

to behold, and the condition of this nether region in the night must be bad in the extreme. I need not describe the separate rooms, as they are similar to those in the roof. The amount of restraint and seclusion resorted to is, of course, large. Yet I was informed that it was very much less than formerly.

To the statement in regard to the crowding of the patients in this asylum, it will be objected that I have given a description of a state of things which will shortly disappear, as additional wards are being provided for their accommodation. While I am glad to hear that other rooms will be available before long, I am not by any means convinced that the lowest and topmost wards of this asylum will be disused for patients. There are now, the Mother Superior said, about 1,000 lunatics in the building, and when first informed that new wings were being prepared, I concluded that it was for the purpose of providing increased accommodation for the existing number of inmates only. That hope, however, was greatly lessened, if not wholly dispelled, when I learnt from this lady that when these new wards are ready there will be room in the institution for 1,400 patients. It is said the new rooms will contain 600 beds, but how many cubic feet are allowed in this calculation I do not know. I have no hesitation in saying that when the patients are removed who now occupy the two portions of the building I have described, and when the occupants of the other galleries are reduced to the number the latter ought properly to accommodate, there would be at least 400 patients who should be removed from the old to the new building. If I am correct in this opinion, the present lamentable evils will continue after the opening of the additional apartments, or if they are mitigated for a time, they will but too surely be renewed as fresh admissions take place. Assuming, however, that overcrowding is lessened, and that these dark cells should cease to be used, what guarantee—what probability—is there, that the manacles will fall from the wrists of the patients of this asylum? I am not now speaking from the standpoint of absolute non-restraint in every conceivable instance of destructive mania. It is sufficient to hold that the necessity for mechanical restraint is exceptional, and that in proportion as an asylum is really well managed, the number whose movements are confined by muffs, strait-waistcoats and handcuffs will become fewer and fewer. The old system of treating the insane like felons has been so completely discarded by enlightened physicians devoted to the treatment of the insane, that it can no longer be regarded as permissible in a civilized country. The astonishment which I experienced in witnessing this relic of barbarism in the Province of Quebec is still further increased when I see such excellent institutions as the lunatic asylums of the adjoining Province of Ontario. I am perfectly certain that if it were possible to transfer the worst patients now in the asylum at Montreal to these institutions, they would be freed from their galling fetters and restraint-chairs. They