

imputation, is no violation of the rights of the subject? If the word or suspicion of a medical man, of the proprietors of an asylum for the insane, of his keepers, and of the relations of a party, are not taken as to the guilt of a common thief charged with taking a bushel of apples or potatoes from their gardens, and the accused cannot be committed to prison without investigation before a magistrate, minute, and on oath, or without trial before a jury of his countrymen, what renders the word and opinion of these parties so immaculate, that it should be sufficient at once to consign a person of some wealth or standing, male or female, to indefinite confinement, and loss of property and reputation, without any appeal to any tribunal? Such a diabolical system does not exist in France or America, or even in our channel islands, at least it does not exist recognized by the law, and it is a disgrace to our Legislature at our age. To remedy this system, and to give every patient, in person or through his friends, a fair investigation in his case, and appeal to some proper tribunal for a re-hearing of it, when there is reason to suppose that he is convalescent, is the sound object of the Alleged Lunatics' Friend Society, not in order to throw difficulties in the way of persons who are really insane and dangerous, or who need protection, being restrained, but to make the unjust confinement of sane persons, or of weak, nervous, but harmless and innocent people, next to impossible.

E. B. cannot object to me, as others do, that my apprehensions and those of my friends on this subject are fantastic, exaggerated, and so forth, for he acknowledges in his second letter—"at present it is perfectly impossible for any Commissioner's opinion to be of any value," and consequently the protection intended to be afforded by them to parties unjustly detained, is of no effect. Now, with all my wildness, Mr. Editor, I have never ventured to make, I believe, so sweeping an assertion; I am glad, however, to find myself out-hectorated at last, as I have been in other instances, and on other occasions. Now, by E.B., and I am far from venturing to deny his authority, though I have hitherto contented myself by stating that from the hurried nature of the Commissioners' and Justices' visits, it was impossible that their opinion could be relied upon. It is true that E.B. uses this argument in a contrary sense to that in which I use it, but the testimony of opposing parties to the same fact is the best proof of its truth, and therefore I thank E.B. for wielding his sword in this cause even against myself and my friends, though he did not know when he did so that it was a two-edged one.

That which renders the existence of private lunatic establishments incompatible with the principles of sound legislation, is the temptation afforded to human weakness—to receive without much scruple, or to detain when no longer necessary to do so, persons, as patients, whose residence is profitable to the proprietor, or who may damage his interests by making an unfavourable report of his establishment; and the temptation to stint the patients in medicine, food, accommodation, exercise, amusement, or attendance, to make a greater profit out of the allowance for their maintenance. I do not know if these objections to such institutions can be effectually removed, because so

much duplicity and plausibility is exercised in these matters. But as the first can only be taken away by giving the most perfect security and facility of appeal to the law to any party who conceives himself aggrieved, and guarding most effectually against any uncalled-for aggression upon the personal liberty of the subject, on the pretence of insanity, and by treating the suppression of the appeals of an alleged patient to his relations, to his friends, and to the authorities, as a heinous offence. I trust that E. B. will see that the interests of his patients and his own are the same, and that the objects we pursue are so far conducive to his own interests also; as unless they can be obtained there can be no question that private asylums for the insane are a nuisance that must be abolished, and an expensive nuisance, costing so much for their present—even as acknowledged by himself—ineffectual surveillance.

I have the honor to be, Sir,

Your obedient humble servant,

JOHN PERCEVAL.

Parthenon Club, Regent Street,  
Nov. 1, 1851.

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## Medical Intelligence.

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### ROYAL COLLEGE OF SURGEONS.

The following gentlemen were admitted Members on the 7th instant:—Robert Bowman, Richmond, New South Wales; William Taylor Colby, New Malton, Yorkshire; Henry Samuel Colston, Bombay; Walter William Harris, Australia; William Houghton, Dublin; John William Howard, Fenchurch Street; John Black Paterson, London; William Robinson, Carlisle, Cumberland; John Wills, Shaftesbury, Dorset.

The following gentlemen were admitted members on the 14th inst.:—Charles Chibnall, Tothill Street, Westminster; James Collier, Aberdeen; Wm. Edward Day, Bristol; Joseph William Eastwood, Chesterfield, Derbyshire; Edward Ross Prance, East Stonehouse, Devon; James Martin Roche, Fermoy, County Cork; James Edward Turford, Boston, Lincolnshire.

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### SOCIETY OF APOTHECARIES.

The following gentlemen were admitted on the 6th inst.:—William Adams, St. Austell; James Cornish Crossing, Devonport.

Gentlemen admitted on Thursday, the 13th inst.:—James Joseph Cregeen, Ramsey, Isle of Man; Robert Wilkinson, Bradford, Yorkshire.

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### APPOINTMENTS.

Dr. Parker has been elected Assistant-Physician to the London Hospital, in the room of Dr. Pereira, appointed Physician.

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### OBITUARY.

On the 15th inst., at Craddock House, Uffculme, Devon, John New, M.D., in the 83rd year of his age.

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### TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Communications have been received from Mr. Harvey (twice), Dr. Tunstall, Mr. Bree, and the Birmingham Pathological Society.