

*Richmond District Lunatic Asylum, Dublin.—Report of the Medical Superintendent for the year 1862.*

This asylum contains now 678 patients. The staff is very large—eighteen officers, including two visiting physicians, a surgeon and an apothecary, in addition to Dr. Lalor and no end of matrons and deputies. Then we find two gate porters, two hall porters, and a messenger, a band master, in addition to two schoolmasters and twenty-five male attendants and six female nurses for the service of 305 male patients, exclusive of artisans, farm servants, and two men in the kitchen. There are also two female cooks, two kitchen maids, two hall maids, and thirty nurses for 373 female patients. From the balance-sheet it appears that the imperial treasury (as one might have guessed in Ireland) pays the piper to the tune of £17,000. We have no such establishments allowed in England; even the princely foundation of the Royal Hospital of Bethlehem has to sail nearer the wind than do our friends in the Richmond District Asylum.

Dr. Lalor appears to have gone further with his schools than we remember to have seen reported elsewhere. There has been an average of forty-seven male and sixty-seven female patients on the school rolls during the year 1862. From the time-table given, the school instruction extends, we see, throughout the day, and daily. "In the past good results (says Dr. Lalor) of the system of educating the insane pursued here, and in its great prospective advantages, I am sure the board of governors will find ample reward for the zeal and readiness with which they have supplied the means of introducing and working out the system."

*The Twelfth Annual Report of the Committee of Visitors of the Middlesex County Lunatic Asylum at Colney Hatch. January Quarter Sessions, 1863.*

This report contains 178 pages, closely printed, with a mass of tables; deals with an income of £60,000 a year, and refers to the history and condition of 2300 patients who were under treatment at Colney Hatch during the year 1862. About fifty pages of the 178 are occupied with unpleasant details, which we should rather have seen consigned to the oblivion of the clerks' office. The case of Mitchell is a warning against the discharge of a lunatic with delusions, however harmless he may show himself under the discipline of the asylum.

In direct opposition to Dr. Lalor's experience in the Richmond District Asylum, the Colney Hatch committee have discontinued the office of schoolmistress, "as the schools have been found to be en-

tirely a failure." There must have been some great want of skill in their management to justify such a sweeping censure. The Commissioners, in their report of their visit, p. 74, "regret that no kind of instruction is now given to the patients of either sex," and "hope that the committee will take this subject into their serious consideration." They certainly ought to do so.

Dr. Sheppard's contributions to the volume are marked by a thoughtful and independent tone. He evidently realises both the rights and duties of his office. With reference to the manifest want of ventilation throughout Colney Hatch, and which in the day rooms and galleries Dr. Sheppard has already done his best to remedy, in places where the windows do not open, by the introduction of air-gratings level with the floor, he observes (p. 78), "light and ventilation are two of the great desiderata in all buildings designed for hospitals or asylums, yet they are two of those things which seem to have been singularly overlooked in the construction of this great refuge for part of the insane population of the county of Middlesex. The ventilation of the various dormitories and galleries is one of those improvements which I have ventured to bring prominently under your notice during the past year, and you have been good enough to carry out my suggestions to a very considerable extent. More, however, remains to be done. By such measures calm and unfevered nights will be substituted for restlessness and disquiet."

We regret that the Commissioners' wise suggestion of a handsome detached chapel (which might with advantage be placed adjoining the cemetery) has not yet commended itself to Dr. Sheppard's approval. He should visit the West Riding Asylum, and see how well the new detached chapel there has answered. The present chapel at Colney Hatch is a miserable, gaol-like place, and to add galleries to it, as the clerk of the works suggests (everybody at Colney Hatch is allowed to make their crude suggestions in print on the Commissioners' well-considered report), would make it even more hideous and unsuitable for its purpose. It would make an excellent recreation hall, and enable the patients to have a large weekly ball, as they ought to have. Dr. Sheppard remarks on the great labour of preparing the large dining hall for a dance, "so that we are seldom able to avail ourselves of its extended area for recreational purposes." Another good reason for thus appropriating the chapel.

The Commissioners remark on the number of bedsteads having sackings without mattresses. Dr. Sheppard remarks that it is only the general paralytics and the worst epileptics who sleep upon sacking without mattresses, and "that such an arrangement is best suited to their comfort and protection, by admitting of an easy draining away of the urinal excretion." The Commissioners are again, we think, right in this matter. The number of sackings with the dirty plan of a drain in the crib, with a chamber beneath, strikes every superin-

tendent on his visits to Colney Hatch. We manage these matters better in the provinces, and give to every general paralytic and epileptic a good horse-hair mattress, protected by a Mackintosh sheet, and which, by careful changing during the night, entirely protects the mattress. The Colney Hatch canvass stretcher is not a fit bed for a general paralytic.

The Commissioners speak of the manifest improvement in the wards occupied by the better classes of patients. Mr. Marshall records a case of suicide, "the second case only that has occurred in upwards of ten years, during which period more than 2900 patients (female) have been treated."

The establishment is ample, and liberally paid. Thus there are twenty-five laundrymaids. The kitchens and stores at Colney Hatch are unrivalled, and the new medical superintendent sets to work as if he meant at last to place the male wards on the same footing.

*Report of the Clonmel District Lunatic Asylum for the year ending 31st December, 1862.*

Dr. Flynn dwells in this report on the heavy increase of his duties entailed by the new rules for the Irish asylums. He also bears testimony to the good understanding subsisting between himself and the visiting physician.

"Far be it from me to claim exclusively the credit, whatever it may amount to, of all that is good, or rather all this absence of evil. Much is due to the cordial and friendly co-operation of my colleague, Dr. Shiell, who, in the discharge of his duty as visiting and consulting physician, fully, freely, and honorably co-operates with me in every particular; and I attribute to this honest and upright conduct the good results that have occurred for many years in this institution."

*Forty-fourth Annual Report of the Stafford County Asylum, 31st December, 1862.*

Dr. Bower, in his report to the visitors, thus notices the steady mitigation of the severity of the symptoms of insanity under the non-restraint treatment:

"The above number of recoveries shows, in a satisfactory and gratifying manner, that the improved moral treatment of non-restraint, now believed to be almost universal, modifies in an extraordinary degree the most alarming and dangerous aspects of the insane, and tends largely to hasten their cure.

"Although the moral and intellectual faculties are either changed,