

removed by arrangement to the hospital, where she eventually recovered. The male patient was treated in the Asylum, and also recovered, and, though no special arrangement could be made for his isolation, the disease was confined to him. Scarlatina was at the time prevalent in Christchurch and the surrounding districts, and the fact that it did not spread further in the Asylum is additional evidence of the satisfactory sanitary condition of the institution.

Two patients gave birth to children in the Asylum during the year: one (referred to above) during arrangements for her removal to her friends, subsequently contracted scarlatina; the other, the subject of acute mania, whose release was out of the question, and who was in very low physical condition from prolonged excitement, developed septicæmia from which she died. In both cases the children were removed as soon as practicable.

There were no suicides, fractures, or serious accidents involving life.

The overcrowding, especially of the male division, has become greatly aggravated, without any apparent prospect of relief, though it has been repeatedly brought under the notice of the Department by myself and others in their official reports of recent years, and its alarming nature pointed out. I am powerless to do more, and can only disclaim responsibility for the condition and the consequences. On the female side the single-room sleeping-accommodation is not nearly sufficient, so that the proper and safe classification of the patients at night is impossible, many of them occupying dormitories, who, from their objectionable habits or dangerous tendencies, are not fit associates for the better behaved inmates. This has arisen from two chief causes: the extension of the general accommodation from time to time without the provision of more single rooms, and the occupation of many of the latter, originally intended for patients, by extra female attendants, owing to the great increase of the staff in recent years. I have pointed out how this can be to a large extent relieved by the building of a small semi-detached block for the sleeping accommodation of a certain number of female attendants, thus rendering available for patients several rooms now occupied by the former.

A Nurses' Home is now considered a necessary adjunct to all well-equipped hospitals and kindred institutions, and has been already provided at many asylums, so that I trust such an amelioration of the life and condition of our female attendants will shortly be accomplished here. If it is necessary at a general hospital, it should not require any argument to show its greater need in an institution of this kind, where the attendants have longer hours of duty in constant association with the insane, less interesting work, and more trying and exacting duties.

In my report last year I drew special attention to the marked unrest and desire for change amongst the Asylum employees, and stated what were, in my opinion, the chief reasons thereof; the same state of things has continued more or less, and has been at times embarrassing, though I do not think it interfered to any extent with the efficient working of the institution. When the vastly improved condition as regards remuneration of this class of employee in the general labour market is considered, with the fact that there has not been any corresponding increase of the salaries of the ordinary male and female attendants for many years, it cannot cause surprise that there should be greater difficulty in getting and retaining the services of suitable persons. The salaries at which the female and the ordinary male (as distinguished from the tradesmen attendants) are now engaged, have not been altered for the last twenty years, and I think the time has now arrived for their revision, or for greater inducement of some kind.

The farm is each year becoming a greater source of profit, and the increased yield of milk and butter, and of general produce for sale and home consumption, has a very marked effect on our maintenance rate. The expenditure thereon has been heavy, but was largely for permanent improvements, and will not recur. Of the receipts for produce sold, the sum of £1,190 was paid into the Public Account, the chief items being, roughly: Cattle, £249; horses, £73; pigs, £222; hams and bacon, £147; potatoes, £254; peas, £136; mangolds, £40; poultry, £26, &c.; while during the year 12,564 lb. of butter and 10,685 gallons of fresh milk were supplied to the building, besides a large amount of skim-milk used in cooking, &c. If the value of this dairy produce, at contract price, and if all the potatoes (85 tons), vegetables, fruit (8½ tons), poultry, eggs, fresh pork, veal, &c., be added to the above it will, I think, be seen that if our labour is cheap it is advantageously employed. We have now, I believe, one of the largest and best dairy (Ayrshire) herds in the colony, and are able to sell our young stock, for which there are numerous inquiries, at highly remunerative prices. The yield of milk for the year 1901 amounted to 435,563 lb. as against 312,653 lb. for 1900, an increase of 122,910 lb., equal to about 12,290 gallons.

During the year women cooks were substituted for men in the kitchen, giving, amongst other advantages, a greater variety of domestic employment to our female patients. In consequence of this change it will be necessary to cover in the kitchen-yard with a raised glass roof, open round the sides for ventilation, and to build rooms for the cooks in proximity to their work; as this can be carried out at very small cost (about £200) I trust no time will be lost, as the former will afford the patients much-needed protection from rain and inclement weather, and the latter relieve other accommodation for its more proper purpose.

I cannot close this year's report without a reference to a practice which has come under my notice and exercised my mind a great deal for the last year or two—viz., the extent to which persons are now compulsorily placed and detained in homes, or so-called private hospitals, kept for the lucrative advantage of the proprietors. I feel the more justified in drawing your attention to this subject as some of these patients have, after longer or shorter periods of such confinement, been committed here in legal form when their prospect of recovery had become hopeless, and, it may be, the resources of their friends well nigh exhausted; whereas had they been sent to a properly equipped asylum under experienced management, and conducted with a primary view to the recovery of the patient, at an early stage of the malady, they might not have become permanent burdens of the State. I am aware of the reluctance of many persons to allow their relatives