

VI.

The First Report of the Committee who have undertaken to make Inquiry into and ascertain the extent of the Process practised by Messrs Delahoyde and Lucett, for the Relief of Persons Afflicted with Insanity, and to provide the means of paying the expence of such Inquiry. London. 8vo. 1813. p. p. 19.

JOURNALISTS are like ambassadors, whose duty it is to report all the state papers and transactions which are calculated to inform or to interest their readers. We hasten, therefore, to communicate intelligence which has reached us, and which, if true to half the extent that fame records, would be worthy of a gazette extraordinary,—for it is nothing less than the discovery of a process to restore insane persons to their right reason. The newspapers announced, some months since, that several mad patients had been cured by some secret process, practised by Messrs Delahoyde and Lucett, and the case of Mrs Lancaster, wife of the celebrated Joseph Lancaster (the Count Rumford of schoolmasters, as he has been called) was quoted as a memorable example. A committee, consisting of several royal personages, and many noblemen and gentlemen, have undertaken to make inquiry into, and to ascertain the extent of the means employed by Messrs Delahoyde and Lucett for the cure of insanity; and they have selected four incurable patients from the Government receiving-house at Hoxton, in order to put the process to the severest possible test. Dr Harness (the Commissioner of his Majesty's navy) is one of the present committee, and he, very judiciously, suggested the selection of the most confirmed lunatics from the government asylums. Four patients were accordingly chosen, out of 94, who had been deemed incurable by Dr Weir, Naval Inspector; Mr Haslam, Apothecary of Bethlem Hospital; and Mr Sharp, Surgeon to Sir Jonathan Miles's receiving-house at Hoxton. These four patients, whose names are John Braily, William Matters, James Cardiff, and Daniel O'Keefe, were put under the care of Messrs Delahoyde and Lucett on the 27th of June 1813. The following are extracts from Mr Delahoyde's reports, copied verbatim from the present publication:

“ June 30th, Braily's pulse has not exceeded 72 the whole of the day, (before being subjected to the process it was 108, as reckoned by Dr Harness); he has had another good night, and has not been either violent or outrageous; he amuses himself in walking in the garden and playing at drafts.”

“ From

“ From 1st of July to the 7th of August, Mr Delahoyde reported progressive improvement, with a small degree of increased irritation about the period of the change of the moon.

“ August 7th, Mr Delahoyde reported that Braily was in a state of convalescence.——

“ 30th July, Matters’s pulse on his arrival was 104; at nine o’clock I commenced the curative process. In the course of an hour his pulse was reduced to 76; at half-past 10 o’clock he fell into a sound sleep, which continued eight hours; he then awoke much refreshed.

“ 31st, Continued tranquil and sane the whole of the day.

“ August 1st, has had another good night, and continues sane.

“ 2d, His pulse remains at 74, he has had a good night, and I have put him to work in the garden.——

“ James Cardiff arrived at eight o’clock P. M. 30th July, with Matters, and underwent the process at half past eight o’clock; his pulse was 98 previous to the operation; at half-past nine his pulse was reduced to 70; he got into a sound sleep, which continued nine hours.

“ July 31st, he awoke refreshed and tranquil, and has passed the day in assisting the cook in dressing dinner for the house.

“ 1st August, Cardiff continues as yesterday, his pulse at 72, and has had a good night.

“ 2d, Continues to improve, his pulse at 70, and has had another good night.

“ 7th, The rapid amendment of Matters and Cardiff is more strongly and satisfactorily marked than in any other public case I have had as yet under my care—I consider each of these men in a state of convalescence.”——

“ I commenced the curative process on Daniel O’Keefe, at half past seven o’clock, the 16th July, in the evening. His pulse, previous to the commencement, was at 98; in the course of 57 minutes after the process, his pulse was at 70, his skin soft, and his countenance serene and tranquil: he has slept seven hours; awoke refreshed, and seemed to have improved in his memory a little—he is at this moment at work in the garden.

“ 26th July, Works in the garden daily without restraint; his recollection and health progressively improve.

“ 2d August, His memory daily gets better.

“ 7th, O’Keefe evidently improves in memory.”

Thus it appears, from Mr Delahoyde’s statement, that all these four patients, who had been in Bethlem Hospital more than one year, who had been deranged several years, and were obliged to be chained, were brought by his process *into a state of convalescence*, as he calls it, *in the course of six weeks*. The committee, however, do not go so far; they wisely remark, that the violence of the patients’ paroxysms were evidently mitigated, and on the 25th of September

September the four men were more calm and collected than at any former time since their removal to Sion Vale. Dr Harness visited these patients three days after the date of Mr Delahoyde's report, accompanied by Dr Weir; and these physicians are too honest and sensible judges to suffer themselves to be imposed upon by a specious change in the symptoms of insanity. They close their report of this visit by saying of two patients, "each of them, after being talked to a short time, reverted to his peculiar complaint, viz. O'Keefe to the loss of his hair, and Matters to his being distended by air." "On my visit of the 25th September (says Dr H.) I could not discover that O'Keefe had made any progress to amendment; Cardiff and Matters I consider improved."—Page 16.

Since printing the foregoing report, Messrs Delahoyde and Lucett have, under a pledge upon honour of secrecy, communicated to their Royal Highnesses the Dukes of Kent and Sussex, and to Dr Harness, their process for restoring insane persons to sanity, and we find a declaration respecting its being quite harmless. No patient has been injured by its application. Has any patient been perfectly restored by it? Before we can venture to send any lunatics from this side of the Tweed, we must ask, *cui bono?* The journey and the change of scene, we know, would render the most furious more calm and collected; and they would not, perhaps, talk the same subjects over and over at Sion Vale as at Edinburgh; but we are doubtful whether any measures would restore them in so short a period as two months; and we shall wait for further evidence before we pronounce any judgment upon the process which is so much talked of. We observe one fault in the general proceeding of the committee. They do not boldly put forward the entire strength of their case; they temporise, they manage, they allow the communication of the nature of the process to some of their members, but not to all. They select too few medical men to form their committee, and they keep secret what they know. This for a committee of inquiry is the choice of a weak point. He has not observed well on the nature of insanity who does not know, that it is intermitting, sometimes periodical, susceptible of change from internal causes, and varying from day to day. In some instances it is apparently fixed and immutable for years. The periods of the changes of the moon have no influence upon mad people, nor is the state of their pulse connected in any obvious way with the state of their minds. Mr Delahoyde particularly specifies the reverse of these two observations; and we own that we are apt to consider any opinions void of truth when we find absurdities connected with them.