

paralytics, a large proportion in the absence of large manufacturing or mining or seafaring centres. On the other hand phthisis only accounts for two deaths out of ninety-one. The asylum patients chargeable to the county and the county borough of Brighton have increased by 58 or nearly 6 *per cent.* during the year.

Sussex (West).—The Committee state that they have found the establishment of a pension scheme a thorny subject, and prefer to wait until Parliament has said what, if anything, it is going to do in the matter.

Dr. Kidd gives the following curious instance of self-restraint. It has quite an old-world flavour about it.

“Attempted escapes have been made in four instances, and one of these was successful. This patient (G. G—) was subject to severe attacks of excitement at night, when he was apt to be destructive and dangerous to himself, but by day he was capable of being allowed a large measure of liberty, and was freely trusted. He abused this confidence and effected his escape, and was eventually written off the books. It was subsequently ascertained that he was assisted by his friends, but was so apprehensive of the nocturnal attacks—of which he was well aware—that he had to strap himself in bed every night.”

Metropolitan Asylums Board Imbecile Asylums.

The body which is responsible for these asylums has quite recently reorganised its work, and has substituted for independent committees managing the separate institutions a central committee, with sub-committees for each asylum. In this respect it has followed the example of the London County Council, and will no doubt experience the same beneficial results from co-ordination. One immediate result has been the production of full statistics on the lines of the Association's Tables, which have been adopted to the full extent.

The daily cost in respect of all charges other than those of a special nature was 1s. 4½*d.* for the year ending Michaelmas, 1900. The average number resident during 1900 in the three institutions was 5831.

A new departure has been taken by the hiring on lease of a large house near Ealing, in which it is proposed to place “150 educable (*i. e.* improvable) children with proper classroom, etc.” There will be 90 males and 60 females. It is proposed to place the institution under the care of a headmistress or matron, assisted by a housekeeper, medical assistance for general treatment being sought locally, while the special treatment is to be directed by a medical expert visiting once a week. The Board's expressed reason for the change of practice is that medical superintendents become administrative officers instead of medical experts. However that may be, a medical superintendent trained in the service is the best guarantee for kind, efficient, and even treatment, as a rule, and we are of the opinion that the absence of a medical superintendent will make it the more incumbent on individual committee men to pay frequent and unannounced visits.

The Committee shows itself very much alive to the dangers of overcrowding, and to its duties in regard to tuberculosis, of which we shall

speak later on. They have laid down for themselves the following standard of cubic space per patient :

Standard height of apartment	.	.	12 feet.
Ordinary cases (by day)	.	.	300 cubic feet.
" " (by night)	.	.	500 "
Infirmary	.	.	850 "
Offensive	.	.	1200 "

These allowances for ordinary cases are considerably below the requirements of the Lunacy Commissioners for asylum inmates, being about the same for infirmary patients.

At *Leavesden* the chief subject of remark is the terrible death rate from phthisis, tuberculosis playing a principal or secondary part in 105 out of 310 deaths. The satisfactory proportion of 90 per cent. of *post-mortem* examinations leaves very little room for scepticism as to the real amount of this disease existing at death. The deaths therefrom occurred at all ages, four being of patients between eighty and ninety. Dr. Elkins states that the neighbourhood is very healthy, and free from consumption ; he has no sort of doubt that the disease is bred in the asylum, and is favoured by overcrowding of a degenerate population. In consequence it was determined to enlarge the cubic space, as above, with the result that Leavesden is reduced in capacity for patients by one eighth, viz., from 2000 to 1750. Influenza was also a fatal pest, no less than fifty-one deaths, or one sixth of the total mortality, being attributable to it.

Sixty-three persons died at ages between seventy and ninety.

At *Caterham* phthisis had but little share in the mortality, eight out of 134 deaths arising therefrom. Dr. Elliott ascribes this to the salubrity of the site (chalk subsoil), and exceptionally dry bracing air.

We are accustomed to the frequent complaints in asylums as to the admission of senile dements from workhouses ; it is rather startling to find that Dr. Elliott has the same complaint to make. He thinks that several of those sent to him might very well have been retained in their respective workhouse infirmaries.

At *Darent* the deaths were few, as might have been expected from the juvenile element in the conjoined institutions ; they only amounted to 75, or 3·85 on the resident population. Phthisis caused twelve of these, pneumonia eighteen, and valvular degeneration of heart twelve. General tuberculosis, however, accounted for four.

Dr. Taylor produces an interesting table, founded on Dr. Beresford's very careful inquiry into the histories of the children admitted. Fifty-four of fifty-seven males and thirty-two of forty-five females were thus followed up with accuracy. Dr. Taylor says that in dealing with congenital insanity, hereditary influences are by far the most important factors, exciting causes, as given by relatives, being of small consequence. He considers the chief hereditary factors to be insanity (including epilepsy), phthisis, syphilis, and alcohol. He enunciates another factor of great importance—abnormal labour. These causes stand thus:—History of insanity, 19 cases ; of phthisis, 24 ; of syphilis, 3 ; of alcohol, 6 ; and of abnormal labour, 35. This latter subject will well repay further inquiry. It is seldom that in ordinary asylums is there any opportunity of obtaining information bearing on it

While at all the asylums under the board the recognition by the Medico-Psychological Association as training institutions is evidently appreciated, Dr. Taylor urges his committee to insist on the certificate as an indispensable qualification for office holding. He says that the nursing is now intelligently carried out, and the patients reap the benefit—bedsores, one of the surest tests of nursing efficiency, being now almost unknown, and this in spite of the fact that a majority of the cases are of defective habits and many crippled and helpless.

The tables of each institution are, as said above, worked out to the full, and a summary of all is likewise given. We welcome the appearance of them and the detailed reports as giving to our branch of medicine a large addition of valuable information, which has hitherto not been available. We hope at some future period to find space and time to devote to a comparison between the statistics of these and other homes for the insane.

Some Registered Hospitals.

Bethlem.—This institution has not, for some years, been receiving its usual quantum of admissions by reason of some departments being under extensive repair. The average number resident last year (213) is the lowest for very many years. We suppose that the majority of the admissions being from recent and active insanity, it has been possible to obtain more reliable information as to the causation of the disease in each case; but, however this may be, it is creditable to those concerned that in only six out of 226 cases has it been necessary to admit the cause to be “unknown.” We notice, too, that in nearly 50 *per cent.* hereditary predisposition has been established. In ten cases venereal disease has been assigned. We know that this is the term adopted by the committee of the Association, who reviewed the tables, some fifteen or more years back. But since then syphilis has attracted much more attention, and it would be well in all asylums now to state it as a cause, leaving the other term for those rare cases which may be attributed, directly or indirectly, to other forms. The proportion of cases attributed to alcohol is small, being 10 *per cent.* in the male and about 4 *per cent.* in the female, the Commissioners’ 5-year average for private patients being 20·8 and 9·4 respectively. The high proportion of cases caused by mental anxiety, worry, and work (28 *per cent.* in the males and 13 in the females) points to the classes from which the patients are drawn to a great extent.

Barnwood.—Dr. Soutar, like some others, is rather sceptical about the advantages of manual labour as an all-round method of treatment.

“We have tried again and again, but with no success, except in a few isolated instances, to get our patients to engage in manual labour. At our failure in this matter I am not at all surprised. Very few men who have been trained for the professions or for commercial life, as is the case with most of our patients, have any liking or capacity for manual labour on farm or garden—they are accustomed to take their exercise in other ways. I have seen patients who enjoy a brisk walk in the country, or a steady saunter in the grounds, or a game of tennis, or cricket, or bowls, dawdle listlessly and discontentedly in the garden with the unaccustomed spade, or rake, or hoe in hand—a real reproach to those who failed to ascertain how far the general theory, that manual labour is good for the insane, is applicable