private poor have never yet been adequately met by the country; and our only word of caution is that there should be, in our opinion, a limit to the rates of board charged in such institutions. They should be rigidly kept for the class indicated, and we venture to submit that the maximum payment should be a guinea a week.

THE NEW DERRY ASYLUM.

The *Lancet*, of 28th November, 1896, reports that it has been agreed to select a number of architects, and to ask them to send in plans for an asylum to contain 600 patients. It is calculated that this can be done for £170 per patient. Protests have been made in reference to this scheme on the ground that the expenditure will bear heavily upon the county, that the half empty workhouses should be utilised, that the people are not duly represented on the management. If the asylum be required for the treatment of curable cases we cannot conceive that any suggestion to utilise workhouses can be upheld.

BERI-BERI IN RICHMOND ASYLUM, DUBLIN.

We are glad to learn that the epidemic of beri-beri is now disappearing from the Richmond Asylum. There has been no fresh case on the male side since November, and but few amongst the female patients. It would appear that progress is being made with the works for the relief of over-crowding, and improvement of the sanitation.

ACCIDENTS.

Two fatal accidents have been reported, one in the Portsmouth Asylum and one in the Richmond Asylum. At the former one patient in a sudden fit of anger seized another and hurled him against a table; at the latter one patient fractured the skull of another with a grating. Both these incidents seem to have occurred at the hands of working patients, and illustrate the constant dangers to be encountered in dealing with the insane.

LATTER-DAY METHODS.

The Portsmouth Asylum is surely ruled by Gilbertian authorities. Some time ago Dr. Mumby was appointed Medical Superintendent on the plea that he had proved a most admirable and efficient medical officer of health. He, however, laboured under the disadvantage of having had no previous experience in lunacy. Later, we observed that the Chairman of the Committee advertised for an Assistant Medical Officer—one with "some previous experience in an asylum preferred." "Preferred" is good, but "necessary" would have been better from our standpoint, the best for the patients. *Fiat experimentum.* The world thinks, and we think, too, that as a general rule this topsy-turvy method of inexperienced Superintendent and experienced assistant is not to be desired.

Portsmouth, nevertheless, has so much of business aptitude as enables the Asylum Committee to fix the salaries for the medical officers they employ.

https://doi.org/10.1192/bjp.43.181.429-a Published online by Cambridge University Press