

of the labours of such men can never be fully estimated, their works being truly—

“Deeds which are harvest for Eternity.”

STATUS OF THE INSANE.

At the present time Quebec is the only one of the provinces of the Dominion in which there is no state institution for the care of the insane. Though vastly improved in every respect and much more strictly supervised by the Government than when Dr. Tuke visited them, in 1884, and so graphically portrayed the then existing evils, the two largest hospitals, St. Jean de Dieu and Beauport, are still proprietary establishments, and, as such, still open to the criticism thus forcibly expressed by that distinguished alienist in his work, “The Insane in Canada and the United States.” “Far be it from me to attribute to these Sisters of Charity any intentional unkindness or conscious neglect. I am willing to assume that they are actuated by good motives in undertaking the charge of the insane, that they are acute and intelligent, and that their administrative powers are highly respectable. Their farming capacities are, I have no doubt, very creditable to them. It is not this form of farming to which I have any objection or criticism to offer. In the vegetable kingdom I would allow them undisputed sway. It is the farming out of *human* beings by the Province to those or any other proprietors against which I venture to protest. . . . It is a radical defect—a fundamental mistake—for the Province to contract with private parties or Sisters of Charity for the maintenance of lunatics. Whatever may be the provision made by private enterprise for patients whose friends can afford to pay handsomely for them, those who are poor ought to have the buildings as well as the maintenance provided for them by the Legislature. They are its wards, and the buildings in which they are placed should belong, not to private persons, but to the public authorities, with whom should rest the appointment of a resident medical officer.”

No less pronounced in his condemnation of the “farming out” system is a later writer, one of the greatest authorities on all appertaining to insanity and the care of the insane, Professor Kraepelin. This world-renowned alienist says of it, in an article published some five years ago:—“It is not only unworthy of the State, but in the long run is also dangerous to entrust the care of such institutions to promoters, who are working only on their own responsibility, be they laity or clergy. The best ordinances of State supervision cannot do away with the danger which attends the transference of the insane from the care of the public officials