

PART II.—REVIEWS.

Thirty-sixth Report of the Commissioners in Lunacy.
1882.

There is no falling-off in the interest which attaches to this report, in which continued assurance is given that the public receive from this department of the State honest, earnest, and enlightened service.

We learn from it that the registered lunacy of England and Wales has increased within the last twelve months by 1,729 patients, and that the total number on the 1st January last was 74,842, in the proportions of 33,747 males to 41,095 females, and of 7,753 private patients to 67,089 paupers. Of these, the private patients were distributed as follows: In County and Borough Asylums, 584; in hospitals, 2,770; in licensed houses, 3,415; in naval and military hospitals and the Royal India Asylum, 305; at Broadmoor, 228; and in private dwellings, 451.

The paupers who were cared for in County and Borough Asylums were 42,107; in hospitals, 151; in licensed houses, 1,468; at Broadmoor, 274; in workhouses, 16,976; and as out-door patients, 6,113.

The increase referred to has been confined almost exclusively to pauper patients, who numbered 1,717 more than on January 1, 1881; while the private patients had only increased by 12. As we have previously pointed out, this discrepancy undoubtedly arises, in some measure, from the inadequate provision which exists in other classes of institutions for the care of private patients whose means are insufficient for the payment of more than small weekly sums for their maintenance, and who are consequently obliged to be sent to the County and Borough Asylums under arrangements with Boards of Guardians.

The Commissioners draw attention to the increased number of pauper patients who are being maintained in licensed houses, as showing that the provision by county and borough authorities of public asylum accommodation fails to keep pace with the requirements, a state of things upon which they remark that they are constantly urging the Justices to take a comprehensive view of the prospective re-

quirements of their districts, but, in many instances, they say that their representations have only resulted in action after much delay, whilst in the meantime Guardians have been obliged to maintain many of their insane poor in licensed houses at nearly double the cost which would have been incurred in County Asylums.

The very elaborate series of tables, which form a large and most valuable portion of the report under review, show that, whereas in 1861, 19·71 persons in every 100,000 were registered as insane, the proportion had reached 28·06 last year, and this year 28·34, which would represent one in every 352 of the population. They also show that while the percentage of paupers to population has gone on regularly decreasing for several, and, with some fluctuations, for many years past, that of pauper lunatics to paupers still continues to show the steady increase which, also with some fluctuations, has continued since 1859. This is explained by the Commissioners to be due to an annual accumulation of patients in asylums, from the greater care taken of them, and a reduced death rate among them, rather than to an annual production of fresh insanity disproportionate to the yearly increase of the population; and they support this opinion by reference to a table, which gives the ratio of admission into asylums to the population, and shows that whereas this was 5·17 to every 10,000 in 1875, it had only risen to 5·18 in the year to which this report relates.

This is eminently satisfactory, as proving that, heavy as the burden of insanity has become to the sane part of the community, there are influences at work which, in spite of drawbacks such as some continued depression in trade, and disturbance in the labour market, have already begun to stem the tide of increasing lunacy, and hold out a more encouraging prospect for the future.

The alleged causes of insanity in those under treatment during the year present a remarkable uniformity with those registered in the previous year, and we again give a table which shows the percentages of these in three classes of patients. (For Table see next page).

Of the total number of patients admitted into all classes of asylums during 1881, 9·2 per cent. were epileptic, 7·4 general paralytics, and 27·4 credited with a suicidal propensity. The number of suicides during the year was 23, of which 17 were in County and Borough Asylums, 1 in hospitals, 4 in licensed houses, and 1 in private care.

TABLE I.

CAUSES OF INSANITY.	PROPORTION PER CENT. TO THE TOTAL NUMBER OF PATIENTS IN EACH CLASS ADMITTED DURING 1881.								
	Private.			Pauper.			General Paralytics.		
	M.	F.	T.	M.	F.	T.	M.	F.	T.
MORAL—									
Domestic trouble, including loss of relatives and friends.....	4.4	12.4	8.2	4.3	9.7	7.1	4.2	9.4	5.3
Adverse circumstances (including business anxieties and pecuniary difficulties)	9.1	3.6	6.5	8.7	3.2	5.9	11.8	3.3	10.0
Mental anxiety and "worry" (not included under the above two heads) and overwork	14.5	9.5	12.1	4.1	4.8	4.5	7.7	3.3	6.7
Religious excitement	1.5	5.1	3.2	2.8	2.5	2.6	.6	.4	.5
Love affairs (including seduction)	1.0	4.2	2.5	.7	2.2	1.4	.5	1.4	.7
Fright and nervous shock	1.1	2.5	1.8	1.0	2.0	1.5	.3	1.4	.6
PHYSICAL—									
Intemperance, in drink	19.1	8.3	14.0	19.3	6.3	12.7	24.4	16.0	22.7
" sexual	1.4	.3	.9	.6	.4	.5	2.9	1.8	2.6
Veneral disease	2.2	.2	1.2	.5	.2	.3	1.6	.9	1.4
Self-abuse, sexual	5.2	.9	3.1	1.2	.1	.7	.5	—	.4
Over-exertion	1.3	.8	1.0	.5	.5	.5	1.2	.4	1.0
Sunstroke	3.1	.1	1.7	2.5	.2	1.3	3.6	—	2.8
Accident or injury	3.4	1.2	2.3	5.2	1.1	3.1	5.8	2.8	5.1
Pregnancy.....	—	.5	.2	—	1.0	.5	—	1.4	.3
Parturition and the puer- } peral state	—	6.9	3.2	—	6.7	3.4	—	8.4	1.7
Lactation	—	.4	.2	—	2.3	1.1	—	2.3	.4
Uterine and ovarian dis- } orders	—	4.0	1.9	—	2.5	1.2	—	1.4	.2
Puberty2	.5	.3	.2	.4	.3	.1	—	.1
Change of life	—	5.6	2.6	—	2.5	1.2	—	3.7	.8
Fevers	3.0	1.3	2.2	.9	.7	.8	.5	.4	.2
Starvation and privation.....	.2	—	.1	2.0	2.5	2.2	2.2	3.7	2.5
Old age	1.8	2.3	2.0	3.9	4.5	4.2	.5	.9	.6
Other bodily disorders	7.4	8.4	7.8	11.1	9.8	10.4	10.6	10.8	10.6
Previous attacks	12.9	16.4	14.5	14.8	19.2	17.1	4.9	8.0	5.5
Hereditary influence ascer- } tained	14.9	25.1	19.7	18.8	20.5	19.7	13.3	18.3	14.4
Congenital defect ascertained	7.5	3.3	5.5	4.9	3.2	4.0	.1	.4	.2
Other ascertained causes	10.4	2.0	6.4	1.5	.8	1.1	.6	.9	.7
Unknown	12.4	12.8	12.6	23.6	23.7	23.7	31.5	31.1	31.4

The total admissions of the year 1881 were 14,669, of which 1,872 were readmissions and 976 transfers. Deducting the latter, the fresh admissions of the year were 13,693, or 2,263 (1,178 males and 1,085 females) of the private class, and 11,430 (5,593 males and 5,837 females) who were paupers.

The patients discharged (including those transferred) were 8,784, of whom 5,366 were returned as recovered. The deaths were 4,715.

Excluding the idiot asylums and the transfers, the recoveries, calculated upon the admissions, were 34·85 for the males, 44·46 for the females, and 39·72 for both sexes, which the Commissioners consider to be very satisfactory, as being not below the average of the last 10 years. With the same exclusions the death rate was 11·61 for males, 7·47 for females, and 9·37 for both sexes, a rate which is lower than the average of the last 10 years.

The percentages of recoveries and deaths in the several classes of institutions are shown in the following table:—

TABLE II.

	Proportion per cent. of Recoveries to Admissions.			Proportion per cent. of Deaths to the Average Numbers Resident.		
County and Borough Asylums ...	32·66	40·84	37·58	12·1	7·5	9·6
Registered Hospitals	28·7	47·09	38·22	6·2	4·8	5·5
Metropolitan Licensed Houses ...	26·36	38·8	32·95	11·18	8·43	9·78
Provincial Licensed Houses ...	22·25	32·21	27·87	9·64	7·17	8·31
Private Single Patients	11·11	9·37	10·71	4·57	7·34	6·27

The number of post-mortem examinations made in asylums during the year was 2,789 out of a total of 4,715 deaths, or 59 per cent., as compared with only 37 per cent. in 1880, a difference which the Commissioners record with satisfaction, as indicating an increased safeguard for the proper and kind treatment of patients.

They enumerate with approbation the various means which are adopted in the several institutions which they visit for the amusement of the patients, and for avoiding the necessity for restraint, and they draw attention to the importance of increased exertion being made to give employ-

ment to patients, the amount of which, they say, varies unreasonably in different asylums of the same class.

With reference to the important question of attendants, while they have no complaint to make of insufficiency in their number in County and Borough Asylums, they consider that there is room, speaking generally, for much improvement in their training and efficiency, a fact which no one would probably be more ready to admit than the superintendents of asylums, who have to endeavour to secure, from such materials as they can obtain, the discharge of very delicate and difficult duties.

The whole question of the qualifications and remuneration of attendants, who are required to undertake skilled work of a high class, is attended with considerable difficulty, and it is greatly to be desired that establishments could be devised wherein the requisite training could be given to suitable persons willing to become attendants.

But the class of persons who are now clamouring so loudly for County Boards would, we fear, be scarcely willing to pay the higher price which this more finished article would demand and deserve.

The average weekly cost in County and Borough Asylums appears to have decreased 2½d. since 1880. It has been in County Asylums 9s. 4½d.; in Borough Asylums, 10s. 8½d.; and in both taken together 9s. 6½d., the following being the items of expenditure:—

TABLE III.

	County Asylums.		Borough Asylums.	
	s.	d.	s.	d.
Provisions (including malt liquor in ordinary diet) ...	4	4½	4	6½
Clothing		8½		9½
Salaries and wages	2	2½	2	5½
Necessaries, <i>e.g.</i> , fuel, light, washing, &c.		11½	1	2½
Surgery and dispensary		½		½
Wine, spirits, porter		½		½
Charged to Maintenance Account—				
Furniture and bedding		5½		6½
Garden and Farm		6		6½
Miscellaneous		3½		8½
	9	7½	10	11½
Less monies received for produce sold		3		2½
Total average weekly cost per head	9	4½	10	8½

The Report before us deals at unusual length with the present condition of the registered hospitals and licensed houses.

With reference to the latter, a more or less detailed account of each is given, and there are some, it must be admitted, which are not spoken of favourably, and do not seem to be fulfilling a very useful part in the care of the insane, but these are the exceptions. Many of them receive patients at low rates of board, and, of course, afford them humble accommodation, but it seems difficult, if not impossible, to displace them with advantage to insane persons of the lower middle class, for whom they provide accommodation which it is difficult in many instances to obtain elsewhere.

As respects the condition of the "Hospitals," the reports of the Commissioners are almost uniformly favourable, but they repeat their complaint of last year that more provision is not made in them generally for the care and treatment of persons of the middle class who are unable to make more than very moderate payments.

Their profits, they say, appear too often to be expended not in the extension of provision for cases of this kind, but in accommodation calculated to attract the wealthier class, and, in some instances, by apparent competition with licensed houses of high reputation.

In these complaints of the Commissioners there is, no doubt, considerable force, and it is greatly to be desired that in the case of all hospitals a continued effort should be made to devote a considerable and safe proportion of their income to the purpose to which attention is directed in this report.

No class of the community is in more urgent need, and to none could charitable aid be more suitably extended. But in order that this charity should deserve the name, the rule which prevails in many hospitals, that the mental states and not the pecuniary payments of the patients shall regulate their classification, should be preserved, for it would obviously be no charity to charge the rate of a County Asylum and give the patients only such accommodation and associations as are suitable for persons of the lower classes.

Unfortunately, as the Commissioners remark, "the unaccountable lack of public sympathy for the mentally afflicted of the middle class is a great difficulty with hospitals for the insane."

They have, as a rule, only small endowments, and any

attempt to limit them in their reception of affluent patients must ultimately result in a loss of connection and income, and in an inability to give even their present amount of aid towards charitable purposes—the very object of their existence—besides lowering the character of their accommodation, in which at present all participate.

From the figures which are given by the Commissioners, it would appear that, omitting St. Luke's and Bethlem, which possess large endowments, the total income of the 11 lunatic hospitals amounted in 1881 to £157,448, of which only £8,450 was derived from donations, subscriptions, legacies, dividends, or any other form of endowment, and of this £3,664 was possessed by two hospitals, leaving to the nine others the small sum of £4,786, or an average of only £532 each.

These facts tell their own story. If wealthy philanthropists will not endow these institutions, a considerable number of opulent patients must be admitted to make it possible to assist persons of the middle class and those who have seen better days. Not, however, that we for a moment deny that the governors of the lunatic hospitals throughout the country require to keep steadfastly in view the claims of a very needy class of insane patients, and the importance of devoting as much space as possible to their accommodation.

In this connection we would point out the extraordinary fact that one registered hospital which has obtained just celebrity, and which provides gratuitously for the very class which is alleged urgently to require accommodation, has for so long a period had a considerable number of empty beds, that it has recently been decided by the governors to admit patients at £2 2s. a week to increase the income, which has been seriously lessened by agricultural depression. Strange to say, there does not appear to be a sufficient number of insane persons falling within the rules of this excellent charity to fill the beds *without charge*, but they are now steadily filling when it is known that patients can be admitted on the privilege being granted them of making a payment!

The report contains the usual entries of visits to the County and Borough Asylums, from which it would appear that their general condition and management are as creditable to those who are responsible for their direction as they are satisfactory from a national point of view.

With reference to the 451 registered single patients, the Commissioners express their general approval of their care and treatment, which they describe as having materially improved of late years.

They report, however, that while the insane in workhouses are generally well cared for, they have had occasion in some cases to complain of grave defects, but so far from there now being a general desire to detain in workhouses patients who ought to be sent to asylums, the tendency is rather to take advantage of the four shillings allowance, and crowd the asylums unnecessarily with those who might, with a little more liberal provision in the way of food and supervision, be adequately dealt with in workhouses.

The Commissioners conclude an interesting and suggestive report with the following tribute to the memory of a deceased colleague, which those of our readers who, during his long career as a Commissioner, were brought into official relation with him, will cordially endorse:—"The Secretary having reported to the Board the death of their colleague, Mr. W. G. Campbell, it was resolved to express their deep sense of the loss sustained by themselves and the public. During six-and-thirty years Mr. Campbell's career on the Commission exhibited remarkable diligence, judgment, and ability. His ripe judgment and long experience were of the greatest value both to themselves and to the public."*

Twenty-Fourth Annual Report of the General Board of Commissioners in Lunacy for Scotland. 1882.

We agree with the Commissioners that it is more useful to give once in five years a detailed review of the progress which the statistics of asylums reveal rather than to do so in each Annual Report. Such a review was given two years ago; in the present report, therefore, the general progress of the Board is merely indicated. From this it appears that from 1858, when it was established, the total number of

* The useful List of Medical Superintendents, &c., in appendix (F), requires to be really, as well as nominally, "corrected to date of publication, 1882." We have been unable to discover from it who is the present superintendent of the Royal Naval Hospital, Yarmouth, the gentleman whose name is given having left long ago.