

substituted for epileptics. But if Dr. Radcliffe benefits all his patients, and cures many of them, by a totally different plan, what can we say except that the general system is wrong, for seldom, indeed, does it result in a cure, or even in what may truly be called permanent benefit.

If we are unable to agree with the views of Dr. Radcliffe, we must nevertheless thank him for having relieved the dull monotony of despair in seeking for the true philosophy and treatment of this hideous disease. His book although it is so much opposed to all received opinions on the subjects of which it treats is both ingenious and interesting.

The Want of a Military Lunatic Asylum.

[In answer to our enquires, Dr. Lockhart Robertson has favored us with the following Letter, on the subject of the first Article in our last number. The former position of the writer as Medical Officer of the Military Lunatic Asylum, which once did exist at Yarmouth, adds the weight of experience to his able judgment. Ed.]

1, Charles Street, Berkeley Square,
April 27, 1855.

Dear Sir,—I write one line to say how fully I concur in the sentiments expressed in your Article on the Military Lunatic Asylum. The case is however stronger than you have stated it.

Shortly after the publication of the first Report of the present Commission in Lunacy, Parliament actually voted £60,000 for the erection of an asylum for the insane soldiers (officers and privates). The then Chancellor of the Exchequer took upon himself, after a site had been purchased near Maidstone and the foundations partly dug, to rescind this vote, and to apply a small sum to fitting up the barracks at Yarmouth, for the reception of the insane patients of the army, and by way of having it conducted on modern principles, Sir James M'Grigor offered me the resident physicianship, and I must say, during the five years I held office, every effort was made by the Secretary at War to place the establishment on the best possible footing.

Sir J. M'Grigor, however, retired from the Medical Department, and Dr. Andrew Smith (of sad notoriety) first removed both the medical officers who had conducted this new establishment to the satisfaction of all its official visitors, and replaced them by men who had never seen an insane patient before. He next acquiesced in its entire closure, and reverted to the exploded system of farming out the military lunatics.

Has ignorant routine, one may well ask, the right thus to nullify the vote and intentions of Parliament?

Further, it will hardly be credited that the Yarmouth Hospital has now for a whole year, at least, been fitted up for the wounded from the East; that two medical officers have been residing there; but that *no patients have ever been admitted!*

I should like to see a return of moneys expended in fitting up first the barracks at Hythe for temporary use of the insane patients of the army; then in adopting the Yarmouth barracks for permanent use; then for altering again the Yarmouth barracks for the purposes of the war.

Let us however hope for better things soon. Dr. Andrew Smith is about to be removed from his office, and the enlightened views of Lord Panmure will, when the crisis of more important matters is past, find, I trust, a remedy for Dr. Smith's mismanagement of the Insanity Department of the army. Yours truly,

C. L. ROBERTSON, M.D.

To the Editor of the Asylum Journal.

Physiological Effects of Haschisch.—M. Berthault has written an essay on this subject. He describes from his personal experience, the effects of this singular agent to be distinguishable into three periods, that of excitation, characterised by great intellectual activity, exaggerated ideas and sensations, and acceleration of the pulse to 120 and even to 140; then the period of dissociation of ideas, with the desire of quietude and repose, accompanied by hallucinations and delirium, the pulse being normal; lastly, the period of reaction with an invincible desire to sleep; after some hours of sleep the patient awakes, refreshed and as well as ever. He thinks that the mischievous effects of Haschisch are owing to adulteration with Stramonium or Belladonna, which is frequently practised in India. The principal contraindications of its use are an extremely nervous temperament, and diseases of the heart. He thinks that the properties of Haschisch are far from being completely known, and that it is destined to take a high rank among the therapeutic agents in common use.—(*An. Med. Psych. Jan. 1855.*)

Chemical Composition of the Substance of the Brain,
by DR. SCHLOSSBERGER. (*Annalen von Liebig und Wöhler. Band. 90. 3, p., 381.*)

The ash of the grey substance of the convolutions has an alkaline reaction, that of the white substance of the commissures is acid, in man and in the higher animals. The mineral constituents also are very different in both. The reaction is very different among different animals, and also among different classes, as to age of the same species. The grey substance burns completely in oxygen gas to a whitish grey ash, the white substance less completely, probably on account of the residual phosphorous compounds. A very important result is, moreover, made conspicuous, as was already mentioned in the former investigations conducted by Bibra, that *among aged people the material in the brain is diminished, which is usually soluble, and the watery parts are increased*, and this change proceeds as the years increase. The chemical constitution of the brain of old men gradually returns to a condition resembling that of children.

The Queen v. Rundle, (see Asylum Journal, p. 191.)

The point of law reserved in this case was decided by the Court of Criminal Appeal on the 28th ult., to the effect that a husband ill-treating an insane wife was not within the meaning of "any person having the care and charge of any single patient" (16 & 17 Vic. c. 96, s. 97. Such a party should be prosecuted under the common law.