

At the beginning of 1896 there were 561 patients. During the year 83 patients—57 men and 26 women—were admitted. The whole number under treatment during the year was 644, and the average number resident was 555. There remained in the Asylum at the close of the year 350 males and 212 females, and there were absent on trial 5 males and 7 females. The number of admissions (83) was six less than the previous year, and the number discharged “relieved” and “recovered” was 41 (the same number as last year). The proportion of discharges to admissions was thus 3 per cent. higher in 1896 than in 1895—viz., 49 per cent. as compared with 46 per cent. These figures however, have little value for the purpose of comparative statistics, as the probation system, which is largely availed of here, prevents a considerable proportion of temporary recoveries from appearing in the discharged list. A patient on trial returned before the completion of the probationary period does not count as a discharge, whereas he would do so if sent out under the ordinary system. Thus the proportion of patients discharged relieved and recovered, though apparently just under 50 per cent., is in reality considerably above that figure.

In the apparent causes of insanity among patients admitted that of “over-study” is of special interest. It is certainly important that parents and guardians should clearly recognise that prolonged and excessive mental strain, and neglect of exercise, recreation, and rest, especially among girls, during the period of rapid growth and development, cannot be continued without an ultimate dwarfing of both mind and body, and grave peril to the integrity of the organism. In the stress of competition for honours and prizes the brain is so often worked at the verge of the breaking-strain, to the neglect of everything else, that one is inclined to wonder that entire mental collapse does not result more frequently. If the secondary effects of overpressure among girls in impairing the potentialities of reproduction and healthy maternity were more widely known it would probably prove a greater incentive to moderation than the more striking but comparatively rare causation of insanity.

During the year 29 patients died, or  $4\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. of the number under treatment. Of these deaths 12 were of patients admitted during the year. Eight of these averaged sixty-five years of age, and were admitted in advanced stages of fatal organic disease, such as Bright’s disease, heart-disease, and general paralysis. The causes of death of the remaining four were general paralysis, pneumonia, syphilitic meningitis, and asphyxia. In the last-mentioned case death was due to hanging, this being the only suicide during the last six years. Among the chronic cases the principal cause of death is old age. There are at present 100 patients whose ages vary from sixty to ninety-seven, and of these 20 have been in the Asylum from thirty to thirty-five years.

The chapter of accidents for the year has been unusually large. A fracture of the neck of the femur occurred in a decrepit partially-paralysed patient through falling on the floor; a fracture of the humerus in an atrophied arm, and the fracture of a rib in a violent maniacal patient. This last was alleged to have been caused by an attendant, but evidence was wanting. While working in the garden one patient assaulted another with a spade, causing two severe wounds of the head before the attendant could intervene.

The overcrowding still continues, and is specially embarrassing in the case of the women, as the building does not afford proper facilities for classification. There are, fortunately, very few idiots at the Asylum; but even so it would be a great advantage if these were kept in a separate establishment. All the patients in any way fit for work have been kept employed at various occupations—the men mainly at the farm, garden, workshops, &c., the women in the laundry, kitchen, sewing-rooms, &c., the average number employed being 427—viz., 290 men and 137 women.

The ordinary works incident to the development of the institution and estate have been continued. The North Park for women is now almost ready for occupation, and a covered way has been constructed from the main building to the auxiliary. Sheds and yards for the permanent maintenance of about six hundred fowls are nearly completed, and we now have abundance of eggs for all purposes.

The slipping of the ground of the whole countryside continues, and necessitates a considerable expenditure in the repair of the water-supply and drainage pipes.

A bookbinding department, worked by one of the patients, has been established during the year, the services of a skilled bookbinder having been engaged to give the necessary instruction.

Religious services have been conducted weekly. Recitations and amusements, such as sports, picnics, walking parties, tennis, cricket, theatrical entertainments, dances, concerts, &c., have been provided as usual, in addition to billiards, cards, &c.

The thanks of the institution are due to the Otago Witness Company for copies of their journal supplied free, and to the various persons who have sent books, periodicals, and other presents; also to entertainment companies for their gratuitous services.

To the officers and staff I have to convey my thanks for their hearty co-operation in carrying out the work of the institution.

The Inspector-General of Asylums, Wellington.

I have, &c.,

F. TRUBY KING, M.B., B.Sc.

#### WELLINGTON AND PORIRUA ASYLUMS.

SIR,—

I have the honour to submit to you the following report on the Wellington and Porirua Asylums for the year 1896:—

##### WELLINGTON ASYLUM (MOUNT VIEW).

In commencing this report the subject uppermost in my mind is the deplorable overcrowding of the patients, concerning which something was said in the last annual report. Since then what was bad has become worse. During the year, by excess of admissions over discharges, removals,