

"An analysis of 131 male Criminal Lunatics admitted to the West Riding Asylum, Wakefield, during the years 1884 - 1896 inclusive."

A Thesis submitted to the Faculty of Medicine, for the Degree of Doctor of Medicine, by
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An analysis of 131 Male Criminal Lunatics admitted to the West Riding Asylum, Wakefield during the years 1884-1896 inclusive.

The period chosen is from the introduction of 'The Criminal Lunatics Act, 1884', to the end of the year 1896.

Male cases only are considered.

Criminal Lunatics are divided into two classes:

(a) Any person for whose safe custody during Her Majesty's pleasure Her Majesty or the Admiralty is authorised to give order; and

(b) Any prisoner whom a Secretary of State or the Admiralty has in pursuance of any Act of Parliament directed to be removed to an asylum or other place for the reception of insane persons."

or shortly Queens Pleasure Lunatics and Secretary of States Lunatics, the former, 7 in number, having an indefinite, the latter 124 a definite period to serve viz: to the determination of the sentence of the court.

During

'Archbolds Lunacy 4th Edition p. 800

During the same period 24 cases were received from prison, as Pauper Lunatics, at the expiration of their sentences, 6 military cases, 9 cases transferred from the Criminal Lunatic Asylum, Broadmoor, & 1 ticket of leave man from Portland Convict Prison. These cases are sometimes, but erroneously, termed Criminal Lunatics and are not further considered.

The cases were received from Her Majesty's Prisons at Wakefield, Leeds, and Armley, the prisons of the West Riding of Yorkshire, and were largely composed of the lowest grade of the mining and manufacturing population of that district. The degree of education of the majority was very low, many indeed being unable to read and write.

Of the total 53 were labourers, 16 Ironworkers, 11 Tradesmen, 6 Miners, 4 Engine drivers, 3 Clerks, 3 Hawkers, 2 Tramps, and one of each of the following: Journalist, Printer, Schoolmaster, Farmer, leather carrier, the remainder being made up of mill hands &c.

Their ages were as follows:—

17-19	20-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60-66
2	34	42	31	17	5

The average age was 37 years.

The

The oldest case, aged 66 years, was sentenced to 1 month imprisonment for breaking windows. He remains in the asylum, after more than three and a half years, hopelessly insane and deluded. He frequently threatens to kill some mysterious 'Smith', and on one occasion stole and secreted a knife. The youngest, aged 17 years, was sentenced to 1 month imprisonment as a 'vagrant, sleeping out'. He was a congenital imbecile with hallucinations of a persecutory character, was impulsive quarrelsome and violent. He was discharged 'Relieved' mentally, in six months.

70 of the cases were single, 49 were married, and 12 widowed. 102 belonged to various protestant denominations, 28 were Roman Catholics, and the religious views of one case were unknown.

The offences for which they were convicted were as follows, in order of frequency:—

Larceny 45, Rogue and Vagabond 13, Drunk and Disorderly 11, Assault 8, Indecent assault 7,

Brawling 6, Housebreaking 6, Attempted suicide 6, Begging 5, Horsestealing 3, Threatening 3,

Murderous assault 3, Shooting 2, Breaking glass 2, Embezzlement 2, Neglecting the family 2, with one

case

case of each of the following. Manslaughter, Interfering with railway points, Libel, Travelling without a ticket, Army deserter, Cruelty to a horse, and Bestiality.

Included in the above are the Queens Pleasure Lunatics two of whom were sentenced for attempted suicide, and one for each of the following offences shooting, manslaughter, wounding, Indecent assault, and Larceny.

The sentences varied from 5 years to 10 days, 2 cases for 5 years, 1 for 3, 3 for 2, 11 for 1 1/2, 1 for 1/4, and 7 for 1 year, the remainder being for lesser terms of imprisonment.

Two of the number only, showed no symptoms of insanity after admission and were discharged after a few days as 'Not Insane' being considered to have been malingering. 19 cases were congenitally defective without Epilepsy, 8 were cases of Epileptic Insanity; 36 suffered from General Paralysis; 31 from Mania; 26 from Melancholia; and 9 from Dementia.

The number of 'congenital cases without Epilepsy', 19, calls for remark, being more than 14 per cent of the total criminal cases, while for the same period

periods, taking all the similar male admissions to the asylum, the percentage to the total male admissions rate was under 7.

The number of 'General Paralytics', 36, is also very large, being 28 per cent of the total criminal admissions. During the same period, the percentage of all the male General Paralytics to the total male admissions was 18, this of course including the criminal cases under consideration.

Of the General Paralytics 24 were maniacal and 12 demented on admissions. Many ran an exceedingly rapid course. One of these cases in a fall sustained a fracture of the femur which made a good union.

20 of the maniacal cases were fairly acute, but none suffered from typical 'acute mania', 6 were chronic, 1 Recurrent, and 4 were cases of 'Mania a Potius'.

Of the melancholics 24 were acute, 1 chronic, and 1 Recurrent.

More than one half of the maniacal and melancholic cases might well be termed cases of 'Delusional Insanity' since their delusions and hallucinations formed the most prominent phase of their alienation.

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In considering the form of Insanity of the cases one is at once struck by the large number of hopeless cases, from a ^{recoverable} ~~reasonable~~ point of view, and this is fully borne out by Statistics. - for, of the discharges 23 or nearly 18 per cent were Recoveries, as against 36 per cent male Recoveries on the total male admissions for the same period, leaving the large number of 106 or 82 per cent as incurable. One case having recovered some time previous to the expiration of his sentence was returned to prison. (The 2 cases discharged as 'Not Insane' are excluded from these Statistics.)

Of these 106 cases, 28 were discharged 'Relieved' to their relations or to the Guardians, any acute symptoms they may have exhibited having subsided. 23 were, after the expiration of their sentences transferred to other asylums as Pauper Patients, their unions of settlement not being of the districts sending their patients to the W. R. Asylum, Wakefield.

The procedure adopted being, on the approach of the expiration of the sentence on a case, to obtain a Magistrate's order for the further detention of the case, being still insane, making him chargeable prima facie to the union in which the offence

was

was committed, leaving the burden of finding his correct settlement to that Union's Authorities.

31 cases died, or 25.5 per cent, the average death rate for all males for the same period being nearly 24 per cent calculated on all the male admissions.

The death rate for males calculated on the average numbers resident for the same period was 15 per cent.

The death rate in the criminal cases is really much higher than the figure 25.5 per cent represents, since many cases were transferred to other asylums after but short residences in this asylum.

This high rate is brought about by the large numbers of General Paralytics. Of the 31 deaths 1 was a congenital case, 25 were General Paralytics, 1 maniacal, 1 melancholic, and 3 were demented.

But for the General Paralytics the death rate would be very low, as one would expect from the class of admissions, there being an almost complete absence of acute or senile cases.

In the case of a Criminal Lunatic dying before the expiration of his sentence it is the duty of the coroner to hold an inquest on the body. This point is not mentioned in 'The Criminal Lunatics Act, 1884.'

Their

Their health and condition on admission was described as Good in 50 cases, Fair in 64, and Poor in 17.

Prison regimen, especially in short sentence cases undoubtedly reducing the bodily condition.

At the end of the year 1896 there remained in the Asylum 24 cases who had been admitted as Criminal Lunatics. The period of their residence varying from 12 years to 3 months, the average period being 4 years.

The number of cases whose sentences had not expired was 5.

In studying the etiology of these cases even greater difficulties were met with than in the case of ordinary Pauper Lunatics in obtaining reliable information as to the history of the cases and especially so as regards their family history.

In several cases it was impossible as no relations were known.

The probable causes and combinations of causes of Insanity in these cases are as follows :-

Moray 5, Intemperance in drink 8, sexual excess 8, Venereal disease 23, Masturbation 4, Sunstroke 4,

Injury

Injury 3, Privation 1, Previous attacks 21, Heredity 20, Congenital defect 19, Laudanum habit 1, Nostalgia 1, and in 12 cases no cause could be ascertained.

The cranium was malformed in 22 cases:— asymmetry, microcephalus, hydrocephalus, low receding foreheads and narrow highly arched palates were noted.

22 cases shewed other stigmata of degeneracy: prominent or malformed ears, strabismus, corneal opacities, old iritis, large hernia, extensive psoriasis, small pox marks, bodily deformity, degraded facial expression, and tattooing were found.

The cases in which malformed heads were noted includes a few of the cases in which other stigmata were present.

4 cases had previously been drummed out of the army and 1 was an army deserter.

16 cases were ascertained to have been previously convicted. Others probably had, but this is not certainly known.

One case having 11 previous convictions against him, was sentenced to 5 years penal servitude with 5 years police supervision for stealing: he

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is a chronic maniac, is noisy, abusive, and has hallucinations of sight and hearing.

In no case could Prison life be definitely given as a cause of the Insanity, but it undoubtedly had great effect in moulding its form in many cases, there being a remarkable similarity in the delusions and hallucinations expressed by these cases. The probable explanation of this similarity is to be found in the prison regime: in the long hours of solitary confinement cases on the borderlands of Insanity, or already insane, are all subjected to the same sounds and other influences from without which they are unable to interpret correctly, this combined with the prohibition from conversation with their fellows during exercises would naturally tend to the fostering of wrong impressions and the gradual evolution of systematized delusions.

The number of cases in which alcoholism was ascertained is largely in excess of the general lunatic population, the same remark applies to the cases which shewed evidence of venereal disease, but in a greater degree. Indeed this is to be expected when we consider that the
majority

majority were drawn from the lowest grade of society. The actual percentages comparing the criminal cases with all the male admissions for the same period are:—

Alcoholism in 66.6 Criminal to 31.2 general.

Veneral disease in 17.8 Criminal to 2.2 general.

The most prominent symptoms of Insanity displayed was delusion, no less than 47 cases expressing delusions persecutory in character e.g. false imprisonment, conspiracy against them, that they were going to be poisoned was frequently expressed, to be burned, that cancer was put in the food, that they were damned spiritually, two cases who claimed to be Christ were noisy, abusive, and foul mouthed, against the fidelity of the wife, witchcraft &c. Religious, sexual, and persecutory delusions were frequently found together in the same case.

12 cases, not included in the above 47, expressed delusions of grandeur. These were, in the main, General Paralytics in the early stage, one of whom was sentenced for travelling without a ticket, another for stealing a chemise

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at a time when both considered themselves worth millions of pounds.

42 cases had hallucinations of one or more of the special senses, the most frequently found being 'the hearing of voices', visual hallucinations were fairly common, olfactory less so, of taste were rare, various parasthesia were common in the alcoholic cases.

In the majority of cases the hallucinations were painful and persecutory in character, those of a pleasing nature being almost absent.

Some of the hallucinations were:- that chloroform was administered, chemical vapours in the air, odours or dust thrown into the air of the room, phonographs applied, and in several cases that telephone wires were attached to the bedsteads &c to learn what they were thinking about and to worry them in other ways.

In two cases, both of whom had double aortic murmurs with hypertrophied hearts, these electrical delusions and hallucinations were very persistent. The one case died in this asylum having never lost them. The other, a fairly educated man, a journalist, at the expiration of his sentence was transferred to
another

another asylum, and there being a technical error in the magistrates order for his further detention as a pauper, was discharged. He then published a pamphlet describing his experiences in the Asylum and brought numerous charges against the administration of the Institution and the medical staff for their electrical ill-treatment of him, amongst other things saying that one of the airing grounds was heated to an unbearable pitch by electricity. Since his discharge, about 9 months ago, he has on several occasions attempted, and is still attempting to obtain summonses against members of the staff and others. From letters which he writes he still believes himself to be acted upon by electricity from this Asylum although he lives in another county.

A very small number refused food to the extent of needing to be fed by the tube.

The criminal cases are as a class refractory.

42 cases exhibited violence to a marked degree towards their fellow patients and members of the staff. One case who remains in the asylum after more than 11 years exhibits post epileptic automatism

automatism, in which state he is at times very dangerous. 11 Cases attempted escape, using violence in the attempt or at their recapture.

30 Cases were restless and noisy a large proportion of these, but by no means all, being General Paralytic. 21 were very destructive of bedding, clothes, books, plants &c.

4 cases had a predilection for breaking glass, availing themselves on every opportunity. One of these cases suffered from petit mal. He could converse rationally, but was of a rather sulky disposition. He had been turned out of the army for striking, and had been very violent and destructive of glass in the prison. In the Asylum he was impulsive and would suddenly turn and strike anyone near him without the smallest provocation, or if near glass would strike at it and on several occasions cut himself severely.

He attempted escape and fractured his os calcis in dropping from the top of a high wall. He frequently stated that he tried but was unable to control these actions and that he always felt great satisfaction after having given way to the impulse

13 cases were exceedingly dirty in their habits, throwing their urine and feces about, and at times painting the walls with excrement.

A case, who still remains in the Asylum after 3 years, has needed special supervision to prevent his practising sodomy, he has been found teaching imbecile lads to masturbate and has incited them to commit sodomy, in order to blackmail them afterwards. He practises masturbation to an excessive degree, this however is a very common habit.

A large number of the cases had marked thieving proclivities, but it was very often impossible to bring the theft home to them, they as a rule being sufficiently cunning to steal from cases who could not bring charges from their demented or imbecile condition, the theft only being discovered during surprise inspection of their pockets and clothing, when money & which they could not have come by honestly was found.

One case was detected rifling the pockets of an epileptic, who was on his knees at bedding time, having noticed that his victim was usually long at his nightly devotions.

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A few have stolen and secreted knives for future use, whilst others have improvised weapons or tools by sharpening bits of iron they have picked up and fitting them into handles made from wood or by binding rags around one end.

From the character of their delusions and hallucinations, with their other proclivities, it will be readily seen that a large number of these cases were very prone to take and give offence on the slightest or indeed often for no provocation. They were frequently involved in broils and a large proportion of the cases resident was always to be found in the refractory wards.

The mental symptoms, as a rule, abated considerably after a short residence in the asylum, but few made an absolute recovery. The improvement being due to the removal of the strict prison regime for the greater freedom of asylum life, with the improvement of dietary and the privileges of conversation, writing to or receiving visits from their friends &c.

Many of the cases had no known relatives and on
going

going through the visiting books for the period under consideration it was found that 38 cases or 29 per cent, had been visited by relatives. But few were visited regularly, many receiving only one or two visits in a long period of years.

From the foregoing it will be seen that these cases are by no means a desirable class for reception into an ordinary Pauper Lunatic Asylum, where they must mingle with the other patients, there being no provision made for treating them in special wards such as were arranged for by the Government to be attached to Bethlehem Hospital in 1814 and again to Fisherton House, Salisbury in 1835.

The experience of this Asylum agrees with one of the findings of a select Committee appointed by the House of Commons in 1859, to inquire into the care of the Criminal Insane, as quoted in Archbold's Lunacy :-

"To mix such persons with other patients is a serious evil; it is detrimental to the other patients as well as to themselves; but to liberate them on recovery, as a matter of course, is a still greater evil, and could not be sanctioned, for the danger

danger to society would be extreme and imminent."
 (Parliamentary Paper, No 495, 1860)²

One of the results of this Committee's Report was the building of the Criminal Lunatic Asylum at Broadmoor which was opened in 1863, under what is known as the 'Broadmoor Act, 1860'. This is the only Asylum that has hitherto been built under the Act, a Departmental Commission, appointed in 1880 to inquire into Criminal Lunacy, finding amongst conclusions:—

"3. That if it is necessary to make special provision for specially dangerous pauper lunatics, the proper course is for the local authorities of counties and boroughs, by united action, to build one or more asylums designed to receive such specially dangerous lunatics (Parliamentary Papers C-3448, 1882)³ an excellent suggestion which has not been acted upon.

² Op. cit: p. 726.

³ Op. cit: p. 728

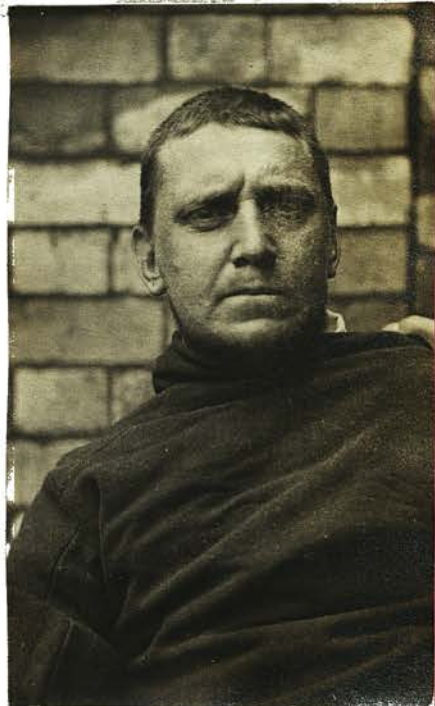
15 photographs by R. Bowen, Pathologist's
Assistant W. R. Baylum Wakefield, of
Criminal Cases.

1. A case of Chronic mania sentenced to
3 years penal servitude for 'Feloniously interfering
with points on Great Northern Railway -
Extensive and very intractable psoriasis.
2. Mania of General Paralysis, sentenced
to 4 months Hard Labour for 'Horse Stealing'.
3. Mania of General Paralysis, sentenced
to 1 month Hard Labour for 'Larceny'.
4. Chronic Mania, sentenced to 1 month
imprisonment for 'Wife desertion'.
5. Chronic Mania, sentenced to 5 years
penal servitude for 'Shop breaking'.
Had 6 previous convictions against him.
6. Petit mal (mentioned specially),
sentenced to 6 months Hard Labour
for 'Horse Stealing'.
7. Chronic mania, sentenced to 5 years
penal servitude with 5 years police
supervision for 'Larceny'. Had 11
previous convictions against him.

8. Chronic Mania, sentenced to be detained during Her Majesty's Pleasure for 'Unlawfully wounding'.
9. Imbecility, sentenced to 2 years Hard Labour for 'Indecent Assault'.
Corneal opacities on right eye.
10. Chronic Mania (Delusional), sentenced to 1 month imprisonment for 'Breaking windows'. The oldest admission at: 66 yrs.
11. Mania of General Paralysis, sentenced to 14 days imprisonment for 'Stealing 2 pints of beer'. 3 previous convictions for petty theft.
12. Chronic melancholia, sentenced to 9 months Hard Labour, for 'Housebreaking'.
13. Imbecility, sentenced to 11 months Hard Labour, as a 'Rogue and Vagabond'.
14. Imbecility, sentenced to 9 months Hard Labour, for 'Housebreaking'.
15. Mania (Delusional), sentenced to 6 months Hard Labour for 'Larceny'.



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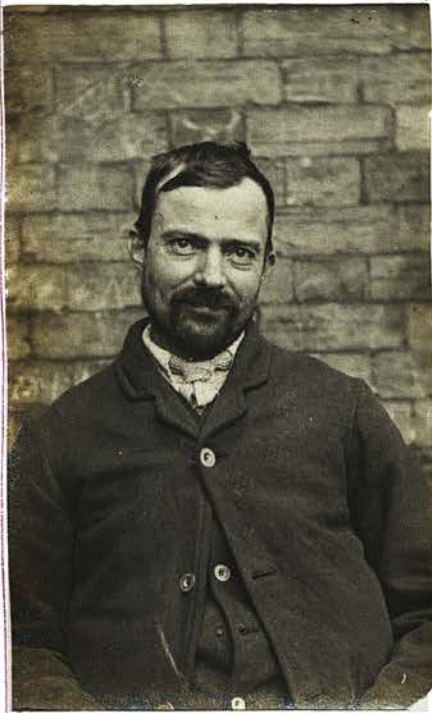
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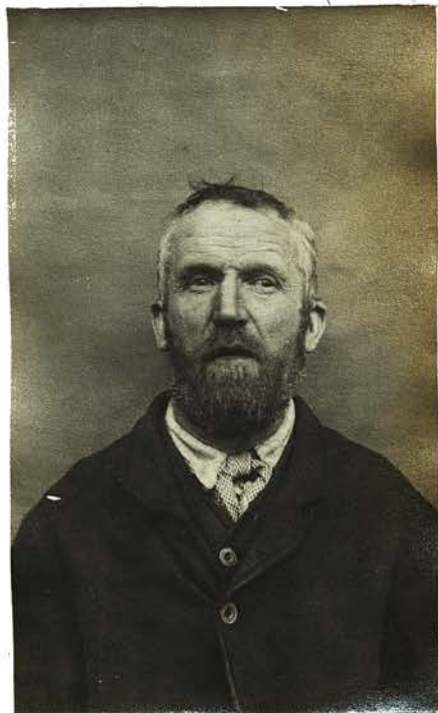
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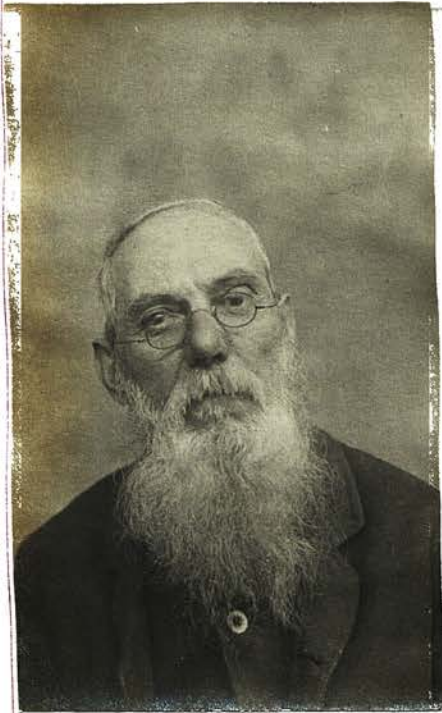
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