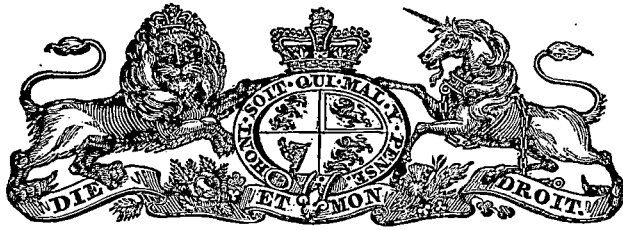


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1859.

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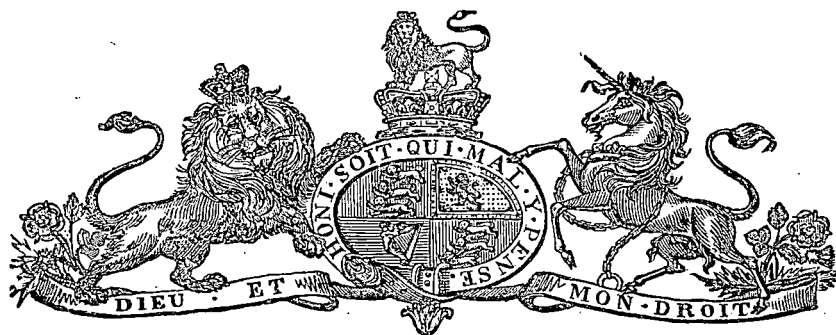
**HOSPITAL FOR THE INSANE, NEW NORFOLK.**

RETURN TO AN ORDER OF THE COUNCIL.

*(Mr. Wedge, 10 August.)*

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Laid upon the Table by Mr. Henty, and ordered by the Council to be printed,  
19 August, 1859.



*Hobart Town, 22nd October, 1858.*

SIR,

I TRUST the motive that induces me to address you will be considered as an excuse for my doing so.

2. I presume the land still belonging to the Government in the neighbourhood of Hobart Town will be, before long, offered for sale. I would therefore beg leave to suggest that, before it is disposed of, an eligible site should be selected and reserved for a future Hospital for the Insane; which, I trust, before many years pass over, will be erected and occupied, instead of that far removed, ill-constructed, and very imperfect building now set apart for that very important purpose at New Norfolk.

3. I presume there could not be two opinions as to the propriety of having a properly constructed Hospital for the Insane in the immediate neighbourhood of the City, where Patients afflicted with this malady in any class of society could be accommodated and treated with advantages which cannot by possibility be afforded in the present Institution: and this being admitted, the importance of the site would next present itself.

4. When I say immediate proximity to the City, I would be understood within two miles of it; and that not less than Fifty acres should be reserved.

5. In proof of the anxiety of the Government in Melbourne to secure a proper site for the large Hospital for the Insane about to be erected, I will take the liberty of enclosing a copy of a letter I had the honour to address to the Chief Secretary of that Colony on that subject.

6. The letter was most favourably received, immediately printed by the Government, and referred to the Commission appointed to arrange the affairs connected with this most important work. It is gratifying for me to learn that my suggestion has been adopted; and it is the more so, as it will involve the trouble and expense of removing about four millions of bricks, which had been burnt close to the site about to be abandoned.

7. From the printed letter enclosed, the opinion I would venture to offer as to a site may be seen; and I shall feel much gratified if such site be now selected and reserved as, I am sure, will be beneficial at a future day to those who may become afflicted with an infirmity that demands our utmost sympathy.

8. I cannot conclude without expressing a strong conviction that when the time comes (and may it be soon!) for an effort to be made to erect such Institution, that subscriptions would pour in from every part of the Colony; that no one who possesses a pound would refuse a shilling, and that those who possess much would give with great liberality. In fact, upon certain conditions, I believe the Government would be almost, if not entirely, relieved from the cost of erection.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your obedient Servant,

† R. W. WILLSON, *Catholic Bishop of Hobarton.*

*The Hon. the Colonial Secretary.*

[Enclosure.]

Melbourne, 26th June, 1858.

SIR,

I TRUST I am fully sensible of the liberty I am taking in addressing you on a subject of a public nature, in which, as a stranger, I am in nowise personally interested.

August, 1856, I had the gratification of visiting your wonderful Colony, and was struck with amazement at the progress almost every project had made. Among other objects that delighted me, was your noble Hospital for the sick, with its admirable medical and domestic arrangements—an Institution that would do honor to the olden country.

Wishing to see your Hospital for the Infirm of Mind, I visited the establishment at Yarra Bend, and was kindly allowed to examine every part of it. There, unhappily, I found much to deplore; but, taking into consideration the rapid increase of the insane, and the very peculiar circumstances connected with the Colony, the requirements necessary for the proper treatment of that class of our afflicted fellow creatures could not be, reasonably, expected at that period. It also appeared to me that the site for such Establishment was very objectionable.

Hearing, on my arrival in Melbourne, a short time since, that it had been determined upon to erect an Asylum on better principles, and upon another site, I felt anxious to see that spot, and have done so.

It is with deep regret that I venture to express, with all due deference, my disappointment on the selection made for the site of a building *so peculiar in its requirements, and so important to the public throughout the Colony*, both now, and, it may be, for ages to come.

In my humble judgment, the site at Kew, selected for your intended building, has very few, if any, advantages over the one at Yarra Bend. It is in, what may be fairly termed, a sequestered vale, having only one open view, and that not an extensive one—sombre, almost gloomy, and standing on a narrow peninsula running down to the river, it is peculiarly lonely—in fact, there is nothing cheering about it.

Gentlemen who have visited the olden country of late years, and made observations on the treatment of the Insane, or the erection of public Asylums, must have remarked how carefully cheerful and elevated situations have been selected, almost regardless of cost.

The question I would now venture to bring under your consideration I believe to be one which may be termed *of national importance*; but, happily, being quite free from all political, sectarian, or party feeling, I am sure it will not be hastily put aside as one of little value.

I beg leave to state, that there is, in my humble judgment, a site within a quarter of a mile of that proposed, most eligible, with an extensive bird's eye view, as near the river, I believe, as it is; and one having nearly all the advantages (except, perhaps, its distance from Melbourne\*) to be desired for such an establishment. It is especially on this account I take the liberty of drawing your attention to this painfully interesting subject.

I believe the comfort of very many of our fellow creatures for years to come, whether curable or incurable (to say nothing of the feelings of relatives and friends), will depend on the fixing the site of this intended Asylum—I ought rather to say, "Hospital for the Cure of the Infirm of Mind;" and sound policy, as well as humanity, will dictate the propriety of indulging the hope, and making an effort, that each one who may become afflicted with, perhaps, the heaviest of human infirmities, may be relieved, or by proper treatment in a proper place, restored to sorrowing friends, and to sweet liberty; and allow me to add, from my own experience in watching over the treatment of the insane, from the highest class in society to the lowest, I believe it would be wrong to despair of the recovery of any one, however desperate the case might appear to be.

"Oh, Reason! who shall say what spells renew,  
When least we look for it, thy broken clew!  
Through what small vistas o'er thy darken'd brain  
Thy intellectual day-beam bursts again;  
And how, like forts, to which beleaguers win  
Unhoped for entrance, through some friend within,  
One clear idea, waken'd in the breast  
By memory's magic, lets in all the rest."

I have the honor to be,  
Sir,

Your most humble Servant,

+ R. W. WILLSON,  
Catholic Bishop of Hobarton.

The Honorable the Chief Secretary,  
Melbourne.

\* Kew is about four miles from Melbourne.

P.S.—Since writing the above, I have again visited the projected site, and this visit, which was a little before sunset, confirms me in the correctness of the opinion I have ventured to submit; and moreover, induces me to predict that, if the Asylum be erected upon it, it will ever be a subject for future lamentation.—+ R. W. W.

Hobart Town, 8th March, 1859.

SIR,

I HAD the honor to address a letter to you, October last, in reference to the treatment of the Insane in this Colony, and again beg leave to trouble you on the same subject.

2. The deep importance that attaches to the question respecting the best mode of treating that class of our fellow-creatures who are afflicted with this melancholy infirmity, will, I am sure, afford sufficient excuse for the liberty I am about to take, and also ensure that deep consideration of the Government it deserves.

3. As the Government have done me the honor to place my name on the list of Commissioners for the management of the affairs at the Hospital for the Insane of New Norfolk, I spent a considerable portion of last Tuesday at that Establishment, in order that I might be better acquainted with its construction, and the general system pursued in the treatment of the patients, than I had been.

4. I have long been impressed with the conviction, as expressed in my letter last October, of the unfitness of this place as a *Curative Hospital*, or one at all suitable for affording that comfort even the incurable have a right to receive.

5. My visit at the Hospital last Tuesday fully confirmed the opinion I had previously formed; and I should now consider myself wanting in duty as a Commissioner to the present unfortunate inmates, to those who may have to follow them, and to the Colony at large, did I not, with much anxiety, most respectfully represent to you some of the evils which I believe now exist, in the hope that a remedy may be obtained with all reasonable despatch.

6. I need not, I am sure, call attention at any length to the humane and successful change that has taken place in the treatment of the Insane in our native land during the last twenty-five years. Having myself been engaged in the reconstruction of one large Hospital for the Insane, and witnessed the extraordinary effects produced by it, both in cures and the general comfort of the patients, I am doubly anxious that an effort should be made to ameliorate the condition of those placed under our care at New Norfolk.

7. To expect that a fair proportion of cures should be effected in such a dismal place, fit only for a prison-house for the worst class of felons, would be as unreasonable as to expect grapes on thorns. Gloomy prison yards, gloomy ill-ventilated darkened cells, (one division of which swarms with vermin, which, from the construction with planks of wood, cannot by any exertions be destroyed,) no opportunity of classifying properly those unfortunate beings, the congenital idiot living in the day-time with the recently admitted patient; the noisy and offensive in language with the silent, the delicate-minded, and the tranquil; the drivelling imbecile with the scrupulously neat in habit and feeling; the violent and morose with the timid and retiring,—are some of the evils which exist at this moment at New Norfolk.

8. I feel convinced that everything that can be done, is, by the vigilance, caution, humane feelings, and attention of Dr. Huston, the Surgeon Superintendent; but I am sure the skill of Dr. Conolly, or Mr. Gardiner Hill, or any other gentleman of eminence in England, would be baffled in such a wretched place as our present Hospital.

9. From the defective construction of the whole of the back part of the establishment, anything like reconstruction appears to me to be quite out of the question. There are seventy cells now occupied which I have no hesitation in saying ought not to be used. From the want of knowledge of the requirements of a house for the proper treatment of the Insane, the original part or front portion of the building was also very imperfectly arranged.

10. Carefully considering the whole question, I think I am warranted in concluding that the only remedy for the great evils that now exist would be to build a house for this most important purpose, on an eligible site in the vicinity of Hobart Town, on the model of one of the most approved Hospitals recently erected in England.

11. I am induced to press this subject on the immediate attention of the Government, more particularly as it is in contemplation to expend a considerable sum (I believe nearly £2000) in erecting a building for the accommodation of the higher class of female patients. In addition to this, should the present establishment be retained, it will be necessary to make arrangements shortly, by purchase of a house or erection of quarters, for the Surgeon Superintendent on the premises. The Board of Commissioners have been lately informed that the house now occupied by Dr. Huston, opposite the Hospital gate, will in a little time be offered for sale; and a question would arise whether it should be purchased by them at a cost of (including repairs, said to be absolutely required) £1300, or erect these quarters on the land belonging to the Government.

12. From the description I have given of this Hospital, as to its unfitness for the proper treatment of the infirm of mind according to the generally adopted system now pursued in our best Hospitals for the Insane in England, I can only come to one conclusion, namely, that it would be cruelty to our afflicted fellow-beings who now inhabit it, and to those who might do so after them, for one penny to be expended upon it if that penny caused it to be retained one minute longer than was absolutely necessary. Anything, therefore, that would aid in keeping open this dismal abode would be, in my humble judgment, fraught with melancholy consequences; in fact, that it would be better to throw the money that must be expended, if the house be retained, into the river than thus to use it.

13. May I then be allowed to suggest that a cheerful elevated site may be at once selected in the vicinity of Hobart Town, and such sum of money placed on the Estimates as will be sufficient for the erection, not of a palace, but of a house where the afflicted may have every reasonable chance of being restored to liberty, to home, and to friends, and where, at all events, the permanently infirm of mind may have all those advantages and comforts a well-conducted establishment with airing grounds, garden, &c. can afford them; and where their friends, who are deprived of them, may have the heartfelt consolation of reflecting that they are in possession of those blessings that will tend to greatly ameliorate their sad condition. Every penny of this outlay would, of course, be spent in our own Colony.

14. As to the propriety of having such establishment in the immediate vicinity of the City, no one who is conversant with the proper treatment of the Insane, and the necessity of frequent supervision, will, I apprehend, call in question. Nothing can be more inconvenient, to say the least, than the present mode of visiting the Hospital. The loss of time for the Commissioners living at Hobart Town, and the short space of time, comparatively, necessarily allotted for a monthly visit, render such visitation most insufficient.

15. I venture to conjecture that, from the obvious blessings that would result from this humane, nay simply just, measure, there would not be a dissentient voice in the Parliament against this grant.

16. And perhaps I may also be allowed to say, that I should feel much gratified if Tasmania could be first of these Colonies in which a proper Hospital for the Insane could be erected; and also that I am of opinion, if that were the case, the friends of patients in the upper classes of society in the sister Colonies would, from the advantages to be derived from the treatment in Tasmania, and from the qualities of our beautiful climate, gladly seek an asylum for them here, which would tend to lessen the household expenditure.

I have, &c.,

† R. W. WILLSON, *Catholic Bishop of Hobarton.*

*The Hon. the Colonial Secretary.*

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*Colonial Secretary's Office, 3rd May, 1859.*

SIR,

I HAVE the honour to forward a copy of a Letter, addressed to the Government, which has been received from the Right Rev. Bishop Willson respecting the condition of the New Norfolk Lunatic Asylum.

I have to request you will be good enough to lay the same before the Commissioners, and to say that I shall feel obliged if they will give the contents their consideration, and favour the Government with any remarks they may deem it expedient to make.

I have, &c.,

WILLIAM HENTY.

GEORGE HUSTON, *Esq., Superintendent, &c., New Norfolk.*

*Colonial Secretary's Office, 23rd May, 1859.*

MY LORD,

I HAVE the honour, by direction of the Colonial Secretary, to acknowledge the receipt of your letter on the subject of the Asylum for the Insane at New Norfolk, and to assure you that the subject will receive from the Government the consideration its importance demands.

I have, &c.,

B. TRAVERS SOLLY,  
*Assistant Colonial Secretary.*

*The Right Rev. Bishop WILLSON:*

*Hospital for the Insane, New Norfolk, 6th July, 1859.*

SIR,

WE have now the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your communication of the 3rd of May last, enclosing for our consideration a letter addressed to you by His Lordship the Roman Catholic Bishop of Hobart Town on the present condition of the Institution under our control.

2. We have afforded to the letter that careful consideration which is due, no less to its important character than to the able and earnest manner in which it is written, and the high authority from which it emanates.

3. We recognise with pleasure the thoughtful and active benevolence which characterises its whole tenor, and we feel indebted to the Bishop for the frank and straightforward manner in which he has brought this important question under our notice.

4. But, Sir, we feel unable to concur in the sweeping and unqualified condemnation which His Lordship passes upon the present establishment.

5. We have long been painfully conscious of the many deficiencies of the buildings now at our disposal, and we must with deep regret acknowledge that the cells *are* "gloomy and ill-ventilated,"—that sufficient facilities are not afforded for that proper classification of the Patients which the Bishop so justly advocates,—and that, owing to the desultory and patchwork construction of its various compartments, the Asylum is far from being so well arranged as we could desire. But we cannot admit that it is a "*dismal place, fit only for a prison-house for the worst class of felons,*" or that the yards and ordinary wards are of the gloomy character attributed to them.

6. A place of confinement for Lunatics, including many of a dangerous character, must, from the necessity of security, ever partake to some extent of the nature of a prison-house, and of this appearance it is impossible wholly to divest it; but, although the yards the Bishop complains of are limited both in extent and prospect by the surrounding buildings, they are, nevertheless, well open to both air and sunshine, and are not unwholesomely confined. It must not moreover be forgotten, that rather more than one-half of the Patients belonging to these yards are constantly employed throughout the day-time in various ways outside of them, and are thus relieved from the monotony of what would otherwise possibly be a depressing and injurious confinement.

7. Nor, indeed, do the results of the last two years' experience tend to indicate the faithfulness of the dark and gloomy picture drawn by the Bishop. It must be borne in mind that a large majority of the Patients heretofore confined in the Asylum have been of the Convict class, the offspring of diseased parents, inheriting in very many cases a defective intellect, brought up from the earliest childhood in misery and vice, and leading in after years a life of sensual debauchery and crime, resulting in enfeeblement alike of body and mind—a more hopeless class of subjects it would be almost impossible to collect together in one Institution; and yet it will be seen from the annexed Return that the number of deaths during the past two years has amounted to only a little over 6 per cent. per annum, whilst the same number have been discharged either wholly cured or greatly improved,—a result which, while it proves that the Hospital cannot be so greatly deficient in a sanitary point of view, also shows that, under the most difficult and unfavourable circumstances, it has not altogether failed in a curative sense.

8. Having thus noticed the very strong language made use of by the Bishop in the first part of his letter,—not, as we desire it to be distinctly understood, in any spirit of hostile criticism, but simply with the view of recording our dissent from expressions which seem to us,

if passed unquestioned, calculated to raise in the public mind unfounded feelings of alarm and distrust in the present management of the Asylum,—we now proceed to the consideration of the second portion of that communication.

9. And this, Sir, appears to us to involve two propositions; viz.—

1st. That an entirely new Asylum should be erected; and

2nd. That it should be situated in some position to be selected in close contiguity to Hobart Town.

10. We have already expressed our opinion on the unsatisfactory arrangement of the present buildings; and we may now further state that, when improved to the uttermost, the inherent defects in their construction will probably preclude the possibility of arriving at that perfection which is to be desired.

11. We should therefore be rejoiced if any prospect were afforded to us of being enabled to construct an entirely new Institution, upon the model of the most approved plans now adopted in the Mother Country.

12. But, when we consider that an Asylum affording the amount of accommodation this Colony requires cannot, according to the best information at our command, be erected for a less sum than £65,000, we are constrained to believe that, in the present state of the public finances, such a work is beyond our reach, and we must therefore look upon His Lordship's proposal as at present impracticable.

13. Whilst, however, we reluctantly arrive at this conclusion, we are far from disposed to allow the buildings to remain in their present condition without strong efforts to effect their amelioration.

14. From the moment the present Commission was established, the Members of it have directed their attention to the necessity of amendment, and have not ceased to urge the subject on the attention of the Executive Government.

15. Nor have their representations been disregarded: already has a building been erected for the reception of the more refined class of patients on the male side, and a vote of money has been obtained for the construction of a like building in the female division, and the alteration of the cells, where needed, throughout the whole establishment; works which will be commenced and completed so soon as the season will permit.

16. Much, however, will undoubtedly still remain to be done; but as the Commissioners cannot doubt that the Parliament will unhesitatingly vote such moderate sums as they may from time to time require for these purposes, they look forward with hope to the time when, by the exercise of judicious internal improvements, the Asylum may, if not perfect, at least be rendered a comparatively well-arranged Institution.

17. In furtherance of this object it is the intention of the Commissioners to recommend that a sum of money be provided for the ensuing year.

18. As we have felt unable to concur in the feasibility of the main feature of the Bishop's proposal, it would seem almost superfluous to dwell upon the second portion of it; but, since His Lordship has questioned the propriety of the present site of the Asylum, we think it right to state that New Norfolk was chosen, after mature deliberation, by Sir George Arthur, and that it is recommended by various considerations as a most eligible situation for such an establishment.

19. Healthily placed amongst scenery of a cheerful and pretty character, having the command of a *water supply* which, after the completion of works now in progress, will afford an ample sufficiency, not only for necessary purposes, but for irrigation and even ornament, easily accessible by good roads from all parts of the Colony, within a very easy distance of Hobart Town, whilst it is sufficiently remote to be free from the constant visits of idle curiosity, to which, if nearer the capital, the Asylum would be so injuriously exposed, it possesses advantages which it would be difficult to find combined in any other locality, and which, in our opinion, more than counterbalance the benefits which the Bishop is inclined to attribute to the greater facility of supervision, which the removal of the Institution to the vicinity of Hobart Town would afford.

We have the honor to be,

Sir,

Your most obedient Servants,

E. S. P. BEDFORD, *President of the Commissioners.*

*The Hon. the Colonial Secretary.*

*RETURN of the Number of Insane Patients discharged from, and died in, the Hospital for the Insane at New Norfolk, between the 1st of June, 1857, and the 1st of June, 1859.*

Discharged cured .....	19
Ditto improved .....	5
<i>Total</i> .....	<u>24</u>
Died during the above period .....	26
Average strength for the same period .....	202
Average number confined in the two back-yards, Male Division .....	65
Of whom go to work outside the walls, about .....	15
And outside the yards, but within the walls of the Hospital, about .....	20

G. F. HUSTON, *Superintendent and Medical Officer.*

14 July.

MY DEAR SIR,

MR. HENTY was kind enough to say that as soon as the letter arrived from New Norfolk, respecting the question as to the propriety of having a New Hospital for the Insane, I should have a copy. May I beg of you to let me have a copy at *your earliest convenience*?

Your faithful Servant,

† R. W. WILLSON, *Catholic Bishop of Hobarton.*

B. T. SOLLY, *Esq.*

*Colonial Secretary's Office, 16th July, 1859.*

MY DEAR LORD,

IN compliance with your request, by direction of the Colonial Secretary, I have the honor to forward a copy of the Letter received from the Commissioners of the New Norfolk Asylum for the Insane relative to the erection of a New Hospital, as proposed in your Lordship's letter.

I have, &c.,

B. TRAVERS SOLLY.

*The Right Reverend Bishop WILLSON.*

*Hobart Town, 6th August, 1859.*

SIR,

I HAVE the honor to acknowledge receiving a copy of the Letter addressed to you, 6th July, 1859, by the Commissioners for the management of the Insane Hospital at New Norfolk, and to thank you for your courtesy in allowing me to have it.

2. It would be ungrateful were I not to record my thanks for the kind manner the Commissioners have been pleased to express themselves towards me, and for the frank manner they have met my statements, which I now cordially do, and especially for the many admissions they have openly granted.

3. It appears, on most careful examination of the Commissioners' letter, that very little difference of opinion exists between them and myself with respect to the sad condition of the Patients at New Norfolk, arising from the unsuitableness of the buildings. But, as there are some observations made by the Commissioners that seem to call for remarks, I feel it only due to the unfortunate Insane, to the Colony at large, and to myself, to beg your permission to do so.

4. The Commissioners are pleased to take exception to the terms I have used, namely,—that a considerable part of the Hospital is “a dismal place, fit only for a prison-house for the worst class of felons;” yet they themselves admit that the cells are gloomy and ill-ventilated, that the yards are limited both in extent and prospect, that out of 65 male patients who occupy those dolesome yards 50 are perpetual inhabitants of them!

5. This melancholy fact arises, not from want of humane feeling for this helpless class of our fellow-creatures, but solely from the miserable character of the buildings, which precludes any better arrangement. Surely, then, the description I have given of this portion of the Establishment is not incorrect.



6. The Commissioners observe that they record their dissent from the description I have given lest, if unquestioned, it should raise in the public mind unfounded feelings of alarm and distrust as to the present management of the Hospital. But, Sir, this is a mistake, and a mistake of some importance. My complaint was confined to the *construction of the buildings*, as being unsuitable either for a curative Hospital or an Asylum where the permanently infirm of mind could have that comfort and care their helpless and pitiable condition entitles them to; and if you will be so good as to refer to Paragraph 8 of my letter, you will find that I have stated emphatically my sense of the care, humanity, and attention afforded by the Surgeon Superintendent, and that I was convinced the skill of Dr. Conolly, Mr. Gardiner Hill, or of any other gentleman of eminence in our fatherland, would be baffled in such a place as our Hospital. The Commissioners themselves, however, state that they have been long painfully conscious of the many deficiencies in the buildings; and it is impossible that it should be otherwise. Gloomy cells and confined yards may be, unhappily, needful for the detention and punishment of the depraved and guilty; but it is evidently wrong to subject the innocent and afflicted to the same system of treatment in an Institution professing to be a place for the cure of some, and permanent retreat of others who are incurable, where they may have that reasonable share of comforts their pitiable condition is capable of receiving. Such a system is not necessary, and is therefore a positive evil. All the back portion of the Establishment was, I presume, constructed for the convict class of patients when convictism was necessarily marked on everything in the land, and the buildings designed by those who were much more conversant with planning cells for criminals than apartments for the infirm of mind. And, certainly, if ingenuity could be called upon to produce the largest amount of gloom in the smallest given space, we have it here in perfection. Surely, then, it is only right that the public, and all who are interested in the well-being of this helpless class of persons who are under our care, should be made fully acquainted with, and impressed by, all the evils connected with the present buildings. We must ever bear in mind that it is infirmity, and not crime, now at least, that causes persons to be secluded there.

7. The Commissioners state that it is their opinion, "that a large majority of the patients heretofore confined in the Asylum have been of the convict class, the offspring of diseased parents, inheriting in many cases a defective intellect, brought up from childhood in misery and vice, and leading in after years a life of sensual debauchery and crime, resulting in enfeeblement alike of body and mind." Be it so; and it tends, I conceive, strongly to confirm the fact I wish to prove, namely, that it is a positive injustice to subject those who have ever been free from legal moral taint to confinement in the very cells and yards which have been constructed for and used by the class of unhappy persons so powerfully described by the Commissioners. Gloomy cells in the Asylum might have little effect on the minds of individuals from the class referred to by the Commissioners—those who have probably passed weeks or months, or it might be years, in jail cells and prison yards; but what effect must it have on the minds and brain of timid, nervous, and vividly susceptible patients of either sex, who, taken from comfortable homes, families, and friends, are placed in these doleful apartments?

"Shut from the common air, and common use  
Of their own limbs."

Is not such a place far more calculated to disturb the brain, increase disease, and confirm insanity, than relieve it? It certainly appears so to me. The Commissioners, no doubt, deprecate the state of those melancholy cells as deeply as myself. They are past all remedy.

8. The Commissioners omit making any special remarks on the buildings occupied by the female patients; and however doleful the brief sketch I gave of their division in the letter addressed to you, Sir, 8th March, Paragraph 7, it falls far short of the reality. It is most painful to contemplate the condition of that class of patients, solely from the construction of the buildings,—not forgetting the swarms of vermin in the chief section of that part of the Institution. In one portion there are 11 cells opening into a corridor less than 7 feet wide, which is used for all purposes by the patients occupying these cells when not in seclusion. There are 4 back yards, only 7 feet 3 inches wide by 28 feet 8 inches long, for the use of some of these unfortunate creatures, having boundary and separating walls averaging 13 feet high. Neither sunshine nor fresh air can ever cheer the afflicted here. A fifth yard attached to the same portion is 73 feet by 28 feet 8 inches.

9. The Commissioners remark on the small number of deaths (6 per cent.), and the number of patients discharged cured or improved, (also 6 per cent.), as showing that the Hospital at New Norfolk has not altogether failed either in a sanitary or curative point of view. But this, I respectfully contend, is not the question. The question is, whether it be reasonable to expect a *fair proportion of cures* could be effected in such a place as the New Norfolk Hospital? and, Sir, I appeal to you if the letter of the Commissioners is not more than sufficient to decide this question. To those conversant with the treatment of the Insane it would indeed appear singular, even with such defective buildings as now exist, if 12 cases out of 200, in one

year, should not be wholly or partially restored. In 32 County Asylums in England, in the years 1854, 5, and 6, on an average of the daily strength, the number of recoveries per annum was nearly 40 per cent., and deaths 9 per cent. Elaborate statistical tables on this subject may be seen in Mr. Gardiner Hill's excellent work on the "Non-restraint System." (London, Longman & Co.)

10. The Commissioners appear fully to agree with me in opinion that the inherent defects in the present buildings are such as to make it impossible to improve them so as to render them properly suited for the important purpose for which they are intended, and join me in earnestly desiring the construction of a new building, upon a proper plan. This admission, I doubt not, will prove to be most beneficial in settling the weighty question now brought before you. Any expenditure then, it is admitted, however large, would not procure that which is requisite for the proper treatment of the Insane.

11. The expense of a new building the Commissioners estimate at £65,000, which is, no doubt, a large sum to be raised in the Colony. But, probably, so large a sum may not be required. In a little time, it may be fairly supposed that the number of inmates will be less than 200, and it is satisfactory to observe that this is proved by the Commissioners' letter; it is there shown that a large number of the present patients are from the Convict class, which is now rapidly diminishing. This is a fact of much importance.

12. Suppose the number hereafter to be even so large as 150, the cost of a building would not be, it is conceived, anything near £65,000. The Essex Hospital for the Insane, erected in 1856, was constructed for the accommodation of 450 patients. It is built in an ornamental style, and comprises a chapel for 300 persons, has schoolrooms, separate residences, with separate staircases for physician, assistant-surgeons, steward, and matron, a committee room, visitors' room, chaplain's room, 150 separate bedrooms for patients, workshops, steam engine, &c. &c. The total expense, exclusive of the land, was £65,000. To construct a suitable building for only one-third of that number of patients, and dispensing with everything not absolutely necessary, could not, it is conceived, amount to more than one-half the sum that has been named. In so useful, so charitable, and honourable a work, surely the Colony could spare £35,000. The expenditure need not be incurred in one year, nor two. If it ever be judicious and allowable to obtain money on the security of the Government, it is difficult to imagine a case so overwhelmed with reasons for doing so as that before us. And what can be more reasonable than that those who follow us should, when they find an establishment ready prepared for the proper treatment of their afflicted members, bear a reasonable proportion of the cost of its erection: for it must be remembered, the proposed arrangements would be such as to confer permanent benefits on those who shall follow us, as well as for those who now stand in need of our protection and sympathy. I have not offered any opinion as to the value of the property now belonging to the Government at New Norfolk, nor as to the use to which it could be appropriated should it be vacated. The buildings (with the exception of that recently raised) were erected, I presume, with Imperial, not Colonial, funds.

13. As the Commissioners concur with me as to the propriety of having a well-constructed house, one calculated for the reception and proper treatment of the free, from the various classes of society (not a mere prison-house for the detention of those in bondage, as at present) the only question now remaining is, as to the site—whether it shall be erected at New Norfolk or in the immediate vicinity of Hobart Town.

14. The Commissioners observe, that the present site was selected by Colonel Arthur, thirty years ago, after much consideration; and the question is, whether, with the enlarged experience of the last thirty years in the treatment of the Insane, his selection comprises those advantages which may properly be looked for now. The Commissioners urge in favour of New Norfolk, that it is healthy, and placed among cheerful scenery, well watered, accessible by good roads from all parts of the Colony, within a short distance from Hobart Town, and sufficiently remote from the Capital to be free from the visits of idle curiosity.

15. As to the character of the scenery, different persons will hold different opinions, but I imagine few will describe the scenery at New Norfolk as being peculiar for its cheerfulness; and, unfortunately, whatever may be its quality, such is the position of the buildings, that only a very small portion of the Patients can catch a glimpse of any thing beyond its boundary walls. The best view that could be obtained from these premises, even if the walls were razed to the ground, would only be contracted, and any thing but cheerful. The dense fog that so frequently obscures a great portion of the early part of the day at New Norfolk, during the Winter months, is a circumstance very unfavourable to all who are confined within the narrow limits of the Hospital.

16. Healthiness, water in abundance, and good roads, may also be found in many other places. The great objection to New Norfolk, and to almost all other sites, except in the immediate vicinity of Hobart Town and Launceston, is, that it is remote from that visitation and

inspection necessary to secure *for a continuance of* those benefits so devoutly to be desired. To go from Hobart Town to New Norfolk and return is a journey of more than 40 miles, and of necessity a whole day is consumed in one visit; and I hesitate not to say, the monthly visit of the body of Commissioners is productive of mischief, mentally, to several of the patients, rather than of benefit.

17. Hobart Town of itself contains a fourth part of the whole population of the Colony, and many persons in the interior have occasion to visit it frequently. For one visit paid at New Norfolk by friends many would be made, if the state of such patient admitted of such visit, were the Hospital near Hobart Town, and in some cases nothing can be more beneficial to a patient than communication with a relative or friend. But the paramount reason, after all, is *super-vision* under proper regulations,—this is essential, I am convinced, for the *permanent* well-being of such an Institution. Instances have, alas! been too frequent of late in our native land to prove the correctness of this assertion. I mean not, of course, visits for the mere gratification of idle curiosity (which could be as easily prevented in Hobart Town as in those excellent Institutions at Gloucester and Lancaster); but visits from relations, friends, medical men, clergymen, magistrates, and all those who, in well-regulated establishments in England, are enabled to form an opinion whether the patients are kindly and properly attended to. This facility of visiting the Hospital, in addition to the official duties incumbent on the Commissioners who have consented to take upon themselves the heavy moral responsibility they have, would secure the confidence of the public, prove a source of deep satisfaction to the relatives and friends of patients, and tend greatly to ensure good management, and do even much more than that, it would prevent abuses coming into existence.

18. I trust I need hardly add that it is quite immaterial to me where the Hospital for the Infirm of Mind is located; I have no wish to gratify further than that which will be for the happiness of my fellow-creatures who may be afflicted with Insanity long after I have been removed from this world. Yes, Sir, the question now before you does not refer solely to the unfortunate inmates at the present time under our care (many of whom, you are informed, have been, if not so still, in bondage), but it affects the comfort, and, I doubt not, the restoration of very many to liberty in after times—children to parents, husbands to wives, brothers to sisters, and *vice versâ*, of those who have ever been free from criminal taint. Sound policy, humanity, nay, I would almost say selfishness, would dictate the abandoning the present site, and erecting such house as is required; for who amongst us can say, “I am safe from such melancholy visitation as that of insanity?” and what man who knows of, or who now learns, the deficiencies of this ill-constructed Establishment would not shrink with fear if told that he, or some one dear to him, would have to inhabit it?

19. May I, therefore, express a hope that the Government will sanction the immediate selection of a convenient and truly cheerful site in the neighbourhood of Hobart Town,—suggest also to the Commissioners the propriety of not erecting any more buildings at New Norfolk,—and grant such sums for the improvement of ventilation, and other arrangements, of the present buildings that would tend, at least, to ameliorate in some degree the condition of the Patients, until such sum of money could be advanced by the Colony as would allow the Commissioners to commence buildings calculated to answer the great and noble end for which it would be granted. And, Sir, I should feel deeply gratified if any Member of either House of Parliament would, before he gave his sanction either to patch up the present miserable place, or for an entirely new building to be erected on the present site (a work, be it observed, that would from the nature of the malady that afflicts the Patients be accompanied by difficulties almost insurmountable), convince himself that he is right in so doing by personal examination, and the perusal of such works as have been recently placed before the public on the treatment of the Insane in England. The vote of one Member may affect the happiness and the liberty of many for ages to come.

20. I beg to apologise most earnestly for the length of this communication,—the only excuse I can offer is the deep importance of the subject, and my desire to prove that I have not made representations calculated to raise in the public mind unfounded feelings of alarm and distrust. Common humanity seemed to compel me to urge (crude and ill arranged though it be) what I have in the hope that something sound and solid may be done; and true humanity (we are told by the illustrious C. J. Fox) “consists not in a squeamish ear, it consists not in starting and shrinking at tales of misery, but in a disposition of the heart to relieve it. True humanity appertains rather to *the mind than the nerves*, and prompts men to use real and active measures to execute the actions it suggests.”

I have the honor to be,

Sir,

Your faithful and obedient Servant,

† R. W. WILLSON, *Catholic Bishop of Hobarton.*

*The Hon. the Colonial Secretary.*

Hobart Town, 17th August, 1859.

SIR,

I TRUST I shall be excused laying before you the following information with reference to the supposed cost of the Hospital for the Insane, lately brought under your notice.

2. It appears from a statement laid before the Parliament in Melbourne that, in the erection of twenty-two Asylums in England, Ireland, and Scotland, the average cost of building was £154 per patient. From the great difference of the estimates per patient (from £86 to £227) I apprehend the cost of land is included in some.

3. Essex Hospital for the Insane, erected in 1857, for 450 patients, in an ornamental style, &c. &c. &c., as briefly detailed in twelfth paragraph of my letter, 6th August, (and now attention is earnestly called to the whole of this paragraph) cost £65,000, (not including land). This would give an estimate of £144 10s. per patient. (For particulars respecting this Institution see *Builder*, 16th May, 1857.)

4. I may observe that 45 acres of land for the Worcester Hospital for the Insane cost £13,000, and that for Essex £8000.

5. Suppose the Hospital here to be erected for even 200 patients, at £150 per patient, the sum required would be only £30,000.

6. I trust this information, brief though it is, will tend to throw some light on a question no doubt of much importance. This calculation has been submitted for the consideration of a competent architect, who speaks confidently that such building as we require could be raised at the estimated cost of £150 per patient.

I have the honor to be,

Sir,

Your humble and faithful Servant,

† R. W. WILLSON, *Catholic Bishop of Hobarton.*

*The Hon. the Colonial Secretary.*