

SEVENTH BIENNIAL REPORT

OF THE

VISITING COMMITTEE

TO VISIT THE

HOSPITALS FOR THE INSANE.

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1887.

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## REPORT.

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HON. WILLIAM LARRABEE, *Governor of Iowa:*

THE Visiting Committee of Hospitals for the Insane submit the following report for the biennial period ending June 30, 1887:

In addition to regular committee meetings individual members of the Committee have made monthly visits to each hospital. At each of these visits all the wards have been visited, beds, bedding, sleeping apartments, bath-rooms, water-closets and dining-rooms have been inspected and the general sanitary condition carefully noted, together with the general conduct of the attendants toward the patients, and in the care of the apartments.

### PHYSICAL CARE OF PATIENTS.

We have found the system adopted by the Superintendents for the physical care and comfort of the patients to be thorough, the carrying out of which is strictly enjoined upon the attendants, and that the comfort, cleanliness and general physical welfare of all within the buildings is carefully and constantly looked after.

### FOOD: QUALITY AND QUANTITY.

We have also at each visit examined into the quality and quantity of the food and its preparation, cooking and serving; and while we were met with complaints from patients, at almost every visit, concerning the food, we have been unable to find any foundation for them. We have found the quality to be the best obtainable, the preparation made with care, the cooking as well as can possibly be done with the present limited capacity, appliances and conveniences, and the serving done with marked regularity and promptness at each meal. The food includes the greatest variety obtainable of the ordinary nutritious kinds, both animal and vegetable, including special dishes and delicacies for the sick, and a bountiful supply of fruits in season.



## OUT-DOOR WORK AND EXERCISE.

Your Committee have also carefully noticed the management of the institutions as regards out-door work and exercise for the patients, and are most favorably impressed with their sanitary importance and curative influences. When the weather does not absolutely prohibit it, the patients are taken out regularly each day, spending much of the time outside the building. Details are also made each day, particularly in summer, from the wards of patients who desire to perform manual labor, the men in the fields, gardens or upon the grounds, and the women at various domestic duties outside the wards, each patient being permitted to do the kind of work which he or she is best adapted to perform, or for which a preference is expressed.

All the patients, however, are not in a mental or physical condition to perform manual labor of any kind. All these whose condition does not prevent it (and we are glad to say this number is small), as well as those who do not desire to do any kind of work, are taken out daily to walk or ride, so that all the patients have, daily, the benefits of fresh air and exercise. The only complaint your Committee has heard from patients concerning this part of hospital life is that they do not always have enough work or exercise.

## COMPLAINTS OF OVER-WORK AND ABUSE.

Your Committee have heard, and read in public journals, charges of overwork and abuse of patients by contractors and supervisors or attendants, while at work in the fields, gardens or upon the buildings, and we have made it one of the special objects of our visits to inform ourselves concerning them. To this end we have, without the knowledge of any of the officers of the institution or overseers of the work, repeatedly watched the patients at work in the fields, on the new buildings, grounds, and in the various domestic departments, but have never seen a single instance of any act toward any patient which looked like oppression, abuse or over-work, nor have we ever heard an unkind word spoken to them concerning their work, nor saw or heard any thing which savored of rigorous dealings with the patients. On the contrary, they work when they please, and rest when they desire; and ordinarily we have found as many resting as there were at work. Among all the complaints from patients to your Committee about the treatment received from officers and attendants, that of

over-work or abuse while at work has but rarely, if ever, been the cause.

## THE NEW ADDITIONS.

The completion and occupancy of the new wing at Mt. Pleasant, with a capacity of two hundred patients, and of the detached building at Independence, with a capacity for one hundred, marks a new era in the history of these institutions, and one which enables their managers to more fully and perfectly carry out the curative and humanitarian designs of these homes for the State's unfortunates. In addition to providing ample room, and thus meeting present demands, relieving to some degree the poor-houses and preventing the overcrowding of the wards as heretofore, these new additions enable the Superintendents to better classify the patients; a fact which not only greatly contributes to the comfort of the patients, but is also an important factor in the curative influences of the institutions, as without proper classification much of the good influences of hospitals for the insane is lost.

## WHAT OUR HOSPITALS NEED AND SHOULD HAVE.

The buildings enlarged; the number of patients increased and increasing, there come imperative demands for additional means for securing the best results from these institutions, demands which cannot be denied without greatly interfering with the highest and best interests of this large and rapidly increasing class of unfortunates.

Among the pressing wants of both institutions is *more land*. Excellent land which lies contiguous to that owned by the State, and on which the hospitals are situated, can be secured at a reasonable price. The necessity for more land cannot but be apparent to all who will rightly consider the subject. There is a large class of male patients who are in a bad condition mentally, many of them incurable, but who are physically strong and are able and willing to work. This class comes largely from among the farmers, and, under the supervision of competent managers, are capable of doing a fair day's work fairly well, on the farm or in the gardens. There is, at least, 50 per cent of the male patients in our hospitals whose labor can be utilized on the farm, and who can thus contribute very materially to the support of the institutions, and at the same time benefit themselves mentally and physically. There is another class of patients,



physically strong but very filthy in their habits when kept in the wards, or are given only ordinary exercise, but who when given work in the open air which tires them are free from their disgusting habits and practices. As a rule these patients work willingly and do their work comparatively well, much better than persons who have not seen them at work would credit. From our own observation, and from the testimony of the officers, it is always a hopeful sign when patients express a wish to take part in work, and the marked improvement in many as a result of employment is a better argument for the State providing the ways and means to give employment to the inmates of our hospitals for the insane, so far as possible or practical, than any we could offer.

And while we would not ignore the importance of scientific treatment of mind and body of these unfortunates, we would like to impress upon the minds of all connected with their management, and especially upon those whose business it is to appropriate public funds for meeting their necessities, the great importance of providing means for physical employment to the largest extent for all. To provide the necessary employment with limited means and a scarcity of necessary appliances is not only a very perplexing matter to the officers in charge of these institutions, but is a positive hindrance to the carrying out of plans for the greatest good to the greatest number of patients; hence we direct your honor's special attention to this important subject, with the hope that executive influence may be used in presenting this important matter. We will only add that, in the opinion of your committee the purchase of these additional tracts of land would be economical to the State, as there is enough available labor in each hospital to work it, and thus contribute largely to the support of the institutions. In addition to the vegetables, fruit, etc., used in the institutions, all of which could be raised if sufficient land were secured, milk is one of the most important items in hospital diet; in fact is indispensable. With the present amount of land connected with either institution, the supply of milk is necessarily limited and insufficient. The additional land asked for would give an ample supply for grazing all the cows needed to produce a full supply of milk, and at the same time furnish all the vegetables and fruit required, as well as nearly all, if not all, the grain and hay necessary for the animals used in connection with the institutions. It was a mistake that these two tracts of land were not purchased by the State years ago, and we trust the mistake will not

be again repeated, and that both tracts will be secured at the earliest possible day.

#### CHAPELS AND AMUSEMENT HALLS.

Another important feature in the conduct of our insane asylums are the provisions made for religious services and for entertainments and amusements for the patients. The apartments set aside for these purposes are not what they should be, in either hospital, to fully meet the demands. The present apartments used for these purposes are, by far, too small, and neither is as inviting and attractive as it should be to best subserve the interests of the patients. A gallery in the chapel at Independence would add materially to its seating capacity, and frescoing would make it much more inviting and attractive. These improvements would meet present wants. But your Committee would favor a sufficient appropriation to enlarge the apartment, as contemplated at the Mt. Pleasant hospital, sufficiently to admit of the chapel and amusement hall being divided. We advise this for the reason that many of the patients have prejudice against attending any but religious exercises in the chapel, and feel that it is a desecration of a sacred place to hold in a chapel other than religious services; hence when theatres, concerts, dances and entertainments of like character are held in the chapel they refuse to attend, because they are in the chapel; and they also refuse to attend religious services because the chapel has been desecrated by dances, etc.

Your Committee has learned to look upon the religious services and the evening entertainments in our hospitals as very important adjuncts to the welfare of the patients, and to believe that they are important factors in the curative influences of the institutions. The importance of a comfortable and appropriate place for religious services will not be questioned, and the necessity for rational amusements, which the patients can hear, witness and take part in, cannot be over-estimated. We would emphasize the great importance of these means of diversion, solace and cure; as also that, in our opinion, the amusement hall and chapel should be separated. This can be done at a comparatively small cost, and all grounds for the prejudice referred to removed. The religious exercises and amusements are held in high esteem by a large class of patients, as they serve to dispel the gloom and despondency of many, and thus enter largely into the means of restoration. They serve also to brighten the lives



and lighten the sorrows of another large class who are doomed to spend the remnant of their days in what they in their more gloomy hours are pleased to term a "mad house."

It must be remembered that all persons sent to hospitals for the insane are not bereft of reason, thought and feeling, and that many of them are as susceptible of impressions and influences as are those who are perfectly sane; hence the importance of ample provision being made for their spiritual guidance and the diversion of their minds by rational amusements. Your Committee considers these things second in importance to no other in the treatment of the insane. In view of its importance, the sums asked for providing suitable apartments for religious services and amusements are small, and we most earnestly recommend liberal appropriations for enlarging these apartments.

Your Committee would also direct attention to the importance of improving and ornamenting grounds, building summer houses, making walks, etc. The important influence of surroundings in hospitals for the insane cannot be ignored and should not be underestimated. We all realize the influence of home surroundings and the attractions or repulsions of localities upon ourselves and families and should not forget that these same surroundings play an important part in the curative influences and agencies of hospitals for the insane, where favorable and healthful mental impressions are important factors in the cure of diseased minds. Flowers, attractive walks, trees and pleasant surroundings in and about these hospitals are a fruitful source of comfort, solace and amusement to a large class of patients, many of whom find little or no amusement or attraction save what they receive through the medium of the eye. They become weary of their wards, fretful, discontented, restless and dissatisfied, but a walk through shady groves, the sight and odor of flowers or a quiet rest in a summer house from which they can gaze upon attractive surroundings, soon dispels the gloom, dissipates the idea of a "mad house," chases away the horrors of locks and grated windows and inspires the patients with a feeling that life is worth living. By these means hospital life is shorn of much of its terrors and the patients are inspired with a desire to help themselves. This is not mere theory; your Committee has learned to appreciate these influences by association and conversation with patients, noting their effects upon the minds of many and from the testimony of many fully recovered or in a fair way to recovery. Flowers in the wards in winter are

much prized by a large class of patients, as they serve to chase away the gloom of many who are inclined to be melancholy and despondent where out door exercise is impracticable. The cost of a greenhouse is small and incomparable with the benefits resulting from the sight and care of flowers by patients. We have dwelt at length upon this subject for the reason that the popular opinion is that walks, trees, flowers and beautiful surroundings and adornments generally in connection with our hospitals for the insane are only for the pleasure and benefit of the officers, and that they are useless to "crazy people." This is a mistake, as will be conceded by all who have had opportunities for observing how largely these simple means enter into the good effects of hospital treatment and how much they contribute to making the lives of a large majority of the patients brighter and happier.

#### BOILERS AND BOILER HOUSE.

Your Committee would call attention to the boiler and the boiler house at Mt. Pleasant. Having repeatedly examined the boilers now in use we do not hesitate to pronounce them wasteful of fuel, insufficient and unsafe. They have outlived their usefulness (if this kind of boiler ever did serve a useful purpose in institutions of this character.)

The boiler house is, practically, a continuation of the main building, and its present condition is a constant menace to the institution from fire. It should be in a detached building, a safe distance from the main structure, as contemplated when a new boiler house is built. The present accommodations for coal are too limited. There should be room enough for the storage of coal to permit laying in a sufficient supply at one time to prevent the possibility of its being exhausted during a temporary stoppage of railroads by storms in winter, or a scarcity of supply at any time. Aside from the bad location of the present boiler rooms, they are badly needed for storage room, which at present is very much limited and more is imperatively demanded.

The present wash house is badly located and is, by far, too small. Situated as it is it occupies space which could be much more advantageously used for other purposes for which there is a pressing demand.



## INDUSTRIAL BUILDING FOR WOMEN.

The asylum at Mt. Pleasant needs an industrial building for women, ironing room, assorting room, dress-making room, sewing room and matron's store room. The importance of these industrial rooms to the best interests of the institution and of the female patients, and the necessity for them can only be realized by those familiar with the disadvantages and the impracticable and limited character of those used for these purposes. Your Committee would strongly urge the industrial rooms. Men can be employed on the farm, in the garden, and at other out-door work, but as yet there are but limited provisions made for the employment of female patients. All that has been said of the advantages of employment for men applies with equal force to the female patients. The full benefits of the institution cannot be had until ample provisions are made for the employment of the women as well as the men, and to do this there must be separate apartments, as indicated in the request. With these, much of the confusion now incident to the distribution of clothing, etc., would be avoided, the whole work could be perfectly systematized, and the machinery of these important departments would run much more smoothly, and greatly to the advantage of all concerned, officers, attendants and patients.

## COLD STORAGE AND ICE HOUSE.

The asylum at Mt. Pleasant needs, and should have an ice house and cold storage room. The necessity for these in institutions of this character need not be urged. Cold storage for the preservation of meats is an absolute necessity, while that for ample cold storage for butter and eggs, to enable the managers to lay in a full supply when these important articles of consumption are cheap, is a matter of economy which should not be disregarded. In summer butter can be purchased at 10 to 12½ cents per pound. This kept in cold storage is as good in winter as that for which 25 to 30 cents must be paid. Eggs can be purchased in summer at from 5 to 8 cents per dozen. These in cold storage are as good for winter use as those for which 15 to 20 cents must be paid at that season. These two articles of diet are among the most important used in the institution, and their cost is among the largest items in their current expenses; hence, as a matter of economy, ample cold storage room should be provided. The present ice house is simply a "barracks" made of refuse lumber,

and at least one-half, if not more, of the ice stored is lost. Even if the whole for which there is storage room could be saved, the capacity is not sufficient to meet the absolute demands of the institution.

## REPAIRS.

There are many things about both institutions badly out of repair, and much is getting out of order daily. The necessity for keeping in repair the property of the State needs no urging, and the necessity for a liberal fund for that purpose requires no argument.

The importance of pork and lard in these institutions will be apparent to all who duly consider these items; hence the necessity for ample provisions for the care of the hogs for the use of the institutions. A sufficient number of hogs for the use of the hospitals can be raised on offal from the kitchens, requiring but little additional cost for fattening. Both institutions usually raise a surplus of pork each year, and the credits for pork sold are important items in the economical management of the institutions. The means for caring properly for hogs at Mt. Pleasant are imperfect and limited, and we would urge that better accommodations be provided. The slaughter house at Mt. Pleasant is a nuisance, which should be abated at the earliest possible hour. It is too small, is old and dilapidated, and is so situated that the stench at times permeates throughout the wards. As a sanitary measure it should be torn down and a larger and better one built in a different locality.

The kitchen at Mt. Pleasant has long since served its day. It was barely large enough to meet the wants of the institution when it was first built. The population has doubled several times since that, the building has been much enlarged, but the kitchen remains the same. The idea of cooking properly for one thousand persons, three meals per day, three hundred and sixty five days in the year, in a room some 44x22 feet, requiring some thirteen cooks, is simply preposterous. The wonder of your Committee is, not that food is not always cooked as it should be, but that it is ever cooked or served as properly and promptly as it is.

## WATER SUPPLY AT INDEPENDENCE.

The present main which carries the water from the water-works at Independence to the hospital is, by far, too small, and should be removed and replaced by a six inch cast iron main. This done, the



water which now costs ten cents for one thousand gallons would be purchased for seven cents. The six inch main would also furnish ample water for protection from fire, which the present does not.

The Independence hospital also needs aid to finish and furnish the kitchen and building. It will not require a large amount of money to make this important department complete and of sufficient capacity to meet the wants of the institution. The improvements contemplated by the Superintendent are absolutely necessary, and your Committee hopes he will not be prevented in making them for want of funds.

The laundry department at Independence is also very incomplete and inconvenient, subjecting the officers to much inconvenience and rendering the work in this important department much more imperfect and laborious than it should be. The laundry improved as desired and contemplated, the necessity for doing any part of the washing for patients in the wards, as now has to be done, can be entirely done away with, much to the advantage of all concerned. The wards should be homes to the patients and not wash-houses nor laundries; hence the necessity for the most ample provisions for this work being done exclusively in one apartment, separate from the living rooms of the patients.

A new coal shed is among the important wants of the hospital at Independence. The present shed is worn out and practically useless as a place of storage for coal. Twice during the past year spontaneous combustion took place, and a great number of tons of coal had to be thrown out of the shed in order to get at the fire. The combustion was caused by moisture from the plank in the floor resting on the ground, as also we think from the coal becoming wet from the leaky roof. The same thing is likely to occur in these sheds at any time, entailing a loss in coal, and endangering a still greater loss by communicating fire to the main structure.

#### TILING.

There are many acres of land on the Independence farm practically useless, but which with proper drainage by tiling could be made productive and valuable—the best land in the farm. It is not economy for the State to let this land lie, as it has for years, practically useless when more land is so badly needed. The Superintendent contemplates tiling and thus reclaiming all this wet land and making it available for the needs of the institution. We trust no short-sighted policy on

part of our legislature will prevent his doing this at the earliest possible day.

The Superintendent of the Independence hospital is also desirous to complete changes to supply low-pressure steam heating. These are necessary from an economical stand-point and should be made.

#### PIANOS AND BILLIARD TABLES.

A request for funds to supply an asylum for the insane with pianos and billiard tables may seem strange to the average citizen who knows little or nothing of the plans, aims and operations of these institutions. What we have said elsewhere concerning the amusement of patients applies with equal force to music and games. In the convalescent and hopeful minds these are never ending sources of amusement and entertainment. It must be remembered that there are in every institution of this character a large number of patients of highly cultivated minds, some of them musical experts, and all of them lovers of music, while the average patient finds in music a rich source of amusement and pleasure. The curative influence of music upon some classes of insane persons need not be enlarged upon, as since the days of Saul and Jonathan the good effects of music upon diseased intellects have been acknowledged. Playing billiards and other games are a prolific source of pleasure and amusement, especially in winter, to a large class of patients, and serve to make the hospital a home. Billiards is a favorite game with many of these patients, and the good effects of this and kindred amusements cannot be ignored. Your Committee is convinced that pianos and billiard tables are not among the things which could be dispensed with without harm; but rather that more of them should be in every hospital for the insane, as they, with other amusements, have a very salutary influence and are especially serviceable and beneficial during the long winter days and evenings, when outdoor exercise or work is impracticable. In summer the patients have croquet, base ball, lawn tennis and other outdoor sports; but in winter, billiards and kindred games, with music, reading, etc., must be their principal sources of amusement. Without them, the minds of many must be practically dormant, and the good effects of treatment by exercise, etc., outdoors must be in a great measure lost during the winter. Money spent for these things is as well spent as for any other purpose in the treatment and care of the insane, and there should be no narrow-gauge policy concerning them.



In addition to what we have already mentioned, your Committee desires to call attention to the need of elevators in our hospitals, especially for the female wings. Many of the patients in the upper wards have physical ailments, peculiar to their sex, which are greatly aggravated by walking up and down stairs. They are obliged to ascend and descend several flights of tiresome steps each time they leave their wards for work or outdoor exercise. It is a question in the minds of your Committee if the injury caused by this does not more than counteract, in many cases, the good results expected from outdoor work or exercise. The cost of elevators would be small, but the good results from them would be great.

Another thing your Committee would suggest is the removal of the morgue at Independence from its present locality. It is now situated directly under the dining room of ward "C." It does not require a very wide stretch of imagination to anticipate what might be the results from the presence of dead bodies here for any length of time, as in the case of autopsies or intricate scientific examinations. To avoid the possibilities of any bad results from this source, we recommend that a suitable place, outside the hospital proper, be prepared for the morgue.

#### COMPLAINTS AND CHARGES FILED BY PATIENTS.

Your Committee has carefully and thoroughly investigated all complaints or charges made orally or by letter, from patients, as to bad treatment received from officers or attendants. In a few instances we have found just cause for these complaints, but the greater portion of them were imaginary. In our investigations of these cases we have always found the Superintendents ready and willing to afford us the best opportunities and the largest liberty, with no attempt to conceal anything or excuse any dereliction of duty on part of attendants or employes. And in all cases where the cause of complaint was found to have foundation in fact, we have found the officers ready and willing to adopt the suggestions and recommendations of your Committee for the removal of all sources of dissatisfaction among patients. As regards causes for complaint of harsh or unjust treatment from any of the patients, your Committee is glad to say that they are the exception and not the rule in the management of the institutions. They result, as a rule, from the impossibility of the Superintendents having constant personal supervision over every in-

dividual attendant in every ward, and the impossibility of at all times getting attendants and employes adapted to the care and treatment of insane persons. Prompt dismissal quickly follows every case of harshness, unkindness or any act savoring of abuse of patients by any employe. Your Committee is deeply impressed with the importance of securing competent attendants for the wards. They should be persons of mature age and judgment, endowed with a decided tact, if not a love, for the work. We are aware of the difficulty of securing such attendants, especially at the wages paid, but we are convinced that if really competent persons were offered inducements sufficient to retain their services from year to year, many of the causes of complaint would be removed. To this end the appropriations should be sufficiently large to pay competent persons fair salaries. It may be economy on part of the State to secure and retain cheap attendants for these unfortunate wards, but it is not in the interests of humanity. Your Committee would earnestly urge reform in this particular.

#### SPECIAL ATTENDANTS FOR THE SICK.

We would also urge the necessity for more liberal provisions for special wards and special trained nurses for the care of the very sick, day and night. This important matter has not been entirely neglected, but the plans and provisions are not as thorough and complete as they should be. The appropriations for the current expenses of the institutions should be sufficiently large to meet any ordinary expense for this service.

#### CONFINING INSANE PERSONS IN JAIL.

As a result of our familiar personal intercourse with the patients, your Committee is deeply impressed with the gross injustice and positive harm perpetrated by incarcerating insane persons in the county jails and in city prisons pending their examination, or their being sent to the hospital. The impressions made are baneful and lasting. Many of them are impressed with the belief that they have committed some crime for which they have been put in jail. This impression they carry with them to the hospital, and in many cases is intensified on their arriving there, they fully believing that the hospital is a prison, and that they have been put there as a punishment for crime. It requires no argument to show the pernicious



effects of this treatment, and the barrier it may prove in effecting mental restoration. Your Committee cannot admit that there are any number of insane persons whom it is necessary to place in jail for safe keeping; and yet it is the common practice for officers, and often relatives and friends, to place them there, and it is a common practice for officers en route to the asylum who are obliged to stop in a city over night, to make a train in the morning, to place the insane persons in their charge in jail during the night, that they, the officers, may be relieved of the care and sleep in a hotel. But few, if any, insane persons requiring restraint, require any more than can be had in a room in a private house or a hotel. And yet the mildest cases are often put in prisons greatly to their hurt. Placing insane persons in jail is barbarous, cruel and hurtful, and it should be made a penal offense for any officer, or other person, to put a person adjudged insane in prison pending their being sent to the hospital.

#### ANOTHER PERNICIOUS PRACTICE.

Another pernicious practice much in vogue with friends and officers in the commitment of insane persons to the asylums, is to deceive them as to where they are going. They tell them they are going for a ride on the cars, to visit friends; that the hospital is a hotel, where they will only remain over night, etc., etc. But few persons are so badly demented on being taken to an asylum as to not soon realize that they have been deceived, and this knowledge adds greatly to their mental irritation, and often severely interferes with the beneficial effects of treatment. On all commitment papers furnished by the officers of the hospitals there is a note advising persons in charge of insane people not to deceive them in regard to where they are going and what they are going for; and your Committee, from having heard the stories of patients as to this deception, and seen its effects upon them, would insist that its practice be abandoned.

#### TRIAL BY JURY.

While your Committee has never found a patient in our asylums we did not think was technically insane at least, or who was not legally placed there, we have been impressed by conversations with patients concerning the manner of their commitment, with the importance of a more thorough investigation in some cases, for the sat-

isfaction of the patients if for no other reason. While it is true that a trial by jury can be had in any case if application be made within ten days after the arrest of an insane person, it does not follow that if this application be not made within the specified time it should not be made at all. If there be a necessity for it within ten days there may be a like necessity within six months, a year, or shorter or a longer period after confinement. Hence, in the opinion of your Committee, the right of trial by jury should be perpetual.

#### INSANE CONVICTS.

From your Committee's observations among the insane convicts in our asylums, we are convinced that a majority of them should not be permitted to have free association with the other patients. In many cases they are a source of constant perturbation in their wards, causing discontent, insubordination and antagonism to necessary discipline among the patients. Our asylums for the insane have been too long a refuge for this class, and while there are some among the present convicts in the asylums who are worthy objects of the charities of these institutions, there are many who abuse their privileges, and whose influence on others, not convicts, is positively bad. In view of this, your Committee hopes that the completion of the department of the Anamosa penitentiary for insane convicts will not be delayed.

#### GENERAL OBSERVATIONS.

While your Committee cannot say they have seen nothing in the management of our asylums for the insane which they would not have changed, when change is possible or practicable, we are free to say that the spirit of progress pervades the conduct of these institutions to a very gratifying extent. This is especially marked in the gradual but permanent removal of personal restraint, and, so far as possible, every appearance, in or about the hospitals, of everything calculated to impress the patients with the idea that the Asylums are prisons, or that punishment has any place in their management. Discipline is necessary, but it is the discipline of kindness and not of force. As evidences of progress in this direction your Committee found in the airing courts massive oaken chairs and settees, so constructed as to be fastened to the floors, once used in the wards for strapping patients in, but now cast aside or used only as seats in which the patients may sit or recline when in the airing courts. We



also see a number of closed beds, at Mt. Pleasant, relegated to the lumber pile, and while there are still some of these used, and while we look upon them as the most humane way of restraining violent patients who will not sit or lie down without some restraint, and while we prefer these beds to the bed straps used at Independence for this class of patients, the number cast aside and the few now in use show that their necessity is not so great as it was once thought to be. Either this, or this class of patients has greatly diminished in the past few years. With the exception of leather mittens, applied at intervals, for patients who tear their clothes, pluck their hair, or pinch their persons, but little or no restraint is used except as noted above, and whatever is used is only temporary, the restraint being removed entirely as soon as the habit is modified or broken. There are no patients in either hospital kept in constant restraint or confinement, and but few who cannot be taken out for daily exercise. At Independence there are two detached buildings or cottages, in each of which there are one hundred male patients. There are no bars or guards on the windows, no high fence about the buildings, and no restraint of any kind in or about them, and yet, one hundred insane men in each of these buildings, sleep in one large, well-aired dormitory, eat in one dining room, and are guarded, if guarding it can be called, by one attendant during the night. And, notwithstanding the absence of all sort of restraint, day or night, no attempt to escape from the windows at night has been made, and it has rarely happened that patients have run away, or attempted to escape during the day. Each man has his own bed and his own place at the table, and the greatest order prevails. And all this among two hundred patients, all of whom are in a bad mental condition, and many of whom are, practically, demented.

We refer to these things, and we might itemize many more, for the purpose of dispelling a popular belief and prejudice in the public mind concerning the management of and practices in our asylums for the insane. The popular belief is that an "insane asylum" is a prison house filled with raving maniacs and dangerous characters who are subjected to restraint of the most rigorous character; that an asylum is a place of restraint for persons unsafe to be at large, and the idea of its being a place for the cure of insane persons and for making the lives of the incurable more comfortable, is but rarely suggested to the thought of those contemplating an institution of this character. Such may have been the character of hospitals for

the insane long years ago, but they are not so now, at least not in Iowa. On the contrary, they are homes for these unfortunates; homes where the mental, physical, moral and religious welfare of the inmates are carefully guarded; where the unfortunates are kindly and skillfully managed and treated, and the object in the management of which is to make each inmate feel that he or she is there for *cure* and not for *punishment*. But owing to the wise provisions of our State laws for keeping constant and careful watch over these institutions, there is but little danger of gross injustice being perpetrated, or bad management being long continued, even if the officers were inclined to be unjust toward, or permit employes to neglect or abuse the inmates. In fact, these institutions are under almost constant surveillance. At least one of the Visiting Committee visits each hospital once a month. Their visits are unannounced; and while they go without prejudice, they go as friends of the patients and in the interests of the institutions as a whole. They visit every ward and every department unaccompanied by the officers or attendants, mingle and converse freely with the patients, listen to all complaints from them, and make inquiry into every case showing probable cause. The names and post-office address of your Committee is posted conspicuously in every ward, and the law provides that the patients can write to any one, or to all, the members of this Committee without these letters being read by the officers. In addition to this your honor can visit the institutions at will and make such examinations and investigations as you may deem necessary untrammelled. The full board of trustees meets every quarter, and a visit and examination is made by one of them each month. This constant watch by regularly constituted State authorities, together with the almost constant flow of visitors, most of whom are on the watch to discover some wrong doing, make it well nigh impossible for any wrong in the conduct of the hospitals to long continue, even if the managers were inclined to countenance or perpetrate any irregularities or injustice toward the patients. And while this strict surveillance may seem to argue a tendency to wrong doing in these institutions, and the general public, not familiar with the conduct, may conclude that the predilection of the officers to mal-treat the patients is strong, we desire to say here that this conclusion has no foundation in fact. It simply serves as a guard against the possibility of wrong-doing, and was instituted for the reason that the insane are the most helpless and dependent wards of the State, and it shows a watchful, careful,



constant guard over them by the State authorities which insures ample care and full protection against any and all neglect or bad treatment. This supervision has a salutary influence. It makes all connected with the management and care of our asylums more careful in the right performance of all particulars and details. It does no harm to those who perform their duties conscientiously, and has a restraining and corrective influence over any who might be inclined to neglect duty or perpetrate wrong. Not only this, but it is a protection to the officers against unjust and untrue charges from any source and at the same time a protection to the patients against any wrong doing on the part of officers, attendants, or other employees.

Your Committee does not desire to indulge in fulsome praise, but we deem it but simple justice to say that, in our opinion, the outgrowth of very close observation and careful investigations, the Iowa hospitals for the insane are a credit to the State and bright stars in the crown of her humane efforts to properly care for this large and rapidly increasing class of unfortunates. The commonwealth has been lavish in her expenditures for providing ways and means for their care, comfort and cure. Appropriations have been judiciously and economically expended, and every dollar thus far used has been used in the interests of humanity. But we cannot stop here. The number of these unfortunates is increasing from year to year and the demands for their care increase correspondingly. These must be met, and it is the hope of your Committee that no false ideas of economy will prevent the supplying of these demands promptly and fully, nor in providing the means for keeping even pace with the progress of the age in all that pertains to the cure, improvement, comfort and happiness of these unfortunate, helpless, dependent people. To those who are inclined to think and say "any ordinary comfort is good enough for crazy people," your Committee would say "put yourselves, or your friends, in their places." Would you then think any comfort too great or too extravagant? And who can say "I, nor any of my family or friends, will never need the hospitalities of these homes for disordered minds?"

Let there, at least, be no backward steps taken in the conduct of these institutions, that it may ever be truthfully said of them, they are true homes, and that those who are, or may yet be, so unfortunate as to be compelled to send relatives or friends to them may be confidently assured that they can do so without a thought or suspicion

that they will not be humanely treated, kindly cared for, and that everything will not be done to effect restoration to health of body and mind. Nor should our efforts stop with the completion and full equipment of the hospitals now in successful operation, nor should there be any delay in completing at the earliest possible day the hospital at Clarinda.

It is estimated that there are two thousand insane persons in the county poor-houses of the State, for whom there is no room in the hospitals. Humanity demands that these should have the care and treatment provided in the regular hospitals for the insane.

It is not a question of cold, rigid economy, but it is a question of warm hearted, generous, Christian humanity, and our efforts in this direction should not relax until every insane person, curable or incurable, in our poor-houses, is comfortably housed in a State hospital. That this one dark spot on the bright record of the humane efforts of the people of Iowa may be speedily removed, and that the day is not far distant when we can proudly point to the fact that Iowa's poor-houses do not contain a single insane person, is the hope of your Committee.

F. McCLELLAND.

MRS. S. R. WOODS.

JOHN BRANNAN.