for the making of mats, the other of cigars, 4,000 of these being produced annually.

Patients are discharged (1) when they attain the age of 28 years; (2) after being in the school for five years; (3) when the state of their health requires it; (4) if there is no hope of progress and improvement.

In conclusion I must acknowledge M. Moesveld's kindness in showing me everything which I expressed a wish to see.

Two Visits to the Cairo Asylum, 1877 *and* 1878.

I. By A. R. URQUHART, M.D., Warwick County Asylum.

It has been pointed out that, however potent Islam has proved in the history of civilisation, progress within its narrow boundaries is unknown—its development is at once full-blown. And especially is this true with regard to the treatment of its lunatics; for whatever credit may be due to the pioneers of Mohammedanism in originating the idea of the separation of the insane from the sane, it is sadly marred by the fact that in thus caring for the welfare of the community at large they have quite overlooked that of the luckless minority.

It may be that the improvement of the condition of the insane of Grand Cairo is relegated to the golden age—the every-day dream of the modern Egyptian—that is to be inaugurated "when England annexes Egypt." Manifold indeed are the changes to be consummated then—divers in their aims as the interests of the missionaries, the magazine writers, the stockbrokers or the statesmen that propose them. But as it is, in the matter-of-fact present, amid all the wonders of Cairo, amid the Mosques and Bazaars, amid the gaieties of the Oriental Paris sprung up under the fostering care of the Khedive, amid the gigantic relics of that wondrous civilisation of Ancient Egypt, there is no more melancholy, degrading fact than their common madhouse.

Doré with pencil among the noisome alleys of London, Dickens with pen in the horrors of the Fleet, have made us familiar with miseries and loathsomeness that would be comforts and cleanliness to *Les Miserables* of Cairo; and though travellers' tales and special correspondents' telegrams are looked on with suspicious eyes in these latter days, an unvarnished statement of the condition of lunatics in

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Egypt in the year 1877 may show that the Conolly of that country has still his work to do.

By the kindness of Dr. Grant, who has been for many years in practice in Cairo, we were enabled to pay a visit to what must be termed a Lunatic *Asylum* by courtesy only. It is hidden away in a remote and unfrequented part of the City—far from the haunts of the European, and in fact known but to few of the natives, if one may judge by the difficulty experienced by our dragoman in finding it. It is entirely under native control, being visited at uncertain intervals by an Arab physician.

Arrived, by the inevitable donkey, at a great closed gateway, we dismounted, and entered through a jealously guarded wicket. This gateway led into a court-yard, a rickety barrier excluding the lunatics who swarmed on the farther side; and it was occupied by a small group of Arabs gathered round a solemn-looking semi-European-clad youth, who seemed to be devoting all his energies to the hookah by his side. The advent of Europeans here was evidently rather an exceptional event, and was certainly the cause of a good deal of noisy talk, in which our dragoman joined freely.

Dr. Grant's card of introduction was handed about, and carefully read upside down by the solemn-faced youth who, we were assured, was the physician in charge. A judicious administration of "backsheesh" cleared our way wonderfully, and with a small crowd of attendants and donkey boys we were admitted into the court-yard of the asylum among the "patients." A tall, powerful Arab, who seemed to exercise supreme power, showed us round. He was armed with a stout rattan cane, with which he laid about him unsparingly and impartially—clearing a way for us through the crowd of excited gesticulating lunatics.

The asylum seemed to have been adapted from an ordinary house—a court-yard surrounded by lofty walls on two sides, while along the third ran a range of dormitories one storey high. It might be about forty yards long by thirty wide at the farther end, narrowing to the gateway by which we had just entered. And sprawling on its uneven, hard-trodden surface, furiously treading its limited space, crouching in its filthy recesses, or surrounding us with entreaties and menaces, were some two hundred hopeless lunatics in various stages of nudity. The sun was beating down fiercely, and the stench of the place almost unbearable. In one corner of the court was a large stone cistern in close proximity to the

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only apology for a latrine, and attached to this was a battered old drinking cup, the solitary vestige of the "cooking animal" the place was guilty of.

While standing by, one of those unhappy creatures committed an act of indescribable filthiness in this cup, rinsed it out with the dirty water in the cistern, and drank it off, much to the amusement of the men in charge. The state of the closet can be better imagined than described, innocent as it was of Condy or carbolic—of even the most primitive fittings. We could not discover, indeed, what arrangements were made for the cleansing of it; but it was evident from the horrible stream that flowed from it that its periodic emptyings were of the rarest.

Entering the building described as running along one side of the court, we were at once saluted by a still more overpowering odour than we had left in the open air, the only advantage of staying indoors being the escape from the blinding rays of the tropical sun. Here a fairly wide corridor separated a row of single rooms from two large dormitories looking on the court. There were eight or ten of those single rooms ranged along the back wall—the more remote, used as lumber rooms, filled with decaying bedding and odds and ends of timber that cried aloud for burning. Each cell was guarded by a strong barred door, lighted by a high, small window, paved with stones, and contained no vestige of furniture. The central one was better lighted than those on either side; that only opened on the dark corridor, as its doorway was opposite the entrance from the court; and in it were some six or eight lunatics, two of whom were engaged in a sanguinary quarrel as we approached—a quarrel that promptly subsided on the offer of a few opportune cigarettes. These poor creatures were perfectly naked, and pressed eagerly against the bars of their cage, stretching out their hands for a cigarette in pitiful resemblance to so many wild beasts in a menagerie. The resemblance was heightened, too, by a prompt caution we had to keep, as it were, outside the bars—a caution enforced by a cut of the rattan across the poor naked arms. A display of English feeling on the subject was *not* well received, and our attempted descriptions of English modes of treatment created the evident impression that they might do very well for England, but would hardly be efficacious in Egypt. The sanitary condition of those unfortunates, who were described as "Very wild men, Sar!" was truly distressing to witness; the floor and walls were

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smeared with filth and steaming with urine, and the atmosphere perfectly pestilential.

The adjoining cell had been placed *hors de combat* by an energetic occupant, who had devoted himself to digging up the paving stones; but we could get no information as to when it would be repaired, nor did our attendant give himself the slightest concern about the matter.

Two roomy dormitories lay on either side of the entrance, and in these beds were placed in close proximity—so close that one could hardly make his way between them. The filthiness of the motley bed covering, (nearly all were in use on our visit), effectually prevented us from making a long stay among them. And whether the men stayed in bed by day to insure one at night, whether they were in bed by day, not having been so fortunate by night, or whether they remained there for lack of clothes, we could not determine. None were reported in bed from sickness; in fact, it seemed to be regarded by the man in charge as an amiable weakness to prefer the filth indoors to the filth out of doors —a weakness which did not affect him in the slightest degree.

In one bed a tiny Frenchman crouched, with long unkempt hair swarming with pediculi. He was labouring under monomania of suspicion, looked in wretched physical health, was said to have been there five years, though we have grave doubts as to the possibility of a European surviving five years of such a life. In conversation he stated that he had *Soupe maigre* and bread for breakfast and dinner, and *that* only; that he had no clothes, but that he was King of Egypt, and kept there by his enemies. Being of an uncommunicative nature, we could get him to say no more, but were soon engaged in conversation with a highly delusional and loudly loquacious man, who spoke English very well, and declared himself to be a fellow countryman, though in truth his appearance did not justify his assertions. This individual was standing on his bed, leaning on the window-sill, contemplating the crowded court-yard, when we entered, and was airily attired in a long night shirt, with a cotton handkerchief twisted round his head. He had a great bundle of old letters carefully tied up with certain curious eatables, which he seemed most anxious to conceal from us. These letters were written in English, demanding his immediate liberation, and full of delusions (?) as to his property, etc. He told us his clothes had been taken from him, and he had

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been detained there fifteen months, (he named the date of our visit pretty accurately); that he wished to get away to see about various telegrams as to his money he had had from the English Consul. The supposed telegrams he treasured so carefully were worthless scraps of paper, and he was generally incoherent and delusional—such a case as one might see in any English asylum. But he did not complain of his food, of his clothes, of his treatment, of the miserable and filthy surroundings, as might have been expected. Though he had a little tobacco, he would not be bribed into saying where he got it, nor would he give any opinion about the place, but ran on incoherently about his claims on the Government, about his letters and telegrams, and about his money matters in general. Through our dragoman we learnt that he was not an Englishman; but a drunken courier, and had been brought there by the police in consequence of having attacked people in the streets.

As we crossed the court on our way out, we were struck by the apparent absence of attendants or discipline of any kind, save, indeed, the free use of the rattan, wielded by the ready and powerful arm of our guide. Several of the men were entirely naked, and one of those was a rough, noisy, bullying lunatic, for whom the more timid made way right quickly. Another was loaded with heavy chains on waist and ankles that had evidently been long accustomed to their embrace. The heat, the glare, the stench, the noise and the crowding, rendered an escape into the sheltering gateway a grateful change, though even there the pandemonium beyond the tumble-down barrier was overpowering enough, and several pairs of gleaming eyes were discernible through the cracks.

As to female patients, the custom of the country rendered it impossible for us to do more than glance into a great, bare, unfurnished room, opening off the gateway, where a few women were squatting. As in other Eastern countries, there is a great prejudice against sending women to a public hospital of any sort; so the fate of the female lunatic is wrapped in Egyptian mystery, yet it may be that they are to be counted more fortunate than their brethren condemned to drag out a miserable existence in this fearful Bedlam.

On our enquiry for the physician in charge, we found that he and his hookah had disappeared, and we could get no reliable information as to admission, deaths, discharges, diet, or the thousand-and-one things that interest the specialist on such a voyage of discovery. We could not

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even get a satisfactory account of the population of the place—of the actual number resident. Wild guesses were indulged in by our dragoman that there were a thousand—or perhaps five hundred; but we certainly did not see more than about two hundred and fifty. We were told that the police brought the "patients" there; but our knowledge of the Cairo police regulations was too limited to furnish us with any idea as to the correctness of this statement. With regard to deaths there was an ominous silence, and the phrase, discharge of a lunatic, seemed to have absolutely no Egyptian equivalent. But the whole place is so utterly beyond the ken of civilization, that it remains as hideous a blot on the earth's surface as is to be found even in the Dark Continent.

II.—By William Samuel Tuke, M.R.C.S.

In one visit to an asylum, during which all conversation has to be carried on through the medium of a dragoman, it is not easy, however intelligent he may be, to gain all the facts which one desires bearing on the many questions which arise in reference to the insane in a land placed under such different conditions from our own, as is Egypt. Hence no further excuse is needed for the insufficiency of my observations on the Cairo Asylum, which I visited on Dec. 11, 1878.

Dr. Mahommad Tagroi is the principal medical officer, and I am indebted to him for the obliging manner in which he showed me over the institution, and facilitated my inquiries. The asylum is a Government establishment, and the doctor finds his superiors the reverse of liberal in affording him the means to effect improvements. He was anxious that I should understand that the dirt and miserable squalor which at once strike any one familiar with the condition of an English County Asylum, are not in accordance with his own wishes, but are due to the impecuniosity of the Government. Let us hope that with the expected revival of Egyptian finance, this asylum may participate in the advantage.

The building dates from the time of Mohammad Alí (1805-48), but at that period it was used as a dock warehouse, and was only converted into an asylum about two-and-twenty years ago. Having such an origin as this, it can easily be imagined that it is not strikingly comfortable, or structurally adapted to its present functions. It must be remembered,

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