

swamp the asylum grounds, and after every heavy rain the aspect of the whole place is truly pitiable.

Through an inexplicable combination of circumstances the whole administration of this large asylum is centred in a dilapidated wooden building, leaking at every corner, and separated from the asylum by a field, across which I saw the attendants and patients wading to fetch the dinner. It is true that I visited the asylum after a very heavy flood, but it must be remembered that, owing to the low-lying site of the building, and the absence of any proper drainage channels along the Riccarton Junction Road, every heavy rain converts the grounds into a puddle. This makes the remoteness of the kitchen, in itself an intolerable evil, to have the effect of paralysing the successful working of the institution.

I resumed my examination of the asylum on the 2nd June, and continued it on the 3rd and 4th. On the day of my last visit the number of patients was 321: males, 202; females, 118; and 1 male inebriate. I examined every part of the main and outlying buildings, and made an individual inspection of every inmate. I found none in seclusion or under restraint.

I was greatly impressed by the fact that all the male patients, except four, who were too feeble, were ranged and drilled in the most orderly manner, ward by ward, on the green, with their attendants at their head. The care and perseverance on the part of Dr. Hacon and his staff, which such a fact implies, show an enthusiasm and energy from which I anticipate the most satisfactory results when the recent purchases of land are added to the farm, and make it easier to turn them to the employment of the patients in productive work. Even as things are, and in spite of the difficulties caused by the proximity of two public roads, and the absence of any proper fence, I am of opinion that, by a better organization of the staff, and by a more painstaking distribution of the patients in working-parties under their charge, many who are now condemned to pass most of their time pacing a barred court-yard might be usefully employed in the open air. I do not forget that a great deal is done by means of walking-parties, drives, &c., to let the patients out as much as possible; but I hold that the chief point in the successful conduct of any asylum is the proportion who are occupied in regular labour out of doors. Rather than have them shut up, as some now are, for want of suitable productive work, I would gladly see them employed in transporting soil from one part of a field to another, so that they might benefit by that greatest of all curative influences, regular labour, producing healthy sleep.

The sin that most easily besets asylum superintendents and their warders is the tendency to shirk the constant care and watchfulness required to look after patients employed in the fields and workshops. There is no more signal proof of a medical superintendent's faculty than the firmness and watchfulness with which he combats the natural inclination of warders to magnify the risks and difficulties attaching to the out-door employment of the insane.

I found the food well cooked, abundant, and good. The clothing was suitable as regards material and make, and sufficient for comfort. The whole of the apartments were well furnished and scrupulously clean; two especially of the female wards struck me as being particularly bright and cheerful, while all the beds were clean and comfortable.

The asylum is quite full, and indeed the female side is greatly crowded; some of the patients had to sleep on the floor in day-room and passages; one bed was actually made up in what was meant for a lift, a closed box not long enough to stretch in.

There was a remarkable absence of excitement in all the wards except the female refractory ward. Here I found a badly-lighted day-room excessively crowded with noisy and restless women, and the effect on a wet day was very painful. I wish our rulers could see them in such circumstances. A great improvement could easily be effected in this ward at little cost by taking in a considerable space at one end, which is wasted, and throwing out a large bow-window where now there is only a blank wall.

I cannot think it possible that the building of the central administrative block, the vital part of the whole institution, can be put off any longer. Surely neglect and delay cannot go much farther. The cost of the block as designed may be greatly reduced by leaving out for the present all but the kitchen and offices, with the dining-hall and the single rooms, that are so urgently required. The instalment of the block, for which tenders have just been called, is a mere mockery. The piecemeal process adopted will be found greatly to increase the cost of the whole, and the results can never be satisfactory.

The long and valuable services of Mr. Seager excuse if they do not justify the cost of the office and stores department; but I think that merely looking after the stores does not give sufficient scope for Mr. Seager's energies, and I should be glad to see that his services are utilized, and, if possible, turned to account in other directions, as, for instance, in looking after, under the Medical Superintendent's directions, the out-door working-parties.

I have carefully examined all the statutory books and documents and found them all properly kept. The case-book in particular was very carefully kept, and furnishes abundant evidence of the care and attention which Dr. Hacon bestows on his medical duties. I destroyed a number of patients' letters, which had been properly detained. The staff as a whole struck me as being a highly efficient body, and Head Attendant Clarke in particular seems an experienced, attentive, and highly-capable man, while the Matron is all that could be desired. Dr. Hacon's enthusiastic devotion to his work and his kindly anxiety for the proper treatment and welfare of his patients I very heartily commend. The amusement of the patients is here most systematically and successfully attended to.

22nd October, 1886.—During my last visit to this asylum I was very painfully impressed with the misery resulting from the delay in building the central block. What has struck me most forcibly during my present visit is that, after all allowances have been made for Government neglect and delay, the whole surroundings of the asylum look much more like the leasehold of a bankrupt farmer than the grounds of a well-managed public institution. No doubt a great deal of the squalor and slovenliness is due to the fact that the absence of a proper fence has paralysed and