not otherwise connected with the institutions, whose duty it should be to make regular and irregular inspections, especially of the sanitary arrangements, to receive the reports made by inferior officials and by unofficial visitors, and to report at stated times to the Governors, suggesting measures which may appear necessary.

The institutions already subjected to such inspection are, with one temporary exception, amongst the best of the whole number, and they owe their excellence to the exertions and suggestions of their inspectors. The faults which they still retain are those sanitary ones which it appears to be hopeless to attempt to cure without the operation of sanitary acts.

In the larger colonies, with many institutions, it would be necessary to appoint two or more inspectors, and to give them regular salaries. In the smaller ones, where the work would be light or occasional they might be unpaid, or receive only fees for their reports.

In addition to such general visitation, and to the present inspections by the boards and the Governors, it would be well that visits should also be made in all cases by judges and juries, and that their attention and that of casual visitors should be directed, by a regular form of questions, to those important points which are likely to escape their notice.\*

General inspections must be further supplemented by a better system of reports. Reports may be of three kinds. The first sort are reports of the actual working of a system made by the officers who carry out the system to the inspectors or other governing body; and this kind cannot be too many or too minute, for they are the best, if not the only means of keeping the officers in a state of thorough attention. An attendant will slur over many things if he is to have himself for his sole judge, which he will do exactly and conscientiously if he has to write down an account of his measures, and of his reasons for them, for the judgment of superior authorities; and the mere fact of having to state reasons will necessitate his having some reason in cases where he would otherwise act by impulse or routine. This is of especial importance in the case of those who have the care of lunatics. It ought to be the first principle in the treatment of the insane, to deal with them as nearly as may be as if they were sane, and to infringe firmly when necessary, but otherwise as little as possible, both as a matter of right and for the purpose of cure, on their habits and natural independence. It is not more the business of a keeper to do all that is necessary to supplement what is wanting in the judgment and self-preserved instincts of the patient, than it is his business to do no more than this, and not to drive or confine him unnecessarily: and yet in practice those who have had experience of lunatic asylums say that nothing is more common than causeless tightening or relaxing of discipline in particular cases, without consideration of whether there is any reason for so interfering or neglecting to interfere with the patient's inclination. If the keepers were required to report both the particular departures from rule, and also the reasons for them, they would be less likely to act without reasons. Reports.

In this view it is greatly to be desired that it should be made a part of the duty of all head keepers or matrons in asylums and hospitals to report any case of exceptional treatment, and the reasons for it, and a part of the duty of the inspectors to examine such reports, and judge of the validity of the causes assigned. A list of questions to be filled up weekly by the chief keeper of each ward of an asylum with reference to this object has been framed by a Commissioner in Lunacy, and is appended in Note 5. A similar form for head nurses in hospitals ought to be obtained from medical authorities.