

lend to such as these a helping hand to prop them up, to reinstate them, and to prevent their being left as failures upon the path of progress. That there is ample material for this Society to work upon goes without saying, for there are to-day probably more than 128,000 insane persons in England and Wales, of whom 59,000 are men and 68,000 women, and our boasted civilisation is probably manufacturing more at the rate of six or seven per day. In the London asylums alone there are 20,000 insane persons, of whom over 11,000 are women.

With regard to those who leave our asylums recovered, there were over 8,000 of these reported by the Lunacy Commissioners to have been discharged recovered in their Report of 1908, and in the proportion of 3,480 men and 4,540 women. In the London asylums alone, for the same period, there were 1,228 persons discharged recovered, of whom 706 were women. It is estimated that at least one in every ten of these poor women is friendless, and probably another one in ten has friends who are too poor or helpless to render any assistance, and these must go into the Workhouse unless the Society helps them. The Workhouse is a most undesirable and hopeless place into which to launch a mental convalescent, for an indignity is felt by the respectable, and a feeling of degradation is engendered by compulsory association with the low characters met in these places, which must invariably tend to a relapse. It is only too well known that association with the ordinary inmates of a Workhouse does not tend to improve the self-respect and self-control of honest people, least of all "mental" convalescents.

It is, indeed, a pitiable and cheerless prospect for self-respecting people to be compelled to undergo the degradation of the Workhouse in addition to the stigma of insanity, all because our Association is lacking in the funds necessary to provide an intermediate home between the asylum and a full resumption of former duties. Under these circumstances there is much truth in Sir Andrew Clarke's dictum that "it was sad to become well."

It is unfortunate for our unostentatious Association that an appeal for public recognition, in order to be successful, must often be accompanied by a blare of trumpets or flamboyant headlines, whereas such modest and quite private work as ours is, and which cannot be given in detail from the very nature of the help, must of necessity fail to arouse general interest or to elicit public support. Be it noted also that this charity does not limit its bounty to London cases only, nor to those of England and Wales, but is ready to assist suit-

able cases from all parts of the United Kingdom. Is it not essential, nay imperative, that these should be assisted, yet our Society is begging for funds and has not adequate means to render efficient help?

One cannot but long for a John Howard or a Florence Nightingale or a Shaftesbury to rise again in our midst, and stir the well-to-do and the benevolent to even greater sympathy for those who are mentally infirm. Our own country has always been to the fore in charitable and philanthropic work, but as regards the insane our organisation was preceded by both France and Germany, as well as by several other European countries.

It may be permitted to us for a moment to review briefly the aims of our own Society, and Dr. Savage very ably summarised these at the last annual meeting to be, in the first place, to complete recovery; secondly, to prevent relapses; and thirdly, to prevent continuing and permanent mental weakness—in fact, to bridge over the gulf between the asylum and the outside world, to test the fitness of patients for living outside, and to enable those helped to make a satisfactory fresh start in life. Many women return to poor homes, where deprivation and want cause them to break down again. Nearly 400 women were admitted last year to the London asylums as paupers whose occupation was that connected with home life and domestic work, and the After Care Association, by helping to confirm these in health, restores their self-confidence and usefulness in their former positions. Those of us who know life in great institutions also know that long residence in them destroys that feeling of initiative and self-reliance, and, above all, that healthy independence which is so necessary for success, and, unless there is a helping hand near by, such as this Association offers, the probability of relapse upon discharge is almost certain.

Surely, for economic purposes alone, this Society deserves to be free from pecuniary anxiety, an appeal which should have especial force to the ratepayer and to the general public.

The aims of our Society present in the highest degree an altruistic rôle, for in reinstating a fallen comrade the Association fills a marked lacuna in humanity as well as in social economy. Society demands the care of the mentally infirm in asylums, but, upon their convalescence, turns them out without resources or succour. Moreover, owing to acts whilst their insanity was developing, a return to their former neighbourhood and former positions becomes not only uncomfortable to their sense of self-respect, but is often also well nigh impossible, owing to unjustifiable

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