

*Dr. John Webster, on the Site of Bethlehem Hospital.**To the Editor of 'The Lancet.'*

SIR,—When the question of removing Bethlehem Hospital was discussed in your columns, I strongly advocated that measure, which was also strenuously supported by the Commissioners in Lunacy, by the medical press, and approved by the profession generally. Among the arguments then used, I stated that throughout Europe foreign governments and other official bodies were busy transferring public lunatic asylums out of towns, where they had heretofore been usually placed, to more eligible sites in country districts, my assertions being based on observations made personally during various recent holiday tours on the continent, which extended from Northern Scandinavia to Southern Spain, and from Moscow to the British metropolis. Having, further, lately visited Scotland, I would now add, in support of my former statements, that a similar tendency to migrate countrywards pervades public administrative bodies in North Britain—nay, has existed for some time, as shown by several illustrations I formerly mentioned—viz., the Edinburgh Asylum erected at Morningside, that of Glasgow removed to Gart-Navel, and the ancient institution at Montrose now located on the slope of Sunnyside, whose name correctly describes its really fine situation.

Since the above examples were quoted during previous discussions, a new district asylum for Perthshire has been recently constructed at Murthly, about eleven miles north of the "fair city," and which rivals in respect of situation and other requisites many country mansions, or even noblemen's castles in the United Kingdom, as well for the splendid landscape afforded by the Grampians on the north, the fertile valley of Strathmore, through which the Tay largely meanders, and the Ochill Hills rising in the distant south, as far as far-famed Dunsinane, with Birnam Wood, whose foretold movement towards the former should portend Macbeth's defeat. In fact, finer scenery could scarcely be found in all Caledonia, than is now constantly presented to the gaze of Murthly residents, to say nothing of the lawns, gravelled walks, terraces, flower-beds, &c., within the precincts of this establishment, which comprises sixty acres at least.

Another illustration of the point mooted is supplied by the newly-opened Inverness District Asylum. This institution, which in many respects seems judiciously constructed, occupies the southern slope of a hill about three miles north of Inverness, from whence the building resembles some castellated or even regal residence, and accordingly constitutes a prominent object, which always attracts the notice of travellers visiting the admired scenery around. From a broad terrace in front of this asylum, as likewise through most of the windows of its wards, day-rooms, and dormitories, the varied and extensive views obtained over Strathness, the adjacent city, the hilly distant horizon opposite, with beautiful terraqueous vistas both east and west, are really magnificent. Indeed, the panorama here presented to the eyes of admiring spectators seems almost unrivalled.

But another feature which will soon characterise this establishment for the insane, merits special remark—namely, that the extent of land attached and the cottages scattered thereon, will ultimately permit a new development of appliances highly beneficial for treating mental affections. When the full complement of officers shall have been appointed, it is proposed that married attendants, with their families, shall reside in these dwellings, under whose

charge a certain number of patients will then be placed, and treated like ordinary members of such households, taking part also in the customary domestic arrangements. In short, the Gheel system will thus be put in operation, although at first on a limited scale. Nevertheless, agencies of that kind cannot but become, in many cases, powerful prophylactic aids towards promoting professional treatment, besides thereby usefully occupying the inmates. Much praise is, therefore, due both to Dr. Aitken, the able medical superintendent, for recommending, and to the Inverness District Board of Lunacy for sanctioning, so humane a proposition; while every philanthropist anxious to promote the well-being of demented persons, to whom "the free open-air treatment" is applicable, must wish it success.

Believing some of the remarks just made regarding lunatic asylum sites will not be deemed wholly uninteresting to those engaged in these discussions, and also considering that several of the facts narrated demonstrate conclusively that Scotland does not lag behind other European countries in reference to the novel point at issue, I shall feel obliged should the present cursory observations obtain a place in your valuable journal.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

JOHN WEBSTER, M.D., F.R.S.

Brook Street; Oct., 1865.

The Lancet, November 11th, 1865.

The Mackintosh Case—Testimonial to Drs. Smith and Lowe.

OUR readers will recollect that a series of actions was brought by Mr. Mackintosh, of Holme, against those whom he charged with having been accessory to his illegal detention in a lunatic asylum. The last of these actions was brought against Drs. Smith and Lowe, the proprietors of Saughtonhall Asylum. There were peculiar hardships in the case of this action, for not only had Mr. Mackintosh been received as a patient in virtue of a regular warrant, but the action was not raised for a number of years after the alleged illegal detention had taken place. In the subsequent proceedings the defendants were successful; but even though they gained their cause, a very considerable expense was incurred. The medical profession of Edinburgh, desirous of testifying to Drs. Smith and Lowe the sympathy they entertained towards them, collected a sum of money to aid in defraying their expenses, which, a short time ago, was handed to Dr. Smith by Dr. Burt, President of the Royal College of Physicians. The subjoined correspondence will explain itself.

"Physicians' Hall, Edinburgh;

"17th November, 1865.

"MY DEAR SIR,—You cannot doubt that you and Dr. Lowe have had the wide-spread sympathy of the profession in your long and vexatious litigation with Mr. Mackintosh, of Holme, and that the termination of the case in your favour has given universal satisfaction.

"A few of your brethren have entertained a strong desire to lessen in some degree the pecuniary loss you have sustained, and with that view have contributed to the best of their ability, and it gives me great pleasure to be the medium of conveying to you the amount subscribed (£190 10s.), with their best wishes for your future happiness, and the prosperity of the ad-