

The general health of the asylum inmates is very good; only one or two are confined to bed, and their ailments call for no special remark.

There was a remarkable freedom from noise and excitement during my several visits. One or two patients recently admitted required to be secluded for short periods, but I witnessed no other form of restraint. All were clean and suitably clothed. The bedding I found to be in good order, and a number of new bedsteads had just been provided for use in the single rooms of the male division and elsewhere.

The number of patients on the register to-day is 223 males (including 2 absent on probation), 111 females (including 1 absent on probation): total, 334.

Since my visit in February last, an increase of 20 patients has taken place.

The asylum affords proper accommodation for 217 only, and the over-crowding which prevails is very disastrous in its effects, and is almost daily becoming worse. The airing-courts are crowded with patients who ought to be employed, did proper workshops exist; and some of the accommodation on the female side is absolutely disgraceful in its badness, the single rooms having the appearance of whitewashed fowlhouses.

I never speak of the Auckland Asylum but with feelings akin to shame. Compared with the other colonial establishments it has a poverty-stricken appearance, reminding one forcibly of a bad English workhouse in olden times. A proper percentage of recoveries is not to be looked for with such surroundings, nor is such neglect conducive to economy. A new building for females should be put in hand without one day's delay. Plans are long since prepared for this addition, which should be followed by a remodelling and enlargement of the administrative (or central) block, and by the erection of additional wards and workshops for male patients. A new mortuary is badly needed, the present wooden shed being very rotten and accessible to rats. Additional shelter is also wanted in the male airing-court, where a "lean-to" roof might be erected along one of the brick walls at small cost. Repairs are badly needed in some parts of the asylum.

It is scarcely credible or creditable that the drying-closet erected in the new laundry some years ago—in fact, before I took office as Inspector—has never yet been able to be used. Repeatedly has attention been called to this matter, which causes grave and increasing inconvenience in bad weather, and which certainly might be considered to be within the capability of the Public Works Department to remedy.

The day-room No. 1 (female division), with its adjoining dormitory, lavatory, and water-closet, very badly requires whitewashing and painting; and the passage-walls on the way to the laundry should also be painted where the cement has been repaired.

I would again point out that the bath-rooms and closets of No. 2 (female ward) are, by their position and bad ventilation, unfit for use. They should be rebuilt elsewhere. The female attendants' mess-room also requires repairs and renovation. The store-room is devoid of proper shelves, bins, and fittings, which renders it impossible to keep it in an orderly condition. The imperfect or faulty construction of the shutters in the single-room windows led very recently to a suicide. I have recommended that ten of these in each division be altered so as to enclose the sash-cord, and prevent its being used for purposes of strangulation.

It is satisfactory to turn away from this overcrowded and defective building, and inspect the auxiliary asylum, where ample space exists for the 63 inmates, and where everything is bright and cheerful. The attendant in charge, Mr. White, deserves great credit for the admirable order in which the establishment is kept, down to its smallest details. One matter here calls for remedy, a defect in the water-supply rendering one of the bath-rooms useless. This should be at once put right. Some nice flower-gardens are being formed about this building, and also well-turfed grass plots.

Outside the asylum I note that great improvement has taken place in the kitchen-garden, which has also been materially enlarged since the services of the old gardener were dispensed with.

Mr. Boyd, the steward, appears also to have the farm well in hand, but is hampered by the want of decent farm-yard and buildings.

I find that about 140 male patients and 73 females are regularly employed. Divine service (at the auxiliary building) is attended by about 76 men and 30 women.

Mr. Hardy, the asylum head-attendant, has had his duties and responsibilities materially increased during the illness and since the death of the late Medical Superintendent, and has been at his post night and day. I recommend him to the favourable consideration of the Colonial Secretary.

Christchurch.

The number of patients on the 1st January, 1885, was 348—221 males and 127 females. During the year 39 males and 18 females were admitted for the first time, and 6 males and 8 females readmitted. The total number under care was 419, viz., 266 males and 153 females. Of these, there were discharged as "recovered" 19 males and 19 females; 28 males and 23 females were discharged as "relieved" or "not improved;" while 10 males and 2 females died. At the end of the year there remained in the asylum 209 males and 109 females: total, 318.

The works required at this asylum are as follow: The erection of the centre block. The remodelling of the old buildings so as to convert them into an auxiliary asylum for harmless patients, and those employed in out-door labour: all the objectionable parts in the rear should be demolished, and four new single-rooms erected. The provision of a liberal and permanent water supply: great trouble has occurred of late through want of adequate pumping apparatus: temporary arrangements became urgently necessary, and have been