Part III.—Retrospects.

ASYLUM REPORTS FOR 1898.

Some County and Borough Asylums, England.

Carmarthen.—Dr. Goodall reports two cases of insanity following cranial injury, both of which made a good recovery. In another connection he writes:

> Syphilis was traced as the cause of the brain lesion in only one case, but this has no bearing upon the influence of syphilis in producing brain disorder. In examining the bodies of persons dying in asylums one observes the comparative frequency of degeneration of the blood-vessels (arteries), especially of the brain, and I quite subscribe to the view expressed by eminent authorities, that syphilis is the most frequent cause of organic brain disease in persons not much past middle life. In an asylum drawing largely from a rural population, such as this, one does not expect to find much evidence of the after-effects of syphilis, but any towns in the asylum district are sure to supply their quota of general paralysis and organic brain disease; and it is precisely in this class that a careful inquiry into the personal history of these cases often discloses the existence of hereditary or acquired syphilis in a surprising degree.

Derby County.—Dr. Legge mentions a case in his report which illustrates the risks, not always personal merely, attaching to asylum service:

> An inquest was held in February upon the body of J. W. M—. This case was remarkable from the fact that another patient (C. P. M—) made a strongly expressed and elaborate statement before the coroner, in which he accused an attendant of having murdered the deceased. The coroner's jury, however, accepted the Medical Officers' opinion that death was due to natural causes. The matter was also investigated by the committee.

Devon County.—This is the last report to come from the pen of Dr. Sanders. The committee in their report mention that he has retired after thirty-eight years of able and faithful service on a pension of £742 10*s*. The present average residence is practically double what it was when he first took charge, while both recovery and death ratios have decreased considerably. We note six out of sixteen admitted and eight out of twenty-six remaining general paralytics are females. This proportion is remarkable in view of the fact that Plymouth has its own asylum.

Gloucester.—Dr. Cradock adverts to the "uselessness, not to say absurdity, of most of the vaunted nostrums for checking the spread of insanity or for curing the insane," and derives some pleasure from noting at last an effort in what he considers the right direction. This is refusing to people with strong hereditary taint permission to marry. The practical application of this principle is said to have come from America, but we think that we have heard before of the principle itself. In fact, we have always thought that while it is absolutely correct from an Utopian point of view, in practice it is only another vaunted nostrum. Prohibition of marriage will not, except, perhaps, in the case of a few exalted cases, stop marriage, especially in those to whom heredity brings strong impulses with weak control. Compulsion, unless it is backed up

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by the bistoury, is hopeless; and the bistoury is rightly *tabu*. Moral suasion and education are the only possible weapons wherewith to fight the genesis of insanity, and these under the circumstances are of little account.

Hants.—We are glad to note the award of the full pension of £250 to the Clerk, who retires from continued ill-health. The following bit of economy is worth notice:

In last year's report I mentioned the completion of the Water Softening process, erected by Messrs. Maignen, of Regent Street, London, and said it was a great success. I am now able to state that, in addition to the economy in soap and soda in the laundry, and the labour and expense expended in replacing pipes that were choked, a very considerably less amount of water is used, and that therefore the engines run daily for twelve hours instead of fourteen, as they did when the water was hard, and in this way a large amount of coal is saved.

Hereford.—Dr. Morrison brings before his committee the proposal to combine with other asylums for the purpose of joint pathological investigation. He is quite right in protesting as follows:

I desire to draw the attention of Boards of Guardians to the lax, unreliable, and absolutely worthless manner in which many relieving officers fill in the statement of particulars accompanying the order of admission. If this information is inaccurate, it may easily prejudice the nature of the treatment and care that has to be adopted on the admission of the patient, besides prejudicing a portion of the future history of the case as recorded in these statistics.

Lancashire—Prestwich.—The following extract comes from the report of the committee:

At the same time the committee must not be taken to agree in the theories held by the Commissioners as to the size of asylums, as practical experience appears to be altogether in favour of large asylums, as securing a better classification of patients and a more complete subordination of officers and attendants, besides affording greater scope for the study of insanity in all its phases, with a view to its treatment or amelioration.

Now-a-days there can be no division of opinion as to the benefits to be obtained from the Association's system of training attendants. Nevertheless, as coming from a superintendent with such unrivalled experience as Mr. Ley has, the subjoined reference to it by him deserves recording.

I wish to record my appreciation of the interest taken by the medical officers in this important work. There can be no doubt that the successful care and treatment of the insane largely depends upon the experience and character of those who are in immediate charge of them. Our aim has been to perfect a staff of experienced attendants, imbued with an intelligent appreciation of their responsibilities and duties, for without such a trained and experienced staff no system, however good, can be successfully carried on.

Middlesborough.—This is the first report of a new asylum, and we are very glad to note that Dr. Pope has, like Dr. Kidd of Chichester, worked in a full and detailed account of the design, building, fitting, and furnishing. The particulars given cannot fail to be of use to committees and medical superintendents advising them, who have to undertake similar work hereafter.

For particulars we must refer our readers to this valuable report itself, and plans attached thereto. That things have been well and

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efficiently done is evidenced by the fact, communicated to us by Dr. Pope, that no hitch whatever has occurred during the two years in which the asylum has been at work.

We are glad to see that the Association tables are adopted in their entirety.

Newcastle.—The ratios of general paralytics for the year, always high in this asylum, are remarkable.

	Admitted.			*Died.*			*Remaining.*		
	M.	F.	T.	M.	F.	T.	M.	F.	T.
G.P. .	28	8	36	15	7	22	32	14	46
Total .	77	61	138	35	32	67	242	274	516

Alcohol in 61, and venereal disease in 5 out of 138 admissions are assigned as causes.

We regret to notice from the report the death of the former medical superintendent, Dr. Wickham, who for many years was a member of the Association.

Suffolk.—We note that this county has followed the example of Lancashire in availing itself of Section 26 of the Lunacy Act. It sends patients under that section to Mildenhall Workhouse. It is possible that the capacity of workhouses throughout the country has been seriously let down since the 4*s.* stampede commencing twenty-five years ago, but it is impossible to believe that a determined effort could not bring into use for lunacy purposes some of the accommodation which is being vacated by the decrease in indoor pauperism. Dr. Whitwell urges that the word "asylum" should be dropped in favour of the term "hospital" in connection with public institutions for the insane. He has extended the principle of demonstrating facts by charts by introducing new ones, showing the admissions and residua year by year in respect of each of the unions in his area. Beyond the possibility of some one working out valuable scientific deductions from them, we cannot but think that there is a special value attaching to them, from the probability that the various unions and their officers will be led to take a more intelligent interest in their own lunacy production.

Sussex, West.—It is somewhat alarming to read in a second report of a new asylum that accommodation so recently provided is actually being increased by 66 per cent., but so it is in Sussex. When this is finished, and East Sussex has its asylum for 1100 patients or more, and Brighton is in sole possession of the 900 beds at Hayward's Heath, nearly 3000 beds will be provided where 400 was considered ample forty years ago.

Dr. Kidd has gone one better than Dr. Whitwell in inducing the committee to call their institution Graylingswell Hospital for unofficial purposes. The report shows that thus soon Dr. Kidd has got everything into perfect working order, a fact which was clearly substantiated by the inspection of those members who attended the meeting there in February last. The impression left then was that Graylingswell was a cheerful, efficient, and orderly place, in which it will be good for a pauper lunatic to live.

Wilts.—In view of the serious block arising from many workhouse cases being sent to the asylum unnecessarily, the committee took the

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step of addressing through their chairman a letter of strong protest to the authorities of each union. It is very satisfactory to read that it has had an excellent effect.

Dr. Bowes records the fact that the number of relapsed cases is twice what it was ten years ago. He offers no explanatory theories.

West Riding.—The statistics in relation to the admission of general paralysis into the three county asylums present a contrast that is worth reproducing.

Asylum.	*General Paralytics.*			*All Admissions.*			*Percentages.*		
	M.	F.	T.	M.	F.	T.	M.	F.	T.
Menston .	29	17	46	255	317	572	11·2	5·3	8
Wadsley .	14	5	19	227	232	459	6·1	2·1	4·1
Wakefield .	28	9	37	191	151	342	14·6	5·9	10·8

The following are some of the assigned physical causes:

Asylum.	*Alcoholism.*			*Sexual Intemperance.*			*Venereal Disease.*			*Self-abuse.*		
	M.	F.	T.	M.	F.	T.	M.	F.	T.	M.	F.	T.
Menston .	54	21	75	5	2	7	17	3	20	3	0	3
Wadsley .	49	27	76	2	0	2	1	0	1	0	0	0
Wakefield .	57	19	76	7	1	8	11	4	15	13	0	13

It will be seen that drink pressed heavier on the Wadsley and Wakefield cases, and that sexual troubles were much lighter at Wadsley than at the other two places. A comparison of urban and rural sources of the admissions and a comparison of "previous occupations," while they might be of use in comparing the West Riding with all other counties and boroughs, do not seem to throw any light on the differences between the three asylums in regard to this particular disease. Some of the large towns, such as Leeds and Halifax, share their new patients between Menston and Wakefield, but Wadsley has Sheffield and Huddersfield to itself. The senile and congenital admissions were ratably rather more frequent at Wakefield, as was the case with dementia. There was, therefore, a smaller proportion of active insanity admitted.

Scottish District Asylums.

Argyll and Bute.—Dr. Cameron notes the curious fact that the number of patients chargeable to the latter county exceed those chargeable in 1882 by one only. Those from Argyll seem to increase a good deal faster, but both counties together do not show the increase found elsewhere.

Fife and Kinross.—Dr. Turnbull strongly advocates the discharge to private care or boarding out of those who have improved but have not recovered. Of the seventy-two discharged no less than thirty-four are returned as relieved only. He finds that in many such cases after a time the patients cease to be chargeable on the rates. We note that out of four general paralytics admitted three were females.

Glasgow District—Garloch.—The "Hospital" here is reported to fulfil the expectations entertained in regard to its usefulness. Dr. Oswald has not found treatment with animal extracts as successful as it has been with others, but in a few cases it had led to recovery. The amalgamation of the two parishes of Glasgow has brought this and the Woodilee

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asylum together. New cases are admitted into each in alternate weeks.

Govan District.—Here, too, the "Hospital" is well spoken of. The Sutton bacterial form of sewage disposal has been adopted and found to work economically and efficiently.

Lanark District—Hartwood.—The extension has been completed, and there is now accommodation for 950 patients, which Dr. Clark thinks may suffice for eight or nine years.

Referring to treatment by spleen extracts he gives the following results:

	Recovery.	*Improvement.*	*Physical Improvement.*
Females	19 per cent.	12 per cent.	36 per cent.
Males	33 „	11 „	25 „

The treatment was applied to forty-two female and thirty-six male cases. He thinks it fair to point out that it was used when other means failed. The most striking results are found in young, especially male, persons. Only 7 cases in 133 males and none in 123 females of general paralysis were admitted. No less than £5344 of work in making roads and laying out the estate has been done by the patients in a little over three years.

Royal Asylums.

Crichton.—Of 176 cases admitted (98 male and 78 female) there were 8 male cases of general paralysis. A careful examination of facts showed that with the exception of two it was impossible to eliminate syphilis as a factor. The two exceptions were both traumatic, from injury to the head. One of these cases is particularly interesting. The injury was caused ten years before death, and was at once followed by change of manner, headaches, dyspepsia, etc. The patient managed to do his work, and kept his appointment till four weeks before admission. On admission he had the usual motor signs, with aural hallucinations and marked mental weakness. He died within a year, and on post-mortem examination it was found that no injury had occurred at the seat of the blow, but the results had been produced by *contre-coup* and in the line thereof.

In consequence of fresh arrangements being made for the Glasgow District patients, the admissions fell from 423 in 1892 to 176 in 1898. The recovery rate was 50·6 on all admissions, including 15 transfers.

Dundee.—The following extract from Dr. Rorie's Report shows that his experience proves what common sense and knowledge of asylum life suggest; and it is impossible to believe that quiet homeliness is to succeed only in private cases. This element of quiet homeliness is likely to be missed in the grand "villas" which are, thanks to official requirements, now becoming the most advanced form of decentralisation in pauper asylums.

Gray House, which has so frequently been referred to in high terms of commendation by Her Majesty's Commissioners in Lunacy, continues to prove a valuable adjunct in the treatment of the private patients, and to afford a quiet and homelike place of residence for such as do not require the rigid supervision of an institution. Several ladies have recently left it recovered, who, I feel sure, would not have done so had they been placed in less favourable surroundings.

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Dr. Rorie gives some valuable additional tables, which we lately published. In them are given some statistics of the 6000 patients admitted since the opening of the asylum in 1820. One can here see how the proportion of mania cases has dwindled down from 51 per cent. for the first twenty-eight years, to 31 in the last seventeen, melancholia from 22 to 18, while dementia has risen from 10 to 21, monomania from 11 to 23, and general paralysis from 2 to 3·39. Other interesting facts are given as to the ages on admission, which will repay perusal.

James Murray's, Perth.—Dr. Urquhart, in stating that the present report is his twentieth, shows that the total number of patients has risen from 66 in 1879 to 131 in 1899, in these numbers there being included 1 and 7 voluntary boarders respectively. This great increase has been accompanied by a satisfactory recovery rate and a reasonable death rate. More satisfactory still is the financial aspect, which shows a moderate balance on the right side for the year's working, with a substantial and progressive reduction in the capital indebtedness incurred by reason of the extra accommodation and furniture provided.

The Tables of the Medico-Psychological Association.

Having finished now our perusal of many asylum reports for 1898, we feel constrained to say that we find more and greater departures in the handling of these tables in Scotland than in England. Those who rigidly adhere to them are in the great majority everywhere, while not a few give additional yearly tables of value and interest. We venture to plead for catholicity, especially in new asylums. It may be probable that an individual superintendent has good reasons of his own for scepticism as to the value of any or all of the tables; possibly it may be that these reasons are better than those of the able gentlemen who drew the tables up, but in any case figures extending over the whole of our area are better than those falling short. As a concrete example, we find that in a few reports there is no table of forms of disease on admission (No. XI). Those—and there must be several—who are closely following the fell march of general paralysis are thereby baulked from a full inquiry into facts. Beyond this is the fact that the greater and the more complete the bulk of opinions expressed by figures, the more are the extremes of variation in personal opinion eliminated. One has only to glance at the elaborate statistics of the English Commissioners as to the causation of insanity to establish this. New men with strong ideas come in and report, but the averages of the mass of opinion vary but little from year to year, and in consequence are of more established value.

1. Anthropology.

The Cephalic Index in Europe [*L'index céphalique*]. (*Les Races de l'Europe—Assoc. Franç. pour l'Avanc. des Sc.*, 1897, *appearing in* 1899.) *Deniker.*

Dr. Deniker, of the Paris Museum of Natural History, has for some time been engaged in preparing a monograph of great importance on the races of Europe. The eminent French anthropologist has expended a

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