

"Mr. Hill became house surgeon in 1835; and it will be seen by the table already given, that the amount of restraint, which in consequence of Dr. Charlesworth's exertions had so much decreased, became less and less under the united efforts of these gentlemen, until the close of the year 1837, when restraint was entirely abolished; and while on the one hand, as Mr. Hill frankly acknowledges, 'to his (Dr. Charlesworth's) steady support under many difficulties, I owe chiefly the success which has attended my plans and labours;' while Dr. C.'s great merit, both before and after Mr. Hill's appointment, must never be overlooked—it is only due to the latter gentleman to admit that he was the first to assert the principle of the entire abolition of mechanical restraint—as is stated in the paragraph quoted from the fourteenth annual report; which report is signed by Dr. Charlesworth himself.

"The experiment then commenced by Dr. Charlesworth, and completed by Mr. Hill, had resulted in establishing the possibility of the discontinuance of mechanical restraint, even for a longer period than at the York Retreat. And it led to the adoption on the part of not a few, devoted to the subject of insanity, of what is now so well known as the non-restraint system. However much it was practically discontinued at York, it was now for the first time laid down as a principle—that in no case was mechanical restraint necessary. *'I assert then, in plain and distinct terms, that in a properly constructed building, with a sufficient number of suitable attendants, restraint is never necessary, never justifiable, and always injurious, in all cases of lunacy whatever.'* [Hill on Lunatic Asylums, 1838.]

"This we repeat was a principle never laid down in this unqualified manner before; and never before was it accompanied by the practical exhibition of the principle in the total abolition of all personal restraint throughout an asylum."

The measure of desert of Mr. Hill and Dr. Charlesworth has been the subject of acrimonious discussion, the more painful because, all the facts being known, it was perfectly unnecessary. It is not denied that the whole proceedings at Lincoln were animated by Dr. Charlesworth, and that, being first in command there, he was the systematic promoter of all efforts to improve the condition of the lunatic. Nor is it possible to doubt that with Mr. Hill originated the conception of the total abolition of restraint, and that he first put it into practice; that he was not only the first man to think the thing possible, and to express that belief, but the first man also to make it an accomplished fact. On what substantial point, therefore, is dispute possible.

There is actually no standing ground for disputants. As well might one stimulate the animosities of human nature, upon the question whether Pope Leo or Buonarroti had the best claim to be the builder of the noble edifice which perpetuates the fame of both.

The physician who on the basis of non-restraint has constructed the new English system, has acted towards his predecessors in a manner very different to the one which Pinel observed, affording them praise and thanks in such terms as to prove him a single minded advocate for the insane, forgetful of his own claims in the earnestness of his demands for them.

Dr. Tuke concludes his chapter on Lincoln, with the observation that—

"For a time there were certainly some drawbacks to the success of the Lincoln experiment, from the serious physical effects (such as broken ribs, &c.) which occasionally resulted from the struggles between attendants and patients, and it is highly probable that had not the experiment been carried out on a large scale at Hanwell by Dr. Conolly, with much greater success, that a reaction would have ensued of infinite injury to the cause of the insane."

The sixth chapter is made up of quotations from reports, and the seventh is devoted to the contrivances adopted instead of mechanical restraint; a task imposed upon him by the subject of his Essay, a task which we think he would have done wisely to have repudiated, for restraint has not been replaced by any contrivances whatever.

We must now take leave of Dr. Tuke's interesting book without mentioning that it is an Essay to which a prize was adjudged by the Society for Improving the Condition of the Insane.

The Secretary informs us in the dedication that the Society is a private one, we may therefore fairly hold ourselves excused for ignorance of its existence, and of the legitimate objects of its utility. We are told however that it is an old friend with a new name, namely, the quondam Alleged Lunatic's Friend Society. It has done good public service in the publication of Dr. Tuke's book, the merits of which are intrinsic and genuine.

J. C. B.

[We insert the following letter with readiness; although our readers will observe from Dr. Conolly's valuable communication to our present number that as far as the correction of his mistake is concerned it was unnecessary. That Gentleman must indeed be rejoiced to find that the system which owes its establishment to his exertions, is the subject of contention for the priority of its employment; an honorable contention affording homage to the merits of the system.—ED.]

To the Editor of the Asylum Journal.

Sir,—In Dr. Conolly's 'Notice of the Eighth Report of the Commissioners in Lunacy,' inserted in your last number, there is a paragraph which contains an inaccuracy. It is in reference to the introduction of the non-restraint system into the Northampton General Lunatic Asylum. I will quote the passage—"I may myself add, as respects the female side of the Hanwell Asylum, under the successive superintendence of my valued friends, Dr. Davey, Dr. Nesbitt, Dr. Hitchman, and Mr. Denue, mechanical restraint was never resorted to; and that the first three of these physicians have since shewed their unqualified approval of the non-restraint system by introducing it at the Colney Hatch Asylum, the Northampton Asylum, and the Asylum for the County of Derby."

Now as respects the Northampton Asylum, I cannot understand how Dr. Conolly could have fallen into such an error. Dr. Conolly may point to Col-

ney Hatch and Derby as instances where the non-restraint system has been successfully introduced by officers of his own training, but the great principles involved in this system, and which, undoubtedly, Dr. Conolly by his writings and exertions, has done much to uphold, were practised at Northampton long before Dr. Nesbitt's time, and were derived neither from Hanwell nor Lincoln.

The Northampton Asylum was opened in Aug. 1838.

Within twelve months of that date, the system of non-restraint existed and was in full operation there. Indeed I may assert that from the very first it was adopted in spirit, and would have been carried out to the very letter, had circumstances permitted. Dr. Nesbitt was appointed superintendent in 1845, upon the resignation of the late Dr. Prichard, who had organized and opened the institution in 1838.

The exertions of the late Dr. Prichard and the condition of the Northampton Asylum at the time the question of non-restraint was being so fully agitated, have not often been adverted to in the discussions that have since taken place. They were known, however, and appreciated by some who took a deep interest in the movement. The opposition both at Hanwell and Lincoln was violent and determined, and it is not impossible that the example set by Northampton at that time, may have contributed to the successful issue of the question at both these Institutions. I feel, therefore, that it is only due to the memory of those passed away from amongst us, not to permit such an error as that of Dr. Conolly's to remain uncorrected; and to substantiate what I have advanced, I shall add extracts from the Visitors' book of the Northampton Asylum, proving that the non-restraint system existed there previously to 1845, the year of Dr. Nesbitt's accession to office.

"Oct. 13, 1839. I have visited this establishment with much satisfaction. *The entire absence of restraint* with the general prevalence of order and quiet are very striking. SAMUEL TUKER."

"March 4, 1840. I have derived very great gratification from my visits to the asylum. *The entire absence of restraint is a very remarkable feature*, and this circumstance as well as great cleanliness of the house, reflects the greatest credit, &c., &c. FITZWILLIAM."

"Feb. 16, 1841. Visited the house, nothing can exceed the cleanliness and order that prevail, &c., &c. I did not find one patient under restraint.

ROBERT WEALE, *Asst. Poor Law Commisr.*"

"Feb. 28, 1842. The entire abolition of restraint in this asylum, as regards the higher as well as the lower classes of patients, practically demonstrates that which some speculators have theoretically doubted, &c. JOHN ADAMS."

Oct. 10, 1843. We have been particularly struck by the judicious classification and the ample attendance, by means of which, the superintendent has been enabled to carry into successful operation, the principle of non-coercion, &c., &c.

R. W. S. LUTWIDGE, } *Commissrs. in Lunacy.*
J. C. PRICHARD, M.D. }

The reports are all in the above style to Sept., 1845.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

THOMAS PRICHARD, M.D.

Abington Abbey, Northampton, Nov. 17, 1854.

Died at Hanwell, 27th December, MR. WILLIAM CLIFF, for many years the Steward of that Asylum. The state of his health had been for some time such as to alarm his friends; they were however not altogether prepared for the ultimate rapidity of his decease.

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All Communications for the forthcoming Number should be addressed to the Editor, DR. BUCKNILL, Devon County Lunatic Asylum, near Exeter, before the 1st day of February next.

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