

I saw dinner served on two days: thirty-five of the inmates of the old male wards were seated in the hall at a neatly-arranged table, and their behaviour was all that could be desired. Thirteen of this class dine in their own day-rooms. The difficulties in the cooking and serving of the food increase with the population of the asylum. The kitchen shows serious signs of dilapidation, and seems unlikely to last for another winter. No time should be lost in the erection of the new building, which will greatly conduce to the comfort and well-being of both the patients and the staff.

I am glad to learn that drainage works will be undertaken as soon as the water-logged soil of the asylum estate is sufficiently dry.

The hall forming part of the old asylum requires to be protected by weather-boarding, as it is constructed of bricks which were merely sun-dried, and is suffering from exposure. It is my opinion that excellent accommodation can be made in this and the adjoining rooms (now used as stores) for those male patients who may be employed upon the farm and garden; and that the building is therefore worth preserving by means of a small expenditure.

Every part of the asylum I found in good order. Improvements have been made in the bedding used by some of the male patients (noticed in a former report), and any suggestions made by me are invariably complied with. The stores are well found; the articles judiciously selected, and kept in the most praiseworthy order. The laundry badly requires enlarging by the addition of a sorting-room. The concrete floor is in a bad state, and needs repairing. A new dormitory for twenty-five patients has been formed in the top-storey of the male division. This is not so well lighted as I could have wished, but it will prove a great boon by rendering possible the removal of the whole of the patients from the old and objectionable wards on the completion of the new airing-court. Some improvements have been made in the grounds by judicious planting of trees and shrubs.

Considering the great amount of liberty which the patients enjoy, escapes are not frequent. Of the refractory male patients there are only some eighteen who are entirely restricted for exercise to their airing-court; and I hope shortly to learn that arrangements have been made for small walking parties who will go beyond the asylum precincts. The inebriates, three in number, are provided for in a separate portion of the building, as enjoined by statute, and are perfectly satisfied with their treatment.

Dr. Hacon shows no abatement in the zeal with which he labours for the welfare of this important institution. He is supported by excellent officers, and I formed a very good impression of his present staff of attendants.

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21st and 22nd April, 1884.—I have spent the whole of these two days in my periodical inspection of the Sunnyside Asylum, and have visited not only the buildings occupied by the insane, but also the whole of the estate, and the cottages occupied by the married attendants.

Regarding the estate, I am glad to report that a very complete scheme for draining the surface and subsoil in proximity to the asylum, and for preventing the floods which have hitherto proved very troublesome, is on the eve of completion. I have reason to believe that the remedy will be effectual, and will increase the healthfulness of the establishment. Arrangements are also well advanced for disposal of the sewage, which will be conveyed away into the city sewers through glazed earthen pipes. It will thus shortly be practicable to use the waterclosets, long since provided, but their use prohibited. In connection with this matter I would point out the necessity for increased water-supply, or rather pumping power. A small windmill is in use, and is supplemented by hand pumping to a large extent. A steam-engine will certainly be required for occasional use, and a second or larger windmill should be erected. I do not regard pumping as a congenial occupation for any number of lunatics, who might be, moreover, more profitably employed when the one hundred acres of land recently purchased become available for asylum use on the expiration of a certain lease.

It becomes more than ever desirable to divert the public road which separates this new portion of the estate from the older part. An excellent airing-court in process of construction will otherwise be completely open to public view, and much excitement and trouble will result therefrom. The completion of this airing-court will render unnecessary the further occupation by patients of the old buildings. A good dormitory for twenty-five of this class has been formed in one of the attics of the new buildings, and suitably furnished.

Since my last visit the laundry has been thoroughly repaired, and many minor improvements introduced. The drying-ground has been divided off by a good picket-fence, and things are now in this department in a very satisfactory condition. The building containing the old dining-hall and offices has been encased with weather-boarding, and will now last for an indefinite time. The total cost of this work was only £27. I greatly regret that, for financial reasons, the erection of the central administrative block is postponed. The inconvenience of carrying all the patients' meals for such a distance out of doors is great, especially in bad weather.

The asylum is now quite full. There are 345 patients on the books, of whom 224 are males and 121 females, one of these latter being an inebriate and not a certified lunatic. It is contemplated to erect without delay two small blocks of building which will ultimately connect with the proposed central block. An additional number of some twenty single rooms will thus be secured. The enlargement of the female refractory-ward will follow. The need for this improvement is very urgent, the patients occupying this part of the asylum being of an unusually bad and excitable class.

I have seen every patient, with the exception of four females who are absent on probation. Few complaints were made to me, and none of these were founded upon any real grievance. Those who demanded their release were unfit to be at large. All were well under control, and evidently treated with kindness. In the old buildings I saw thirty-one men (out of a total of forty-four) at