Sisterhoods in Asylums.

"Nothing in connection with the treatment of the insane has a more direct and immediate effect, for good or ill, upon their condition and comfort, than the fact of their being under the charge of good or bad attendants."—'Fifteenth Report of Commissioners in Lunacy,' p. 55.

"Il est là un medicament dont l'action est supérieure à tous les medicaments connus."—Guislain, 'Leçons Orales sur les Phrénopathies,' t. iii, p. 485.

It is not our purpose to frame an indictment against the attendants upon the insane. We shall not even quote the frightful narratives contained in recent reports of the Commissioners of Lunacy as a text to these observations, for neither do we regard the cruelty and neglect which these commemorate as characteristics of the body to which they refer; nor are we insensible to the merits of many of its members, or to the difficulties and dangers to which they are exposed. But we, at the same time, believe that could the physicians and medical superintendents in this country be asked—What is the chief impediment to the successful management of the institutions committed to your charge—what is your grand and ceaseless source of anxiety and alarm—what obstructs, mars, subverts therapeutical and moral treatment and the plainest dictates of humanity? they would, unanimously, answer that these obstacles consisted in the inefficiency of their instruments, the want of self-control, common-sense, and co-operation in their subordinates. They would, doubtless, speak of some noble exceptions to this sweeping censure; they could point to individuals who loved their charges as children, whose judgment and fidelity and unselfishness were unimpeachable, beyond praise or price. But they would add that these had been selected from hundreds, who had, in the course of years, run a moral gauntlet, the vast majority of whom had been tried and had been found deplorably wanting; and that these had been moulded, trained, made by surrounding circumstances and influences. They would describe the mass as coarse, harsh, passionate, indifferent, untrustworthy, intemperate; as having no higher conception of their office than as that of gaoler, no clearer estimate of their duty than what obtained in the days of Esquirol—"at all hazards and by all means to keep the lunatics quiet"—and as having no better or kinder or more humane bond with them than that of watching and warding and ruling them. They would confess that they commenced their professional career with fervent confidence that their staff would participate in the execution of their plans, if not with their own ardour and enthusiasm—would be educable into intelligent and sympathising companions and guides; and that experience had taught them to be content with such qualities as forbearance, sobriety, and mechanical obedience to rule. We are familiar with

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the proceedings of a medical superintendent, now gray in the service, who, horrified by the brutal and illiterate instruments through whom he was expected to act, curatively, upon the moral nature of his patients, recruited his staff with self-taught individuals, readers, members of mechanics' institutions. Philosophers proved to be as harsh and slovenly, and more dogmatic and opinionated than clod-hoppers. He next tried pensioned soldiers, whose acquaintance with discipline, order, and personal neatness, offered promising elements; but subordination to superiors does not extinguish a tyrannical spirit, and a smart exterior may conceal an insatiable thirst for stimulants. He next sought assistants among teetotallers; but the self-imposed virtue of abstinence, excellent in itself, afforded no guarantee against the other evil tendencies to which uncultivated minds are heir to. He lastly required a communion or membership with the church to which the applicant professed to belong, as affording a certain amount of security; but even clergymen warned him that such a test would prove fallacious and unsatisfactory.

Many of these failures take place, it must be remembered, in individuals who have been drawn, there is reason to believe, from that large body who covet the luxuries of life without its labours, or what is luxury to them, good food and raiment and an easy loitering employment, in which the unscrupulous may make long intervals of rest or vacation alternate with brief periods of activity or worry; who economise physical exertion and rarely attempt to acquire that moral influence which is won by kindness and judgment. They are the lazy-bodies, the rejected, the outcasts of other trades. Men with saleable qualities, experts in their own business, of a delicate or refined appreciation, are repelled from such an occupation by the low rate of remuneration and the painful and disgusting nature of much of what they are called upon to perform. It should not be concealed that the office of attendant upon the insane, when conscientiously carried out, imposes not only a grave and harassing responsibility, but many sacrifices, some danger, and duties in themselves offensive or even revolting, and which might be regarded as degrading were they not sanctified by being duties necessary to the health and happiness and reason of our fellow-beings. It is likewise clear that an urgent motive is required to induce suitable candidates to enter upon such an engagement; and we know of none save the feeling of preference which enters certain minds and is accepted, and is sometimes rightly accepted, as a special call; and a sense of religious duty, which are sufficiently powerful and enduring to sustain the guardian and to secure justice to the ward. There is no ground for surprise that those who enter upon such a service in the same spirit and with the same object with which they would become tailors or troopers, who resort to it because they have nothing else to do, or because they are not strong enough, or active enough, or inclined

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to do anything else—who come from the stable yard, or a washing tub, or a marching regiment—should bring with them the habits and peculiarities of their original calling, and should signally fail equally as a domestic and as a ruler. It is true that much of success in such cases depends upon individual character, and that a warm heart, a well-balanced reason, and a well-ordered life, are materials which may constitute a nature-made but heaven-sent attendant; or out of which such an officer may be formed by the very call upon his sympathies and by the work which he is required to do. But, like genius, so rare is this gift or combination of gifts, that it would be rash and must inevitably lead to disappointment to trust to such a course of training for a sufficient and suitable supply of hospitallers; and there arises the necessity for seeking for assistance in other and, we fear, lower social substrata.

The remedy for these difficulties suggested by the Commissioners is to raise the salaries, and thus, by giving a better status, to induce individuals belonging to a better class and of a better nurture to engage in the department. They say—

"The major part of the complaints which proceed from patients have reference to the conduct of attendants. That these are not always founded on fact we are well disposed to believe. But they are sometimes literally true, and they have, in most instances, some origin in grossness of behaviour or in undue exercise of authority on the attendant's part. It is therefore that we have thought it our duty to make numerous inquiries and repeated investigations into this subject, and to recommend that no care or expense should be spared to ensure good and competent servants for the patients in every establishment. Having made ourselves acquainted with the rates of remuneration usually paid to them, we have very frequently suggested a considerable increase of wages, and that such wages should be on a gradually ascending scale, as the best mode of obtaining the services of competent persons and of ensuring the continuance of such as were already secured."* This is an important consideration. We hold that even the mediocre guardian is underpaid; but it is worthy of inquiry what amount of compensation may be expected to effect the purpose in view. Let it be supposed that the pecuniary payment were doubled, and the rations and privileges largely augmented, and thus raised to an equality with those enjoyed by a clerk or skilled artisan. We have no reason to conclude that this measure would tempt those in possession of such, or even of lower allowances, to seek employment in an asylum; or, supposing that it did so, that the deserters would possess much higher properties than those whom they supplanted. Such a process might secure better cooks or coachmen, but it is doubtful whether you can buy

* 'Thirteenth Report,' 1859, p. 63.

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good tempers and tact and discretion; or, if purchased, whether they might not be soured and spoiled and changed by the trials and strain to which they must be subjected. Practically, it has been ascertained that highly salaried attendants are not more efficient than those who receive the current rate of wages. It is not merely better servants that are desiderated, although such would be invaluable, but it is better regulated minds and dispositions; and unless these be under the regulation of conscience or a creed, religious impressions or a system, reliance cannot be extended towards them, nor can they be regarded as adequate exponents and agents of the scientific and wise and well-founded beneficence which the medical profession has at its disposal. In fact, the moral treatment of the insane must remain a mockery and a deception and a failure until art has its artisans, and until the Utopia of Pinel and Conolly has been realised. Let us picture, for a moment, the absurdity of presenting a calming and composing draught to a restless excited creature, who has been intimidated, baited, bullied, all day; or of admonishing for irritability of temper where the provocations came from the patient's guardian and adviser; or of encouraging confidence and hope and industry in one dreading the shower-bath, or seclusion, or insult, or who has been told and treated as an "incurable, useless, drivelling idiot!"

In certain Continental countries the whole management and administration of hospitals are confided to religious bodies. A medical man is called in, as may seem necessary, but he forms no part of the resident staff; he is supernumerary, and too often regarded as superfluous. Against such an incongruous arrangement the arguments and remonstrances of psychologists, even of those most profoundly convinced of the aid derived from religious sodalities, have been energetically and legitimately and successfully directed; yet in such establishments order and moral government prevailed. It is now twenty years since we visited the asylum at Mareville, subsequently the scene of the labours of Archambaud, Morel, and Renaudin, but then under the superintendence, and we fear we must add the mismanagement, of about twenty sisters, as the community was merely visited by a medical officer who resided in Nancy. But the religious element, or the power which personal piety or official sacredness confer, shone forth in various ways through the ignorance and superstition around. One illustration of this lingers most lovingly in memory. In passing, with the sister who acted as guide, through a remote ward, cries and the sound of strife reached us. We quickly reached a small paved court surrounded by buildings, in which two male lunatics were engaged in a furious and what might have proved a fatal struggle. The sister advanced fearlessly to part the combatants. In a moment the strife was over. One of the men rushed to the most retired part of the yard and crouched

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shame- or awe-stricken, in the corner. The other, perhaps the aggressor, knelt penitently down, kissed the sister's skirt, and at once obeyed her command to follow us.

The present observations are confined to a scheme by which individuals set apart by religious obligations, or by pure and elevated motives for ministration upon the sick and the sorrowful, should take the place, or be associated with, the nurses and guardians now employed; "le milieu," to quote the emphatic words of Morel, "entre la brutalité des infirmiers et les mauvaises tendances des malades"—should occupy the position and part of intelligent but subordinate agents in carrying out the prescriptions and instructions of the physician, moral as well as therapeutical; in acting as companions and guides and governors, according to a code laid down; and in diffusing around that calm and order, and, it may be added, that Christian love, which are the virtues which they strive to attain, to embody and to inculcate. It is not desirable that their discretion should be passive, their ministration automatic; neither would it be permissible that the promptings of the religious sentiment should be implicitly and actively obeyed. They should neither be priests nor preachers; yet there are a thousand modes in which their principles could be infused into the discharge of common duties, could become the very vehicle and authority by means of which the objects of the physician might be attained, and which he might elect as the most appropriate and trustworthy vehicle. It is not visionary to suppose that the mere example, the tone of mind, the habits of such a class, would exercise a soothing and salutary influence; that the kind and merciful and comforting practical offices extended to sorrow and suffering would have their reward; that the prayerful thought, the clear statement of a truth, the hopeful word, judiciously employed and as the physician directed, might lead, not to penitence nor piety on the part of the patient, for such are not the objects in view—although, should they come, what would there be to regret?—but to the quieting of wild excitement, the inspiring of hope, the enlightenment of reason darkened by despair. It must, however, be distinctly understood that such auxiliaries are not preferred as teachers, even by example, of religious truths, but because the religious truths by which they are elevated, and under which they profess to act, render or should render them trustworthy agents in carrying out a system founded upon justice and humanity.

The department for females is proverbially the best arranged and best regulated part of an asylum, and this is the case even where the servitors are common place and ignorant, and have nothing to guide them save their innate sense of neatness and propriety. Were there associated with these qualities a cultivated intelligence, purity and elevation of sentiment, or even honest sincerity of purpose, rational treatment might legitimately be expected—the faithful ad-

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herence to whatever instructions were issued, or that forbearance which we have described as the most humble of the requirements for such an office. But could some higher qualifications be secured—could an interest in the well-being and restoration of the patients be inspired—could the guardian be animated by a sense of responsibility to her God, her church, or to the society to which she belongs—or to act in accordance with a self-imposed standard of excellence or obligation—or were she to act simply under the impulse of devotional feeling—great gain would be effected. No other mode of accomplishing these ends, or some of them, appears to be available except by the employment of sisterhoods, or religious corporations. Experience abroad has shown that associations of females are more efficient and successful than those of men. This superiority has secured the universal preference of the sex in hospitals. Yet it cannot have been their attention to petty details, to neatness, order, cleanliness, not even the cheapness of their labour; it must have been the suggestions of the softer and more sympathising natures of sisterhood, or maternity, which brought about this result. The organization of congregations of widows in connection with Christian charities, in early times, may have emanated from the same source and from a full appreciation of the influence of the maternal feeling. "Les sœurs," says Morel, "ni sont ni des femmes, ni des hommes, ce sont des sœurs elles sont un principe qui agit favorablement sur le moral des aliénés." *

To the employment of sisterhoods we shall confine our inquiry. We write, however, in ignorance as to whether such communities as now exist would willingly accept of such a mission, or whether the direction of their labours into such a channel may be compatible with the objects of their institution and with the views of those who guide their efforts. But we write after long and careful observation of their signal achievements in somewhat similar circumstances, with a firm conviction that they possess, and in a high degree, many of the qualifications and, in an especial manner, the organization which promises to accomplish the desired revolution; and with a knowledge that such a provision has been craved and has been called into existence since true civilisation began. It has been on its trial for nearly two thousand years. It is coeval with Christianity itself. Its duration amounts to a demonstration that there was good in it. In a survey of the various shapes in which the charitable impulse and systematic relief to suffering manifested itself through the aid of women; and of the continued succession of orders and communities set apart to such noble works, we are compelled to conclude that these were in harmony with the wants and wishes of successive generations—that the mass of mankind either saw clearly a remedy, and the best remedy for many evils in such agencies—or saw so much of good in them that they were conserved and reproduced,

* Guislain, p. 496.

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not merely under every form of government and throughout all changes of manners and customs, but even under circumstances most adverse, even hostile, to such institutions. A large amount of learning, accumulated at second- or hundred-hand from Ludlow, Howson,* and other sources, might be adduced to show that in every age, before and since the Reformation, the stern and clamant necessity for arrangements by which woman was, in some way or sense, devoted and consecrated as a nurse, has been recognised; and that whether responded to in visitation of the poor, in actual domestic or public ministrations, in instruction of the young, the ignorant, the depraved, or in facing death and disease and all that is repugnant to pure and feminine natures, in order to relieve pain and sorrow, to reclaim from sin and to save souls—the stream of benevolence has flowed on continuously. But while this would prove a vain or supererogatory process, it may be well—epitomising the information afforded by these authors—to recall the facts that widows, succourers, a diaconate, existed in apostolic times; that in the succeeding ages, during the spreading and widening of Christianity, these classes were not merely separated, but ordained and dedicated for performing certain duties, such as almsgiving and helping or succouring the poor, in addition to missionary work. It appears that very early ascetism and seclusion, the hermitic or monastic life, was added to or substituted for these practical services. We read of thousands of recluses and nuns in Egypt, in the fourth century,† of nunneries in which young girls, not yet twenty years of age and luxuriously brought up, had taken up a monastic life, who worked harder than maid servants, receiving the sick to be tended, carrying beds, washing others' feet, and even cooking.‡ These were, perhaps, sporadic and spontaneous exhibitions of religious sentiment, sanctioned, however, by the Church; but at a very early period communities of females, professing such or similar objects, were regularly organized and subjected to a system of rules by their ecclesiastical superiors. The specific purposes of such societies appear, however, to have differed widely, although in no case were worship and charitable work omitted or neglected. In the sixth century there was a convent of 200 nuns at Arles, who were bound, conjointly with religious offices, to learn human letters for two hours a day, and were mostly employed in copying books. They were, in fact, the Emily Faithfuls of the dawn of literature. The monasteries in England appear to have been frequented as finishing boarding schools for the patrician orders. At the same period the chaplain and abbess of a convent at Tours, are discovered relieving the weightier matters of the soup-

* Ludlow, 'Woman's Work in the Church,' 1865. wson, 'Deaconesses, or the Official Help of Women in Parochial Work in Charitable Institutions,' 1862.

† Montalembert, 'The Monks of the West,' p. 323, vol. i.

‡ 'Woman's Work in the Church,' p. 88 (Ludlow, quoting Chrysostom).

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kitchen and the pharmacy by originating *vers de société*, corresponding poetically and platonically as to violets, flowers placed on the altar, delicate little feasts, and the stereotyped topics of sentimentalism. A little later, abbesses are described as authoresses, learned in the classics, theologians. But these were the superficial and ornamental parts of this universal institution, the main and recognised spheres of its operation being among the poor, the miserable, and the unenlightened. In the eleventh century the Beguines formed themselves into associations, often amounting to thousands, generally connected with hospitals or asylums for the reception and maintenance, or for the relief, of the aged, the poor, the sick; and who, besides engaging in teaching and manual labour, went out to nurse and console the sick, to attend deathbeds, to wash and lay out the dead, and were called in to pacify family disputes. The succession is carried downwards by Hospitallers, Filles Dieu, Alexians, Gray Sisters, who visited and watched the sick, assisted in times of pestilence and famine, became attendants in infirmaries, leper-houses, or in the infected homes of the diseased and the dying. As we approach recent times, the divisions and ramifications of this mighty stream of charity become greatly multiplied, many-named, and more extended in application. The most conspicuous display, however, of the projects for the relief of physical and other suffering by the help of religious women,—that which not only left the most indelible impress on society and survived the disasters and decadence of the Church of which it was a part or appendage, but which now interpenetrates the charitable institutions of what may be called its native country, and there flourishes vigorously, in the midst of opinions and habits which cannot be regarded as favorable to primitive or mediæval principles of thought or action,—was the noble work of St. Vincent de Paul. To his preaching and prayers and exertions is mainly due the separation of the deranged from the diseased and depraved, the opening of special wards in general hospitals, and the erection of separate asylums for their reception. His greatest creation, although not his only creation—the Sisters of Charity—grew out of human wretchedness and famine and demoralisation, survived the Reign of Terror, and may now be fairly said to offer their services wherever misery presents itself, and wherever the gentleness and sympathy of woman can be brought into operation. They are now established under various designations, but with the same characteristics, in maternities, reformatories, hospitals, and asylums.

It will be observed that as until the time of this great revolutionist the insane, whenever confinement was resorted to, were consigned to monasteries or public hospitals, they must have been indebted to the religious bodies serving or presiding there for whatever merciful care was extended towards them. Evidence has been preserved that,

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however useful that care may have proved, it partook largely of an ascetic and penitential character. We have reason to believe that Esquirol was keenly alive to the evils of the system of supervision which obtained in asylums of which he was the physician, and regretted the disappearance of the religious element from the servile body to which the management of his patients was mainly committed. He has not, so far as we know, left any record of the latter opinion; but he has left the following contribution to the history of the abuses which sprang from the rule of the religious bodies when unchecked by a medical or civil board of direction:—"In some provinces the insane were placed in deserted leper-houses and lazarettos. In 1600 a priest was the governor of the asylum in Marseilles, when such disorders took place as to necessitate the municipal authorities to place the establishment under the charge of officers appointed for the purpose. In 1660 the Parliament of Paris ordered that the General Hospital should be provided with a place for the confinement of such lunatics as might thereafter be admitted. Such patients were still received into the general hospitals, from which, whether cured or uncured, they were discharged. In many places they were confined in monastic or other religious houses, and often confounded with the dissolute and depraved; many congregations actually kept boarding-houses for fools, and the Brothers of Charity possessed many. In the north of France the Brothers Bonfils had a sort of monopoly of taking charge of the insane; they provided religious to attend upon the affluent classes in their own residence, and had large establishments at Lille, Armentières, Mareville, near Nancy, St. Venant, in Artois. Lunatics were received into a great number of monasteries throughout France."* It would appear that, so recently as 1844, certain religious communities, les Frères Hospitaliers de St. Augustin, claimed, not merely to superintend and nurse, but to treat the insane, and were actually intrusted with the care of certain establishments. They proposed to cure, and invariably to cure, where the malady was not above eight months' duration, sorcery, magic, divination, animal magnetism, somnambulism, Saint-Simonianism, mental alienation, and epilepsy, &c., by exorcism, faith, prayer, and fasting, and the direct influence of religion, as these conditions depended upon possession or the interference of demons with human affairs. These spiritualists contended, and perhaps still contend, that if physicians have occasionally, though rarely, cured energumens and moral lunatics without religious means, it was because Satan, by the permission of God, voluntarily came out of his victims, or ceased to act openly, in order to deceive his antagonists, the physicians. "There is, then," says M. Bouchet, who recounts these pretensions, "a direct opposition between the treatment of insanity and the principles enunciated by the Society of St.

* Esquirol, 'Des Maladies Mentales,' t. ii, p. 436.

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Augustin;" adding, "that all superintendents and guardians in hospitals for the insane must be under the authority of the physician."* And in this relation do these parties stand to each other wherever success has attended the arrangement, and wherever we propose it for imitation. Nor is such development new or foreign to Protestantism. In 1560 the Damsels of Charity of Sedan undertook to succour the aged and sick poor in their own homes. Various efforts of the same kind have occurred during the progress of the Reformed Churches, more limited, of course, in extent, and, perhaps, in results, but indicating an appreciation of the same wants and the same remedies as in the Roman Catholic community, and have recently assumed a more imposing and organized form at Kaiserwerth, where, among the many-branched applications of charity, there is a lunatic asylum, and in the sisterhoods of this country. There are now upwards of twenty such bodies, independently of branches, in operation in England. Kaiserwerth can boast of its twenty mother-houses and eighty sisters. These occupy different spheres of usefulness in Switzerland, France, Holland, Sweden; a few have even penetrated the far east and established themselves at Jerusalem and Smyrna.†

In proposing that from such sources should be drawn attendants we are dealing with no Utopia. We advocate the adoption and use of materials prepared and, to a certain extent, framed to our hand. These materials, it must be further observed, are not open to the censure and objections which have been launched, correctly or not, against the members of similar institutions. They are not the subjects of an irresponsible power, which can check or overrule medical authority; they are not enslaved to so rigid a course of penitential or prayerful devotion as to suspend active duty. With them to labour is to pray; they are under guidance and government from which they may escape in an hour, and by an act of their own will; works of charity and mercy and instruction are with them the main object of their life and mission, their profession and habit being assumed for the very purpose of performing this mission safely, sedately, and effectively.

Apart from the influence of a pure and devotional deportment, or of a professed devotee, and supposing that such an instrument cannot be obtained, it appears that education would secure valuable benefits. We do not advert to the respect inspired, nor to the dependence and confidence extended to trained mental powers, but to the capacity which such powers impart to discriminate character and disposition, and especially lower, feebler, and less artificial characters; to understand and carry out the system of which they are the handmaids,

* 'Ann. Médico-Psych.,' t. iii, p. 53 et seq.

† "Sisterhoods in English Church," by Dr. Neale, 'Church Review,' January 6 and 20, 1866.

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and to devise and bring into operation means of occupation, recreation, and consolation. They can, besides, better estimate the value of conciliation, and the mode by which it is to be effected.

There will be two classes of objectors to any such innovation. There will be, first, the physician, apprehensive that his power may be invaded or usurped, his place positively taken, by the well-disciplined guardian. Confessedly, the opponents of such an aid in the administration of asylums denounce or dread a divided or diffused responsibility, or, in plainer terms, interference with that authority which is claimed, and rightly claimed, for the medical officer in all that concerns his patient. Wherever such usurpation takes place it originates more in the incapacity of the dethroned physician than in the ambition or conceit or insubordination of the rebels. It might come to be a question, if humane and rational management were certainly and permanently secured, whether in the present state of therapeutics, as applied in the treatment of mental disease, such a usurpation might not be hailed as a boon; but believing that the medical art involves the moral art, we deprecate all such interference with the duties of the superintendent. It is not, however, clear why such interference is more likely to proceed from an association of educated, religiously minded persons, or of persons professing to act upon philanthropical principles, than from those who cannot be regarded, even when viewed in the most favorable light, as other than hired servants, enjoying great privileges and intrusted with extensive power. There is, besides, a defiance of authority which is infinitely worse than either conscientious opposition to the system or regulations laid down or the pragmatical adoption of views differing from those of the supreme authority, or an attempt to supplement the lagging zeal or abortive exertions of those around. It is where rules and regulations are neglected, frustrated, or set at nought—where the plan prescribed is counteracted by indifference, disobedience, and disrespect—where, in place of treatment, there is tyranny; it is, in fact, where that anarchy exists which we desire to prevent or to restore to order.

There will, secondly, be the more formidable alarmist representing the current suspicions and shibboleths of society, who will proclaim the dangers of fanaticism, proselytism, or, more mildly, of sectarianism. It does not seem necessary to reanimate, in order to slay, the almost forgotten bugbear that religious impressions might depress or agitate the insane. There is the more specious and subtle insinuation that these simple and sincere women may pervert the orthodox views of those committed to their charge. Should the lunatic be converted to formalism, or to some abstract dogma, and thereby, or at the same time, regain sanity and serenity of mind, the result is scarcely calculated to inspire regret or dissatisfaction; and should a mode of prayer, or a mode of belief, be engrafted upon chronic and

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incurable lunacy, the evil is not obvious. One who was the very antipodes of fanaticism, Dr. Arnold, has written, "The doctrine of the Communion of Saints practically taught, *religious orders, especially of women* of different kinds, and under different rules, delivered only from the snare and sin of perpetual vows—all these, most of which are of some efficacy for good, even in a corrupt church, belong no less to the true church, and would there be purely beneficial."

There may, notwithstanding, be such or other dangers; but it is our conviction that they may be guarded against or neutralised, and that even if a bulwark or breakwater could not be erected at every point, the advantages to humanity are so incalculable that the risk should be run. We are not here called upon to deal either with the mode in which protection against such evils should be secured nor with the mode in which the experiment should be made. We accept the practicability, and, under certain circumstances, the triumphant success, of the change as incontrovertible facts; and we are not called upon to decide whether the educated and religious guardian whom we seek shall be provided by a church, a corporation, or sisterhood, or come as a volunteer; whether she offer her services as a Sister of Charity, an Anglican Sister, a Protestant Deaconess, or, in the words of Dr. Howson, as "women devoting themselves to the nursing of the sick, to the systematic care of the young, to the rescue of the degraded, and to the details of parochial work, as the business of their lives, without ensnaring vows, without any breach of domestic ties, and without even the affectation of what is foreign to the English people and to the English Church."

It would be vain to expect that the animating principle, whether that has been religious convictions, philanthropy, or a sense of duty, should have so interpenetrated and subdued, or transmuted the natural character as to render every volunteer judicious and sympathising. That principle may not have lived at all, or it must have been modified by character and position. The impulse may have deserved no higher rank than an escape from self or a devotion to self. Even in the best specimen of a genuine nun the heart may be said to be a moral palimpsest, twice written upon, the earlier characters appearing, though less distinctly, than those recently and deeply impressed upon the old rubbed and roughened surface. We can detect the faults of early training through the very words of the Gospel. There will be selfish tyrants as well as self-denying martyrs, indolent and obstructive as well as zealous co-operators, callous and indifferent by the side of kind and humane companions. Even when duty is done with a sacred and stringent faithfulness it will and must sometimes partake of the precision and perhaps of the austerity and ungenialness of a formal and artificial nature, which has been created and regulated by an unbending system, and moved by principle rather than by impulse of feeling. Even pity may be

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frozen by routine, and the gentle yoke of guidance may become a burden and a bore if imposed by rude or unskilful hands. We have read of the austereness of even English sisterhoods, and of that stern and cold rule which might be calculated to dim, if it do not extinguish, the kindest feelings of our nature, and precisely at the moments when the exercise of such feelings is most natural and irresistible and Christian; but amid a very marked and sometimes offensive bitterness of tone, the very works which contain these criticisms bear a most important testimony to the good works which such instruments have accomplished, in the Crimea, for example, and to the still greater achievements in winning back the erring and fallen, in teaching the ignorant, and in caring for the sick and infirm, when placed under proper governance.* But all such defects as formalism are modified, although they may not be eradicated, by conscientiousness, whether original or acquired. And, moreover, such defects assume the rank of excellencies when compared with the noxious and repulsive qualities, the coarse manners and sordid motives, of attendants. The mere fact that such guardians have been trained that they act in conformity to certain principles and views which constitute them what they are, afford, to a certain degree, a guarantee against irregularities in discipline or temper, self-will, self-conceit, and, what is still more formidable, tendency to self-indulgence. The snares of the hireling attendant are crass ignorance, the arrogance of power, the craving for ease, sensual gratification, and gain. They are left to their own resources in acquiring a rude notion of what insanity is; they naturally, and according to the only experience which they can possess, attribute the waywardness, disorder, and degradation which they encounter to perversity or possession or wickedness; they resort to what was the earliest, and may be the latest, method of combating and correcting such qualities; they secure subjection and quiet by sheer force and intimidation, and they show that they are proud of their victory. Or, they recognise no other than a sordid tie with their charges; calculate how much may be made of them, and at how little outlay of supervision or labour; enlist them or compel them to do their work; and consummate a terrorism or slavery which is more calculated to lead to fatuity and imbecility than to health or happiness. It is worthy of note that the educated religious cannot fall into such errors of judgment and heart. It is not that these are inconsistent with their vow or profession, that they are repugnant to their knowledge and experience; but they are incompatible with their interests, with the object of their mission and life; and although they may, in their own fashion, be greedy of reputation, and not free from the petty ambition of showing that they rule, they are shut out from avarice, aggrandisement,

* 1. 'Experiences of an English Sister of Mercy.' 2. 'Sisterhoods in the Church of England." By Margaret Goodman.

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and indolence. They may be eggregiously wrong in their premises; but conclusions which involve self-denial, hardwork, and vigilance, may assuredly be utilised in the management of the insane.

We shall not go so far as to propose that these women should be admitted to the diaconate, should be consecrated for their office. Let the office impart sanctity to the individual; but the corporate tie and feeling, the theory and system of sisterhood, would at once increase authority and responsibility. They are not only one of many, a part of a great whole, but they are accountable for every thought and act to the medical as well as to their religious superior, to every member of their body, to their own vow in God. But besides this they are set apart, or have set themselves apart, for good work; they are attendants formed according to a Christian standard, and during attendance in public hospitals and in private families; they can understand the object of the provisions and prescriptions of medical art; they have sufficient intelligence to carry them into effect; they neither drink nor swear nor strike nor garrotte, and, although they may be actuated by like passions with ourselves and with the warders whom it is proposed they should displace, they can discriminate where sympathy should be given and where it should be denied; they are, in many senses, nursing-mothers. It might be beneficial could such a noviciate or preparation as wifehood and maternity have been passed through in every case; but as this would greatly limit and lessen the corps available, we must accept as a substitute what is in reality an approximation to marriage and motherhood, the separation from other and ordinary ties, and the adoption in love of those who are benefited, reared up, cared, and prayed for. It is natural to expect, and it is opportune, that at a time when the efficacy of the home and family life in the cure or amelioration of certain forms of alienation is recognised, that the aid of women, acting under religious or compassionate and, above all, motherly motives, should be invoked. That such an artificial maternity may have contributed to the success of the thousand communities that have sprung up, succoured and humanised their fellow-beings in the Western Church, is highly probable. But it was scarcely fictitious under such circumstances, as professed nuns were wedded to the Church, spouses of Christ, and bore the endearing names of mother and sister. If Christianity gave to woman her status and rightful influence, she has imparted to its ministrations the gentler graces of motherly tenderness and unselfish kindness and humanity. It is not asked that these servitors should be vowed or veiled, but it does not appear that their service should be rejected because they are either or both; nor can we readily understand why faithfulness and humanity, the virtues which we seek for, should be impaired by being made obligatory by a promise, or being habited in a few yards of black crape. We have seen the ordinary staple attendants of an asylum

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flaunting in all the glories of green ribbons, and a semi-regimental uniform of blue coats and bright buttons, but did not learn that their efficiency was either enhanced or diminished by their smart costumes.*

It has been alleged that religious nurses are themselves liable to become insane. The accusation was directed against cloistered nuns, and against the discipline or tyranny to which it is supposed they are subjected. To whatever amount insanity may prevail in seclusion, we should be disposed to expect that the work and activity and sense of usefulness which hospital sisters court, and which it is proposed should be the characteristics of a similar institution, would act as a barrier and preservative against vapours and nerves and hysteria, and the long catalogue of ills to which luxury, idleness, and inanity inevitably lead, and which find vent and expression in the cry for work, visitations, and religious ministrations. The whole subject, calumny as it has been styled, is dealt with, and we think disposed of, by Roman catholic writers in the 'Dublin Review.'† Similar traditions are extant as to the frequency of derangement among the ordinary class of attendants. The disease has, in their case, been ingeniously attributed to the painful nature and to the monotony of their employment! But the explanation may be sound, although the tradition be apocryphal or an exaggeration. That there are sensitive and excitable temperaments upon which the duties of an asylum would fall heavily and injuriously may be true, just as duties of any kind would fall; but in such cases as we have examined the opprobrium has originated in mental depression following upon defects of character, or excesses and intemperate habits. Deaconnesses are actually employed in asylums in Berlin, Dresden, Frankfort, and Worms. Belgium affords the best and largest experience upon this subject. There, the services of religious corporations are not a mere useless or ornamental relic of mediæval times, but they are in active operation in private families, in the civil and military hospitals, and in almost all asylums, and with the sanction and approbation of the physicians of the community. Speaking of one of these establishments, Dr. Webster‡ reports:—"Throughout, the wards looked very clean, the inmates tranquil, well clothed, and apparently contented. In one apartment I saw about 120 patients at work, many being engaged in lace-making, which seemed to me of much better quality, if not finer, than that made by ordinary sane persons. Subsequently, a large party were noticed at dinner, who then conducted themselves quietly, the same as ordinary persons, and really behaved very like rational creatures. In another apartment upwards of a dozen young females—all idiots or imbeciles—were assembled at their singing-lesson, under the tuition of a zealous

* Lecture by Rev. J. M. Neale, Liverpool, Oct., 1865.
† Vol. xxxiii, pp. 467—526, 1852.
‡ 'Notes on Belgian Lunatic Asylums,' by John Webster, M.D., &c., 1857.

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'sister.' These poor girls sang delightfully, accompanied by their teacher upon the piano, which made quite a musical treat; and as several juvenile performers were blind or dumb, while their execution hence seemed more surprising, this unexpected performance by intellectually bedimmed and unfortunate fellow-creatures caused us greater gratification. Many inmates seemed helpless from physical infirmities, but, considering their previous position in the external world, they now lived comparatively more comfortable. Besides the 'Sœur Supérieure' there are also thirty-one Sisters of Charity, of whom one is secretary, another music-mistress, while others are teachers of various departments and chief superintendents, as also in other capacities throughout different wards. To these, ten lay-female servants, with seven assistants, must be added, thus making, altogether, forty-eight actual attendants for 269 patients or one to every six lunatic inmates."

Another witness says, of the same house, "In another room some were making clothes for their own wear, while parties were amusing themselves with cards or dominoes. Of the upper class, many remain in their own apartments, either from choice or because they are not fit to leave them; but about half-a-dozen were seated in an arbour, formed in their own private garden, which is tastefully laid out. There is a common dining-room for these patients, where all who are not confined to their apartments meet for meals, unless, as in some cases, they prefer solitude. There is a separate kitchen for this portion of the house, of which the sisters have the charge, as well as of the others, but are assisted by servants. A nun sits up every night, going the round of the wards, and only calling up the nursery sisters if necessary. One curious fact she told me was that of their having noticed the rule of silence observed by the community, and of their having, in consequence, volunteered, though not apparently in a spirit of penance, to keep a three hours' silence daily, and, what was more surprising, they had religiously observed it." *

The physician, Guislain, who daily saw and superintended these very developments, anticipatory and positively still in advance of our movement in this country, comments upon his machinery†—"But their object is a heavenly recompense; gain attracts the ordinary servant. Our religious are honest, sober, lead a laborious life; they exhort the patient to virtue. If the laics appear more apt in penetrating motives, they often give themselves up to immorality, which is apparent in their conversation and which dictates their conduct; while we find among the members of our confraternities the principles of morality, a good education, even solid knowledge, qualities which we conceive are of great importance in treatment; even their

* 'Flemish Interiors,' by the writer of 'A Glance behind the Grilles' (quoted in 'Asylum Journal,' vol. iii).

† 'Traité sur les Phrénopathies,' &c., par J. Guislain, &c., Médecin en Chef des Etablissements des Aliénés à Gaud, p. 479.

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dress imparts to them a certain degree of dignity." But even under these circumstances, regular contracts are entered into between the governors of the institution and the heads of the religious bodies, stipulating as to the numbers required, the nature of their duties, their maintenance or remuneration, their relation to the officers and ordinary guardians, if such there be, so that when indolent or ineffective they may be removed by the physician; and there is no reason why similar or even more stringent compacts might not be formed wherever such an arrangement was attempted.

In France, although it be argued that the introduction of monks is incompatible with the present organization of asylums, and would prove subversive of the usefulness and rights of the medical director, a high, we might say extravagant, estimate has been formed of the co-operation of hospital sisters. Renaudin, the most eminent and judicious of the many advocates of the system, is of opinion that the religious should constitute the companions and guides rather than the servants of the insane; that they should superintend, but not perform, menial offices, and be responsible for the domestics, upon whose character and disposition it has been shown their example and teaching produce a most beneficial influence.* The same author argues that, although the religious are invaluable agents in carrying out in reality what is merely attempted or dreamed of elsewhere in the department of moral treatment, they increase the expense of the establishment. They do not, it is true, receive salaries, but they are lodged and boarded in the house, and receive an indemnity amounting to 150 or 250 francs for clothing; and it does not appear that their presence materially diminishes the number of secular guardians. We do not, however, discover why this double staff should be required in asylums when it is dispensed with in general hospitals, where the duties imposed upon the sisters must be as servile, and more distressing and disgusting. Dagonet, a medical superintendent as well as a writer on psychology,† while admitting that he has found as valuable assistance from laics, regards the intervention of female religious as presenting "les avantages incontestable quand l'organisation est serieusement constitué," when they act according to a code of regulations, and when they have no other object than that of giving the example of those virtues of which their habit is an emblem. He would be guided in his preference by the locality, by the traditions and dispositions of the population among whom they were to labour, and would confine their sphere of action to the maintenance or order and discipline, personal care of the sick, the direction of occupation, and to continuous and intelligent supervision in the female department.

* "Administration des Asiles d'Aliénés," 'Ann. Méd.-Psych.,' t. v, pp. 14 and 225, 1845.

† 'Traité élémentaire et Pratique des Maladies Mentales,' 1862.

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Morel speaks still more strongly. He regards them as excellent when they come to the aid of science, with that benevolence, devotedness, and humility, which can only be found in individuals actuated by religious principles.

Of the medical men in this country few have directly expressed any opinion upon this subject, although many have borne testimony to the present unsatisfctory state of supervision in public hospitals of all kinds, and extended admiration towards such an arrangement as is here advocated. But we find Dr. Gooch very explicitly advocating such an experiment. "Let all real Christians join and found an order of women like the Sisters of Charity in Catholic countries; let them be selected for good plain sense, kindness of disposition, indefatigable industry and deep piety; let them receive, not a technical, but a practical medical education."*

Recent and very valuable evidence on the point is afforded by Dr. Howden, in his notes on Italian asylums for the insane, where he speaks of the beneficial working of a band of male religious, and in a country which we are apt to regard as lagging behind in the national competitive movement. "The male asylum," he says, "was a most pleasing contrast to the female one. It occupies the whole of the island of San Servulo, Venice, and is conducted by a body of monks. The monkish doctor, in his long gown, seemed delighted to show me everything of interest. Everything appeared perfectly clean and orderly. The number of patients at the time of my visit was 436, rather more than the establishment could well accommodate; that, however, they seemed to be doing their best to remedy, several new rooms being in process of building. The baths bore no evidence of being constructed with an eye to fastening in the patient, as is too often to be found in foreign asylums. I saw nothing in the shape of restraint, and the doctor said that it was but rarely had recourse to. One of the few things that conveyed anything like an unpleasant sensation to one's mind was in the presence of several iron gates between different parts of the house. The gardens and airing-ground are very cheerful and pleasant, with a delightful look-out over the sea and surrounding islands. On one of the neighbouring islands the government is at present constructing a very large asylum, which, however, I was told would not be completed for several years. There are workshops on the premises for wrights, blacksmiths, and tailors; and out of the 436 patients there are 120 constantly working, a fact which, I think, shows more than anything else how much the brotherhood have the good of their patients at heart. Nor is the necessity for amusement overlooked. There is a good instrumental band formed of patients, and in the church attached to the establishment the organ is played by a patient, and there is also a choir formed of patients.

* Letters in 'Medical Gazette,' 1825.

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The doctor showed me, with considerable pride, a copy of a notice of the asylum, by Dr. Robertson, extracted from the 'Journal of Mental Science.' I left the asylum, delighted with what I had seen, and much pleased by the courtesy extended to me." "Sisters of charity attend upon the Female Patients' Asylum, Rome, and to their care and attention, I believe, is greatly due the cleanly condition of the inmates, many of whom seemed busily engaged in sewing and making clothes of all kinds under the kindly superintendence of those sisters."*

There is a cry for woman's emancipation and her rights. Here is offered her hereditary right—to care for the wounded, the stricken, the fallen. Mrs. Jameson says, in her 'Communion of Labour,' "There are thousands and thousands of women who have no protection, no guide, no help, no home,—who are absolutely driven, by circumstances and necessity, if not by impulse and inclination, to carry into the larger community the sympathies, the domestic instincts, the active administrative capabilities, with which God has endowed them; but these instincts, sympathies, capabilities, require first to be properly developed, then properly trained, and then diverted into large and useful channels, according to the individual tendencies." There is a demand for work for women." Here is a labour, a mission open to and worthy of the humblest capacity and loftiest aspiration; duties so sad and servile as to deserve the name of penance, if it please the labourer so to regard them; and others so refined and elevated, in nature and range, as to exercise the wisdom of the serpent as well as the gentleness of the dove. For such as have no home, or no suitable home, here is a retreat; for such as crave a wider field for exercising sympathy than what their natural vocation affords, are offered a life of cares and anxieties, duties and rewards; for such as desire to emancipate themselves from the conventionalities of society, from the luxurious or frivolous or do-nothing habits of their class or training, or who court work for its own sake, for the mental health and complacency which it brings, or even for the retirement, the protection from the world, the pride of life, &c., and for the independence which is its price,—an asylum provides real, substantial, Christian exertion, so varied and yet so constantly appealing to the better part of human nature, and exacting so much of thoughtfulness, reticence, and self-possession, as to realise, in great measure, what religious associations profess to have as special objects and to desire to undertake. Nor is the task proposed a mere play at work, a spectacle, a contemplative, white-glove, namby-pamby supervision—not even worsted work relieved by religious ceremonies. It demands menial and manual Christianity, long-continued watching, the exercise of every resource which education or ingenuity has imparted. It

* 'Edinburgh Medical Journal,' Dec., 1865.

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exposes to ingratitude, contumely, treachery, danger; and all this without the praise due to heroism, or even the publicity which often inspires and sustains where principle might fail.

Clinical Notes regarding Epileptic Insanity. By ADAM ADDISON, L.R.C.P. Ed., Assistant Medical Officer, Royal Lunatic Asylum, Montrose.

THE following observations are based upon fifty cases, and compiled from notes taken by Dr. Howden and myself. They are published merely as a contribution to the statistics of the subject, which are by no means numerous. Of the cases admitted into the Montrose Asylum during the last eight years, 3·8 per cent. were epileptics. Their physiognomical characteristics are given in the following table:

In 39 males, 11 females—

	M.	F.	Total.
The face was pallid in . .	24	6	30
Lips thick in	20	7	27
Eyelids puffy in . . .	32	9	41
Pupils large in	20	5	25
„ of medium size in . .	19	6	25
„ unequal in . . .	0	2	2

It was observed that the pupils were very variable, as regards size, apparently owing to the frequent vertiginous attacks to which such patients are subjects.

The bodily condition, as regards nutrition, was generally good, and in many cases the tendency was to plethora.

The nutrition was—

	M.	F.	Total.
Plethoric in	16	5	21
Normal in	11	5	16
Defective in	12	1	13

The usual disturbances of motility during the interparoxysmal period were observed in the majority of cases, namely, tremor, tonic and clonic spasm, with imperfect muscular co-ordination, and sometimes paralysis, and, as the result of these, imperfect articulation, tremor of the muscles of the face and hands, want of precision in grasp, and the characteristic straddle in the gait. Those of the patients whose intelligence could be relied on reported that tonic spasm generally occurred in the muscles of the legs and arms, often after they got into bed, and before they became warm. Clonic spasm was observed in the muscles of the legs, arms, and face, and in five

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