

however, that many who have survived the storm of acute mania have been rapidly restored by change of scene and surrounding circumstances. Much depends upon the capability of the parties who undertake the management of the insane at this stage. The enfeebled and perhaps childish mind must be provided with amusements and employments suitable to its powers. It would be quite as rational to expect that a man just recovered from a tedious illness should be able to compete with a perfectly healthy man in feats of bodily strength, as that a mind emerging from madness should be capable of discussing the variety of political or religious opinions which may be thoughtlessly forced upon its attention; but, on the other hand, it would be equally wrong to treat the many little peculiarities of thought and temper with indifference or rude neglect. Kindness of manner will go far to remove many unpleasant residua of the primary stage. I apprehend that the greatest difficulty will be experienced in finding persons in these colonies who will devote a sufficient amount of time and attention to cases of this description, if intrusted to their care. The opinion I have been (as yet) enabled to arrive at on this important question amounts to this: I feel convinced that when patients have recovered so far as to permit of their removal from the Asylum, and when such patients have any near relatives or friends in their native country, the best course to pursue would be to secure the services of some steady and benevolent individual who would be willing to undertake the responsible position of guardian to them on their homeward voyage, and see them safely placed with their relatives or friends on their arrival in their native land. The benefits thus conferred would, in my opinion, be more lasting; and, in the event of the Government defraying the costs of the voyage, &c., would be obtained at a much less expense than would in all probability be incurred by placing the patients in private houses in any part of the Colony.

"I beg to state that I have not formed this opinion at random, or from any very recent experience of the benefits conferred by the practice here advocated, but from observation of cases with which I was acquainted previous to my arrival in the Colony, and which enables me to conclude that a homeward voyage and quiet sojourn in one's native land is likely to restore many patients who if permitted to remain in an Asylum would almost certainly lapse into a more or less hopeless state of dementia. But even in those instances in which insane persons in the Colony may not have friends or relatives in their native land who would be able and willing to receive them, much benefit may be conferred by their timely removal from the Asylum.

"It should be stated, however, that patients of this class are not likely to receive any benefit from residing with their own family or immediate relatives just after their removal from an Asylum; hence the propriety of placing them under the surveillance of persons with whom they have not been very familiar previous to the outbreak of insanity. There are a large number of inmates in most public Asylums who neither desire nor require a change of abode; these poor creatures are those confirmed cases of dementia or idiocy which merely require attention to their daily wants, and a soothing and kindly treatment. They are but little influenced by surrounding circumstances, and their intelligence is too low to enable them to appreciate their peculiar position.

"Much has been written upon the classification of patients in an Asylum, and some physicians of great experience have expressed the opinion that it may be overstrained; and it is quite possible that even refined efforts at classifying patients might be more conducive to the perpetuating of certain forms of insanity.

"A certain amount of judicious classification is obviously requisite. The raving and destructive sufferer from acute mania cannot be permitted to injure himself or others; but whenever amelioration of his symptoms supervenes, and he begins to exercise more or less self-control, it would be decidedly wrong to separate him from his fellow-inmates, the protracted seclusion of such patients only tending to confirm the malady. He cannot, it is true, hold converse with a sane community, but he will find much to interest him in mixing amongst the more improved patients, and frequently displays much shrewdness in pointing out their various foibles and peculiarities. It can scarcely be shown that particular forms of mental disease may be contracted after the fashion of contagious bodily diseases, and perhaps least of all in an asylum.

"In conclusion, I must beg leave to decline an opinion as to the probable cost attendant on placing out lunatic patients in the families of private settlers, but fear it would be much greater than in Great Britain."

The necessity of maintaining a strict supervision is obvious; and were patients placed in different families remotely situated from each other, it would tend to increase the expenses attendant upon it.

I have not had sufficient experience of "The Lunatics Act, 1868," to be able to offer any positive opinion upon the necessity of amending or altering any of its clauses.

I have, &c.,

JOHN KING,

Inspector of Asylums.

The Hon. the Colonial Secretary, Wellington.

Sub-Enclosure 1 to Enclosure in No. 1.

Mr. JOHN KING to His Honor the SUPERINTENDENT, Auckland.

Provincial Government Offices, Princes Street,
Auckland, 28th July, 1869.

SIR,—

In accordance with clause 60 of "The Lunatics Act, 1868," I have the honor to report that during the six months ending 30th June ultimo, I have paid twenty-two official visits to the Lunatic Asylum, the number of miles travelled being 132. Fourteen male and six female patients have been discharged during that period. Four deaths occurred lately; the Coroner, Dr. Goldsbro', insists upon holding an inquest upon every patient who dies at the institution, which I do not consider at all necessary, especially where they have long been ill from physical causes, and death ensues as a natural consequence. Where the place is open for inspection to visitors, inquests—unless in cases of homicide or suicide, or sudden death—are both frivolous and vexatious.