

ALLEGED ABUSE OF CHILDREN.

In Syracuse Home for Feeble Minded
They Were Beaten with Rubber
Hose, Kicked in the Face, &c.

ALBANY, Aug. 10.—Controller William J. Morgan has written a letter to the Right Rev. Frederick D. Huntington, D. D., Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Syracuse State Institution for Feeble-Minded Children in which he calls attention to cruelties and irregularities found to exist in that institution by the investigation conducted by Deputy Controller Gilman and Secretary Heberd of the State Board of Charities. The communication in part is:

I am aware that it is contrary to the wishes of the Board of Managers of the institution that corporal punishment should be inflicted upon the inmates; in fact, I am informed that such punishment is prohibited by the rules of the institution. Notwithstanding this, it appears from the sworn evidence, both from the attendants and inmates, that corporal punishment is quite generally inflicted. The nature of this punishment consists of cuffing the children upon the head and body, of striking them, both naked and clothed, with the hand and sticks and with rubber hose, and kicking them. It was also shown that attendants were in the habit of punching the children in their stomachs and abdomens with their fists and picking them up bodily and throwing them to the floor. In one instance at least a child was kicked in the face, making a cut that had to be stitched up by a physician. Corporal punishment is bad enough in an institution like this under the best circumstances, but it is vastly worse when it is administered without authority and by irresponsible, inconsiderate, hot-headed attendants, which is the case in your institution. While your Superintendent may not have been a party to the infliction of such punishment, it is almost impossible to understand how he could have been ignorant of the facts; but, admitting that he was ignorant, it indicates a lack of that close personal knowledge on the part of the inside workings of the institution which is absolutely necessary to good management.

In matters of discipline and financial affairs altogether too much has been left to the subordinates of the institution. State property has been missed, and in many cases not cared for as it should have been. But it is not my present purpose to point out shortcomings in business methods. That will be the subject of future communications. Believing that corrective measures will be speedily adopted by your board as soon as they learn of the situation, I hasten to lay the above facts before you. Very respectfully yours,
WILLIAM J. MORGAN,
Controller.