

SUNNYSIDE ASYLUM, CHRISTCHURCH.

SIR,—

I have the honour to submit the annual report on this Asylum for the year ending 31st December, 1901, together with the usual statistics of the admissions, discharges, and deaths, as follows:—

—					Male.	Female.	Total.
<i>Admissions.</i>							
Admitted first time	...	...	...	...	47	38	85
Readmitted	...	...	...	...	10	9	19
Totals	...	...	...	...	57	47	104
<i>Discharges.</i>							
Recovered and relieved	...	...	...	...	15	23	38
Not improved	...	...	...	...	1	1	2
Totals	...	...	...	...	16	24	40
Number discharged who were admitted during year	...			...	10	16	26
Number died	...			...	10	2	12
Number remaining	...			...	37	29	66
Totals	...	..	...	...	57	47	104
<i>Deaths</i>	...	...	...	...	21	11	32

Percentage of discharges of first cases on admissions	...	...	...	30 $\frac{1}{2}$
" all discharges on admissions	...	...	...	36 $\frac{7}{8}$
" deaths on admissions	...	...	...	30 $\frac{1}{2}$
" deaths on number under treatment	...	...	...	5 $\frac{1}{2}$

On the 1st January there were 514 patients on the Asylum books, viz.: 283 males and 231 females, which, together with 104 admissions, gave a total of 618 under treatment for the year, being fifty in excess of the previous year. This augmentation is chiefly accounted for by the increased number of admissions—viz., thirty-eight, as compared with those of the year 1900, when they were remarkably low.

Of those admitted for the first time during the year under review over 30 per cent. were released in the same period, while the percentage of all those discharged relieved or recovered on all admissions was over 36 per cent. If this percentage is not as high as that obtaining in the asylums of the Old Country, it must be remembered the difference in the class of patients committed to this Asylum, which has become a dumping-ground for defective troublesome children, and old people in their dotage, who elsewhere would be sent to other more suitable institutions or homes. In fact a very large proportion of the admissions, composed as they are of epileptic, imbecile youths and children, and senile cases, are most unfavourable as regards recovery, and have become a burden and clog on the proper functions of the Asylum, rendering it more of an alms-house than a hospital for the insane, preventing any proper efficient classification, and, I have no hesitation in saying, interfering with the recovery of curable cases. This abuse has been pointed out by myself and my colleagues in previous years, and last year was put before you very forcibly by Drs. Truby King and Gow, as well as myself, in connection with our respective Asylums. It is becoming more aggravated each year, but it seems as if some serious accident only will put a stop to the committal of such cases here, for it is highly dangerous to the old people, as it is quite impossible to classify them with due regard to their safety from the violence of their fellow patients. But the practice is not only wrong to the individuals themselves, it is also a needless slur on their posterity.

The recovery-rate is thus much below that of the previous year, and this largely accounts for the increased accumulation referred to below.

There were thirty-two deaths, against fifteen for the year 1900, which was much below the average; and these, taken with the discharges, forty, and deducted from the total under treatment, gives the number remaining on the books at the end of the year 1901, viz., 546, which is an increase of thirty-two, or an excess of twenty over that of the previous year. Of the thirty-two deaths, twelve were of patients admitted during the year, of whom five were over seventy, and eight over sixty years of age.

Four cases of enteric fever, one male and three females, occurred towards the end of the summer, but all made good recoveries, though one had several relapses and was thus prolonged. The male patient was not specially isolated for want of some proper accommodation, yet no further cases occurred in that division. The females were treated apart from the others as far as the means permitted, and the disease was thus confined to the few mentioned. I was quite unable to assign the cause of this outbreak, for the patients had had no communication with the outer world which could reasonably account for the infection; and the fact that the disease was limited to so few was proof, I think, that it was not due to any insanitary condition in the Asylum itself.

Two cases of scarlatina, one in the male and one in the female division, also developed; the latter was in a patient who had just given birth to a child, who, being mentally convalescent, was