

**DANNEMORA STATE HOSPITAL.**

**DANNEMORA, N. Y.**

Four years after the opening of the Matteawan State Hospital it had become evident that that institution would soon be overcrowded. The conditions were such that Governor Morton, in his annual message in 1896, recommended the erection of a building on state land at Dannemora, where convict labor from Clinton Prison would be available. The Legislature, acting upon this recommendation, appropriated \$25,000 from the prison capital fund and work was begun. After some delay, due to insufficient appropriations, a comparatively small section of the institution as planned was, in 1900, made ready for the reception of patients. At this time there had been completed at Dannemora a block with two wards for patients, connecting with a central loggia on the first floor and a small infirmary on the second, an employees' dining room, the main kitchen and the power house. There were no office rooms nor staff quarters and the superintendent and his assistants were obliged to appropriate for such use the operating room, pharmacy and three or four small guard rooms.

Legal provision had been made for the transfer from Matteawan to Dannemora of all male prisoners convicted of felony having still to serve not less than six months of the term for which they were sentenced. The reception of patients began November 15, 1900, when 48 were received by draft from Matteawan. This draft was followed by others within a few weeks, and the admission of new cases from the penal institutions of the state began early in the year 1901. Within two years the number of inmates exceeded the nominal capacity of the buildings. There has been much difficulty in providing new buildings rapidly enough to meet the increased requirements. Notwithstanding the very decided efforts to keep down the population, made necessary by the existing conditions, there is an annual increase of about 30, with every reason to believe that by the time the institution, planned for 650 inmates, is completed, it will be, as it is now, seriously overcrowded.

Since the opening there has been built, under the direction of the resident officers, an administration building and officers' residence, a congregate dining hall and assembly hall, a large wing for the accommodation of 100 patients and an infirmary which will accommodate 75, as well as a number of detached buildings, including an employees' cottage, stables, an ice-house and small shops.

As the organic law of the hospital limits the admissions to male felons adjudged insane while under sentence in the penal institutions of the state, the population necessarily includes many habitual offenders. The very great prevalence of forms of persecutory insanity among criminals of this class serves to increase their dangerous character. These conditions call for many precautions and make necessary a greater degree of discipline than is required in the ordinary institution for the insane. The standard of care is, however, the same as that of the civil hospitals, with such differences in method as are essential, owing to the character of the inmates.

The first superintendent at Dannemora was Dr. Robert B. Lamb, who was, at the time of his appointment, first assistant physician at the Matteawan State Hospital. He was appointed superintendent July 1, 1900, and came to Dannemora well equipped for his new task by years of experience with the convict and criminal insane at Auburn and Matteawan. He was peculiarly well suited by ability and inclination to take up the many problems, large and small, relating to organization and further construction. He remained at Dannemora until December 1, 1904, when he was appointed superintendent at Matteawan, filling the vacancy caused by the death of Dr. H. E. Allison. His successor at Dannemora was Dr. Charles H. North, the present superintendent, who in 1900 accompanied Dr. Lamb from Matteawan and assisted at the opening of the new institution. Dr. Amos T. Baker and Dr. M. Langdon Bird also assisted at the time of the opening. Dr. Baker is still in the service of the state as first assistant physician at Matteawan. Dr. Bird resigned in 1903 to go abroad. In October, 1906, Dr. Theodore I. Townsend, at that time assistant physician at the Utica State Hospital, was appointed first assistant at Dannemora, which office he filled until June, 1909, when he resigned to accept a similar position at the Bloomingdale Hospital, White Plains, N. Y. The vacancy thus created was filled January 1, 1910, by the appointment of Dr. Robert S. Macdonald, who had been a member of the medical staff at Dannemora since the summer of 1904. He was succeeded by Dr. John R. Ross. The staff at present includes also Dr. Roger Dexter, who was appointed November 15, 1907, Dr. H. N. Robert and Dr. L. T. McNulty. Mr. James H. Kurtz, the steward, has served the hospital since January 15, 1903, coming by promotion from the older institution at Matteawan.

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