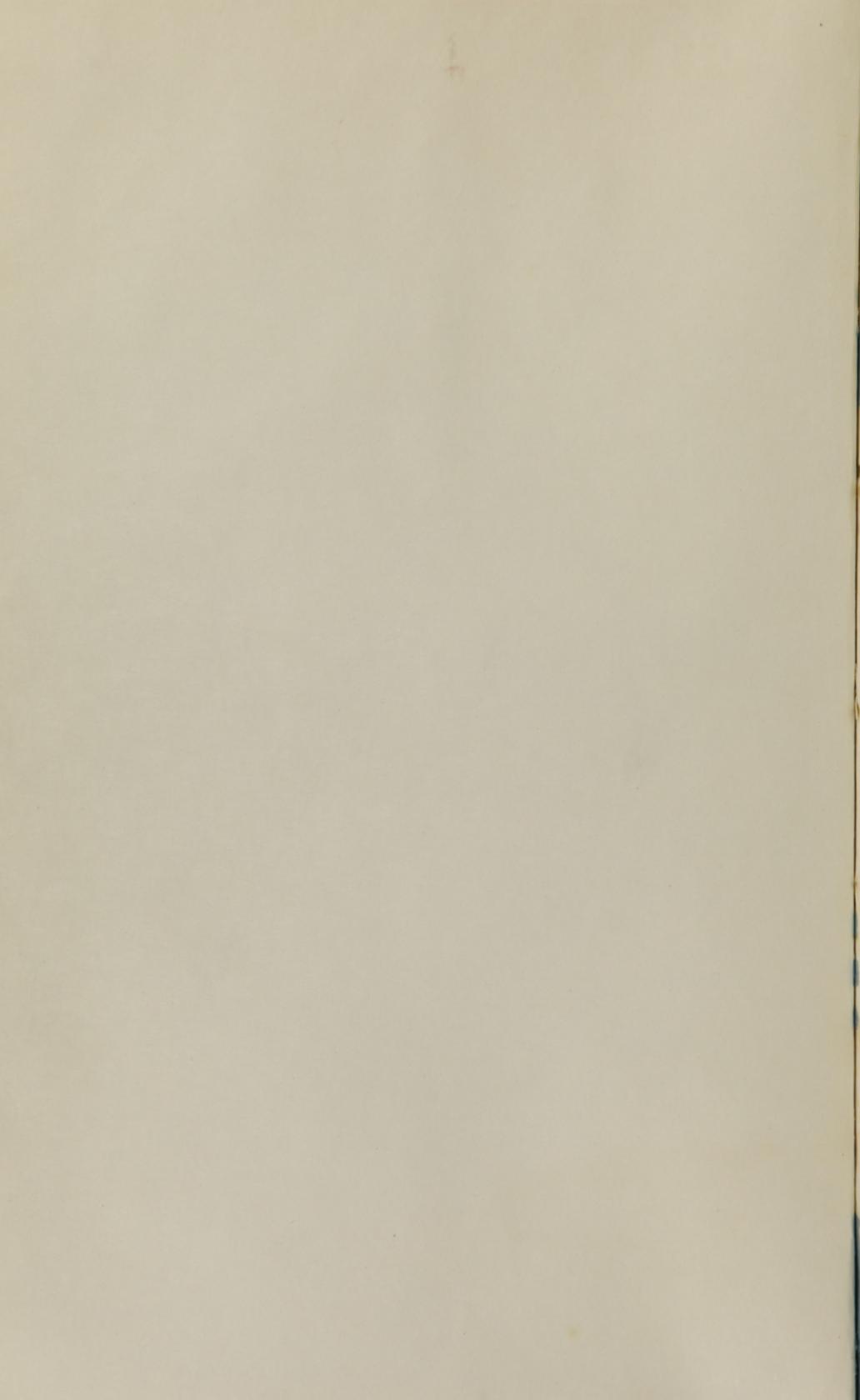


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TO THE HONORABLE THE LEGISLATURE OF THE  
STATE OF NEW-YORK.

*Re. indigent and  
insane*

GENTLEMEN—

Your attention is solicited to the condition of many indigent and pauper insane persons in the county-houses of this State elsewhere. Your petitioner asks to present their wants and their claims, regarding this unfortunate class, not as being properly the charge of those towns and counties where their lot may have fallen, but as Wards of the State, made so by the most terrible calamity that can assail human nature—a shattered intellect, a total incapacity for self-care and self-government.

Notwithstanding the liberal appropriations for the relief of this class by the establishment of the State curative asylum at Utica, large numbers are yet unprovided for. Many whose cases offer every hope of recovery, if brought under remedial treatment, are sinking in the prime of life into irrecoverable insanity; others, whose condition exhibits nothing to encourage hope of benefit from being placed in a curative asylum, are permitted to fall into states of the most shocking and brutalizing degradation—pitiable objects, at once sources of greatest discomfort to all brought within their vicinity, and exposed to exciting irritation from the reckless sports of the idle and vicious. But this is not the darkest view of their condition; these most unfriended and wretched beings are often subject to more horrible circumstances. Fidelity to my cause compels me, however revolting the topic, to speak more explicitly. I state, therefore, that both idiots and insane women are exposed to the basest vice, and become mothers without conscious-

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[ASSEMBLY

ness of maternity, and without capacity in any way to provide for their offspring, or to exercise those cares which are instinctive with the lowest brute animals. Is this a condition of things to be tolerated in a christian land, in the very heart of a community claiming to take rank for elevation of moral principles and high-minded justice? I am persuaded it is unnecessary to dwell upon this subject; it must be enough that these evils are known to exist, for legislation to guard against their continuance. It may be well to say that the broadest evidence, sustained by appalling facts, can be adduced, substantiating these monstrous offences. Special details here would be out of place; suffice it, that an investigating committee, though governed by no nice sensibilities, would shrink before half their task should be accomplished.

I will not consume time by narrating individual histories, which, however they might rouse your indignation, or awaken your sensibilities, will, I believe, not be needed to strengthen a cause so evidently claiming your very serious consideration and efficient action. I shall, as briefly as possible, refer to those institutions in the State, where are found both sufficient and defective provision for all classes of the insane, that from such statements you may determine what additional establishments are required.

The Asylums at Utica and at Bloomingdale afford insufficient accommodations for the reception of even the curable insane; large numbers of both classes are accumulated in the county alms-houses, and in private dwellings. Of the condition, generally, of such as are retained by their own families, I am unprepared to speak; were it proper to visit these as a stranger, time would not have afforded opportunity. Ten weeks of uninterrupted travelling has barely sufficed to ascertain the general condition of those in county-houses; but inquiry in towns through which I have passed, has been met by information of one or several cases in each neighborhood; sometimes these have been represented as hopelessly insane, returned from hospitals; but oftener such as have received no skillful care or remedial medical treatment; and in not few instances subject to the application of a severe discipline, almost too terrible to be described. The cases are not many where this has appeared to be the result of wilful brutality, so much as a consequent of ignorance and great perplexity under unaccustomed trials. Few persons, however well-disposed and patient of trouble, have tact and discretion in managing a raving madman, or a perverse maniac.

I am spared the pain of describing the jails of New-York as containing, like those of Massachusetts, receptacles for the insane, or dungeons occupied not by criminals, but by those whom misfortune, not guilt, has brought low. Against that monstrous abuse, your just laws have effectually guarded; nearly every county-house however, has its "crazy-house," its "crazy-cells," or its "crazy-dungeons" and "crazy-cellar," as that of Albany, for example.

The county and city of New-York have made liberal and ample provision for their pauper lunatics, in establishing upon Blackwell's island a hospital capable of receiving four hundred patients. This is considered a branch of the Alms-house establishment, which is in the city. At the time of my visit, this hospital contained about three hundred patients, curable and incurable. This institution, so honorable to the city, went into operation in 1839, and received from the alms-house all such as were considered fit subjects for removal. About twenty-five, principally idiots in the lowest state of imbecility, remain at Bellevue. The prominent defect of the asylum at Blackwell's island, seemed to me the want of a sufficient number of competent attendants, and sufficient employment, and out-door exercise for the patients. I was told, in answer to a remark on the advantages of household labor for a portion of those heretofore accustomed to active life, that "under present arrangements this was impossible, as women of the vilest class from the prison were employed to perform most of the work of the establishment, and it would not answer to expose the patients to their debasing conduct, and profane language"! This plan of accomplishing the domestic labor of the hospital is so very objectionable, that it cannot, it is believed, be long suffered. New institutions often have great difficulties to overcome in course of being carried into operation; it is not to be supposed that the responsible officers of the New-York Asylum, will be satisfied that it should hold a secondary rank in its internal or more general form of administration.

The alms-house at Bellevue is placed on a much better system of moral discipline than formerly. The house of refuge for juvenile offenders appeared to be conducted in the most unexceptionable manner. The farm schools on Long island, belonging to the city, and connected with the alms-house, are models of order and good government, and illustrate the solid advantages of separating the juvenile from the adult poor. Connected with these extensive establishments and the alms-house in the city, is a hospital on Blackwell's island for the children

and infants, who are sick and feeble. The plan of these judicious and humane establishments, can only be appreciated by those who have compared the results they afford, with those which flow from the more prevailing and most pernicious system of indiscriminate alms-house association of the old with the young. A partial division is ineffectual to prevent evil; to be productive of substantial good, it must be complete—then will alms-houses cease to be primary schools for jails and State prisons.

ALBANY COUNTY ALMS-HOUSE, at *Albany*, as I saw it in November, 1842, presented scenes of horrible neglect and misery, which even now I shudder to recall, and I rejoice, that a late visit in December, 1843, afforded evidence of many favorable changes, especially in the “dungeons” so called, and the “crazy cellar;” yet there even now, one finds many friendless creatures whose condition urges a sufficient and early provision, by the State, for their relief.

It was on the afternoon of a severely cold day in November of 1842, that I visited the alms-house at Albany. Inquiring of the master who held charge of the establishment, the number of the insane then in close confinement, I was answered, “There are plenty of them; somewhere about twenty.” “Will you let me see them?” “No, you can’t, they’re naked, in the crazy cellar.” “Are all in the same apartment then?” “No, not all, but you can’t see them.” “Excuse me, but I must see the women’s apartment. It is to learn the condition of the insane here, that I have come.” At length a direction was given, and I was conducted by the mistress of the house into a court-yard, and the person holding charge over the insane women was summoned to attend me. Ascending a flight of stairs, conducting from without, to the second story of a large building, I entered an apartment not clean, not ventilated, and over-heated: here were several females chiefly in a state of dementia; they were decently dressed, but otherwise exhibited personal neglect; the beds were sufficiently comfortable; the hot air, foul with noisome vapors, produced a sense of suffocation and sickness impossible to be long endured by one unaccustomed to such an atmosphere. I delayed here but few moments, and asked to be conducted to the dungeons: “dungeons,” repeated the attendant, eyeing me closely. “Yes, the dungeons, I have heard there are dungeons here; I am in haste, oblige me by losing no time.” She still hesitated, when speaking more decidedly I said, “I must go, friend, and that immediately:” whereupon she led the way over the outer staircase, across the common

court-yard, and descending into a spacious cellar kitchen, crowded by a most disorderly and profane set of men, women, and children, emerged on the opposite side upon a yard enclosed by a high board fence, and opening on the left upon still another enclosed space, surrounding a wooden building. We here encountered the man who kept the keys of this place, and who appeared to have charge of the building. I do not hesitate to say that he was unfit for the office. I was told both these persons were "paupers from Canada," and their phraseology did not contradict the information. A noisy altercation ensued, made up of coarse oaths and expletives, unmatched except in Newgate or on Blackwell's island. I again interposed, and at length induced the *turnkey* to produce his keys. Detaining my first companion, I followed through the opened doors, and ascending a flight of steps found myself in a passage not very narrow, on each side of which were "the dungeons" or cells. These were totally dark and unventilated, and there was *then* no provision for drying or warming them. To describe the scenes which were revealed as these loathsome dens were successively thrown open is impossible. Those who have read the reports of the Hospital Commissioners to the British Parliament, exposing the condition of the wretched inmates of the private mad-houses in England, may conceive an idea of what existed in the alms-house at Albany a year since. The keeper unlocking the first door on the left, vociferated to the poor wretch there confined, to "come out to the light and be seen." The horrible stench emitted from this dreadful place compelled me repeatedly to retreat to the outer air to recover from overpowering sickness. When I could so far command myself as to observe this dungeon and its occupant, God forgive me (if it was sinful,) the vehement indignation that rose towards the inhabitants of a city and county, who could suffer such abominations as these to exist;—towards all official persons holding direct or indirect responsibility, who could permit these brutalizing conditions of the most helpless of human beings, and towards a country ever vain-glorious of its liberty, and of its civil, social, and religious institutions. I affirm that the dungeons of Spielberg and of Chillon, and the prisons of the Court of the Inquisition before their destruction, afforded no more heart-rending spectacles than the dungeons (not subterranean) of the Albany alms-house, at the time referred to. Language is feeble to represent them, and the mind shudders with disgust and horror in the act of recalling the state of the unfortunate insane there incarcerated.

In the cell first opened was a madman ; the fierce command of his keeper brought him to the door—a hideous object ; matted locks, unshorn-beard, a wild wan countenance, yet more disfigured by vilest uncleanness, in a state of entire nudity, save the irritating incrustations derived from that dungeon reeking with loathsome filth : here, without light, without pure air, without warmth, without cleansing, without *anything* to secure decency or comfort, here was a human being, forlorn, abject, and disgusting it is true, but not the less a human being—nay more, an immortal being, though now the mind had fallen in ruins, and the soul was clothed in darkness. And who was he—this neglected, brutalized wretch—a burglar, a murderer, a miscreant, who, for base foul crimes had been condemned by the justice of outraged laws, and the righteous indignation of his fellow-men to expiate offences, by exclusion from his race, by privations and sufferings, extreme, yet not exceeding in measure the enormities of his misdeeds? No, this was no criminal outcast, who was here festering in filth, wearing out the warp of life in dreariest solitude and darkness—no, this was no criminal, but “*only a crazy man!*” Of him in the touching language of Scripture could it be said : “My brethren are far from me, and mine acquaintance are verily estranged from me ; my kinsfolk have failed, and my familiar friends have forgotten me : my bone cleaveth unto my skin and my flesh. Have pity upon me—have pity upon me, for the hand of God hath touched me !”

I turned from this miserable scene only to witness another, yet more pitiable. A woman, of what age one could not conjecture, so disfigured was she by neglect and suffering, occupied a dungeon on the right. The keeper harshly summoned her “to come out,” but she only moved feebly amidst the filthy straw which was the only furnishing of the place ; her moans and low cries indicated both mental anguish and physical pain. In vain they tried to force her forward—she seemed powerless to raise herself upright ; she, too, was unclothed ; and here alone in sickness and want, with no pure air, no pleasant warmth, no light, (those unmeasured gifts of God, alike shared by “the good and the evil, the just and the unjust,”) no friendly hand to chafe the aching limbs, no kind voice to raise and cheer—there she lay on that loathsome plank, miserable beyond words to represent. I know nothing of her history, whether forsaken by able kindred, or reluctantly given over to the *public charity* by indigent parents, or taken in, a wandering, demented creature ; I only know that I found and left her reduced

to a condition upon which not one who reads this page, could look but with unmitigated horror! Do you turn with inexpressible disgust from these details? It is worse to witness the reality. Is your refinement shocked by such statements? There is but one remedy—prevent the possibility of such monstrous abuses by providing hospitals and asylums where vigilant inspection, and faithful care, shall protect and minister to those who, in losing reason, can no longer protect themselves; who, as young, feeble infants, are helpless and unconscious; who, through the calamity of insanity, become in the most peculiar manner the charge of those whose “light has not gone out.”

Turning from the dungeons, the keeper said, “come to the crazy-cellar, you’ll get noise enough there.” I objected, that the master of the house had said, they were in no condition to be visited. “Oh, come, he knows nothing about them. The woman there told him, three weeks ago, that the dungeons were too cold for those people you saw, but he’s forgot all about them—he’s something else to think of—come, this is the way.” I hesitated, but the idea that possibly I might learn facts which should lead to a change for the sufferers, led me on; reaching the cellar—within which, just then, all was quiet—the keeper entered, and “for the sake of exercise,” began by knocking one down, and so went on to rouse the whole company; there were twelve or fourteen men here, sufficiently clothed for decency—some extended on the floor, others *chained to their beds*—all exhibiting a disgusting and miserable appearance: in an adjoining apartment were others in like circumstances. In March last, some gentlemen visited this same cellar, and returned expressing horror, that “such things could be tolerated, or that they ever could have existed in any civilized country.”

I revisited this county house a few weeks since; there had been a change of masters. The present overseer evidently has qualifications which enable him to secure a very improved order of things throughout the establishment; he has to contend against the great defects of the present system, and prominent evils must of course exist. Five hundred paupers of every age and various conditions, (a large proportion of these able-bodied foreigners, who here are idle for want of work, which the county does not provide, as well as idle in many cases from choice,) compose this family or rather community. Considering the very crowded state of the house, and all the difficulties to be encountered, a surprising degree of order and cleanliness are now secured. But inevitably this is a soil where the vices will take

root and flourish. I visited "the dungeons," and found but two females in confinement there ; by comparison only could they be called comfortable. A stove is now placed in the passage, I cannot say it seemed to afford any great advantage to the insane in the cells ; in these apartments were bunks, beds and bed-clothing. The apparel was slight and required attention ; but the fact is, the inmates ought to be transferred to a hospital where they can receive appropriate care. In the crowded "crazy cellar" I found improved accommodations, better beds, &c. One man "poor George," had just deceased, and his coffin was borne past as I stood at the entrance of this dreary place ; surely the angel of death here performed a most blessed ministration. Several men were chained to the beds or the floor ; a general quiet prevailed. I noticed that the master "our boss" was welcomed as a friend, and no doubt, so far as he had the power, the condition of these friendless insane was made comfortable. The time has past, however, for society to sanction such provision for this class of the poor.

RENSSELAER COUNTY HOUSE, in *Troy*, about two miles from the city, is composed of extensive buildings, constructed on a much more judicious plan than most houses of this class. I understand that at no distant time, here, as in many other places, very gross abuses have existed, but at present the establishment appears in excellent condition. It is said that the insane have suffered both personal injuries and neglect. I saw none in the cells. One young woman was confined in a comfortable apartment, but in a state of furious madness. The room was evidently not left without care. A young man not long insane, appeared a subject for a curative institution ; but the mother was poor, and some objections I was told had been made by the county officers to incurring the expense. The house throughout exhibited a remarkable attention to neatness ; it was not the neatness and order consequent on a weekly arrangement, but the result of daily and constant care. The cells for "the crazy inmates" are said to be in very bad condition ; I did not see them. The county are liberal in providing supplies of clothing and furniture for the various departments, and except for the insane, it is one of the most complete establishments in the State ; it has the faults common to all these institutions, arising from a defective system.

SCHENECTADY COUNTY HOUSE, at *Schenectady*, is at the present time in excellent condition, having advantage of one of those efficient,

active housekeepers, whose ready capabilities put things, and keep them, in right order. By kindness, encouragement, and decision, the comfort of the house is admirably maintained; ample supplies of good beds and bed-clothing; clean and well arranged rooms; carefully mended apparel, and cut with due regard to convenience and economy when new; food not only supplied in sufficient quantity, but wholesome and properly cooked, all these characterize the Schenectady alms house; nothing is wasted, and nothing needed which is not supplied; but here classification of the adults is less complete than at Troy, from deficiency of room. All the children for the same reason, are associated with the adults. But one insane person was found in close confinement; not neglected; her history would be out of place here, but will no doubt be made public.

SARATOGA COUNTY HOUSE, near *Ballston*, presented neat and comfortably arranged apartments; the poor were neatly clothed, and the children taught by a "hired teacher." The house has a larger number of occupants in the winter than can be well provided with lodging-rooms. It was expected that when the State Lunatic Asylum was opened, all the insane would be sent from this place to Utica; but so soon as the terms of admission were made known, and it was found that they could not be received "without cost to the county," the plan was abandoned, and consequently here are many, both men and women, in various stages of insanity, some curable probably, others affording no favorable symptoms, and all very improperly situated. The upper apartments occupied by these persons, are not so well arranged and attended as they might be, even under all the disadvantages inevitable upon being connected with an alms-house. They are said to be less objectionable than before the present master was appointed. The cells in the "cellar basement" "by the wash room," are neither ventilated nor do they admit light uniformly; here I found two females in the worst possible condition personally. I cannot say that any who were appointed to take charge of them, wilfully neglected or abused them. I can but speak of the circumstances in which I found them; and leave it for others to determine where blame should primarily be attached. Each cell contained a little straw; it was said that one patient was so furious that she destroyed every thing upon which she could place her hands; and I had ample evidence of her destructive propensities during the short time I was there. In answer to some remark implying great disapprobation of the cells as places of confinement for

these maniacs, I was answered that it was strange I "should find fault, for the mother of one of the insane women came to see her sometimes, and she did'nt complain; and the doctor, when he came, did'nt complain; and why should a stranger care any thing about it? She was no better than a brute beast, and the place was good enough for such an ugly creature." I quote literally, from the person having daily care of these poor maniacs,

The family who have charge of the house at large, have effected, I was told, very important reforms from the earlier condition of the alms-house.

The county jail at Ballston was in very excellent order, highly creditable to the warden and his family.

I heard in this county of the extreme wretchedness of several insane persons in private families, but did not visit them.

WASHINGTON COUNTY HOUSE, at *Argyle*, is well built, in good repair, and *at the present time* well conducted. The school is taught by a hired instructress, and the children looked after, at all times, with a care very unusual in alms-houses.

The family were respectably clothed, the apartments suitably furnished, the food of excellent quality, and prepared in a wholesome manner. The great want of free ventilation in the lodging rooms was manifest upon the countenances of many; one evidence was afforded, by the remark that the "children were so pale and feeble when they got up in the morning, that they seemed about to faint, and that they had to be nursed up in the spring with *bitters* and strengthening things, to keep them along at all." The mistress added, "that she sometimes thought they would all be sick, sleeping so many in one room." I hinted that a supply of pure air would probably be the most effectual tonic.

In this establishment I found above twenty insane men and women, besides several "simple, silly, and idiotic." The men were in most cases confined by *fetters, with chains and balls*, to prevent their escape from the premises, and were thus allowed to leave their cells or little apartments in an outbuilding. "By adopting this plan," said the master, "I am able to give them air and exercise, otherwise I should have to keep them constantly shut up." Several females, who were in a very

tranquil state, were in the main building, in all respects neat and comfortable; and of this I am quite confident, that however revolting were some methods of restraint, they were adopted because at the time, they were supposed to be the only modes of controlling the violent, or detaining the vagrant. A considerable number of women, most of them apparently classing as incurables, were "behind the pickets," in an outbuilding; here was a passage of sufficient width for exercise, both lighted and warmed; upon this the cells opened, these with two exceptions, were comfortable, in good repair, white-washed, and furnished with good beds and well supplied with bed-clothing. The noisy here of course, disturbed the quiet; the restless excited the more tranquil, and annoyed the feeble. One woman who had a propensity for rending her clothes, and destroying any thing she could seize, was held in restraint by a very singular apparatus; I should not commend its use to others. This consisted of an iron collar investing the throat, through which, at the place where it was united in front, passed a small iron bolt or bar, from this depended an iron triangle, the sides of which might measure about sixteen or eighteen inches; iron wristlets were attached to the corners, and so the hands held in confinement, and as far apart as the length of the base of the triangle. If the hands and arms were suddenly elevated, pressure upon the apex of the triangle at the point of connection at the throat, produced a sense of suffocation, and why not complete strangulation, it was not easy to see. I suggested a muff and belt for the hands and waist, as securing the necessary restraint in a less objectionable form, but they had none and had never seen any. I must repeat it as my full belief, that, however unsuitable the condition of the insane at this alms-house, I cannot think any blame should attach to the master of the establishment. It was evidently his desire to do what was right, so far as he knew how, in the management of those committed to his care. I saw in Argyle, an insane and most wretched being, in a state of great excitement, and in very painful circumstances; difficult to manage, and seldom in a tranquil state: addicted to the most offensive language and habits, she had exhausted the patience of the former keepers at the alms-house, and abuse, violent measures, and neglect followed. Her sisters, too poor to support her unassisted, laboring for daily bread with the needle, begged to take her to their own home, and solicited aid from the county. I found them humbly and earnestly toiling to fulfil their duties, patiently performing the most difficult and revolting offices, and trying to meet expenses which their situation rendered

both uncertain and painful. I carefully inquired into the facts of the case, and learned that the county officers had said "it would cost less to keep her at the poor-house, and they had no right to expend the public money by such appropriation."

I trust the appeal made in hope of changing their views was not unavailing, and that the devoted sisters receive at least *fifty cents* per week regularly paid, for their hard work of duty.

The jail at Sandy-Hill, is in a poor condition, and little used. That at Salem is better built and kept in order.

WARREN COUNTY-HOUSE, at *Warrensburgh*, is well situated, but the buildings are not constructed for convenient classification. Some repairs were in progress. Greater care was called for in several departments. The insane, when requiring to be kept in close confinement, occupied cages, or spaces divided from the common room of the poor, by perpendicular wooden bars; the objections to such arrangements are too obvious for comment. At the time of my visit there were none in a very excited state. The family having charge of the poor were well spoken of in the vicinity; they certainly are not accountable for all the deficiencies in the establishment.

The county jail at Caldwell was inconvenient and not suitable for comfort or the secure detention of the prisoners. It has recently been destroyed by fire.

ESSEX COUNTY POOR-HOUSE, near *Essex* and *Westport*. That portion of the dwelling occupied by the family having charge of the establishment, neat to exactness, and comfortable without deficiency. The apartments of the poor, ill-arranged, ill-furnished, ill-kept, (except two,) and very inconvenient. No hospital apartments; no suitable provision for the children, though when sent to school, a teacher was hired to instruct them; no proper classification of the inmates on the lower floor. The neglect manifested here did not produce much suffering I imagine, but it did not show that regard to decency and propriety which would be creditable to a county-house,—or is deemed fit in any family. The floors, wood-work, walls, and beds were *greatly* neglected. Some apology was offered for the "confusion of the rooms," on account of some repairs in progress; carpenter's work however, is clean work, and this was not the occasion of the various defects observable. I learnt in different parts of the county, that dis-

satisfaction existed in regard to the deficient furnishing of the house, and perhaps by this time the superintendent may have supplied some pressing wants. I am sure the people of Essex county are not parsimonious where suffering is to be relieved, or the care of the poor and infirm is to be considered. Perhaps if less sums were charged for the removal of the poor from their respective towns, there would be less objection to making appropriations for additional conveniences, putting up additional buildings, and furnishing them for more decent and respectable accommodation. There were here no proper apartments for the insane, and at the time of my visit, there were none of this class confined "in the cells." These I did not go "below" to see. They were described as "very cold, damp, and dreary, and not fit for a dog to house in." It did not seem necessary to add any testimony of mine to verify such a description; since with but little variation the same account was derived from a variety of sources, and confirmed on the premises. I believe that the master and mistress of the house are humane people, and would desire to treat kindly any person laboring under this calamitous visitation who should be sent to their care. I am aware that some remarks respecting this and other like establishments may seem to contradict each other; but as in private families may be often seen attention to some things, and remarkable negligencies in other departments, it is not singular that these should be noticed in yet broader contrast in a county poor-house.

CLINTON COUNTY HOUSE at Plattsburgh, is not a good building, and much out of repair; it is not large enough for the numbers thronging to it in the winter. It is distinguished by a remarkable neatness throughout. I visited this place on a stormy day, at an unexpected and unseasonable hour; it was doubly gratifying to notice a place of so much comfort and quiet, made so by the uncommon care and capability of the master and mistress of the house. Here the sick were in well arranged apartments, and well attended; the household suitably and neatly clothed; garments well made, and in *good repair*; clean beds, bedsteads, and bed-clothing; clean tables, chairs and floors; clean walls and clean windows, showing that neither the application of white-wash, or water and the scrubbing brush were spared. The kitchen in good order.

There were here at the time of my visit in October, no insane in close confinement. I saw in the house, seated quietly by the fire, an

insane man, who formerly, before the present master of the house was appointed, was kept chained to a post in the barn, in a state of complete nudity, "receiving" said my informant, "no other care than to have his food tossed to him like a dog—and not always cooked." The poor wretch had been released for a considerable period; was washed, dressed, and taken into the house, where he partook of his meals with others of the family. He occasionally rendered some little assistance in bringing wood and water. Great care was requisite in managing him: he was subject to outbreaks of violence, and really was an unsafe inmate; a proper subject for hospital treatment, or for an asylum adapted for such cases. This crazy man bore marks of former "lashes of the cow-skin, applied to drive the —l out of him," as was significantly said.

An insane female was assisting about some household work, and though often much excited was still kept pretty tranquil a large part of the time, by patient care. In most families I have found such cases subject to close confinement.

Compassion was deeply moved at seeing a little girl, about nine or ten years of age, who suffered the fourfold calamity of being blind, deaf, dumb, and insane. I can conceive no condition so pitiable as that of this unfortunate little creature, the chief movements of whose broken mind, were exhibited in restlessness, and violent efforts to escape, and unnatural screams of terror. No gentleness or kindness seemed to sooth her, or to inspire confidence. Various methods had been tried to promote her comfort, but with little success. She would rend her garments and bed-clothing to pieces, and seemed most content when she could bury herself in a heap of straw; when food was presented, she swallowed it with avidity, and seemed indifferent to its kind or quality. It was necessary to watch her with great care. To promote her comfort at one time, she was removed from the cells and placed with other persons in a large room, fastened by a small chain to the floor, to prevent her from falling upon the heated stove. She resists control, and perpetually struggles to escape. If left at large in mild weather, for a few minutes, she gropes her way, or rather rushes off avoiding by some invisible instinct violent falls, and conceals herself beneath a bush or fence: when brought back she resists violently, and utters the most vehement outcries. I took her hand gently, but she fell into the wildest paroxysm, which passed by, only when she had concealed herself in the straw in her cell. The utmost care was taken

to keep her clean, and to do all for her comfort that her unhappy condition permitted.

There is at this house no provision for the insane who are at any time too violent to be permitted at large, except low, dismal cells, fit for no use, and which should never be employed for any persons of this class. The true remedy will be found in State asylums, on a cheap, but comfortable plan for the incurables.

FRANKLIN COUNTY-HOUSE, at *Malone*, fifty miles from Plattsburgh, is at present under so good administration, that it is to be hoped a change of its present master will be avoided, for years to come. The defects of the present system are, however, apparent here quite as much as elsewhere. The house is crowded with inmates beyond its capacity for either health or convenient accommodation. There is no proper provision for the insane, who need separation, by occasion of their violence, from the other members of the household. There can be no really suitable arrangements planned for them in county houses.

There are few insane in the alms-house at *Malone*. These are kept pretty comfortably; yet I say this by comparison with many found in worse conditions. I heard in this section of the country of many recent cases of insanity; several of much suffering. It was not seldom replied, when I questioned why these, and also others in remote counties, were not sent to the hospital at *Utica*, that they could send but one or two from any county; and assurance has repeatedly been given that some of these would have been sent, if it had not been officially declared that only a specified number would be received from each county. In many instances, no doubt, this was a true reason; in others it was made an excuse for not incurring the expense necessary for removal, and board at the Asylum. It is frequent to hear of whippings and other severe measures; and many have yet to learn that the all-prevailing law of kindness, has a truer influence than brute force or vehement language. Of one truth may all be sure; if, for a time, the former appear ineffective, the latter not only never accomplishes the end aimed at, but aggravates the malady while it enhances the sufferings of the unfortunate maniac.

ST. LAWRENCE COUNTY-HOUSE, at *Canton*, consists of several excellently constructed buildings, in many respects adapted for convenience and classification. The apartments were well arranged, decently ordered, and comfortably furnished. There was a general attention to

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neatness throughout all these, and also more than usual attention to furnishing those able to work, with employment. The children's school was taught by a young woman hired for the purpose. There is here, as at nearly every alms-house in the country, great neglect of the moral and religious instruction of the poor. I will not decide where this fault rests; it is not with the master and mistress of these houses, whose whole time is necessarily engrossed with other important cares. It may be hoped that both the county-house schools, and the inmates generally, will receive inspection and instruction at suitable times, and no longer be regarded as excepted from the consideration of communities in the vicinity, because "it is the poor-house establishment." To the poor was the gospel preached in the days of the Saviour, and we have no reason to believe that these cease to need the benign influences of christianity. The excuses often offered for these neglects are unworthy and trivial. The insane poor at Canton occupy chiefly a building constructed for their use; it may be well warmed and completely ventilated, but it exhibited defects which would make those interested in this subject solicitous for other provision for all this class.

JEFFERSON COUNTY-HOUSE, at *Watertown*, is remarkably well built, and judiciously situated in a pleasant and healthful section of the county. It is constructed on a more commodious plan than many, though often too much crowded in the winter. No sufficient plan for employing the inmates, who are able for work, has been devised. The children require much more care than they can easily receive; here, as in other places, often acquiring and confirming indolent habits. The time which is given to school instruction is less here, throughout the year, than is usual in alms-houses. The house is generally neatly kept, and a complete change was going on throughout the establishment, preparatory for winter arrangements. The building appropriated to the insane, was clean, well lighted, well warmed, and sufficiently ventilated. Here are to be found demented persons of both sexes; some traversing the long passage in front of the "cells or dungeons," some seated, others standing. Again others in close confinement in the cells, the doors of which were composed of wooden bars, affording a distinct view within. Part of the inmates were quiet, others raving; part clothed; part in a state of nudity; all exposed to any who chose to observe them, whether men or women. So far as general daily care was regarded, none seemed to suffer neglect, but I have no confidence that this may not occur. A man and woman, themselves paupers, took

charge of all the cells, and really appeared heartily interested for the unfortunate creatures so dependant on their continued good offices ; yet were these subject, by many contingencies, to serious evils and sufferings.

LEWIS COUNTY-HOUSE, at *Lowville*, is small, ill built, and in no way suited for the use to which it is appropriated. It is uncommonly deficient in ventilation, and in being purified by frequent applications of lime-wash, and scrubbing. The inmates appeared to be abundantly supplied with food ; and to have suitable apparel, if it had only had the advantage of more frequent washings. The overheated and crowded rooms gave the idea of great discomfort, though no discontent was manifest on the part of the occupants ; and it is quite likely they would not feel under obligation to any who should insist on a more suitable conduct of their domestic affairs. There are no tolerable apartments for the insane ; and at the time I was there, none were in close confinement. In fact, for such as these, there is no provision at all. Several crazy persons were associated with the family at large. I understand that the farm and the dairy are well conducted. Justice to the master and mistress of such an establishment seems to require new and wholly different buildings. Certainly under the present circumstances they are very unjustly burthened with responsibilities, without fit means for securing good conduct or moral discipline. I have understood that this subject is likely to receive attention.

HAMILTON COUNTY is but partially settled, and till lately has been an almost unbroken extent of wilderness. It covers an area of one thousand and sixty-four square miles, has but seven small settlements, and but about two thousand inhabitants. I was able to learn nothing of the poor and insane. It is safe to infer that they are very few ; and I may add that the former certainly would not be likely to fall into a condition of much suffering.

OSWEGO COUNTY-HOUSE at *Mexico*, is a decent building, with the usual defects as an alms-house. A part appeared well arranged : lodging-rooms not in the order which should distinguish them from the superior care they should be supposed to receive. General aspect of the inmates negligent, and implying want of sufficient employment for those able to work. I impute no intentional neglect to the overseer of this house, and I ought not to omit the fact that several imbecile persons seemed to receive uncommon care in being kept comfortably clean.

There could not be said to be any provision for the insane here, separate from others of the family. At the time of my visit in November, there were *none* of this class in close confinement.

I heard in this county of many cases of insanity in private families, requiring skilful care and remedial treatment; and at Pulaski was made fully acquainted with the touching and melancholy history of an insane female now in the Oneida county-house at Rome; the facts have reached me from various authorized sources, and are too horrible to record. I have but too much evidence that here is not a solitary example of brutal outrage and protracted misery. So far as the cause of humanity might be served by a disclosure of facts, it may become obligatory to produce evidence that such abominations exist. I do confess, with the author of the *Inferno* that—

*“So by my subject, is my power surpassed,  
Whate’er I say compared with truth seems weak!”*

WAYNE COUNTY-HOUSE at *Lyons*, is at the present time under excellent administration, good discipline, kind care, and neatness being secured to a considerable degree. The master of this establishment was a sensible well-informed man, having a clear comprehension of his duties, and understanding in the discharge of them. So complex are the arrangements in alms-houses which are made to serve so many purposes opposite in object and result, that one must be rather singularly endowed to meet every emergency. The children here appeared under a supervision careful beyond what is usual. The cells for the insane were to some extent rendered comfortable—that is to say—though not by any means fit for crazy men and women, which is part the fault of the county, they were taken care of daily, and by inference I should suppose at no time neglected, which may be ascribed to the fidelity of the master. One circumstance especially pained me; it was the situation of an insane girl, who though placed in a comfortable apartment and decently dressed, was attended by a woman whose ill-temper was apologized for from the fact of her probably having been disturbed through the night by the restlessness and cries of the young woman. She was represented as being a good nurse, and no doubt had some excellent qualifications, but she was not a good nurse for a creature like this poor girl, placed so much in her power. “This is no house for such rich folks as her’s to send their children to; it is for the poor, and they may take care of her for themselves.” “She is more ugly than crazy, and knows well enough what she is about.”

I pointed to a large bruise on the temple of the weeping girl; the nurse did not deny that she had inflicted a blow, but persisted that the girl was "ugly and would'nt be still!"

MONROE COUNTY-HOUSE, at *Rochester*, is large and in general well and neatly arranged. There is still need of much more careful classification. The expenditures in this county are enormous for the support of the poor, who chiefly are foreigners, and who crowd in, as winter advances, from all quarters; and not only are the expenses great, but most liberally met. The quantity of fuel, provision and clothing distributed alone in the city of *Rochester* at public cost, and through private charities, must appear quite incredible to those not familiar with the facts. One is made to feel the great importance of framing effectual plans for diminishing pauperism, rather than by supplying present urgent wants, increase dependence, and diminish the self-reliance and self-respect which is felt by those in humble circumstances, who endeavor, by care and economy, to provide, at least in part, for themselves. In *Rochester*, *Buffalo*, *Utica* and *Albany*, (which I particularly designate as being constantly crowded with foreign paupers able to work, but saying they cannot procure it,) work-houses are loudly called for. These might be so conducted as not to injure the more industrious and capable members of the community, and yet ensure employment without other compensation than the whole support of the families throwing themselves thus on the public charge; let them know certainly, that if they do not support themselves abroad, they will, by law, be required to do so in a work-house, and I think pauperism, in a few years, would dwindle down to cases of the aged, the infirm, and to children without parental guardians. At *Rochester*, the master was making arrangements for providing separate apartments for the children, so as to cut off, in part at least, communication with the adults: the plan here is less perfect than that at *Buffalo*, but must have substantial advantages. Here is a school taught by a young woman hired for the purpose.

The insane who were in close confinement, were in decent cells of pretty good size, furnished with a bed; the ravings of the violent disturbed the sick, and maintained discomfort throughout "their quarter." Several insane men, according to very common usage, were dragging about a *chain and heavy iron ball* attached, these were united to the *fetters*, and used for such as not being shut up, were liable to escape. Of one it was said that "the exercise of dragging his ball and chain, had much improved his health!"

No neglects were apparent in the Rochester county house at large ; and I am told it receives much attention from the authorized inspectors from the city. This is right ! It should not be supposed that a master is deficient in fidelity, because his establishment is often inspected. Too much vigilance cannot be exercised, especially in reference to those made wholly dependent on the care of others through sickness or insanity. Persons have no right to *assume* the fact of a good administration of these affairs ; the evidence should consist in frequent visitations and the closest observation. All responsible persons should be able to say, " I do not *believe* only, I *know* that all is right."

The jail at Rochester, cannot be commended for good conduct or efficient management in its internal arrangements or daily care. I did not see the warden of the prison, but I should not consider the subordinates fit persons for the trust they hold, except their duties are confined literally to the " turning of the keys." Older and more responsible persons would be likely to exert a more wholesome influence in the *upper*, as well as the *lower* department.

ORLEANS COUNTY HOUSE, at *Albion*, has many great defects. I do not know but the farm is well conducted, and the inmates well supplied with food. In winter they have over-heated apartments ; for such indeed are found almost universally, *except for the insane* ; but essential improvements might be made in the domestic arrangements. I saw here but one insane person, a woman, in close confinement, and in a wretched condition, yet by comparison better than many beside, in having wider space, light and air. She was in an apartment divided into two parts by wooden bars, and within a similar enclosure was a large iron stove ; the *fire had been forgotten* however, on that day ; the weather was cold and rough, the crazy woman was employed in pulling the straw from one side of the room where she made her bed, and pushing through the bars towards the cold stove, one straw after another to " make a fire and keep the cold away." The aspect of this poor crazy girl, covered with a single garment, and crouched on the floor, offered little to inspire interest, except that she was a suffering human creature, therefore needed sympathy ; she was unfriended, and therefore needed just and watchful guardians. I do not know that the omission of the fire was habitual, but the neglect should never occur ; one was kindled before I came away. It had been the custom to keep the " crazy people," below stairs in the cells or dungeons, which were dark and with little air ; but " they were so raving there, that they

had concluded to build, in the kitchen occupied by the paupers, a cage, composed of upright bars of wood," this I saw nearly completed, and to this the girl above, on the first floor, was in a few days to be removed! so insane as to require a degree of retirement and shelter. One would believe that the family, if not the county officers, would have discovered the impropriety of such an arrangement. Here, constantly exposed to exciting noise and merriments, and often to the teasing tricks of the many occupants of the room, she would have no quiet, if indeed she allowed it to others. This was a case of hopeless insanity; and this, combined with gross exposures, in all probability, will be a life-long condition.

NIAGARA COUNTY-HOUSE, at Lockport, is well built, but till recently is not spoken of as being of good repute. The most obvious defect, was overheated rooms, thronged with idle men and women. One insane man from this house, who is at present in the Asylum at Utica, *bears upon his ancles the scars of fetters and chains, and on his feet evidence of exposure to frost and cold.* He evinces much emotion when reference is made to these facts, and not long since, when I saw him, wept like a child, as he told of his sufferings there. It is quite common for patients at the hospital, who have been exposed to injury and abuse, to chains and fetters, to "blows" and "floggings," to exhibit great excitement, if reference is made to their former condition.

ERIE COUNTY-HOUSE, at *Buffalo*, situated a short distance from the city, consists of a large and not well constructed building, where are the adult poor; this affords insufficient accomodation for the large numbers gathering here in the winter months. The house, at the time of my visit, required extensive repairs; but so far as care on the part of the master and mistress was considered, the domestic arrangements were highly creditable. I remarked the humane consideration shown to the aged, who were at their morning meal, apart from the other inmates, and received the special care due to advanced age and infirmity.

A substantial and convenient building on the premises is exclusively devoted to the children, who are superintended by an excellent matron, and have a good school taught by a hired teacher. The counties of New-York and Erie, at present, have the only completely distinct establishments for poor children that are to be found in the State.

The insane occupy a pretty comfortable, but very small building in rear of that appropriated to the other poor. I saw nothing, at the time I was there, to indicate that these insane were not receiving sufficient general care from their attendants; but still I must renew and repeat protestations against *all county* receptacles for the insane, and *all private* institutions for this class throughout the country: they *may possibly* be exempt from abuse and neglect, but are not likely to be, and if not very exceptionable one year, the county receptacles may, by change of officers, become so the following season. Persons fully acquainted with these subjects, and medical men having experience, offer enough substantial reasons why such should never, at this advanced day, find favor or toleration. I am told that, at a recent meeting of the supervisors and superintendents of Erie county, these gentlemen voted that the series of cells at the county alms-house, should be called the *County Hospital for the Insane!* It will require a great many votes to convert that little building, with its few cell-rooms, into a hospital, or even an asylum. This may remain a petty receptacle for some five or six incurables, but it never can be a curative establishment. At present this county-house has the advantage of a sensible and benevolent physician, who, while he perceives the essential disadvantages of the place, has earnestly addressed himself to diminish the evils resulting from so defective a system, and I perceive has, in a recent number of the Medical Journal, offered some pertinent remarks on the bad custom of converting alms-houses into houses of correction; thus bringing into contact, the basest class—the most guilty members of society—with those whose chiefest misfortune is infirmity, or poverty, or friendlessness.

CHAUTAUQUE COUNTY-HOUSE, near *Mayville*, is well situated, and apparently, at the present time, under good direction: the general aspect of the household indicated care for their comfort and regular discipline. The apartments were too much crowded, and there was an unusual number of idiotic, imbecile and deformed persons. There was a school for children, and a variety of work was furnished to some who were able to be employed. Provision for the insane much the same as in a majority of these houses. The cells in part divided by solid partitions, and in part by perpendicular wooden bars, were wretched in the extreme. Bare of furniture and receiving insufficient light and ventilation, they exhibited little beside misery and suffering.

I passed into two which were occupied. In one were two very crazy females. The eldest fancied herself a queen, and greatly resented the familiar manners of her companion, advancing energetically from words to blows, she inflicted bruises and wounds without mercy; in fact, she proceeded to biting; and when I proposed that they should be wholly separated, was answered, "we would be glad to do it, but have no more room." In the adjoining cell, which might be eight or ten feet square, was no furniture of any description. Upon the floor, covered with one slight garment, sat in a contracted posture, a miserable looking woman, perhaps forty years of age. The cell was dismal and offensive. The only companionship of this unfortunate person was that of the other insane and idiotic women, who were in a room upon which this one looked by means of the bars between which the light and air were admitted. One could discern in this solitary female nothing indicating that she had ever been other than the debased creature she now appeared. Yet it was told me by those who had known her in her conscious, bright years, that she had been one of "the best wives, house-keepers, and landladies in all the county;" that she had been "a good neighbor, a good member of society, a good christian; but that trouble and hard work had broken down her strength and destroyed her mind;" and here I found her deserted of every friend, desolate of every consolation, possessed of no comforts. And so to abandon one who, while she had ability, was faithful in all the social and domestic relations—so to forsake her, was not regarded as an offence against humanity or religious obligation. She was crazy; who could be expected to do any thing for her? She must go to the poor house, there she must be kept alive and tended; and there she is now, a living monument of the injustice of society and the neglect of kindred!

CATTARAUGUS COUNTY-HOUSE, at *Machias*, was in a good condition apparently, so far as the master was responsible. It is ill constructed for an alms-house. The insane were in wretched cells, and in a miserable condition in a small building on the premises, called the "block house." Several seemed to require immediate hospital treatment; all needed a very different situation, and a degree of personal care and attention wholly incompatible with the other duties devolving on the master of the house. I do not propose to consume time by entering on numerous details of individual histories, however appealing these would be to your sympathy. The present actual condition appears to me sufficiently wretched to move you to action in their behalf, unaccom-

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panied by the heart-touching narratives of real life, revealing deep sorrows and harsh abuses.

ALLEGANY COUNTY-HOUSE, at *Angelica*, is well situated, and in some respects offered a better appearance within than report accorded, except the condition of the insane, who were most miserably provided for in cells, and in a comfortless room in an out-building, significantly called "the crazy house." This was neither sufficiently cleaned, warmed, nor ventilated. The most furious were in small cells, others in an apartment upon which these opened, and to which they were exposed. One of the men was greatly excited, and in the cell adjoining, an aged woman was imploring to be let out to warm herself, and "because they torment me so through the bars; there's no rest, no rest here; oh the noise; I can't have this noise;" she exclaimed in troubled accents, "oh let me out just for a little while." The misery of this place is not describable; perhaps those who had charge to the utmost of their knowledge, with means furnished, did the best they were able. I am slow to form harsh judgments, and ought to add that it was here, too, that an insane man whose touching history was given by some benevolent persons who had interposed in his behalf, to rescue him from the violent personal abuse and injustice of a *brother*; it was at this same place that he was kindly treated and carefully nursed during a dangerous and painful illness, occasioned by a serious wound; and at length recovering, was received by those who were strangers to him, but christians, through the exercise of a most blessed charity.

STEBEN COUNTY-HOUSE, at *Bath*, has not a good reputation through the neighboring counties. At the season of my visit, the superintendents and supervisors were there, in session. The house was certainly in that kind of good order which could not be the result of a special care at one season. It was said that a spirit of kindness was wanting towards the inmates. The out-buildings which were appropriated to the insane, were not in good condition, and here, especially in the case of two crazy men, I noticed great neglect. I confess I was not inspired with confidence in their general humane treatment; in fact, these should not have been in a county house, but no other asylum as yet is provided in the State for the neglected incurables.

CHEMUNG COUNTY-HOUSE, on *Newtown creek*, ten miles from *Elmira*, is a poorly constructed wooden building, but well managed on the part of its present overseer. The inmates generally appeared well

clothed and comfortable. I found two insane men in an out-building, which in all respects was more convenient and better furnished, than any appropriated to this class of poor in the southern counties of the State. Both cells were warmed by means of a stove in the outer apartment, warmth, air, and light passing through the bars in front.

TIOGA COUNTY-HOUSE, a little north from *Owego*, is built of stone, it is too small, and constructed with little regard to convenience or classification. I found here two insane women in out-buildings, one in a small cell, in a most wretched state, and perfectly furious; her language and conduct made it utterly unfit that she should be in the immediate vicinity of others, yet, here children and all the family were alike exposed to the most demoralizing influences. I do not know that it could be expected of the master of the establishment to make other provision for her; and considering her extreme violence, persons unaccustomed to the charge of the insane would find it a very difficult task to promote her comfort, or secure her in a proper manner. I understand that many inhabitants of this county desire to abandon the alms-house system, and return to the old custom of "bidding off the poor annually to the lowest purchaser." Perhaps some changes at the county-house might restore it to more general favor.

BROOME COUNTY-HOUSE, at *Binghamton*, is out of repair, and greatly deficient in neatness and comfort in every respect. The walls required white-wash, the apartments generally, complete cleansing; the food was sufficient in quantity and quality, but very badly cooked; there was need of a strong, active, working-woman, entirely devoted to that part of the establishment occupied by the poor, in fact two would find ample employment. Here were found a very unusual number of infirm, aged, and imbecile poor; indeed the inmates all were of the class properly subjects of an alms-house charity. There were here no insane persons in close confinement; several idiots occupied together a portion of one building; *one gibbering, senseless creature, was the mother of a young infant.*

CORTLAND COUNTY-HOUSE, at *Cortland*, was in excellent order, clean and comfortable beds and bed-clothing, clean walls, clean floors, and clean furniture, and the whole remarkably well arranged, especially considering that the house was not built for the uses to which it is appropriated. The children here looked well, they were in school, and taught by one of the inmates, a plan not well conceived as it seems

to me ; in the present case perhaps it was less objectionable than in some places, but where the numbers to be taught are sufficient, there should be a competent hired teacher. The cells in which were such of the insane as could not be trusted at large were clean, and in not *severe weather perhaps* sufficiently warmed by the stove-pipe conveyed along the passage, in front of these compartments. This establishment affords insufficient employment for the *able-bodied men* who resort here in the winter months.

TOMPKINS COUNTY-HOUSE, near *Ithaca*, was visited very hastily in November last. It is a large wooden building, of which I saw but part ; yet so far as this might represent the condition of the whole, it was very respectable. It was clean, well aired and warmed, and wore an aspect of general good order. One insane person only was in close confinement ; this was a woman within a cage, built in a comfortable apartment on the second floor : this was thoroughly clean, well warmed and convenient. The poor creature was decently dressed, but very greatly excited, noisy and violent. A fit subject for an asylum. I did not learn her history.

This was the aspect of the Tompkins County House this autumn ; perhaps it was, so far as the sane poor were concerned, equally creditable last April, but I cannot feel justified to pass by a case which I *know* to be exact. In the spring of last year, 1843, an insane man was removed from this almshouse, *who had been chained for three years, and shockingly neglected*, and this so as to produce consequences almost too offensive to be spoken of ; but if public institutions are not guarded from such shameful abuses, I do not know why they should not be fully exposed ; what people are not careful to prevent, they must not be too delicate to hear declared. In addition to *every personal neglect*, this poor man was so infected with *insects over the whole person*, that those who received him were compelled to burn every article of clothing he wore from the almshouse and furnish new. When opportunity afforded the means of cleanliness after this, he was found to be remarkably neat.

YATES COUNTY-HOUSE, in *Jerusalem*, near Penn-Yan, is partly built of stone. It is a very neat, well ordered establishment. I particularly noticed the excellent care bestowed upon the children ; these I found neat and clean, in a well-ordered school, taught by a hired instructress. There were several insane persons, but all at large with

the family, though one was much excited—a subject for some suitable asylum.

ONTARIO COUNTY-HOUSE, *Canandaigua*. This is an extensive establishment, and I am told very expensive to the county; it ought to present a better aspect. “The people, it is said, have certainly plenty to eat, are warm enough, and have clothes enough.” All this is undeniably true; but they are disorderly, dirty, and negligent of all the appliances for keeping clean and well ordered apartments. There was a want of method, of discipline, and of good regulations, apparent over all the house. The insane were in a portion of the establishment chiefly apart from the rest. Their cells and apartments might pass through some wholesome changes. I had no direct evidence that the patients suffered serious neglect or abuse. Light, air and warmth were admitted, and they were furnished with beds: but still I cannot think, that should the citizens of Canandaigua, or of the county at large, visit this establishment, they would approve its condition. I am told the farm is well conducted.

LIVINGSTON COUNTY-HOUSE, at *Geneseo*, bears a good reputation in adjacent counties, which is confirmed by its neatly ordered apartments, its good discipline, in short, the whole air and aspect of the place within doors. It is not constructed on a good plan, but these deficiencies are in part compensated by the good judgment and discretion of the master and mistress of the house. No insane confined here in cells.

WYOMING COUNTY as yet, has no county-house, but one is in progress of being built, to be opened, as I understand, next year. At present, the poor are boarded in a farmer’s family in *Orangeville*. A case of the greatest neglect of an insane man came to my knowledge, I could not secure time to see him, but several of his former friends and neighbors described his condition as one of much suffering through want of common daily care. I could not learn that he had ever been in any hospital. He had once filled a respectable place in society; became impoverished, and insane: for a considerable time was taken to the house of one of his brothers; finally, the other refusing to share the expense and trouble, and the family becoming weary of the case, he was cast on the public charity. “By neglect, his limbs are so contracted, that he neither can stand or walk;” “he lies upon a miserable pallet in a most miserable condition,” crippled, untended, uncared for. May those who have cast him off, never know the biting sorrow of abandonment and un-friended helplessness.

GENESEE COUNTY-HOUSE, at *Bethany*, is a well built commodious house, and a model of neatness and exact order throughout. The children were well directed, clean, and not neglected in discipline. A visiter for an hour, would almost here forget the defects of the general system, so excellent are the domestic arrangements. No insane here in close confinement. No provision for insane persons.

SENECA COUNTY-HOUSE, at *Fayette*, an ill constructed wooden building; for the sick, affording no convenient hospital room, and no sufficient lodging rooms during the winter months for the numerous family. Cells for the violently insane are in the basement; several crazy women were in apartments on the second floor, and not neglected; rooms less correctly neat than might be desired. All insane persons, in county-houses are subject to vexatious and disturbing acts from many, who either share their apartments, or who meet them during the day. This is a universal source of disquiet, and cannot be controlled by the overseers of the house—at least only imperfectly. The master of the house at *Fayette*, a sensible, practical man, seemed fully aware of the disadvantages under which he was acting. There was no school for the children; they were at one time sent to the district school in the immediate vicinity, but parents objected to having their children associate “with the children of the paupers,” and these were sent home. The county provided no teacher, and the house afforded no person supposed competent to teach. The children took their education therefore into their own hands, and were acquiring a sort of knowledge which years of careful instruction will fail to eradicate.

In the basement I saw a man who for ten years had been chained in a cage: here, untended in any decent manner, without clothes, beating to chaff the straw which was supplied for bed and covering—raving often day and night, disturbing the slumbers of all the family, and uttering the most horrible imprecations, he was at once a torment to himself, and a source of indescribable disturbance to all beside. One day shortly after the present master took him in charge, word was hastily brought that John had broken his fetters and chain, had broken open his cage, and was then in the outer room below. The master hurried down filled with apprehension; he found the madman in the greatest delight at gaining his freedom; he danced, and sung, and declared that he had done with chains and would no longer live in his cage. When attempts were made to remove him, his entreaties were so earnest and promises so eloquent that he prevailed on the kind-hearted overseer, and had

permission "if he would do no mischief, and not attempt to hurt any body," to stay out, an order being at the same time given for him to be washed, shaved, and dressed. Nothing could exceed John's transports. The owner was necessarily absent from home through the day; returning, John was the first to meet and salute him with the news that he had kept his promise and "no harm had come." Several cases of this sort have come to my knowledge. It cannot be regarded as safe to have these very excitable persons at large and unattended, and there certainly is great cruelty in keeping them chained and shut up like wild beasts. For these things there is but one effectual remedy.

CAYUGA COUNTY-HOUSE, near *Auburn*, has not long since undergone a complete change in its domestic administration; from being a most discreditable establishment, it has become subject to order, wholesome discipline, and careful supervision. Mixed classes make it difficult to secure comfort to the more respectable of the inmates; and double the labor of household care. The provision for the insane though better than in many counties; is not suitable; it is but lately that the most extreme neglect of this class existed here; but I remarked that cleanliness was now exacted of those who were appointed to take charge of the rooms. This county has been very liberal in sending the insane poor to the Asylum at *Utica*. The farm is said to be in excellent order and in good cultivation.

ONONDAGA COUNTY-HOUSE is at *Syracuse*. I regret to refer to this establishment, since I cannot describe it advantageously in any respect. It compares very ill with most county-houses in general appearance, and arrangement. All the apartments needed complete cleansing by white-washing, scrubbing, and the renewing of much of the bed clothing. The aspect of the whole place was that of discomfort; the sick needed more efficient care; the aged and blind more attention; the children some person to have them in sole charge; and the insane needed every thing. I found the women in cells in wretched conditions. I will not attempt to enter upon the description of them; it was such as should never be suffered under any circumstances, and such as no apology can excuse. *Possibly* at the time of my visit, there was a more than usual omission of care through the house. I ought to say that the "hired girl" was absent, and the mistress had for several days been indisposed. But when there are not persons enough to accomplish work properly, the deficiency should be supplied; it is no excuse that the helpless and dependent be left to suffer through want

of care, because there are not enough in the house to perform necessary labor.

I have been informed that the farm is well conducted : also that it is in contemplation to build a more suitable house in a more convenient situation. This is greatly needed. I am very slow to censure those who have personal charge of county-houses ; they have great difficulties to meet, complex duties to perform, and it must, to those who exercise fidelity, be at all times a very laborious charge both abroad and within doors. There will be less need of apology for defects when suitable houses are constructed, and a wholesome system adopted. The county-house of Onondaga ranks very low in other counties ; but I incline to think its moral condition greatly better than in former years ; for many deficiencies the superintendents are responsible rather than their overseer.

MADISON COUNTY-HOUSE, at *Eaton* is well built and well situated ; it has a good farm advantageously managed. The internal arrangements are not good ; the apartments are not well divided, nor well kept. The apparel of all the inmates was in remarkably good order ; a part of the lodging rooms were suitably furnished. A very excellent new building has lately been constructed of stone, which is designed as a hospital for the sick ; this is a department rarely found in county-houses, and always needed. There was wanting in this house a more careful discipline, order, method ; especially was there needed an overseer of the children, who should require cleanness, orderly habits, and maintain discipline at table and elsewhere. The mistress of the house has a most laborious life, and evidently too much care, with too little assistance.

Those of the insane kept constantly confined, are in cells, in the basement. Mercifully there were but three of these poor creatures. They "*are taken out once a week to be cleaned,*" "*and to have fresh straw put into the cells!*" These are raving lunatics : others, not violent above stairs, were mingling with the family, some of them assisting in household labor.;

ONEIDA COUNTY-HOUSE, at *Rome*, is now, perhaps, in a better condition than at any former period since its establishment, but it is so very defective, that if I describe it as it really is, it will scarce be credited that a whole community so respectable as the citizens of Oneida

county, and annually making such liberal appropriations for the support of the poor, should permit the existence of an institution bearing so vile a reputation as this. From Clinton county to Chautauque, from Columbia to Niagara, are proclaimed the late and long-passed immoralities of Oneida county-house. I feel confident I have heard hundreds refer to this subject, and never one voice in favor. It is said, that for a year or more, greater care has been exerted to maintain in some sort moral discipline, but the construction of the buildings does not permit classification to much extent. The rooms were out of repair, but several were kept neat. Most of these greatly needed the application of whitewash, and a new supply of beds, bedsteads, and bed clothing. Wearing apparel was more decent. The master desired the complete separation of the children from the adults, but had not the means to effect so wholesome an arrangement. The *present* master of the house and his wife, evidently desire to perform their duty towards the inmates.

Those of the insane who need close confinement, are in miserable narrow cells, which open upon a small yard. Here I found one man and two women, the latter neglected, and all very improperly placed. I left them in the yard. The history of these unfortunate females is shocking to relate. No more than brief allusion can be made to it. *They have here become mothers!* They, like others here, have formerly been exposed to the lowest vices. These shameless immoralities, these monstrous neglects are suffered. One would deem it time for State legislation to interpose, when county administration is so torpid, and county superintendents so culpably indifferent and inefficient. Oneida, Herkimer, Greene, and Orange county-houses, and ten or twelve beside, have reputations to earn, which till gained, leave their names only *synonyms* for foul crime and base licentiousness. To the guardianship of the State I commend with earnest importunity, the idiotic and insane who, in the overthrow of reason, are no longer accountable beings. Here are about twenty insane. The master of the house has made repeated application for changes in the buildings.

HERKIMER COUNTY-HOUSE is very badly situated, immediately adjacent to a tavern, and on the bank of the canal, near *German-Flats*. It is a miserable building, with about an acre of land attached. I am informed that it is proposed to purchase a farm in a more suitable place, and to erect suitable buildings. The present establishment is in very ill repute, and one of the most disorderly in the State. It was very much neglected, and most of the apartments out of order in all respects when

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I saw them. The cells for the insane were most wretched. The exposures of the idiotic I need not name. The results the same as at Rome. A teacher was hired at the expense of the county for the children's school. All these were in a most neglected state personally. Several were suffering from ophthalmia. I was not at the house during school hours, and do not know but they were well taught.

FULTON COUNTY has at present no alms-house. I have understood that the poor are boarded in farmer's families. I have received but little definite information.

MONTGOMERY COUNTY-HOUSE, at *Fonda*, near the Erie canal, is not well situated. It is a respectable building, in very neat order, and well arranged for the comfort of the inmates. *It is lately* that this house has come into more correct moral discipline. It is too much crowded in winter, as are most such houses. The insane require hospital treatment, or the shelter of an asylum.

SCHOHARIE COUNTY-HOUSE, at *Middleburgh*, can be described only by negatives, save that quite recently there has been appointed a competent master and mistress, to whom no fault is to be attributed for the indescribably bad state of the entire establishment. It is deficient in every thing necessary to secure comfort, decency, or order. Discipline is entirely out of the question; it might properly be referred to the Grand Jury, who certainly would present it as a nuisance. No insane shut up.

OTSEGO COUNTY-HOUSE, at *Cooperstown*, has been, and is now, I am told, an expensive establishment. If it was subject to closer moral discipline, it would be a satisfaction to believe the money was applied to good or to a better purpose. Apparel, furniture, and beds were liberally furnished; also, provisions and fuel. The lodging rooms often contain from fifty to sixty occupants, "so crowded as completely to cover the floors." The insane were in various parts of the buildings, and in *open pens* on the premises. I was assured there were none in the *dark cells* at the time I was there. One crazy woman, whose history I forbear, was *soon to be a mother*. She was with some others in a decent apartment. In a range of *pens*, beyond the court yard, were some crazy men and women. These *pens*, the first I have seen for *human creatures*, were built of rough boards, so high as to prevent escape, and with this exception, were on the plan of pig-pens, such as are commonly seen upon the premises of a farm house. The retreats at the rear, pent-houses perhaps they are called, or kennels, were

stuffed with straw. I was not there at feeding hours! This county, I ought to add, has been very liberal in placing a portion of the insane poor in the asylum at Utica.

DELAWARE COUNTY-HOUSE, at *Dellhi*, is an excellently managed place, where the sick, the aged, and the infirm *now* find a respectable and comfortable retreat: persons able to perform labor are not considered subjects for this alms-house. The mistress zealously superintends the domestic concerns, cuts, makes and mends the wearing apparel, assisted by persons under her direction; maintains a clean house throughout; above, below, and around, the "daily care" is manifest. This really was a *home* for the homeless and feeble. Here was an aspect of comfort, of content; of discipline without severity, and industry without excessive labor. Here the insane, as might be inferred, were kindly and carefully tended: yet, with all the care, which was not to be doubted, and kindness, which was evident, in the intercourse between them and "the boss," "our good boss," with all this to reconcile me, I still assert that county poor houses are not and cannot be fit places for the insane. Several here were chained by the ankle to the floor, that they need not be injured, or do mischief at the fire, and that they need not be shut up in cells and dungeons, or that they need not escape from the house and be exposed to perish in the cold and snow, at this inclement season. Here there could be no persons exclusively devoted to taking charge over them; and without this special care, and a building adapted to their peculiar condition, they either *must be chained*, or must be shut into cells or cages. And who is confident they will there always have a humane master, or if humane, that he will have the tact to manage them without harshness, and protect them from injury and outrage. It is not that one person, or two, or three, by unusual negligence has been permitted exposure to wrong; *it is the many, the very many* of these most dependent beings exposed to horrible and monstrous abuses of power, and neglect of responsibility, which impels me, in the most earnest manner, to urge ample provision for insane persons of both sexes; provision by the State, in safe asylums and hospitals closely inspected.

SULLIVAN COUNTY-HOUSE, at *Monticello*, was hastily visited, yet not so hastily as to prevent observation of a thorough neatness, a comfortable arrangement for the inmates; for example, lodging rooms not over crowded, furnished with comfortable beds and bed-clothing, convenient furniture, white-washed walls, well scrubbed floors, neat ap

parel: the sick not forgotten, and the insane as well taken care of *as the provision made for them by the county* permitted. Some were able to be in the family-rooms, others were not at large, one woman was in a decent room in an out-building *chained*, but dressed, warmed and, I believe, otherwise well cared for. An insane man was performing some work in the yard. These required asylum care and protection; indeed it would be greatly best for all.

ULSTER COUNTY-HOUSE, at *New-Paltz*, or county houses, for there are five occupied as dwellings, and parted by considerable distances; beside these are various out-buildings, for the shops, children's school room, and usual barns and out-houses of a large farming establishment. Generally these were in excellent order, well arranged, and comfortable; uncommonly neat, and well ventilated. The wearing apparel was respectable, and the poor were orderly and decent in their general demeanor. Children well attended to. Food good in quality, ample in quantity, and well prepared. I found an insane woman *chained* to the floor in a good apartment: those acquainted with the case, believed she might be restored under proper medical treatment. Beside this female, were other insane and idiotic persons in different parts of the establishment. I should have excepted one building from the list of those in proper order—this was at the most remote part of the grounds appropriated to the buildings, and was occupied by persons in various conditions of idiocy, imbecility and insanity; very great neglect was visible here, which was more remarked, perhaps, from being in so broad contrast from the first visited divisions. The buildings are all of wood, and subject to serious objections in regard to domestic arrangements, especially during the winter season.

GREENE COUNTY-HOUSE, at *Cairo*, is well built, but not large enough for the occupants, nor as commodiously constructed as need requires. This establishment, lately one of the very worst in the State in regard to morals, is now under charge of a master and mistress, whose energetic supervision has effected so great and beneficial changes, that I feel much regret to offer any comments reflecting on their method of conducting its internal affairs. Many of the apartments are well arranged; an attempt has been made to render a few of the sick comfortable, by appropriating a room for their sole use. Portions of the house were clean, and part of the furniture for the lodging rooms in fit condition; more liberal applications of lime-wash, and thorough cleaning of floors

and tables was needed in most parts. The day room for the men was excessively crowded, over heated, not ventilated, and at present used also as a lodging room; every thing here was in very bad condition; one young man very feeble, suffering from a severe wound, needed every thing that could promote ease and recovery, and yet had nothing which his condition demanded; an insane man, *chained* in the same room was as improperly situated, and not clean.

An attempt had been made to classify part of the inmates, but want of room made this impossible to the extent required in a place where were congregated so large a proportion of vicious and insubordinate people. It is quite time that the authorized officers of the alms-house at Cairo, should make appropriations for furnishing in a more decent manner some of the lodging rooms; also a portion of the inmates with new apparel, which they should be required to keep in some sort clean; and a new building should be appropriated wholly to the children. These appeared to receive much judicious care, but all this is insufficient, while they have daily before them evil influences and corrupting example. Those of the insane who were confined in a miserable out-building, are in most wretched conditions; I do not mean abused by those who have direct charge of them; I have no reason to think this is the case *now*, but the place is not fit for a kennel for dogs, much less for the dwelling of infirm and imbecile men and women, and raving maniacs. Indignation, disgust and compassion, mingled, while examining this wretched place. One conclusion is certain, the county might furnish means for separating the insane men and women effectually and entirely; it is true, they do not occupy one cell or room wholly in common, because the furious are locked into cells, but these are exposed, and I may be spared, I trust, the necessity of specifying all the horrors and disgusting consequences of their being congregated as I found them. This receptacle is a disgrace, alike to the alms-house, to the county, and to the State. The master of the house might effect some trivial changes for the better; the county might have had a decent set of apartments constructed, and more properly conducted; but the State ought not to trust the insane to the evils and miseries almost inevitable upon county, or private superintendence and provision.

I saw much at the county-house at Cairo to commend, and was the more disposed to appreciate this, from knowing how debased was its state before the change above alluded to; but I saw also, much that shocked and pained me, and much that I trust has by this time in part at least, found remedy.

COLUMBIA COUNTY-HOUSE, at *Ghent*, is a populous, well kept establishment; somewhat crowded, but many disadvantages are avoided by judicious arrangements. Very liberal provision is here made for the poor, but, as elsewhere, a work-house department is loudly called for. The sick and aged here receive much attention; children are not neglected, either in school or out, and are as much as possible kept apart from the family at large. It must not be supposed that all even of substantial evils, are here overcome. Quite another alms-house system must be adopted in order to extinguish these. I am glad to say that, while the citizens of Columbia county desire economy in the conduct of the county poor-house, it is not any part of their plan to reduce expenses to the lowest possible rate. It seems to me little creditable to the officers of any such establishment to be able to say their poor are supported at the cost of only *three cents and three-fourths* of a cent per diem, as one reports; or at *thirty cents* per week as another records. We are not surprized, when such results of financial management are exhibited, to find the insane "cast out." But these are *exceptions* to the much more general rule of liberal expenditure. The prominent defects of county-houses in the State of New-York do not result from parsimonious restrictions and stinted appropriations.

The insane at *Ghent* occupy a department connected with the main building but partially. This was in respectable order, decently clean and furnished. A yard enclosed for exercise, in good weather, was appropriated to such of the inmates as were able to leave their rooms, or whom it was safe to trust. The wearing apparel and bed-clothing were sufficient. Besides these cases, I saw several insane men and women in the main building, who were so easily controlled that it was thought safe to associate them with the family at large. I saw nothing at this house, with all its advantages over some others, to dispose me to regard this as a desirable place for any of this class.

DUTCHESS COUNTY-HOUSE, at *Poughkeepsie*, is a model of neatness, order, and good discipline. The household arrangements are excellent; the kitchens and cellars complete in every part. I have seen nothing in the State so good as these. In some respects the county-house near *Whiteplains*, in *Westchester*, has the advantage. The buildings there are all of stone, and safer from the danger of conflagration; also they are better situated in regard to immediate vicinity to a large town. This must, at *Poughkeepsie*, be considered as undesirable at least, if it be not productive of serious annoyances.

Every apartment in the alms-house at Poughkeepsie was unexceptionally clean, well furnished, and neatly arranged. Great credit is due to those who have the immediate charge of this house, for so thorough supervision, and energetic administration of its affairs. Such of the insane as were highly excited were in clean, decent rooms. Their well kept lodging rooms, opening upon one larger, where they could have more space, when tranquil enough to be let out. The women were in another part of the house, quite apart at all times from this division.

The state of this establishment has not always been so good as now ; but in the improvements annually made, it is gratifying to discover the increasing vigilance exercised to secure respectably conducted institutions ; and efforts to have them answer the important ends to society, which they ought always to propose.

The jail at Poughkeepsie was as remarkably well kept and neat as the alms-house.

WESTCHESTER COUNTY-HOUSE, near *Whiteplains*, consists of buildings solidly and handsomely constructed of stone, and adapted to receive more than two hundred persons. The interior plan of the buildings, though good, cannot be regarded as a model. Those at Flatbush, Kings county, are on a better plan, but not free from defects. "Seven hundred and seventy-five paupers," according to the last report, "have been relieved the past year in and out of the house." "Many of the inmates, able to work, have been employed on the farm, and in constructing two hundred and twenty rods of heavy substantial wall ; ditching, capping and filling up two hundred rods of deep ditch. All the necessary work of the house has been done by the inmates : as shoemaking, clothing, bedding, pails, brooms, without extra expense." The house is well furnished, and provided with all needed accommodations. The expenses last year were seven thousand four hundred dollars, besides nearly three thousand paid for out-residents.

The school for the children is taught by one of the paupers, and it is said to be faithfully conducted ; if so, I can see no good reason why the teacher should not be paid for this service by the county, over and above his clothes and board. I could form no opinion of the moral influences exerted here.

The department for the lunatics contains thirty inmates, and deserves something better than the name of receptacle. Neither pains nor expense have been spared here in providing for the comfort, order, and security of the inmates. In neatness throughout every part, I know nothing in the State which I can bring into comparison, except the Asylums at Utica and Bloomingdale. An air of cheerfulness even, pervades some of the rooms ; so white, so clean, so supplied with comfortable beds, and the inmates so cleanly dressed, so clean in their persons. If any thing could ever reconcile me to subordinate institutions, this certainly would do so ; but nothing can, I know too much of liabilities and realities. A physician attends once or twice a week, and I cannot suppose neglects this part of the alms-house establishment, yet I think he would be ready to allow that a hospital wholly devoted to curative treatment, would be the fitter place for such as are not incurable ; and that in all cases, *practised* and *paid attendants* are to be preferred before those considered as paupers. I know that sometimes one may secure the services of such as are of good characters and dispositions in a poor-house, who are able of body to perform the various labor requisite ; but if competent, for all this they are "worthy of their hire," and should be withdrawn from the class of those called dependants on public charity. It did not appear to me accordant with the best modes of managing excitable patients, to order their diet upon the plan here adopted, though this I am bound to suppose has not been done entirely without consideration. Several of the patients, in both male and female departments, would have been better and happier for more employment, though at times they are supplied with something answering this end, I think.

A pleasant temperature is maintained in all the apartments by means of hot air conveyed round the sides of the rooms through iron pipes ; ventilation is not overlooked. There is an abundant use of pure water. The aspect of the attendants was prepossessing. In fine, this asylum, constructed at great expense, and *now* conducted with care, does honor to the humanity and liberal-mindedness of the citizens of Westchester. They cannot guard it too vigilantly, or hold over it a watch too scrutinizingly investigating. It is hoped due caution will be exercised in dividing curable patients from those whose malady is confirmed ; and it is hoped too, while this just accord of much that is excellent is rendered to this institution, that other counties will not adopt the plan, unless the State fails to supply what humanity claims, and justice exacts.

RICHMOND COUNTY-HOUSE, near *Fort-Richmond*, on Staten island, affords a comfortable retreat for the aged, the infirm, and the sick. All the rooms exhibited decent and kindly care, and attention to order and general discipline. The buildings are not particularly good, but neither are they so defective as to fail in securing many important objects. This was like the county-house at Delhi, most strictly an alms-house; a place where the poor, who are disabled, the sick, aged, and infirm, and unprotected children find refuge: and not so much the resort of able-bodied, able-to-work people as are most "poor-houses." No insane confined here.

SUFFOLK COUNTY, *Long island*, has no county-house. A various provision is here made for the poor. In some towns they are "bid off" annually, on the old system, in others "boarded out," in one, or in several families. And again, in other towns they are to be found in "poor-houses," usually having a farm attached. At Coram in Brookhaven, Suffolk county, is a very respectable establishment for the poor; whose general appearance exhibited care and good attendance. There were here several insane persons, but not generally requiring close confinement; these were clean and well clothed.

Not distant many miles from Riverhead, is a "poor's farm," where general wants are well supplied. I was not able to reach this place, but seven or eight individuals described it from personal knowledge, and frequent visits. The house is small, and admits of no classification, and but little division; some additions seemed very much required. Here is a young man regarded as incurably insane; he was at a hospital for a considerable time, till his case being thought hopeless, he was brought here by the overseers of the poor. He is kept in a small building, consisting of a single apartment put up expressly for him in the yard, "because he is dangerous to be at large, and his screams disturb the people in the house;" here his shouts and violent proxysms do not so rack the sick and the aged; and here like a caged tiger he is kept successive months and years. "He has no fire; has never had here;" "he can keep warm enough in winter by beating about his cell." I suggested that there must be periods of quietness and inaction, and at such times, at least, there was danger of his suffering severely in cold weather. They answered there was no room for a stove, and if one should be put there he would burn up the building. I then proposed that if the room was too small to admit a safe division for a stove, a new one should be built, and that it was cruel in the extreme

to leave him thus. I only elicited the reply that "he was warm enough."

At Smithtown are a few paupers chargeable to the county; these are "boarded out." There is here also a farm and dwelling owned by the town, where those having "their residence" in that town, are provided for. The number of the poor thus supported here is small.

In the town of Huntingdon is a small farm appropriated to the town's poor. The dwelling is small, inconvenient, and out of repair; it is a most discreditable and wretched establishment, but I should add that there is now reason to expect a speedy and complete reform; and in place of neglect, confusion, utter discomfort, and wretched apartments, most wretchedly furnished, where vice consorts with misery, and indolence with incapacity, we may hope for a new order of things. The children here most moved my compassion—little neglected creatures, wholly unattended to, by the confession of the mistress herself, and though having food and some clothing, otherwise were veriest outcasts from care and kindness. The incompetence of the mistress of the house for the duties assumed, was apparent every where in every thing. I know this is strong language, but it is borne out by facts, and the overseers of the town of Huntingdon very well know there are objections to present arrangements, which I do not feel called upon to state here explicitly. No insane persons are in this poor-house; a saving mercy for which I am devoutly thankful.

QUEEN'S COUNTY also has no general county-house; though there is an establishment at South-Hempstead, where the county poor are provided for, also one where are the town's poor. I found it quite impossible, through limited time, to visit every town in this county or in Suffolk. Much money is expended in both, for the relief of the poor, but after all with very unsatisfactory results.

I find it a most unwelcome duty to speak of establishments discreditable to the towns and counties from which their support is derived. I well know from personal conversations, that many of the respectable citizens of South-Hempstead greatly disapprove the manner in which their town poor, as well as the county poor, are supported and managed. I have reason to believe also, that the county superintendents are very much dissatisfied with the present arrangements for the poor in the county at large. Many of the evils and abuses now existing, I have strong hope will, before another year, have found remedy.

The *town poor* of South Hempstead, of whom there were but fifteen, at the time of my visit in December, were "sold," "bid off," "or let," to a resident in the town, the landlord of a miserable tavern. This man was addicted to intemperance, and found favor with the paupers by small allowances of rum, with additions of snuff and tobacco. I went to his house and asked to see the family making at the same time the usual inquiries. He replied surlily, that they lived at some distance from his own house, that he had not much to do with them, that his wife knew about them all. He professed not to know either their numbers, age or condition. The wife came, but her information was equally insufficient, and I directed to be taken to the house where the poor lived; which was distant about one-eighth of a mile from the tavern. This was a small building of one story, in a state of wretched dilapidation. The fifteen inmates of various ages, of both sexes, and various colors, presented a spectacle of squalid neglect, and one might say of poverty also: dirty in person and apparel, in rooms equally exceptionable; the little provision for lodging, was of the worst description. One miserable creature, whether colored or white, crazy or idiotic, I could not clearly make out, was rolled in some ragged, dirty blankets in a bunk in a horrible state of neglect. An aged black woman whose limbs were enveloped in a quantity of rags, to serve the place both of shoes and stockings, was feebly trying to quiet the cries of a young child. The only sufficient supplies about the place for the wants of life were food and air, and even here, there was of the last too much, pouring in through the holes, and broken windows, and floors. Confusion, disorder, and wretched life characterized the place. I was told that the mistress came down almost every day to see them, but her visits were followed it seemed by no very wholesome household arrangements. The history of the town's poor of South-Hempstead, for years past has been worse rather than better than it is at the present time. *One dollar* per week is paid for each of the poor; provisions in this quarter are cheap, and rents moderate. In Westchester county-house, the cost of each person to the county is *fifty cents two mills and four-tenths a mill* per week; what a contrast of condition!

The county poor were some miles distant from the place last described, and distant also from all taverns. The appropriations for the support of this class was liberal; indeed the inhabitants of Long island pay their taxes for the poor ungrudgingly, and in these relations are not

governed by a parsimonious spirit. Money enough is expended; the misfortune is, it is not well applied.

The house last referred to was not adapted for either convenient or comfortable arrangements. The inmates were negligently appareled, and not clean, nor were the lodging rooms properly furnished with decent beds and bed clothing. I was told that I had visited it at an unfortunate time. Perhaps so, but I fancy all times would have been equally so in my judgment of the place. Accidental disarrangement may always be perceived; habitual neglects mark themselves. The children were untidy and unwashed; the adults, with one exception, the same. The only insane person I saw, was a young woman of good aspect, neat, and actively employed; I suspect the most efficient member of the household. To those who have seen no well conducted establishments for the poor, this might have appeared less disadvantageously; but I could not consider it other than *greatly discreditable* to those who contribute to its support, and promoting at best but a negative good.

The towns of North-Hempstead and Oyster bay, having received a bequest of ten thousand dollars unitedly, for the support of their poor, purchased a farm in a section of the latter township, and have built an alms-house. This, amongst other reasons, is assigned as the cause of not building a county poor-house. From personal observation and inquiries, in Queens and Suffolk counties, I am not inclined to the opinion advanced by many, that the poor in small towns, are severally as well provided for as they would be in county houses. Each *plan* offers advantages and objections, but in neither is the obligation *to do this well*, set aside.

KINGS COUNTY-HOUSE, at *Flaibush*, takes rank with the very best establishments of this sort in the State, in being the most complete in every department, and excellently conducted. The buildings are so extensive as to afford means for classification in an uncommon degree, and so also, for securing good order and discipline. The respective houses were thoroughly neat, apartments clean to exactness, commodiously arranged, well warmed, and supplied with pure air. The children were neatly dressed, and uncommonly well attended. Food as is usual, not only liberal in allowance, but also, what is not as common, wholesome in quality, and well cooked, and finally, served with neatness and in order. The hospital department for the sick and feeble,

was in excellent condition; every thing was comfortable, nothing seemed omitted that comfort required, nor neglected that duty enforced.

The asylum or hospital for the insane, stood apart. It was well ordered for a county receptacle, but altogether inferior to that in Westchester. With all its arrangements for keeping the insane of both sexes, and with all the care of the attendants as I saw them at their stations, I did not feel that this department, by any means, met the wants of the class it was designed to benefit. I saw not the smallest evidence of abuse or neglect; on the contrary, kindness and attention, so far as wants were comprehended; but much must be wanting here, which a well governed institution, wholly devoted to the insane, would secure. I was told that the county officers proposed to build a larger establishment, finding their numbers exceeding their present accommodations. Here were twenty-five in confinement, early in December, and another to be brought that same day. One had deceased the day before.

ROCKLAND COUNTY-HOUSE, near *Clarkstown*, is in some respects decent and neat; not completely or thoroughly so, especially the out-buildings occupied by some sick, infirm, insane, and feeble persons, and children; this greatly needed an entire reform in cleansing, furnishing, and in the personal care of the occupants. A little sick child was very improperly situated, and though it may sound severe, I should say neglected; the person having charge of it, a feeble infirm woman, having hardly capacity to reach the cradle; I think indeed she was called crazy. The main building was clean and well ordered. I found through this, and the adjoining counties, that this alms-house was not thought to afford the needed comforts, such an asylum is supposed to furnish: of this, I could form but a qualified opinion. The master and mistress were persons of respectable appearance; I incline to believe they purpose what one said of them, "to do about right;" I should perhaps add, so far as their knowledge leads them.

ORANGE COUNTY-HOUSE, at *Goshen*, is a large and expensive establishment; till quite lately, it has ranked very low in respect to morals, so much so, that great dissatisfaction has been created in several towns, with the plan of an alms-house common to all the poor of the county; and though greater care and close supervision are now exerted, the prejudice is not effaced. Though capacious, the house is crowded; many of the lodging rooms are well arranged, and an attempt at classification

has placed things on a better foundation than before the present master took charge ; here, as at Cairo, there was so much for the present newly appointed master to do, so great abuses to reform, so many rules to enforce, that to those who have been laboring for this, the place appears to much greater advantage than to one who sees it for the first time, and compares it with institutions better established, and longer subject to judicious government. There is want at this season, of sufficient employment for those who gather from various quarters in the cold months. A hospital for the sick is also needed ; and one, by the energetic exertions of the master, has been partly built of stone the present year, free of county cost. The county officers have declined making any appropriations for this object. The school is said to be well taught ; it costs the county nothing, besides the board and clothes of one of its paupers. The rooms occupied by the colored people were comfortable, though like all in the main building, too full of occupants. And now I come to the departments for the insane ; one severally for the men, and one for the women. Difficulties surround me ; if I attempt to describe these, few will find it easy to receive the statement as a fair relation of facts ; those who perhaps mean to do, not wrong, for and by these most afflicted beings, will feel injured, and I surely am convinced, that any language I employ, will fail to reach and expose all the evils of their lot. I would that I had skill to place before the Honorable Legislature of New-York, with distinctness, and in all its REALITY, one such receptacle for madmen and madwomen as I see repeated in many places ; my cause would be gained. The persuasion of the actual, would have wrought what its faint description is feeble to effect.

The insane women who are too violent to be at large, in the county house at Goshen, are in dreary, narrow cells, opening upon a yet more dreary apartment, of which they at all times have a view from between the perpendicular bars of the cell-doors, utter filth and wretchedness found place here. Personally neglected, indescribably so, their mad ravings resounded through the building—now imprecations, now wild cries rent the air. I approached a cell, and spoke soothingly to the poor maniac ; suddenly she ceased, then whispered low, “ speak, oh speak again ;” and drawing about her unclothed person a blanket, she grew still, and moaned no more ; but as I was turning away, she gently murmured, “ stay, stay.” Out from her cell she could look, but it was to see a gibbering idiot, or a cowering imbecile, or perhaps a mur-

muring half demented creature, wandering languidly about the room. In an adjoining cell was another female, not noisy, but loathingly disgusting in a neglected person, and equally neglected cell. This *may* not have been a uniform state of debasement; I have no reason, however, to believe it otherwise. The irresponsible attendant, chosen from the poor who are regarded as incompetent to take care of themselves, as is shown by their presence in an alms-house, had no special interest in these unfortunates, no moving stimulant to urge her to a faithful care of these so peculiarly dependent beings. Neither the master or mistress of the house would intentionally sanction neglect; yet they at this time have failed to secure in any sufficient degree the daily attendance, and daily watchful, kindly care these helpless creatures so imperatively need. The place appropriated to the insane men, squalid and disgusting, generally and particularly, had yet one redeeming view: it was apart from that occupied by the women. A foreigner as dirty and offensive as those over whom he held charge, was the only attendant I saw here. Chains secured some, feebleness detained others, and imbecility controlled the residue.

It is impossible to enter upon individual histories here, and I think that the plain facts, stating recent outward conditions, are sufficient to show that society at large is unfaithful to its moral and social obligations. Neglects and injuries are not confined to county-houses. I know of insane sons permanently shut up by fathers, without fire, without light, without aim or object to revive, to cheer, or to heal the wounded mind. I know of sisters and daughters subject to abusive language, to close confinement, and to "floggings with the horse-whip." I know of parents in their old age, sunk into imbecility, basely abused, and left to suffer; and I know of many *cast out from dwellings*, to wander forth, and live or die, as the elements, less merciless than man, permit. Many are these histories; dark, but true, and difficult to credit, which reach me in many parts—nay, almost every part of the country. They are not peculiar to New-York, nor to any section of these United States which I have traversed; but it is not the affecting histories, or moving passages in the lives of the insane, upon which I fix my own thought, or to which I desire to draw the attention of the public. These are common to humanity, are the providential dispensations which all at one time or another in part share. It is upon the real outward state of those who are suffering from a malady, truly appalling in its consequences, that I wish to concentrate your thoughts;

it is to the grave consideration, whether these wrongs are to be redressed, these abuses guarded against, these mischiefs arrested, that I would draw you. Tearful sensibility is short-lived, and its shallow fountains are soon dried away; deliberate conviction and judgment are permanent, and conduct to effective acts and to solid advantages.

Permit me, briefly, to refer to the prominent defects of the present county-house system throughout the State.

These institutions are *compound* and *complex* in their plans and objects. They are at one and the same time, *alms-houses*, or retreats for the aged, the invalid, and helpless poor: *houses of correction* for the vicious and abandoned; *asylums for orphaned and neglected children*; *receptacles for the insane and imbecile*; extensive *farming*, and more limited *manufacturing establishments*. Beside, in addition to being *mixed establishments*, they are not, one in ten or twenty counties, built in reference to these various objects. They are not planned to secure division and classification of the inmates. They afford insufficient accommodations, both in "the day rooms," and in the lodging apartments; not being constructed with a view to securing convenient arrangement or sound health. They are almost universally deficient in hospitals, or rooms especially appropriated to the sick, and to invalids. They do not guard against the indiscriminate association of the children with the adult poor. The education of these children, with rare exceptions, is conducted on a very defective plan. The alms-house schools, so far as I have learnt from frequent inquiries, are not inspected by official persons, who visit and examine the other schools of the county. The moral and religious instruction of the poor at large, in these institutions is either attended to at remote and uncertain intervals, or entirely neglected. The scriptural text, that to "the poor the gospel is preached," that "good news of glad tidings," appears to have failed in its application to alms-houses. "We cannot afford it," says one; "our subscriptions and donations are even now burthensome in the support of foreign missions, to Asia and the South Sea islands." "We have not time," say others, "we have in our town been wholly engaged, for the last six months, by a revival." "Why do you not visit those degraded beings at your alms-house, and try to reclaim them to godness and virtue?" "Oh, I have no time for such things. I am an active member and secretary of the Moral Reform Society." "How can you refrain from interposing in behalf of those poor fettered maniacs, wearing out a terrible life in chains, shut out from the light of

the beautiful sky, and pining in friendless neglect?" "I assure you I have quite as much as I can do to work for the Anti-Slavery Fair. I detest all abuses and oppressions, and have devoted myself to the cause of emancipation in the slave-holding States." "And I," said another, "must lecture on freedom, and justice, and human rights. We at the north must be zealous to rouse the citizens of the southern States from their apathy to the claims of suffering humanity." These, and such like answers, to often renewed questionings, are given continually; and to me they are evidence of our proneness to overlook the discharge of duties "nigh at hand;" and to forget that "the good example" is better than the "reiterated precept." Here *at home*, for a long time, have we ample fields of labor: to teach the gospel of the blessed Jesus by *word and life*; to enlighten ignorance; to stay the tide of vicious pauperism; to succor the friendless, support the feeble; to visit the afflicted; to raise the depressed; to lessen human suffering, and elevate human aims; to redress wrongs; rectify abuses; unloose the chains of the maniac and bring release to those who pine in dark cells and dreary dungeons: having plucked the beam from our own eye, we can with a less pharisaical spirit, direct our efforts to clearing the mental vision of neighbor.

I have referred to some of the most obvious defects of county-houses. Considering the compound objects of these, it is surprising that so much good is found in them. It is to be remembered that knowledge is the growth of a tedious experience. The evils to which I have alluded, are felt and acknowledged by all those brought into direct acquaintance with the subject. Greatly too much is required, both of the masters and mistresses of county-houses. Few men and women possess such varied and rare gifts as are called into exercise, in conducting these institutions.

The master must be, at one and the same time, an able practical farmer; the warden of a prison; the vigilant superintendent of a community, rather than of a family, composed of persons of different tempers, habits, and all ages. He must direct a school; conduct a various manufacturing establishment; be the responsible superintendent of a lunatic receptacle; a good accountant; ready at bargaining with trades-people, and acute in selling to advantage surplus produce, and a vigilant overseer and watchman. The mistress is expected to be an excellent house-keeper; good cook; quick seamstress; skilled in tailoring, mantuamaking; repairing garments; competent in making up

beds, bed clothing, and household linen. She must be vigilant in every department : in the laundry ; in the dairy ; in the sewing rooms ; in the kitchen. She must hold watch and ward, at all times, over a refractory and ill-assorted household. All these duties, and many beside, devolve on the master and mistress of a county-house. And I am constantly assured that, of all these, perplexing as are many of them, the care of the insane is the most difficult, and attended with fewest satisfactory results.

I respectfully suggest the adoption of an *improved system* for county alms-houses. I know that this subject is encompassed with difficulties, and that it is much easier to indicate mistakes, and to detect errors, than to rectify misjudgments or retrieve faults. To maintain public charities, so that there shall be no premium on pauperism, and so that vice shall be kept at bay, is still a problem in civilized society : we can only say that if all evils cannot be excluded, many may be abated ; if pauperism cannot be extinguished, the muddy fountains which generate it may be reduced.

The annual disbursements from the county treasuries in the State of New-York, for the support of the poor, is enormous ; some plan for diminishing these without trenching upon the just claims of those dependent, seems worthy of consideration. It is difficult to legislate upon this subject, so that all, in every section of this "Empire State," shall be equally benefitted, and none suffer disadvantages. Laws wholesome in their application at the north, might work contrary results at the south ; plans suited to the wants of the east, would be mischievous carried into effect at the west ; what might promote good on Long island, would perhaps show different results on the shores of Lake Erie. This State, as yet infant in age, though of gigantic growth, exhibits social phases accordant with its paradoxical combinations of immaturity and precocity. "Rest content," said to me not long since, one of your distinguished statesmen, "rest content, if these desired reforms are not all speedily wrought ; all will follow in time : the life of a State, is not as the life of a man ; with the *first*, thirty years is but a pulsation, with the *last*, it is the half almost of a whole life." The greatest good cannot I know, be suddenly accomplished, but is it not true wisdom by present energetic measures, to guard against growing evils : is it not better to eradicate the master-root, and not rest satisfied with having merely pruned the fibrous offsets. The present plan of supporting the poor, was a great advance

from that barbarous usage so long prevailing this whole country, of "bidding them off," "letting them out," &c. The really necessary expenses of the poor, are, it appears to me, with very rare exceptions, cheerfully met throughout the State; but still it is felt that the taxes for these objects rise to the verge of excess. It might be well to examine impartially, the modes of expending these moneys. Possibly they would be reduced in many ways, *without touching* the *direct special* appropriations at county-houses. The charges of transporting the poor from place to place, for example, are very large, and this is made the ground of one argument with many towns, for not sending their poor to the county houses, or sending them reluctantly.

In Berlin, and other parts of Prussia, very little is expended in the *management of their poor system*; here in this country might be another saving, without trenching on the claims of poverty. But there is another and broader ground for consideration. Of those now annually supported in the State of New-York, in the county poor-houses, much the largest portion are foreigners; most of these are able-bodied men and women, with entire families, competent to perform labor, and many of these are not cast transiently upon the public charity, but hundreds of them resort annually as the cold season advances, to the county-poor houses. Here they remain till spring opens, from four to six months, and departing are seen again only as autumn approaches winter, when the fields have all been tilled and the harvest gathered. This especially is the case in the larger cities and towns of populous counties. In November of 1842, I was informed at the alms-house in Albany, that *four-fifths* of the inmates were foreigners, most of whom were able to perform full day-labor. In December 1843, the master told me the whole number of inmates was *five hundred*, a large proportion of whom are in health and competent to labor, "but for these," he added, "I have but little or no employment." These facts, with many which might be adduced, go to show the expediency of establishing work-houses in many counties, if not in every one of them. By the adoption of such establishments, under good regulations uniting kindness and necessary discipline, all, whether Americans or foreigners, might when able to work, be transferred from the alms-houses, to the houses of employment, and the former be reserved for the aged and infirm, for feeble persons, and young children. Well conducted alms-houses will be oftener found, when less crowded with able-bodied paupers, and when they cease to contain receptacles for the insane.

There is but one testimony throughout the land, from county officers respecting the unfitness of county alms-houses for the insane ; these results of a various, and not new experience, appear entitled to consideration.

Among the prominent objections to retaining insane patients in alms-houses are these : burthened by crowding household cares, and with various objects connected with these institutions, the masters and mistress of them, have no time to bestow upon these very dependent beings ; had they time, they seldom have had opportunity of acquiring a knowledge of the proper modes of governing them ; or, if possessing tact for these duties, they are liable to removal themselves from their places at any renewed vibration of the pendulum of political parties.

The insane require a daily care, wholly different from that requisite for any other persons ; this only can be commanded in institutions founded expressly for their reception.

In alms-houses, if violent, their outcries and noise disturb the slumbers of the household, and continually disquiet the sick and infirm.

If blasphemous and indecent, their presence is mischievous and demoralizing.

They are themselves exposed to the teasing tricks and injurious treatment of many whose chief pleasure consists in exciting and irritating them.

They are liable to great neglects, and to the most terrible outrages.

The most shocking abuses may exist towards them, without the power on their part, of claiming or finding redress. It is well known, that *recovery is very rare in alms-houses, where confinement in cells, and rigorous methods of government, are enforced*: it is also well known that a large majority of the insane in this State, and in the United States generally, are either in narrow circumstances, or wholly dependent on public charity ; it is not wise therefore, to provide curative institutions, where those who give hope of recovery may be brought under skilful treatment ; and asylums, where those in whom the malady has become settled, may find kindness and protection. The expense of institutions *appropriate for the cure and the care of the insane*, may be sustained by the State at less cost, than any creditable hospitals can be by the counties severally.

Of lunatics and idiots I have seen in the county-houses of the State of New-York about *fifteen hundred*; of the same classes in private families, I know comparatively but little, and can produce no statistics; but I believe we may fairly estimate all of these classes in the State as numbering about three thousand. A part of these, both the idiots and the insane, would in no sort be benefited by change of place—but a great number are suffering more terribly than language can describe, for want of appropriate care, and accommodations adapted to their peculiar necessities, and their entire dependence on others for all that can ameliorate the miseries of their earthly life.

I find in the very able report of the Trustees of the New-York State Lunatic Asylum, for 1841, the following important remark, sound in its text, and demanding serious consideration. “*The incurables should not be received or retained, to the exclusion of the curables; and of the latter class, recent cases should always be accommodated rather than old ones:*” and in a subjoined note is added, “*too much importance cannot be attached to this distinction; ample confirmation of this view of the subject, is quoted at length in the appendix.*”

Dr. Bell, the justly distinguished and honored superintendent of the M'Lean Asylum, in Charlestown, Mass. remarks in the twenty-third annual report of that institution, that “the records of the asylum justify the declaration, *that all cases certainly recent, that is, whose origin does not either directly or obscurely run back more than a year, recover under a fair trial. This is the general law: the occasional instances to the contrary, are the exceptions.*”

It would appear from the opinions above referred to, and from other and various authorized sources, that *first* importance is attached to provision for the curable classes of the insane; and that ample means should be secured for this end, becomes from every consideration, an imperative obligation; especially that patients may, in the earliest stages of their malady have the benefit of skilful treatment.

This conducts to the inquiry what present provision has been made in the State for the insane, and is this sufficient for their immediate necessities? It is known that the asylums at Utica and Bloomingdale, are the only public institutions in the State, and these can by no possibility retain all even of the curable classes, and it is acknowledged that these are adapted in all respects, by architectural arrangements, and by

the eminent professional skill of their respective superintendents, for curative hospitals : and we now come to the question what is the provision already made for the now numerous class of incurables ? *The State has made none* : the counties (save those of New-York and Westchester,) *none* that *professional* medical men, or enlightened christians, can sanction as fit for temporary, to say nothing of permanent, use : and by the judgment of those most acquainted with their structure and means of accommodation, and connexion with poor-houses, these must be condemned even for temporary use ; being chiefly *close, unventilated rooms ; narrow dark cells ; cheerless dungeons, cold and damp ;* with accompanying trappings of *iron balls, collars, manacles, fetters and chains ;* and it must be added, the *heavy blow to quicken obedience ;* and the *stinging lash to enforce silence ;* but these last not always, not oftenest ;—yet if at all, if in but one, rather than what is true, in many cases ; or if but the probability exists that such cruelties *may be, what is the duty of the public, of the whole public ?* I reply, and do not all reply, that *large, entire* provision must be made for these the most-to-be-compassionated of human beings. But why should the State make such provision ? I answer first, because the *expense* of minor establishments, *that are in every way* adapted to the necessities of the insane, forbids the idea that they can become the charge of the counties respectively, if attempted, they would at no distant time degenerate into mere receptacles, where neglects would multiply and abuses crowd in. The vigilant and successful superintendent of your State Asylum has observed in a work on insanity, and its modes of treatment in hospitals, “that too much attention cannot be given to the prevention of abuses in lunatic asylums.” “*Attendants of the most unblemished moral character, and remarkable for kind dispositions, for calmness and intelligence should be procured, and well instructed in their responsible duties ;* and be induced by proper compensation to *devote themselves* perpetually to the care of the insane.” These opinions are corroborated by all who have given consideration to the subject. But it is believed that no elaborate arguments need be advanced to show why county asylums, (and private families with very few exceptions,) are unsuitable for the insane, and should never receive general sanction.

It is remarked by a writer who has become distinguished for efforts to lessen the privations of the afflicted, and to secure protection for suffering humanity, that “with regard to paupers at least, the duty of

the State is clear and imperative, and this should be the duty of every Christian government, to provide the best *means for the cure of the curable*, and to *take kind care* of the incurable." The duty of society, besides being urged by every consideration of humanity, will be seen to be more imperative, if we consider that insanity is, in many cases, the result of imperfect or vicious social institutions and observances. We have not space to allude to all these; but among them are revolutions, party strife, unwise and capricious legislation, causing commercial speculations and disasters; false standards of worth and rank, undue encouragement of the propensities and passions, social rivalry, social intemperance; some fashions and conventional usages; religious and political excitement. These, and many other causes for which society is in fault, are productive of a large proportion of the cases of insanity which exist in its bosom. But if to these we add the still larger number which arise from ignorance of the natural laws, which ignorance society should enlighten, we can fairly lay at its door almost all the cases of insanity which occur. I have advanced the claim of the insane to be received as *wards of the State*, and have shown that this State, by liberal appropriations at various periods to the two public asylums, have acknowledged the justice of this claim; but I have not, I trust, failed to represent the insufficiency of these appropriations to meet the wants of the *largest* portion of this class: my earnest, my importunate intercession, then, is in behalf of the *incurable insane*, who, lost for life to the exercise of a sound understanding, exposed to suffering and degradation, to neglect and abuse, and often abandoned of friends, are at once the most dependent and most unfortunate of human beings. The basest criminal, who distorts by vile crimes the harmony of social life, who is shut out by just decrees from intercourse with his fellow men in the open walks of life, is still protected by the laws which he has outraged, and his prison opens to admit the minister of religion bearing the holy word of life, the humane instructor and frequent visitor, whose counsels may inspire repentance towards God, and purposes of amended practice; but the poor wretch whom broken capacities and darkened understanding disqualify for self-care and moral accountability—who, as a young feeble infant, is helpless and unconscious—he is unprotected, unprovided for, *forsaken* of friends, forsaken of all! He is forsaken—but this will not last; civil and social organization are advancing to higher stations—reaching after greater perfectness.

I refer again to that valuable State document from which I have already quoted, and respectfully remind you that "it should not be forgotten, that what the State has now done, in the erection of the Asylum at Utica, forms but the smallest and most insignificant link of a mighty chain of *"merciful measures which must lengthen with our increased acquaintance with the laws of the human mind, and with the privations of that mind, and can only terminate when the insane are unknown in the land."*

I will not consume time by suggesting plans in detail for the best accomplishment of what is so much needed to meet these important claims. Establishing the State Asylum at Utica, together with that at Bloomingdale as the curative institutions, may I be permitted to suggest that four or six asylums in convenient sections of the State, established upon a *cheaper plan*, which, while it *assures every needed comfort* and most *careful attendance*, will not need the many extra provisions absolutely essential to a curative institution. These should be built in convenient situations, where abundant supplies of water and of fuel could be had without extra cost; and where extensive grounds for *exercise* and *cultivation* might serve at once to maintain health of body, and a degree of mental tranquility, and to contribute to self-support in some measure. Fire proof buildings well ventilated, two stories high, to spare labor and numerous attendants, these and other accommodations should be prudently studied. Cottages might be adjacent to a main building, for the most tranquil male patients, somewhat on the plan of the celebrated and successful establishment of *Ghiel*, connected with the hospital at Antwerp. Every Asylum should at all times be subject to the vigilant inspection of qualified and authorized persons, who should never *assume* the administration to be well conducted, but *be assured* of the absolute fact that it is so; this rigid supervision would imply no distrust of superintending physicians, or of subordinate officers and attendants; on the contrary, it would confirm and sanction public confidence, and stimulate diligent care into conscientious fidelity.

But whatever deliberation this subject may receive, whatever conclusions may be reached, I will indulge the hope that these will embrace a permanent mode of relief. The great seal of your State, which bears that somewhat aspiring device, the *rising Sun*, the *Heaven-*

*bright sky, the lofty mountain, the flowing river, the fertile plain,* and a motto that should not have been assumed but by minds stayed to highest purposes; nor retained, but by those whose lofty principles sanction its use,—your State seal is to me the pledge that you will not delay to remedy those corroding moral evils, to which I have asked your attention; that you will not be satisfied with having commenced a good and noble work, but that you will go forward to complete and perfect your system. I solicit your action *now*, on the various ground of expediency, of justice, of humanity, of duty to yourselves, of duty to your families, of duty to your neighbor, and your fellow citizens, of your duty to the Most High God, who, in ordaining that the “poor should never cease out of the land,” at the same time ordained that nations, not less than individuals, should find sanctification in the exercise of the higher charities, and the ennobling acts of life.

I am told that the world is selfish, that men seek only outward aggrandizement and temporal prosperity. I assuredly see much of this, but society would cease to exist if liberality and enlarged principles of action did not more prevail. I discover that negligence and folly, vice and crime, sweep widely and fearfully; but I cannot be blind to the fact that there must be a greater amount of care and reflection, of purity and integrity, else the fabric of social life would fall in ruins, and the intellectual become subservient to animal life.

In view, then, of the ascendancy of the more elevated principles of humanity, I renewedly solicit your action now upon the subject under consideration. I might recommend this on the low ground of expediency, and prove by numerical calculations that present complete and efficient plans would at no distant time be the cheapest. But while a fit and wise economy ought to be studied, I cannot suppose that you will, in consulting the mere saving of dollars and cents to your State treasury, lose sight of that justice and humanity which most ennoble human nature, and which should be your governing motives; these involve also the highest responsibilities. God, in giving to you understanding above the brute creation, and immortal capacities, has revealed that there is a treasury whose wealth does not fail, where riches may be garnered for the harvest of eternity.

Provide asylums which shall meet the whole necessities of your State; give to your sister States an example yet wanting, of complete

and sufficient institutions for each of these afflicted classes of the insane, and pause only till degradation and suffering are guarded against, so far as human care and human kindness may prevent the one or diminish the other. It will be said that much already has been done for these poor miserables. I know it, and that is why I expect still larger benefits to reach them. It is *because* men have begun, not only to discover evils but to apply remedies; it is because there is a clearer comprehension upon these subjects, that I appeal to you untroubled by distrust. It has now been learned by experience how much of human suffering may be diminished, how many ills may be obliterated, how much that has been deficient may be supplied, how much that has been wrong may be redressed. No, I will not believe that it is in New-York I am to find statesmen and legislators, who will return to their constituents and say to them that their decisions have stayed the sacred cause of humanity, and checked the work of justice and mercy. Am I importunate? Go, look on such scenes as I have witnessed in your State these last three months; you will forget all in zealously devising plans to heal these great distresses. Am I importunate? Importunity finds justification in acquaintance with the diverse and unfailing resources of this vast State, which open to energetic and vigorous enterprise the way to unprecedented prosperity. Except perverse in the extremest sense, except blinded by the most sullen self-will, except disqualified by the rashest movements, New-York cannot but be the Empire State in that wealth which is computed by ample treasures of gold and silver, as well as from its permanent advantages from natural position. It is hardly possible that prosperity should here suffer more than temporary interruption—a mote crossing the disc of your rising sun—a feeble striving upon a little surface, of your deep flowing river—a passing cloud, shutting out for a moment your sky-reaching mountain. Look around you, is it not true what I say? Look abroad, is not that real which I show? And if true, if real, if you are, in the adoption of your State-seal ambitious, without being vain-glorious; if you are great, without conceit; if you are just, without speciousness; if your noble motto is not a bitter satire upon your acts, then am I more than justified in the confidence, transcending hope, which inspires me while urging the claims of the most dependent, and most miserable portions of the community. Now, amidst the many acts, the various deliberations which consume time in your stately Capitol, consecrate a portion to the highest, most enduring interests—to perpetuating the

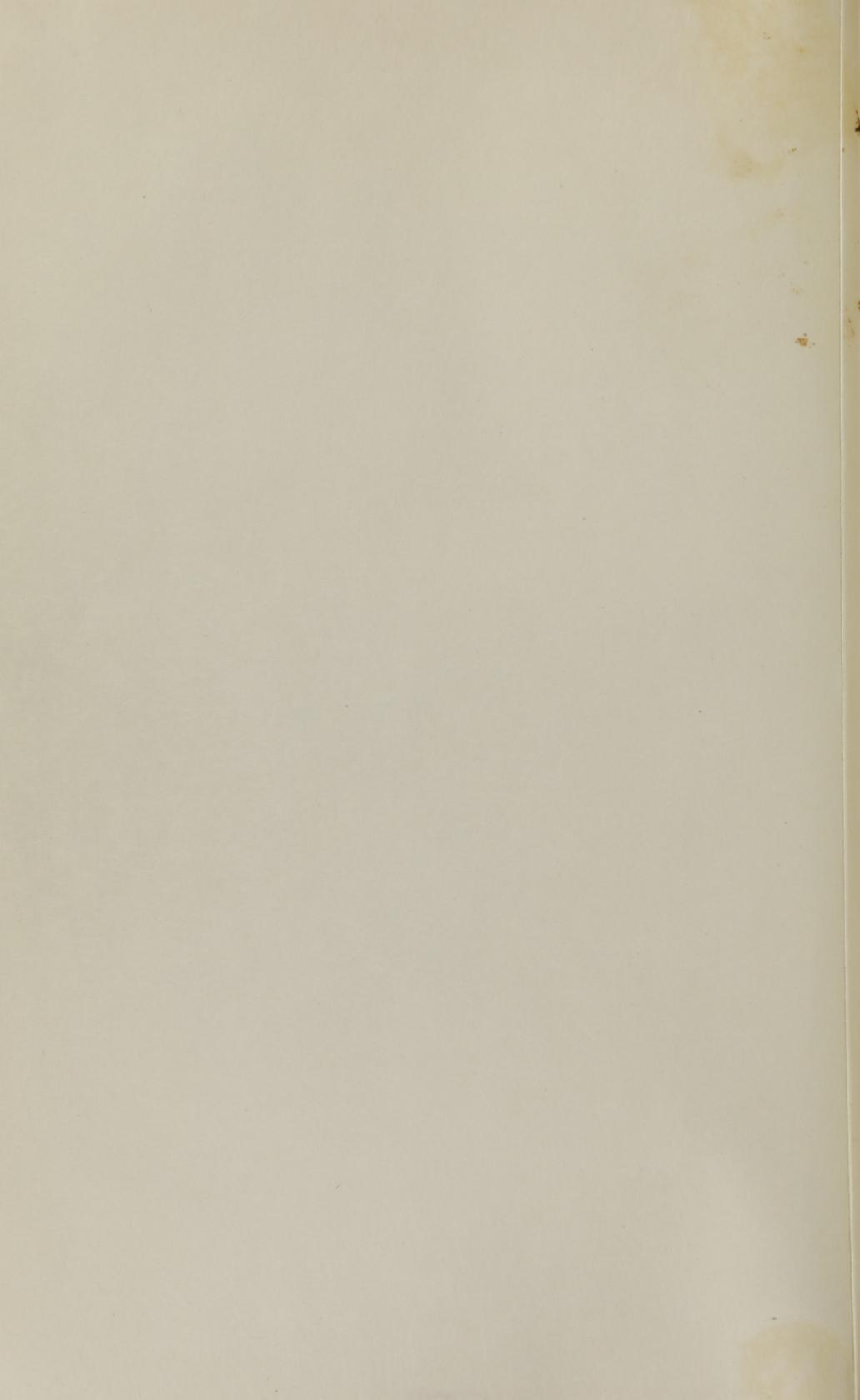
truest glory of a people aspiring to glory—the truest prosperity of a people eager to be prosperous—the truest good of a people emulous to advance! So shall the Genius of your State reiterate, with exulting voice, your sublime motto—

EXCELSIOR! EXCELSIOR!

Respectfully submitted,

D. L. DIX.

*Albany, January 12th, 1844.*





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