fication of the Bill, as well as to the success which has attended these efforts.

All these facts are so well known and so thoroughly before the Association, that no more need be said; but we trust that the next Session of Parliament will find us fully armed and prepared to defend our own rights, as well as to safeguard the treatment of our patients.

Attacks on Private Asylums.

The occurrence of a case of death from unascertained injury in a Private Asylum has furnished the *Star* with the means of filling its columns with correspondence abusing these institutions and advocating their abolition.

The *Star* at the same time chronicles a similar case occurring in one County Asylum, and might have recorded, we regret to say, a second case in another.

If the *Star* were logical, therefore, it should equally demand the abolition of the County Asylums; but reason is not a strong point in the emotional outcry of the silly season.

Such casualties are deeply to be regretted, but with the utmost care in the supervision of patients and attendants, they happen under circumstances which again and again have failed to yield a definite conclusion to the most stringent and searching investigation.

Harm rather than good must arise from unreasoned abuse and condemnation of those in charge, who are probably attacked so freely because they are unable to respond.

The imputation of self-interest which is the stock argument against Private Asylums is the emphatic reason why these institutions should be desirous of avoiding such accidents, since their occurrence means ruin, or at all events great pecuniary loss.

The allegations of improper detention, again, show how ignorant are these irresponsible critics of the true condition of the institutions they assail; the modes of admission and certification, the supervision of the Commissioners in Lunacy and of the Magistrates, the freedom of correspondence and complaint, rendering this practically impossible.

These ignorant reformers may probably be astonished to learn that those who are really acquainted with the working of asylums complain that the real fault of the Private Asylum is a too early and ready discharge of patients: their

https://doi.org/10.1192/bjp.43.183.839 Published online by Cambridge University Press

fault is indeed the exact opposite of too prolonged detention: and this without doubt arises from the fear of being thought to be actuated by mercenary motives.

The same ignorance fails also to recognise the great advantage in treatment which these institutions possess, in the large amount of individual medical attention which they supply; one medical man often having only ten or twenty patients to care for, and the amount of individual liberty on parole accorded to the inmates of the Private Asylums is thus very great, owing to the intimáte knowledge and careful watching which can be given to each case.

The freedom of action of the Private Asylum Superintendent ought certainly to give him a great advantage in initiating improvements in treatment: probably more is owed to the initiative and example of Private Asylums than is usually recognised: and their competition with the public hospitals is assuredly of considerable advantage to the latter.

That the abolition of Private Asylums would be a serious loss to progress in the treatment of the insane is, we believe, the opinion of all who have practical knowledge on the subject.

The present state of the law in regard to Private Asylums, by precluding those members of our profession who have acquired great experience in the treatment of the insane from undertaking their treatment in small numbers, is without doubt a great loss to the community, of valuable professional services. That it is a gross infringement of individual liberty of action there can be no doubt.

The rampant faddism which inflicted this gross injustice on the members of our speciality and the community, is now less powerful than in recent years, and it is possible that a determined and energetic representation of this wrong to the Legislature might even now, or at an early date, repeal this legislative mistake.

Beri-beri in the Richmond Asylum.

Beri-beri bids fair to take its place amongst the wrongs of Ireland. It has either appeared in the Metropolitan Asylum of the distressful country three times in four years, or, if only twice, then the existing epidemic has lasted since August, 1896, and has merely been reinvigorated by the summer weather this year. If popular opinion may be

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