

Every part of the premises has been seen by me, including the asylum reserve at Point Chevalier.

The auxiliary asylum is not yet ready for occupation, the drainage not having been completed, and other necessary work remaining yet unfinished.

Steps have been taken to procure the necessary furniture without delay. I regret to find that the shutters have not been altered in accordance with my suggestions, and that no attention appears to have been paid to some other matters which I had expected to find carried out. The outer doors of this building require twelve ponderous keys, each of different pattern. This matter will receive the attention of the Public Works Department.

The cost of the asylum water-supply being very great, some use should be made, by ram or steam-pump, of the excellent spring which rises on the estate. A small reservoir is needed for the auxiliary asylum, which could readily be filled. The very necessary enlargements at the main buildings might include storage, in some lofty part, for water, which would effect a considerable economy in the working expenses of the asylum.

I have every reason to believe that Dr. Young makes the best use of the imperfect appliances for treatment at his disposal, and that he devotes his whole energies to the good management of the asylum, being supported, moreover, by a good staff.

Christchurch Asylum.

The number of patients on the 1st January, 1883, was 307—199 males and 108 females. During the year 44 males and 28 females were admitted for the first time, and 11 males and 7 females readmitted. The total number treated was 397—viz., 254 males and 143 females. Of these, there were discharged as “recovered” 22 males and 13 females; 1 male and 5 females were discharged as “relieved” or “not improved;” while 13 males and 6 females died. At the end of the year there remained in the asylum 218 males and 119 females: total, 337. The recoveries show a percentage of 38·88 upon the admissions; the deaths were 6·01 per cent., calculated upon the average number resident.

The asylum was visited by me on the following dates: 16th, 17th, and 18th May, 1883; 26th, 27th, and 28th September, 1883; 21st, 22nd, and 24th April, 1884. I made the following entries in the Inspector's Book:—

26th, 27th, and 28th September, 1883.—I have been engaged on each of the above-mentioned days in my periodical inspection of the Sunnyside Asylum, and have taken the opportunity of conferring with the Medical Superintendent regarding the plans of the proposed new administrative block of buildings. I have seen every patient, with the exception of two females and one male, who are absent on trial.

Since my last inspection, on the 17th January, 1883, there have been admitted 38 males and 26 females; 15 men and 12 women have been discharged; 7 men and 5 women have died. There have also been 4 admissions and 1 discharge of inebriates: leaving a present total on the register of 328—viz., 215 males and 113 females. The above numbers show the large increase of 29 patients, but it must be remarked that six of the women were removed here from the Dunedin Asylum. The whole of the books and registers are well and neatly kept: these I signed after examination. The orders and medical certificates furnished on admission of patients, and the statutory list of names, were submitted for inspection, as well as some letters which had very properly been detained from the post.

During my visits one patient only was in seclusion, and that for a short time. He had endeavoured to secrete one of the table-knives. The Medical Journal shows that, although seclusion has been somewhat frequent of late, it has been monopolized almost wholly by two patients, and used for their protection from injury. I am perfectly satisfied that it is not unduly resorted to, and that it is never employed without the sanction of the Superintendent.

Some little excitement was apparent in the ward for refractory females. This ward is very gloomy, and too small for its purpose, and the airing-court is undergoing repairs. Under such circumstances excitement must be expected to occur, the patients having no space for recreation and exercise. The court is, however, nearly completed and much improved, and I hope shortly to see the day-room enlarged. Throughout the rest of the asylum the quiet behaviour of the patients was remarkable. They made no complaints which would need investigation, and appeared well dressed and kindly treated. Their general health is good. A few are taking medicine, and twelve were found in bed, either on account of illness, feebleness, or excitement. Dr. Hacon appears to favour voluntary retirement to bed in cases where great mental excitement prevails, and the large proportion of twelve is thus, in part, accounted for. I cannot avoid noticing the unfavourable character of the bulk of the cases with whom he has to deal, the number deemed curable being very small indeed.

On the first day of my visit preparations were being made for a fancy-dress ball, which duly and very successfully took place, being attended by 132 of the male and 66 of the female patients, with about a hundred visitors. I learned that weekly entertainments are the rule, and that a periodical parade and simple drill of the male patients had been instituted. This I had the opportunity of witnessing; 128 men took part in it, and their behaviour was most orderly and creditable. The number would have been still larger had I not requested that those occupying the old wards should be detained there for my inspection. Another very good feature is the establishment of evening school twice weekly; the subjects taught being reading, writing, and simple arithmetic. A Sunday-school class is also held by the visiting chaplain.