

One hundred years ago

The improper use of asylums for the insane

SIRS, – Could you help in a matter that calls for a thorough change of plan? Lunatic asylums are built for the insane; delirium tremens is a passing madness only, and is recoverable from by the rigid withdrawal of the exciting cause. Clearly the Act never contemplated the treatment of such afflicted persons as lunatics. Among the poor, if the boards of guardians cannot take such cases

in and put them under proper restraint, we, certifying magistrates, are constrained to send these poor people to asylums. They get rapidly well and are yet prejudiced as to future employment by the fact that they have been lately under asylum treatment, and so the drink craze is bound to resume its sway, recrudescing as it is from idleness and low spirits and lack of food. Thus the mode of cure makes sure of the renewal of the disease: surely a sad irony on modern methods.

I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,

GEORGE H. R. DABBS, M.D. Aberd.,
Shanklin, I.W., Nov. 16th, 1900.

REFERENCE

Lancet, 24 November 1900. 1531.

Researched by Henry Rollin, Emeritus Consultant
Psychiatrist, Horton Hospital, Epsom, Surrey

Corrigendum

Neuropsychological analyses of impulsiveness in childhood hyperactivity. *BJP*, 179, 138–143. The fourth author's surname should read: Oksanen.