

Under Public Lunatic Asylums are included those for idiots, and the Broadmoor Criminal Asylum. Under Workhouses the Metropolitan Asylums for Idiots and Imbeciles are included. All persons mentally deranged not comprised under the above three headings are relegated to the column headed "others."

With regard to *age-periods* the following table shows the number of the insane at successive decades per million of corresponding ages and sexes, 1891, in the general population of England and Wales:—

Ages.	Males.	Females.
All ages	3250	3478
0	88	82
5	614	444
10	1106	806
15	1926	1385
20	2728	2089
25	4060	3761
35	5719	6022
45	6870	8053
55	7530	9060
65	7669	9454
75	6792	9786
85 and over	6781	9635

The Lewisham Workhouse Inquiry.

It seems as if the troubles produced by certifying were taking a new line, and parish officers, who hitherto have not been troubled much in exercising their medical discretion as to persons of unsound mind, are going to have their turn of worry. The medical officers of workhouses have no interest in signing certificates for the removal of the insane to asylums, and their masters, the Guardians, can hardly be

looked upon as interested either, but this notwithstanding, the parish of Lewisham will have cause to remember the danger of sending persons supposed to be of unsound mind to the County Asylum.

The facts of the case are simple, and it puzzles one to think how the lawyers managed to spread out the inquiry so that it lasted nearly three weeks. A certain Mr. Williams, a journalist, said to have been at one time on the staff of "The Times," was received into the Workhouse infirmary suffering from what was reported as alcoholism. He seems to have passed through various troubles of body and estate, and to have been exposed to cold and starvation for some time before his reception. He was depressed and miserable on admission, and the assistant medical officer spent a long time in the most careful investigation of his case, and agreed with the senior medical officer that Williams was suffering from melancholia with suicidal intentions, and that, therefore, he ought to be placed in the lunatic ward for safety. Williams said that he wished he were dead, and that life was not worth living. He also spoke of his friends having turned against him, and of persons in the street taking notice of him. He was sent into the lunatic ward where there was another patient who was dying from general paralysis of the insane, and this seems to have been one of Williams' grievances, that he was put into a ward where a raving lunatic was dying. After several examinations it was decided that he had better be sent to the County Asylum at Cane Hill, and this was done. On reception there the medical officers of the asylum could detect no clear evidence of insanity, and naturally waited. They were informed of the nature of the symptoms from which Williams suffered, but it was hardly their place to investigate the truth or falsity of all the statements made by the patient when he appeared free from any depression or excitement.

Anyway, they reported that they had detected no insanity, and the patient was only kept for a time under observation. At the end of some weeks he was discharged "well," and the troubles seem soon to have arisen, for Williams found sympathisers among the Lewisham Guardians, and the evening papers caused a sensation by a heading "Sane man in a Madhouse." The medical officer of the Workhouse, whose conduct was thus called in question, wrote asking for an inquiry, and about the same time some of the Guardians seem to have thought the whole matter should be sifted. The

inquiry was held before Inspector Dr. Downes, who, during the whole tedious process, displayed the most painstaking care, and the utmost calm, amid counsels' differences. We think the counsel for Williams went as far as was allowable in imputing motives to the doctors of the Workhouse, and the tone of the cross-examination recalled rather a criminal than a civil trial. After the most careful study of the newspaper reports on the case, we are convinced that there was enough evidence to satisfy the medical men of the Workhouse that Williams was probably suicidal as a symptom of melancholia, which depended on bad feeding, exposure, and excess of alcohol, and that, therefore, he should be treated as a lunatic. As to the asylum officers, though we feel the difficulty of their position, we cannot help thinking that if they heard of the various charges which were made against Williams they were hardly in a position to state that he was not insane, though he may have been free from the more active signs of insanity. This case once more calls our attention to the trouble and suffering that may be caused by patients who are suffering from forms of alcoholic insanity which temporarily render them irresponsible, but which, passing off, leave them permanently malignant.

*American Superintendents and the New York
Lunacy Commission.*

There is, and has been for some time, an indignant revolt on the part of the Superintendents of Asylums in the State of York and the State Commission in Lunacy. In England the almost unanimous feeling among mental specialists favours the existence of a Lunacy Board. With some exceptions the action of the Board in London has been fairly judicious. The late Lord Shaftesbury held the opinion strongly that very considerable freedom of action must be left to medical superintendents, even on points on which the Commissioners, individually or collectively, might entertain opposite views. In some instances in which this course has not been pursued by the Board, the result of the collision has been unfavourable to the authority of the Commissioners.

In the United States, the recent action of the New York Commission of Lunacy has been directed to petty details of management, which we regard as undignified, mischievous, and irritating. The consequence has been a disastrous con-