

It would be difficult to find a greater contrast than that which is presented by the spacious well-aired female department, and its quiet contented inmates, and this crowded, ill-constructed building. In the airing-yard of the refractory ward the noise and excitement, and the numerous vehement manifestations of irritability and discontent, were quite astonishing, and could only be accounted for by a degree of close confinement and overcrowding which, without exaggeration, seemed enough to drive a sane man mad. It is vain to look for any amelioration in this state of matters until the male wing of the new building is ready.

Much inconvenience and annoyance are experienced at this Asylum from the want of a proper system of drainage. Earthclosets are used, or were intended to be used, in both buildings; but they are found, as has generally been the case in Asylums, extremely unsatisfactory; it is nearly one man's work to look after them, and in the female department, where the pans have to be carried through the wards, they are found to be a disgusting arrangement. The sewage from the washing-house, sculleries, &c., is conducted beyond the Asylum grounds by an open drain, which has hardly any fall, and the smell from this filthy, stagnant ditch is almost always very strong and offensive. It is essential, for the sake of health, comfort, and cleanliness, that ordinary waterclosets should be substituted for earth ones, and that a thorough and satisfactory system of drainage should be established.

Another serious defect from which this Asylum suffers is the want of gas. Besides many other disadvantages, this leads to many of the patients being sent much too early to their beds, which has an injurious effect upon them. The use of kerosene in Asylums is attended with much anxiety and no small risk of accidents.

The laundry and washing-house are now beginning to be found too small for the increasing population of this Asylum, and it will soon be necessary to provide an additional laundress, one being hardly able to overtake all the work.

A most unfortunate occurrence took place in the month of June. A male patient, M—P—, who had for many years ceased to exhibit any dangerous propensity, and who was thought both harmless and good-natured, and accordingly allowed a great deal of liberty, asked one of the male attendants for his keys, which he believed belonged properly to himself, and on being refused plunged a carving knife into the attendant's abdomen, causing his death within a few minutes.

The recreation and amusements of the patients receive much attention; but their occupation in useful and interesting work of different kinds, more especially in the cultivation of the farm and garden, is not encouraged to so great an extent as is desirable.

Divine Service is performed regularly every Sunday, and about 70 of the men and 30 of the women attend.

A vast reduction has been made in the quantity of "medical comforts" and stimulants consumed; and this has not been attended with any grumbling to speak of, nor any bad effect on the patients, but rather the reverse. Apart from the saving thus effected, a very considerable decrease in the expenditure on maintenance has resulted from the appointment of a clerk and storekeeper. It appeared from the storebooks at the time of the visit that during the five months which had elapsed since this officer had entered on his duties the average monthly expense for provisions was £57 less than that of the five months preceding his appointment.

The "north house" is a small detached building intended for the use of habitual drunkards committed under the 21st section of the Lunatics Act, and having accommodation for 14 males. But it is found impossible to reserve it for the exclusive use of inebriates owing to the excessive number of lunatics, and accordingly when inspected it contained only one such case, together with two private patients and ten others who were crowded out of the main building. Female inebriates, when committed to this Asylum, are received into the ordinary wards, there being no other place for them. Such treatment as it is possible to give habitual drunkards, whether male or female, here is hardly ever followed by the slightest benefit, and their residence among ordinary lunatics is almost invariably exceedingly irksome and disagreeable to themselves as well as injurious to the discipline of the Asylum.

*Dunedin Asylum.*—There were 235 patients in this Asylum on the 1st January. During the year 93 were admitted, 58 discharged recovered, 3 relieved, 1 not improved, and 17 died; leaving, at the end of the year, 173 males and 76 females; total, 249.

The Asylum was inspected on the 24th and 26th November, and everywhere found in excellent order, and scrupulously clean. Only two patients were on this occasion in seclusion, one of whom, a dangerous and treacherous man, had been continuously so for several months, and had also his arms restrained by a sheet fastened round his chest. Two other patients had their arms restrained in a similar manner, but were not secluded. As a rule the patients were very quiet and contented. Their comfort appears to be studied with the greatest care and, considering the circumstances, with remarkable success.

It is unnecessary to repeat at length here what has already been said about the defects of this temporary Asylum, and the extent to which its energetic management is crippled by these, more especially by the want of land on which to employ the male patients. Large numbers are confined in a state of pernicious idleness in the airing-courts from one week's end to another, not because they cannot be trusted out of these dreary dens, nor because they will not work, but simply because there is no other place to put them, either to work or to walk. A large majority of the men who do work out of doors (42) have to be employed altogether beyond the Asylum bounds in levelling and in making a public road.

In the Asylum bakery, which affords occupation to four patients, all the bread consumed at the Asylum, Hospital, and Gaol is baked.

The garden is cultivated with great industry, and, small as it is in proportion to the Asylum population, large quantities of vegetables have frequently to be sold.

The Asylum piggery, which is a marvel of cleanliness, yields about three tons of bacon and ham in the year, and is thus not only a source of economy, but a means of varying and amplifying the diet, which is much appreciated by the patients.