

ANNUAL REPORT
OF THE
SUPERINTENDENT
OF THE
LUNATIC ASYLUM,
MADE TO THE
GENERAL ASSEMBLY
AT
REGULAR SESSION, 1874-5.

COLUMBIA, S. C.:
REPUBLICAN PRINTING COMPANY, STATE PRINTERS.
1874.

LUNATIC ASYLUM,

Compliments of

Dr. J. F. Ensor.

the great increase of the population of the Asylum of late years, owing, in a great measure, to the admission of the colored element to the benefits of this great charity, a privilege which was before denied them, except in rare instances.

The new wing of the new Asylum, now in process of construction, will be completed by January next, and will accommodate about sixty patients, thus largely increasing our present number.

In view of the fact that there is in our State a very large number of insane persons unprovided for, many of whom are languishing in the various jails and alms houses of the several Counties, and in view of the fact that hundreds are annually turned away and refused admittance into the Asylum, because there is not room for their accommodation; and, finally, in view of the fact that all over the world philosophers and statesmen are advocating the wisdom, as well as the humanity, of caring properly for the insane, and States and nations are putting their teachings into practice by the erection of costly, spacious and comfortable asylums for the insane, we beg leave to suggest that it is high time for South Carolina to take a step forward in this matter, and enlarge her accommodations for the care of her insane. This could be easily done, and the people would not feel it, by levying annually a special tax of fifty thousand dollars for the completion of the new Asylum. By this plan the building would, in a few years, be finished, the people would not miss the money it would cost, our insane would be properly provided for, and the State would have an institution that would be honorable alike to our wisdom and benevolence.

The Superintendent informs us that he has conversed with prominent citizens from nearly every part of the State upon this subject, who gave him the most flattering assurances that such a tax would be cheerfully paid by the people; for this is an institution in which the whole people are more nearly interested, perhaps, than any other in the State.

We feel it to be our duty to bring this matter to your attention. It is for the State to say whether or not our views shall be carried out.

Before closing, we call your especial attention to the past indebtedness of the institution, thereby acquainting the Legislature and appealing to them to pass a law whereby the same may be honorably liquidated. We can truthfully assert that the said past indebtedness, from indisputable proofs, is just, proper, and ought to be paid fully and at once.

In conclusion, we take great pleasure in availing ourselves of the present opportunity to give public expression to our hearty endorsement of the administration of Dr. Ensor, our worthy and efficient Superintendent. We have the fullest confidence in his honesty, his integrity and ability. As a public officer, he has an enviable record. As a professional gentleman, there are few better qualified for the delicate and

but a community numbering two and a half million souls, the loss to each one is ordinarily so trifling that the careless delinquent is secure against deserved punishment. Hence there is always a tendency to extravagance in the expenditure of public money, even where there is no reason to suspect dishonesty.

But extravagance is often the outward sign of hidden corruption. The public money may be directly or indirectly stolen, and the fact be well concealed from observation. One method is by the purchase of supplies and their conversion into private uses; another is by duplicated or fraudulent vouchers; but the most common is by a corrupt agreement between a purchasing agent and the party from whom purchases are made, to pay a larger price for supplies purchased than their actual value, and divide the excess, thus securing a receipt in due form as a voucher for the expenditure, while a secret discount from the face of the bill is allowed, at the time of settlement, so that the State pays more for what it receives than it would have paid, but for the inability of its agent. Or, it may be, that instead of a cash discount, other privileges are given to the purchasing agent, to induce him to pay excessive prices, such as the use of money as a loan, without interest, or a profitable partnership in some paying business, or frequent presents, of greater or less value, or the privilege of buying goods for his personal use at cost. Where the parties to the transaction are sure enough of each other, the excessive prices paid may be concealed by a fictitious statement of the quantity or quality of the articles to be paid for, or an article of one description may be entered on the bill under a false name, as an article of another. These speculations are dangerous, but difficult of detection; and the only security against them consists in a thorough system of checks and constant vigilance.

MORE ROOM NEEDED.

Upon this subject I cannot do better than clip a chapter from my previous reports:

An increased capacity has become an absolute necessity, if we mean to make suitable provision for the care and the treatment of our insane. During the past year a large number of applicants were rejected, because we had not the room to accommodate them, and not another patient can be admitted at the present time. The picture of an insane person brought in chains to your doors by his friends, seeking that relief which the largest charity cannot bestow at home, and turned away amid the tears of those who have a kindred blood, and are bound to him by ties of the strongest affection, is sad indeed, and must make the liveliest appeal to the heart's best sympathies. With our want of means we can

do nothing, and must wait the action of the Legislature, who alone can give the remedy. What I would suggest, nay, indeed, urgently recommend, is, that the new building be completed at once, or, at least, the centre building, and one section of the north wing put up, so as to enable us to transfer the females from the old building, which could then be used as a home for idiots and imbeciles. If this arrangement could be effected, it would enable us to relieve our wards of a large number of idiots and imbeciles, for whom nothing can be done, in a curative sense, who are not proper subjects for an insane asylum, but who have been accumulating for the last forty years. We would thus have abundant room for all cases of acute insanity for many years to come. As it is now, the idiots and imbeciles crowd out a large number of recent cases of mania, which might be cured if placed in the Asylum in time. If experience has established a single fact about insanity, it is the importance of placing the insane under treatment in an Asylum at the earliest possible moment after the manifestation of mental alienation—that, under proper treatment, a majority of recent cases are curable, while but little can be done for those of long standing.

The question, then, is: Shall we continue to receive, and retain in our Asylum for the insane, idiots and imbeciles, to the exclusion of cases of acute mental disorder, which might, under proper treatment in an Asylum, be restored to soundness of mind, to society, and to lives of usefulness? Besides this, it is eminently improper, in my opinion, that idiots and imbeciles should be kept in the same buildings and grounds with the insane. I believe the association has a damaging effect upon the insane mind, and, if this be so, it is of itself sufficient reason for carrying out the above proposition—the removal of our idiots and imbeciles to the “old Asylum.” This unpleasant feature in insane asylums has been long since recognized; and in Europe and most of our Northern States the authorities have obviated it by providing homes for those afflicted with these two forms of mental insufficiency, where they are separately maintained and educated, and their condition improved so far as practicable. I see no good reason why we should be behind other parts of our country in these matters. South Carolina could establish this much-needed charity at a less cost than perhaps any other State, for she already owns the buildings and the grounds, and their proximity to the Asylum is so convenient that it would not require a separate organization. The same officers could govern and manage both institutions, if this should be desired.

I cannot leave this subject without earnestly commending it to your careful consideration.—*Vide Report, 1871.*

This is another subject twice before discussed; but it is one of such vital importance to the interests of the insane of the State, that I cannot

pass it by in this report. An increased capacity has become an absolute necessity, if we mean to make suitable provision for the care and treatment of our insane. This is the language of my last report, and the experiences of the past year have more thoroughly confirmed the correctness of this proposition. Notwithstanding the fact that a large number of cases of imbecility and chronic insanity were removed last spring and summer to the County alms houses, to relieve our wards of their crowded condition, their places were almost immediately filled up by more recent and violent cases, and a large number of applications for admission, from different parts of the State, had to be rejected in consequence of our want of room. Again, if we argue from facts obtained from carefully compiled statistics, it will be seen that there is a large number of insane persons in the State unprovided for.

Dr. E. T. Wilkins, Commissioner in Lunacy for the State of California, has made exhaustive researches into this subject, both in this country and Europe, and, after collecting the most copious and trustworthy statistics in every State in the Union, in Canada, England, Ireland, Scotland, France, Italy, Bavaria, Austria, the German States, Switzerland, Belgium and Holland, he publishes the result, conclusively proving that the rate or proportion of insane to the sane is about 1 in every 489 persons. Now, if we apply this to South Carolina, (and I think it will be admitted that it will apply as well here as to any other part of the world,) we find that we have, in this State, 1,439 persons subject to one form or another of mental derangement, or mental insufficiency—unable to take care of themselves, and irresponsible for their conduct. What has the State done towards providing for the care and protection of these hapless creatures? It has furnished protection for 220—leaving 1,217 unprotected and unprovided for. Dr. Wilkins' remarks upon this subject are so peculiarly adapted to our own situation that I cannot refrain from making an extract from his able work. He says: 'We may as well make up our minds now, as at any future time, that every community of four hundred and fifty or five hundred persons will have to support or provide for one insane person. When this becomes to be a recognized fact among the people, the whole subject will have been stripped of more than half of its difficulties and embarrassments; the system for which we have labored will have been established, and the just and regular provision will be made for their support, as it is now for the common schools or the ordinary and inevitable expenses of the State Government. Until this has been accomplished, the constantly recurring and ever renewing question of provisions for the insane will be brought before our Legislature to occupy its time and perplex its members.'

Until more ample accommodations are made for the care and protection of our insane, the wards of our present buildings will be constantly

overcrowded, and hundreds will be turned away for want of room. The practice of overcrowding hospitals for the insane was thoroughly discussed by the Association of Medical Superintendents of Institutions for the Insane, at its last meeting, and the following resolutions touching this subject were unanimously adopted:

Resolved, That this Association regards the custom of admitting a greater number of patients than the buildings can properly accommodate, which is now becoming so common in hospitals for the insane in nearly every section of the country, as an evil of great magnitude, productive of extraordinary dangers, subversive of the good order, perfect discipline and greatest usefulness of these institutions and of the best interest of the insane.

Resolved, That this Association, having repeatedly affirmed its well matured convictions of the humanity, expediency and economy of every State making ample provision for all its insane, regards it as an important means of effecting this object, that these institutions should be kept in the highest state of efficiency, and the difference in condition of patients treated in them, and those kept in the alms houses, jails, or even private houses, be thus most clearly demonstrated.

Resolved, That while fully recognizing the great suffering and serious loss that must result to individuals by their exclusion from hospitals when laboring under an attack of insanity, this Association fully believes that the greatest good will result to the largest number, and at the earliest day, by the adoption of the course now indicated.

Resolved, That the Boards of Management of the different hospitals on this continent be urged, most earnestly, to adopt such measures as will effectually prevent more patients being admitted into their respective institutions than, in the opinions of their Superintendents, can be treated with the greatest efficiency, and without impairing the welfare of their fellow-sufferers.

Resolved, That the Secretary be instructed to furnish a copy of these resolutions to the Boards of Management of the different hospitals for the insane in the United States and the British Provinces.

Justice cannot be done to the insane of our State until our Legislature shall awaken to a sense of their claims, and greatly increase our hospital accommodations. This, in my opinion, can only be done by levying a special tax for this purpose, the proceeds to be employed in the completion of the new Asylum. I feel assured that this tax would be cheerfully paid. It is something in which the whole people are interested, for, to say nothing of the promptings of a common humanity, who of us has not a relative, however remote, or some dear friend, that does not need the protection and care of an Asylum. At any rate, I feel it to be my duty to bring the claims of the insane to the notice of that authority which alone can

satisfy them, and I trust that what I have said may not be wholly thrown away, but that it may take root in the hearts of our rulers, and eventually bring forth fruit that may console and comfort the afflicted of all races."—*Vide Report 1872.*

IMPROVEMENTS.

We have made no improvements beyond the completion of those commenced last year, and the construction of a water closet to the west wing of the female department. This closet extends to the top of the building, and is supplied with the most modern and approved conveniences. The entire cost of construction, including pipes, patent hoppers and water supplies, did not exceed five hundred dollars. A similar one for the east wing will complete the accommodations of this department.

I trust that I will not be regarded as trespassing upon the province of the Building Committee in saying, it is very gratifying to be able to report that there is at last a prospect of the early completion of the addition to the new Asylum. This addition was commenced in 1870, but for (as is alleged by the Building Committee) want of funds, it has drawn its tardy progress through the lapse of four years. But I think I may safely say it will be ready to occupy by the first of January next, and will enable us to accommodate about sixty additional patients, and will, of course, correspondingly increase our expenses; and this naturally brings us to the discussion of our

FINANCES.

By referring to Exhibit One of the financial statement, it will be seen that our total liabilities at the close of the last fiscal year amounted to \$91,360.64—a pretty round sum of indebtedness, you will say, to begin a new year with. Our total expenses for the present year, including all classes of expenses, much of which does not belong to the present year and cannot be regarded as a part of the expenses for the support proper of the institution, such as borrowed money and interest and charges on borrowed money, amount due patients on account of unexpired time, cost of sending discharged patients home and mileage, amounts to \$71,589.72, upwards of \$16,000 less than last year. I have always claimed, and stated so in my reports, that the institution could be supported for from twenty to twenty-five thousand dollars less upon the cash principle than upon credit, as has been the case mainly for the last four years; and the experiences of the present year have clearly demonstrated the correctness of this view. During the past four years we have never had a dollar on hand to pay the cash for anything. Even postage stamps have had to be purchased on credit.