with intelligence, that all the means used for the reduction of a case of strangulated hernia had failed, and that the operation must not be longer postponed. The assistant, a member of the College of Surgeons, had been with the patient during the preceding night, and had neglected none of the ordinary means constituting the taxis. Finding that opium had not been given, I suggested the employment of a large dose, and a teaspoonful of laudanum was immediately given. This producing no effect, after waiting two hours, another teaspoonful was given. This was almost immediately followed by prostration of the muscular system, a dilatation of the pupil in a remarkable degree, and the easy reduction of the hernia. The patient was a strong muscular man, a farmer's servant.

I deem this the more worthy the notice of members of our association, because I derived the hint from my excellent friend Dr. John Conolly, in conversation, when I had the pleasure of seeing him at the Anniversary Meeting at Oxford. The benevolent mind of Dr. Conolly will be gratified to learn, that an incidental remark of his saved at least one individual from a painful and dangerous operation.

ON THE NECESSITY OF ESTABLISHING PAUPER LUNATIC ASYLUMS.

By THOMAS POYSER, Esq., Wicksworth.

I BEG leave respectfully to direct the attention of the Provincial Medical and Surgical Association to a subject, which, indeed, has great claims on the consideration and sympathy of the public at large—I mean the present condition of the pauper lunatics of this country. Although a great change has taken place in the management of the sane poor, and workhouses on an extensive scale have been erected, yet I am not aware that any measures have been resorted to, or contemplated, for the amelioration of the insane, or any asylums proposed for their reception.

The fearful extent to which insanity prevails among the poor, is a subject of great and melancholy interest to all. From recent parliamentary returns, it appears that there are in England and Wales upwards of thirteen thousand pauper lunatics and idiots, and that the number is progressively increasing. Among the causes which tend to increase insanity, may be reckoned extreme distress and poverty; the use of ardent spirits; and exposure to cold. But the most efficient cause is unquestionably hereditary predisposition.

This is seldom adverted to by the poor; hence they contract improvident marriages, and insanity, scrofula, and other hereditary ailments are propagated to a fearful and constantly increasing extent. The operation of the new poor-law may also, it is to be feared, in some cases prove an exciting cause; the bastardy clause for instance, however politic it may be in other respects, has a tendency to destroy maternal feelings; and the state of desertion and destitution, to which the unfortunate female is reduced by it, not unfrequently occasions insanity, suicide, or destruction of the offspring. The indiscriminate removal of the poor to workhouses; the consequent separation of families; and the little distinction that is

made from poverty occasioned by illness and misfortune, and that which is the result of idleness and guilt, has a tendency, in many instances, to subdue the strongest heart, and to produce despair, melancholy, and insanity. Poverty is too commonly treated as a crime rather than as a calamity; and, indeed, the unfortunate pauper has frequently to endure hardships and privations, which are unknown even to criminals. Poverty, wretchedness, and even bodily illness, are, however, compared with insanity, trifling calamities. For however painful and loathsome disease may be, if the mind retain its seat, the sympathy of friends may cheer the bed of sickness, and frequently the illness becomes a blessing to the individual. Indeed, I know of no instance on record, of suicide from mere bodily suffering; but alas! it is far otherwise with mental distress; not a daily paper can be taken up without appalling accounts of self-destruction, from what is generally considered temporary insanity. The moment a poor man is bereft of reason, he becomes, as it were, an outcast from society; a terror to himself, and to his relatives and friends. To him the pathetic language of Job is literally applicable, "My breath is strange to my wife, yea, young children despised me: all my inward friends abhorred me; and they whom I loved are turned against me." Deprived of those curative measures which the rich can command, and which in the great majority of instances are attended with success, the temporary lunacy of the pauper, from ignorance or neglect, usually becomes permanent; and he has to end his days in the parish workhouse—

"The moping idiot or madman gay."

When a pauper becomes deranged, he is generally allowed to wander about until he commit some act of violence; and there is scarcely a village in the country without a lunatic or idiot going at large, himself exposed to injury, and a terror or an object of derision to the neighbourhood. If restraint become necessary, he is commonly sent to the workhouse, and unless he be unmanageable, is kept there, often in direct contravention to the act of parliament. In the workhouse there are no means of using, with success, moral or medical treatment, and consequently the medical attendant seldom resorts to any; the lunatics, therefore, go about among the aged, the sick, and the infirm, unless their violence require them to be manacled with cords, or the strait waistcoat. If, however, they become dangerous or quite unmanageable, they are removed to the cheapest private asylum, and although the accommodation in these institutions for paupers is of the very lowest order, yet the expense (from ten to twelve shillings a week) is sufficient to deter parishes from sending them, except as a last extremity.

In the private asylum for the poor, as little attention is usually given to curative measures as in the workhouse. Eight or ten lunatics are commonly confined in a small room, frequently under personal restraint, with no light or ventilation, except from a skylight; without classification; without any regard to the causes or peculiar character of the cases, and without any interest for their recovery. The great panacea in the treatment of lunacy, viz. unvarying and never-ceasing kindness and attention, is withheld from these wretched inmates; and their constant exposure, in their lucid inter-

vals, to scenes of madness in its most hideous form, too commonly fixes irretrievably the destiny of their reason. Hence, we cannot be surprised, at what is really the fact, that instances of recovery of pauper lunatics from these institutions are exceedingly rare, and bear no proportion to those from public county asylums, where the treatment is conducted with kindness, science, and an interest in the recovery and well-being of the patients. Even as regards the cases which are unfortunately irremediable, we cannot refer to the published reports of the Hanwell, Lincoln, and other well-conducted public institutions, (where personal restraint is now almost wholly abolished, and where the patients, by humane and judicious management, are rendered comparatively comfortable and happy,) without a feeling of horror and distress at the cruelties and injustice inflicted in the minor and more clandestine Bethlems.

It is far from my wish to depreciate private institutions, when under judicious and merciful superintendence; but, although there are no doubt many honourable exceptions, yet I would appeal to all who have witnessed and attended to the subject, whether, as regards the pauper inmates, the truth is not generally as I have stated. Indeed, these are no new opinions; the same views have at all times been maintained by philanthropists. Dr. Reid, in his beautiful essays on this subject, says, "A heavy responsibility presses upon those who preside or officiate in the asylums of lunacy. Little is it known how much injustice is committed, and how much useless and wantonly-inflicted misery is endured, in those infirmaries for disordered, or rather cemeteries for diseased, intellect."

The hardships endured by lunatics are indeed not confined to asylums. From the disgrace and shame which unfortunately attach to insanity, many whose minds are only temporarily disordered, are condemned to a state of insulation from all rational and sympathizing intercourse, before the necessity has arisen for so severe a lot. An instance occurred in this immediate neighbourhood, where a man of respectable family, harmless and inoffensive in his habits, but whose reason was obscured, was confined upwards of fifteen years in a small and noisome room, chained by his leg to the bed, excluded from all social intercourse, and almost from the light of day, and was only released by the hand of death, the confinement of the legs having occasioned mortification. Such instances are probably not very rare.

That the statements I have made respecting pauper lunatics are not exaggerated, will, I believe, be proved by the observation of all who have attended to the subject; and when we reflect on the numerous charitable institutions of this country, and the desire manifested to ameliorate the condition and to remedy the diseases of the sane poor, it seems unaccountable that so little should be done for the insane.

To obviate the hardships and the difficulties attendant on the treatment of pauper lunatics, the only real remedy is the establishment of public county asylums. Sir W. Ellis, the late humane and talented medical superintendent of the Middlesex County Asylum, is high and competent authority on this subject. In his valuable publication, he states, that "For the poor no place can be found which will bear any comparison with a

county lunatic asylum; their wants are there provided for in the most substantial manner, and at an expense which is but little felt by each individual who contributes to it; and as no one in such establishments has the least advantage by the patients remaining in them, they are sure to be discharged as soon as they are sufficiently recovered to justify such a step. Wherever there are one hundred lunatic paupers in one county, there ought to be an asylum."

In this county the parliamentary returns show that there are upwards of two hundred pauper lunatics and idiots, but the actual number is probably greater, and there is no public asylum. Indeed, until the last few years, when a small private establishment was opened in Derby, there was no place for the reception of lunatics. Unquestionably the same deficiency is felt in other parts of the kingdom. The object of the present communication is to suggest the propriety of establishing or erecting public asylums for the poor, in districts where they are needed, on the same principle and in the same manner as the union workhouses have been built. If several unions were to join so as to form an union of unions, an establishment capable of accommodating one hundred or more lunatics might be erected, and the expense, if defrayed by rate, would be but little felt by the contributors. To secure all the advantages of an asylum, the expense of admission should be moderate; it should be open to the inspection of visiting magistrates at all and uncertain times; the medical officers should have the means of classifying the cases according to their respective peculiarities, and derive no advantage from the patients remaining on the establishment. Such an institution would not only be of incalculable advantage to the patients, but if occasionally open to the inspection of medical men, and the results of treatment made known, it would be the means of dissipating much of the prejudice and ignorance which now envelope mental disorders. For no subject hitherto has excited so little, or deserved so much, the attention of medical and scientific men as that of mental derangement. The importance cannot be too deeply impressed of counteracting a tendency to this disease. When it is fully formed and established by habit, our efforts will seldom prove of much avail. In no complaint, therefore, is a knowledge of the premonitory symptoms more important than in insanity. The acute remark of Montaigne, however applicable it may be to the early discrimination of disease in general, is particularly so to that of mental derangement: "*De toutes choses les naissances sont foible et tendres. Pourtant faut-il avoir les yeux ouverts aux commencements, car comme alors en sa petitesse on découvre pas le danger, quand il est accru, on n'en découvre plus de remède.*"

August 22, 1841.

CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE PATHOLOGY OF CHILDREN.

By P. HENNIS GREEN, M.B.

LECTURER ON DISEASES OF CHILDREN AT THE HUNTERIAN SCHOOL OF MEDICINE.

ACUTE HYDROCEPHALUS, WITH SLIGHT LESION OF THE BRAIN.

ARISTIDE POTIER, 14 years of age, admitted