

was made up for by many other indulgences. We must not allow our judgment as to treatment to be influenced too much by the feelings of a few patients. We have to ask ourselves the question, Will the cure of the disease be retarded by the patient ceasing to mix alcohol with his food? He believed the experience of the largest number of alienists would say that it would not.

Dr. RUTHERFORD said that, after lengthened and varied experience, he had come to the conclusion that the indiscriminate use of beer as an article of diet was unnecessary and injurious. Many years ago, when assistant physician at the Birmingham Asylum, a change was made in the distribution of beer; it was stopped to epileptics and to many chronic patients. He could not help thinking at the time that it was only a half measure, and that it would have been better to have stopped it altogether and improved the dietary. As Superintendent of the Argyll District and of the Barony Parochial Asylums, he did not use beer as ordinary diet, and within the last year, at the Dumfries Royal Institution, he had greatly modified the practice in regard to the distribution of stimulants by entirely abolishing wine and beer as an article of diet and making it extra or medical diet. At the same time, however, he improved the dietary by securing the services of a first-class hotel cook. The change had, he thought, had a beneficial effect on the patients, on the discipline of the staff, and on the whole tone of the establishment.

Dr. SAVAGE said he could not order persons to be abstinent and not abstain himself; he did not think pleasures ought to be removed from insane patients without replacing them; he did not mind if the patients were sleepy after dinner; he thought the danger greatest in the case of male attendants—the women having little tendency to drink. Men who have become charge-attendants run risk from opportunity and lack of active work. Alcohol, whether in the form of beer or wine, was good in some cases. He believed more, however, in good diet, and would be glad to sacrifice the beer for really good dinners. He believed also that the lads who came to their asylums would be much better without any beer.

INTERNATIONAL HEALTH EXHIBITION, AUG. 2, 1884.

Among the lectures delivered under the auspices of this Exhibition, was one of much interest by Dr. Shuttleworth, of the Royal Albert Asylum. A more appropriate opportunity could not have been chosen for introducing the very important subject of "The Health and Physical Development of Idiots as Compared with Mentally Sound Children of the Same Age." After describing certain well-known types of idiocy, he unhesitatingly asserts that the most frequent physical disorder amongst idiots is scrofula. Full 75 per cent. of the deaths in the Royal Albert Asylum have been due to scrofulous or tubercular diseases. As the object of the lectures at the Health Exhibition is to deduce lessons regarding the prevention of disease, Dr. Shuttleworth seized the occasion to insist upon the fact that scrofula is "essentially a disease of darkness and dirt," and that light and cleanliness, temperance, and avoiding imprudent marriages, are necessary conditions in the prevention of scrofula and idiocy. Referring to the large proportion of epileptics among idiots, there being at the Darenth Schools 153 out of 496 patients, and at Earlswood one-fourth of the inmates, Dr. Shuttleworth speaks of the inherited predisposition to nervous instability, for the origin of which we must look back to the circumstances of bygone generations. In England, unhappily, intemperance is too likely to figure in a certain number of cases as an ancestral cause.

That idiot children are more liable to sickness than ordinary children is amply proved; the exact ratio in this respect between the two classes is difficult to show by statistics, but the death-rate at institutions for idiots, compared with that of the general population at the same ages, guides us to their comparative vitality. Taking the figures in the reports of Earlswood and the Royal

Albert Asylum from 1879 to 1883, the following are the death-rates (calculated upon an average number under treatment at these ages) of 775:—

Ages.	Deaths per 1,000 resident at each age.		
	Male.	Female.	Total.
From 5 to 10 	52·9	44·6	50·1
From 10 to 15 	31·6	38·8	33·9
From 15 to 20 	46·0	43·2	45·1

From the Registrar-General's Reports the following is deduced as the mortality in 1,000 persons living at certain ages from 1878 to 1882:—

Ages.	Males.	Females.
From 5 to 10 	6·3 ...	5·9
From 10 to 15 	3·3 ...	3·4
From 15 to 20 	4·6 ...	4·9

Contrasting these figures and those above given, we may say that the approximate ratio between idiot and ordinary mortality at the various ages is as follows:—

From 5 to 10, as 8 to 1 ;
 From 10 to 15, as 10 to 1 ;
 From 15 to 20, as 9 to 1 ;

the conclusion to be drawn from these limited data being that the death-rate of idiots between the ages of 5 and 20 is at least nine times as great as that of sound-minded children at the same period of life.

We have not space for two interesting tables showing the relative weight and stature of the general population and of idiots and imbeciles, but of course the comparison shows that the latter weigh less, and are shorter than the former. Adult idiots are 23 lbs. below the average in weight, and their stature is 3 inches below the average.

Dr. Shuttleworth concludes his paper with enforcing the moral that, in consequence of the tendency to disease and death among idiots, a medical man should be in charge of all institutions for their education and care. Further, that their surroundings should be salubrious and spacious, that the buildings themselves should be situated in accordance with hygienic principles, and that the dietary should be liberal, and contain the heat-forming constituents of food in abundance. Of course Dr. Shuttleworth does not omit the education of idiots on physiological principles, but this aspect of the question was specially treated of in a subsequent address.* The impression left on the auditors would no doubt be as encouraging as the state of the case allows, for it is probable that many would fail to catch the little but significant word, "perhaps," which precedes the closing sentence, in which an observer of the education of idiots is represented, in the words of Prospero, as seeing the cloud of idiocy lifting, and the rising senses chasing away "the fumes that mantle their clearer reason." This lecture will, we hope, be published in the "Transactions of the Health Exhibition."

* This, with a demonstration, was given in the Division of the Exhibition in connection with the exhibit, by the Royal Albert Asylum, of educational appliances and products, for which we are glad to see that Institution was awarded a Diploma of Honour.