

The discharges of 1865, if compared with the admissions of the same year, have a pleasing appearance—being, including one eloped recovered, 74 to 96; whilst for 1864 they were 77 to 136.

I have on former occasions pointed out the fallacy of comparisons of this sort. The discharges of any year, as any person of common sense may perceive, are not all made from the admissions of that year, but to a large extent from those of the previous year. Of the 74 discharged in 1865, no less than 50 were patients admitted in 1864 and previous years; therefore it would be more rational to compare the discharges of 1865 with the admissions of 1864.

Notwithstanding this obvious fact, the blunder is constantly committed in asylum reports of comparing the discharges with the admissions of each respective year; and men who are fond of figures, collect their knowledge of insanity from such deceptive sources.

It appears that the average period of residence of discharged patients, for 1865, has been $13\frac{1}{2}$ months, whilst in 1864 it was only 11 months and 29 days. In previous years it ran about 10 months.

Some persons will probably argue from these figures, that the institution is retrograding in efficiency of treatment; indeed, no other conclusion would probably be available by those who go no deeper into the subject than the inspection of asylum figures.

It is, however, well known to the compilers of such statistics, that as to the average time of residence of discharged patients, it depends on various circumstances, which, though palpable to them, are not likely to be thought of by hasty thinkers, and hasty readers. In a list of twenty discharged patients, for example, should four have been resident for five years each, twenty years would be added to the aggregate of the other sixteen, or one whole year to each of the twenty, yet the other sixteen might not give an aggregate of eight years, or six months each.

The 74 discharged in 1865 give an aggregate of 82 years and 19 days; but 22 of the 74 make up $57\frac{1}{2}$ years of the whole,