

times three or four of them accompanying a woman patient with acute delirium or mania.

The impetus to improvement was doubtless already beginning to be felt in the asylums themselves as a part of the general advance throughout the domains of medicine, and most of the steps in the progress I am about to describe are due to the initiative taken by the asylum physicians themselves, whom I have always found to be alert to test any suggestion of improvement. To them belongs the chief credit of the betterment in the treatment of the insane.

There are now fourteen State hospitals for the insane, two State hospitals for the criminal insane, and twenty-three private retreats licensed by the Commission in Lunacy to care for the insane, altogether thirty-nine institutions, with 24,999 insane patients. The following are some of the important changes which have taken place in the period of twenty years indicated:—

1. All of the insane have been removed from county houses, and are under the care of the State.

2. Restraint by means of camisoles, straight-jackets, muffs, &c., has been practically abandoned throughout the State.

3. In each of the State hospitals, and most of the private institutions, use is made of the "open-door system"—*i.e.*, wards with unguarded windows and unlocked doors.

4. Training-schools for nurses exist in all State hospitals, and in one private asylum (Bloomingdale) women nurses have been introduced into a considerable proportion of men's wards, which has tended to improve the character of the nursing as well as to render the wards more homelike.

5. The patients are now sent for by the medical officers of the institution, male nurses for male patients, and female nurses for female patients; when necessary, a physician is also sent to accompany the patient to the hospital.

6. Each hospital employs a dentist to look after the teeth, an ophthalmologist to look after the eyes of the patients, and a woman physician to supervise the especial needs of women patients. Such hospitals as are accessible to large centres of population have consulting boards of physicians, surgeons, and other specialists.

7. Nearly every hospital is fully equipped with an operating room quite equal to those of the general hospitals of our cities, where operations formerly altogether neglected are now almost daily performed. It used to be the practice to wait until the mental disorder had vanished before resorting to surgical procedures.

8. The paroling of patients—*i.e.*, giving them the freedom of the grounds, and often of the neighbouring towns—has been extended. The proportion of patients employed in wards, shops, gardens, grounds, quarries, barns, and on the farm has been

increased from year to year, till now the actual labour of the patients, besides being of remedial service, has attained distinct monetary value.

9. The so-called "moral treatment" of the insane has been vastly improved by continual efforts to make the rooms and wards more homelike and attractive, the routine life of the patients more interesting and stimulating.

Some of you will remember the barn-like wards of other days, without pictures, without window curtains or shades, without rugs or plants, with great benches and tables screwed to the floors. The criticism that these hospitals have become elegant hotels, while an exaggeration, is, at least, a pleasant commentary on the evolution of the present cheerful hospital from the prison-like edifices of the past. At any rate, where there was formerly little beyond custody and food provided, nowadays all the mental stimulus that can be gained from externals in the way of comfortable furniture, rugs, flowers, birds, libraries, games, pianos and other musical instruments, theatrical entertainments, schools, lectures, concerts, baseball fields, tennis courts, and the like is generously supplied by the State to its charges. Religious services are regularly given, and chaplains and priests employed to administer to their spiritual wants.

Every kind of medical and surgical appliance, instruments, invalid chairs and special mattresses, ambulances, hydro-therapeutic and electric apparatus, solariums, &c., are freely provided.

10. Coincident with these material advances, which have to do with the general care and treatment of the patients, there has been a great awakening of the scientific spirit among the asylum physicians, and most of the hospitals show a steadily-increasing output of purely professional and scientific work.

In some of the hospitals there are regular meetings of the medical officers for the purpose of consultation and discussion of clinical and pathological prognosis. More pains are taken in making detailed examinations of every organ of the body, exact analyses of the blood, urine, gastric contents, &c., and greater care is evinced in the study of the probable causes of mental disorder present. Great improvement is taking place in the character of the medical histories which are recorded preserved in the hospitals. Hitherto they have been satisfactory from a legal point of view, but have been frequently too brief as to clinical data to have much value from a scientific standpoint.

Perhaps nothing has been of more service in the direction of stimulating the medical development of the State hospitals in New York than the newly-organised pathological institute which has been re-established on Ward's Island, in close connection with the clinical material of the large asylums there. Early in December a course of

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