

first man from whom Pinel removed the manacles had, with those very manacles, killed one of his keepers. The Superintendent who really takes most precautions against violence is not the man who applies the most complete restrictions upon liberty, but he who weighs the general results of different modes of treatment, and selects that which proves in practice most successful in decreasing the number of violent acts."

In connection with one of the Scotch asylums referred to in the fourteenth report of the General Board of Lunacy for Scotland three suicides and one accidental death from swallowing carbolic acid occurred in the year, the average number of patients being only 175;* and yet no reflection was made upon the management, the report simply stating that "the list of deaths presents an unusual number from accidents, but it is satisfactory to be able to report that this unfortunate result is not due to any laxity of management, but mainly to an unfortunate concatenation of events."

Dr. Manning's report of the Asylums of New South Wales for 1890, just received, shows that there were two suicides last year at Callan Park, one of the model asylums of the colony, and not the slightest reflection is made by the Inspector upon the asylum.

As to the suicides which are supposed to have occurred every week for three weeks running at Seacliff, I need only say that there have been but two during the last two years and a half, and these occurred at an interval of two months and a half, both considerably more than a year ago.

The clipping from the *Otago Daily Times*, of the 26th June, 1890,† explains the matter, and shows that one of the two suicides occurred while I was absent on holiday—in other words, there has been one suicide during my charge of the Asylum. It is useless to dwell upon the case, but I may quote a short passage from my letter to the Inspector to show that the bearings of the accident were carefully gone into at the time: "In view of the recent suicide upon the female side, I feel specially worried at this unfortunate accident. Nothing short of cooping every insane person up in a yard can provide against casualties of this kind. No one had any doubts as to the man's safety, and, moreover, he was in the smallest gang we had. Had we been keeping only twenty patients at work on the farm instead of two hundred, neither the present nor the former suicide would have been prevented."

Dr. Yellowless, of Gartnavel (Glasgow), says that "a fatal accident might occur at any moment in any Asylum, which no human foresight could prevent;" and almost every authority on insanity, while enjoining all reasonable precautions, warns Superintendents against letting "caution degenerate into cowardice."

Charge 4.—"That Dr. Truby King has been unduly harsh or insulting towards the relatives of some of the inmates of the asylum." Without foundation. Doubtless it refers to Emerson's case.

Charge 5.—"That Dr. Truby King has behaved towards subordinates in a harsh or unfair manner." Untrue. I think it should be clearly understood that, in spite of all that has been said and done to create distrust and disaffection, the staff has remained true and loyal to the Institution throughout the recent agitation, and the statements about a wide-spread spirit of mutiny and rebellion have been simply concocted. There are a few—a very few, certainly not more than half a dozen—discontented officials in the asylum, but these have no reason for feeling aggrieved at the management. Censure and disrating are usually ill borne by those who deserve them. A very contemptible effort was made to turn the attendants against the Superintendent by stating that the friends of the latter represented him as having to contend with a staff that was "bad throughout." This insinuation was directly contrary to the truth, for I have always spoken in the highest terms of the staff. But for the hearty co-operation of able and energetic officials the improvements which have been effected could never have been carried out.

As to grievances, I informed the staff at the beginning of the present winter that they could never have any grievance (either individually or as a body) against the management until they had brought the ground of complaint before me, and had been refused relief. This was said at a general meeting which took place on account of a request for half-an-hour more time in the morning (which was granted). I availed myself of this opportunity to exhort the men to always bring any similar matter frankly before me as they had just done, instead of keeping silent or grumbling, and persuading themselves that they were hardly used—a tendency to which I had occasionally noticed on the part of one or two of them.

The staff has always been liberally treated, and I believe there are few services in which equal advantages obtain. I may instance the fact that two attendants remained ill and incapable of doing anything—one for six and the other for nine months successively—and yet no mention was made either of lowering their wages or dispensing with their services. Men very rarely resign, and we always have many applications for the positions.

Charge 6.—"That Dr. Truby King's supervision has been so inefficient as to permit of a patient

* It should be noted that this is the case of an asylum twenty years ago, when far greater restrictions upon the insane existed than in the present day.

† An error has crept into the report of the Inspector-General with reference to the Seacliff Asylum. The report states that three suicides took place at Seacliff, whereas, in reality, there were only two. Further, the suggestion conveyed in our leading article of Wednesday that these suicides might possibly be associated with the increased liberty now accorded to patients is not borne out by the circumstances connected with the two suicides which actually did take place. One of the cases was that of a woman under special supervision, who managed to kill herself during the absence on leave of the Medical Superintendent, and at a time when the institution was disorganized through influenza. So severe was the epidemic that half the female staff, including the matron, and all the senior attendants, were prostrated simultaneously, and six inexperienced temporary hands had to be engaged to tide over the emergency. The other case was that of a man who had been working outside for years, and who, without previous warning, suddenly developed a suicidal impulse. He was working cutting piles at the margin of the bush, with a small party of eight patients under one of the most experienced attendants, when during the confusion caused from a shower of rain coming on and the men having to seek cover, he managed to get out of sight, made for the nearest water, and drowned himself before aid could be rendered.