

RESULTS OF SIXTEEN YEARS' ASYLUM LIFE.

The last Annual Report of the Brookwood Asylum possesses more than ordinary interest from its being the last which the late superintendent, Dr. Brushfield, will issue, and from its containing a brief summary of the principal points connected with the institution during the period he has held office.

Of the 4,155 patients admitted, 1,286, or 31 per cent., have recovered; 653, or 15·7, have been either somewhat relieved (3·4) or not improved; 1,188, or 28·6, have died, leaving 1,028 in the asylum. Of the above admissions 274, or 6·5 per cent., were readmissions. In England and Wales the readmissions bore a proportion of 12·47 per cent. according to a recent Report of the Commissioners. Of the deaths 36·1 per cent. were due to general paralysis. In late years the proportion of cases of this disease among the men has decreased, while it has increased among the women. Reckoned on the admissions, 9 per cent. died of general paralysis. There were only two cases of suicide.

The importance of the steady increase in the number of aged patients is well brought out in some of the figures given by Dr. Brushfield. Their bearing on recoveries and deaths is clearly shown. Of 1,028 inmates on Jan. 1st, 1882, 681 were below 50 years of age, and 347 above, the greater proportion being among the females. The number of aged patients at the end of 1881 presented a marked increase over those recorded in previous years. Thus:—

Total number of inmates. Aged 50 and upwards.				
Dec. 31, 1869	..... 620	..... 173	..... = 1 in 3·58 or 27·90 p.c.	} Of the total inmates.
" 1876	..... 957	..... 282	..... = 1 in 3·39 or 29·46 "	
" 1881	..... 1028	..... 347	..... = 1 in 2·96 or 33·75 "	

The next figures show how the deaths and recoveries of the past year are affected by the age of the patients.

1881. Total number aged 50 and upwards.				
Admissions	..... 244	..... 51	..... = 1 in 4·7 cases or 20·9	} Per cent. of the total number.
Recoveries	..... 113	..... 14	..... = 1 in 8·0 "	
Deaths	..... 88	..... 41	..... = 4 in 2·1 "	

The only other points to which we shall refer are those of mechanical restraint and seclusion, on which Dr. Brushfield thus writes:—

"As a pupil and follower of the late Dr. Conolly in carrying out the non-restraint system of treatment, I have never in my life ordered or sanctioned mechanical restraint of any kind, not but what I have met with occasional instances that might have benefited by such treatment, but the risk of abuse was so great that it led me to discountenance it. It is not a little singular that in my last year of official life, by a kind of irony of fate, I have had to record an instance which has been already alluded to earlier in this Report. Seclusion by locking up a patient in a room has not been practised in the asylum since the year 1871. Instances came under my notice which induced me to believe that the practice led to some of the worst cases being neglected. I determined to disuse it if I could, and I have never regretted its abandonment."

Correspondence.

To the Editors of the JOURNAL OF MENTAL SCIENCE.

GENTLEMEN,—In your last quarterly issue certain observations are to be found at page 112 which, as Senior Inspector and Commissioner of Control of Lunatic Asylums in Ireland, I deem it expedient to notice; they have reference to a statement published by the resident medical superintendent of the Richmond District Asylum in his report of 1880. I quite agree in opinion with the reviewer who, in his Psychological Retrospect, suggests that "It would be well if, in his next report, Dr. Lalor explained the reason of the Inspector's

omitting to visit the Richmond Asylum, as, to persons non-resident in Ireland, such a state of affairs appears inexplicable." As the gentleman referred to has declined, or perhaps more correctly speaking, has been unable to do so, I trust that a simple recital of facts conveyed through the medium of your largely circulated periodical will afford ample proof "for the satisfaction of the public conscience that *all* Irish asylums are inspected by the proper officials." I quote as follows from a document supplied me by the Secretary at the Richmond Asylum in answer to these specific questions. 1. Names of governors attending meetings (21) with an average of eight members at each:—Sir John Barington, D.L., Burton Brabazon, J.P., Col. Cunningham, D.L., Alderman Campbell, D.L., Major Ellis, Sir George Hodson, Ion Frant Hamilton, M.P., H. Hamilton, D.L., Sir James Mackey, D.L., The Lord Mayor of Dublin, E. Kinahan, D.L., The Earl of Meath, Richard Martin, D.L., Sir George Owens, Sir John Toulayne, C.B., Viscount Vowerscomb, H. Verdon, Esq. 2. Dates of meetings, 1880, attended by Dr. Nugent, Commissioner of Control, &c., &c. February 1, March 16, April 27, May 18, July 6, August 24, September 21, October 19, November 23, December 17. 3. Visits made by Dr. Nugent in 1880, either with one or more governors or officers of the staff. January 22, February 4, March 2, April 2, June 6, July 19, September 12, November 2.

Independent of the above, I find my colleague inspected the house on four occasions. I am thus particular in giving names and dates so as to obviate all possible misconception when matters of fact are in question, or erroneous inferences deducible. Of my frequent attendance at monthly meetings, whereby the advantage was afforded of a personal communication with gentlemen of position, alike desirous as the Inspectors for the well-being of the institution, Dr. Lalor must have been aware, for although the benefit of his presence at their deliberations had been declined by a resolution of the governors three years ago, and more than once repeated since then, he could not have failed to see me when "called on to read his reports and to afford such information as might be required of him." It is incumbent on me, however, to state that the exceptional course just adverted to was proposed without the knowledge of the Inspectors, and adopted without their concurrence.

Before closing this communication on a very unpleasant subject, I cannot but express a deep regret at the occasion which unavoidably forced it on me. As one of the heads of an important department, I cannot recognise any right on the part of subordinates to criticise before the public the conduct of their official superiors. If there be a dereliction of duty by the latter, a proper tribunal is available in the Executive; the Inspectors have in every mode at their disposal, pecuniary and other, sought at all times to raise the character of Irish asylums by extending the sphere of their utility, while in their Parliamentary reports, they never fail to bestow on their respective staffs the full credit of their successful operation, and as regards more immediately the medical officers attached to them, they have consistently upheld their social status and legitimate independence as educated members of their own profession.

I am, gentlemen,

Your obedient servant,

J. NUGENT.

Rutland Green, Dublin, 12th June, 1882.

A CASE OF ENDARTERITIS WITH INSANITY AND APHASIA.

To the Editors of the JOURNAL OF MENTAL SCIENCE.

GENTLEMEN,—I beg to offer the suggestion that the case recorded by Dr. Mitchell in "Clinical Notes and Cases," in the last number of the Journal, and provisionally named by the above title, was an example of "Multiple Cerebro-spinal Sclerosis" of Hammond (Charcot's "Sclérose en plaques disséminées").