

## PART IV.—NOTES AND NEWS.

*An Extract from Dr. Paget's Harveian Oration, 1866.*

IN following the course of men who have searched out the secrets of nature, we have had regard chiefly to the intellectual powers and processes by which their success was achieved. Let us now, with one more instance, illustrate their moral qualities and temper of mind. Let our instance be the improvement in the treatment of the insane.

We may doubt whether anything in the history of the world can be found more sad or more humiliating to the pride of civilisation than the description we have of the condition of lunatics in the time of our fathers. The influence of kind and gentle treatment was unknown. It had not been tried. Those who aimed at controlling the lunatic sought to do it by severity—by inspiring him with awe and dread. The bath of surprise and the whirling chair were among the most refined of their remedies. Various restraints of a painful kind were regarded as not only necessary, but beneficial. Many persons supposed that insanity was incurable, and that little or nothing could be done for the unhappy sufferer, but secluding him from the eyes of the world, and preventing him from injuring himself and others. Public asylums were looked upon rather as prisons for dangerous persons than as hospitals for the cure of their malady. Hence it followed that the treatment of the insane too often passed from the hands of the physician into those of men destitute of all medical knowledge, unfeeling and unprincipled. Then came neglect and cruelty, and all the horrors of which we read: the manacles and fetters; the iron collars by which the poor creatures were chained to the walls, incarcerated for years in narrow cells, dark, damp, and cold, like mediæval dungeons, and filthy beyond description, or in cages in which they were exposed as a sight for public curiosity, and made a show of like wild beasts; their beds the bare ground, or straw seldom changed; their scanty clothing, or very nakedness; the blows and stripes that aggravated at once their suffering and their malady, and debased them below the very beasts of the field—below all, except their own brutal keepers. It is difficult to realise that this state of things was common in civilised Europe at the close of the last century; and that little more than fifty years ago it had not been wholly abolished in this very town—in the metropolis of the land—where Howard had long before rescued the worst felons from such misery and degradation. And all this suffering and humiliation heaped upon poor creatures, whose only fault was the most terrible and grievous of human afflictions!

Honour to those whose wisdom and courage changed all this! who opened men's eyes and hearts to its folly and its shame!

The honour of the first step is due to Tenon, who published in 1786 the first suggestions for an humane and gentle treatment. Duquin went further. In an *Essay on Insanity*\* written in 1791, and dedicated to Humanity, he

\* 'La Philosophie de Folie ou Essai Philosophique sur le Traitement des Personnes attaquées de Folie,' par Joseph Daquin, 8vo, Paris, 1792.

The Censor's report and imprimatur are dated Chambéry, July, 1791. This little essay is in many respects a very remarkable production. The only copy of it with which I have met is in the Library of the Royal College of Surgeons of England.

not only condemned cells and chains, but recommended good diet, fresh air, exercise, and occupation. He urged the advantages of rational and moral treatment, and of gentleness mingled with firmness. He had tried these remedies in the Asylum at Chambéry, and had proved their advantages. In urging their adoption, he certainly anticipated Pinel, and merited an equal fame. Pinel, it is said,\* was drawn to the study of Insanity, in 1785, by the shocking fate of a young friend of his, who became maniacal through excessive study, and in that state escaped from his father's house into the neighbouring woods, and was there devoured by wolves. About this time an asylum was established for the treatment of the insane. The first patient was sent to it by Pinel, and it was there apparently he made his first trial of humane and rational treatment. In 1791, the Société Royale de Médecine offered a prize for an essay on the most efficacious means of treating mental derangement. Pinel was one of the competitors. Whether he was successful or not is unknown. The political convulsions of that time have left a gap in the records of the society. In 1792, amidst the tempest of the French revolution, Pinel was appointed Physician to Bicêtre, and there found work to do, the doing of which has for ever placed his name high among the great and the good.

The state of the lunatics in that great Parisian hospital, exemplified all the horrors I have mentioned. Their attendants were malefactors drawn from prison. The madmen were such as were supposed to be incurable. Many of them irritated by barbarous usage had become ferocious and revengeful. Chained though they were, they were dreaded by their keepers. To Pinel they were objects of pity, for he recognised in their paroxysms of fury only the natural outburst of indignation at their wrongs.

He applied to the authorities for permission to remove the chains. Their only answer was to call him an aristocrat, an epithet then almost equivalent to a death-warrant. He then went in person to the commune, and pressed his suit earnestly and warmly. At length it was answered by the wretch Couthon, who said he would visit Bicêtre, and see whether some of the enemies of the people were not concealed among the lunatics. The sights and sounds that met him there soon put an end to his search. He broke off with an exclamation that Pinel must be mad himself to think of unchaining such animals. The required permission was granted, but not without a warning to Pinel that he would fall a victim to his temerity.

Then did Pinel, by one courageous and decisive experiment, prove for ever the soothing influence of humanity and kindness. He began by releasing twelve of the madmen from their chains. How instructive are some of the details! † what a picture is that of the first who was unchained! the English captain of whose history no one knew anything, except that he had been in chains for five and forty years. He was regarded as the most dangerous of all, for in a fit of fury he had killed one of his keepers with a single blow of his manacles. Pinel enters his cell alone, and addresses him calmly: "Captain, if I were to have your irons removed, and give you liberty to walk in the court, would you promise me to be reasonable and not to hurt anybody?" "I promise; but you are making game of me; they are too much afraid and so are you." "I'm not afraid, for I've six men at hand to make me respected, if necessary; but take my word, I will give you your liberty if you will let this waistcoat be put on you instead of the irons." The captain submits willingly, shrugging his shoulders, without a word more. The

\* 'Eloge de Pinel,' par Pariset. 'Mémoires de l'Académie Royal de Médecine, 1828.

† *Bicêtre en 1792*,—'De l'Abolition des Chaines.' Par Scipion Pinel. 'Mémoires de l'Académie Royale de Médecine,' 1836. Also in 'Traité du Régime sanitaire des Aliénés.' Par Scipion Pinel, Paris, 1836.

chains are removed, and he is left in his cell, the door open. Several times he raises himself from his seat and falls again; he had been sitting so long that his legs were stiff and weakened by disease. In a quarter of an hour he gets on his feet, and comes tottering to the door of his cell. His first look is at the sky, and he cries out in ecstasy, "How beautiful!" During the rest of the day he is constantly in motion walking up and down the staircase, and exclaiming again and again, "How beautiful! how good!" At night he returned of his own accord to his cell, slept tranquilly on a better bed which had been prepared for him, and during the two remaining years he passed at Bicêtre his paroxysms not once returned, and he made himself useful in the house, exercising a certain authority over the lunatics.

Then the second, an old French officer, who had been in chains thirty-six years. His maniacal delirium had ceased, but reason had not returned. He sat mute and motionless, with rigid and shrunken limbs, still in the same chains, though he had become too weak even to lift them. They were removed, and he was carried to bed in the infirmary, and lived some months longer, but never became conscious even of his deliverance.

Three unhappy Prussians who had been chained for many years, nobody knew why, and who were habitually calm and inoffensive, resisted violently the removal of their chains, and would not leave their cells, apparently suspecting that some worse mischief was intended.

Perhaps the most interesting of all was a French soldier, famous for his enormous strength, who had been fastened to the wall with a chain and iron collar ten years. Pinel perceived that his excitement was kept up only by ill-usage, and on liberating him at once engaged him to assist in releasing others, and promised, if he behaved well, to take him into his own service. The cure was completed on the instant. From that moment the man became a model of good conduct and gratitude. During the reign of terror he several times saved the life of Pinel, and the rest of his days were spent in one continuous act of devotion to his benefactor.

In the course of a few days fifty-three of the poor creatures were liberated from their fetters; and then tranquillity came over the place which had so long resounded with cries and howlings and clanking of chains.

It was the close of the year 1792. Terror then reigned throughout the rest of Paris. But within the walls of Bicêtre an ancient reign of terror had ceased; a bloodless revolution had been accomplished by the courage, humanity, and wisdom of one man searching for nature's secrets by experiment.

Amidst this blessed calm of his own creating Pinel pursued his study of mental disorder; regulating with assiduous care the internal arrangements of the hospital, comparing, month by month, and year by year, the results of his treatment; for severity and violence substituting the moral influence of gentleness and kindly attention, and seeking to correct what was deranged by appealing to what was yet sound. He thus established a system of treatment which soon bore the fruits of numerous and striking cures.

The treatise in which he gave to the world, in 1801, the happy results of this large experience, must ever mark an epoch in the history of medicine. It made inexcusable the gross ignorance which had prevailed respecting the habits and tendencies of the insane. It established principles for their treatment equally sagacious and humane.

The treatment of insanity by some English physicians of our own time illustrates what Bacon calls *productio experimenti*. Pinel's experiment has been extended; it has been urged to an *effect more subtile*. When an experiment is thus pushed further, the result we know, in some cases, differs from the original conclusions. These are proved to be less general than had been supposed, and lose their pretensions as laws of nature. How then

has it fared with Pinel's conclusions when tried by an extension of his experiment?

Pinel and the early reformers, while abolishing chains and other obviously degrading means of restraining lunatics, did not deem it expedient to abolish all mechanical restraints. They still employed the strait-waistcoat in certain emergencies; and other physicians less enlightened than they were, continued the use of various mechanical contrivances both hurtful and humiliating to the patients. To abolish these was to repeat Pinel's experiment: to abolish also the strait-waistcoat and all mechanical restraints whatever, was an extension of the experiment. This trial was first made at the Lincoln Asylum. Under the direction of Dr. Charlesworth the various instruments of coercion were, in the course of years, one by one discontinued, until in 1837, when Mr. Gardiner Hill was house-surgeon, the last mechanical restraints were wholly abolished.

In June, 1839, Dr. Conolly was appointed resident physician at Hanwell. In September he had abolished all mechanical restraints. The experiment was a trying one, for this great asylum contained eight hundred patients. But the experiment was successful; and continued experience proved uncontestedly that in a well-ordered asylum the use even of the strait-waistcoat might be entirely discarded. Dr. Conolly went further than this. He maintained that such restraints are in all cases positively injurious, that their use is utterly inconsistent with a good system of treatment; and that, on the contrary, the absence of all such restraints is naturally and necessarily associated with treatment such as that of lunatics ought to be, one which substitutes mental for bodily control, and is governed in all its details by the purpose of preventing mental excitement, or of soothing it before it bursts out into violence. He urged this with feeling and persuasive eloquence, and gave in proof of it the results of his own experiment at Hanwell. For, from the time that all mechanical restraints were abolished, the occurrence of frantic behaviour among the lunatics became less and less frequent.\*

\* Time would not have permitted me to give a complete history of the improvement in the treatment of the insane, even if I proposed so to do. Such a history would have required some reference to the efforts of the philanthropic Duc de la Rochefoucauld, and a more particular mention of the aid given to Pinel by his assistant, Pussin, an unlettered but very remarkable man. Living in the midst of the insane, Pussin had a thorough insight into their habits and all their symptoms. From him Pinel acquired much knowledge of details. He had even anticipated Pinel in venturing to release some of the madmen from their fetters. When, three years after the reform at Bicêtre, Pinel was solicited to undertake the like task at the other great hospital, La Salpêtrière, he made it a condition of his acceptance of the charge, that there also he should have the aid of Pussin.

The reform in the treatment of lunatics in England had its origin in the well-known "Retreat," near York. This asylum was projected by William Tuke and other members of the Society of Friends in 1792, and was opened for patients in 1796, the first physician being Dr. Fowler. The first superintendent having died at the end of two months, William Tuke, though not a member of the medical profession, undertook the office for nearly twelve months, until a suitable successor could be found. George Jepson, who was then appointed to be resident apothecary and superintendent, contributed much to the success of the gentle treatment. (See the Description of the Retreat. By Samuel Tuke, 1813.)

There are reasons for believing that the chief public asylums of England were in a better state than those of France prior to Pinel's reform at Bicêtre and La Salpêtrière.

Tenon in his 'Mémoires sur les Hôpitaux de Paris,' 1788 (p. 393), says:—  
"Les deux Hôpitaux de fous les mieux conçus que nous connaissons sont ceux de Bethlém et de S. Luc à Londres, &c."

And again, in his Preface, p. xxv,—*"Le premier remède est d'offrir au fou une*

Thus did the experiments of Charlesworth and Conolly confirm the principles of treatment inaugurated by Daquin and Pinel; and prove that the best guide to the treatment of lunatics is to be found in the dictates of an enlightened and refined benevolence. And so the progress of science, by way of experiment, has led men to rules of practice nearer and nearer to the teachings of Christianity. To my eyes a pauper lunatic asylum, such as may now be seen in our English counties, with its pleasant grounds, its airy and cleanly wards, its many comforts, and wise and kindly superintendence, provided for those whose lot it is to bear the double burthen of poverty and mental derangement—I say this sight is to me the most blessed manifestation of true civilisation that the world can present.

This result we owe to the courage and philanthropy of such men as Pinel and Conolly. Pinel's large acquirements and practical intellect would alone have availed nothing; his first step would never have been taken but for the generous impulses of a feeling heart and courageous spirit. Conolly's experiment at Hanwell would have been foiled by opposition and discouragement, had he not been sustained by a spirit of earnest benevolence towards his unhappy patients.

The spirit which animated these two men is the spirit without which much of the progress of practical medicine would have been impossible. For, however diverse may be the intellectual powers that find their several fit places in the study and practice of medicine, there is but one right temper for it—the temper of benevolence and courage; the temper in which Larrey invented the *ambulances volantes*, that he might bring help to the wounded under fire; the temper in which physicians have devoted themselves to the study of the plague and other infectious fevers; that same temper which has originated and sustained the highest Christian enterprises, and which ennobles any man who, possessing it, with an honest and true heart does his duty in our profession.

#### *The Association for the Promotion of Social Science.*

THE Association for the Promotion of Social Science has excited something of opposition and ridicule by the very largeness of its pretensions. The word "social" and the word "science" are among the most comprehensive in the language, and the scope of each is not lessened by its union with the other. When, then, a number of ladies and gentlemen met together some years since to "promote" social science, the discerning part of the public guessed that the result would be the delivery of a great number of

*certaine liberté de faire qu'il puisse se livrer mésurément aux impulsions que la nature lui commande; ce qu'on à très bien compris et exécuté aux Hôpitaux de Bethléem et de Saint-Luc à Londres."*

Daquin, in his essay already referred to, when treating of the construction of asylums, adds in a note:—"Il y à Londres l'hôpital de Bethléem où les fous sont traités avec toute l'humanité et tous les soins imaginables, et à Manchester on en a bâti un depuis peu, où, d'après le compte qui en a été rendu, les succes ont été étonnans."

In 'Observations on Insanity,' by John Haslam, Apothecary to Bethlehem Hospital, 1798, the moral treatment recommended is kindly and not unwise. (I have not seen the edition of 1794.) It seems as if the treatment of Lunatics in Bethlehem Hospital had deteriorated between the end of the last century and the time of the Parliamentary inquiry in 1814. The period was one in which the thoughts and energies of England were engrossed in war.

According to Daquin (op. cit.), the knights of Malta were accustomed to treat their insane patients with gentleness and kindness. If so, they were not altogether degenerate representatives of their once famous order.