

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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DOCUMENTS

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THE LEGISLATURE,

OF THE

STATE OF MAINE,

DURING ITS SESSION

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TWENTIETH LEGISLATURE.

NO. 13.

HOUSE.

R E P O R T

OF THE

COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC BUILDINGS,

RELATING TO THE

INSANE HOSPITAL.

REPORT.

THE Committee on the Public Buildings, to whom was referred the order of the 20th January, requiring of the Secretary of State to be "laid before the House the several appropriations made and expended in erecting the Insane Hospital; also any estimate heretofore made of the probable cost of said building," with the answer of the Secretary thereto,

REPORT.

By a Resolve of March 8, 1834, the sum of twenty thousand dollars was appropriated, on condition that a like sum be raised by individual donations. The sum of ten thousand dollars was subscribed by Benjamin Brown, Esq. of Vassalborough, and before the expiration of the time limited in the Resolve, the Hon. Reuel Williams, of Augusta, also subscribed ten thousand dollars, making the sum necessary to secure the appropriation from the State.

By the statement of the Secretary it appears that from this appropriation the sum of \$3,075 was paid in 1835. By an act of 1836, a further sum of \$8,000 was appropriated, by which act the unexpended balance of the appropriation of 1834 was cut off. By subsequent acts, in 1837 the sum of \$24,975, in 1838 the sum of \$29,500, and in 1839 the sum of \$15,000, have been appropriated, to which has been added the sum of \$421 48, making an aggregate of eighty thousand nine hundred and seventy-one dollars and forty-eight cents (\$80,971 48) actually expended for the purchase of the site and the erection of the building. The amount received from individual donations has been paid into the Treasury and applied to the ordi-

nary expenses of the government. Mr. Williams has paid in the whole amount of his subscription. Mr. Brown has given his obligation to pay ten thousand dollars, and in part payment has conveyed to the State a farm in Augusta valued at \$4,000, leaving a balance of \$6,000 yet unpaid. The farm has been sold for \$4,000, and the payment secured by good notes, and also by mortgage.

No original estimate of the cost of the building is to be found on the files of the Executive Department.

With the funds thus appropriated by the State, a building for an Insane Hospital has been erected on the eastern bank of the Kennebec river, opposite the State House, for the accommodation of one hundred and twenty patients. The outer walls are of unhewn granite, and all the partition walls between the cells and rooms are of brick or stone: the windows with iron sash. It is warmed and ventilated in every part by means of furnaces in the cellar, and water of the best quality is carried by aqueducts throughout the building, as high as the third story. The attic is designed for a chapel, where the insane will meet weekly for religious worship, or it may be used for other purposes. There are upwards of seventy acres of land attached to the institution, nearly all of which is suitable for tillage.

An appropriation of \$25,000 was last year estimated to be necessary to complete the building. Only \$15,000 was appropriated. The building in consequence remains unfinished in the inside work. The amount now wanted to complete it is estimated by the Superintendent and Architect, at nine thousand dollars.

It has been supposed that, restrained by severe economy, and regarding the straitened finances of the State, a *part* of the building might be finished and made ready for patients, and one wing at least left to be finished hereafter. But your Committee are satisfied that sound economy requires the whole to be finished before any part is occupied, not only because it will cost less to do the whole at once than to make several jobs of it, prolonging the pay of overseers of the work, but because

the presence and noise of workmen would disturb the insane occupants. Besides it is necessary not only to keep the male and female patients in different wards or divisions of the building, but also to classify and keep entirely separate the individuals of different ages, conditions and degrees of insanity. Those who are convalescent must not come in contact with newly admitted and raving maniacs, nor with the incurable insane. For these reasons we are of opinion that the building should be finished at once. It may not be necessary to *furnish* it all as soon as finished. The requisite furniture may be obtained as soon as it is wanted, at the discretion of the Governor and Council. Some portions of this may be made by the patients themselves. This has been done in other similar institutions, particularly the making of quilts and other articles of bedding, by the female patients.

The estimated cost of *furnishing* the Asylum complete is ten thousand dollars; but your committee believe, as the building will not be ready before the first of July, that a judicious expenditure of four thousand dollars will procure all the furniture that may be wanted between that time and the next meeting of the Legislature.

Your committee are of the opinion that no time should be lost in completing the building and using it for the purpose for which it was designed. Upon no branch of science has there been such rapid and successful improvement in our day as in the treatment of the insane. Until a period comparatively recent, insanity has been deemed an incurable disease. The universal opinion has been that it was an awful visitation from Heaven, and that no human agency could avert the judgment by which it was inflicted. During the prevalence of this opinion, as all efforts to restore the insane were considered unavailing, the attention of their friends and the most benevolent in the community was at the best only directed to their comfortable subsistence while they survived, and to the protection of the community from their violence. Hence they were immured in dungeons or confined in cages, or chained in cel-

lars or garrets, or shut up in county jails and poor houses. Not having discretion to be trusted with fire in their apartments, and many of them too insane to keep clothing on their persons, their sufferings, particularly in our northern climate in winter, must have been intense. Thus treated, there could indeed be no hope of recovery. On the contrary, they were sure to grow more raving and dangerous, or sink into confirmed and passive imbecility. The poor maniac, considering every human being as his enemy, and holding his janitor in particular abhorrence, permitted no one to approach him, and therefore remained unshaven, filthy, and repulsive to the last degree. His unventilated dungeon was loaded with intolerable stench, and the rags which he suffered to remain upon his person were filled with vermin. There might be eyes to pity, but there were no hands to relieve. Sometimes, to subdue his ravings and compel him to obedience and quiet, he was beaten with cudgels, his body covered with bruises, or he was reduced by starvation, and subjected to a course of discipline which indicated almost as great insanity in his keepers as in the wretched maniac. The multiplied instances of extreme cruelty, wretchedness and suffering which have been brought to light in the publications of the Prison Discipline societies and the reports of the trustees and superintendents of insane hospitals in various States in the Union, are enough to freeze the blood of the reader. We can only refer you to these publications for the information, and submit to you whether it is not probable the State of Maine affords its full quota of suffering maniacs.

But thanks to the persevering energy of a few benevolent men, these cruelties are every where about to cease. It is now demonstrated that insanity is a physical disease, and that with proper medical and moral treatment, it yields with more readiness than ordinary diseases. Dr. Woodward, the intelligent and skilful superintendent of the Massachusetts Lunatic Asylum at Worcester, in his 4th annual report, says:

“No disease of equal severity can be treated with greater success than insanity, *if the remedies are applied sufficiently early.*”

If, however, the early symptoms of insanity be neglected till the brain becomes accustomed to the irregular actions of disease, or till organic changes take place from the early violence of those actions, then the case becomes hopeless of cure. In this situation, in too many cases, the victim of this deplorable malady is cast off by his friends, thrust into a dungeon or in chains, there to remain till the shattered intellect shall exhaust all its remaining energies in perpetual raving and violence, till it sinks into hopeless and deplorable idiocy."

Among the individuals who have contributed largely to throw light upon the subject in this country, is Dr. Pliny Earle of Philadelphia, who in 1837 and 1838 visited thirteen asylums for the insane in Europe. The result of his observations was published last year in Philadelphia. Some of these European asylums have been established many years, with gradual and progressive success. Most of them, however, have been established within the last thirty years. One of the oldest is *La Salpetriere*, near Paris, established by Louis 14th, in 1656. It is devoted exclusively to females, and contains 4,500 beds. It is a vast asylum for the poor, or pauper village. The department devoted to the insane is the most extensive in the world, the number of patients usually exceeding *one thousand*. The number of admissions is about 500 per annum, the number discharged 300, deaths 200. The cures are 33 per cent. of all admitted, which is thought to be a good number, considering that a great portion of them are persons discharged from other hospitals as incurable.

La Bicetre is two miles from Paris. It is for men alone, and nearly as large as *La Salpetriere*. Both these institutions owe their extent and efficiency to the indefatigable and benevolent Pinel, the Howard of France, whose name should be enrolled among the benefactors of mankind, and his fame cherished when the conquerors of the world are forgotten, or remembered only as the scourges of their race.

At *Charenton* is another insane hospital. All these are provided in French taste with billiard tables, flower gardens, and every means of amusement and exercise.

In England Dr. Earle found the insane poor more profitably, and doubtless more beneficially employed. At the Middlesex County Asylum, at Hanwell, of the 600 patients, mostly insane poor, more than 400 were regularly employed in profitable labor, such as cooking, brewing, washing, tailoring, shoemaking, cabinet making and carpenter work. Most of them were incurably insane, and yet, by kindness and skilful management, they were rendered so docile that no accident had occurred from trusting them with edged tools.

The asylum at West Riding, in York, was established in 1818. From that time to 1837, there were 2,242 patients, of whom 709 had died, 1224 been discharged, and 309 remained. The cures amounted to 996, or 44 1-5 per cent. of the whole, and this is perhaps rather above the average of cures at the various hospitals on the continent, some of which more resemble ancient prisons than the modern structures built for the purpose.

The *Retreat*, near York, is for more wealthy patients, but it is found that these require very similar treatment. Samuel Tuke, one of the founders of the institution, told Dr. Earle he was satisfied that *labor*, properly pursued, was the most efficient auxiliary in effecting a cure, and that the superiority of the treatment at the asylum at Siegburg, on the Rhine, over all others, arose simply from the managers having succeeded in *inducing*, not *compelling*, the wealthy patients to *labor*: and rural labors, of all others, were believed to be the most healthy and beneficial. If this be so, the farm attached to the Maine asylum, may all be cultivated like a garden by the hands of the insane patients.

Dr. Earle visited asylums at Amsterdam, Utrecht and Antwerp in the Netherlands, where the cures were about 40 per cent. He visited one in Milan and one in Malta, and he even found one in Constantinople, but the management of it partook largely of the general character of Turkish civilization. The patients were all chained. Of course there were no cures, and little abatement of insane symptoms.

The number of insane persons in Great Britain has been

estimated at about one to every thousand inhabitants. But more thorough investigation has shown that in many districts there is one in eight hundred, and this estimate is believed to be nearly correct in the United States.

By reference to the Maine Resolves of 1834 (page 657) it will be seen that the report of the committee on the Insane Hospital for that year, estimated the whole number of insane persons in the State at 562, or about one in 800. The number is certainly not less now: and yet we have no asylum in the State, public or private, to which one of them can be sent.

In Massachusetts, besides the McLean Asylum at Charlestown, and the State institution at Worcester, which has lately been enlarged, there are several private hospitals, and a new public one for the city is about to be erected at South Boston.

In Connecticut, the Retreat at Hartford has existed for many years, and appropriations have been made for a new State institution.

Vermont has commenced one at Montpelier.

New Hampshire and New Jersey have made some progress in establishing State asylums, with aid of individual donations.

Ohio has had one similar to ours in operation more than a year. It had admitted 157 patients on the 1st December last.

Kentucky has expended \$30,000 upon one.

South Carolina has expended \$100,000 on one at Columbia, the capital of the State.

Tennessee has erected one at Nashville.

Pennsylvania has a number. One of them, the oldest in the United States, was established by William Penn.

New York has an old asylum at Bloomingdale, to which the Legislature gave \$10,000 annually for 20 years. A new one has been commenced at Utica, to which the State has given \$125,000;—estimated cost near half a million of dollars,—to accommodate 1000 patients. An asylum for the city has been commenced at Blackwell's Island, which, though only one wing is finished, is ready for the admission of 200 patients.

We mention these facts, not merely because they are inter-

esting in themselves, but as going to show that enlightened public sentiment every where requires speedy and efficient measures for the relief of the unfortunate and hitherto neglected portion of the human family who have been bereft of their reason.

Were we to look only to the improved condition of the incurably insane, we should find abundant reason for adopting the modern course of hospital treatment. Even on the narrow score of expense in taking care of them, the asylum presents its advantages, particularly if they can be made to labor : but when we consider that each insane person, not shut up in a county jail, is the subject of anxious care, disquietude and apprehension to whole families, and sometimes to whole neighborhoods, the value of an institution where all these can be collected together, made comfortable and kept quiet, can hardly be appreciated. But superadded to all this is the overwhelming truth, now well established in the best institutions of Europe and the United States, that by a timely application of remedies, more than *nine out of ten* cases of insanity can be perfectly cured.

The seventh report of the London Prison Discipline Society, published in 1827, shows that in the Retreat at York, of forty patients admitted within three months after the first attack, the whole number were restored to their friends, recovered. Of those admitted after three and within twelve months after the commencement of the malady, the proportion of cures was as 25 to 45, but of those whose disease was of more than two years standing, the proportion of cures was only as 14 in 79. The experiments of Dr. Barrows at his private asylum in England exhibit similar results, and the same results are effected in asylums in this country. At the Hartford Retreat, of recent cases, 91 per cent. have been cured, and at Worcester more than this has been done in a succession of years, while of long standing cases, where the disease had become chronic, not more than twelve per cent. have been cured. The report of the Worcester Institution for 1838 says:

“ The 12th table of the Superintendent shows that upon the proper and usual basis of computation, the proportion of cures at this hospital in recent cases, that is, in cases of less than one year’s duration at the time when received, is *ninety-four* per cent. : while the proportion of cures in cases of more than five years’ duration has been only twelve and a half per cent. : and in cases of more than *ten years’* duration *only three and a half per cent.*”

From the same Report we read—“ During the six years of the existence of the hospital eight hundred and fifty-five insane persons have partaken of its remedial treatment. Of this number *three hundred and forty-four* have recovered their lost reason. The residue, with few exceptions, have been reclaimed from a state of nakedness and filth; from ferocity which assaulted relatives and friends with deadly intent; from melancholy which poured itself out in continual tears—to a quiet, an orderly, and to a great extent a cheerful community, observant of the decorous usages of civilized life.”

Dr. Woodward, the superintendent, makes the following striking remarks:

“ While this paragraph is being written, with every room in this large establishment occupied, amounting in numbers to more than *two hundred and thirty patients*, but one individual, either man or woman, in our wards, has upon his or her person any restraint whatever. *Five* only are in strong rooms in consequence of violence; the remainder of the strong rooms are occupied by imbeciles and idiots, because we have no other place for them to occupy. Of this number of insane persons, a very great portion of whom were sent to the hospital ‘*furiously mad and dangerous to go at large,*’ two hundred and twenty at least sit at the table at their meals, use knives and forks and crockery like other boarders, and generally conduct themselves with decorum and propriety.”

We might go on to quote facts and observations of a highly interesting character, but we fear we have already exceeded our limits. Our excuse must be in the anxious solicitude we

feel to have this important subject well understood, and the urgent demands of humanity for the speedy completion of the asylum of this State, properly appreciated. What more need your Committee say to satisfy you that no time should be lost in putting the hospital in operation? We should be unworthy successors of the benevolent men who originated the institution, and have carried it forward almost to completion, if we hesitate to finish what they have so wisely begun. As well might we *delay* extending a helping hand to a fellow being sinking beneath the waves before our eyes, and within our reach. While we are deliberating, there are insane persons in the State whose minds are sinking constantly and rapidly beneath the swelling flood of oblivious madness; while others, already past recovery, are confined in cold, damp dungeons, without fire, suffering the rigors of a northern winter, and the gloomy horrors of cheerless solitude.

As the building already erected will not contain more than a fifth part of the insane in this State, it seems to be proper that some rules for the admission or rejection of applicants should be adopted. Your committee are not prepared to recommend any such rules before it is known what applications may be made. They however cherish the hope that before the present generation shall have passed away, and when death shall have thinned the ranks of the incurables, so that none but new cases shall be presented; and when too the means of *prevention* shall be better understood through the agency of the annual reports and other publications on this subject, the number of insane in the State will be reduced to *one-fifth* of its present number; and that instead of there being one insane person in 800, there will not be more than one in 4000, and nearly all these under perfect discipline, less exposed to bodily and mental suffering than the great mass of the community.

Your committee therefore recommend the passage of the annexed Resolve.

LUTHER SEVERANCE, *Per Order.*

STATE OF MAINE.

RESOLVE in favor of the Insane Hospital.

Resolved, That there be allowed and paid out
2 of the Treasury the sum of nine thousand dollars
3 to complete the Insane Hospital, and the Gov-
4 ernor with advice of Council is authorised to
5 draw his warrant on the Treasury for the same.

Resolved, That the further sum of four thou-
2 sand dollars be appropriated, to be expended
3 under the direction of the Governor and Coun-
4 cil, and at their discretion, in the purchase of
5 furniture for the Insane Hospital.

Resolved, That the Governor and Council
2 be authorized to prepare suitable rules, regula-
3 tions and conditions for the admission of patients,
4 and to appoint suitable officers and attendants,
5 and fix their salaries, and for such salaries or

6 other necessary contingent expenses, the Gov-
7 ernor, with advice of Council, may draw his
8 warrant on the Treasury, to be paid from any
9 money not otherwise appropriated.

STATE OF MAINE.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, }
February 8, 1840. }

ORDERED, That this Report be laid on the table, and one thousand copies printed for the use of the Legislature.

[Extract from the Journal.]

ELBRIDGE GERRY, *Clerk.*