of the Court or to the *Chef du parquet,* without the intervention of a solicitor being necessary.

(3) The persons who procured the admission, whether this were voluntary or ordered by the public authority, ought to receive notice of the demand for discharge made by the person in detention, so that, should there be occasion, they may be able to make before the Court any statements they may desire.

(4) The right of claim before the Court ought not to be subject to any pecuniary obligation; consequently, the documents relating thereto ought to be registered, not "*en debet,*" but quite gratuitously.

(5) Decisions given *en Chambre du Conseil* by the Civil Courts, on claims demanding the discharge of persons placed in a lunatic asylum, ought not to be subject to appeal.

On Irish Asylum Dietary. By E. Maziere Courtenay, M.D., Medical Superintendent of the District Asylum, Limerick.

In bringing before you the subject of the dietary in use in public asylums in this country, I have, in the first instance, to apologise for my inability to treat so great a subject in a manner in any way commensurate with its importance. I omit altogether touching on those fields for research as to the nature, quality, and quantity of food best suited in the treatment of acute insanity for the support of bodily strength, allaying excitement and producing sleep, as to the arguments for and against artificial alimentation, and as to the use and abuse of stimulants.

My present object is to compare the various published tables of diet in the Irish public asylums with each other, and with those in similar institutions in England. Unfortunately I have been unable to obtain any information of the Scotch asylums, as they do not publish their diet-tables in their reports; and, though most valuable tables appear in the Blue Book of the Scotch Commissioners of the cost of each article of food used, still no quantities are given. The American customs and tastes differ so entirely from ours that no comparison could be made with advantage.

I trust that from these comparisons of different diet sheets some discussion may arise on the articles of food best suited to the habits and tastes of the pauper insane in this country, and that some definite opinion may be arrived at as to the form of

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dietary which would meet the requirements of our various institutions.

In Vol. xiii. of the "Med. Chirurgical Review," an article will be found by Dr. Beneke "On the Amount of Nitrogenous and Non-Nitrogenous Elements in Various English Dietaries." In this he compares the quantity and quality of food in various educational and invalid establishments, prisons, hospitals, and asylums, giving the amount of each article of food for each person weekly, in ounces. The return for Hanwell is as follows:—

Meat, 21; bread, 96; potatoes, 60; greens, 10; sugar, 3½; flour, 16; fat, 3; milk, 20; cocoa, 3½; beer, 140; cheese, 14; rice, 3. Dr. Beneke goes on to compare the proportion of nitrogenous and non-nitrogenous elements, and finds the mean proportion to have been 1 to 5 in the various institutions. In like manner I have drawn up two tables (see pp. 18 and 19), giving similar articles of food in ounces per week, one for the twenty-two public asylums in Ireland, and another for fourteen English asylums taken at random.

I would also refer you to an able article on "Asylum Dietary," published in the "Medical Times and Gazette," in which like details are given of 14 English asylums. In these the average amounts were found to be—meat, 25 oz.; bread, 108½ oz.; vegetables, 65 oz.

Perhaps I may be excused in stating that a certain amount of vagueness exists in the dietary lists of some of the Irish asylums. For instance, in some no information is given of the quantity of meat issued for each patient, in some ox heads are used, of which there is no comparative value of the amount of bone and flesh. In almost all both oatmeal and either tea or coffee are given for breakfast on the same day. I do not say that these objections exist in practice; they may only be the result of condensing the tables for publication.

The meat in all cases in the tables given by me has been reduced in weight for bones and cooking, allowing one-fourth of the weight for bones and one-tenth for cooking, or, roughly, by deducting one-third from the original weight allowed.

One principal object to aim at in framing scales of diet for public institutions in any country is to take into consideration the habits of the people. No food, however nutritious and costly, no matter how well served, will give satisfaction or cause contentment to those who have not only lost their freedom, but their power to select their own food, unless it is of a similar kind to that which they have been accustomed to in early life.

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IRISH ASYLUMS.

Estimated Amount of Food Consumed by Each Person Weekly, in Ounces.

Name of Asylum,	Meat.	Bread.	Potatoes.	Vegetables.	Sugar.	Milk.	Tea.	Coffee.	Cocoa.	Indian & Oatmeal.	Rice.	Remarks.
Armagh	20	168	24	8	Average: Six ounces each.	36	2	—	—	56	—	Ox heads used.
Ballinasloe	20	134	168	8		36	1	—	2	56	—	Ox heads used.
Belfast	18	116	168	12		140	—	—	—	56	—	Ox heads used.
Carlow	20	130	64	10		76	—	—	3	56	—	
Castlebar	20	126	90	8		96	—	—	3	56	—	
Clonmel	18	140	96	12		36	1	—	2	56	—	
Cork	24	120	144	10		36	2	—	—	56	—	
Downpatrick	26	112	96	6		36	1	—	2	56	2	Ox heads used.
Ennis...	16	168	80	10		68	1	—	2	56	—	
Enniscorthy	18	134	160	8		70	—	—	—	49	7	
Kilkenny	18	154	—	8		140	2	—	—	49	7	
Killarney	20	120	64	64		36	1	1	1	56	4	
Letterkenny	20	80	196	12		90	1	—	—	56	—	
Limerick	30	140	96	32		48	1	1	2	70	—	
Londonderry	24	72	196	—		80	—	—	—	112	—	Ox heads used.
Maryborough	28	78	168	6		90	—	—	1½	56	—	Ox heads used.
Monaghan	24	112	192	12		48	1	1	2	56	—	
Mullingar	24	168	128	12		48	1	—	2	56	—	Ox heads used.
Omagh	24	168	128	12		48	1	—	2	56	—	
Richmond	30	168	48	32		36	1	—	2	56	—	
Sligo	24	136	64	12		90	1	—	—	112	4	
Waterford	20	126	96	12		90	—	—	2	56	—	
Total	486	2870	2466	308	132	1474	18	3	28½	1344	24	
Averages for 22 asylums	22	130	112	14	6	67	·82 16 asyl'ms 1¼	·13 3 asylums 1	1·3 14 asyl'ms 2	61	1·08 5 asylums 4·80	

NOTE.—Oatmeal and Indian Meal are issued to non-working patients in most asylums.

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ENGLISH ASYLUMS.

Estimated Amount of Food Consumed by Each Person Weekly, in Ounces.

Place.	Meat.	Bread.	Potatoes.	Vegetables	Sugar	Milk.	Tea.	Cocoa & Coffee.	Rice.	Flour	Butter.	Beer.	Skim Milk.	Cheese.	Remarks.
Worcester	25	112	40	12	7	35	1	1	12	3	7	60	—	—	
Warwick	25	110	50	10	7	35	1	1	—	4	5½	70	—	—	
Northampton	30	112	70	10	7	35	1	1	—	6	7	80	—	—	
Leicestershire	25	105	48	10	7	42	1	1	—	3	5	60	—	2	Working patients, in addition to the ordinary dietary, are allowed—Bread, 3 oz.; cheese, 1 oz.; beer, ½ pint (in most asylums), daily.
Staffordshire	27	135	40	10	7	20	1	1	20	6	7	80	—	—	
Derbyshire	25	115	48	10	7	35	2	—	—	3	7	—	—	—	
Hereford	25	119	70	13	7	52	½	2	—	3	5½	—	80	—	
Birmingham { Winson Green	26	107	54	16	7	30	1	1	—	10	7	—	—	1	
Birmingham { Rubery Hill ...	22	112	48	10	7	30	1	1	—	10	5	—	—	—	
Glamorgan	18	136	64	16	7	20	1	1	—	3	7	—	—	—	
Beverley	24	102	60	10	7	50	1	1	4	6	7	—	—	—	
Devonshire	26	94	56	16	7	28	1	2	—	16	6	—	—	—	
Cane Hill, Surrey	21	99	70	5	7	22	1	1	1	15	7	—	—	—	*Extras.*—Fruit pies during the season.
Nottingham Borough... ...	20	110	60	10	7	35	1	1	2	6	7	70	—	—	
Total—14 scales	339	1568	778	158	98	469	14⅔	15	39	94	90	370	80	3	
Average	24·2	112	55·5	11·3	7	33·5	1·05	1·07	$\frac{5}{7·8}$	6·7	6·4	$\frac{6}{61·6}$	$\frac{1}{80}$	$\frac{2}{1\frac{1}{2}}$	

It must further be remembered that the habits of the people in all parts of the country have greatly changed. That nearly all live more luxuriously than they did fifty years ago. Whereas the agricultural classes were then accustomed to potatoes and milk as an almost unvaried article of diet, now they are not satisfied unless they have tea, bread, butter, bacon, and flesh meat. Further, I may add that all the inmates of our asylum, though reduced to poverty through disease, were, in very many cases, originally able to maintain themselves in moderate comfort. They, therefore, deserve to be treated with every consideration for their changed position.

On examining the table giving the amount of food per patient in Irish public asylums, we find that meat is, on an average, 22 ounces per week, and varies from 16 ounces to 30 ounces. Ox heads are given in addition at Armagh, Ballinasloe, Belfast, Maryborough, and Mullingar. In all bread is given in large quantities; milk is also largely used, especially at Belfast and Kilkenny, where each patient gets 140 ounces in the week, exclusive of skim or mixed milk. Potatoes, as might have been expected in Ireland, form one of the principal articles of diet, except at Armagh and Kilkenny; other vegetables seem to be given according to the supply. Cocoa is used in all except five, and tea in all except six.

If we now take into consideration the tables giving the quantities of food used in the two countries, we find, in accordance with the different habits of the people, that animal food is in excess in the English asylums, whilst bread, milk, and potatoes form the larger part of the dietary in this country. Some difficulty exists in determining the quantity of milk used in English asylums, as it was seldom given unmixed. Now, I believe it is used in some asylums in place of beer. In Ireland, on the other hand, it has always been looked on as the staple article of diet. Why bread should have been given in such large quantities in Ireland I am at a loss to understand.

I cannot but think that the food given in Irish asylums is to be commended on one point, and that is for its bulk. My belief is that in institutions of the kind bulk of simple food, such as porridge, bread, milk and potatoes (of course within proper limits) gives much more general satisfaction than a highly concentrated diet. We must, of course, allow that it results in a certain degree of waste. But dealing as we do with an agricultural people, always accustomed to live on the produce of their own land to a very large extent, I believe they are much more contented on a farinaceous regimen than on animal food.

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Of course we have not, nor would it be wise to introduce, as it would be utterly unsuited to the tastes and former habits of our patients, the constant use of fruit and meat pies, suet dumplings and cheese. The use of fish in England is much to be commended. Here, however, the supply is so precarious that, unless in those institutions situated near the sea, it would be impossible to obtain a regular supply of fresh fish. I have always understood that the use of salt fish has been found unsatisfactory, but should be glad to hear of any experiences in this article of diet.

One article of food has increased in favour with the Irish more than perhaps with any other people, namely, tea. Used in their homes twice, and oftentimes thrice a day, there is no loss they feel more on admission to a public institution. Its use as a means of nutriment is of course most doubtful, but the ready way in which a cup of tea will be taken by those who would perhaps refuse to touch any other form of food renders it most useful as an encouragement to other more strengthening food.

On the other hand cocoa, though forming a part of the dietary of 14 out of the 22 Irish asylums, is utterly unknown in the Irish cottage, and though undoubtedly more nutritious than tea, is disliked from the first, and never can be rendered palatable, no matter with what persistency it may be retained on the diet-sheet.

We do not find butter given in any of the published diet-sheets of Irish asylums, though, as far as I am aware, it is largely given as an extra. Undoubtedly it is looked on as a costly item, increasing largely the trouble of serving the meals in our institutions. Its importance, however, in adding to the comfort and homeliness of the meals, in rendering the food more palatable, and increasing the nutritive value of the quantities of bread by the addition of fat, renders it worthy of a place amongst the most simple diet.

Another most important consideration in a dietary is variety. In an admirable article on asylum dietary, Dr. Lauder Lindsay, formerly Superintendent of the Perth Asylum, thus speaks of the importance of some variety in the food:—"The experience of athletes, boxers, wrestlers, and pedestrians, of the trainers of race-horses and fighting cocks, shows that the most vigorous health cannot long be maintained on a uniform diet, however nutritious and substantial this may in itself be, and how necessary therefore is the selection of food for the insane." Such is the importance of variety as an element of diet that food in-

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ferior in nutritive value is frequently superior in usefulness or suitableness, simply because a greater and more judicious variety is supplied. Fortunately it frequently happens also that greater variety is not necessarily synonymous with greater expensiveness. On the contrary, the more varied diet may be the more economical as well as the more palatable and digestible. Hence it is desirable, within due limits, to vary the diet in a public institution from day to day, so that no special food or article of diet may be suffered to pall upon the appetite on account of its uniformity.

In Ireland, owing to the simplicity of the fare, it is difficult to vary the meals to any very great extent. However, something might be done by substituting different kinds of meat for the unvaried supply of soup made from beef. One dinner of mutton in the week would not increase the expense to any very great extent. But what appears strange is that bacon is not more used. In Ireland it is perhaps the most universal, and in many cases perhaps the only form of animal food, amongst the poorer classes, and amongst all it is more prized than any other article of diet, whereas the amount consumed in public asylums is small.

In these few remarks I have not made any attempt to discuss the subject of feeding the pauper insane from the standpoint of expense—perhaps under this view of the question we may find it come most prominently before us. Living as we do in a very poor country, we generally find that all suggestions for improvement are considered under the head of "cost," in the first instance. However, it is a part of the subject which does not concern us so much to-day as the consideration of the articles of food most suitable to the health and habits of our insane poor, whose wants are well described in the article on the diet of the insane in the "Medical Times and Gazette" already referred to. "The insane are really the subjects of disease, whose most general character is depression of vital energy, weakness, or imperfect nutrition. Hence it is that inmates of an asylum must be supplied with food not only nutritious in quality, but abundant in quantity."

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