

most numerous class, we find either men who have failed in other branches of the profession, or the least successful men of the London and Edinburgh schools. The former class, having a settled object to gain, almost invariably make good officers, but, owing to their small number, are not easily to be obtained. Of the latter generally the less said possibly the better. What, however, would be the result if from £150 to £200 a year was offered? Why, instead of getting the worse specimens from the schools, we should get nearly the best—men well versed in the groundwork of their profession, and able and willing to bring their young and ardent energies to bear to help to elucidate the obscurity still clouding the science and practice of psychological medicine. Besides, medical superintendents are often absent from their duties, and it is daily becoming more manifest that they cannot properly perform their work and remain in good bodily and mental health without a long leave of absence, varying from one to two or three months in each year; and during this absence the assistant medical officer is perforce and of right the person in charge of the asylum, and the whole responsibility of this charge rests on his shoulders. Now, is it seemly, or even just, to the many sane and insane persons he has unlimited control over, that they should thus be at the mercy of, to put it mildly, an inferior man? Certainly not, and we trust that the day is not far distant when this evil will be remedied. Already some superintendents have taken the initiative; and we find the salaries of the assistant medical officers in the Somerset, Northampton, Sussex, Abergavenny, and other asylums, slowly creeping up. There is also another point which, if altered, would very materially improve the position of the second medical officer, namely, if the title of deputy medical superintendent, which this officer really is, was universally adopted, instead of the various titles by which he is at present known.

*Buckinghamshire.—Fourteenth Annual Report on the County Pauper Lunatic Asylum.* Mr. JOHN HUMPHREY, Medical Superintendent.

THIS asylum contains 325 inmates, namely, 134 males, 191 females; and the amount charged per head was in three quarters 9s. 4d., and in one quarter 8s. 9d. The report of the Commissioners in Lunacy is, on the whole, favorable. The mortality during the year was low, being only at the rate of 9 per cent. on the average numbers resident. The inmates of this asylum are allowed as much liberty as is consistent with their safety, and several have, during the past year, enjoyed the privilege of spending from one to seven days with their relatives. This is a boon that should be much

appreciated, or it cannot recompense the officers for the anxiety and worry it causes.

*Ninth Annual Report of the Committee of Visitors of the Cambridge, Isle of Ely, and Borough of Cambridge Pauper Lunatic Asylum.*

GEORGE WILLIAM LAWRENCE, Esq., M.D., Medical Superintendent.

THE committee of visitors in their annual report remark that the sewage of the asylum having been used on the land, good crops have resulted, not only of cereals, but of roots. The committee also report that they have terminated their contract with the Cambridge University and Town Waterworks Company, owing to the company wishing to charge them £146 per annum, this being at the rate of about 9s. 9d. per head per annum on 300 patients. For about £320 they have sunk a well and built a steam-engine and engine-house, and propose to work the engine at an estimated cost of £40 per annum.

The lady who has been matron of the asylum since 1858 having retired, the wife of the clerk and steward was appointed in her stead. We cannot avoid protesting against such an appointment, as being, to say the least, ill judged, and, if not tending to weaken the authority of the medical superintendent, manifestly fraught with trouble for him in the future. It was a decided departure from the policy that has of late been pursued in most county asylums. This asylum, although containing nearly 300 patients, has no assistant medical officer. We cannot conceive how the committee of visitors reconcile themselves to the belief that they are doing their duty to the 300 patients under their charge as long as they neglect to fill up such an office.

We regret much to find, from the report of the committee, that Dr. Lawrence has been ill, and has required a lengthened absence; but we trust that his health will be soon permanently re-established.

In remarking on the deaths during the year, Dr. Lawrence congratulates himself and the visitors on the fact that there has been no death from epilepsy at night by suffocation. This he attributes to an epileptic pillow, which he has invented. It has been in use for three years, during which time no death from suffocation has occurred.

Dr. Lawrence relates a curious accident; it was in this wise:

“A boy, whilst gathering watercresses, twisted his left leg under him, and hurt his knee-joint. He was able to get back to the asylum with difficulty and was placed in bed. There was much pain and swelling for some days, at the end of which time there was discovered in his knee-joint a small hard substance, circular and capable of but slight movement, which I thought to