8. Asylum Reports.

Indian Asylum Reports, 1899.

(Continued from p. 201.)

Bengal.

Attention is directed by the Inspector-General to a marked increase in the admissions. The increase was largest at Dullunda, but the superintendent of that asylum cannot assign any reason for it. The excess occurred both among criminals (23) and non-criminals (15). Calcutta and 24-Parganas furnished 52 cases against 27 in 1898. Howrah sent 11, against 3 in the previous year. The superintendent of the Berhampore Asylum cannot satisfactorily explain the excess of 13 in that institution. The increase, however, was not local, but two districts of the Rajshadi Division sent 6 lunatics each, against *nil* in 1898. More lunatics were also received from Jessore and Nadia. At Cuttack, the superintendent attributes the increase to the admission of cases of temporary insanity sent for observation. The small increase at Dacca calls for no remarks. Criminal lunatics must, of course, be admitted into an asylum, but in regard to non-criminal lunatics Government circular No. 42, dated 3rd December, 1891, enjoins on the local authorities that greater discrimination should be exercised in sending a lunatic to an asylum. Although the increase in the number of admissions during 1899 was unusually large, it will be easy to suppose that the instructions of Government were not fully carried out. If, however, the admissions during the current year show an increase, the attention of the magistrates can be drawn to the circular quoted above.

The increase in discharges was general. At Dullunda, it was partly due to the fact that a large number of cases found sane on admission were either sent to stand their trial, or made over to their relatives; and partly to greater efforts made to find out the friends of harmless lunatics, and to induce them to take charge of them.

The accommodation remained unchanged in amount, and was sufficient in all the asylums except at Dacca, where there was some overcrowding in the female division towards the latter part of the year. This has since been relieved by the transfer of four females to the Dullunda Asylum.

The types of insanity of the lunatics admitted during the year were—

Idiocy		11
Mania, acute or chronic	Epileptic	3
	Other forms	125
Melancholia, acute or chronic	Epileptic	2
	Other forms	37
Dementia, including acquired (other forms)		6
General paralysis of the insane		2
Delusional insanity		12
Declared to have recovered or not yet diagnosed		22
Total		220

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The alleged causes were—

Ganja smoking	44
Use of bhang	1
Spirit drinking	6
All other intoxicants	1
Fever	3
Heredity	13
Epilepsy	5
Congenital	1
Childbirth	2
Total	76

As to ganja smoking the Inspector-General remarks:—There were 44 cases due to ganja smoking, against 21 in 1898. Fifteen were returned from Dullunda. The superintendent says all the cases were verified by evidence given either by the patients themselves, their relatives, or by the committing officers, in addition to the statements made in their medical history sheets.

At Dacca, 12 cases were admitted in which ganja was alleged as the cause of insanity, but the superintendent instituted further inquiries, the result being that in only 6 cases was it established. The superintendent observes that in nearly all cases of insanity there are mixed causes producing it.

Six cases were reported at Patna. The superintendent says the medical history sheets of the lunatics and their own admission left no room for doubt as to ganja being the cause of insanity.

There were 8 cases at Cuttack, two criminals and six non-criminals. The particulars furnished in each case showed that ganja was the cause of lunacy. Four of the 8 cases recovered during the year, the maximum and minimum period of detention being a month and five days respectively. Insanity due to ganja is generally of short duration, and there is a greater tendency to recovery in such cases.

Nine cases were reported from Berhampore. The superintendent made careful inquiries in each case through the committing magistrates before accepting ganja as the cause. He remarks that recovery in such cases generally followed on rest and abstinence from the drug. Of the nine admissions nearly 50 *per cent.* recovered.

Notwithstanding the remarks made in the report of the Inspector-General for last year, and those of the Government made in paragraph 5 of its resolution recorded thereon, there has been no improvement in the filling up of the medical history sheets. These are very important documents for the guidance of the superintendents, but there seems to be still great want of care in their preparation. One of the superintendents remarks that the medical history sheet was not furnished in 23 cases.

Another reports:—The usefulness is marred by the careless and perfunctory manner in which it is still prepared. At times they are sent unsigned, resulting in much unnecessary correspondence. If the committing officers were addressed by Government on the subject the irregularities now complained of would disappear.

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The infirm-gang system was introduced at Berhampore during the year, but the superintendent says no special results followed. The superintendent of the Patna Asylum also reports that no marked advantage resulted from the establishment of the infirm gang. In the report of the Inspector-General for 1898 he pointed out that the system simply means that weakly-looking persons are more frequently weighed, and receive some extra diet, tonics, and drugs, the advantage being that it serves to keep off serious disease. This result was attained at Dacca, and the superintendents of the other asylums will be asked to give it an extended and thorough trial.

At Dullunda a watchman's clock was purchased to regulate and check the nightly rounds of the jamadars.

The matter of amusements received the special attention of the superintendents. The lunatics were provided with musical instruments, cards, pet animals, and birds, and were entertained with *nautches* and other amusements. Sweetmeats were also distributed on festival days. At Dacca, the authorised *pujas* were held. The superintendent of the Berhampore Asylum states that those who can read are provided with books. He says there is one lunatic now in gaol after recovery who learnt to read and write in the asylum. Others are also being educated in the asylum, which, the superintendent says, might be further advanced by the attendance daily of a paid schoolmaster. The Inspector-General does not think the latter arrangement is at all necessary. The provision of books and papers and the education imparted to a recovered lunatic is sufficient for all practical purposes. In Calcutta, the best conducted lunatics were taken to the Zoological Gardens. At Dacca, such lunatics were allowed to go to the bazaar under proper escort. The superintendent says that lunatics who do not work and will not take exercise of their own accord are taken out morning and evening for walking for two hours. He attaches great importance to this system, and attributes much of the satisfactory results during the year under report to this arrangement, and to keeping the lunatics as much as possible in the open air. At Cuttack and Berhampore, the system of giving regular walking exercise to the lunatics outside the asylum was kept up during the year. This was not done at Patna, as the neighbourhood is crowded and insanitary, and is another good reason for the removal of the asylum.

The question of the formation of a central lunatic asylum for Bengal was considered during the year. The Inspector-General suggested that the asylum should be located at Berhampore, which was a better place, in his opinion, than others which had been proposed, from a sanitary point of view. Moreover, there was plenty of room near the existing asylum, which might be extended for the purpose. After much consideration and examination of the different sites, as well as careful investigation of statistics, etc., this situation has now been approved by Government, and plans and estimates have been prepared for the additional buildings which are required.

In last year's report, the Inspector-General remarked that the question of improving the position of the warders was carefully considered, but no satisfactory conclusion was come to, mainly on the ground of expense. The subject first attracted his notice during his inspection

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of the asylums, and he suggested the improvement of the position of warders, as a good staff of keepers is one of the conditions of success in the administration of lunatic asylums. The Director-General, Indian Medical Service, in paragraph 20 of his notes on the Reports on Lunatic Asylums in India for the year 1898, suggests the abolition of all forms of restraint, and sees no reason why the Indian keeper should not be improved as the modern English warder has been. The ideal should certainly be aimed at, and the Inspector-General has drawn the special attention of the superintendents to his remarks; but, as he observes, it will call for extra expenditure, which at present stands in the way of securing suitable men for such work.

Central Provinces.

The Superintendent of the Jubbulpore Asylum remarks: "To prevent this overcrowding I think it necessary that more attention should be paid to the suitability of cases sent to the asylum. Chief Commissioner's Book Circular, No. XXXI, dated October 5th, 1877, points out that in the case of harmless lunatics nothing is ordinarily gained by transfer to an asylum. The asylum is meant for dangerous and violent cases. I have several cases in the asylum who are not likely to gain any benefit, and should not, I think, have been sent to the asylum. In one case the report says that the man was found wandering and did not talk rationally, but was not dangerous to himself or to others; the man was a professional beggar. He is at present in the asylum, perfectly harmless, quiet, and inoffensive. Another case, a female professional beggar, was sent to the asylum with no real history of insanity. On arrival at the asylum she was very anæmic and was silly. There are at present in the asylum ten men and seven women who should not have been sent, and who will never benefit by being in the asylum. They are more fit for the poor-house."

At the Nagpur Asylum, as many of the inmates belong to the cultivating and labouring classes, a large number were employed on dairy farming and gardening, while one or two, who had previously been clerks, were given light work in the asylum office. Books and writing materials were provided for those who could read and write, and musical instruments for those who wished to have them. A certain quantity of tobacco was given to all, and an extra allowance to those who were well-conducted.

At Jubbulpore Asylum a great form of amusement is farming and gardening. A native band has been got up amongst the inmates with the aid of a few musical instruments, and the superintendent states that it is very interesting to watch the faces of the lunatics while the playing and singing is going on. Pets are also allowed in the shape of birds and cats. *Pachhisi* is a favourite game among the uneducated, while books and papers, English and vernacular, are supplied by the deputy superintendent to those who can read. Some forty selected lunatics were taken to the Great Indian Circus, which performed near the asylum; they were given free tickets by the manager.

The majority of the cases admitted into the Jubbulpore Asylum are

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in a poor state of health, while the old patients have been particularly healthy. It is certainly peculiar that the lunatics should be so free from sickness, especially as the majority of them eat dirt. One will swallow lumps of chuppaties without mastication, others have to be forcibly fed for years. A great many with difficulty are made to keep clothes on, even on the coldest days. If the same condition happened in the gaol what would the sickness be?

The following was given daily to the lunatics from the beginning of May to November:

Cinchonidine . . .	gr. ij.
Ferri Sulph.	gr. j.
Acid. Sulph.	ɱv.
Aqua	ʒj.

With regard to antiscorbutics, the lunatics have an almost unlimited supply of fresh limes, tamarinds, bael, guavas, and plantains, which they obtain from the garden; and as most of them work in the garden, they eat and bring in to others.

There is a Hindu temple and a mosque in the grounds. The Hindu temple is supplied with a set of articles for performing the poojah, viz., Shankh, Jhalar, Vijaya-Ghant, and a bell, and when this bell rings a man who has been contented to lie in the mud will jump up and rush to the shower-bath and wash, put on his clothes, and go to the temple.

Madras.

The escapes were one female criminal from the Madras Asylum, who was recaptured after a fortnight; two male civil insanes from the Vizagapatam Asylum, both recaptured; and one male civil lunatic from the Calicut Asylum, still at large.

The escape of a non-criminal insane is a matter of little or no consequence, for so long as he can elude discovery and take care of himself there is in most cases no particular need for his detention. There is always a suspicion that in asylums where such incidents never occur restraints are more rigid than are compatible with conditions best suited for the recovery of the inmates. It is different with criminal insanes, who should, at any rate until the probationary stage is reached, be as carefully guarded as ordinary prisoners.

Fortnightly weighments were made throughout the year. The following table compares the weighments in the three asylums:

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Asylums.	Of those treated during the year 1899.						Of those admitted during the year.		
	Aggregate weight on 1st January, 1899.	Aggregate weight on discharge, death, or on 31st December, 1899.	Number and ratio per cent. of those who gained weight.	Number and ratio per cent. of those who lost weight.	Number and ratio per cent. of those who remained stationary.	Greatest gain.	Greatest loss.	Aggregate weight on admission.	Aggregate weight on discharge, death, or on 31st December, 1899.	Number and ratio per cent. of those who gained weight.
	lb.	lb.				lb.	lb.	lb.	lb.	
Madras . . .	39,416	35,884	198 51·83 %	142 37·17 %	42 11·00 %	26	22	9242	7872	54 59·34 %
Vizagapatam . .	6,159	6,283	35 56·45 %	15 24·19 %	12 19·36 %	21	17	798	868	7 87·50 %
Calicut . . .	10,525	10,925	81 76·42 %	14 13·21 %	11 10·37 %	29	35	3090	3327	29 90·62 %

Asylums.	Of those admitted during the year—*cont.*				Of those discharged during the year.				
	Number and ratio per cent. of those who lost weight.	Number and ratio per cent. of those who remained stationary.	Greatest gain.	Greatest loss.	Aggregate weight on admission.	Aggregate weight on discharge.	Number and ratio per cent. of those who gained weight.	Number and ratio per cent. of those who lost weight.	Number and ratio per cent. of those who remained stationary.	Greatest gain.	Greatest loss.
			lb.	lb.	lb.	lb.				lb.	lb.
Madras . . .	31 34·06 %	6 6·59 %	30	13	8947	7376	58 65·91 %	24 27·27 %	6 6·82 %	44	22
Vizagapatam . .	1 12·50 %	—	26	25	645	758	7 100 %	—	—	26	—
Calicut . . .	3 9·38 %	—	26	13	1917	2089	18 90·00 %	2 10·00 %	—	29	7

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Punjab.

Taking the two asylums together, it is observed that while at the Lahore Asylum most of the admissions were Mohammedans, at Delhi they were mostly Hindus. This is probably due to the fact that the Mohammedan religion prevails in the north of the Punjab, and the Hindu religion in the neighbourhood of Delhi. It is also noticeable that the patients came mostly from among the following classes:—cultivators, agriculturists, beggars, labourers, and sepoys. Mania and melancholia were the principal types of insanity admitted. Charas smoking, toxic and moral causes, were the chief predisposing influences.

The year 1899 is the last one for which the report will embrace the statistics of two asylums. The new lunatic asylum for the whole of the Punjab has been completed and brought into use.

Rangoon.

The lunatic asylum was in charge of Major Bell for nine months of the year under report, and for the remaining three months the office of superintendent was held by Major Sellick. Mr. Donaldson was deputy superintendent until October, when Dr. Paul was appointed to that post, as it was thought desirable to employ a professional man. The change has not been beneficial to the asylum, and fresh arrangements will again have to be made. The asylum has been unfortunate in its superior subordinate staff, as the sub-overseer is also reported to have proved unfit for his post. An important feature in the history of the asylum was the reorganisation of the subordinate establishment. A matron was appointed to take charge of the female enclosure, while the staff of warders was divided into a day establishment and a night establishment, and five male warders and three female warders were added. The result of the revision has been to provide a larger and more efficient staff at an increased cost of Rs. 2142 *per annum.*

A mortuary nearer the new hospital occupied in 1897 was put up during the year on a site more suitable than that on which the building formerly serving this purpose stood. Iron gratings have been fitted into the opening in cells through which night-soil buckets are passed. This addition was necessitated owing to two of the inmates having effected their escape through the openings.

The accommodation for females has been unsatisfactory, and in order to avoid overcrowding it has been the practice to place some of the older women in cells in the male portion of the asylum during the night. To obviate this objectionable necessity an additional cottage to hold twelve females has been recommended and is now under course of construction, but even with this enlargement of accommodation there will still be some overcrowding.

The dry-earth system of conservancy is carried out. The night-soil, after being received in tubs, is mixed with dry earth and then trenched in the asylum grounds. The ground used for trenching in 1897 has been cultivated during the last year, and the ground so used in 1898 will be cultivated this year. The result of cultivation of the 1897 ground was highly satisfactory, and excellent crops were obtained.

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Special attention is paid to the cleanliness of the lunatics themselves, and the patients are all bathed daily. On account of the position of the asylum on naturally sloping ground the drainage of the institution offered no difficulties.

Fresh vegetables were supplied from the asylum garden to the inmates during the whole year, with the exception of the months of November and December. During these months it became necessary to purchase vegetables from an outside contractor once or twice a week. The milk for the sick has been entirely supplied by the asylum dairy.

The lunatics are encouraged in every way to get up amusements amongst themselves. Games of Burmese football are duly indulged in. In addition, playing cards, Burmese dominoes, and draughts have been supplied and are much appreciated. During the year fourteen *pwès* (theatricals) have been held in the asylum; they are self-supporting and very popular.

A small library has also been started and two daily papers, one in English, the other in Burmese, have been subscribed for. The money for these amusements is obtained from the profits derived from the *pwès*. A matron was appointed to the charge of the female enclosure in the latter part of the year. The want of an appointment of this nature had long been felt, and a considerable improvement in the condition of the female lunatics is already noticeable.

The commonest types of lunacy met with are mania and melancholia, the former disease accounting for 51 *per cent.* and the latter for 27 *per cent.* of the total population of patients. These figures approximate closely to those obtained from the returns of lunatic asylums in England and Scotland, which are roughly 56 per cent. for mania and 30 *per cent.* for melancholia. The percentage as obtained from the Rangoon Asylum is therefore slightly lower than those of England and Scotland, but in the latter countries it is probable that the onset of lunacy is more quickly recognised and treatment in asylums resorted to more early than in this country, and so the totals there get swelled by the admission of a greater number of slight cases. General paralysis of the insane provides but one case; this is in accordance with the experience of experts in lunacy, who state that this form of insanity is exceedingly rare amongst Asiatics.

General paralysis of the insane appears to be caused by any mode of life in which the brain is unduly stimulated, more especially when combined with the effects of excesses in drinking. The rural Burmans will naturally escape these causes, and though the Burmans living in large towns do drink at times heavily, and also are undoubtedly widely affected with syphilis, they do not, it is considered, exercise their brains unduly, there being no such acute struggle for existence as occurs in England.

Tezpur.

The grounds are nicely laid out, and the garden is flourishing. Nearly one acre was planted with castor-oil seeds, but unfortunately the plants were all destroyed by the unusually heavy rains. Sixty good *Kaghazi* lime trees have been planted and are doing well. The

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number of lime trees should be raised until it equals the number of inmates, and thus 10 *per cent.* should be planted annually to make up for losses.

A new ward for females has been constructed during the past year and is now in use. This is a great comfort. A small hospital for women is still required. A hospital for men is very much needed, and it is hoped that funds may be available next year. A small isolation ward is also required for male criminals, in which dirty cases could be kept. The intolerably filthy habits of some of these poor wretches make them most dreadfully disagreeable companions at night-time, and a small ward for their isolation is a necessity.

A prophylactic issue of quinine and iron was given from May to October to all the inmates, except a few fractious individuals, and it certainly seems to have done good. Four grains of quinine with two grains of sulphate of iron and ten minims of dilute sulphuric acid were given every day in the morning before they went to work.

Attention is paid to giving amusement to the patients by showing them magic-lantern pictures and by music, and a microscope has been purchased at a cost of Rs. 45—47 to enable the hospital assistant in charge to diagnose cases of *anchylostomiasis*.

The *Kutcha* buildings for male lunatics are a constant source of anxiety, as they may be set on fire at any moment by maliciousness or carelessness on the part of some lunatics—an occurrence which would probably cause a terrible loss of life. Lunatics also find no difficulty in escaping from them. They ought to be replaced as soon as possible by zinc-roofed buildings. Constantly renewed dry sand is used on *Kutcha* floors to prevent dampness.

In addition to those already maintained during the previous year only one keeper, a female, was appointed in the month of December. Although there was provision in the budget for three female keepers one could not be procured before December.

With reference to paragraph 20 of Notes by the Director-General, Indian Medical Service, on Asylum Reports for 1898, the superintendent points out that the sanctioned pay for warders is not such as to attract really suitable men. A warder gets Rs. 10 per mensem, while the wages of the coolies working in the town amount to annas 6 per day, or roughly Rs. 12 per mensem. The work is also very hard; the warders remain present day and night, and have only four hours off duty in twenty-four.

Report of the Lunatic Asylum at Aarhus for the year 1899. *By the Physician-Superintendent, Prof. Knud Pontoppidan.*

In this report the distinguished Professor confines himself mostly to statistical details. In the beginning of 1899 there were in the asylum at Aarhus 257 male patients and 269 female patients—526 in all. During the year there were admitted 55 males and 72 females—127 in all. There were treated during the year 312 males and 341 females—

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