

"The general health of the patients has been on the whole very good. The only exceptions were two or three slight outbreaks of diarrhoea among a few of the patients, accompanied in two or three cases by dysenteric symptoms. The cause, I have no doubt, was sewage emanations. McDougall's system of deodorization of the sewage by carbolic acid I cannot pronounce a complete success. It is true it was subjected to perhaps too severe a test. The sewage was run on to undrained land with a clay subsoil. It could not percolate down through the soil, and however completely the sewage was deodorized at first, yet it will necessarily decompose and give off injurious gases, except the soil absorbs and transforms it. I never could detect any offensive smell from the sewage when first run on to the land, but since it has been run off in a covered drain we have had no more diarrhoea. The field over which it is to run is not yet levelled and drained, and until that is done we shall try no more experiments with it."

This matter of the utilisation of the sewage is one of such great importance, that we feel no apology is necessary for again declaring how different is the experience at Hayward's Heath to that of Dr. Clouston. There the whole sewage from the asylum has been run on to the land directly in front of the asylum for the last seven years, and without the slightest ill effects; and latterly it has been run directly from the drains on to the land, without the intervention of any tanks to collect the solid matter. The soil is the stiff Wealden clay. The fields are all well drained, and the sewage is deodorised with carbolic acid and lime.

*Eighteenth Annual Report of the North Wales County Lunatic Asylum, Denbigh.* GEORGE TURNER JONES, L.R.C.P. Edin., Medical Superintendent.

At the time the report was written there were in this asylum 372 patients—183 males and 189 females. The institution seems to have been fortunate in donations this year, having received a large store of valuable prints, the gift of Messrs. Colnaghi, Messrs. Graves, and Messrs. Hogarth; but, more valuable still, Mrs. Mesham, a lady residing in the neighbourhood of the asylum, has presented fourteen acres of freehold land, in perpetuity, for the uses of the institution. The other matters in this report are of but local interest.

*Twenty-first Annual Report of the Devon Lunatic Asylum.* G. SYMES SAUNDERS, Esq., M.B. Lond., Medical Superintendent.

THERE are 254 males and 289 females, making a total of 643, now in the asylum at Exminster. These numbers include the patients chargeable to the borough of Plymouth, who have been in this asylum since its opening; and a contract has been entered into to retain them for a further term of ten years.

This asylum was visited by the terrible scourge of cholera during last autumn. We can fancy nothing more dreadful than cholera in a lunatic asylum, or more wearying than the anxiety it must cause to all the officials—peril encountered and duty manfully done however, nothing can be sweeter than to know that our efforts are appreciated, and the following paragraph from the report of the committee must have been extremely pleasing to Dr. Saunders, Mr. Stuckey, and the other officials. Speaking of the epidemic, they write—“Before concluding this part of our report, it is our duty to state that in our opinion the fullest care and attention was bestowed on the sick, and that the exertions of the attendants, by night and day, were unremitting. At the same time we have every reason to think that all that could be done by medical skill and treatment was effected by the medical superintendent, Dr. Saunders, and by the medical assistant, Mr. Stuckey.”

Dr. Saunders reports that the health of the patients had been good during the summer, and up to the date of the outbreak there had been a comparative immunity from diarrhoea, although cholera and choleraic diarrhoea prevailed in the adjoining districts. On the 28th September two idiots, brothers, who had been in the asylum nearly twenty years, were attacked with cholera in its most virulent form. How the disease was imported, or in what way these patients first came in contact with the germ of the cholera poison, is unknown, although, writes Dr. Saunders, “the greatest care has been taken to clear up the mystery on this point.”

The disease rapidly spread, and patients were attacked in nearly every ward on the males' side. They numbered in all forty-five cases, of whom thirty died; and thus by the 9th of November, when the last case occurred, the disease, which confined itself to the males' side of the house, had, as Dr. Saunders points out, more than decimated the male population in the short period of six weeks. No female patient, no male engaged in out-door pursuits, and no attendant, was attacked, the disease confining itself almost entirely to idiots, general paralytics, and dements. Dr. Saunders accounts for the immunity of the females to the fact that the latrines for either sex in the Exminster asylum are devoted to their exclusive and separate use. Dr. Saunders gives the following summary of the measures adopted to isolate, as far as possible, the infected patients, and arrest the spread of the disease among the healthy.

“1. An observation room was set apart for the reception of all patients attacked with diarrhoea and suspected cases.

“2. Two dormitories at the detached male new house were converted into a cholera ward. A temporary staircase, external to the building, was erected, and internal communication with other parts of the building was cut off by a partition. All cases of decided cholera were at once sent to this ward.

"3. All closets and utensils were thoroughly disinfected, and cleansed twice a day, oftener if necessary.

"4. All excreta, vomit, as well as dejections, were received into vessels containing chloride of lime, carbolate of lime, or Sir W. Burnett's fluid. When passed on the floor they were at once covered with disinfectants, and removed without delay. A deep trench was dug in which the excreta were buried.

"5. The attendants were directed to watch the patients narrowly, and report to the superintendent, or assistant medical officer, any patient seen going to the closet more than once a day, also to report the first symptoms of diarrhoea or vomiting.

"6. All linen or mattresses tainted with the discharge to be burnt.

"7. The hands of all attendants on the sick to be scrupulously cleaned, whenever they have become soiled by 'rice water,' by washing in 'Condy's fluid.'

"8. Special attention to be directed to the feeding and clothing of all the patients.

"9. An extra allowance of meat was ordered for every patient in the asylum, and other extras according to circumstances.

"10. Convalescents to be kept some time separate from the healthy patients.

"11. The friends of patients were not allowed to visit the asylum.

"12. The patients in the ward where the disease first broke out were removed to No. 6 ward, and the patients in that ward were accommodated in the chapel, which was fitted up as a dormitory containing thirty-six beds. Every gallery, day room, and dormitory, with closets, &c., were thoroughly whitewashed and disinfected throughout the asylum.

"13. A temporary cholera hospital for the women, according to a plan submitted to the visitors by the superintendent, was erected. It consists of a wooden building 60 by 20; 12 feet to the eaves, and 25 feet to the centre, accommodating twenty patients, allowing to each patient 1000 cubic feet. In design and construction it is similar to the military wooden hut or hospital.

"14. A *qualitative* and *quantitative* analysis of the water was made by Professor Voelcker, who reported that it was 'unusually pure and wholesome drinking water,' 'and unusually pure as regards organic impurities.'"

*The Annual Report of the Dorset County Lunatic Asylums, Charminster and Forstan, for the Year 1866.* J. GUSTAVUS SYMES, Medical Superintendent.

THE two asylums at Charminster and Forstan continue to be under the management of J. G. Symes, Esq., the senior medical assistant, Mr. W. H. Clarke, residing at Forstan, and a second assistant medical officer with Mr. Symes at Charminster, which is the new asylum. The numbers in the two asylums on December 31st were—males, 237, females, 223; total, 460.

In the report of the committee we find the following:—"A new set of general rules for the government of the two asylums has been prepared." A copy of these rules was forwarded to us with the report, and we find that, although the senior assistant medical officer