

REPORT

OF THE

REGENTS OF THE LUNATIC ASYLUM

TO THE

LEGISLATURE OF SOUTH CAROLINA,

NOVEMBER, 1855.

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1855.



# REPORT.

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*To the Honorable the Speaker*

*and members of the House of Representatives:*

GENTLEMEN:—I herewith transmit to your honorable body, the Annual Reports and proceedings of the Board of Regents of the Lunatic Asylum.

From the several reports you will be fully informed of the state and management of the institution for the past year.

All of which is respectfully submitted.

A. WALLACE, *President of the Board of Regents.*

Nov. 5, 1855.

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## REPORT TO THE BOARD OF REGENTS.

GENTLEMEN:—The Committee charged to draw up the report, which, if approved of by your Board, will be the account we give, annually, of our stewardship to the Legislature, respectfully reports:

We are grieved that the mortality in our institution has been so great as reported by the physician. Sometimes epidemics will find their way into institutions like ours, at other times an unusual number of patients, with dilapidated constitutions, is received, which we believe has been the case during the past year. It would seem, however, that one of the additional causes has been the inadequate space of our yards of the main buildings, and the deficient state of the lower stories. We do not think general insalubrity of our situation can be the cause, since the patients in the buildings on the eastern portion of our ground, about forty in number, have enjoyed common good health, and not a death has occurred among them, although some patients, peculiarly infirm, were placed there, and all the patients suffering from diseases superinduced in the asylum, and who could be transported from the western to the eastern section have recovered, as we are informed. It seems, therefore, that either the crowded state of the western section, or the insalubrity of the yards and lower stories, or indeed both, but not the general insalubrity of our situation, must be considered a partial cause of the large mortality in the last year.

The two chief subjects on which it seems the duty of your Committee to report, are the question of removal or non-removal of our Asylum, and the



new organization which the Regents have felt it their duty to give to the institution.

As to the first, the Regents were invited, in the course of the summer, to meet the Joint Committee of the Legislature. At this meeting the Regents passed a resolution, and handed it over to the Committee, to the effect that the Regents are still of the unqualified opinion, that if a new hospital for the insane be erected, it should not be situated farther than one mile or a mile and a half from the city limits.

The Regents were informed that there was a place which would, probably, unite all requisites. Some Regents accompanied the Committee on a tour of exploration, and reported to your Board, in extra-meeting, that if entire satisfaction regarding the salubrity of the place alluded to could be given, and also regarding an abundance of wholesome water, *that* place would be very eligible. Upon this the Regents adopted two resolutions. By the first of them they informed the Joint Committee of the Legislature that, should upon careful inquiry, the two vital questions of salubrity and water be satisfactorily answered, and should the Legislature appropriate the necessary sum of money, the Board of Regents would heartily join in the erection of a new hospital for the insane; but that, on the other hand, they hoped, if either enquiry should fail to give a satisfactory result, the Legislative Committee would do their best to obtain an appropriation sufficient to commence a new building on the eastern section of the present grounds. The Regents, moreover, urged the Committee, respectfully but strongly, to do all in their power to set this long suspended subject of removal or non-removal at length at rest; and we herewith entreat our Legislators themselves to settle the grave question during the present session. The Regents unanimously consider it of vital importance that this matter be settled now, and they believe with equal unanimity that it has been detrimental to the interests of this institution that this question has been left open so long.

By the other resolution of the Regents, passed at the time, a Committee was appointed to inquire into the salubrity of the place in question, and Doctors Trezevant and Parker were charged to make a like inquiry and report thereon.

The report of the Committee, Dr. LaBorde being Chairman, is lying before you. Its conclusion is that the Committee are constrained to say that they cannot recommend the site proposed as a fit and proper one for the erection of an asylum for the insane. Dr. Trezevant, in his report, admits that he would not assume the responsibility of advising its selection.

Several Committees of our Board, Messrs. Wallace and Bryce being respective chairmen, have failed on previous occasions, to find an eligible place besides our own, within the prescribed circuit around Columbia, and we ask, therefore, for an appropriation, say \$50,000—sufficient to commence the

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building of a new Asylum on our present grounds, according to that plan which, on the 4th of June, 1853, was unanimously adopted by the Board, after a patient and comprehensive inquiry; after having carefully examined the plans of Dr. Trezevant and Dr. Parker; after having sent the latter on an especial tour of inquiry to the North; after having examined other plans presented to the Board and collected, by a committee appointed to enquire into the question: "What ought to be the principles on which any architectural plan for the new building ought to be formed," and after having heard the report of that Committee, consisting of Messrs. Lieber, John S. Preston, and Col. Goodwyn.

The minutes of this protracted and laborious inquiry are very full, and no labour of our Board has ever been gone through with greater circumspection, more unwearied attention, and on ampler information.

If this proposition be adopted by the Legislature, we shall be able to make use of the present building, during the time that the new Asylum may be in the course of erection, while the plan adopted by us, as above stated, is of such a kind as to allow us to make use of each portion of the new building so soon as finished.

We would state here, as proper to be known by the Legislature, that according to the estimate of business men, our present ground, with all the buildings on it, might be sold for \$30,000, at the most.

As to the second main subject, we have to observe that our institution differs from all existing ones, so far as we know, in having two officers—a physician and a superintendent—instead of one officer, uniting the attributes of both our chief officers. Every member of the present Board found this anomaly when he entered upon his office, and whatever may have been the opinion of some or of all the Regents, regarding this anomaly, so long as the two officers worked amicably together, no harm seemed to result from it. This harmony, however, has been interrupted, no matter by whom or by what cause. We speak of facts exclusively, and the present organization has shewn its defects to such a degree, that your Board found itself obliged to reorganize the chief departments. Nothing has been done rashly. The Regents have matured their ultimate act by a succession of committees, proceeding from the enquiry into the necessity of the change, to the adoption of the chief principles to be adopted for the plan, and from these to the organization itself, which is to go into operation, by the election of a chief physician, on the first of February next. By this new organization, one physician will be at the head of the whole institution, emitting the medical and administrative attributes, under the supervision of the Board of Regents. He is to reside within the precincts of the Asylum, and is to be allowed no private practice. We have increased the power of this officer, as we have augmented his responsibilities. In one word, we have made his office similar to the corresponding one of



necessarily from our location. The inmates have but a choice of evils. They must either remain within the house, or resort to the court yards and be subjected to the damps of the ground. The one poisons by its noisome affluvia, the other is no less destructive by its effects on the digestive organs.

In dry seasons the average of mortality is about 5 per cent., but in wet it has been equal to one in every three. In the present year the bowel affections commenced with the rainy season, continued whilst it lasted, and ceased when the earth was no longer saturated with moisture. The facts were too palpable to be overlooked, and though we had forty less in the house than at the last season, yet it assumed an equal virulence and greater mortality; and it should point out the necessity of abandoning a location in which we have repeatedly suffered from disease and great mortality, when there was but little sickness in the town.

It is known to you, gentlemen, that the Committee of the Legislature requested me to give them my opinion as to the propriety of abandoning the old building and erecting another; and whether the lands owned by the Asylum were suitable for that purpose; if not, to look out for a proper site and report to them at their next meeting. The substance of my remarks on those subjects, as given to them, and also my views of the proper construction of an Asylum, when commenting on the plans offered, I now transmit to you.

I assumed as a fact, not admitting of dispute and acceded to by all, that the old Asylum was totally unfit for the purpose to which it is applied, and that the same could be said of the lands which were owned by the Asylum. I stated to them that every Medical Superintendent in America and Europe had distinctly vetoed the building of an Insane Asylum within two miles of a town; and that except the Regents of this Institution and its Superintendent, there were none who would advise such a step to be taken. My reasons for objecting to the location have already been given in detail; I need only now say, that there is not sufficient land, nor can that of a proper kind be obtained, to add to its extent, and what can be obtained does not lie well for our use. A street intervenes between the homestead and main body, and there is barely sufficient for pleasure grounds; and if the new building is erected on the spot prepared for it, it will be within the corporate limits of the city. That it is valuable and will sell for far more than a better site, with the proper portion of land, can be obtained. One hundred acres is the minimum called for by the Superintendent, but the advantage of having extended grounds has become so evident that the improved opinion of the age, of which the Massachusetts Committee has now become the exponent, has fixed 250 as the minimum. The Legislature of Illinois directed 300 acres to be purchased for the Asylum they were about to build; and the



Legislature of Alabama did the same; and it was attached to the Asylum at Tuscaloosa.

The same quantity of land should be purchased for an institution, such as the State ought to endow, and the quantity cannot be purchased adjoining us. Less than 250 ought not to be bought, for the patients require space, occupation is necessary, they should have diversified employments, exercise is absolutely essential, and it should be within their own limits, but these cannot be effected in the present location, and it creates the necessity for our removal. The three first propositions of the Superintendents embrace the subject of the resolutions of the Legislature. They are the result of the practical experience of physicians of the highest standing, whose whole time has been devoted to the care of the insane; and carry a moral influence to which no man can object. Those opinions were expressed by the American Superintendents, as individuals, long before they acted as a Board, and can be found in the writings of Buttolph, Bell, Earle, Ray, Kirkbride, Wyman, and warmly advocated by Connelly, Falert, Jacobi, Ellis, Knight, Millingen, Zeller and others. It seems to me, that the opinions of such men, given under such a variety of circumstances, and in different countries, should settle the question, and that hereafter no Asylum should ever be built within the limits of a town.

The Architects were directed to send their plans to my care, and it became incumbent on me to examine into the principles of their construction, their cost, &c., for the Committee; and when exhibiting them at their subsequent meeting, as a matter of course, the interest which I felt, as a medical man, and one who, for thirty years, had been intimately connected with the Asylum for the insane, (independent of my instructions to obtain information,) induced me to canvass their respective merits, and I stated, whilst looking over them, that there were two principles on which Asylums were now constructed. The single range or corridor with the rooms on one side, large windows opening into the pleasure grounds, and the double range with rooms on both sides of the corridor, and receiving their light by end windows. I stated my reasons for preferring the former; that it was also advocated by some of the best men in our specialty—that Bell, Ray, Earle, Connelly, and a host of others strenuously advised that plan; that the Butler Asylum was constructed on it, and had given general satisfaction—that the Friend's Asylum was on the same, and that Dr. Worthington highly approved it, after having had the management of both; that Dr. Kirkbride and others preferred the double range; that he, in his letter to the Regents, stated there was no objection to the single for a small establishment. Its capacity for accommodating a number is now satisfactorily proved. Dr. Worthington writes, and gives me a plan, shewing that it could accommodate two hundred and fifty as easily as one hundred. The Butler Asylum

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proves that it is beneficial. The Derby contains over three hundred. The number accommodated at Hanwell has been extended to one thousand, and so well pleased were the Commissioners of Asylums with its operations, that Colney Hatch was constructed on the same principle, and with accommodations for one thousand two hundred.

In any climate, Dr. Worthington writes, I would prefer it, but in your southern, I should deem it indispensable.

I fully agree with him, and it appears that for the last fifteen years, as asserted by Earle, that no asylum has been erected in Europe, but on the single range. I have no question, from personal experience of both, that there is more comfort and health, for both patient and officers, in the single range, than can possibly be given in the double. The test is easily applied; let any of you gentlemen visit our asylum about 7 o'clock in the morning, and though you will find nothing to admire in either, as they are in our arrangement, yet I am very confident, you will speedily leave the double, in order that you may breath a little more freely in the single.

I have examined the land proposed as sites for the erection of a building for a new asylum, and especially directed my attention to the one pointed out by Col. Hampton. I have been over the ground, and noticed the character of its soil, and the growth thereon, and I can see no reason to suppose it otherwise than healthy. It is a high sandy soil on a clay bottom, and principally covered with pine. The ground is gently rolling, so as to carry off all superfluous moisture. It is on an elevated plain on the crest of a hill; has an area of sixty acres of land, sufficiently level for all purposes of the institution, and with gradually sloping sides, which afford a facility for draining that is truly desirable. Water can be obtained from a number of springs, and all of them can be brought to one point, about three hundred yards from the selected location. About one quarter of a mile from the hill, is a small pond of about twenty acres, fed by springs, and having an outlet at the junction of the railroads. It could be made to subserve very useful purposes, and give much pleasure to the patients. There is an abundant supply of wood. The quantity of land in the tract is no disadvantage, it can be used for pasturage, and enable them to raise cattle and sheep, &c., and add greatly to the comfort of the patients, besides enabling the officers to raise very much of the food necessary for the support of the institution. It is within a mile and a half of the State House, and adjoins the unsettled part of the town, and the whole tract, if it belonged to the asylum, would enable the officers to maintain the privacy of the inmates, and yet be within a half mile the borders of the city. By removing some trees vistas might be opened, and the views extended over Columbia and around the country for twenty miles. Any amount of exercise, and of any character that their condition might require, could be given, without passing from their own enclosure.