

charges, but also of other charges or insinuations publicly made, and certain statements which appear in *Hansard*, 17th July, 1891, in the debate in *re Lunatics Bill*. Indeed, were it not for the somewhat wide misconceptions which appear to exist in certain quarters, I should not feel justified in devoting much time to dealing with Mr. Kitchen's allegations:—

*Charge 1.*—"That since Dr. Truby King has been Superintendent of the Seacliff Asylum there has been upon his authority wasteful expenditure of public funds."

This charge is very indefinite, and includes a long period of time—nearly two years and a half—during which, in spite of the careful administration of my predecessor, Dr. Radford King, the expenditure has been steadily diminishing. In the House, on the other hand, exception appears to have been taken not to wasteful expenditure but to the undue parsimony supposed to characterise the Asylum administration. Taking these statements together they would appear to indicate *that there has been an excessive expenditure on the one hand in unnecessary directions, and an undesirable saving on the other at the expense of the highest interests of the Institution*. Before proceeding further it may be well to define broadly the main purposes for which expenditure has been incurred outside what would have been required in order to maintain the Asylum in the state in which I found it.

These are simply the conditions essential to the preservation of life and health in man, viz. :—

- I. A pure and good supply of substances taken into the body for the purpose of sustaining its various energies: (1) Air, (2) water, (3) food.
- II. Bodily environments: (1) A certain degree of light and warmth, (2) cleanliness.
- III. Exercise, recreation, rest (bodily and mental).
- IV. Moral and other elevating, refining, and soothing influences.

I.—*A pure and good supply of substances taken into the body for the purpose of sustaining its various energies.*

(1.) *Air.*—Dr. Grabham, the late Inspector-General of Asylums, reported of Seacliff Asylum when leaving the colony in 1885, as follows: "Although I have been openly contradicted in Parliament, and received hints of intended law proceedings with demands for apologies, I will again assert that the site of the Asylum is ill-chosen, the establishment badly designed and out of date, the buildings defective in construction and showing everywhere bad workmanship, which should never have been accepted." This is referred to as affording a clue to the radical changes which were required in order to bring the Asylum into a healthy condition. It is difficult to decide whether the original designs of the sanitary arrangements or the manner in which these designs were carried out was more at fault. [*Vide Appendix A.*]

The provisions for ventilation were such that the percentage of carbonic-acid gas rose in the dormitories as high as .5 per cent. during the night—a very alarming degree of impurity. This primary defect has been to a large extent remedied; and in the course of the year we hope to complete the arrangements for the inlet of fresh air and the outlet of foul air. In our ventilated rooms a reasonable standard of purity is maintained. (Appendix A 1.)

While the supply of fresh air was thus deficient a still greater evil existed in the contamination of the internal atmosphere by sewage effluvia. Nearly a mile of sewer-pipe, with only two ventilation apertures, poured its gases freely into the building in every quarter. This was due, not merely to the fact that almost every lead pipe leaked at the joints owing to bad workmanship, but also to a faulty design which ensured the emptying of a large number of the traps by the exhaust action of descending columns of water. Further, there was no safeguard anywhere in the form of a disconnecting trap to prevent the sewer gases passing into the building.

Indeed, the drainage scheme was such that, had the workmanship been perfect, the practical advantage would have been very little, except in so far as the repairing of perished pipes (Appendix A2) and joints has engrossed almost the whole time of one or more plumbers throughout my term of office. The changes which were needed in order to overcome these initial defects, and which have been carried out, are illustrated in the accompanying diagram, in which an endeavour has been made to represent the successive stages by which the sewer or soil-pipe gas (indicated by black arrows) has been cut off from the building and a circulation of fresh air (indicated by red arrows) has been ensured in its place. The advantage of the latter is that the inevitable leakages which are constantly recurring from our faulty pipes are rendered practically harmless. (Appendices A and A3.)

A third measure was necessary in order to prevent pollution of the air through emanations rising from within the building. This has been accomplished by polishing the floors with bees'-wax and turpentine, thus rendering them impervious and easily cleaned, whereas formerly many of the floors were kept constantly damp owing to daily scrubbing with soap and water, and the dormitories of dirty patients became very foul.

These various changes, when completed, will have entailed an extra expenditure of under £250, including the wages of artisan attendants while engaged upon the works. A fair index of the effectiveness of the alterations which have been made is to be found in the diminished number of erysipelas cases which have occurred during the last six months (23rd February to 23rd August) as compared with the corresponding period of last year—namely, eight cases with one death last year, and two cases with no death this year.

(2.) *Water* (as a beverage).—Formerly (as shown in the diagram of one wing—Appendix A) the soil-pipes terminated in open fresh water-tanks cut off merely by a water-seal which in summer dried up, and at all seasons was liable to be syphoned out by the descent of columns of water from the closets. Now, separate overflow-pipes, having no connection with the drains, have been provided for the water-cisterns. The soil-pipes have been carried up 4ft. above the tanks, and provided with exhaust cowls, and the tanks have been covered over. The pollution of drinking water is one of most fertile sources of disease. The expenses of the above improvements are included in the £250 before mentioned.

(3.) *Food.*—Under this heading (Charge 2), "That the food supplied to the patients has been frequently poor in quality and in some cases insufficient in quantity," will also be answered.