

Canada Medical Journal.

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REPORT OF THE MEDICAL SUPERINTENDENT OF THE PROVINCIAL LUNATIC ASYLUM, TORONTO.

WE had intended before this referring to the able and important report of the Medical Superintendent of the Provincial Lunatic Asylum at Toronto, and we feel certain that no unbiassed reader can peruse this report without endorsing fully the views propounded by the talented author. We have, again and again, contributed our protest against the systematic neglect of these unfortunate patients; but it remained for Dr. Workman to point out what is the true solution of the difficulty. A man who is afflicted by insanity or any other malady becomes a charge on his friends if he has any, or on the community, if he has no relatives willing and able to succour him in his distress. In the case of the insane man prompt and active treatment by isolation and appropriate medication is the only hope he has of ultimate recovery. If left for a time without that care which is acknowledged to be his only chance, his disease becomes a settled madness.

Dr. Workman has pointed out this in connection with the system adopted in our country.

There are here in Canada seven asylums for the insane, five in Upper Canada, and two in the lower section of the Province. These seven asylums are full to repletion, the inmates being of that class who have little or no chance of deriving benefit from any treatment. These necessarily occupy the room in our asylums which should be reserved for cases of acute mania. The doctor proposes the establishment of secondary asylums for the residence of incurables. The primary asylums or insane hospitals being reserved for recent cases.

"The great want seems to me to be the institution of a comprehensive and humane system of providing for the chronic and incurable. This is now most inadequately attempted by their retention in our primary asylums, with the collateral aid, since 1856, of the three branch asylums. All are now full; and the demand for further accommodation, instead of decreasing, is constantly augmenting. Multiplication of branch asylums, such as those hitherto established, is by no means desirable; but even were the case otherwise, it is very doubtful if any government we may ever have in Canada, would feel disposed to augment the charge upon the pro-