

ment on this subject at large, to guard against such cases for the future

We were surprised to find that it had been the practice of the Board of Directors to change occasionally the physician of the Institution—most generally at intervals of two years—in compliance with a rule, which, according to the testimony of one of the oldest of the former Directors, (Thomas Sheppard) was adopted because the Institution “was considered by the Board as a school for the improvement of the medical knowledge of the person chosen, and with this view, young men, who had just graduated, were generally appointed.” (See Testimony, page 83.)

This practice of making the hospital department of the Institution subservient to the advantage of young graduates, and opening it to them as a field to prepare them for efficient practice in their profession, and when the medical officer of any period had improved in his knowledge, and become useful to the establishment, to supercede him by the selection of another, was wrong. Humanity alone should dictate the impropriety of subjecting defenceless prisoners, when suffering under disease, to the hazard of such ills as they might experience from being resigned to the care of an unpracticed Physician, but the interests of the Institution were opposed to such capricious removal of this office. To relieve the monotony of daily labor, it is reasonable to expect, that convicts will often feign sickness, in the hope of being relieved, by the Physician, from work. In making the discriminations between real and simulated cases of disease it will often require all the knowledge of a much experienced physician, and it is manifest, that he would be materially aided, in doing this, by a previous acquaintance with the habits of the convicts. We know of no public station in which a physician is necessary, that requires more experience and judgment than the office of Physician to a Penitentiary, and we hold it to be the duty of the Directors, as it is the interest of the House, when they have a good Physician, to retain him.

A frequent exercise of the pardoning power is believed by all, who are conversant with the subject to be productive of serious injuries, as well in its general effects as in those which are produced by it upon prison discipline. Mr. Livingston in his Penal Code, has pointed out the evils resulting from the too free use of the pardoning power, and several of the witnesses have testified strongly as to its bad effects. (See testimony pages 96, 127, 128, 150 for some excellent remarks on this subject.)

The testimony of the directors, as given on page 21, is very decisive against frequent pardons. They say, “We are of opinion that the frequency of pardons has a strong tendency to weaken the efficacy of punishment by exciting in the convict a constant hope of release, and that the pardoning power should be, therefore, exercised