

opening of the Parkhurst Asylum accounts for the additional forty-one in excess of last year's figures, all of these being males.

As regards the geographical distribution of the increase, the six counties in which the highest annual increases have taken place for the last five years are London (630), Middlesex (115), Essex (108), Glamorgan (seventy-three), Kent (sixty-eight), and Surrey (sixty-seven). Glamorgan excepted, these, it will be perceived, are all metropolitan counties. Among the boroughs, the highest average annual increase has been in Manchester (seventy-two), West Ham (forty-six), Liverpool (forty-two), Salford (forty-one), Leeds (thirty-six), and Plymouth (thirty-four).

It is hard for a nation to recognize, and still harder for it to admit, a decay of mentality, but facts have to be met in the long run. The progress of insanity in this country during the past fifty years is a problem that ought not to be shirked. The longer it is evaded the more serious is it likely to become. The figures of the commissioners' report are not of a kind to create general alarm, but they are unquestionably bad, and if the situation they reveal is persistently neglected it must grow worse. A medical man attached to the staff of a public lunatic asylum, interviewed the other day on the subject of this report, asserted that the explanation of the increase of lunacy is to be sought elsewhere than in national drinking, or in the rush and worry and strenuousness of modern life. "The real cause, I consider," said he, "is the care we take of degenerates. In savage countries there are no lunatics, because the savages knock on the head the physically unfit, or leave them to perish by the wayside. We do all we can to preserve them, to restore them, if possible, to their homes and companions."

This goes to the root of the matter. We are all familiar with the suggestion of another very eminent medical man, that in certain cases the unfit should be disposed of in the lethal chamber. This the public will not stand; but the authority just cited observes that if we refuse to put out of the way the physical and mental degenerates who are multiplying every year, we