arranging his facts, so that certificates too often contain a mass of crude statements which in many cases are of no moment, or do not relate to the mental impairment, whilst on the other hand symptoms of the utmost importance are altogether omitted. The following samples will suffice to illustrate the foregoing remarks :—

J. R. C., for three months the inmate of a workhouse; was admitted with suicidal melancholia. The statement, as signed by the relieving officer, affirmed him to be not suicidal, whilst the symptoms, as detailed in the medical certificate, were to the contrary effect. In the admission room, and in the presence of the person who brought him, he threatened to commit self-destruction, and a few days subsequently made a most determined attempt to effect his purpose. This patient was not brought until eight days after the date of the medical certificate (April 1st), and accordingly, as this was beyond the period allowed by the law he was not received, and had to be taken back to the workhouse. He was admitted three days afterwards with new certificates.

S. S., suffering from chronic mania when admitted. The whole of the "Facts indicating insanity," as observed by the medical man, were thus reported by him :—"On Monday last I heard S. S. making a great noise and shouting at the top of her voice about the treatment she had received in the workhouse. She was in a most excited state and made a great disturbance; to-day she is quiet, and has answered my questions fairly but not always correctly." Now none of these "facts" were at all inconsistent with the patient being perfectly sane. Examination of her case soon proved that her mind was considerably impaired. She had hallucinations of hearing, was the subject of fancied provocation, made groundless complaints, declared she could get no food, and when any was placed before her refused to partake of it, and shortly afterwards again affirmed she was unable to obtain any, and was unable to give a coherent account of her history, etc.; all of which were good "facts" as testifying to her insanity, and were sufficiently explanatory of her occasional noisy excitement—a symptom of minor importance in comparison with those already mentioned.

Attendants on the Insane.

In the same Report Dr. Brushfield points out the difficulties of procuring the services of good and efficient persons to fill the vacancies that occur in the staff of attendants. He says :—

It would naturally be thought that those who had gained experience in other similar institutions of the same nature of the required duties to be performed would be most fit and proper for appointment; but in practice so large a section of this class fail to give satisfation, that in selecting candidates a preference is commonly given to those who have

https://doi.org/10.1192/S0368315X00229198 Published online by Cambridge University Press

not had previous experience of asylum duties. In too many instances, notwithstanding the outward display of cleanliness, smartness, and attention to duties, of this class of professional attendants in the presence of officers, there is soon evidence of an undercurrent of uneasiness; and although the patients may make no complaint, it is felt that they do not receive the proper amount of attention they ought to do. Moreover, by introducing objectionable habits and practices from other asylums, they are apt to create a feeling of dissatisfaction, and to induce much mischief amongst the well-disposed of the other attendants, and so add materially to the anxious labours of the officers. By the Lunacy Act, the dismissal or forced resignation of an attendant for misconduct of any kind is, required to be reported to the Commissioners in Lunacy, in order "by means of a central register, available for general reference, to prevent improper persons from being employed in the care of the insane;" (8th Report of the Commissioners in Lunacy, pp. 63-4) but this object has been completely frustrated in practice, and the experience of other medical superintendents, as well as of mine, testifies to the fact that attendants, after being discharged for misconduct of any kind, have hitherto had but little trouble in being engaged in other asylums.* Now, if it were made obligatory for the names of all attendants and servants entering or leaving the service of an asylum, together with such other information as might be thought desirable to be sent to the Office of the Commissioners in Lunacy, an accurate and complete register would be established, and would be of material benefit to all having charge of Lunatic Asylums. Such a record would afford the Commissioners a better opportunity of ascertaining the changes that occurred in the staff of any asylum; it would prevent the engagement of anyone who had been discharged for misconduct; of those who, after a probationary period, had been found inefficient; and of those who are in the persistent habit of leaving their places "for a change." Under any circumstances the patients would be the gainers.

Many Superintendents will, we think, endorse Dr. Brushfield's opinion regarding attendants who have been in other asylums, and agree with his experience that those who have not been in other asylums, do, after the necessary training, make the best attendants; but, with all deference to so experienced a Superintendent, it may be doubted whether his suggestion of a complete registration at the Office of the Commissioners in Lunacy would meet all the difficulties of the case. We doubt whether it would be desirable to impose upon those who have the care of insane patients, the burden

* "We have reason to believe that attendants obtain employment who, if due enquiries were made, would be ascertained to have been dismissed for misconduct from previous situations. In all cases of doubt, application should be made to this office for information, which would be readily furnished."—(17th Report of Commissoners in Lunacy, p. 38.)

https://doi.org/10.1192/S0368315X00229198 Published online by Cambridge University Press

of sending to the Lunacy Office the name of every attendant they engage and every attendant they discharge, nor would it seem desirable for the Commissioners to undertake such a registration. Insane patients are not, nor should they be, patients of the State, though the State properly makes provision for an efficient supervision of their condition while under care and control. The power of freely engaging and discharging his own servants should certainly be left unfettered to the Superintendent, who is responsible for their conduct, just as the medical treatment is left entirely to him; for in any way to hamper him in the exercise of that power, as the obligation suggested could not fail to do, would be in an equal degree to diminish his responsibility. In the case of patients in private houses, again, the obligation of such a return would put another serious hindrance in the way of the successful treatment of recent insanity. Already the statutory forms to be complied with are so formidable as frequently to frighten the patient's friends from adopting proper measures for bringing about his recovery by sending him from among them; they keep him at home, to his own detriment, rather than comply with the forms; and medical men, wishful to do the best for their patient and to obey the law, are grievously harassed by the rigidity and inelasticity of a system which, adapted to chronic cases of insanity and asylums, works badly in its application to recent insanity under treatment in private houses. Moreover, what is wanted is not a complete register of engaged and discharged attendants only, but an office to which superintendents might make application when they were in need of attendants. It is not only required to prevent improper persons from being employed in the care of the insane, but it is required to obtain the services of proper persons for the trying and responsible duties which attendants have to perform. A good organization to secure these two great ends, would assuredly do more to promote the welfare of the insane than many more ambitious schemes.*

* The plan followed in Scotland is thus alluded to in the last report of the Scotch Board:—"With the view of eliminating from the ranks of attendants all persons discharged from asylums for any grave fault, we require that all engagements and discharges shall be reported to us in order that we may take measures to prevent the re-engagement in another asylum of any one who has been found unsuitable. By this means we hope to render the re-engagement in a similar capacity, of discharged attendants a matter of some difficulty, and so to afford greater inducements to steadiness and good behaviour. During the past year, two attendants who had concealed the fact of having been previously in asylum service were immediately discharged on the receipt of intimation to this effect from the Board. We cannot, however, expect to reap the full benefits of this practice until the emoluments of attendants are made such as to render their discharge a much more sensible punishment than it is at present."

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