

mounted by a small bellcote. The original chapel has been altered, so as to fit it for a recreation-hall. It is 45ft. by 37ft., with a raised stage 14ft. by 6ft., and a gallery 36ft by 7ft. Both the new chapel and the recreation hall are warmed by Gurney's stoves. The plans were prepared by the Surveyor to the Visitors (Mr. Young), according to instructions from Dr. Palmer, and the total cost has not exceeded the means placed at the disposal of the committee. The contract has been carried out in a very creditable manner by Messrs. E. Otter and Binns, of Lincoln, under the superintendence of Mr. William Young, as clerk of works.

At eleven o'clock divine service was held in the new chapel, the congregation comprising a large number of the visiting justices and their families, the workmen employed at the Asylum, and about 300 of the patients, who conducted themselves in a most orderly and attentive manner. The prayers were read by the chaplain (the Rev. C. C. Ellison), the 1st Lesson by the Rev. Prebendary Perry, and the second Lesson by the Rev. J. Swift. The Communion Service was read by the Lord Bishop of Lincoln: the Chaplain read the Epistle, and the Bishop the Gospel. The Bishop then preached an excellent sermon from the 27th verse of the 14th chapter of St. John—"Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you." The offertory in aid of the poor of the parish, amounted to £6 12s. 1d. The Holy Communion was afterwards administered to 77 communicants.

At two o'clock, Dr. and Mrs. Palmer entertained a large party of friends at luncheon in the recreation-hall, which was tastefully decorated with flowers for the occasion. The guests included the Bishop of Lincoln, Mrs. and Miss Wordsworth, Ven. Archdeacon Trollope, Miss Mackenzie, the Mayor of Lincoln, Lieut.-Col. Ellison, Messrs. G. K. Jarvis, J. Bromhead, W. Parker, (Hanthorpe), J. Paradise, R. Hall W. Beard, and W. G. Glasier, Mr. and Mrs. Tweed, the Rev. Prebendary and Mrs. Perry, Revs. G. T. Harvey, E. M. Barrett, P. Curtois, and J. J. Swift, the Misses Dudding, Mrs. Mulhall, Rev. C. C. and Mrs. Ellison, &c. —*Lincolnshire Chronicle*, May 21.

#### GLIMPSES OF ASYLUM LIFE. BY HENRY HAWKINS, M.A.

Facing a beautiful range of the South Downs stands one of our large county asylums. Its southern aspect is surpassingly rich and varied. In the immediate foreground are the trim Italian terraces and gardens partly private, partly appropriated as exercise grounds for the inmates of the establishment.

And what a lovely landscape is spread before their eyes as they sit or walk in the well-kept grounds! The view would be worthy of a royal palace. Beyond the nearer precincts of the building is the well-wooded, park-like farm. A quaint old farmhouse, with the date 1666 on its southern wall, is partly seen at a short distance in a hollow. In the fields and gardens, patients, with their attendants, are at work.

Here and there the spire or tower of a country church adds beauty to the scenery. Now and then the line of white vapour shows the course of the distant train. Further off are the softly undulating South-down hills, presenting endless varieties of beauty. They delight the eye under almost every change of season and of weather, sometimes appearing nearer to the eye—ominous, then, of bad weather—sometimes more remote; sometimes standing clear and bright in the sunshine, or overshadowed by the passing cloud, or partly shrouded by mist, or at times in winter capped or covered with snow.

Surely the charm and loveliness of the surrounding scenery must, in many instances, imperceptibly soothe and tranquillise the afflicted mind, and contribute, more even than direct remedies, towards restoring its peace and healthful balance. The very air which "nimble and sweetly recommends itself unto the gentle senses" can hardly fail to prove health-restoring.

A glimpse at some features of asylum life may interest some readers. At an early hour the household is astir. The "toilette" of all the patients is carefully superintended. Cleanliness and neatness are scrupulously enforced, but grotesque or whimsical arrangements of dress (in which some patients, if left to themselves, would be apt to indulge) are discouraged. It is said to be a wise maxim in the management of the insane, to treat them, as far as practicable, as if they were of sound mind. At the breakfast hour the male and female patients assemble in two handsome halls, not unlike college halls, without the high table and the grave portraits of founders and benefactors. Here they take their various meals, seated, in batches, at what may be termed mess-tables. Each patient takes his or her own place. An attendant says grace; various attendants watchfully provide for the wants of those under their respective charge. There is no confusion or disorder—the greatest method and regularity prevail. The chapel service follows breakfast. The ringing of a clear-toned bell summons the worshippers. They cross the small space between the main building and the chapel, and take their places in the holy building. It possesses great beauty. The campanile is a conspicuous object. Internally, the arches of the aisles are sustained on slender graceful double shafts (wreathed or otherwise decorated at Christmas-tide). The light, coming through opaque glass, is subdued. The open seats are kept beautifully clean and polished. The gas standards are of costly workmanship, and the prayer-desk, which also serves as a pulpit, is a handsome structure of carved stone and marble. Not many years has the sacred building been in use yet already it contains memorials of the departed who in life were worshippers within its walls, and now, we trust, await the resurrection of the just. A brass mural tablet, with simple inscription, commemorates a brother; a handsome brass lectern, a sister, "fallen asleep in Jesus." The sanctuary, though small, is reverently ordered, and on certain occasions the holy table is bright with fresh flowers. The daily morning service consists of a selection from the Church's Order for Morning Prayer, or of the Litany. Many voices devoutly and audibly join in the responses. On Sundays greater numbers attend; and at the monthly celebration of the Holy Communion there is a small but reverent band of communicants.

The week-day service over, the regular duties of the day fairly begin. First comes the medical inspection. Besides the general oversight, any case requiring special treatment is brought under the experienced eye of the physician. The working parties are then "told" off to their various scenes of labour. The greater number of men capable of work are occupied on the farm or in the gardens. The shops of the carpenter, tailor, shoemaker, hat and basket maker, &c., receive their respective contingents. Some of the shops have surplus stock for sale—door-mats, cocoa-nut matting, plain and fancy baskets, &c. Of the female patients many remain in the wards at needlework. These wards with their dainty white curtains, flowers, birds, handsome prints, and furniture, are models of taste and neatness. Indeed after the coarse and rough treatment of the insane in past years, a reaction has set in, with a tendency, perhaps, towards over-indulgence and ultra-refinement in their management. Other female patients find employment in the laundry, kitchen, needle-room, &c. Many alas! merely vegetate day after day in vacancy of mind!

At mid-day the large dining-halls are again filled. Then work is resumed. So in asylum life, as in the outer world, man goeth forth to his work and to his labour until the evening. Supper is served in the halls, brilliant with gaslight, in the winter months. At an early hour the patients retire to rest, watched, and, if need be, ministered to, even during the silent hours of the night.

The daily routine is relieved by indulgences of various kinds. The weekly visiting day of the friends of patients is by many anxiously looked forward to. In the forenoon of that day may be noticed country folk or town people, singly or in small parties wending their way to the asylum. They seldom go empty-handed. A basket or paper bag, containing some gift for their friend, is a usual

accompaniment of visitors. The interviews take place in a large room in which the smock frock and the homely dress of country people, and the holiday coat and smart dress of the visitors from the towns, may be seen as the various parties sit or stand in groups conversing with parent or child, husband or wife, brother, sister, or friend, as the case may be. At a fixed hour the room is cleared, the visitors depart, the patients return to their quarters. During the greater portion of the year classes are held for the improvement in writing and reading of a few selected patients. The more advanced scholars transcribe pieces of prose or poetry. A portion of the allotted time is devoted to reading aloud from some book or interesting serial.

During the winter months frequent dances, known as "balls," take place. These are a source of great amusement to many of the patients. Numbers look on as spectators only. The mechanical manner in which some of the dancers take part in the evening's recreations is noticeable. They are interested, but it seems in the way of business rather than of pleasure.

On special occasions the entertainment is of a more festive character. The hall is decorated with flowers or evergreens; refreshments are handed round, and the amusements are kept up a little longer. Sometimes a concert, with characters in costume, is given, or a "reading" from popular writers. Even more interesting, perhaps, are the occasional missionary meetings. Many pleasing reminiscences are cherished by the writer of such gatherings in past years. The honoured names of Wolff, Tozer, Mountain, Higgins of Cuddapah, writer of the "Delhi Mission," rise to remembrance. Not a few have been the acts of self-denial made in the cause of missions by the patients and others of the asylum.

In the summer out-door amusements, of course, prevail. On the lawns the sharp tap of the inevitable croquet mallet is to be heard in the fine evenings. On leisure afternoons a cricket match is often played. Sometimes a tea-party for the female patients is held *al fresco* on some suitable spot on the beautiful grounds; or a long country ramble beyond the boundaries is enjoyed by selected patients, who may be seen returning with handfuls of spring or summer flowers.

But the best appreciated out door treat consists in the picnic held now and then during the summer months. It is a long day's pleasure.

Beyond the bounding hill to stray,  
And break the live-long summer day  
With banquet—

not "in the distant woods," which would afford opportunity of escape, but on a wide stretching common, which inspires something of the sense of freedom and of liberty. Soon after chapel, the commissariat cart is brought round and loaded with ample provisions for the day's campaign. Not trifling is the consumption of bread, cheese, meat, and beer, by that monster picnic party, with appetites sharpened by exercise and by bracing country air, partaking of qualities of the "sea board and the down."

Sometimes preceded by a brass band, the patients, in two detachments, start betimes for their *fête champêtre*,—by orchards, corn-fields, heaths, on to an extended moor, admirably suited for such a gathering. Arrived at their destination, the holiday-makers give themselves up to the *abandon* of the day. Wickets are pitched; the football is kicked about: a dance is got up, or "kiss-in-the-ring" is voted for. Presently a very substantial dinner is served. Then amusements are resumed. Many of the women prefer to pass the day seated on the grass, some in vacancy of mind, others, poor things, thinking about home and dear ones there; others with thoughts disordered, "like sweet bells jangled" out of tune.

Towards early evening a camp-fire is lighted, gipsy fashion, and tea prepared; at length, with the lengthening shadows, the whole party, a little wearied, but all the better for the day's excursion, return to the asylum. Thus, in healthful work, relieved by occasional but not too frequent recreation, asylum life passes away. Many, by the blessing of God on the remedies adopted, become, after a

longer or shorter course of treatment, convalescent, and return to the outer world. The restoration of some proves permanent. Their faces are seen no more in the wards. Others suffer relapse, and return as patients. Many old and feeble, or chronic cases, remain, carefully tended and watched over, till their appointed hour comes, and their bodies, if not claimed by their friends, are laid to rest in the beautiful cemetery until the morning of the Resurrection.—*The Churchman's Magazine*

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## CORRESPONDENCE.

### THE EDUCATION, POSITION, AND PAY OF ASSISTANT MEDICAL OFFICERS IN PUBLIC ASYLUMS.

*To the Editors of the Journal of Mental Science.*

GENTLEMEN,

I observe in the April number of the Journal a letter from one signing himself "An Assistant Medical Officer to a County Asylum, &c.," advocating changes in, amongst other things, the position of assistant medical officers. I quite agree with him in thinking that a preliminary training for the post is necessary, and in thinking that the clinical clerk system is as good as any other, at least until the study of Psychology is insisted on by the examining boards. But when he goes on to say that the senior assistant or the sole assistant should be dubbed Assistant Superintendent, I do not accompany him. He objects to the term "Assistant Medical Officer" because he says it does not include the assistance rendered in the administration department. In like manner I might object to his term which does not include the assistance rendered in the medical department.

But it is not on these grounds that I am writing. To alter the present rank and pay of assistant medical officers would be, I think, to take away much of the good which their position at present affords. No assistant ought, in my opinion, to get more than £150 a year, with board, &c. I get £100, and think myself, with every necessary of life found me, except my clothes, quite as well off as a superintendent with £250. To raise the pay of assistants in asylums to £200 a year and more would, in eyes of men of more experience than the "Assistant Medical Officer, &c.," be a great mistake. Not the smallest evil which it would breed would be to introduce a class of men who would remain all their lives assistants; men of no ambition, who would perform their duties perhaps conscientiously, but with spirits enervated by the routine of twenty years or so in a subordinate position, which the spur of responsibility never goads. As to the position of the assistant medical officer, no rules, however sharply defined, can alter it from what the medical superintendent has privately determined it shall be, and consequently his position really depends entirely on himself. If he wins the confidence of his superior officer he will have as much responsibility and authority as any young man can wish for, and in some cases a great deal more.

I have the honour to be,

Gentlemen,

Your obedient servant

AN ASSISTANT PHYSICIAN.