

I have pleasure in stating that no accident has occurred with any patient since the establishment of the asylum.

With reference to the yearly increase of the insane in this asylum, a certain proportion remain chronic or incurable, very many of whom are without relatives in this Colony. By drafting such patients from this and other similar Provincial institutions to one central asylum, their labour could be utilized in farming operations on an extensive scale, besides the advantages to be derived in a pecuniary sense from their labour. I am led to believe, on medical authority, that it would materially conduce to the health of the patients, and probably contribute to their ultimate recovery. If the foregoing suggestion were carried out, I am confident that the weekly cost of maintenance per head would be very much reduced. Moreover, the adoption of such a plan would be the means of relieving the present asylum, and obviate the necessity of so frequently enlarging the buildings, as is now occasioned under the present regime.

Divine service is held every Sunday, and opportunities are afforded to ministers of the various denominations to visit the patients during the week. Frequently as many as eighty patients attend the Sunday service. Amusements are provided for the patients, in the shape of music and dancing every week, at which from eighty to a hundred are usually present; other entertainments are also devised during the winter months in a large and commodious hall attached to the asylum. In the wards, provision is also made for playing various games. Books and the daily papers are likewise supplied, and many British illustrated papers and periodicals are regularly received and circulated for the use of the patients.

On my monthly visits through the wards of the asylum the inmates were quiet and orderly; they appeared (with few exceptions) to be contented and satisfied with the treatment they experienced. The dormitories and bedding I found at all times scrupulously clean and in excellent order; the provisions also were always of good quality and properly cooked.

The careful management and satisfactory condition of this asylum reflect eminent credit upon Mr. Hume and his assistants.

I have, &c.,

A. CHETHAM STRODE,
Inspector.

His Honor the Superintendent of Otago.

Enclosure in No. 11.

SIR,—

Dunedin Lunatic Asylum, June, 1871.

I have the honor to forward you the Eighth Annual Report of this Institution for the year ending 31st March, 1871.

The number of patients in the asylum on the 31st March, 1870, was 112, of whom 79 were males and 33 were females.

Within the twelve months 61 patients have been admitted—34 males and 27 females; the total number under care and treatment for that period being 173, with a daily average of 123.

Compared with the previous year, in which 81 patients were admitted, there is a falling off of 25 per cent.; but the daily average number resident,—123, compared with 105 of the previous year,—shows a steady increase of chronic cases, as is the case in all asylums.

On referring to Table XI, a remarkable feature is noticeable in comparing the admission of sexes for the two years: 34 male patients, or 54 per cent. less, admitted during the past year than the previous one, while 27 females, or 50 per cent. more, were admitted during the same period. The cause of insanity in 20 per cent. of the admissions of females was puerperal.

The number of patients in the asylum this day, 31st March, 1871, is 127. Males, 83; females, 44.

Under the 21st section of "The Lunatics Act, 1868," two cases of dipsomania were admitted during the year.

The numbers discharged during the year were 37 recovered, 3 relieved, and 1 escaped (dipsomania); total, 41. Excluding the relieved and escaped, the recoveries are 60·7 per cent. on the admissions of the year, and 21·4 on the total number under treatment.

The mean annual mortality is male 4·4, female 0; and on these treated 2·9. The care taken of the insane may be gathered by a reference to Table XI, General Results. For the eight years since the institution was opened, only three female patients have died out of 134 admitted during that period, showing a mortality of 2·2. It is also gratifying to record that no serious accident has occurred to any patient to the present time.

During the year five males died, and, as provided by statute, an inquest was held in each case. The causes of death, &c., are shown in Table II.

In accordance with the terms of clause 64, Lunatics Act, 1868, thirteen patients were allowed out on trial during the year, ten of whom were quite restored, and obtained their discharge from the asylum, and three were returned by their friends as unmanageable. It is intended to take fuller advantage of this important clause, by allowing suitable convalescent and harmless cases to return from time to time to their friends. The beneficial results of this measure are easily noticeable. The return home, with its associations, are both cheering and pleasant to the patient. However light the control or easy the discipline of an asylum may be, yet the insane in nearly all cases experience a sense of relief and exhilaration when released from the surroundings of an asylum. An extension of this measure would also relieve the asylum accommodation considerably. Where the friends are poor, it would be a judicious step to allow a small sum for the patient's support at home; the allowance in any case not to be more than the actual cost of the patient in the asylum. Such a step in suitable cases would be a great amelioration in the condition of the chronic insane.

In 1863, when the asylum opened, accommodation was provided for 36 patients. Since then additions have been made at various times, and 140 patients can now be taken. A new female ward has recently been built; its dimensions are—length, 84 feet; breadth, 23 feet; and an average height of 11 feet. The ward is divided into large day-room, single rooms, bath-room, lavatory, attendants' room, &c. In connection with this ward, a large airing court is being laid out, with verandah