

It was shown in last year's report that not only was there a much larger number of insane men than insane women in the colony, but that there was relatively more insanity among men than among women, the proportion of insane men to the male population being 1 in 434, and that of insane women to the female population being only 1 in 656. The admissions during last year point to the same conclusion, those of males being in the ratio of 1 in every 923 of the male population, while those of women are in the ratio of only 1 in 1,636 of the estimated female population. Another fact of interest regarding the admissions is the great difference, as shown by Table VIII., in the relative numbers of married and single in the two sexes; and it seems probable that, if this is not simply explained by a corresponding difference in the general population, it may have an obvious bearing on the point just referred to. Of the men admitted 70 per cent. were single and 25 per cent. married, whereas of the women only 35 per cent. were single and 60 per cent. married.

Discharges.—The total number of patients discharged recovered was 180, and of these 123 were males and 57 were females. The proportion of recoveries to admissions was 49·72 per cent., which is nearly 8 per cent. lower than it was in the preceding year, though higher than is usually found in long settled countries. Thus the percentage of recoveries on admissions in county and borough Asylums in England in 1876 was 36·75, in Royal and District Asylums in Scotland 41·41, in the Asylums of New South Wales 44·38, and in those of Victoria 47·87. The comparatively high rate of recovery in the Asylums of New Zealand is simply due, in so far as it is real, to the favourable nature of the cases admitted, and certainly not to any special excellence in these overcrowded institutions. The rate varies considerably in the different Asylums, in some of which official inspection seems rather to have the effect of diminishing than increasing it. In the Auckland Asylum in 1876 it was given as 69·64, which appeared incredibly high when the condition of that establishment was taken into consideration. Last year it fell to 21·42, which, though low, is more like what can be looked for in that Asylum, which, besides the many defects which characterize it, appears, on the one hand, to receive cases of a more hopeless kind than are sent to the rest of the Asylums, and, on the other hand, receives no cases of *delirium tremens* nor of transient mental derangement committed "on remand for medical examination" under the 5th and 10th sections of the Lunatics Act, and no habitual drunkards under the 21st section. The rate at the Napier Asylum was 57·89, and at the Hokitika Asylum 58·65; but these high rates, especially the former, are to a large extent accounted for by the number of patients received "on remand," and who, though reckoned among the recovered when after a few day's treatment they are discharged, are, properly speaking, not lunatics at all. In the Wellington Asylum, where such cases as those above referred to are not sent, the ratio was 33·89, which is lower than that in English Asylums, and 20 per cent. lower than it appeared to be the previous year. In Nelson Asylum it was 40 per cent. It was very high in the Asylums of Dunedin and Christchurch, being 62·36 per cent. in the former and 68·91 in the latter. The high rates of these Asylums, not being affected by "remand" cases, and only to a limited extent by cases of *delirium tremens* and dipsomania, seem to show that the admissions are, as a rule, of a much more curable class than usual.

Deaths.—The total number of deaths was 63, and nearly two-thirds of them were due to diseases of the nervous system. The number of deaths from pulmonary disease, which usually contributes so largely to the mortality of the insane, appears remarkably small in the asylums of New Zealand, especially when their excessively crowded state is taken into consideration. Only 9 per cent. of the deaths last year, and 8 per cent. the previous year, were due to this cause, whereas in the Victorian Asylums last year 18 per cent. of the deaths appear to have resulted from it; and during the last nineteen years 28 per cent. of all the deaths in public asylums in Scotland were due to it. Among the deaths were two from typhoid fever, which had been mistaken for insanity, and one from *delirium tremens*. There was a suicide by hanging in the Auckland Asylum; and there were three accidental deaths—one at Auckland Asylum, where a female patient was consumed in the fire which occurred there; one at Wellington, where a patient labouring under organic disease of the heart choked at dinner; and one at Nelson, where an epileptic patient was found dead in her bed, having apparently turned on her face during a fit, and so suffocated herself. The death rate was 7·70 per cent., calculated on the average number resident, and 5·46, on the total numbers under care. Both of these rates are slightly higher than they were the previous year, and higher also than the corresponding rates in the Asylums of Victoria and New South Wales, and in Scotch Asylums in 1876; though lower than those in English Asylums in the same year. The death-rate varied considerably in the different Asylums, and was lowest in the Christchurch Asylum; and, next to that, in the Dunedin Asylum; and highest in those of Wellington and Auckland.

ASYLUMS.

Christchurch Asylum.—The number of patients in this Asylum on the 1st January was 193. During the year 74 were admitted, 51 were discharged recovered, 2 relieved, and 10 died; leaving, at 31st December, 126 males and 78 females; total, 204.

The Asylum was inspected during several days in the month of November, and again on the 11th December. The new building, which forms the female department, was found for the most part in excellent order, the two best wards in particular presenting a remarkably cheerful and comfortable appearance. In the two other wards, however, which are constructed on the double-corridor system, and the sleeping rooms on the south side of which are said to be so cold in winter that, after they have been scrubbed, it is necessary to heat them by means of brasiers placed in them, otherwise they would still be wet when the patients retired to bed the floors of the bathrooms and sculleries were observed to be in a damp, decaying state; and the scullery in the upper ward had a close, offensive smell, owing to defective drainage and ventilation. Great tranquility prevailed among the patients, who appear to be kindly and judiciously treated.

The male department continues to be in an extremely unsatisfactory condition. Every ward is densely overcrowded, and much of the accommodation is of a truly wretched description. The public space per bed in some of the dormitories is about half what is usually considered a minimum allowance, and the air in these becomes so vitiated during the night that the stink is complained of by the attendants as quite overpowering. All the day rooms have to serve the purpose of dormitories.