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With the Writer's compliments.

REPORT

AS TO THE

EXISTING HIGH RATE OF LUNACY

IN THE

County of Wilts.

Devises:

PRINTED AT THE "GAZETTE" OFFICE.



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“At a Meeting of the Visiting Committee of the Wilts County Asylum, held on the 20th July, 1897, Lord Edmond Fitzmaurice referred to matter appearing on pages 28-30 of the Medical Superintendent’s Report for the year 1896, which dealt to a large extent with the existing high rate of Lunacy in the County, but which might, he thought, be amplified in a form which would convey some information to the Public, and moved “That the Medical Superintendent be requested to prepare for this Committee a Report on the High Rate of Lunacy in the County of Wilts as compared with other Counties, and in certain parts of the County in particular, and that with that object he be also requested to make such enquiries, from Public Authorities or otherwise, as may appear to him desirable.”

The motion was seconded by Lord Frederick Bruce and carried.

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REPORT.

The subject of insanity is one that is commanding more and more the attention of the psychologist and the general public, and is receiving more consideration and thought than ever before. The almost universal cry for more accommodation for the insane has caused public and professional alarm, and enquiries are being made as to the why and wherefore of such need; and the large outlay required to provide increased accommodation, and the cost of maintaining so many persons of unsound mind is a serious drain upon the ratepayers. There is no doubt that County Councils and their special Asylum Committees have inherited a difficult duty in providing for, and meeting the requirements of the day. It will not be disputed that the long delay in formulating and passing the Local Government Bill of 1888 accounts to a great extent for the present deficiency of accommodation. The promised change in County Government, and the uncertainty as to the form and powers of such management when developed, made the old power shelve many questions until such new body came into force. Hence the County Councils and their Asylum Committees have found an accumulation of work, and the general cry for more accommodation for lunatics has been universal, and at last reached such a crisis that no surplus accommodation existed in any one of the English County Asylums. This state of things and the great works which have now to be done, entailing much outlay have at first thought, and to the uninformed, pointed to an alarming increase of insanity, but it has been demonstrated almost conclusively that the increase of insanity has not risen to the extent it at first sight appears, and that the seeming increase is due to various factors causing an accumulation of the insane rather than any increase disproportionate to the rise in population.

Apparent
Increase of
Insanity.

Accommo-
dation for
the Insane.

Special En-
quiry by the
Commis-
sioners in
Lunacy

The matter has been a subject of special enquiry on the part of the Lunacy Commissioners, who with a view of drawing up a report upon the matter, submitted a series of questions to the Superintendents of English Asylums. The replies (62) coming from experts possessing every opportunity of forming and expressing a correct opinion on the local insanity of their respective counties are interesting and instructive, and worthy of consideration and confidence. Upon the strength of these opinions and from statistical knowledge at their own disposal the Commissioners came to the conclusion that much of the apparent increase of insanity has been due, not to an increase in the incidence of that disease, but of the aggregate of persons affected by it, and to their redistribution; in other words, that insanity has not greatly increased, out of proportion to the increase of population, but that the numbers of the insane have greatly so increased, and that they have been so redistributed as to give the impression of an actual increase of the disease. It now only remains for us to suggest the causes which have been, and are, at work to produce this continually augmenting accumulation of the registered insane, especially in institutions. These causes may generally be summarized under the following heads:—

1. Greater accuracy of registration.
2. Extended views as to what constitutes insanity requiring confinement.
3. The retention in Workhouses of a diminished proportion of pauper lunatics.
4. The four shilling grant, a relief of local taxation which, in our opinion, has largely contributed by its reactions to increase the burden of lunacy upon the public.
5. The increased popularity of Asylums.
6. The gradually increasing ratio of transfers from the unregistered to the registered class.
7. The increasing proportion admitted of old, and broken down cases, to which special reference was made in our forty-ninth report.

8. The greater density of population in the large towns, and the decrease of home industries, making it less and less possible to retain at home persons suffering from even the less severe forms of insanity.
9. The increased treatment in Asylums of temporary attacks of alcoholic insanity formerly treated in Workhouses or at home.
10. The opening of new Asylums.
11. A material diminution in the percentage of persons discharged from Institutions.
12. A decrease in the death rate.
13. A decrease in the recovery rate.

Causes Nos. 3, 4, 5, 7, 11 and 12 had been previously offered in the Annual Reports of this Asylum in explanation of the increase in the population of the Wilts County Asylum. Nos. 3 and 4 have, no doubt, proved the great factors, and the consequences following their operation have from time to time been drawn attention to in our Annual Reports, and more especially so in 1895, when the following table was inserted:—

Year.	Total No. of Lunatics in Wilts.	PERCENTAGES.			Fewer in Workhouses.
		In County Asylum.	In Workhouses.	Under care of Friends.	
1874	878	54·7	19·0	24·7	
1884	980	64·0	19·6	15·8	
1894	966	73·2	14·7	11·8	

What effect the 4s. grant has had in filling Asylums cannot be definitely proved, but, judging from the above figures, which are suggestive, there has been some force in action during the past 20 years which has materially influenced the growth of the population of this Asylum. The grant came into operation in 1874, and from that year to 1884 the number of insane persons in Wiltshire

The Four-shilling Grant.

jumped from 878 to 980, an increase of 102. During the next ten years (1884 to 1894) we see a falling off of 14 in the number of lunatics in the County, with a further increase in the number in the Asylum. In twenty years we have an increase of 20 per cent. under treatment in the Asylum, with a decrease of 5 and 13 per cent. respectively in numbers detained in Workhouses or in care of friends.

The remarks of the Commissioners upon the subject are as follows:—

“Whereas on the 1st January, 1859, 25 per cent. of all officially known lunatics were in the Workhouses, the proportion had decreased exactly one-half, or to 12·5 per cent. in 1896. This change, which as has been shown has materially affected the rate of admission of apparently new cases into Institutions has been no doubt largely due to fiscal considerations.”

Then follow the remarks given in No. 4 of the causes of apparent increase of insanity. However, some counties, particularly Welsh, still maintain a high proportion of their insane either in Workhouses or under care of friends. Of the English Counties Hunts has the highest proportion (90 per cent.) in Asylums, having only 8·7 per cent. in Workhouses, and 1·3 per cent. with relatives. Wiltshire with 75·7 per cent. in its Asylum and 13·7 in Workhouses and 10·6 per cent. with friends holds an average position.

Insanity in
Relation to
Class.

Much is said and written as to the evils attending the rush, hurry, and restless movement, with keen competition and struggle of the present day, but, strange to say, these evils do not appear to cause an increased amount of insanity in those most likely to be influenced by such trials, but we find insanity in the middle or business classes almost stationary, and that whereas the ratio of insane paupers has risen since 1859 from 15·95 to 28·44 per 10,000, the ratio of private patients during the same periods has only risen from 2·38 to 2·69 per 10,000. This supports the theory of the Commissioners as to the effect of greater accuracy of registration and transference of so many unregistered to the registered class. In the face of all these explanations we still have the disagreeable fact before our eyes that the number of insane people to

the population in 1859 was 1 to every 536, in 1889 the proportion stood at 1 to 337, and in 1897 stands at 1 to 313 in England. To show the difficulties attending an accurate analysis of the proportion of insane to sane persons, it may be mentioned that in 1891 the census showed the existence of 97,383 lunatics, whereas the Commissioners' figures accounted for only 86,795 insane persons, a difference equal to more than 10 per cent.

Ratios
throughout
England.

After this divergence from the special purport of this report, it will be well to consider the subject of insanity in Wiltshire in relation to the insanity of other Counties. The County of Wilts has for many years been prominent in the matter of lunacy, and during the fifties and sixties it possessed a higher proportion of insane to population than any other County in England. In 1867 the ratio of pauper lunatics and idiots to the population in England was about one to five hundred (1 to 494); at the same time the proportion in Wiltshire stood at 1 in 327. Other counties ran Wilts very close and were scarcely less favourably circumstanced, for Gloucester had 1 in 341; Oxford, 1 in 349; Berks, 1 in 340; Dorset, 1 in 387, and Hereford, 1 in 329. The most favoured counties in those days, and counties possessing the lowest ratio of pauper insanity were Durham, 1 in 843; Glamorgan, 1 in 758; Suffolk, 1 in 729; Yorkshire (West Riding), 1 in 709; Cornwall 1 in 694; Derby, 1 in 628, &c. The following table will show the then disposal of the insane, and in connection with this table two important points are to be noticed.

Insanity in
Wiltshire.

Proportion in
other
Counties.

1st. That Counties having a high ratio of insane are purely agricultural, having no mining or manufacturing population, whereas Counties having a low ratio of insane population comprise those possessing mining, manufacturing and other trade enterprises.

2nd. It is also to be noticed how great a number of pauper lunatics and idiots were then either in Workhouses or in care of friends.

TABLE SHOWING RATIO OF PAUPER INSANITY IN ENGLAND & WALES.

COUNTY.	Population corrected to July, 1866	Pauper Lunatics and Idiots, 1st Jan., 1867.			
		In Asylums	In Work-houses, with friend and elsewhere.	Total.	Ratio to Population.
Durham ...	567,500	400	273	673	1 to 843
Glamorgan ...	360,703	258	218	476	" 758
Stafford ...	816,056	712	407	1,119	" 729
West Riding					
Yorkshire ...	1,598,946	1,134	1,122	2,256	" 709
Cornwall ...	376,306	365	177	542	" 694
Derby ...	360,968	331	224	575	" 628
Chester ...	530,279	495	396	891	" 595
East Riding					
Yorkshire ...	249,849	293	128	421	" 593
South Wales ...	730,813	514	744	1,258	" 580
Lancaster ...	2,628,542	2,525	2,077	4,602	" 571
Rutland ...	21,301	28	11	39	" 546
Cumberland ..	210,167	219	168	387	" 543
North Riding				483	
Yorkshire ..	260,123	302	181		" 539
Kent ...	792,947	802	675	1,477	" 537
Northumberland	362,753	411	268	679	" 534
Huntingdon ...	64,284	78	44	122	" 527
Westmoreland ..	62,082	65	55	120	" 517
Lincoln ...	414,758	515	311	826	" 502
Nottingham ...	305,587	340	274	614	" 498
Monmouth ...	183,240	251	125	376	" 487
Devon ...	593,010	651	587	1,238	" 479
Southampton ...	520,037	622	504	1,126	" 462
North Wales ...	433,993	370	571	941	" 461
Sussex ...	377,180	531	310	841	" 460
Bedford ...	140,691	185	121	306	" 460
Norfolk ...	430,841	478	473	951	" 453
Warwick ...	605,275	909	433	1,342	" 451
Salop ...	246,768	336	223	559	" 441
Suffolk ...	336,997	394	377	771	" 437
Somerset ..	445,352	475	551	1,026	" 434
Essex ...	422,617	587	387	974	" 434
Worcester ...	322,632	516	229	745	" 433
Surrey ...	905,098	930	1,187	2,117	" 427
Cambridge ...	171,322	237	170	407	" 421
Middlesex ...	2,366,439	3,864	1,791	5,655	" 418
Hertford ...	176,270	250	186	436	" 404
Northampton ...	235,366	2	587	589	" 400
Dorset ...	191,080	310	184	494	" 387
Bucks ..	170,127	312	130	442	" 385
Leicester ...	240,963	367	278	645	" 374
Oxford ...	171,196	292	199	491	" 349
Gloucester ...	336,777	594	395	989	" 341
Berks ..	179,351	322	296	528	" 340
Hereford ...	127,823	244	185	389	" 329
Wilts ...	216,856	425	330	755	" 327
England & Wales	21,135,515	24,152	18,618	42,770	1 to 494

In 1871 the proportion of insane to population in Wilts increased to 1 in 319, and on the taking of the census in 1881 the proportion amounted to 1 in 271. But though on the latter occasion the ratio of insanity in this County showed so great a rise, its position had, to a certain extent, improved, and instead of being at the head of the list and having the highest ratio of any County, it was found to stand third—two other Counties possessing proportions of 1 in 243 and 1 in 246 respectively.

Wiltshire's
Position Im-
proved.

On the census of 1891 Wiltshire had further improved its position, not only as regards the ratio of insanity, but compared with the ratios of other counties. Wiltshire's proportion was then lowered to 1 in 290, and four other Counties had a higher proportion—one having as many as 1 in 193 of its population.

The following table shows the estimated relative positions of the various counties on the census of 1891, and comparing this table with the one for 1867 it will be noticed that Agricultural Counties continue to maintain a higher ratio of lunatics than other Counties, and further how great a change has occurred in the disposal of the insane throughout the Counties.

Position of
other Coun-
ties on
Census of
1891.

COUNTY.	Population in 1891.	Pauper Lunatics and Idiots 1st Jan., 1891.			
		In Asylums.	In Work-houses, with friends and elsewhere.	Total.	Ratio to Population.
Cardigan ...	62,596	144	179	323	1 in 193
Hereford ...	115,986	365	159	524	" 221
Montgomery ...	58,003	159	93	252	" 230
Berks ...	238,446	607	215	822	" 290
Wilts ...	264,969	635	277	912	" 290
Oxford ...	185,938	436	195	631	" 294
Middlesex, Surrey, & Kent ..	6,124,855	13,672	7,097	20,769	" 294
Brecon ...	57,031	152	38	190	" 300
Salop ...	236,324	587	200	787	" 300
Gloucester ...	599,974	1,201	742	1,943	" 308
Radnor ...	21,791	48	22	70	" 311
Somerset ...	484,326	1,043	506	1,549	" 312
Norfolk ...	456,474	943	481	1,427	" 319
Beds ...	160,729	391	111	502	" 320
Cambridge ...	188,862	413	143	556	" 322

COUNTY.	Population in 1891.	Pauper Lunatics and Idiots 1st Jan., 1891.			
		In Asylums.	In Work- houses, with friends and elsewhere.	Total.	Ratio to Population.
Dorset ...	194,187	440	159	599	" 324
Merioneth ...	49,204	78	72	150	" 328
Monmouth ...	252,260	593	163	756	" 333
Herts ...	220,125	520	136	656	" 335
Devon ...	631,767	1,297	557	1,854	" 340
Pembroke ...	89,125	164	96	260	" 342
Southampton ...	690,086	1,307	666	1,973	" 349
Warwick ...	805,070	1,752	519	2,271	" 354
Notts ...	445,599	748	494	1,242	" 358
Carmarthen ...	130,574	195	166	361	" 361
Leicester ...	373,693	782	235	1,017	" 367
Sussex ...	472,778	718	305	1,023	" 367
Rutland ...	20,659	46	10	56	" 368
Worcester ...	403,755	858	228	1,086	" 380
Suffolk ...	369,351	665	295	960	" 384
Cornwall ...	322,589	651	168	819	" 393
Carnarvon ...	118,225	133	162	295	" 400
Bucks ...	185,190	355	106	461	" 401
Northampton ...	302,184	546	188	734	" 411
Lancashire ...	3,926,798	6,734	425	9026	" 435
Stafford ...	1,083,273	1,561	884	2,445	" 443
Northumberland ...	506,096	904	234	1,138	" 414
Westmoreland..	66,098	104	41	145	" 455
Hunts ...	57,772	108	18	126	" 458
Lincoln ...	472,778	718	305	1,023	" 462
Cumberland ...	266,556	418	152	570	" 467
Denbigh ...	117,950	133	119	252	" 468
Chester ...	730,052	1,109	442	1,551	" 470
Anglesey ...	50,079	52	54	106	" 472
York, E. R. ...	399,412	607	230	837	" 477
Essex ...	785,399	1,183	390	1,573	" 499
York, N. R. ...	368,237	591	139	730	" 504
York, E. R. ...	2,441,164	3,386	1,195	4,581	" 532
Glamorgan ...	687,147	931	355	1,286	" 534
Durham ...	1,016,449	1,293	323	1,616	1 in 628
Flint ...	77,189	60	56	116	" 665
Derby ...	527,886	560	211	771	" 684
Add patients of no settlement confined in Asylums and chargeable to County Rates		1,556			
Totals England and Wales ...	29,001,018	54,981	22,803	77,784	1 in 372

Having made these comparisons between the various English Counties it will be well to compare the ratios of insanity in the various Unions within the County of Wilts as set forth in the following table.

Ratios of
Insanity in
Union Dis-
tricts.

Union	Population in 1891.	Increase or Decrease of Population between 1881 and 1891.		No. of Lunatics in 1896.	Proportion of Lunatics to population in 1896.	Proportion of Lunatics to population in 1891.
		Increase	Decrease			
Highworth and Swindon ...	47,310	11,555		117	One in 404	One in 639
Cricklade and Wootton Bassett	11,835	222		33	358	394
Malmesbury ...	13,165		784	39	337	243
Marlborough ...	8,506		1082	29	293	283
Salisbury ...	28,423	902		100	284	323
Tisbury ...	8,596		710	34	252	252
Chippenham ...	21,668	501		86	251	249
Wilton ...	9,874		356	41	241	299
Melksham ...	18,565	488		78	238	241
Mere ...	6,756		593	30	225	198
Pewsey ...	11,712		691	54	216	239
Warminster ...	13,032		805	62	210	233
Bradford-on-Avon	10,351	106		52	199	199
Amesbury ...	6,888		671	35	196	313
Devizes ...	19,744		786	107	184	212
Westbury and Whorwellsdown	10,166		487	57	178	212
Calne ...	8,506		155	29	177	189

The populations at the last census, it will be seen, generally showed a decrease and this probably continues, but in the case of Highworth and Swindon the estimated annual increase of population is 2,000, so that the present population would be about 52,000, giving one lunatic in 447. In eleven of the Unions the proportion has gone up, in two it is stationary, and in four it is lower. The Highworth and Swindon Union possesses a growing and varying cosmopolitan population with numerous changes in its residents who consist chiefly of the artisan class and are what might be called well-to-do, and there one sees a much lower proportion of lunatics than is found in other

and agricultural parts of the County, which is a distinct advantage.

Pauperism
and
Insanity.

Much of the present insanity in Wiltshire, particularly in rural districts, had its origin and was generated in bygone days. People are surprised to read of so high a proportion of insanity in agricultural districts where hard competition, worry and anxiety, the modern causes of insanity, are almost unknown. But the matter is easily explained and one has only to refer to the Poor Law Records of sixty years ago to see and understand the life then led by residents in rural districts, and how their then surroundings and habits necessarily more or less bred insanity. The Poor Law Commissioners report of 1834 holds up the Calne Union as a strong example of a bad system of working the Poor Laws. Calne appears to have formerly had a manufacture of cloth, &c., which fell into decay and caused many men to be thrown out of employ, and these men being incapable of other occupation, were dependent upon Poor Law Relief, and at that time 84 able bodied men with their families received relief, besides 27 widows with children and 41 bastard children. The number of illegitimate children appears excessive and points to a low state of morals, and this is confirmed by a further paragraph in the same report, when those relieved by the Overseer are spoken of as most notorious drunkards, swearers, and thieves. The same state of things it appears prevailed in adjoining parishes, and probably to a certain extent existed in other parts of the County. The depravity, starvation, and wretched surroundings and other evils of those days must be answerable for much of the imbecility and mental deficiency now apparent.

Though prosperity with its consequent extravagance, particularly in drink, is an acknowledged factor of insanity pauperism is also intimately connected with mental disease, and where pauperism prevails insanity is prominent. Thirty years ago when Wiltshire held so leading a position in the matter of insanity it was also eminent for its large proportion of pauperism, in fact it had the highest proportion of any County in England, possessing, according to the Poor Law Boards Report of 1860 no less than 1 pauper to every 12 of its population. Other Agricultural Counties had the following ratios :—

Dorset	...	1 in 13
Oxford	...	1 ,, 14
Gloucester	...	1 ,, 15
Berks	...	1 ,, 16
Hereford	...	1 ,, 16

Whereas the ratio of pauperism in manufacturing counties was little more than one half of the above being:

Durham	...	1 in 23
Stafford	..	1 ,, 23
Lancaster	..	1 ,, 25
York, W. R.	..	1 ,, 26
Chester	..	1 ,, 27
Derby	...	1 ,, 33

Thirty years later (viz. in 1897) we find by the Local Government Board's Report that Wiltshire, as in lunacy so in the matter of pauperism, had distinctly improved, and in place of having a ratio of 1 in 12 paupers it has only 1 in 25.

The following table shows the proportions of paupers to population in the various Union Counties on the 1st January 1897.

Union Counties.	Ratio per 1000 of estimated Population Paupers of all classes.	Union Counties.	Ratio per 1000 of estimated Population Paupers of all classes.
Norfolk	46.0	South Wales ...	29.9
Dorset	45.6	Yorks, East Riding	29.9
Hereford	43.8	Essex	29.1
Somerset	41.3	Yorks, North Riding	29.1
Wilts	40.8	Northampton ...	28.6
Devon	40.1	Leicester	28.3
Suffolk	39.8	Kent	27.7
Oxford	39.4	London	27.6
North Wales ...	39.4	Berks	25.8
Cambridge	38.3	Cumberland ...	25.5
Hertford	38.2	Nottingham ...	25.1
Cornwall	38.1	Derby	24.2
Buckingham ...	36.8	Salop	23.3
Bedford	36.2	Durham	22.0
Lincoln	36.2	Surrey	21.1
Gloucester	35.9	Chester	21.0
Monmouth	35.2	Westmoreland ...	20.6
Rutland	34.5	Northumberland ...	20.1
Sussex	32.4	Warwick	20.1
Southampton ...	31.6	Lancaster	19.6
Huntingdon ...	31.5	Yorks, West Riding	18.6
Stafford	31.3	Middlesex	18.4
Worcester	31.1		

From this table it will be observed how materially pauperism has diminished, but at the same time we notice that Agricultural Counties generally possessing high ratios of insanity have the greater proportion of paupers.

Causes of
Insanity.

It will now be well to consider some of the causes of lunacy and as far as possible compare those common in Wiltshire with those most prevalent in other Counties. Here we meet with difficulties, for reliable information is not generally forthcoming and frequently the assigned cause has little if anything to do with the case. Such information as we do possess is derived chiefly, if not solely from the statement accompanying the order of admission, and there is too much reason to fear such statements are filled up in a haphazard, superficial and careless manner, and this information is often fallacious, misleading and unreliable. It is much less trouble to put "Not known" than to ask a lot of questions and write down the replies. However, apart from this want of care to make full and sufficient enquiries into the nature of each case and its past personal and family history there is a great reluctance of relatives to disclose family secrets and to enlighten those responsible for the completion of such statements. Insanity is a skeleton in the cupboard of social life—the fact of Royalty suffering from it early in this century did not make it a fashionable disease—and there is a kind of stigma attending its presence or shadow which unfortunately makes the disease to be abhorred and dreaded above all others.

The following table shows a yearly average of the assigned causes of insanity throughout England during five years.

TABLE 1.—PROPORTION PER CENT. TO THE YEARLY AVERAGE NUMBER ADMITTED DURING THE FIVE YEARS 1891 TO 1895.

CAUSES OF INSANITY.	Males.	Females.	Total.
MORAL:			
Domestic trouble (including loss of relatives and friends)	4.3	9.2	6.7
Adverse circumstances (including business anxieties and pecuniary difficulties)	7.4	4.5	5.9
Mental anxiety and "worry" (not included under the above two heads) and overwork	6.2	5.9	6.0
Religious excitement	1.5	1.8	1.6
Love affairs (including seduction) ... ..	.6	2.2	1.4
Fright and nervous shock ... ..	.8	1.8	1.2
PHYSICAL:			
Intemperance, in drink	20.9	8.5	11.5
" sexual	1.1	.6	.8
Veneral disease	1.7	.4	1.0
Self-abuse (sexual)	2.1	.2	1.1
Over-exertion ... ..	.4	.3	.3
Sunstroke	1.8	.1	.9
Accident or injury	4.8	.9	2.8
Pregnancy	—	1.1	—
Parturition and the puerperal state...	—	6.5	—
Lactation	—	1.5	—
Uterine and ovarian disorders	—	1.1	—
Puberty ... ..	.9	.9	.9
Change of life	—	4.6	—
Fevers	1.4	1.0	1.2
Privation and starvation	1.3	1.5	1.4
Old age	5.9	6.7	6.3
Other bodily diseases and disorders...	13.9	13.0	13.4
Previous attacks	16.4	22.0	19.2
Hereditary influence ascertained	20.8	25.9	23.3
Congenital defect ascertained	5.2	3.7	4.4
Other ascertained causes	1.1	.7	.9
Unknown	18.4	15.8	17.1

Percentages
under
Assigned
Causes.

The following table has been compiled to show the percentage of cases under assigned causes in manufacturing and Mining Counties under column A; in Agricultural Counties under B; and for comparison a special column for Wiltshire.

TABLE 2

CAUSES OF INSANITY.	A.		Total.	B.		Total.	WILTSHIRE.		
	Males.	Fem.		Males.	Fem.		Total.	Males.	Fem.	Total.
MORAL:									
Domestic trouble ...	8.2	11.4	9.8	2.7	4.3	3.5	6.5	10.9	8.7
Adverse circumstances ...	10.4	6.7	8.6	3.7	2.1	2.9	10.1	3.7	6.9
Mental anxiety, worry, and overwork...	3.6	3.2	3.4	3.1	2.5	2.8	7.6	1.2	4.4
Religious excitement ...	1.9	1.9	1.9	1.2	1.2	1.2	—	2.4	1.2
Love affairs (including seduction) ...	3	1.9	1.1	—	2.1	1.0	1.2	2.4	1.8
Fright and nervous shock ...	1.6	1.9	1.7	.4	2.1	1.2	—	—	—
PHYSICAL:									
Intemperance in drink ...	41.7	10.2	26.0	12.8	3.3	8.1	15.5	3.7	9.6
Veneral disease ...	1.1	.4	.7	.8	.8	.8	—	4.8	2.4
Sexual abuse ...	4.0	1.1	2.5	.8	.2	.5	2.5	—	1.2
Self-abuse (sexual)...	2.3	4.0	3.2	.6	—	.3	—	—	—
Over exertion ...	—	.2	.1	—	.2	.1	—	—	—
Sunstroke ...	.8	—	.4	1.6	—	.8	2.5	—	1.2
Accident or injury ...	5.7	1.3	3.5	4.8	.6	2.5	—	1.2	.6
Pregnancy ...	—	1.5	—	—	.6	—	—	4.8	—
Parturition and the puerperal state ...	—	7.7	—	—	1.6	—	—	1.2	—
Lactation ...	—	2.9	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Uterine and ovarian disorders ...	—	.3	—	—	1.0	—	—	—	—
Puberty ...	1.9	2.6	2.3	—	1.0	.5	—	—	—
Change of life ...	4.6	—	—	—	4.0	—	—	—	—
Fevers ...	3	.7	.5	.4	—	.2	—	3.7	.6
Privation and starvation ...	6	1.0	.8	.6	1.0	.8	2.5	1.2	2.5
Old age ...	5.4	4.7	5.1	9.6	11.2	10.4	3.8	13.4	8.7
Other bodily diseases and disorders	15.4	12.1	13.8	9.2	12.5	10.9	25.4	15.8	20.8
Previous attacks ...	17.8	20.8	19.3	9.0	15.5	12.2	11.6	26.8	19.2
Hereditary ...	23.8	30.0	26.4	18.2	31.1	24.7	24.7	34.1	29.5
Congenital defect ...	9.6	4.7	7.1	8.6	5.2	7.0	7.7	4.8	6.2
Other ascertained causes ...	6.3	1.4	3.9	8.4	2.1	1.2	—	—	—
Unknown ...	5.5	7.1	6.3	—	7.1	7.7	7.7	1.2	4.4
Epilepsy ...	—	—	—	—	—	—	6.4	8.5	7.5

These percentages are not entirely accurate, but in most instances are correct, and in all cases sufficiently reliable and approximately correct to form a basis for comparison. The leading causes of insanity throughout England are, it will be seen by Table I, Hereditary 23.3 per cent. ; Previous Attacks, 19.2 ; Intemperance in Drink, 14.5 ; Bodily Diseases, 13.4. In mining and manufacturing counties Table II, column A, Hereditary shows 26.9 per cent. ; Intemperance in Drink (being 2.60) 12 per cent. higher than counties generally—Previous Attacks or recoveries in many cases from Drink, 19.3 per cent. Comparing these figures with agricultural counties we find a difference, as against manufacturing counties, of 2.2 per cent. under Hereditary, and a more marked variation of no less than 18 per cent. under Intemperance in Drink, and 5 per cent. difference under Old Age. There is much information to be gained by comparing these percentages, and it is interesting to note the large percentage of Intemperance where wages are high, with the high rate under the head of Domestic Trouble and Adverse Circumstances, which confirm the statement that prosperity means dissipation, increases misery and proves an exciting cause to insanity. Examining the percentages in the Table under the head of Wilts, and comparing the same with other agricultural counties under “B.” we notice Wiltshire has a higher (by 5 per cent.) percentage of Hereditary Insanity, and that Intemperance, Domestic Trouble, Adverse Circumstances, and Mental Anxiety, are all slightly higher than other agricultural counties, but the great difference appears under Bodily Diseases, which in Wiltshire is 10 per cent. higher than in agricultural counties generally. The emaciated and diseased state of the patients admitted into this Asylum has often been commented on in the Annual Reports. Not long ago, a writer remarking upon the influence of climate on the formation of character, gave it as his opinion that “in the West of England all asperities of thought, all acute prepossessions gradually translate themselves into a vacuous indifference under the spell of the balmy atmosphere, and the voluptuous colours of the fertile hills, and that (naming a county) is the grave of mental enthusiasm and physical angularities—its population absorb moisture and grows fat.” This is certainly not applicable to Wilt-

shiremen, who are generally all angularities and most badly nourished, and generally only grow fat by a residence in the Asylum.

Hereditary
Insanity.

The percentages given under Wilts do not, as they at present stand, correctly indicate the position of the County in the matter of Hereditary influence. This predisposing cause to insanity may, and probably in many cases is lost under the cloak of an exciting cause, and it is only by searching into the family history of each individual case admitted that the true percentage of Hereditary Influence at work can be stated. Not being able to make a similar thorough investigation into the history of cases admitted into other Asylums it is impossible to make exact comparisons, but there is no doubt, as shown in Table II, Wiltshire has an excess of Hereditary Insanity, and to a much greater extent than generally realised. For instance if we collect every case admitted during the past five years in which the family history is known we find an average per centage of no less than 36·2, and some years as much as 50 per cent of Hereditary Insanity. This predisposition to insanity evidently exists and predominates as an accredited cause of insanity throughout the World, but apparently exists to a greater extent in Wiltshire than most places. Many families in this County are full of inherited insanity arising doubtless to a great extent from intermarriage, and this explains the large ratio of insane to population. Wiltshire has held an isolated position, having no seaports, few railways and no important manufactories; there has not been the importation of new blood which is desirable and conducive to the formation of a race strong in mind and body. It is probable, and certainly to be hoped, Wiltshire has passed through a crisis, and that as time goes on we may see the county more opened up, and a healthier race supplanting the degenerative specimens of humanity found in many parts of the County. As this is brought about, the ratio of insanity to population in Agricultural Counties will become lower, and the time will then come for the hurry and wear and tear of busy centres to tell upon sufferers from such drawbacks of the age, and towns in the future may probably have a higher rate of insanity than rural districts.

With a view of gaining some further insight into the causes of local insanity in Wiltshire, enquiries have been made as to the pay received by agricultural workmen, the increase or otherwise of pauperism, the existence or not of insanitary dwellings, immorality, intermarriages, and intemperance, etc.

Further Causes of Insanity.

From the returns received the agricultural labourers appear to be paid from 10s. to 15s. a week, the average wage being about 12s., with in some cases a cottage and other allowance, but in some districts only 10s. or 11s. a week is the average. This appears a low rate of pay, and quite insufficient to maintain a family and meet other outgoings, but intelligent farmers allege that the average weekly rate of wages is no criterion of the average annual receipts of a labourer. There is a considerable amount received by labourers in "extras" of many kinds, not always money. Pauperism has already been shown as decreasing, and this is confirmed by local authorities. In ten districts insanitary dwellings are said to exist, some being due to overcrowding, and, in one instance, it is reported that insanitary dwellings are not condemned by reason of houses being scarce. In twenty-five districts there is said to be no increase in immorality, and this statement is supported by a decrease in the number of illegitimate children registered, but this vice is increasing in five districts. Intemperance in drink is reported as increasing in eight and decreasing in seven districts. There is a general opinion that migration and emigration among the young and able-bodied is increasing, and this opinion is supported by the decrease in population throughout rural districts.

Wages of Labourers.

Insanitary Dwellings.

Immorality.

Intemperance.

The worst feature of this is that nearly all the young people—men and women—who have energy, enterprise, pluck, ambition, leave home and do well, and do not return, leaving the indolent, lazy, and mentally or physically deficient at home to lower the standard.

Emigration and Migration.

There is reason to fear immorality, if not increasing, is maintained, and prevails to a horrible extent. Towns are looked upon as hot-beds of vice and all that is bad in the way of morals, but there, what immorality exists, is to a great extent open and obvious, and not cloaked by rural darkness. The records of Calendars of Assizes, where recently 9 out of 10 cases were of an immoral nature,

Crime.

are much to be deplored. One can only excuse such criminals by supposing they are mentally deficient and not answerable for their actions.

Insanity and crime are so intimately related it may be interesting to quote some figures concerning the latter. The worst county is Monmouth, with 369 crimes per 100,000 of the population, and the best is Cornwall, with 57. Wiltshire contributes 115 cases per 100,000, Gloucestershire 180, Somerset 140, and Dorsetshire 125. We are told that the agricultural counties are much below the crime-rate for general crime, although the south-western group (Dorset, Hants, Somerset, and Wilts) are the worst offenders against morals.

Causes of
Insanity
Summarised.

From the above remarks we may conclude that insanity is not prevalent in Wiltshire, to the extent it was years ago; that what increase appears from statistics and a greater Asylum population arises from accumulation, having its origin in a concentration of the insane and a lower death rate; that Agricultural Counties have shown a higher ratio of insanity by reason of the insane of such counties being generally of a healthier constitution and, therefore, longer lived; that the causes of insanity in Wiltshire are those common to other parts of the world and are much on an average with the causes in other Counties; that Hereditary Influence is the predominating and predisposing cause in Wiltshire, where it exists to a greater extent than in most Counties; that bodily ailments such as anæmia, general debility, and emaciation caused by insufficient and proper food are an excessive cause of insanity in Wiltshire; that much immorality exists including incest of which several cases have been met with. These probably have their origin to some extent in overcrowding. The intemperance in drink appears to relate to ordinary intoxicants and there is no evidence that Methylated Spirit, Ether, or such stimulants as is the case in some Countries, are consumed for intoxicating purposes. ~~that~~ Marriages of persons having an insane taint should be discountenanced, which may in time be brought about by educating the people to see the misery they bring upon themselves and their offspring by such unions.

It is said a number of unmarried women of New York have formed a society for the prevention of hereditary diseases. They have registered a solemn vow not to marry any man whose family is tainted with consumption, insanity, alcoholism, or other heritable disease. This is a step in the right direction, and if the example of these wise ladies is widely followed by their sisters, and if eligible bachelors show an equally enlightened zeal for the healthfulness of posterity, they will do something for the betterment of the race.

During the past few years there has been a new cause of insanity in Influenza, which *per se* is a nervous disease, causing much depression, and in many cases mental aberration, particularly so in persons who have suffered recurring attacks of this disease. Previous to Influenza showing itself and until it became established in this Country, lunacy in Wiltshire was apparently stationary, the average number in the Asylum for four years varying from 683 to 686. Since its advent these numbers have varied and the averages been higher, and it is possible and even probable Influenza may in some way be to blame. At any rate the question is worthy of consideration and further enquiry.

Influenza as
a Cause.

But this disease is not likely to have any material or appreciable effect in causing insanity in this County, but it may account for some of the increase which may be shewn in the number of acute cases admitted. What we have to contend with is a concentration of the insane in the Asylum, and an accumulation arising from an abnormally low death rate and some falling off in the number removed, chiefly by reason of an inability or disinclination to detain chronic cases in Workhouses.

By this report it will be seen that Wiltshire does not hold the prominent position in the matter of lunacy compared with other counties that it did years ago, and there is every hope it may further improve in this matter. We may further come to the conclusion that because the population of the Asylum increases it does not necessarily follow that lunacy is on the increase, but the apparent increase has its origin in the concentration and accumulation referred to above.

No
Apparent
Increase of
Insanity in
Wiltshire.

This view is supported by statistics. In 1884 there were 980 recognised insane persons in this County, placed as follows :—In the County Asylum, 627 ; in Workhouses, 192 ; with friends, 155 ; and in other Institutions, 6. Twelve years later there were 1,032 known lunatics in the County, of whom 779 were in the Asylum, 142 in Workhouses, 109 with friends, and two elsewhere. By these figures we see in twelve years a decrease of 50 in Workhouses, and 46 fewer with friends, at the same time the population of the Asylum shows an increase of 152—deducting the 96 removed from Workhouses and friends there is a nett increase of 56 in twelve years, giving an annual increase of only four. These figures point to no

Conclusion.

increase of insanity, and support the view of the Commissioners to this effect, and the opinion expressed by the Medical Superintendent in the Annual Reports of this Asylum. But though insanity may not be increasing in this County a further concentration of the insane may be expected, and as a lower recovery rate is likely to prevail by reason of cases received being less curable, and the low death-rate probably being maintained, a continual accumulation of the insane may accrue.

J. IRELAND BOWES,

Medical Superintendent

Wilts County Asylum.

