

A DISCLAIMER.

To the Editors of "THE JOURNAL OF MENTAL SCIENCE."

GENTLEMEN,—Some months since, in common with other medical superintendents of the Lancashire and Yorkshire Asylums, I received from the Editor of "The New York Medico-Legal Journal" a circular letter on *Restraint*, as practised in American and British asylums. This circular embraced the published communications of a large body of American alienists, the expression of whose views on the subject had been invited; and I regarded this rather unusual procedure as implying that British superintendents were invited to forward their own convictions (if they desired) to the Editor of "The New York Journal."

This procedure did *not* recommend itself to my adoption, for, with respect to the general question of exposing to odium the opinions of those who differ from us upon any principle of treatment, it appeared to me not only a retrograde step in medico-ethics, but an inquisitorial infringement of the liberty of the subject and individual judgment, entirely opposed to the best tendencies of the age. I desire to make no further comment here on the very ill-advised circular, beyond indicating that as a purely business arrangement each recipient had endorsed the fly-leaf ere forwarding it to his brother superintendent—obviously to avoid its being returned to him a second time. I, in common with others, did this; but I am now told that this might be regarded as an endorsement of the general tone of the circular itself, and, moreover, what is more to the point, might be regarded as implying our concurrence with a most ungenerous and unjustifiable attack made upon two of our most respected English alienists, whose opinions I, for one, hold in the highest esteem, and whose names are household names in English lunacy. This imputation, Sirs, I desire most emphatically to repudiate, and, moreover, would desire not only to express my hearty sympathy with those who have the courage of their opinions despite all odds; but also, whilst deprecating the publication of the letter referred to, would wish to express my very sincere *personal* concern that any such endorsement of the circular letter by myself should have been so interpreted. From what I have already heard from other superintendents I judge that no such invidious meaning was for one moment entertained.

I am, Gentlemen,

Yours very faithfully,

W. BEVAN LEWIS.

West Riding Asylum, Wakefield,
August 14th, 1892.

Obituary.

WILLIAM WOOD, M.D., F.R.C.P.

Dr. Wood's health had been failing for some time, so that surprise was not felt, considering his age (76), when it was announced that an attack of congestion of the lungs had ended fatally on the 27th of August. After his medical education at University College, he passed some time in the Paris Schools of Medicine, and in 1848 took his M.D. degree at the St. Andrew's University. In 1864 he was elected a Fellow of the Royal College of Physicians, London. We have heard him speak of Dr. Elliotson with great respect, and as having assisted him in his experiments in what was then known as mesmerism at University College. In 1845 he was elected to the post of resident medical