THE CASE OF DR. PEITHMAN

John Thomas Perceval
Introduction by Edward M. Podvoll

INTRODUCTION

The following account is an important and provocative document in the history of psychiatry. The author, John Thomas Perceval, (1803-1876), lived in England during the time when care for the insane was becoming the exclusive province of physicians. They were known at the time as "lunatic doctors." John Perceval fought bitterly against the growing power of that specialty. In doing so, he became one of England's greatest reformers of the asylum method of treatment.

This particular work of Perceval's details his efforts to obtain the release of one Dr. Edward Peithman from Bethlehem and Hanwell Hospitals in England in the mid-nineteenth century. It is entitled *Case of Dr. Peithman, LL.D., The Petition of Dr. Peithman, LL.D., Professor of the University of Bonn, &c. &c., As Presented to Her Majesty in 1854, Containing a Brief Account of His History, and of the Circumstances of his Confinement for Nearly Sixteen Years, Without Any Trial, or Public Examination Before a Magistrate; Together With Letters, Certificates, and Testimonials to His Sanity.*

The following is a synopsis of the events. Dr. Peithman was committed to Bethlehem Hospital in 1840 because of suspicious behavior. He was certified and confined there without proper examination until 1854. He obtained his release only after a major social change had occurred. In 1851, a Royal Commission was convened to examine the conditions of the treatment of the insane, and it recommended the periodic inspection and review of Bethlehem Hospital. John

Perceval and his small group of social activists had for a long time demanded the establishment of that Commission and gave testimony before it. Then, in 1853, Perceval managed to become part of the visiting team that inspected the hospital. While there, he befriended Dr. Peithman, whom he felt to be of perfectly sound mind. The case was investigated, Peithman was put under a three-month trial observation, and was then uncertified and released. Peithman then composed a petition to the Crown for compensation for his illegal detainment. He soon made an appearance at the royal palace requesting a response to his petition. He was immediately arrested, certified as insane, and placed in Hanwell Hospital.

John Perceval again came to his aid by helping to procure the necessary testimonials to Peithman's sanity. But Peithman was released only on the condition that he immediately leave the country; it was Perceval who accompanied Peithman to his native Germany, and helped establish him with his family. Within months, Peithman again requested compensation from the Crown and the German government supported his claim.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

John Perceval suffered an acute psychotic episode at the age of twenty-nine and was hospitalized for a period of two and a half years in the private asylums which were beginning to proliferate throughout England. His recovery began within the first seven months of hospitalization, but he was forcibly detained for another one and a half years. He was outraged at the harsh and negligent treatment which he and others received at the hands of the "lunatic doctors"; at the submission of his family to the authority of the doctors; at the incompetence of the governmental magistrates responsible for overseeing the asylums; at the laxity of the organized church which relinquished the care of the insane to the specialists; and at society in general for its cultivated

ignorance and prejudice about the needs of the insane. After his release from the hospital, Perceval dedicated the next thirty years of his life to political actions in the service of reforming the asylum system.

He was surprisingly effective. He wrote voluminously, was in continual contact with government officials including the British Prime Minister, engineered numerous useful changes in legislation regarding the internment of patients and the management of hospitals, and brought about the convening of a Royal Commission to study the problems of asylum reform. While doing all this, he visited many asylums that treated the wealthy and asylums that treated paupers; befriended many of the inmates; pleaded the cases of several people unfairly detained; published an inmate's poetry, which he had smuggled out of the asylum; and obtained the release of a number of people who had been wasting away in the back wards of the infamous Bethlehem Hospital. He was able to accomplish as much as he did because he knew the asylum system inside and out, down to its smallest details. He was also able to accomplish so much because he was knowledgeable and bold about negotiating with government and royalty, having grown up as the son of one of England's most powerful politicians, the reputedly kind and honourable Spencer Perceval (1762-1812), Prime Minister to George III.

Perceval's work began immediately upon his release from the hospital, with his gathering together the many notes, journals and letters that he composed throughout each specific stage of losing his mind, recovering his sanity, and making his arduous reentry into the world. He wrote and published a comprehensive two-volume work whose wisdom and suggestions about the accurate treatment of the insane remains an invaluable resource to the present day. The full title of that work was *A Narrative of the Treatment Experienced by a Gentleman, During a State of Mental Derangement: Designed to Explain the Causes and the*

Nature of Insanity. That journal details in brilliant and painful clarity his psychological calamity.

One hundred and fifty years after his death, John Perceval's work has resurfaced as an uncomfortable reminder of how much we have forgotten, or have never learned. The history of clinical care is forgotten so easily by each generation that there tends to be a virtual amnesia about the clinical wisdom and compassion that may have appeared in the past. It will become obvious that all the issues Perceval made his discoveries about are the same ones we face today.

Perceval's hospitalizations were grueling trials for him. At various crucial stages of his recovery he proclaimed his sanity but each assertion was met with distrust, ridicule, and doubt. That doubt about his sanity and his motives became the greatest single obstacle to his recovery from acute psychosis, and it required immense courage for him to pursue his own course through the stages of recovery. In this adventure, he was terribly alone. A similar suspicion of his sanity and the consequent resistance to understanding him also haunted his reentry into the world. This suspicion persisted well into his later life, and remained even after his death. Even his most friendly commentator, Gregory Bateson, suspected Perceval of being a brilliant eccentric and chronic complainer against the system.[1]

Perceval repeatedly requested "examination" of his sanity: from the "dawn" of his recovery six months after his acute breakdown; through the next two years of his enforced hospitalization; and again six years following his reentry into domestic life. On his own, Perceval never hesitated to take the witness stand to have his sanity tested publicly. When he did so, it was with cool and determined outrage. His outrage stemmed from the fact that he had vividly witnessed the tender shoots of recovery—his own and many others'—being trampled, and he felt that the ignorance of his culture about what was being done would lead to years of inhuman treatment and calculated abuse.

It has been felt by some that Perceval's vigorous attempts to tell the truth about his struggle for recovery, and his pressing forward with malpractice prosecutions, were perhaps a further sign of his confusion and poor judgement. But the facts are otherwise.[2] In the hospital, it had taken Perceval many months to wake up to the fact that he was living with the mind of a madman, in a "lunatic body," in a "lunatic asylum," and at the mercy of the "lunatic doctors," all with their various theories and mythologies about psychosis. Perceval's accusation, in 1838, of oppression by therapeutic power, is similar to the accusations made about our current institutions and asylums.[3]

BETHLEHEM HOSPITAL

John Perceval wrote the following description of conditions at Bethlehem Hospital.

> I will add a word or two upon the nature of the confinement in Bethlehem Hospital . . . the general appearance of the building will convince any sensible man that much prejudice is yet to be overcome, and much improvement still to be made there. I never visit my friend in this asylum without being oppressed, on my approach to it, by the gloomy exterior of the building, and wounded by the severity of the interior, to a degree that makes it painful to return there, and requires of me considerable resolution to do so. The windows are obscured by thick iron bars, which we know now are no longer necessary, as security can be combined with lightness and elegance, and the only defence that I have heard for them is the insufficient excuse of their enabling the keepers to give the wards more thorough ventilation, without fear of escape, or injury to the patients. The walls of the wards and the cells are of bare brick, whitewashed, without any pretence to comfort, ornament, or protection from violence. The cells are dungeons lighted by a small window at the top, inaccessible to the patient, so that a patient confined to his bed from week to week, has no sight to cheer him, but on all sides a rough cold blank, on which his excited and deluded imagination may imprint any ideas that his native propensities may incline him to, terrible or sensual, extravagant or revolting, without any correction, or any distraction. The plea for having thus the bare

whitewashed walls is, that of cleanliness, of freedom from vermin and from infection; but they rather betoken a niggardness* of charity—for true charity would provide becoming comfort for the patients, and render it compatible with cleanliness and healthiness by proper service around them. Lastly, the yards, which are the only places in which the patients can walk for exercise, are small and cheerless, and partake of the severity of the building. Perhaps the best thing to be done with Bethlehem would be that Government should purchase it, as a house of correction, or convert it into a National Gallery; and that the hospital should be removed further into the country, and placed in an open and airy situation, with large grounds around it.

For a period of detention of one, two, or three years, and as a punishment, the rigorous character of the confinement in such a building might not be unsuitable; but for those who, however criminal their acts may have been, are, or have been, the victims of delusion and disease, confinement of such a character, to which there is often no hope of termination but in death, is cruel and unjustifiable. More severity could not be exercised, consistently with humanity, to the most criminal and responsible, who have, humanly speaking, no excuse. Equity, therefore, requires that some difference should be made between them and those whom justice does not consider amenable to her on account of some mental infirmity. Many persons in society, I know, alarmed at the numerous instances of acquittal of parties, upon the plea of insanity, after offences of a serious character against the person, and the person even of the most exalted members of the state, are hurried by their fears into an undue appreciation of the benefit that the criminal may derive from such a repair from the consequences of his outrages. But, if they would visit the asylum as I have done—if they would enter, after the door has been unlocked to them, the stone-passage leading to the criminal wards, on two sides railed in with a grating of iron bars, an inch square, behind which, as though they were wild beasts in cages, the maniacs are confined, crawling, jabbering, shouting, or taking their hurried and excited exercise—if they could hear the echo of the signal given by the key of the servants along the grating in front of them, and see their wan and haggard friend descend the stone steps opposite with the keepers, with whom they have to converse through the bars of his prison-house, on the most private subjects, unless they are admitted as a favour into the comparative privacy of the keepers' little chamber—if they would afterwards reflect that within these bare walls, behind these harsh and heavy gratings, in hearing of these sounds, in sight of this

* I would prefer supposing a want of judgment in desiring rather to extend the charity to numbers, than to deal faithfully to those who are the recipients of it.

wretchedness, the miserable object whom they visit has to drag on his weary existence, in society perhaps unsuited, perhaps degrading to him, from day to day, from month to month, from year to year, and so on in dull and never-ending monotony, they would soon feel that death, if it could be met with propriety, were preferable to such a reprieve, and transportation to the colonies infinitely preferable to such indulgence. But if, in addition to these considerations of the personal and physical privations and annoyances of the patients so confined, any man will reflect a moment upon the necessary and constant separation of them from the charms and solace and delight of female society, they will acknowledge that no fate can be more terrible than theirs; no doom more melancholy; no disaster so fraught with calamity and apprehension to the soul and spirit, as well as to the body—than such isolation from all the guides, all the encouragements, all the aids to cultivating a happy, cheerful, and resigned disposition—all that soothes the spirit, and gives energy to the soul, in her combat between virtuous and vicious propensities.[4]

THE TEXT

CASE OF DR. PEITHMAN, LL.D.
THE PETITION OF DR. PEITHMAN, LL.D.
PROFESSOR OF THE UNIVERSITY OF BONN, &c. &c.
AS PRESENTED TO HER MAJESTY, IN 1854, CONTAINING A BRIEF ACCOUNT OF HIS HISTORY, AND OF THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF HIS CONFINEMENT FOR NEARLY SIXTEEN YEARS, WITHOUT ANY TRIAL, OR PUBLIC EXAMINATION BEFORE A MAGISTRATE; TOGETHER WITH LETTERS, CERTIFICATES, AND TESTIMONIALS TO HIS SANITY. BY JOHN PERCEVAL, ESQ.

PREFACE.

Parthenon Club,
July 16, 1855.

In behalf of Dr. Peithman, whose case excited so much attention last year, his friends have thought it advisable to lay before the public, in the following pages, the petition which was presented to her Majesty by this unfortunate gentleman in June last; and which contains a brief sketch of his melancholy case, together with various certificates which he had then, and has subsequently received; and letters of his friends, and letters of Dr.

Peithman himself, corroborating his claims to be considered a person of sound mind.

The allegations which were made from his seat in Parliament, in reply to questions from Mr. Otway, M.P., by the Right Hon. Lord Palmerston, then Home Secretary, in August last, have led principally to this resolution; his Lordship having then declared that the petition of Dr. Peithman to her Majesty was a proof of his insanity; that he fancied he had certain claims on her Majesty and the Royal Family; and that he had gone to the palace at Pimlico *to enforce these claims*: these allegations having appeared to the Professor's friends to be quite contrary to the fact, and to what they knew of his views and opinions, and no member of Parliament having risen to contradict them.

The public will be able to judge for themselves whether the petition of the unfortunate Doctor is an insane one or not. The petition was presented by Dr. Peithman, with the consent of his friends; and, whilst it represented the grievous and oppressive conduct from which the Doctor alleged that he had unjustly suffered, its object was to induce her Majesty to make inquiries into the case; and if she should find reason to think that the Professor's allegations were true, to procure, from her Majesty's sense of justice and compassion, some redress; whilst a way of affording that redress, most honourable to all parties, and most congenial to the Doctor's feelings, was pointed out, viz., that of giving him some employment, whereby he might regain his position in society.

It is true, that in the petition there is no express prayer for inquiry; but, in the first place, it might be taken for granted that the petitioner did not expect her Majesty or her Majesty's advisers to attend to it without inquiry; and, in the next place, Dr. Peithman, misled by the advice of some of the officers of Bethlehem, rather hastily presented the petition, before it had been thoroughly revised, when this error in form might have been detected and corrected; and Lord Palmerston as hastily presented the petition to her Majesty, although he had been requested to return it for revisal, and to consider it for the time as not yet laid before him for presentation.

If his Lordship meant, however, that it was an act of insanity for Dr. Peithman to solicit employment *under the Crown*, having been confined as insane for thirteen years, and eight months in Bethlehem; and that whatever was the state of his mind now, he was to be judged on the principle of "once a madman, always a madman," and to be looked upon as insane because he did not admit this principle, and so recognise his proper and humiliating position; his Lordship was himself judging hastily in condemning Dr. Peithman *without inquiry*, and he was forgetting how insane he made the nation and the Ministers of the Crown in the reign of his Majesty George III, who was twice, after serious illnesses affecting his mind, allowed to resume the functions of Sovereign.

The allegations that Dr. Peithman imagined that he had any claims upon her Majesty personally, or on the Royal Family, and that he went to Buckingham Palace in July last to *enforce these claims*, were evidently made by Lord Palmerston on the erroneous information of his subordinates. Dr. Peithman constantly *insisted*, even upon his petition to her Majesty for redress for his unjust confinement, being considered as "*a petitio ex gratia*"—an appeal to the royal favour and compassion; and he had no other claims to her Majesty's personal consideration but those of his literary merits, and services in the cause of the education of British youth, and of the reform of the defective system of instruction in our public Schools and Colleges. He consequently could never go to the palace to *enforce any claims*; and he alleges as his sole motive for doing so the vain hope of possibly attracting the Royal attention, consideration, and sympathy, and thereby obtaining the reconsideration of his petition, and some pecuniary assistance to return to his relations in Germany at that moment.

JOHN PERCEVAL,

Hon. Sec. of the alleged Lunatic Friends' Society.

TO THE QUEEN'S MOST EXCELLENT MAJESTY IN COUNCIL.

The Humble Petition of Edward Peithman, LL.D.,

Showeth—

That he is a native of Osnabruck, in Hanover; the son of an officer of the 2nd Hanoverian Regiment, who was killed in the defence of his country when your Majesty's petitioner was yet an infant.

That his mother subsequently married the Baron Von Ripperda, a Prussian landrath, at Halberstadt, in Saxony; that your petitioner pursued his studies in the Universities of Bonn, Halle, and Berlin; and came to England, when about twenty years of age, in June, 1824.

That, from his first arrival in this country, he devoted himself to the improvement of the system of education pursued in the public schools and universities; that with that view he wrote a series of works, and delivered lectures in the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge; that he went to Ireland in the year 1835, in consequence of a strong recommendation to the family of his Excellency the Marquis of Normanby, then Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, by whom he was introduced to a nobleman in the neighbourhood of Dublin, with whom he resided seven months, in the capacity of tutor to his sons.

That he was compelled to relinquish that appointment in December, 1835, in consequence of the too intimate acquaintance of the eldest of his pupils with a Saxon female in the establishment, and of his refusal to assist the parents of his pupil in getting this female transferred with her child, against her will (and without any means of support) to Germany; that understanding afterwards, on his return to Dublin, that he should be required to appear in evidence against his pupil in a court of justice at the suit of the said Saxon female, your Majesty's petitioner wrote to, and subsequently called on, a member of the Marquis of Normanby's family, in the months of March and May, 1836, with a view of bringing the matter to an amicable conclusion, and to prevent the exposure of his pupil.

That your petitioner's intentions in calling upon that gentleman were unfortunately misunderstood; and your petitioner was, in consequence, sent by him before Mr. Stoddart, a magistrate, on the 25th of May, 1836, for a breach of the peace, in intruding upon that gentleman's family; and, after a private examination, he was immediately committed as insane, without any medical certificate, and, as your petitioner believes, unjustly, to the gaol of Kilmainham.

That on the 26th of May, 1836, he was again transferred as insane, but without any medical certificate of such insanity, to the lunatic ward of the Dublin House of Industry, by order of Thomas Drummond, Esq., Under Secretary for Ireland, since deceased.

That his committal as insane, without any medical certificates, was contrary to the laws then and now in operation for the protection of the subject from unjust confinement on the plea of insanity.

That, after nearly three months' detention in this irregular manner, he was sent to Dean Swift's Hospital, on the 22nd of August, 1836, on the certificate of only one medical man, Dr. Litton, the medical officer of the establishment, also since deceased—a gentleman who was far advanced in years, and totally unacquainted with your petitioner, and with the circumstances which led to his confinement, and who stated in his certificate no grounds for his opinion that your Majesty's petitioner was insane.

That, after eight months' detention at the said hospital, he was restored to the unconditional enjoyment of his liberty; and that he then immediately resumed his lectures in the University of Dublin, and commenced a long course of lectures before the Royal Dublin Society, on the reforms requisite in the administration and in the educational system of the public schools and the universities of this kingdom.

That, on the arrival of his Excellency Lord Fortescue in Ireland, your Majesty's petitioner was engaged to instruct his excellency's three sons, and was received at the vice-royal table.

That your petitioner continued to reside in Ireland until the spring of the year 1840, when he returned to London.

That on his release from confinement, at the suggestion of two of his friends in Dublin, your Majesty's petitioner applied to a solicitor, to know if any legal steps could be taken for obtaining redress for his unjust confinement; but that the solicitor declined taking up his case unless he was provided with funds to carry it on; and that your petitioner not having any funds, and considering that he was a foreigner, without relations or support, in a foreign country, and that in taking legal proceedings he might offend the Marquis and Marchioness of Normanby, who were his patrons, and, not being of a vindictive disposition, deemed that he would be most prudent to stop all attempts at obtaining redress by legal proceedings, and to rely on the good feelings of the Irish Government, and on their reconsideration of the proceedings which had been adopted regarding him, to obtain indirectly some compensation; and that he therefore addressed the Under Secretary, Mr. Thomas Drummond, now deceased, on the subject, by letter and in person.

That he resolved to apply, by the advice of the late Mr. Thomas Drummond, the Under Secretary of State for Ireland, and with the approbation of other parties now living, for some situation in the royal household, in hopes of obtaining the protection and patronage of his Royal Highness Prince Albert, and some compensation for the injuries he had endured.

That with that in view, in the month of May, 1840, he respectfully transmitted to his Royal Highness Prince Albert a series of his publications, comprised in eleven volumes, besides diplomas from the University of Bonn, and various other testimonials; that, not having received any notice from his Royal Highness of his humble application, he began to prepare for his return to Ireland; but, before doing so, ventured twice or thrice to call at Buckingham Palace to recover his testimonials, and on one occasion sought an audience of his Royal Highness, when he was admitted into the palace by Colonel Wylde, groom of the chamber in waiting, to whom he had stated the subject of his calling.

That, having remained nearly two hours in the waiting-room or library of his Royal Highness, he was informed that the Prince was then engaged and could not see him.

That your Majesty's petitioner again called on the 29th of June, 1840, and was in consequence brought from his lodgings, by a police officer in plain clothes, to the office at Whitehall of the Secretary of State for the Home Department, then the Marquis of Normanby, under whose government the confinement in Ireland, of which your Majesty's petitioner had complained to his Royal Highness Prince Albert, took place; that he was introduced before a magistrate whom he had never seen before, and without being

confronted with any witness, or any definite charge of misconduct being brought against him, he was, after about half an hour's private examination, consigned to the walls of Bethlehem Hospital, as your Majesty's petitioner believes, in the full possession of his mental faculties.

That his committal to Bethlehem was evidently not based on any offence he had committed in London, for your Majesty's petitioner had been guilty of none, but on the unjust and illegal detention he had endured in Dublin four years previously, to which the above-mentioned relative of the Marquis of Normanby was summoned to Whitehall by the Marquis to give evidence, but not in your petitioner's presence.

That by the warrant of the Secretary of State, which committed him for fourteen years' close and lingering confinement, your Majesty's petitioner was deprived of the protection of judge and jury, and of attorney, and of the power to establish his sanity and innocence of any offence, by the examination in open court of witnesses, and of the parties concerned, and that he has had no opportunity of making any defence or of establishing his sanity.

That in Bethlehem Hospital he was subject to very cruel and protracted tortures, not only from a long and hopeless confinement for so many years, but by being immured in a close and gloomy cell, only eight feet square, for twelve successive hours daily, and deprived during that interval entirely of water, of sufficient air, and the common necessaries of life, although the physicians, whatever may have been their recorded opinion of his sanity, repeatedly declared to your petitioner that he required no medicinal treatment, that he was perfectly harmless, and that his mind was calm and tranquil.

That he remonstrated to the Lord Chancellor, and to your Majesty's Secretary of State for the Home Department, on the injustice of the treatment he experienced; that he does not know if these remonstrations reached their destination, but that he received no answer to them.

That in the years 1851 and 1852, your Majesty's Commissioners in Lunacy were directed to inquire into the abuses of Bethlehem Hospital.

That in the year 1853, on their report being placed before Parliament, an act was passed by the Legislature, placing Bethlehem Hospital, which had hitherto been under the sole control of the unreformed Corporation of London, under the jurisdiction of the said commissioners.

That, in virtue of this act of Parliament, the commissioners inspected that hospital on the 2nd of February, 1854, after your Majesty's petitioner had been detained there thirteen years.

That in consequence, as your Majesty's petitioner believes, of their recommendation, he has been restored to society.

That the Secretary of State for the Home Department consented to his liberation in the month of February last, and that he is at present in the full enjoyment of his liberty.

And your Majesty's petitioner humbly submits that his respectful application to his Royal Highness Prince Albert, and the object of his presenting himself at Buckingham Palace in the year 1840, and his conduct on that occasion, were totally misunderstood or misrepresented.

That his intention was to obtain the powerful patronage of his Royal Highness, not entirely for himself, but for those very reforms of the educational institutions of England which are now being carried out by a bill which is before the Lower House of Legislature.

That he has been, in consequence, subjected to cruel and unexampled tortures for no intentional offence, but for an act of sincere devotion to the Royal Family, and of zeal for the welfare of your Majesty's people.

That the fundamental principles of the British Constitution have been unnecessarily and illegally violated by his confinement and detention; and that, his profession having been ruined and his prospects blighted by the treatment he has experienced, your Majesty's petitioner humbly prays that your Majesty may be graciously pleased to direct that some compensation may be afforded to him for the sufferings which he has endured, and for the loss of time and reputation which he has sustained; and that your Majesty's petitioner being still in the prime of life, possessing a competent knowledge of many sciences, and of five of the leading European and of the Latin and Greek languages, and being anxious to render himself serviceable to others, would, if he were appointed (by your Majesty's or his Royal Highness Prince Albert's gracious patronage) to any situation in the royal household or elsewhere, be happy to be enabled to prove the profound and unalterable devotion which he entertains for your Majesty and for the Royal Family of England.

And your Majesty's petitioner, as in duty bound, will ever pray, &c.

* * * *

We confess, when we first perused the above petition, we were ready to doubt the truth of some of the statements it contains, so utterly repugnant are they to our ideas of justice and humanity; but, from what we have heard since he has been in Hanwell, we feel ourselves compelled to believe them, until they are contradicted by incontrovertible testimony. . . .

August 17, 1854.

[*Letter from* J.A. EMERTON, D.D.]

To the Visiting Committee of the Middlesex Lunatic Asylum.

GENTLEMEN,—I have waited until this day for the document promised me on the 3rd inst., but, from some mistake, have not yet received it. I have, therefore, procured one of the usual papers, which I have signed, and herewith enclose.

You will allow me, gentlemen, to state that, in inducing Dr. Peithman to sign the paper of which I was the bearer last Thursday week, it was under the impression that when once out of the country he was to be a free agent, and that he would be at liberty to return, if he wished, at some future time. I have since heard, from authority on which I am disposed to rely, that there is an intention, when once he is abroad, that he should be kept there; to this I can be no party, and am unwilling to consent that a promise gained by me under different representations, should be deemed binding upon him.

I feel confident, however, that I have only to appeal to your own feelings as gentlemen, to understand the motives which operate upon me in making this declaration.

I confess, the more I know of the case the more I am astonished at it, and the more impossible does it seem to me that you, gentlemen, if you had full opportunity of judging without prejudice, would ever agree to his detention at all. I have spent seven or eight hours in his company, have conversed with him on all kinds of subjects, and every time I have left him have felt more inclined to ask, is it possible for such a man to be confined in a Lunatic Asylum, superintended as that of Hanwell is? I have had frequent opportunities of conversing with many persons of all classes, but remember very few whom I should not have thought as much or more fit for the asylum than Dr. Peithman. The only two subjects upon which any one has suggested his insanity are those of education and the Prince. As respects the former, I can only say that I have often sought, but sought in vain, for one so enthusiastic on the subject, and apparently so well qualified for education as himself; and a proof of my opinion is, that I am ready at once to give him a home and make trial of him, and, if he turn out what I expect, he will not hereafter be dependent on any one for subsistence. As regards the Prince, no one has ever intimated that he had any evil designs upon him, and in his conversation he speaks only of the benevolence of his disposition. His simplicity of character has apparently led him to trust in certain ideal promises, which, if made, he ought to be aware were never intended to be kept, or, if so, his altered circumstances

would not allow it; of this I do not fear but that he might be easily disabused; only give him occupation suited to him, and afford him scope for those talents which he undoubtedly possesses, his mind would, I believe, be entirely taken off from reliance upon anything but God and his own exertions; whereas, from want of opportunity to support himself hitherto, he has been necessarily left to revert to feelings and thoughts which would have otherwise been totally forgotten.

If he be banished from the country at present, no one who knows the whole circumstances will believe that English justice has been awarded him; whereas, by giving him a trial you will have the satisfaction of knowing that, in your regard for the wishes of the powerful, you have not fogotten the claims of justice and humanity, and that, in endeavouring to save the Prince from annoyance, you have not sacrificed that liberty of individual action which it is the glory of England to maintain.

I have the honour to be, Gentlemen,
Your faithful and obedient servant,
J.A. Emerton, D.D.

Hanwell College, Middlesex.

[*Letter from* EDW. PEITHMAN *to the* REV. DR. EMERTON, D.D.]

Hanwell, August 21, 1854.

My dear Doctor,

In compliance with your request, I beg to explain to you the circumstances which have led to the embarrassed situation in which you found me, and so kindly came to my sustainment. In the year 1836 I was recommended to the Marchioness of Normanby, in the capacity of tutor to her only son, the present Lord Mulgrave; and on my arrival in Ireland I was by her ladyship, who at that time resided in Dublin Castle, introduced to the family of the late Lord Cloncurry, and I resided with his lordship at Lyons Castle, near Dublin, and completed the education of his two sons, the Hon. Cecil Lawless and the present Lord Cloncurry. Circumstances over which I had no control induced me to leave the family of that nobleman, and I continued to reside in Dublin, engaged in delivering lectures in the Royal Dublin Society, and in Trinity College, with a view of being ultimately appointed to the chair of Modern European Literature in the University of Dublin. On the arrival of his Royal Highness Prince Albert, I was induced by the late Under-Secretary of State, H. Drummond, Esq., and by other gentlemen, to apply for some situation in the household

of his Royal Highness. I arrived in London, in May, 1840, obtained an introduction to his Royal Highness the late Duke of Sussex, who promised me his support, and I then transmitted to Prince Albert a series of my publications, comprised in eleven volumes, which I accompanied by academical documents and testimonials. Not receiving any definite answer, I called at Buckingham Palace and requested an audience with the Prince, which was illegally and unjustly made the ground of my confinement in Bethlehem Hospital, in June, 1840.

I owe my liberation from Bethlehem to a recent act of Parliament, which placed that hospital under the jurisdiction of the Lord Chancellor's Commissioners, who, after their first visit of inspection, restored me to society. After a trial of three months, I was informed by the authorities of the hospital, that they and the Secretary of State considered me of sound mind, and that I was liberated from all further restraint. I then felt it due to myself to transmit to Her Most Gracious Majesty a statement of the facts of my case, and to petition for redress, which is the undoubted privilege of every individual within this realm. Not having received a satisfactory answer, I called at Buckingham Palace, and enquired of the servants in waiting if I was permitted to attend the service of the Royal Chapel, and on receiving this permission I entered the chapel. This has been made the ground of my unjust confinement in this hospital; for I have been here detained on the certificate of a medical man, who had a few days previously declared me of sound mind; and the impression of the authorities of this hospital certainly is, that I am in the full possession of my mental faculties, and unjustly detained.

With great respect, I remain, my dear Sir,
Your most obedient and faithful servant,
EDW. PEITHMAN.

The Rev. Dr. Emerton, D.D., Principal of Hanwell College.

WHAT ON EARTH HAS HE DONE?

(From *Punch*, Sept. 23, 1854.)

The following paragraph from one of the daily papers has rather startled us. It is headed, "DR. PEITHMAN":—

"Dr. Peithman, whose intrusion into the chapel of Buckingham Palace was reported in the journals a few weeks since, was sent to Hanwell, after examination before the police magistrate. By the active interference of Mr.

Perceval, son of the late Prime Minister, and the Rev. Dr. Emerton, Principal of the Hanwell College, aided by the good feeling of some of the Middlesex magistrates, he has been liberated; but only upon the condition of his leaving the country. This he did on Saturday week with Mr. Perceval, who will accompany him to Germany."

Several of what the authorities might call very important questions crowd upon us after reading this paragraph:—First, What has Dr. Peithman done? Secondly, Why send him to a lunatic asylum? And, thirdly, If it was proper to send him there, why take him out again? Fourthly, If it was proper to release him, why transport him by ordering him out of the country? Fifthly, Why has Mr. Perceval expatriated himself with Dr. Peithman? But we might go on asking questions to all eternity on this very questionable paragraph, which discloses no other offence on the part of the Doctor than his having attended divine service uninvited in the chapel of Buckingham Palace.

Letter from a Gentleman, 70 Years of Age, of great Experience in Education.

In reply to your inquiry, I would premise that I went to the asylum fully expecting to find that, on some point, Dr. Peithman must be insane, as otherwise it would have been next to impossible for him to be detained at Hanwell; but, after having listened to his conversation for several hours on all kinds of subjects—religion, politics, science, language, poetry, &c., &c.—I must confess I was disposed to exclaim, "Surely, if such an individual is a proper inmate of a lunatic asylum, there are very few persons living who ought not to be there."

He manifested, by his remarks, a mind as acute and discerning as I ever knew, and his thoughts were expressed in language most correct. I do not hesitate to say that I have seldom in my life had so intellectual a treat.

How deplorable is it that, in our free and happy country, it is found possible that so superior a person, who might be most usefully occupied, should be immured in the walls of a madhouse!!!

B.K.

[*Letter from* EDW. PEITHMAN *to the* REV. DR. EMERTON, D.D.]

Sept. 28, 1854.

My dear Sir,

Allow me to offer you my sincere thanks for the kind and gracious interest you continue to take in my case. In Brussels, in Bonn, Cologne, Elberfield, and in other towns, I obtained certificates and documents, which were signed by the first physicians and scholars, expressing their conviction of my perfect sanity, and the injustice of detaining me a single hour under any species of restraint. They assured me that in Belgium, in Prussia, in Hanover, such an act of tyranny and oppression could not be perpetrated; that the forms and the spirit of the laws of those countries would not allow that a harmless and inoffensive individual—even if he were in a certain degree eccentric—should on that ground be deprived of his liberty; and they declared at the same time that they could perceive no eccentricity in me. I have the pleasure of transmitting to you authenticated copies of some of these certificates, and the originals of others, which will be sufficient to prove the opinion which the enlightened and liberal-minded men on the Continent entertain of the cruel and unjust treatment I have experienced in England. The Government of France, some years since, sent Professor Cousin to Germany to examine the system of classical and general education which is pursued in the public institutions of Prussia and Saxony; and the leading principles of that system have subsequently been adopted in all the educational institutions of France. For upwards of thirty years it has been my humble endeavour to introduce the same system into England, and to point out the absurdities of the prevailing method of scholastic education. I have received no reward, but I have, during fourteen successive years, been immured in a dark and solitary cell of a madhouse. The manner in which you have advocated my case, and vindicated the rights of humanity and of international justice, has conciliated to you the goodwill and affection of every truehearted German. The publications of yours, which I took with me to Germany, circulate from hand to hand, and one of them will be translated into German.

My father, a veteran officer, who was severely wounded in Waterloo, is delighted to have me in his house, and to support me in Germany until I obtain redress from England; but my family have not the means of permanently supporting me. I have devoted thirty years of my life to promote the best interests of England; the British Government has ruined my profession; and the Secretary for the Home Department has done everything in his power to prevent me from earning an honest living in England. My parents are old and infirm, and not likely to live much longer; and if I had a moderate annuity I should be happy to continue my exertions

in the cause of education, and devote my leisure hours to the improvement of your talented young son, to whom I hope you will have the goodness to convey my best wishes. I also beg you will have the goodness to present my respects to Dr. Begley, and to the magistrates who kindly exerted themselves to effect my liberation from Hanwell.—With great respect, I remain, my dear doctor, your most obedient and faithful

EDWARD PEITHMAN

The Rev. Dr. Emerton, Hanwell College.

P.S. I have had no difficulty whatever with my passport in the countries through which I travelled. The authorities, to facilitate my progress, have given me a railway card, which supersedes the necessity of a passport in any province of Germany. In a few days I shall speak with the Minister of Foreign Affairs in Prussia, and with the English ambassador in Berlin, and urge them to support your application with Lord Palmerston and Prince Albert in my behalf. The most eminent lawyers in Germany whom I have consulted on my case, have given their opinion that I have a *bona fide* claim to pecuniary compensation.

[*Letter from* EDW. PEITHMAN *to the* REV. DR. EMERTON, D.D.]

Sept. 29, 1854.

My dear Sir,

The best means to prove my perfect sanity and harmlessness during the fourteen years I was illegally detained in Bethlehem Hospital is, by a reference to the attendants of that hospital, who have, during the period of fourteen years, daily seen and observed me. I can refer you to three, who are willing to come forward and prove that, from 1840 till 1854, when I was liberated from Bethlehem, I was, every hour and every day, in the full possession of my mental faculties, perfectly harmless, and calm. Their names are _____ (whose address you can obtain from Mr. Perceval), _____, and _____, who is still in Bethlehem.

I have received a letter from Captain _____, now a Yeoman of the Queen's Guards, in St. James's Palace—and who, during the years of my detention, officially inspected Bethlehem Hospital—who has expressed his conviction that, during the many years of my unjust incarceration, I have at all times been of sound mind, calm, and rational. Of this letter, and of many other valuable documents, I was unjustly and illegally deprived by

Mr. Reynolds, the solicitor of the Treasury, that on the day of my committal to Hanwell, July 12, 1854, those documents might be available for the purpose of rebutting the absurd charge of insanity. I shall feel much obliged to you if you would have the goodness to communicate with Mr. Perceval on the subject of these letters and papers.

The day before my illegal committal to Hanwell, on the 8th of July, I had an interview with Dr. Moseley, who with other physicians used to inspect Bethlehem when I was detained in that hospital, and who expressed his willingness to vouch for my perfect sanity. This gentleman resides at No. 28, Tavistock Place. Dr. Lenton, of Leicester Square, is ready to express the same conviction. In Herne Bay, where I resided three months, I received very favourable certificates from Dr. Godfrey and Dr. Evans, and also from the Rev. Wm. Greaves, the incumbent of Christ's Church, Herne Bay, of which Mr. Reynolds unjustly deprived me, that I might not use them in my defense. The landlords with whom I resided in Herne Bay, and in 2, St. James's Square, London, will likewise swear to my perfect sanity.

Have the goodness to represent all these circumstances to Lord Palmerston, or to Mr. Fitzroy.

Believe me, your faithful
EDW. PEITHMAN.

The Rev. Dr. Emerton.

[*Letter from* EDW. PEITHMAN *to the* REV. DR. EMERTON, D.D.]

Berlin, Oct. 25, 1854

My dear Sir,

I have received your letter, and I thank you for your kind and generous exertions on my behalf. I arrived in Berlin on the 1st of this month, and my arrival was noticed in all the leading papers of this town; and the editors made the observation, that they trusted England would consider it a point of honour to grant compensation to a literary man who had for so many successive years honestly and zealously devoted himself to advance the best interests of his adopted country. Yesterday I had the honour of being admitted to an audience with Baron Manteuffel, the Prime Minister, and with the Minister of Justice, in Prussia. I submitted to them documents to prove the injustice and illegality of my protracted detention in Bedlam, and of my committal to Hanwell; and I explained to them that I owed my liberation from the latter place chiefly to your kind interference on my behalf. By the exertions you have made for me, you have conciliated to

yourself the goodwill and the affection of every true-hearted German. I have likewise made the acquaintance of Alexander von Humboldt, the author of the "Kosmos," and of Count Galz and Count Puchlar, the aides-de-camps of H.R.H. the Prince of Prussia, who advised me to remain in Berlin until Christmas, and wait here for the compensation which the English Government would probably feel it their duty to transmit to me for the loss of my profession, and the cruel and unjust detention I have endured. I sincerely trust that you, in conjunction with Mr. Perceval, will have the goodness to apply, in my behalf, to Lord Viscount Palmerston, and to the other personages who are concerned in my case; for, if England expects to receive redress for injuries inflicted on British subjects who reside abroad, I may be permitted to express the hope that the English Government will no longer avail themselves of the absurd plea of insanity to avoid giving any redress whatever in the *prima facie* case of injustice. I have in my possession documents signed by the first physicians and psychologists of Germany and Belgium, who have expressed their conviction that there is not a particle of insanity in my constitution; for, if any disposition to insanity existed in my mind, it would have developed itself under the dreadful tortures which I have endured. It is, therefore, evident that I have, from first to last, been unjustly deprived of my liberty; for it is not alleged that I have offended against the laws, or that I have committed or threatened to commit a breach of the peace. It is the opinion of the people of this country that you and Mr. Perceval have, in some degree, redeemed the honour of England by the generous manner in which you have supported me, and advocated the justice of my cause. I still entertain the conviction that, if you could represent all the circumstances of my case to H.R.H. the Prince, and place them directly before him, his innate sense of justice would prompt him to grant me redress. You would appear before him as the minister of that gospel which teaches us not to return evil for good.

You will, perhaps, have the goodness to let me know how my affairs are proceeding. I beg you will present my respects to your family.

Yours faithfully, EDW. PEITHMAN.

The Rev. Dr. Emerton.

Testimonial of the REV. A. SCHMIDT, *Archdeacon and Pastor of St. Catharine.*

Ascherleben, Sept. 30, 1854.

In the course of Dr. Peithman's residence here for the last fortnight, I have had frequent occasion to converse with him, and have recognised in him a man of extensive as well as solid education, and of a perfectly healthy mind.

The combination of his ideas is uncommonly vivacious, and always coherent; and, with the most attentive observation on my part, I found no proof that his self-consciousness could at any former time have been overcast.

Such I attest herewith, according to truth, and append the seal of the church.

(Signed) A. SCHMIDT,
Archdeacon and Pastor to St. Catharine.

Testimonial of DR. GLUM, *formerly Physician to the "Charite" in Berlin, particularly occupied in the Lunatic Asylum.*
TRANSLATION

Ascherleben, Oct. 3, 1854.

I am now called upon to give my judgment as a physician on the state of mind of the alleged lunatic, and I testify that Dr. Peithman's mind and body are perfectly healthy. In conclusion, let me state that I am quite convinced the supposed lunatic never can have, and never has, been insane.

This certificate I have attested, signed, and given under my seal.

GLUM, Dr. Med., Approbirter, Aug. 4.

Seen and attested, the Magistrate, Hentrick.

[*Letter from* JOHN PERCEVAL, ESQ.]

Elberfield, Prussia, Wednesday, Sept. 6, 1854

My dear Sir,

I am happy to inform you that Dr. Peithman and myself arrived here safely last Monday night. I do not regret the delay, as it has given me an opportunity of observing the Doctor in different circumstances, and of becoming more convinced than ever of his sanity, and that his peculiarities are the result of originality and earnestness of character, and not of weakness of mind. It has also given us an opportunity of making acquaintance on the road, with several foreigners and Englishmen, all of whom have expressed their opinion in his favour, and some of whom were perfectly astonished, and could hardly believe our story. On our way from Bruges or Ghent, we travelled in a carriage with a gentleman from Dublin, whom I found knew Dr. Peithman's former acquaintance. I could not have received greater proofs of the Doctor's sanity than I did from this colloquy. I suppose they spoke together of about twenty or thirty different persons—noblemen, ladies and gentlemen, medical men, professors, schoolmasters, publishers, etc., one reminding the other of names and facts, as if each had only left Dublin five years ago. I would have given a great deal to have the Doctor's powers of memory, and of acquiring information respecting persons and facts; and was surprised that, in the midst of his studies and duties as a teacher, he could have collected so much information about people in society. The gentleman had read some account of his history, and told him that in Dublin there was but one expression of indignation at the treatment he had received, and invited him to come over there, assuring him that there would be some public demonstration in his favour, if he did so.

Here he is, however, now very happy with his brother and sister-in-law, and his nephew and nieces, and quite content to act under their guidance. He proposes going to Berlin, and from thence to Dantzig.

His brother, who is about fifty-four years of age, is very indignant at the treatment he has received, and cannot comprehend it, as there is so much readier access given to subjects to their Princes in this country than in England, of which he has given me many examples. He has seen one of the female Sovereigns of Germany receive three or four petitions at a time, in her carriage; and says that, when he was at Berlin a few weeks ago, travelling hastily through, he should have made no more difficulty of calling on the Minister, and requesting him to obtain an audience for him with the King, than he would have done in calling on any merchant on particular business. He cannot understand the ceremony with which our Ministers are surrounded. I think, therefore, we must no longer be surprised at Dr. Peithman's conduct in this respect, and that it is the most absurd

thing possible to attribute it to insanity, in the face of the great powers of mind which he shows in every other respect. . . .

[*Letter from* EDW. PEITHMAN *to* JOHN PERCEVAL, ESQ.]

Berlin, Oct. 25, 1854.

My dear Sir,

I left my parents on the 1st inst., and arrived in Berlin the same day. The leading newspapers of Berlin, in noticing my arrival, stated that I was, on every principle of justice and of equity, entitled to compensation for the cruel and unjust treatment I have experienced; and that the honour of England is implicated to grant me that compensation, if the English Government expects to receive redress for injuries suffered by British subjects abroad. Every true Englishman will acknowledge that the system of reciprocity is good not only in international commerce, but also in the intercourse of different nations. Yesterday I had a long interview with Herr von Manteuffel, the Prime Minister of Prussia, and I was pleased to see how accessible and friendly the Ministers of this country are, for I had previously been limitted to an audience with the Minister of Justice in Prussia. I placed before Baron Manteuffel some documents relative to my illegal incarceration in English asylums, and those publications the transmission of which to his Royal Highness, Prince Albert was the proximate cause of my protracted detention. The Minister seemed to argue, from the dates of these publications and of the documents which I submitted to him, that at the time of my committal to the madhouse I could not have been insane; and he was led to this conclusion from the informal, partial, and hurried manner in which that committal took place. And the minister of justice observed, that, if I had actually been insane on the first day or in the first month of my detention, it was monstrous to deprive a fellow-creature of his liberty during fourteen successive years without a *periodical* inquiry and examination into the state of his mind; that this detention could be justified only if I had committed a great offence against the peace of society, of which it was proved I was totally innocent; and that it was unfair if the English would now avail themselves of the plea or fictitious pretext of insanity, to avoid paying me that compensation to which I was fairly entitled. He observed, that errors and mistakes will occur in the administration of the laws of every country, but that no honest Government would refuse redress, if the principle of international justice is therein involved. The King of Prussia has granted chapels to the English in three of his royal palaces—at Berlin, Konigsberg, and Coblentz—to perform

divine service; and it seemed incredible to some of the editors and literary men at Berlin, to whom I stated the fact, that I had been committed to a dark and solitary cell for attending the Chapel Royal in London, although I had previously given the attendants my card and asked permission; and that it was chiefly through your kind interference, and through the Rev. Dr. Emerton, that I was liberated from this unjust detention. You have both conciliated to yourself the good-will of every true-hearted German. The English are allowed to inspect every palace in Germany. I have seen them in the private chapel of the King of Prussia; and, if they conduct themselves so decently and respectfully as I have always done, they are never interfered with. . . .

I have made the acquaintance of Count Galz and of Count Puchler, the aides-de-camp of the Prince of Prussia, who advised me to wait till Christmas for a compensation from England; and, if it did not arrive by that time, to return to London, and, with the powerful support of the Prussian Government, to urge my claims in Parliament, or in an English court of justice. I have in my possession documents signed by the first physicians and psychologists, and expressing their conviction that there is not a trace of insanity in my mind. This is the opinion of Alex von Humboldt.

I beg you will present my respects to your family, and believe me, my dear Sir, yours faithfully,

EDWARD PEITHMAN

John Perceval, Esq.

[*Letter from* JOHN PERCEVAL, ESQ. *to the* REV. DR. EMERTON]

November 12, 1854.

My dear Sir,

I came home last Thursday evening, and found the enclosed waiting for me.

In reply to your queries respecting the origin of your assertion, that Dr. Begley had stated Dr. Peithman to be sane, it was one of the Commissioners on Lunacy that I met when posting a letter at Charing Cross, and who told me that such was the report of the medical officer at Hanwell; and when (afterwards) I drew his attention to the distinction that Dr. Begley drew between saying that "he was *calm, rational,* and *coherent,* and that he was *sane,*" he replied, that it was tantamount to the same.

I agree with you that necessity compels you to relinquish your generous idea of employing Dr. Peithman as a professor in your college, until you can persuade the majority of the parents of your pupils that it is not only a sane thing to do, but much to their advantage; of which I am more than ever convinced since I have read his beautiful treatise on the niceties and peculiarities of the Latin language, which show such a delicacy and refinement of taste, as well as so much erudition, that my heart bled again at the confinement of a man of so elegant a mind for fourteen years in the horrible association of Bethlehem.

Before he left me in Elberfield, Dr. Peithman had already obtained several certificates from German physicians to his sanity, and he has sent me some in a letter which I now forward to you. I hope to see you soon.

I remain, &c. &c.

The Rev. Dr. Emerton.

[*Letter from* EDW. PEITHMAN *to the* REV. DR. EMERTON]

Berlin, Nov. 15, 1854.

My dear Sir,

I thank you for your letter of the 9th instant, which I have just received. I transmit to you a verified copy of a letter from a Dublin pupil of mine, Mr. Hercules M'Donnell, the son of the Provost of the University of Dublin. During my stay in Dublin—from 1836 to 1840—I delivered lectures before the Royal Dublin Society, in Kildare Street, and also in Trinity College, to a large class of auditors. I likewise had private classes, which were attended by the Professor of Anatomy in Trinity College, Dr. Harrison; by Dr. Montgomery, Merion Square; and by Dr. Apjohn, the Professor of Chemistry. My perfect sanity during all the years I have been illegally and cruelly detained in Bethlehem you will be enabled to ascertain, if you could obtain an interview with some of the senior attendants of that hospital—Mr. _____, Mr. Thos. _____, Mr. _____, Mr. _____, Mr. John _____. Mr. Stewart, the gate-keeper of Bethlehem Hospital, knows their places of residence. Mr. S. Moseley, surgeon, 28, Tavistock Place, and Sir John K. _____, a captain of the Yeomanry (St. James's Palace), stated, in the presence of Mr. Perceval, that they had frequently seen me in Bethlehem, and that they had at all times found me to be of sound mind, and perfectly harmless. I have never been different from what I am now, and the first physicians and psychologists of this country, who are allowed to be the best in Europe, have declared in writing

that there is not a *trace of insanity in my constitution.* I beg you will present my respects to your family, and believe me

Yours most faithfully,
EDW. PEITHMAN.

The Rev. Dr. Emerton.

[*Letter from* HERCULES M'DONNELL, ESQ. *to* DR. EDW. PEITHMAN]

Upper Bagot Street, Dublin, April 14, 1854.

My dear Sir,

You need offer no apology for writing to me, and I only regret there can be any occasion for an appeal to my testimony. It may not, perhaps, be as full as you imagine, but such as it is, you are fully entitled to it, as a matter of strict justice.

I perfectly recollect you in Dublin during some years; the dates I cannot recal [sic] with precision, but I know it was during my undergraduate course, between 1836 and 1839. I was in frequent communication with you, and I had the advantage of studying under you three or four of the European languages, with entire satisfaction to myself, as well as with the approval of my father, whose position enabled him to be peculiarly qualified to select an instructor for his son. If his letter, as provost of the university, would be of service, I am sure you have not escaped his recollection. It would be saying very little, if I were to testify only that you were in full possession of your mental faculties, and perfectly harmless. I not only found you so, but considered you possessed of no ordinary abilities, cultivated by very industrious study—a gentleman of propriety and education.

As I had, in common with many of my acquaintances, constant opportunity of observing you, I should think it very extraordinary indeed if you had any mental aberration, without its coming in some way under my observation. I have, indeed, heard reports, but they were always from those who *did not know* you, and who had heard of your confinement. The causes of that confinement I could not know of my own knowledge; but you often stated them to me, as your letter now repeats them.

I think, perhaps, that when such ideas were suggested, they have been confirmed with strangers by a certain eccentricity or abruptness of manner; but how few are without some such peculiarity, and geniuses are proverbially eccentric. Whatever the *manner,* I could never detect any defect in the mind.

If I can be of any use, I shall be most happy to aid a gentleman who, I fear, has been most unfortunate; and, if I may credit what report says, not very fairly dealt with.

Yours very sincerely,
Signed HERCULES M'DONNELL.

Dr. Peithman.

[*Letter from* JOHN PERCEVAL, ESQ. *to the* REV. DR. EMERTON.]

Kensington, Nov. 19, 1854.

My dear Sir,

In answer to your queries respecting Dr. Peithman, I beg to inform you that having visited Dr. Peithman at Bethlehem in 1853, at different times for several hours, and corresponded with him while there—having been in constant communication with him for many weeks at Herne Bay and in London, previous to his last confinement at Hanwell—having subsequently visited him and corresponded with him in that asylum, and seen his letters to other parties, and travelled with him to Germany—I consider it perfectly absurd to call that gentleman insane, in the legal sense of that word—as labouring under any delusions, or as a person incapable of taking care of himself, and dangerous to himself and others. He is a man of extraordinary learning, and of surprising memory, not only in matters of philosophy, science, and history, but on the every-day topics of social life. He is also remarkably active and energetic, and early and regular in his hours; possessed of great acuteness, and he acts often with great shrewdness and wisdom. His moral courage is also unquestionable in cases of great difficulty. His works show that he is endowed with a delicate and refined understanding. The eccentricity of his manners as a foreigner, and the abruptness of his address even to strangers, may make him appear to be of unsound mind to well-educated persons in this country, and strange even to some of his own countrymen; but amongst the society to which his brother introduced us in Germany, he would pass unnoticed, and was less singular than many I observed; and I attribute his abruptness to a want of knowledge of the world—perhaps to a contempt of the world's formalities, from a consciousness of his worth and abilities, and to his habits of forcing instruction on his pupils. His chief, and I believe his only offence in 1840 and in this year was, his endeavour *to obtrude* himself, according to our notions, upon the presence of Prince Albert, and on the attention of her Majesty. But the Germans, who were indignant at his treatment, were also

surprised at the absurd extent to which we carry our reverence for royalty; and repeatedly confirmed to me the account he had given to me of the affability of their Princes, and of the facility with which access could be obtained to them, and petitions could be presented to them, on all occasions: so that the eccentricity of his conduct in this respect is perfectly accounted for.

In some respects, he may be accused of simplicity and credulity; and his return to the palace at Buckingham House, so soon after a fourteen years' confinement in Bethlehem, upon the same pretence, is attributed by many to a weakness of understanding; but I am inclined to doubt this in a very great degree, when I consider that, a few days before, he had received from the Prince's secretary the assurance of the Prince's sympathies in his misfortune, whilst his Royal Highness regretted that he could not accede to his petition; that his desire to have an interview with [the] Prince can scarcely be called a fixed idea, as it was ground [in] the conviction that his original applications to the Prince had never been laid before him, and on the desire and the confidence that he had, if he could have an interview with the Prince, to prove to him, by his conversation and manners, and by works that he had published in 1836 and in 1840, at the period of his confinement in these years, that he never had been insane, or so insane as to justify his being then confined; and that he was urged on to take this step by necessity, being devoid of funds. But if he was guilty of any weakness, it was a perfectly harmless, and even an amiable, one, as it consisted in an unbounded confidence in the goodness of the dispositions of the Prince, that he would condescend to listen to and inquire into his representations; and, when he found how unjustly and cruelly he had been dealt with, be moved by a sense of justice and of compassion to relieve him, and to try to make him some amends. At any rate, there was nothing in this step to justify his confinement as a madman. He was not even guilty of tresspass [sic] in seeking the Royal Chapel, as he was admitted by the servants, to whom he produced his card to show who he was, that he might be turned back if he was in error; and he was misled, he assures me, by information that private persons can sometimes obtain admission to the Royal Chapel, which I have since heard is true, but not to the body of the chapel.

I remain, yours truly,
JOHN PERCEVAL.

To the Rev. Dr. Emerton.

[*Letter from* EDW. PEITHMAN *to the* REV. DR. EMERTON]

Berlin, Nov. 25, 1854.

My dear Sir,

I have just received your letter of the 20th instant, for which I am much obliged to you; I am, upon consideration, perfectly satisfied that every statement made in my petition to the Queen is in every point correct, and I would, if necessary, verify it on oath. I trust that you will have the goodness to place the circumstances before Lord Palmerston and his Royal Highness Prince Albert, and if necessary, before the public. I agreed with the magistrates for the county of Middlesex to remain *three* months abroad; this time has now fully elapsed, but I am willing to remain in Berlin until the beginning of February next, if it should be deemed expedient by those whom I consider to be my true friends.

Believe me, yours most faithfully and obliged,
EDWARD PEITHMAN.

The Rev. Dr. Emerton.

THE CASE OF DR. PEITHMAN.

[From the *Neues Preussische Zeitung.*]

BERLIN, MAY 6.—A petition from Dr. Edward Peithman, Professor of Philosophy, gave rise to a very interesting debate in the First Chamber on Monday last, which we now lay before our readers, as we had not room to give a detailed account of it in our report of the proceeding in the Chamber at the time. Dr. Peithman had prayed the Chamber "to support his endeavours to obtain compensation for his unjust deprivation of liberty, and confinement for many years in the Bethlehem madhouse in London." The petitioner was born in Osnabruck, but domiciliated in Prussia since he was two years of age. He is the stepson of the Prussian major and provincial governor, the Baron von Ripperda; and had been, according to his statement, without lawful inquiry, and without trial and condemnation, for thirteen years and eight months confined in Bethlehem. In the English House of Commons several members of Parliament had interested themselves for him in vain.

Ober-burg-meister JOCHMAN, as Reporter of the Committee on Petitions, lamented the circumstances, but thought that his representations bore on the face of them a certain degree of improbability, when it was

considered how high-minded and free-spirited was the character of the English nation; therefore the committee must move that the Chamber should pass on to the orders of the day.

Two amendments (one of Count Arnim Boitzenberg and the other of Ober-burg-meister Krusnick), for referring the petition to the consideration of the Government, received a lively and powerful support.

Dr. Von ZANDER said: I feel it my duty to rise in behalf of the petitioner, on account of his lamentable lot. In Albion, a country so highly esteemed, and which boasts that the liberty of the subject is respected there more than in any other land, a Prussian citizen has been confined, without trial or justice, nearly fourteen years; and then again, without trial or indemnification, released. What can we say, gentlemen, to such treatment? What would the English have said, or much rather, what would they have done, if a Briton had so suffered amongst us? But I rejoice that such treatment is not possible in our country. I hold it to be perfectly worthy of the Chamber to help an injured man to obtain his rights.

Count ARNIM: I am also of opinion that the Chamber is fully competent to interfere in this case. The case has become, through the Press, a public question, and so the materials for proceeding are furnished which the committee finds wanting. It is not denied, even by the Government, that the man has suffered a heavy injustice; and there is only one doubt, whether, in the strictest State propriety, it is the duty of Hanover or of Prussia to interfere. The passing on to the orders of the day would show a want of sympathy in the fate of a much-injured individual. The case has, even in the English Parliament, occasioned a demand for an alteration of the law, in order to prevent such occurrences in future. Dr. Peithman has been brought to me, and I can only assure the Chamber, that I found him to be in a state of mental health that truly could have given no one the necessity of robbing him of his liberty for thirteen years. That the English Government should give him the means to assure his future prospects, which they have blasted, appears to me to be only just.

Ober-burg-meister KRAUSNICK said: Dr. Peithman came to me to beg me to afford him a room for his lectures on English literature, by which he is compelled to seek his daily bread. I found him to be a man of perfectly sound mind, whose righteous petition I must recommend to the consideration of Government.

Count HOVERDER: I have found, through my daily intercourse with Dr. Peithman, that both his mind and heart are sound. Indeed, it is affecting to see with what little bitterness that man speaks of the injustice that has been done to him.

D. Von der HEYDT: The name and the relations of the petitioner were unknown to the committee, otherwise the committee would certainly have resolved upon referring the petition to the Government. I join in

supporting that motion, and I beseech the Government to obtain justice for a Prussian subject.

Ober-burg-meister JOCHMAN replied: No member of the committee will oppose this motion. Our motion to proceed to the order of the day was only made as a matter of form.

The motion of Count Arnim was almost unanimously adopted.

In conclusion, it is to be observed that Dr. Munro, on whose sole authority Dr. Peithman was detained in Bethlehem during thirteen successive years, has been proved to be in a state of insanity, and is actually confined in an asylum.

FIN
JOSEPH CLAYTON, PRINTER,
10, CRANE COURT, FLEET STREET, LONDON.

POSTSCRIPT: IT CAN HAPPEN TODAY!!

The following Associated Press story is reprinted here courtesy of *The Daily Camera* in Boulder, Colorado.

MISTAKENLY IN INSTITUTIONS 31 YEARS

NEWLY RELEASED MAN FOUND SAFE

CHICAGO (AP) Summer 1984—A Chinese immigrant who never learned English and was mistakenly kept in mental institutions for 31 years wandered away from his new home and was missing for more than a day before turning up ten miles away.

"David was not having one of his good days Friday," said Peter Porr, executive director of the Association of Chinese from Indochina. "Let's say he got up on the wrong side of the bed."

David Tom, 54, was released Dec. 29 from the Illinois State Psychiatric Institute. He needs constant care because he has few basic living skills due to his years in hospitals.

On Friday, he wandered away from his new home at the association, officials there said. Twenty-six hours later, Tom walked into a Chinatown police station, 76 blocks away.

Tom, who was awarded $400,000 by a federal court jury last May for being confined to mental institutions since 1952, has had "his good days and his bad days," since his release, Porr said.

Tom, who speaks few English words, such as "Chinatown," was out walking with a group from his new home and wandered away on his own.

Patrick Murphy, Tom's lawyer and the Cook County public guardian, suspected Tom would head for the sights, sounds and smells of the Chinatown enclave, but an overnight search proved fruitless.

Tom is familiar with Chinatown because for about a year in the late 1970s a guardian took him out of the hospital for brief day trips, including lunch and visits there.

Then on Saturday afternoon, just as a South Side police captain was about to distribute photographs of Tom to officers in his station, Tom walked up to the front desk.

In Tom's suit against the state, Murphy alleged that his rights were violated because he was institutionalized for decades with no one who spoke his Chinese dialect to care for him.

The state contended he was institutionalized because he was psychotic and that all his needs were met.

NOTES

1. Bateson, Gregory, from his Introduction to, John Perceval, *Perceval's Narrative: A Patient's Account of His Psychosis,* ed. Gregory Bateson, Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1961.
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