

Cayuga, Chautauqua, Chemung, Chenango & Clinton Counties 1883

Cayuga County. - The poor-house of this county was visited March 24, 1883, at which time it contained 95 inmates, of whom 19, - nine men and ten women, - were classed as insane. Most of these were aged and demented persons, and none were in any form of restraint. The county has 67 insane at the Willard and three at the Binghamton Asylum. I did not regard it as advisable to recommend any removals.

At the request of its chairman, I attended a meeting of a committee of the board of supervisors of Cayuga county, at Auburn, November 30, 1883, to consider the subject of the erection of an asylum in that county, and the withdrawal of its chronic insane from the State institutions. There were present Supervisor J.V. White of Mentz, Chairman, Supervisor Elisha Cook of Venice, and Supervisor W.A. White of the Seventh ward of Auburn, and Morris M. Olmstead, County Superintendent of the Poor. Upon my invitation, the State Commissioner in Lunacy, who was in the city on an official visit to the Asylum for Insane Criminals, also attended. According to the statement of Superintendent Olmstead, the county has about 100 insane in all, in public care, viz.: At the State Lunatic Asylum, 20; at the Willard and Binghamton State Asylums, 65; and at the county poor-house, 15. The latter occupy a separate ward in the institution, and all are said to be quiet and harmless cases. As the county has no buildings whatever for its chronic insane, other than its poor-house, and as this class is now adequately provided for in the State asylums, I did not regard it advisable to recommend an expenditure for new buildings, involving, as it probably would, an outlay of at least \$35,000; but, on the contrary, to discourage the undertaking. At the same time, I assured the committee, that if the supervisors decided to erect buildings for their insane, the Board, so far as practicable, would aid them in devising suitable plans, and in systematizing the work. The State Commissioner in Lunacy sustained my views in the matter, and the committee, which seemed to be actuated for the best interests of the insane, as well as the economic bearings of the question upon the county, took the subject under consideration. At a meeting of the supervisors, December 12, 1883, the committee, through its chairman, presented a detailed report against the erection of a county insane asylum, which was accepted and adopted by the Board.

Chautauqua County. - The poor-house and asylum of this county were visited May 25, 1883. The insane then were, men, 33; women, 44; total, 77. During the past year, the buildings for the insane have been remodeled, the small cell-like rooms removed, the first story being converted into large, airy and well-lighted day rooms, and the second story into sleeping rooms: and steam heating has been introduced. The high, tight board fences at the rear of the buildings have been removed, and the grounds are being laid out and planted. Additional attendants have been employed, so that the entire force now foots up as follows: The keeper at \$600 per annum; two male attendants, at \$20 each per month; two female attendants, each at \$3 per week, and one female cook at \$2.50 per week. The physician, who also attends the poor-house department, receives \$250 per year.

I made an extended and very careful examination of the insane, and none were in any form of restraint. Of the men, 13 were in the day rooms, or about the grounds; one was confined in bed with acute rheumatism, and 19 were at work upon the farm. Three are epileptic, two of them being youths, and one middle aged. Of the women, four work steadily in the kitchen, and it was said that the patients make and mend all of their clothing, and do the laundry work. The buildings throughout were in good order, the beds and bedding clean, and the patients were well clothed, quiet and orderly. I saw no excited, violent or noisy cases, and no removals, therefore, were recommended. The county now has eight chronic insane at the Willard Asylum, removed there during the past year, under the advice of the Commissioner of the district.

In the poor-house department, there was one idiotic child, **Mary Hodge**, ten years old, for whom I recommended the superintendents to apply for admission to the State Idiot Asylum. There also two feeble-minded young women, viz.: **Kate Booth**, aged 17, and **Ellen Germaine**, aged 22 years, whose removal I advised to Newark Custodial Asylum, and Superintendent Warner informs that they were received at that institution June 18, 1883.

Visited August 1, 1883, accompanied by the State Commissioner in Lunacy. Since last visited, May 25, 1883, the changes in the insane have been as follows: Admitted, 1; died, 3; absconded, 2; leaving under care, men, 32; women, 40; total, 72 as against 77 when last reported. The deaths, all women, were from consumption, 1; from epilepsy, 2, both cases of

long standing. One of the absconded had been absent about twenty days, and the other three days. These cases, both quiet, harmless men, left while at work on the farm, and their absence had caused no anxiety, as it was probable they had gone to their homes. The discharged patient, a woman, had been an inmate about six years and was removed by her friends with the approval of the county judge. We carefully examined every patient, and there were no violent, noisy, restrained or secluded cases. The kitchen, dining halls, laundry, day rooms, and dormitories throughout were in good condition; the beds and bedding well ordered and comfortable, and the patients properly clothed, orderly and clean. The grounds have been laid out and improved, and the place presents a pleasing and attractive appearance. The force of attendants remains the same as last reported, and appearances indicated close attention to their duties. It seemed to us that no removals, for the time being, were necessary.

Visited October 24, 1883, with Commissioner Letchworth, accompanied also by Dr. Wilson, attending physician, and by C.G. Maples and J.H. Plumb, members of the local visiting committee. The admissions of insane, since my last visit, August 1, 1883, have been: one man transferred from the Buffalo State Asylum; two men, both chronic cases and former inmates, received from their homes; and two women, who had been sent out improved, returned by their friends. There had been only one discharged, a quiet, harmless man sent to his home. The number under care was 76, as against 72 August 1, 1883, of whom 34 were men and 42 were women. Our visit extended to all the wards, and the buildings throughout, including day rooms, dormitories, kitchen and dining-rooms, were models of neatness and good order. The patients were comfortably clothed, free from excitement, and cleanly in their persons and habits, and there were none in any manner restrained, nor secluded. The keeper, Mr. E.H. Sperry, informed us that not a single case had been in restraint during the present year, and that the institution contained no appliances whatever for restraining patients, it being the aim to manage and control them exclusively by means of attendants. Of the men, twenty-one labor upon the farm, garden and grounds; six of the women work in the kitchen and laundry, and a few engage in sewing, mending, etc. We urged the general introduction of such simple employment for the women as seemed feasible, most of whom appeared capable of and would probably be benefited by doing some light form of work.

In answer to a communication to Dr. Wilson, attending physician of the poor-house and asylum of the county, as to the comparative merits of the old and new system of management of its insane, he addressed me, November 1, 1883, as follows: 'It gives me pleasure to state, that the management and care of our chronic insane, during the past year, has been improved and successful almost beyond belief. The changes inside gave two large sleeping-rooms up stairs, with attendants' rooms between and communicating in each of the asylum buildings. These rooms are vacant and well aired during the day, while the two large day rooms below are vacant and aired during the night, and all the rooms admit of being made bright with sunlight. Ventilation is easy, and heating equalized. The mingling together of the patients begets sociability and good behavior beyond anticipation, and the continued presence of attendants averts disturbance, apparently by moral influence. As no restraint has been used during the present year, doubtless kind and intelligent attendants have much to do with this satisfactory state of affairs. The day rooms contain centre tables, on which are magazines, etc., which are read by some of the patients, while others play various social games, and piece bed quilts, and on a stormy day an attendant's violin affords the motive power for those inclined to dance, thus making many a sad heart almost gay. The most noteworthy improvement is the removal of the high tight-board fences around the yards, into which our insane were formerly turned. Now, attendants go out with the patients for recreation or work. We have fewer attempts to escape, and less opportunity, because the attendants have no fence upon which to rely, and the patient no fence of which he would see the other side. Indeed, an inmate objected to the fence being gone (he was a lunatic of course, no one else would object), and on being asked his objection, he said, 'now there is nothing to climb over, and nothing to run away from.' The patients and employees have plays and many creditable games of base ball, in accordance with the latest rules, and also some other games. A few days since, I saw ten insane with a similar number of sane persons playing base ball. On asking a patient if he liked to play ball, he replied, 'yes, I forget I am called crazy when I play base ball.' The mental condition of our patients has certainly very much improved. Want of space compels me to omit many details. The improvement in the surroundings and care of our patients has been rewarded by a surprising improvement in the patients, greater in extent than during the six or eight years previous to our present plan, as suggested by your Board, yet chance for improvement still remains.'

Chemung County. - I visited the poor-house of this county, June 8, 1883. It then contained 44 inmates - 28 males and 16 females. They were mostly aged, infirm and helpless persons. Among the number were three epileptics - one a feeble-minded boy, and two young girls. I saw all of the inmates, and there were none that could be properly classed as insane. The county has 68 chronic insane at the Willard Asylum. The poor-house has been remodeled the past year, so as to separate and classify the sexes.

Chenango County. - My visit to this county was made March 22, 1883. It then had 43 insane in its care, viz. 15 men and 28 women. Of these, six were over 70 years old, and 14 were between the ages of 50 and 70 years. The only case in restraint was a woman 81 years old, recently admitted, with senile dementia. She was confined by a strap in a chair. There were no noisy nor filthy patients; all were comfortably clothed and clean, and the halls and rooms were in good order. The attendants are the keeper, and his wife, and one female nurse. The county, upon the recommendation of Commissioner Miller, removed four violent insane to the Binghamton Asylum last fall, which afforded great relief. It is in contemplation to remodel the asylum building the present year, and the Board will be consulted before entering upon the work.

Visited June 22, 1883, accompanied by Superintendent Lewis. Since my last visit there have been two deaths and one admission, the number of them under care being 42, divided between the sexes as follows: men, 15; women, 27. There was one - a woman - suffering from periodical excitement, and quite noisy, but at liberty. The gates to the grounds, which are surrounded by an ordinary picket fence, were open, and the insane permitted to go out and in at their pleasure. A number of them were outside the yards at full liberty, and there were none in any form of restraint nor secluded. Two are epileptic - one male and one female. My visit was at an early hour, but the morning work had been completed, and the wards and rooms were cleaned and well ordered. I did not regard any removals to be necessary.

Visited August 28, 1883, with the State Commissioner in Lunacy. The changes in the insane since my last visit - June 22, 1883 - had been as follows: Discharged improved, one woman; lost by death, three - one man and two women. Two of these were extremely aged. This left

under care 14 men and 24 women; total, 38. There was one woman suffering under considerable excitement and confined in her room. She was released and remained quiet during our visit. There were no other cases in confinement or restraint, and we did not advise any removals. The patients were generally well clothed, clean and orderly, and their rooms in good condition.

Visited November 8, 1883. Since my last visit, August 28, 1883, there had been two admissions to the institution, one man and one woman. The former was brought from the State Lunatic Asylum, remained a few weeks, and was taken to his home; and the latter had been an inmate only a few days, and had not been certified to as insane. There had been no other discharges nor deaths, thus leaving 39 under care, of whom 14 were men and 25 women. My visit was early in the morning, and I saw the patients at their breakfast, all of whom, but one man and two women, were at the table. The meal, which was in abundance, consisted of fried fresh pork, boiled potatoes, bread and butter and tea. It was well served, and partaken of in a quiet and orderly manner. There were no insane in restraint, nor any excited or noisy cases. The buildings were being thoroughly cleaned, the beds and bedding renewed, and the walls whitened. There seemed no occasion to recommend any removals.

Clinton County. - The poor-house of this county was visited July 21, 1883, in company with Commissioner Foster and the State Commissioner in Lunacy. The institution then gave shelter to 74 inmates, of whom 33 - 13 men and 20 women - were classed as insane. The men occupy the third story at the left, and the women the second and third stories at the right. The attendants are, a man at \$30 per month, and a woman at \$5 per week. The county has seven chronic insane at the Willard Asylum, and five recent cases at the Hudson River State Hospital.

After a careful examination of the insane, we united in a recommendation to the superintendent, who was present, for the removal of the following cases to the Willard Asylum, viz.: **Bridget Fitzgerald**, 31 years old, brought from the Hudson River State Hospital, June 10, 1880, suffering from chronic mania; is subject to frequent paroxysms of great excitement, at which times she is violent, noisy and destructive, requiring restraint or confinement in her room; and also **Mary Jane Mayo**, 21 years of age, an insane epileptic,

filthy, violent and destructive. The others were mostly quiet and orderly cases, and there were none in restraint nor seclusion. We advised the employment of another female attendant, and that the women be allowed greater freedom and out-door exercise and amusement.

Among the poor-house inmates was a deaf-mute girl, 16 years old. She was first admitted March 14, 1882, since which time she has been twice placed in families and returned. She is a bright, intelligent, industrious girl, neat and tidy in her person and habits, and said to be of good character. We advised the superintendent to apply for her admission to one of the State Institutions for the Deaf and Dumb, and he assured us that he would give the matter immediate attention.