

Albany, Allegany, Broome & Cattaraugus Counties 1883

Albany County. - Visited May 18, 1883, in company with Commissioner Van Antwerp. The asylum building then contained 33 insane - 16 men and 17 women. There is one male attendant at \$50 per month; one female attendant at \$20 per month; and one female cook at \$5 per month. The male attendant is said to be on the ward both day and night; the female attendant lodges in the alms-house department, the cook at night taking her place upon the ward. This county sends its chronic insane mostly to the State asylums, its policy being to retain no cases requiring special oversight and attention. It now has about 250 such insane in those institutions. At the time of our visit the cases under care were of the mild and harmless class, except two acute cases awaiting removal to the State Lunatic Asylum, and there were none in any form of restraint. Of the men, ten were at work upon the farm; and a few of the women do kitchen and other domestic work. The wards and rooms were clean and the kitchen, dining room and laundry in good order. We did not regard it necessary to recommend any removals.

Allegany County. - The poor-house of this county was visited November 2, 1883, in company with Commissioner Letchworth. Its inmates then numbered 56, being about equally divided between the sexes. These were temporarily quartered in detached structures of the old poor-house, awaiting the completion of the new buildings. They were mostly aged, feeble-minded and infirm persons, and several were confined to their beds with sickness. There were three classed as insane, viz.: one man and two women, all quiet and harmless cases, and domiciled in common with the other inmates.

In accordance with the action of the board of supervisors of 1882, the erection of a new poor-house in this county was begun early last spring, on the site of the old structure. It consists of three wooden two-story detached cottages, connected by covered walks, with a central extension at the rear for kitchen, dining and laundry purposes. The buildings were erected, inclosed, plastered and painted, and, it was said, will be finished and occupied before the close of the present year. The centre is designed as a residence for the keeper and his family, the left for the male, and the right for the female inmates. Each of the latter is planned to accommodate about 45 persons. The entire institution is to be heated by steam,

abundantly supplied with water and conveniences for bathing, and the plan will enable a proper classification and complete separation of the sexes. It makes no provision for the chronic insane, it being the settled policy of the county to send this class to the Willard Asylum.

The completion of this poor-house will supply a need long felt by the citizens of the county for its sick, disabled and infirm and aged poor. The buildings are in accordance with plans devised by the Commissioner of the district, and embrace the most advanced ideas respecting the comfort of the inmates, sanitary considerations, and the enforcement of discipline with economy of management. The total expenditure it is said will amount to about \$18,000.

Broome County. - My visit to this county was made February 1, 1883. It then had 74 insane in its care, 38 of whom were men, and 36 women. The paid force, in addition to the keeper and matron of the poor-house, is as follows: Two male attendants, each at \$25 per month; two female attendants, each at \$12 per month; one cook at \$12 per month, and one night watchman at \$18 per month; total pay for attendants, \$104 per month, or \$1,248 per annum. The visiting physician receives a yearly compensation of \$350, thus making the total annual outlay for attendants and medical services \$1,598. Upon the basis of an average of 74 insane, this would give an annual *per capita* expenditure of \$21.59 for supervision and care. My visit was made in the evening after the insane had retired. I went through all the halls and wards in company with the superintendent and night watchman, and there was no noise, nor excitement among the patients; indeed, they were generally so sound in sleep, that but few were awakened by the visit. Two of the women, said to be epileptic, were in open cribs; all of the others, both men and women, occupied beds. The rooms were warm and comfortable, although the night without was cold and boisterous. The attendants' sleeping-rooms are in proximity to those of the insane. The superintendent informed me that a few of the insane were at times disturbed and noisy, but that there were no continuously excited or violent cases. In view of the large force of attendants, and the evident watchfulness and care exercised over the insane, I did not regard it necessary to examine them further, for the purpose of recommending removals. The county has three insane in the Binghamton State Asylum.

Visited June 9, 1883. The number of insane was, men, 39; women, 37; total, 76. Of these, five were in the poor-house proper. There was one hospital case, a woman, paralytic and helpless. Two were in the restraint of muffs. The halls and rooms were clean, and the patients generally well clothed and orderly. There were a few men, however, in the rear yard, that were sloven and untidy in their persons. The inclosure is an extremely high, tight board fence, and there seemed to be a lack of proper supervision of the men in this yard. I advised the removal of the fence and the enlargement of the grounds both for the men and women, with an ordinary picket-fence inclosure. The closets, situated out of doors, are defective, and the superintendent said that they should be rearranged and improved.

Visited August 9, 1883. The number of insane was: men, 36; women, 40; total, 76. Of these, five, - two men and three women, - were in the poor-house, and 71, - 34 men and 37 women, - in the asylum department. There were two destructive and untidy male idiots in the apartments for the men, and I advised the fitting up of rooms for them in a detached building, used for demented and filthy cases. I also arranged for the removal of **Edward I. Dobson**, insane State pauper, who was found in restraint, to the Binghamton State Asylum, and he was, on September 1, transferred to that institution. There were no other cases in restraint, and the rooms, beds, bedding, etc., were throughout clean and in good order.

Visited September 6, 1883. The arrangement for the removal of the high board fences surrounding the asylum buildings was being carried out, and it was said that the alteration would soon be effected. Rooms were being fitted up for the idiots referred to in my visit of August 9, and plans had been adopted for improving the closet arrangements. There were no insane in any form of restraint.

Visited November 22, 1883, accompanied by Superintendent Payne, the keeper being absent. Since my visit August 9, 1883, there had been three admissions, all women, coming from their homes, one being an acute case and two chronic cases. One had been transferred to the State Lunatic Asylum at Utica. One woman had been discharged improved, and one, it was said, had recovered and gone to her home. This left 76 under care, viz.: 36 men, 40 women. Five of them as heretofore, were in the poor-house department, and 71 in the asylum building. I went through all the wards and saw all of the patients. There were no

cases in any manner restrained, or confined in rooms. They were comfortably clothed and clean, and the halls and rooms were in good order. The removal of the high board fences was not begun, but the superintendent said it would be effected, with other improvements contemplated, before the close of the year.

Cattaraugus County. - Visited May 24, 1883, in company with Dr. King, attending physician. The county then had 46 insane in its care: Men, 20; women, 26. Of these, eight, - three men and five women, - were in the poor-house proper, and 17 men and 21 women in the asylum department. This consists of two wooden cottages, - one for each sex, - connected with a central or administrative building by covered ways. The attendants are: One man at \$200 per year, one woman at \$2.50 per week, and a cook at \$2 per week. My arrival at about noon enabled me, first, to observe the insane at their dinner. This consisted of broiled pork, boiled potatoes, bread and butter, and tea. The insane at the poor-house take their meals at the table with the paupers. One of these, a man, is demented and filthy; the others are quiet, orderly cases, and said to be good laborers. Six of the men from the cottage were at work upon the farm, and the others were in the day room. There were no men in restraint or seclusion, nor were there any hospital cases. Two were classed as epileptic. One of the women, in the cottage, said to destroy her clothing, was in the restraint of a camisole. There was one violent woman, at times causing considerable trouble. She frequently has periods of quietude, and then returns to her home. At the time of my visit she was quite turbulent and suffering from injuries of the face, inflicted by herself. Two women were prostrate upon the floor. The others were mild and quiet cases, and their rooms were cleaned and well ordered. Three were engaged in the kitchen and dining-room, and three others assist in the laundry work. The county has three insane at the Willard Asylum and ten at the Buffalo State Asylum. Of the latter, two are soon to be removed to the Willard Asylum, both of whom are women. One of these is said to be extremely violent, and the other feeble and helpless, requiring to be forcibly fed. The number of attendants for the insane of this county, it will be seen, is not equal to the requirements of the Board. As so many of the men go out daily, in summer, to work under the direction of the farmer, the male attendant is enabled to overlook those remaining in the building. In winter, however, when most of them are within doors, another male attendant would seem to be required. The women, during the day, are mostly on the wards, and one attendant, in my opinion, in

which Dr. King concurred, is entirely inadequate to the task. I therefore communicated with the superintendent of the poor upon the subject, and urged the employment of an additional female attendant.

Visited August 2, 1883, the State Commissioner in Lunacy accompanying. The insane then numbered 54, of whom 26 were men, and 28 women. Of these, 40 were sheltered in the asylum cottages, viz.: 23 men and 23 women, and eight - three men and five women - in the poor-house department. There had been no discharges nor deaths, since last reported. Two cases, both quiet, harmless women, had been brought from the Willard Asylum. Among the other admissions there were: A man 73 years of age, feeble and infirm, a recent case; a congenital feeble-minded boy, 17 years old, also epileptic; and a married woman, the mother of six children, an inmate only two days. The latter, said to have been subject to short periodical attacks of insanity for several years, was brought to the institution greatly excited and violent, and suffering from bruises of the face and other parts, inflicted by herself before leaving home. She was in an open crib, and her hands were firmly restrained by a leather muff. We removed the restraint, and as she remained quiet during our stay, advised its discontinuance, keeping her under the constant care of an attendant. There were no cases, other than this woman, in restraint or seclusion. The wards and rooms were clean, the beds and bedding in the women's cottage neat and orderly, but some of the beds in the men's cottage were damp and untidy. No additional female attendant had, as yet, been employed, but it was said that the matter was under consideration. The State Commissioner communicated with the superintendent, sustaining my recommendation upon the subject, and also advised that the chief female attendant, or matron, be given the general oversight of the cottage, beds, bedding, clothing, etc., of the men. The two women at the Buffalo State Asylum, referred to in my last visit, have since then been transferred to the Willard Asylum.

Visited October 25, 1883, in company with Commissioner Letchworth. Since last visited, the changes in the insane had been as follows: Received, two men, transferred from the Buffalo State Asylum, and two women, direct from their homes. One of the latter had formerly been an inmate, and the other had for a long time been held in family care. Two women had been discharged and returned to their homes, one of whom was the excited and violent case referred to in my last visit. This left 56 insane under care, viz.: 28 men and 28

women. Of these, three men and five women were in the poor-house proper, and 25 men and 23 women in the asylum cottages. We went through the entire institution, both the asylum and poor-house departments, and saw all of the insane. There was one woman, destructive of her clothing, in the restraint of a muff, and one woman who was filthy and noisy. The others were at liberty in the day rooms, and several of the men were at work upon the farm. The attendant in the men's cottage had recently been transferred to the poor-house, and Mr. Follett, the keeper, was temporarily performing the duties of attendant. No additional attendant has as yet been employed in the women's department. The necessity for another female attendant, and a more thorough personal supervision of the insane, and especially of the women, was everywhere apparent. A number of them were prostrate upon the floor, in the upper hall, and their dresses disordered; indeed but few, comparatively, were neat and tidy in their persons and habits.

We regard it as impossible for one attendant properly to supervise and care for so many patients, and urged upon the keeper the importance of immediately calling the attention of the superintendent to the subject, with the view to the employment of another female attendant. Dr. King, the attending physician, and Mr. Heman G. Button, chairman of the visiting committee of the State Charities Aid Association, who were present, concurred in this recommendation, and also as to the importance of greater freedom and out-door exercise, as well as of employment and amusements for the insane. It is believed that many of the patients, whose time is spent almost entirely in the buildings, might, under proper supervision, be largely out of doors, engaged in amusements or industrial pursuits, and thus greatly better and improve their condition. The buildings for the insane of this county are among the best of their class in the State, and we trust when the matter is fully understood, a more liberal policy in the employment of attendants will be adopted. On the 31st of October, 1883, Superintendent Truby wrote me: 'I have directed Mr. William Follett, keeper, to procure an additional female attendant without delay.'