

INSPECTION OF COUNTY LUNATIC ASYLUMS.

TO THE EDITORS OF THE PROVINCIAL MEDICAL JOURNAL.

GENTLEMEN,—I have read with some attention the proceedings in the House of Commons, as well as the sensible letters addressed to you on the subject of "Inspection of County Lunatic Asylums;" but I cannot perceive that the real defect in the present law has been clearly pointed out by any one, although an attempt has very unjustly been made to throw the fault of the defective working of that law on the medical profession.

By the last act on the subject, the county magistrates were empowered, at quarter-sessions, to appoint certain magistrates and a physician to visit, and report upon the state of all asylums in their county; and I would beg to ask, whether any other classes of society are likely to furnish more independent, impartial, and competent inspectors of those houses, than magistrates so selected, and assisted by a physician of character and established reputation?

The idea of appointing inspectors without the aid of a medical gentleman is so truly absurd, that I cannot suppose that any sensible man can, on reflection, advocate such a plan. If the most talented professional man has, in some instances of insanity, the greatest difficulty in deciding on the propriety of restraint, how can a non-medical one be expected to form a correct judgment in such doubtful cases?

I have been the physician appointed by the magistrates at quarter-sessions (together with three county magistrates) to visit an asylum, about fourteen miles distant from Lynn, for more than twenty years past; I have never missed attending a single visitation during that period of time. The inspections have been made with the greatest care, and the results entered, in books kept for the purpose, by the clerk of the peace, or some person in his behalf.

In my opinion, the present law wants one alteration—viz., to make it *imperative* on the magistrates to visit their respective asylums at least three times in the year, as the act directs; for, notwithstanding my representations on that point, the asylum of which I am visiting physician has not been inspected so frequently as it should have been, nor as the present law directs.

With this single alteration, I believe that the present law will afford the most ample protection to those unfortunate individuals who may be thought to require confinement, without putting the country to any additional expense.

Your obedient servant,

JOHN TWEEDALE, M.D.

Lynn, Norfolk, May 12, 1842.

PROMOTIONS AND APPOINTMENTS.

War-office, May 13.

14th—William Wallace, M.D., to be surgeon, vice Dowse, who exchanges.

55th—William Arden, to be assistant-surgeon, vice Sinclair, promoted.

75th—James Sidney, M.D., to be surgeon, vice Forrest, who exchanges.

Hospital Staff—Surgeon Richard Dowse, to be staff-surgeon of the 2nd class, vice Wallace; Surgeon John Forrest, M.D., to be surgeon of 2nd class, vice Sidney, who exchanges.

ROYAL COLLEGE OF SURGEONS IN LONDON.

Members admitted on Friday, May 13, 1842.

Joseph Thomas La Presle, Alfred Tulk, Caleb Rose, Charles Edward Prior, Rowland Tilton, John Wright Long, William Jollie, Alfred Milner Mager, Henry Hamilton, John Howells Thornhill.

Monday, May 16, 1842.

Erasmus Stone, Thomas Herbert Barker, Thomas Philip Dennett, Richard Lead Maddox, William Henry Cane, William Brumfil, Farquhar Milne, John Gordon.

BOOKS RECEIVED.

Popular Cyclopædia of Natural Science—Botany. London: Wright and Co., 1842.

The Bengal Dispensatory and Pharmacopœia. By W. B. O'Shaughnessy, M.D. Published by order of Government. Calcutta, 1841. 8vo., pp. 794.

Dr. Hooper's Physician's Vade-Mecum. Edited by Dr. Guy. London: Renshaw, 1842.

The Theory and Practice of Midwifery. By Fleetwood Churchill, M.D. Illustrated by more than 100 wood-engravings by Bagge. London: Renshaw, 1842. 8vo., pp. 480.

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