

observed with much satisfaction that this important question of sending supposed lunatics and persons suffering from *delirium tremens* for temporary detention in prisons is, at last, attracting considerable attention, and I hope the time is not far distant when the matter will be definitely settled, and provision made for the reception into suitable institutions of these unfortunate creatures," but, alas, my hopes were premature, and this most important matter still remains in abeyance, and the prisons are compelled to detain and keep as long as may be required supposed lunatics, as well as those suffering from *delirium tremens*. Is it not a matter of the gravest importance that 93 such persons, with an increase of 14 females on the previous year, should have during the past year been made to pass a certain time in prisons, instead of in hospitals or lunatic asylums, where they would be treated by those specially skilled in the proper mode of dealing with such cases? I can only add that the sending such cases to prison for treatment is unjust and cruel, and was never intended by the Legislature. It must not be for a moment inferred from these remarks that the prison staff do not do their best for these poor creatures, while they are in their charge, as I know to the contrary; but they have neither the appliances nor the time to properly attend or nurse such cases.

12. The following remarks on the Howard Association report for the past year, published in the *Times* of the 20th October last, is of interest in reference to the foregoing: "In the section on habitual vagrants and other misdemeanants it is remarked that, whilst habitual drunkards may with advantage be better dealt with in inebriate asylums rather than gaols, the class of habitual vagrants and other misdemeanants need cellular imprisonment with hard labour, and in conjunction with a better system of sentences. During the year the Howard Association laid before the Home Office authorities a scheme for the gradual but certain cumulation of sentences upon such offenders. It is proposed to commence with a caution for first offences, then, on a second arrest, to send to prison for one week, and to add two weeks only for each reported conviction. The Howard Association's suggestion of a mild but certain graduated series of sentences, requiring (after a preliminary caution) 27 convictions to reach one year, is thoroughly just, unquestionably merciful, and greatly superior in repressive capacity to the existing absence of system, with its opposite extremes of silly or of cruel irregularity. This scheme would be adapted to ordinary misdemeanours, including habitual mendicancy, vagrancy, and petty thefts; but for other offences, and especially for offences against the person, cruelty to animals, or considerable robberies, first sentences should, of course, be followed by longer cumulations, adding three or six months for each repetition of crime."

13. With reference to prisoners undergoing sentences of penal servitude, there were at the close of last year, in the several prisons, 133 males and 5 females, an increase of 3 males and a decrease of 1 female.

14. During the past year 380 males and 57 females were discharged after remands, as against 392 males and 36 females in 1893, a decrease of 12 males and an increase of 21 females.

15. On reference to financial table marked B it will be seen that the prisoners were maintained last year at a gross cost per head of £49 4s. 10d., as against £57 19s. 11d., and at a net cost of £37 5s. 5d., as against £37 2s. 8d. in 1893. The gross costs are made up as follows: Staff supervision, £32 6s. 4d., as against £35 3s. 9d.; maintenance, £14 2s. 10d., as against £13 10s. 11d.; and incidentals, £2 15s. 9d., as against £3 5s. 3d. These costs are economical when it is taken into consideration the small prisons that must be kept open, and where, of course, the net cost must be very large. The table above quoted clearly shows that if some of the smaller prisons could be closed the daily average cost of maintaining prisoners in the larger prisons would be greatly reduced. It must be also borne in mind that prisoners awaiting trial, misdemeanants, sick, lunatics, and those not sentenced to hard labour make no return in labour, &c., for their expenses; this materially adds to the net cost.

16. The receipts and credits for prison-labour, road-metal, bricks, &c., amounted last year to £6,420 8s. 2d., as against £7,421 9s. 6d. in the preceding year, giving a decrease of £1,001 1s. 4d.

17. Table C shows that out of the prisoners who passed through the prisons of the colony last year, 2,603 males and 499 females were able to read and write, 82 males and 47 females could read only, while 257 males and 63 females could neither read nor write.

18. Table F, giving a comparison of previously-convicted prisoners sentenced during the past year with those sentenced five years ago, shows a decrease of 48 males and 12 females in the once-convicted, a decrease of 42 males and 14 females in the twice-convicted, and an increase of 4 males and a decrease of 177 females in the thrice- or oftener-convicted.

19. Attention is called to Table D, from which it will be seen that the pernicious custom of sending infants to prison still continues. Seven infants under ten years of age have been confined in the prisons of the colony during the past year, as against 6 in the previous year, but in every case these children have been isolated, and kept entirely separate from the other prisoners. From ten to fifteen years of age, 47 as against 49 in 1893; and from fifteen to twenty years, 291, as against 211—an increase for the year of 80: giving a total increase for the year in those under twenty years of age of 78. In reference to this child-imprisonment, and other prison matters, another extract from the article in the *Times* before alluded to is interesting: "As to prison discipline, the report says that in recent discussions in the public journals upon prison matters, various reforms already advocated by the Howard Association have been approved and supported, as, for example, the need for further diminution of child-imprisonment, and for the entire separation of juvenile from adult prisoners; for a more liberal and better treatment and better selection of prison warders; for an extended provision of prison visitation on the part of suitable public representatives, whether municipal or otherwise; and for an increase of facilities for the visitation of women in gaol by judicious ladies. The Howard Association, whilst advocating not only the maintenance, but also an extension of the separation of prisoners from evil influence, has, at the same time, specially urged the necessity of such ameliorations of cellular discipline, by means of suitable labour, exercise, instruction, reading, and visitation, as shall secure such separation from