Belgian Opinion on Belgian Asylums.

Elsewhere we quote (see Notes and News) at considerable length a report on Belgian asylums by Dr. Lentz, who occupies in Belgium a position similar to that of an English Lunacy Commissioner.

His communication is interesting for what it does *not*, as well as for what it does, contain. It shows how utterly worthless is outside inspection of monastic institutions. Inspectors who are either afraid to describe what they see, or powerless to bring about reform of what they know to be wrong, do much more harm than good. They help to hypnotise into even deeper trance a public opinion that is already somnolent. They secure the continuance and the increase of abuses. Dr. Lentz refers to the discreditable defence of antique procedures offered at the Antwerp Conference by medical superintendents sometimes living and practising an hour's distance by express train from the institutions whose management they championed. He deprecates the bluntness with which a Teutonic Knight of the Holy Ghost (in Heine's sense) attacked the methods of barbarism, but he forgets to refer to that gentleman's indignation when he found a pair of shackles in a patient's bed in an Antwerp asylum. One of the most instructive items in the report of the Conference is a defence of the present Belgian system. A physician to an asylum, discoursing on the therapeutic value and the necessity of Restraint, remarks that in his institution, containing, as we understand, about five hundred patients, there are about a hundred who are of dirty habits, and that of these it is not necessary to shackle more than five, or at most six, in bed! An Englishman feels unable to criticise a system which leads to an asylum physician making such a boast.

Doctors not Disqualified.

In another place (see Notes and News) we describe the most recent proceedings in connection with the Youghal Auxiliary Asylum that have come to our knowledge. We are not wel supplied with items of information on this subject—a fact which speaks for itself, so we have to depend on the *British*

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