

PART II.—REVIEWS.

The Lunacy Blue Book.

- 1.—*Twenty-ninth Report of the Commissioners in Lunacy, 1875.*
- 2.—*Seventeenth Annual Report of the General Board of Commissioners in Lunacy, for Scotland, 1875.*

We had hoped, by deferring the notice of the Lunacy Books till the present number, that we should have had the Irish, as well as the English and Scotch Reports, but it has not yet come to hand. It does seem as though it would be worth while for the Irish Inspectors to put pressure on their secretary, so that their report should be out before much of its interest had died out.

The total number of the insane, so far as they are known to the Commissioners, was 63,793 in England, and 8,069 in Scotland; in all, 71,862.

The new cases for 1874, for both countries, were 14,333, excluding transfers from one establishment to another, but including re-admissions.

4,724 patients died during the year in Great Britain; and 5,768 recovered from their malady.

There was an increase of 1,766 in the total number in England, which is almost exactly the average increase for the past ten years. In Scotland the increase was only 85.

There was an increase of 887 in the new cases in England; while in Scotland there was a decrease of 95.

In England the rate of recovery in County and Borough Asylums was 38 per cent. on the admissions, which was at the rate of 3 per cent. higher than the average since 1859. In Scotland the rate was 39 per cent., being about the average.

The death rate in those institutions, in England, was 8.52 per cent. of the total number under treatment, and 10.67 on the average number resident. This was very slightly over the average rates. In Scotland the death rate was 5.6 on the total number under treatment; and 7.7 on the average number resident. This was almost 1 per cent. under the average for ten years. The difference between the rate of mortality in England and Scotland is very extraordinary.

In reference to the increase in the numbers of the pauper insane the English Commissioners say—

In the course of the last 17 years, through which the tables extend, the insane paupers have increased from 16·14 in 1859, to 23·55 in 1875, per 10,000 of the whole population; whereas, in the same period, the private patients have merely increased from 2·53 to 3·09 per 10,000 of the population.

The relative increase, however, of the population, and of the two classes of the insane under care in the 17 years past, is to be expressed as follows:—

The total population has increased, from 1859 to 1875, 21·63 per cent. The private patients *under care* have increased in number, as compared with 1859, 48·39 per cent.; and among the pauper patients, in the same interval, the increase of those *under care* has been 77·47 per cent.

The eleven statistical tables that follow are extremely well arranged and clear, giving the numbers in such a way that any non-professional reader would at once comprehend them. This is certainly as it should be, for the public at large have a vast interest in the subject of lunacy.

In the 4,180 deaths in England, only 2,250 *post mortem* examinations were made. This is certainly too small a proportion. Who is to blame for this?

The Medical Superintendents of the various Asylums estimated that only 2,431 of their 32,529 patients, or 7·47 per cent., were curable. The report says—

We have, in previous reports, drawn attention to the fact just noticed, that the County and Borough Asylums were gradually becoming more and more occupied by a large proportion of chronic and harmless patients, who might be adequately provided for in well-organised workhouse wards.

The Commissioners hammer away at the question of the night watching of the epileptics and the suicidal. They have, it is clear, studied the parable of the unjust judge to some advantage. Their importunity towards the Superintendents of Asylums in regard to all the arrangements that they wish carried out, has been a great fact in the history of the Commission, and its success has always been, in the long run, complete along the whole line.

In regard to the expenditure they say—

During the year 1874, the weekly cost, per head, of maintenance, medicine, clothing, and care of patients in County Asylums averaged 9s. 11½d.; and in the Borough Asylums 11s. 8½d; in both, taken

together, 10s. 2½d.* This cost approximates to 3d. per head less than in 1873, the reduction being, as it would seem, chiefly under the head of "Necessaries," which include fuel and gas. The particulars of this expenditure will be found in appendix (D).

The death of Mr. Bryan Waller Proctor is noted. He had been a Commissioner in Lunacy from 1832 till 1861.

In turning to the Scotch report, we may say that we think it a document of great interest, showing great care in its compilation, infinite pains in the manipulation of the statistics, with the view of eliciting some new fact, social or medical, and that it is highly creditable to the medical Commissioners. No one who really takes an intelligent interest in the subject of lunacy and its relations to society and medicine can sympathise with the criticism to which this report has been subjected in two of the weekly medical journals. We do not think that this journal can be accused of undue acquiescence in the views of the Commissioners in Lunacy; but it would be simply untrue that the medical officers of asylums generally sympathise with the spirit of the articles to which we refer. It would not be to the advantage of the insane that the medical profession at large should take the views of these articles in reference to the Commissioners. We cannot acquit the latter of having given some provocation direct, but more especially indirect, to those medical officers of asylums who take a medical view of insanity; we cannot even say that the tables in the Scotch report do not stand in need of more systematic arrangement, or that the use of every one of them is obvious; and we do say, most earnestly and emphatically, that the Scotch report ought to copy the form of the eleven statistical tables given in the English

* The details of the average of weekly cost, are as follows:—

	County Asylums.			Borough Asylums.		
	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
Provisions (including malt liquor in ordinary diet)	0	4	9½	0	5	2½
Clothing... ..	0	0	9½	0	1	1½
Salaries and wages	0	2	0½	0	2	5½
Necessaries, e.g. fuel, light, washing, &c.	0	1	2½	0	1	7½
Surgery and dispensary	0	0	0½	0	0	1
Wines, spirits, porter	0	0	1½	0	0	1½
Charge to (Furniture and bedding	0	0	5½	0	0	6½
Maintenance } Garden and farm	0	0	7½	0	0	4½
Account } (Miscellaneous	0	0	4	0	0	6½
Less monies received for articles, goods, and produce sold (exclusive of those consumed in the Asylum)	0	0	4½	0	0	3½
Total average weekly cost per head £	0	9	11½	0	11	8

report. But these are things capable of easy amendment, and do by no means imply that the Scotch Commissioners are so hard up for employment that they have taken to twisting numbers and making up tables from pure *ennui*. They have done, and are doing, good work. Certain things are necessary to the full measure of success of any such body; and we do not observe, from their report, that they are in any way more deficient in those than their brethren in London. All will admit that the chief of those things are a practical acquaintance with insanity; an active sympathy with the mentally afflicted; a sympathy with the men who manage and treat the insane; with their work and their difficulties; an earnest effort to do their duty; and, above all, an inflexible sense of justice. Asylum Superintendents, who think themselves ill-treated, have many ways of righting themselves; the insane, who may be wronged by the bad management of an institution, have very few. One of our Scotch brethren taught us that if we think the report of the Commissioners unjust, we can always get up a Commission of our own, and call in two of the ablest medical men we can get. That was a lesson for which all asylum men should be for ever grateful. It was just what was needed to put the relations between them and the Commissioners on a satisfactory footing—a court of appeal—the existence of which is certainly good both for the judge and the suitor.

In the Scotch report we think too much is made of a comparison between pauper lunacy and ordinary pauperism. The two things are about as difficult to compare as the state of art with the price of paints. The proportion of lunatics to the population is greatest in the rural counties, while the number of fresh cases coming under treatment every year is greatest in the urban counties, such as Renfrew and Lanark. The Scotch report is always strong on the question of insanity being a malady that is, to a large extent, preventible by training and right living, according to the laws of nature.

The following facts are interesting medically:—

As regards admissions, this table (table xx.) shows that in each of the months of April, May, June, July, August, and September, their number is considerably above the number in the different months of January, February, March, October, November, and December. This is true of both sexes. The admissions reach their maximum in July, the hottest month of the year. But they show a considerable rise in April, and go on rising steadily through May and June, till they reach their maximum in July, after which they fall, with more or less steadiness, from month to month, till they reach their minimum in January.

It has been shown that in the general population deaths from diseases of the nervous centres have their maxima in the period from January to May inclusive; and between this fact and the number of admissions into asylums in the different months of the year the relation is evident and interesting. We do not venture, however, to do more here than point out the facts; and such remarks as we have made are intended rather to show how the interpretation of the facts should be sought than to give the interpretation.

It is, perhaps, worthy of note that the progress of admissions into asylums, from month to month, over the year, is substantially the same as the progress of deaths by suicide in the general community.

Turning to the deaths in asylums, we find the maximum occurring in the cold months of December, January, February, March, and April, and the minimum in the warmer months of June, July, August, September, and October. Indeed, the progress of the total mortality in asylums appears to obey the same influences as those which regulate the progress of deaths in the general population.

It appears from this table (table xxi.) that, as regards the general community, deaths from diarrhæa have a decided maximum confined to the warmer months, and extending over July, August, September, and October, but expressed with much greater emphasis in August, than in any other month.

In asylums, on the other hand, there are two maxima, both expressed with comparative feebleness. One of these coincides, more or less closely, with the summer maximum in the general community; while the other, scarcely so well marked, occurs in December, January, and February, the cold months of the year. Can this depend on the fact that many patients, during the cold months of the year, are constantly confined to the artificially-heated apartments of the asylum, and thus, as it were, pass through two summers? Or, can it be that patients, from being much confined during the cold months of the year to the warm rooms of the asylum, suffer from internal congestions when they are sent out into the open air, without sufficient care being taken to clothe them adequately, or promote their circulation by active exercise?

It appears from this that the chances of recovery among patients admitted into asylums, are very considerable during the first two years after admission—nearly 40 per cent. of the 1,319 new cases admitted in 1868 having been so discharged, either during that or the succeeding year. On the other hand, of those who remained in asylums at the end of the second year, only 16 per cent. were discharged recovered during the third and fourth years.

The following results of an elaborate investigation are also interesting and important:—

From Dr. Sibbald's Report.

The proportion of pauper lunatics to ordinary paupers is, in the gross, nearly the same in urban and rural districts.

The percentage of the general population who are boarded in private dwellings, as pauper lunatics, is much larger for rural than for urban parishes.

Persons becoming pauper lunatics in urban parishes are almost always sent to an asylum in the first instance. Persons becoming pauper lunatics in rural parishes are frequently permitted to remain in private dwellings.

The percentage of the population who become pauper lunatics during the year is much larger in urban than in rural parishes.

The percentage of the population who remain chargeable as pauper lunatics at the end of the year, is much smaller for urban parishes than the percentage remaining chargeable to rural parishes.

The excess over rural parishes in the percentage of persons becoming pauper lunatics annually in urban parishes, consists entirely of an excess in the numbers sent to asylums. It results from this, that there is a slight excess in the number at the end of the year of urban asylum patients, though this is more than counterbalanced by the larger number of rural patients not in asylums.

The excess in the proportion annually becoming pauper lunatics in towns becomes ultimately less apparent, owing to a considerable number being found to have no legal settlement in any urban parish. These persons are transferred to the rural parishes to which they are found chargeable; and, as this is not counterbalanced by corresponding transfers from rural to urban parishes, it causes an apparent increase in the amount of rural lunacy.

Though the percentage of the population who remain pauper inmates of urban asylums, at the end of the year, is rather larger for them than for rural asylums, the excess is small in proportion to the excess in the number of admissions during the year.

The chief reason why the great excess in the number of admissions to urban asylums, over the number of admissions to rural asylums, does not produce a corresponding excess in the average number of inmates, are—

- (a) The much larger proportion of patients who are annually removed, recovered, from urban asylums; and
- (b) The somewhat larger proportion annually removed, unrecovered, from urban asylums.

There is no evidence in the statistics of death to justify the conclusion that a much larger proportion of persons suffering from fatal disease become pauper inmates in urban than in rural asylums.

It is probable that the excess of patients admitted into urban asylums consists chiefly, if not altogether, of persons who either rapidly recover, or soon cease to require asylum treatment, and who, if they had been resident in rural parishes, would not have been sent to an asylum.

The percentage of the population sent into asylums from the towns being greater than that sent from the country, may be accounted for

without necessarily supposing that more insanity is developed in urban than in rural communities.

The great question whether there is, or is not, a greater amount of insanity in urban than in rural communities remains, statistically, unanswered. My own opinion, *valeat quantum*, is that insanity is more common in towns than in country districts. But this opinion rests rather upon the evidence of greater physical degeneracy and disease, which has been shown to exist among urban than among rural populations, than on any statistical data at present available which bears directly on the question of lunacy. It is scarcely possible to believe that, if physical degeneracy of race and excessive mortality are found to be specially associated with urban life, the most delicate function of mind can be exempt from corresponding deterioration.

Dr. Paterson gives the following account of the rise and progress of the boarding-out system :—

The aggregation of a number of special licensed houses in one or two particular localities, which has led so many persons to imagine that the out-door system of providing for lunatics in Scotland was but a reproduction of that of Gheel, has rather been the result of accidental circumstances than of any efforts made in that direction by the Board of Lunacy.

There arose the danger of a divided authority and management, and of an inconveniently large aggregation of cases within a limited area. Under such circumstances, the care and judgment exercised in the selection, both of guardians and of suitable patients, are apt to be less strict and uniform, and the lunatics, instead of being absorbed and lost sight of in the family, have a tendency to become too distinct and prominent an element in the population of the place.

System of Positive Polity; or, Treatise on Sociology, Instituting the Religion of Humanity. BY AUGUSTE COMTE. Second volume, containing Social Statistics, or the Abstract Theory of Human Order.

The second volume of Comte's *Positive Polity*, translated by Mr. Frederic Harrison, has quickly followed the first volume, to which we directed attention in a recent number of this Journal. Gratifying as it is to find that the philosophy of this great thinker is thus being made accessible to English readers, it is to be feared that, for some time to come, such readers will be a select few. Comte's method is so loose, and his style so diffuse, involved, wordy, and full of repetition, that it is really a hard matter to hold one's attention to his line of thought; and it is not unlikely that some readers will be repelled by the