

the "trust" system : the medical societies of each locality are to combine and to select from their members a limited number, to whom alone they give authorisation to appear as expert witnesses.

W. C. SULLIVAN.

Corporal Punishments for Crime. (Med.-Legal Journ., vol. xvii, No. 1, 1899.) Baldwin, Clark Bell, and others.

This subject is discussed in a number of papers read before the Medico-Legal Society of New York. The opinions expressed for and against the application of whipping and castration to criminals are supported by considerations of the theological and sentimental order, with much appeal to political and colour feeling. The discussion is without scientific interest.

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8. Asylum Reports.

*The Insane in India: Indian Asylum Reports for 1899.
Bombay Presidency.*

WE have been favoured with a copy of the report of the Surgeon-General with the Government of Bombay to the Chief Secretary to Government, General Department. From it we propose to reproduce a number of paragraphs, avoiding all criticism, and contenting ourselves to allow the extracts to speak as to the present condition and administration of Indian asylums.

The only alterations carried out in the Ahmedabad Lunatic Asylum during the year under report were the addition of iron-barred doors to six cells for dangerous lunatics.

There was one case of escape from the Colába Lunatic Asylum on the night of July 17th, 1899. This man was a criminal lunatic, who was sent on June 27th, 1899, from the Ahmedabad Central Prison under sentence of transportation for life for murder. He was remarkable for the obstinacy with which he refused food, and had to be forcibly fed. He was from the very commencement under lock and key in a barred and bolted cell and gallery, and was never allowed into the grounds. It appears that by leverage he bent the bolt of the lock of his cell, reaching it easily through the bars of his door. He was thus free to enter the gallery, where there are eight windows, all closed by vertical iron bars an inch in diameter. He bent one of these iron bars sufficiently to wrench it from its socket; and, once in the grounds, escape was very easy, owing to constructional facilities. A police investigation of the circumstances was made, but without avail. Two night watchmen make the round of every part of the asylum every two hours, one for the European, and the other for the native sides. Just outside the gallery where this insane was confined, and commanding a full view of it, are stationed five warders, who take it in turn to be on guard for two hours each—to give water, help epileptic insanes, keep order, and generally to exercise supervision. These men, it should be observed, have to take their turn of night watching in addition to day duty.

Statement No. 7 gives the alleged causes of insanity among the

lunatics. Of the 1114 insanes confined in the asylums during the year under review, a cause is given in 536, and is unknown in 578. Of the known cases, 415 are attributed to physical and 121 to moral causes. Of the former, the use of intoxicating drugs and abuse of spirits accounted for 143 cases; previous attacks, 71; hereditary causes, 37; fever and epilepsy, 31 each; congenital disease, 24; masturbation, 18; syphilis, 12; injury to head, 11; destitution, 7; sunstroke, childbirth, and hypochondriacal causes, 5 each; sexual excess, 4; climate, 3; uterine disorder, 2; and gout, mental trouble, venereal sore producing mental depression, fall followed by fever, paralysis, and overwork, 1 each.

The following are the causes, as far as they can be ascertained, leading to insanity in persons charged with crimes of violence:

Ganga-smoking	10	Fever with persistent head-	
Epilepsy	7	ache	1
Hereditary	5	Puerperal fever	1
Grief	4	Plague	1
Spirit-drinking	3	Disappointment	1
Previous attacks	3	Anger	1
Religion	3	Injury to head	1
Anxiety	2	Unknown	38
Fever	1		

In the existing social state of the people of India, information regarding the previous habits of patients and the probable causes of their insanity must, in my opinion, continue to be very incomplete. Many patients are mendicants, of whom little is known; and in the cases of those whose relatives are accessible it is often most difficult to obtain trustworthy particulars. Magistrates and police officers usually have the best opportunities of obtaining the histories of lunatics; but it would seem that either these are neglected, or inquiries into antecedents are neither closely nor intelligently pursued, or that the details are, for various reasons, unobtainable. The superintendents of asylums report that the information supplied by medical officers and magistrates is often scanty and defective; but, as regards the first-mentioned officials, they are in most instances largely dependent upon the judicial and police officers for the required histories. I have now taken steps with a view to secure in the future as full and accurate information as possible. As regards Indian hemp, I still maintain the opinion that it is a not infrequent cause of insanity, which, in the earlier attacks, takes the form of transient mania.

In calculating the percentage of the lunatics employed, those used as supplementary servants of the asylums—*i. e.* for works other than manufactures—have also been included in this statement; but the estimated value of their labour has not been taken into account. In this connection I beg to state, for the information of Government, that the importance of finding work for the lunatics is recognised. A large number of the patients are unfit for steady or profitable labour, and there is not only much difficulty in providing suitable occupation, but in some instances a want of skilled supervisors. At Colába, lunatics who are willing to be engaged in some occupation are allowed to work in the

factory attached to the asylum or on extra-mural work ; but the European and Eurasian inmates have little suitable occupation in which they can be employed. In other asylums of this Presidency, gardening and cultivation are the chief occupations of those who are willing to work. The female inmates are for the most part employed in grinding corn. The unruly insanes are as much as possible induced to work by the knowledge that they will not otherwise be allowed to share in the diversions and other inducements provided. These consist in musical instruments, games, books, papers, periodicals, etc. ; and native musicians are also occasionally engaged on the principal holidays, when extra diet, sweetmeats, etc., are supplied to the inmates, and are much appreciated. The sum expended for the recreation and amusement of the inmates during the year under review was Rs. 1380, as compared with Rs. 1460 in 1898.

Without considerable expenditure, and a more intelligent staff of attendants, it will not, in my opinion, be possible to largely increase remunerative work in the asylums in the Presidency. Few of the patients are fit for such occupation ; but, if suitable establishments and plant were provided, milch cattle might be kept, and dairies opened at a few of the asylums, though they would have to compete with other dairy farms which now exist in most of the larger towns.

The question of diminishing restraint receives as much attention as possible from superintendents ; but I agree with these officers in their opinion that, until a more educated and intelligent class of persons is attracted to asylum service by improved pay, there can be but little advance in the details of managing our insanes. The present wages of the attendants are those of the ordinary labourer, and consequently the warders are scarcely above this class. In the case of the majority of insanes in this country I believe that confinement within enclosures is necessitated not only by the want of capacity and attentiveness on the part of the warders, but by their own low intelligence, which renders a large proportion of the cases unmanageable and unimprovable. So that whilst I acknowledge that the confinement of the patients, as a whole, can be made less irksome by structural improvements, including more spacious exercise yards and by a more capable staff of attendants, I am unable to admit that excessive restraint is now imposed on refractory individuals, or that the liberty of the general body of inmates is seriously restricted in the asylums of this Presidency.

Some English, County, and Borough Asylums, 1899.

Bristol City Asylum.—Dr. Benham points out that the admission of old incurable cases is often a matter of necessity, since the magistrates, knowing that the imbecile wards of the local workhouses are blocked up and insufficient, feel bound to send them to the asylum. He refers to the recommendation of the Select Committee on Cottage Homes, one of which was that all pauper epileptics and imbeciles should be provided for in separate institutions outside the workhouse, which he thinks should be sanctioned by Parliament forthwith. The asylum had no less than sixteen, or nearly one half of the total number of male attendants called up as reservists.