

CANADA

MEDICAL JOURNAL.

ORIGINAL COMMUNICATIONS.

Observations on Insanity. By JOSEPH WORKMAN, M.D., Medical Superintendent Provincial Lunatic Asylum, Toronto, C. W.

The Provincial Lunatic Asylum at Toronto was first opened in January, 1841, in the old gaol in the centre of the town, directly in front of the present post-office. This building was soon densely filled, and it became necessary to procure further accommodation for the numerous applicants for admission,—a fact realized in all countries on the institution of asylums for the insane.

The eastern wing of the parliament buildings was appropriated to this purpose, and subsequently a still further addition was made by the occupation of a vacant house near the old garrison. The three buildings were used until the present asylum, nearly three miles west of the centre of the town, was ready for occupation. On the 26th January, 1850, the patients of the three temporary institutions, 211 in number, were transferred to the new building.

The total admissions up to this time had been 889, of which 536 were men, and 353 women.

The disparity in the numbers of the two sexes here apparent, deserves attention. It arose, not from a preponderance of insanity in males, but from the fact that up to this time, women becoming insane were not sent to the asylum so generally as men. They were less dangerous and more easily managed at home. The difference between men and women admitted was 183, as will be seen by the figures. At the present time, fifteen years later, the difference is 178; consequently the incidence of insanity in the two sexes, so far as we can judge from the admissions into the asylum, has been almost equal. In this period the admissions of men have been 1110, and of women 1115, and the total of men in the whole twenty-four years has been 1646, and of women 1468, making an aggregate of 3114.