

7. Mental Hygiene.

The Progression of Psychiatric Therapy towards Treatment without Certification [L'Evolution de l'assistance psychiatrique les Services ouverts Sans Interrement.] (L'Hygiène Mentale, June, 1925.) Raviart and Vulliers.

Discussing one direction in which the voluntary system may be said to have failed, namely, in avoiding the stigma which is attached to certification, the authors point out that for the general public the mentally ill remain "madmen," whether one treats them in psychiatric hospitals, in clinics, on a voluntary or a certified basis. The aim of psychiatry should be to educate the public rather than to enter upon a fruitless attempt to deceive it by calling old things by new names.

They advocate the establishment of psychiatric hospitals, where those who after a preliminary period of observation and examination seem likely to show an early improvement may be treated, the more chronic cases being relegated to the asylums.

In the description of these hospitals one notes the importance laid upon baths for the more excited patients, and for those who are confused or agitated a special variety of covered bed, in which the patients, while they have a certain degree of freedom of movement, are prevented from doing themselves any serious injury.

D. EWAN CAMERON.

Where and How one ought to Treat Psychopaths [Ou et comment l'on doit Traiter et assister les psychopaths]. (L'Hygiène Mentale, June, 1925.) Reyneau.

The author in his article proves himself a strong advocate of the newer conception of psychiatric treatment. His aim is to treat the mentally ill as one would the bodily ill. Admission to hospital should, if possible, be voluntary. The patients' relatives should be encouraged to visit him and as much liberty afforded him as possible. Work in which the object in view is the patient's benefit and not the production of an article of commercial value is advocated.

In order to avoid the stigma of insanity, the name of "psychiatric hospital" should be employed rather than "asylum." The author makes a strong plea for the treatment of the poor on the same lines.

D. EWAN CAMERON.

8. Mental Hospital Reports, etc.

ENGLAND.

Kent County Mental Hospitals.—(1) Barming Heath: The total number of admissions for the year 1925 was 314 (males 109, females 205), the number of male admissions being the lowest recorded for

fifty years. Hereditary defect was considered to be a causative factor in 62·6% of the admissions for the year. Of the direct admissions, the chief form of mental disease was recent melancholia, the diagnosis in about 19% of the cases; confusional insanity, primary dementia and delusional insanity also figured largely among the admissions.

The recovery-rate for the year was 36% of the total admissions, and nearly 70% of the recoveries took place within a year of the commencement of the mental illness.

The death-rate was the low one of 6·2% of the average number resident, either broncho-pneumonia or lobar pneumonia was responsible for over 20% of the deaths, and general paralysis for 13·6%

The hospital was unfortunate enough to be visited by a severe epidemic of influenza, involving some 200 patients, with only 4 deaths, however.

Dr. Wolsley Lewis has adopted a complete scheme for the training of nurses, which will be carried out with greater ease when the new Training School for Nurses is available.

"With regard to the recommendations of the Committee on Nursing, the following system has been adopted: After three months' probation, candidates of good character, if physically fit and of sufficiently good educational standard, are required to sign a contract for three years' training, at the same time paying a deposit of £5, which is refunded on completion of the course. The curriculum is as follows: (i) Practical Work in the Wards; Sick Nursing (6 months); Admission Wards (6 months); Wards for Melancholics (6 months); Wards for Epileptics (6 months); Wards for General Paralytics (3 months); Wards for the Tubercular (3 months); Wards for the Delusional cases (3 months); Children's Ward (3 months). Some part of this time is spent on night duty. Lectures and demonstrations in the Wards are given by the Medical Staff; tutorial classes by the Sister-Tutor and detailed instructions by the Ward Sisters; in addition there are 12 practical classes (bandaging, instruments, etc.) by the Sister-Tutor; 12 sick-room cookery classes by the Kitchen Superintendent; 20 massage classes by a trained Masseuse; 6 classes in dispensing by the Dispenser. (ii) Lectures are given on the following subjects: Anatomy (10); Physiology (10); Hygiene (15); Theory and Practice of Nursing (20); General Diseases (20); Mental Diseases (20). We have an arrangement by which selected nurses are sent to London Hospitals for general training (5 are being trained at the present time); we also have 11 general hospital nurses undergoing training in mental nursing here."

Occupational therapy in this hospital, referred to in some detail in a former report, gives evidence of continued and increasing value.

(2) Chartham Downs: The total number of patients in this hospital at the end of the year 1925 was 1,182, and there were 263 admissions (males 119, females 144) during the year. The largest single form of mental disease amongst these was recent melancholia; 19 cases of general paralysis were admitted, and of these latter Dr. Collins notes that suitable cases treated by the Starké method in lieu of malaria infection have shown good results.

36% of the admissions were cases of senile dementia, and 15 epileptics were admitted. The recovery-rate was 32% of the direct admissions.

The year has been one of considerable anxiety owing to the difficulty of efficiently carrying on the work of the institution during extensive renewals in the hot-water system, laundry machinery, etc., and the refitting of the general kitchen.

A small clinical laboratory is in course of being equipped.

Devon County Mental Hospital.—The numbers on the register of this hospital increased from 1,181 at the beginning of the year 1925 to 1,216 at the end, 262 (males 90, females 172) cases having been admitted during the year, with the result that the accommodation on the female side is considerably strained.

The percentage of recoveries on the direct admissions was 37·4, and for private patients only, 47·3. The death-rate was the lowest since 1899, namely, 6·6% of the average number resident. The death-rate for tubercular diseases for the year was 11·4%, which, as Dr. Eager points out, is a very favourable one compared with the high rate of 25·7% which was recorded in 1917, and attributable in some measure to the economies enforced by war conditions.

The pathological laboratory shows a continuous record of valuable work under the newly appointed pathologist, Dr. Henderson. It also has the advantage of the services of Dr. Solly, Pathologist to the Devon and Exeter Hospital.

An important step in advance is recorded by Dr. Eager in the establishment in conjunction with the Exeter City Mental Hospital of an out-patient clinic at the Exeter Dispensary.

The urgent need of a new nursing home is pointed out both by Dr. Eager and the Board of Control, which will no doubt be of great assistance in establishing on a sound basis the excellent system of training introduced into this hospital.

The value of efficient after-care in the case of those convalescing from mental disease is fully appreciated by Dr. Eager, as is shown in the following excerpt :

“ Here I should like to refer to the help we have received from the After-Care Association in taking any cases under their care, who have no home to go to on discharge. No less than 9 cases (1 male and 8 females) have been sent to London and handed over to the officials of this Association during the year, and only one has so far returned.

“ In this way we are able to discharge cases who have no homes to go to, with the feeling that they will be well cared for, and that every effort will be made to obtain suitable situations for them, which means so much to a patient discharged from a mental hospital.”

Dr. Eager publishes in his report some interesting charts covering a period of some 80 years, showing the movement of the population of the hospital and the weekly maintenance charge.

Wilts County Mental Hospital.—At the end of the year 1925 there were 1,168 patients resident in the hospital—an increase of 110 in the year. There were admitted during the year 272 patients (males 112, females 160), a considerable number, however, under contract from other counties. Of the admissions heredity was a

factor in causation recognized in 30% of the cases, senility in 21%, and alcohol was accepted as an element in causation in 7.5%.

The recovery-rate amongst the direct admissions was about 36%, and of those recovered over 50% were cases of first attack of less than three months' duration.

The death-rate for the year was 6.9% of the daily average number resident, and the chief causes of death were senility, tuberculosis and dysentery. No cases of enteric fever occurred during the year.

The Visiting Committee are hoping at an early date to establish in the county an out-patient clinic in connection with the neighbouring general hospital, to be worked by the staff of the mental hospital.

A considerable amount of structural alteration and improvement has been carried out during the year, and the building of a new nurses' block is in progress.

Derby Borough Mental Hospital.—There were on the registers of this hospital, at the end of the year 1925, 484 patients, of whom 46 were out-borough cases, and there were admitted during the year 139 cases (males 34, females 105), of whom 16 were private patients. The recovery-rate for the year was 22.3% on the direct admissions. Of the ætiological factors in the admissions, heredity was established in 29% of the cases and alcohol was only a principal factor in one case. The death-rate for the year was 5.9%, calculated on the average daily number resident.

A considerable epidemic of influenza occurred during the early months of the year, which fortunately was of a mild type.

Much renovation was carried out during the year, wireless installed and distributed to the various wards, and the isolation hospital converted into a detached villa residence for convalescent patients.

59% of the male and 33% of the female nursing staff hold the certificate of the Royal Medico-Psychological Association, and the Committee have recently granted long-service bonuses to five nurses.

St. Audry's Hospital for Mental Diseases (Suffolk County).—There were on the hospital registers, at the end of the year 1925, 983 patients (males 470, females 513)—30 more than at the beginning of the year. There were admitted during the year 184 patients (males 75, females 109), and Dr. Brooks Keith shows in tabular form the areas of the county (with the population at last census date) from whence these cases were derived, compared with the corresponding figures of the previous year. The chief forms of insanity amongst the admissions were primary dementia, recent melancholia and mania, and senile dementia, and of the ætiological factors, alcohol is only considered a principal factor in two cases of the "first attack" series. The recovery-rate for the year was 19%, and the death-rate created a new low record for the hospital at 5.5% on the average number resident.

A considerable amount of structural alteration and addition has

been taken in hand during the year, including the erection of a nurses' home, "which will set free 50 beds for the use of patients," while in order to meet the present urgent requirements for accommodation at the hospital patients are being boarded at Canterbury, and negotiations are being carried on to board out further patients under Section 26 (L.A., 1890) at a Poor Law institution in the county.

A considerable proportion of the nursing staff hold the certificate of the Royal Medico-Psychological Association.

SCOTLAND.

Inverness District Asylum.—The report is for the year ending May, 1926. There were remaining on the register at the end of the year a total of 717 patients—that is, an increase of 9 males and 18 females on the corresponding figure at the commencement of the year. There were admitted during the year 162 patients (males 77, females 85), in whom the form of mental disease was principally melancholia or mania; heredity was ascertained as a predisposing factor in 69 of the cases, and in 58 a previous attack had occurred; alcohol was assigned as a cause in only one case.

The recovery-rate for the year was 35·8% calculated on the admissions, and of the 162 admissions, 30 recovered during the year. The death-rate calculated on the average number resident was 8·2%, senile decay and phthisis pulmonalis being responsible for 56% of all the deaths.

Dr. Mackenzie is to be congratulated on the appearance of his nursing staff at the examinations of the Royal Medico-Psychological examination, seeing that for the second year in succession all his candidates for the final examination were successful, and even more is he to be congratulated on the fact that during the year 52 nurses and 25 attendants have been under training and instruction for this certificate.

Like many other mental hospitals, this one is faced with the difficulty of accommodation, and Dr. Mackenzie points out that this is a question closely related to that of the admission of private patients to public mental hospitals and also the reception into these hospitals of rate-paid voluntary patients. With regard to the first of these, the District Board decided in 1909, owing to pressure on their accommodation, that private patients should not be admitted, and with regard to the second, Dr. Mackenzie quotes excerpts from recent reports of the Board of Control, which indicate some of the factors governing the situation:

"In one of the Royal Asylums this admission of voluntary private patients has proceeded to such an extent that the admission-rate of voluntary patients now exceeds that of certified private patients.

"Voluntaryism on the part of pauper patients is handicapped by the fact that the Lunacy Grant of £115,000 is paid to parish councils towards the cost of certified lunatics. Consequently, a parish council is reluctant to pay for a voluntary inmate in an asylum, as the proportion of grant, amounting to about 2s. 9d. weekly, for each patient would be lost.