

*The Nelson Asylum* occupies a very good site at a suitable distance from the town; but it has only eight acres of land, which are bounded on three sides by public roads, and these circumstances are greatly to its disadvantage. It is a wooden building constructed on the same plan as the front portion of the Wellington Asylum. It has accommodation for sixty patients, and is not yet full. It looks well from the outside, but internally it is not well arranged, though for a quiet community of patients of one class it can be made to do. At the date of my visit it was extremely bare, alike of furniture and ornament, but this has since, to a considerable extent, been remedied. Till recently, its management has been very slovenly; but a few months ago it was placed under the charge of a new Keeper, who, though without any experience, is intelligent and zealous, and is rapidly improving its condition. It is under the medical superintendence of the Resident Surgeon of the Hospital, which is situate close at hand.

*The Hokitika Asylum* is situated at a convenient distance from the town on an admirable site, on a reserve of about 170 acres, about twenty of which have already been cleared principally by the inmates of the Asylum. There is one drawback to the amenities of the situation, and it is not merely a sentimental one—that it is alongside that of the Gaol. The plan on which the building is constructed is far from being in all respects of the most approved kind, but its defects are almost entirely overcome by good management. It is a wooden building, with accommodation for thirty-one males and nine females, so that it is now crowded, and several of the patients require to sleep in the day-rooms. But some of the best parts of the Asylum have been put up by the patients themselves, under the superintendence of Mr. Gribben, the Keeper; and there can be no doubt that further extensions can be made in the same simple and inexpensive manner, so as fully and satisfactorily to meet the gradual increasing requirements of the district. The management is excellent. The Medical Officer does not visit daily, but takes great interest in his duties.

*The Christchurch Asylum* is situated about two miles from the city, and has fifty acres of very good land attached to it. It consists at present of two buildings; the old wooden one, which is now entirely occupied by the male patients, and one wing of a new concrete asylum, which is intended to contain, when completed, 500 patients, and is now occupied by the women. The male department is calculated to accommodate about 60 patients, and now contains 121. It is in many respects very badly constructed, and owing to this defect, and to the dreadful degree to which it is now crowded, it is almost a mockery to call it an Asylum at all. Immediately after the supper the furniture has to be cleared out of the day-rooms in order that they may be converted into dormitories; and in wet weather, when the patients cannot get out to the dismal high-walled airing yards, the Superintendent frequently feels compelled to put numbers of the excitable and dangerous ones to bed for fear of serious quarrels. Despite the crowded condition of this department, its management is such as to reflect great credit on Mr. Seager and his staff of attendants, but it is obvious that its utility as a place of treatment is greatly impaired by the fact that much of their time is occupied in guarding against accidents and disasters, which it is a matter of astonishment are not of almost daily occurrence.

The new Asylum, though there are some inconvenient faults in the plan of its construction, is a fine commodious building, admirably adapted for its purpose, and of which any county in England might justly be proud. The furniture and internal fittings are excellent; and the management and condition of the patients are in a high degree satisfactory. There is a detached building in the grounds which is intended for inebriate patients; but it is also used for private patients of a better class.

Several of the married male attendants have cottages (which are rather too small) within the grounds. There is no proper house for the Superintendent and his family, who, meantime, occupy uncomfortable quarters in the old Asylum. This is a very serious defect, which should receive immediate attention.

The plans for a portion of the male wing of the new Asylum, sufficient to accommodate 150 patients, are now nearly ready; and it is a matter of urgent necessity that so much of the building should be erected without delay, but it does not appear advisable to build an Asylum for 500 patients, as originally contemplated, unless additional ground can be got. Plenty of land, to allow scope for unlimited exercise and occupation for the patients, is one of the chief requisites of a modern Asylum; and fifty acres for 500 patients is totally inadequate.

*The Dunedin Asylum* occupies a beautiful, but, for its purpose, a very inconvenient site, almost within the city. It was originally built as a temporary Asylum for 36 patients, but has been gradually enlarged, and now contains 236. The extreme publicity of the situation, and the small amount of ground (ten acres) available for the use of the patients, render it impossible to conduct the management of this institution in accordance with modern ideas of the treatment of the insane. The building is badly constructed, and some parts of it are exceedingly gloomy and prison-like. The great mass of the male patients are entirely restricted for exercise to the airing yards, where they present a very dismal spectacle. Many of them are violent and dangerous, and the fear of fights and serious accidents causes mechanical restraint and seclusion to be used to an extent which it is distressing to witness, and which no one would think of justifying in a properly constructed Asylum. These remarks do not apply to the female department, the condition of some parts of which is extremely satisfactory, and makes a very pleasing impression.

There is a separate house within the grounds, which affords accommodation of a rather poor kind for a few private patients; and two or three of the attendants have houses within the grounds.

The faults of this Asylum appear to be all more or less directly due to its pinched construction, exposed position, and want of land, and certainly not to any laxity or feebleness in the management, which is carried on with much courage and ability amidst insuperable difficulties.

The Medical Officer lives close at hand, and devotes much time and attention to his work.

There is no time to be lost in dealing with the Dunedin Asylum. It is crowded, and cannot be enlarged, yet the number of patients is steadily and rapidly increasing. About 300 acres of land, at a convenient distance from the city, should be got, and the building of an Asylum for 300 patients should be commenced without delay.