

EIGHTH BIENNIAL REPORT

OF THE

VISITING COMMITTEE

TO VISIT THE

HOSPITALS FOR THE INSANE.

1889.

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1889.

REPORT.

HON. WILLIAM LARRABEE, *Governor of Iowa:*

During the biennial period ending June 30, 1889, the Visiting Committee of Hospitals for the Insane have visited each hospital as often as once a month, and at each visit the condition of the hospitals has been thoroughly examined, and diligent inquiry has been made into the care and treatment of the patients, their complaints patiently listened to, and all alleged grievances have been thoroughly investigated. We have also removed, so far as possible, all causes of complaint and adjusted, so far as in our power, all sources of dissatisfaction.

COMPLAINTS.

In regard to complaints made to your Committee, by patients, to their relatives and friends, and doubtless to yourself, of ill-treatment, scarcity or bad quality of food, etc., etc., we deem it but simple justice to all concerned to say that to secure entire satisfaction on part of the patients is impossible. A large majority of the inmates making these complaints are in a condition of mind, much of the time, that to satisfy their wants, meet their desires and make them satisfied and contented, is beyond the reach of finite mind. No change in their treatment or surroundings can change their mental condition or make them feel contented.

From careful listening to these complaints and frequent attempts to remove the alleged cause, your Committee is convinced that much of this complaint and dissatisfaction has its origin in a diseased mind, and that this unrest and dissatisfied condition will continue until the disease which originates it is removed.

Your Committee makes it a rule to investigate every complaint made, and while we cannot say that they have universally proved groundless, we are glad to say that in a large majority of them we find no foundation in fact. Attendants found to be guilty of cruelty

or neglect to those in their care have been discharged. The rule is, that in all cases of doubt the patient shall have the benefit of the doubt.

FOOD AND CLOTHING.

Your Committee during this period has not relaxed its watchfulness over the quality and quantity of food prepared for patients. Concerning this, we can only repeat what we said in our last report, namely: "It includes the greatest variety obtainable of the nutritious kinds, both animal and vegetable, including special dishes and delicacies for the sick and a bountifully supply of fruit in season." The supply of small fruit has been greatly increased, both at Mt. Pleasant and Independence. There is now a sufficient quantity of grapes, raspberries, strawberries and currants raised at both institutions, and a bountiful supply of blackberries at Mt. Pleasant, to afford a full supply of these fruits for all during the season, and in some seasons a surplus for preserving for winter use. The dining-rooms are neat and inviting, the tables attractively spread. All the appointments in this department are homelike and pleasant, and the food well cooked and savory.

The patients for whom clothing is furnished by the institution—and there are many of them—are comfortably clad and the wardrobe of each is kept neat and clean.

CARE OF THE SICK.

There has been much improvement in the means of caring for the very sick during the period. Special wards have been set aside and appropriately fitted up as infirmaries or "sick wards." These are provided with especial attendants and nurses for both day and night; also, trained female nurses, to give special treatment to all needing such service.

THE SMALL DEATH RATE.

The institutions have been peculiarly exempt from prevailing diseases or epidemics during the period. The death rate has been very low. Most of the deaths which have occurred have been among the chronic cases—consumptives, general paralytics, very old men and women, and those afflicted with chronic disease of the brain.

SANITARY CONDITION.

The sanitary condition of the institutions is most excellent. Everything in and about the buildings is kept scrupulously clean, while the systems of ventilation, sewerage, etc., are as nearly perfect as it is possible to have them.

WATER SUPPLY.

The water supply at all the institutions is abundant and the water of most excellent quality. During the period a six-inch cast iron water-main was laid from the water-works at Independence to the hospital, making the supply of water most abundant for all purposes, including fire protection to all parts of the buildings. The enlargement of this main has reduced the price of water for this hospital to seven cents per thousand gallons. All water required for fire protection is furnished free.

MORE LAND SECURED.

During the period just closed additional land has been purchased for Independence and Mt. Pleasant. This land is of excellent quality, better than the original purchase, and in each case joins the original farm. There is now sufficient land belonging to each of our institutions for the insane to give ample employment to the large number of able-bodied patients, whose physical and mental conditions are greatly benefitted by manual outdoor labor. It also furnishes a full supply of milk for all, vegetables enough the year round, and grain and hay sufficient for all the horses and cattle belonging to the institutions.

ADDITIONS AND IMPROVEMENTS.

Among the important improvements made during the period are the following: At Mt. Pleasant a new boiler-house has been erected and five new and substantial boilers placed in position. The boiler-house, being remote from the main building, an underground passage has been constructed for smoke and fan passage, and for the accommodation of the piping system. This new boiler-house is of brick, 210 feet deep by 120 feet front. In addition to the boiler-room and coal-room, this building contains the wash-house, drying-room, mangle-room, machine-shop and engine-room, with sleeping apartments over the engine-room for outside help. The new industrial building is now in process of construction, and will be ready

for occupancy this fall. This building will contain the ironing, mending, sewing, dress-making and clothes assorting rooms on the first floor. On the second floor will be the matron's store-room and sleeping rooms for domestics. It is so arranged in relation to the main building that the distribution of clothing throughout the wards can be made without the annoyance and confusion heretofore experienced, when the distribution had to be made by carrying the clothes through the rotunda, and through the wards, and otherwise greatly facilitates the work of the various industries for the accommodation of which the building is being erected.

At Independence a new bakery, with a rotary oven, has been built and the kitchen greatly enlarged and improved, and a large refrigerator has been added to the latter. Above the kitchen and bakery there are large store-rooms, and also dormitories for domestics. This building is fire-proof and heated by steam. The enlargement and extension of the water-main around the building, with hydrants placed so that every part is protected, make all feel that there is less danger than heretofore from fire. The laundry has received additional machinery, and a new job printing press is now in use. The wards have been much improved by the purchase of two new pianos and a billiard table; the walls have also been beautified by handsome decorations, oil paintings, pictures, brackets, lambrequins, etc. Much of this decorating has been done by patients. Among the many patients who have contributed to this, Mr. Van Dee, of Independence, is worthy of special notice, as there are but few wards, if any, which do not look brighter and more home-like for his skill in oil painting and other embellishments in and about them. Easy chairs of various kinds take the place of the former uncomfortable seats, all of the wards are carpeted, and present a home-like appearance. The plotting out and fitting up of the grounds has also been commenced, which, when completed, will add greatly to the beauty and comfort of the institution, besides giving the patients increased opportunities for healthful outdoor exercises and recreation during all the year. Improvement of the grounds by numerous groves, summer-houses, seats, walks, drives, flowers, etc., is the only remedy for the former prison-like herding of patients in airing courts and back yards, and we rejoice that the light is breaking, and that airing courts, close confinement, and many other restraints will only be known in the history of the past. Everything in and about the institution is kept in excellent repair. In addition to what has already been noticed, Independence has commenced work in the amusement hall. The capacity will be

considerably increased, and it will be more convenient than heretofore. The transfer of the cemetery, which is too near the building, to the south end of the new farm, is an important change. The new cemetery is nearly a mile from the building, is much more spacious and attractive than the old one.

We assure the tax-payers of the State that all these improvements and additions were necessary, and in making them those having the work in charge have gotten full value for the money expended, as everything furnished is of the best kind and quality, and everything built of the best materials.

CLARINDA HOSPITAL.

Since our last report the administration building and one wing of the hospital at Clarinda have been completed and occupied under the care of Dr. P. W. Lewellen, as Superintendent, and Dr. Akin, as assistant. This institution now accommodates 250 male patients.

In December of last year some 200 male patients were sent from the hospitals at Independence and Mt. Pleasant, and the institution was thus started. The architect has planned and the foundation is laid for an important and extensive institution. The entire building is lighted by electricity, and the patients appear to be reasonably well satisfied. The farm, which contains over 500 acres, is a most excellent one, well watered, and in good repair. If we were to suggest a change in the management of the farm, it would be that there be less machinery used and more employment be given to the patients.

Starting with so many patients of so diversified a character of mental ailments, most of them chronic State patients requiring isolation and classification, together with the fact that the institution was not fully prepared to receive patients when they arrived, the management found it difficult to have affairs run as smoothly at the beginning as desired. But by skillful management, patience, kindness and perseverance the friction from these and other causes incident to the opening of a new institution under the circumstances this one was opened, has been partially removed.

In view of the fact that there is no shade on the land belonging to the Clarinda Hospital, and no place for the patients to be excluded from the sun in summer, during their outdoor exercises, your Committee would urge the purchase of ninety acres of land east of the building, between the hospital and the town of Clarinda. This tract of land is covered with timber, a lovely grove, and its use

would contribute greatly to the comfort and health of the patients. Should it be urged that the expense would be too great, we suggest that there are sixty acres of the present farm which might be sold, the sale of which would not be detrimental to the farm with the possession of the ninety acres of grove suggested. In this connection, we would suggest the erection of summer-houses near the building, for the use of patients who may not be able, or who may not desire, to go to the grove.

Owing to the crowded condition of this hospital, and the impossibility of a proper classification of the patients, we would suggest that all the room in the building which can be utilized for the use of patients, should be devoted to them. As at present arranged, there is much room occupied for other uses which could and should be occupied by patients. Without entering into particulars as to changes which could be made, we suggest that all but the rooms in the center building should be used by patients. Your Committee is of the opinion that there is sufficient available room in the building, and which could be used for patients without inconvenience or detriment to the administration, for two more wards in the corridors. The rooms now used by the assistant physician should be converted into sleeping rooms or for a ward for the better class of patients. We would also suggest that the basement bays be made into dining-rooms, and that the apartments now used as dining-rooms be converted into sleeping rooms. The changes suggested would enable a much better classification, and would obviate the crowding together of disturbed and quiet patients, especially, as at present, in the dormitories. With these changes, Clarinda Hospital will be better able to do the work for which it was intended; without them, this work must be imperfectly performed. We trust, therefore, that these suggestions will receive prompt attention, as your Committee believe them to be of vital importance to the interests of the institution.

REMOVAL OF INSANE CONVICTS.

Since our last report, the insane convicts have been removed from the hospitals to the apartments prepared for them at Anamosa, thus making room for thirty-three more patients in the State hospitals. Your Committee, by the invitation of the Warden, have visited these insane convicts in their new home. We found them kindly cared for, and all were apparently as contented and happy as the patients in the other hospitals. The building is very comfortable and conveniently arranged. These patients are largely

under the care of Dr. Adair, the physician to the penitentiary, who visits them every day, and comes at any call, day or night. The patients are given abundant outdoor exercise, and their physical condition is good. Your Committee had the same privileges of conversing alone with these patients as in the other hospitals. We were much pleased with our visit, and came away feeling that these unfortunates were kindly cared for and humanely treated by both physician and warden. But while we feel that there is not any danger of these patients being treated cruelly by the present management, yet we believe it is not right to leave these men without better protection, where they are liable to be cruelly treated by the prison guards, who have them in charge.

MORE DEMANDS.

But large, perfect and complete as are our present institutions for the insane, we must not conclude that the work of caring for this class of unfortunates in Iowa is completed. On the contrary, the demands for more and better facilities for their care and cure in our present institutions, and for more room, are as imperative as ever. Among the pressing demands are: at Mt. Pleasant a larger chapel and amusement hall. The present chapel cannot accommodate one tenth of the patients who would be benefited by going to religious services and amusements. Another need of this hospital is an ice-house and a cold storage-room. We do not deem it necessary to argue the necessity for this; economy dictates it and necessity demands it. Another need is better fire protection. It should be supplied the same as Independence, with mains around the entire building, with fire-plugs, hose and carts sufficient to meet any emergency. And still another demand is a slaughter-house and piggery. The present slaughter-house is a nuisance; too near the main building, too small, old, and in a dilapidated condition. The piggery we ask as a matter of economy to the State. Enough pork can be raised from the offal of the kitchen to supply the entire demands of the institution for lard and pork, besides a surplus sufficient to make an important factor in the current expense of the institution. A new engine should be provided. The present engine was put in when the hospital was built; it went through the fire a number of years ago; its capacity is not sufficient, and it is practically worn out. The green-house, too, is in a dilapidated condition; too small and unfit to meet the demands. Many fine and rare exotic plants have been ruined for want of better accommodations. A new one should be provided.

WHAT INDEPENDENCE NEEDS AND SHOULD HAVE.

There should be generous appropriations for painting the exposed wood and iron work of the buildings; painting the horse-barn and cow-barn; a new hot water tank; refitting and improving the cold storage-rooms; repairing fences; for a walk through the grounds; for a paint and blacksmith shop; to complete changes from high to low pressure steam-heating; a new coal-house; new cisterns, to secure rain water from the buildings; a green-house; for tile to drain wet land on the farm; and to continue improvements already commenced on the grounds about the institution.

Each hospital should have liberal appropriations each year for improving and preserving the grounds, in order that patients may be taken outdoors, and enjoy pleasant surroundings. These grounds should be sufficiently extensive that the patients from the different wards may be segregated—space enough that the disorderly patients may be kept widely separate from the convalescent. Classification should be as strictly adhered to outside as inside the hospitals; but it cannot be done without ample grounds.

Your Committee would urge the completion of Clarinda Hospital at the earliest possible day. While the present accommodations there have relieved the crowded condition of the male wings of the other institutions, the female departments are crowded to overflow, and Clarinda should be enlarged so as to care for female patients at the earliest possible day, as there is now no room in either of the old hospitals for this class of patients, and there are now many which cannot be properly cared for. In view of the rapid increase of the unfortunate wards of the State, and from the fact that our present accommodations are about full, we would suggest the commencement of a new hospital somewhere in the northwestern part of the State. The site should be selected, the foundation laid, and preparations made for building the superstructure, just as soon as the demand for more room became urgent, which will be in a very few years. The expense of purchasing grounds will be less now than it will be hereafter. A small appropriation by each Legislature would enable the grounds to be improved, trees and fruit planted, etc., so that when the institution is opened it would not be as it is at Clarinda to-day—not a tree to protect the patients in taking outdoor exercise in hot weather. Iowa has been munificent in her contributions for providing for the cure and care of this, the most helpless of her wards, but it will not do to rest on what has been done; the demand is continually and rapidly increasing for more, and the future must be provided for as has been the past.

Your Committee's observations and investigations have led us to the conclusion that there is an urgent necessity for some provision being made for the separation of patients afflicted with venereal and other loathsome and contagious diseases from other inmates. To this end, we would urge the erection of detached buildings for the care and treatment of this class of patients. At present there is no opportunity in any of our hospitals for proper isolation, and we earnestly urge that provision for it be made at the earliest possible day.

CONCLUDING OBSERVATIONS.

The management of the Iowa Hospitals for the Insane is progressive; each year finds important additions and improvements in the means for the care, comfort, and physical and mental benefit of the patients, and new and better methods introduced in the management inside and outside the buildings. Restraint, except in extreme and unavoidable cases, is not now the rule, but the exception; physical exercise and mental diversions, indoors and out, are leading features in the management; manual labor, in the fields, garden, kitchen, laundry, etc., is provided for all who are able, and who desire to thus improve their time. The management of the institutions is being constantly improved, new and better means and methods being adopted for improving the condition of the patients and making the institutions more home-like and attractive, and, consequently, better adapted for the uses for which they are designed.

After careful observation and critical inspection during the period, your Committee feels warranted in saying that the system now in operation in the management of everything in and about our hospitals is a great improvement on the past. In saying this we do not mean to say that there is never any friction, nor that your Committee has not found any irregularities and nothing which they would not have otherwise; but these irregularities have been the exception, and not the rule. And while we do not claim perfection for the institutions and their managers, when we look upon the magnitude and complexity of these hospitals, the wonder is that they go along so successfully, with so little friction, and that there are so few unpleasant occurrences. From careful observation of the management of these institutions by the present trustee system, your Committee is convinced that the interests of these hospitals would be greatly advanced by having the Trustees of each institution selected from the hospital district. There are many reasons for

this, among which are that in thus selecting the Trustees it would bring them closer to the hospitals, and much valuable time would be saved for business at the Hospitals which is now consumed in traveling to and from them. The expenses would also be considerably diminished, or, at least, much now paid as traveling expenses could and would be paid for active service at the hospitals. Another reason is that being in the hospital district the Trustees of each institution would feel a deeper interest in the welfare of the patients, as both patients and friends would be in closer communication with them, and closer relations would be established.

Your Committee's observations have led them to believe that the work of superintending both the medical and business departments of these institutions is too much for one individual, and as the plan of having both a medical and business superintendent has been adopted with favorable results in institutions of other States, notably of Norristown, Pennsylvania, we would suggest that, as an experiment to test the two plans, the trial be made with the Hospital at Clarinda. The experiment would not be an expensive one, and we are of opinion that it is worthy of a trial.

That there will be no relaxation on the part of the proper authorities to provide liberally, year by year, for the better care and comfort of these unfortunates; that the institutions will continue to grow better and better; that the day will be hastened when ample provision will be made within hospital walls for the cure and care of every insane person in the State, rich and poor, is the earnest hope of your Committee.

F. McCLELLAND,
MRS. S. R. WOODS,
JOHN BRENNAN.

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