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VISIT TO THE INSANE.

A "Herald" Reporter Thoroughly inspects the Insane Asylum at East Portland—Interesting Account of What He Saw—The Patients and how they are Treated—Some Appropriate Suggestions—Vagaries of the Mind Deceased—Superiority of American Asylums when Contrasted with those of the Old World—How the Institution is Conducted—Etc., Etc., Etc.

[From the Oregon Herald.]

How few of our fellow beings ever stop to think what the inside of an asylum for the insane really is. There we look upon fellow creatures, some of whose pathways were once more flowery than our own; who were nurtured in luxury; who aimed, perhaps, to rank and station, and looked but for sunshine to cheer their pathway through life. We see those who were their mother's darlings—their father's pride. Here is seen the once loving, indulgent mother, but who now knows not her own offspring. We meet here the father who was wont to deny himself life's necessities in order to provide for his children, but who is now a raving madman; whose mania is the destruction of those who, with reason, he looked upon with pride. Here, too, is met the sordid usurer, whose desire for money caused the dethronement of a once powerful, perhaps very powerful understanding, but who now, with all his wealth, knows less than the poorest medicant who begs his daily bread. The devout doctor of divinity, to whom congregations would sit spell-bound; the deep-mouthed politician who swayed the minds of voters; the erudite philologist who revealed in the laborious love of classic tongues; the garrulous pedagogue who wielded birch without fear or favor; the leprous beggar and prospective statesman—

"Hands the rod of empire might have swayed,
Or waked to ecstasy the living lyre"—

Are met here, holding meaningless arguments, all living upon an equality in a Utopia of their own. How sorrowful it is to contemplate what numbers of unfortunates the asylums of many of the European countries contain. In the British Isles, with a population of nearly 27,000,000, there are nearly 38,000 insane; France, with a population of 37,000,000, exclusive of Alsace and Lorraine, has in her asylums; independent of the many patients in the private mad-houses, 31,000; Spain with a population of nearly 19,000,000, has 42,000; Italy with 25,000,000 inhabitants, has 57,000 lunatics; the Russias, including

Poland, the Caucasus and Siberia, has but 55,000, the majority of whom are in Poland and Siberia. Insanity, it is a well-proved fact, may be transmitted from either parent to their progeny. It has been known to descend in some families from parent to offspring for many generations. Again, a sudden fright produces the worst form of madness; a loss in business, deep sorrow or slighted affections produce the same complaint. In some instances its degrees vary according to the temperament of the person afflicted. It must not be understood, however, that the more stalwart the patient, the more ungovernable. That would be a wrong hypothesis, as the preponderance of physical power seldom has but slight influence to exert in the matter. The affection is the root. It is the directing power of the person afflicted with the malady. The difference is, when extreme symptoms preponderate in the more powerful, more force is required to restrain them than if they prevailed in the weaker patient.

SUPERIORITY OF AMERICAN ASYLUMS.

The system pursued in the treatment of the insane in America is superior to that of any other civilized country in the world. In none of the countries above mentioned is to be met the neatness, care, and healthful discipline that prevails in the insane asylums of the United States.

OREGON STATE ASYLUM FOR THE INSANE.

Actuated by a desire to pen a very brief sketch of our State Asylum, the writer, a few days since in company with another gentleman, paid a visit to East Portland, where the establishment is located. Upon expressing a desire to Mr. Beatty, the gentleman in charge at the time, to be shown through the building, that gentleman after making an apology for the absence of Dr. Hawthorne, the proprietor, opened a ponderous iron-meshed door through which we exited to the rear porch. A few steps further and another door to the left was opened, entering which we found ourselves in

WARD NO. ONE.

A large, spacious apartment in the shape of the letter T, into which male patients are received upon their first entrance into the establishment. On either side were the dormitories of the inmates of the ward. It was gratifying to observe how comfortable are these rooms. Each person is furnished separate sleeping apartments, containing one of the neatest beds to be met with anywhere; not only is neatness manifest in the sleeping arrangements, but moreover, in every particular throughout this ward. The closets, bath-rooms, ceilings, floors and the cheerful patients' dining-room (capable of seating 41 persons) exhibit by their appearance the untiring scrutiny of Dr. Hawthorne. Each ward is under the charge of an Assistant Warden, who is relieved in such a manner that the closest vigilance is observed during the entire twenty-four hours. Hot and cold water is furnished each patient, and, as a rule, all are compelled to bathe at least once a week. On the whole, the regulation of ward No. 1 is far superior in every way conceivable to the similar department in the Stockton Asylum of which the writer has had opportunity of judging. We now directed our attention to the inmates, some thirty-five in number, who evinced from the moment of our entrance

an insatiable desire, as expressed by their gestures, to ascertain the purport of our visit. However, not wishing to tire the patience of the reader, but a brief description of a few will be given.

A MAN WORTH \$250,000,000.

"This," said our guide, presenting us to a well-built, dark featured man of 30 years in the asylum. "Lake's insanity runs on immense possessions. In answer to a question he said he had on deposit in Portland, drawing yearly interest, \$250,000. He believes also, that he is the owner of the Insane Asylum, with the adjoining quarter section of land. 'Are you not afraid,' we asked, 'to trust so large an amount of money in one place?' 'Oh no!' said he very pleasantly, 'the money is in good hands and is drawing a yearly interest of five per cent.; unlike,' he added, 'some persons who go crazy about their money, and I sleep soundly every night.'

JOHN JAMISON.

Is another very curious character, who paces the entire day the north portion of the building. He believes he is beloved (though by no means handsome) by the richest lady in America. He rails unceasingly at those in charge for keeping him locked up; he believes they are bribed by his rival in consideration of receiving a large sum of money to retain him until her affections are weaned from him. He vows, upon his release, to visit legal punishment upon his imaginary enemies.

THOMAS JOHNSON, THE SLAYER OF TWO MEN.

Our attention was next called to Johnson, the most violent patient in the institution. Upon being assured that he could be approached with safety, we elbowed our way to the niche or recess in the wall, to where he was seated with his hands fastened. "What do you want?" he asked, in surly tones, attempting at the same time to catch the writer's coat. "Only to know what you are in need of," was answered, retreating from him. With every degree of truth it may be said he has one of the most vicious countenances to be met with under any circumstances. A low, retreating forehead, a pair of malignant, piercing eyes, together with a demonical expression of features, but too plainly speak what the unfortunate man would do were he allowed the privileges of the place. He has already succeeded in killing two of his fellow-patients in the ward, and has several times attempted the life of the Superintendent, at one time very nearly accomplishing his purpose. Not meeting more of interest, we visited

WARD NO. TWO.

In the south upper portion of the edifice. This ward contains the same features and conveniences as the one just left, differing only, in two exceptions—it is exclusively for female patients, and is but one-third the size. The women presented a far different spectacle than that of the men patients. Hardly an eye was raised as we entered; there was none of that prying curiosity so manifest upon our entrance below. Every one was busy with her needle, making clothing or adding a patch to some old garment. To the right of the large heater was seated sewing, Mrs. Lamb—"Aunt Charity"—who, with an axe, nine years since, chopped her husband's head off while he was eating supper, the facts of which are familiar to Oregonians. "Aunt Charity" is one

of the mildest patients, her countenance beaming with gentleness. The ages in this ward vary from twenty-three to sixty, the majority being in the neighborhood of thirty years of age, all of the younger of whom look much careworn denoting more troubles of the heart than body. When about descending the stairs, Mary Rafferty, or "Grandma," as she is familiarly called, insisted on showing how neat her chamber was. Mary's insanity is of a very mild form, and judging from the lively chatting she kept up, and her contour, she would not under any consideration leave the Asylum. One stout, elderly patient's malady is about the same as "Grandma's." She continually complains (notwithstanding the pleasant atmosphere of the building) of the amount of air that entered beneath the window sills. This poor woman no matter how warm the ward was, complained of the cold.

"The mills of the Gods grind slowly" is verified in a visit to an institution of this kind. Half unaware of our guide's attention, so deep in reflection was the writer, that he was standing before the ponderous portal of the ward containing the

HOPELESS PATIENTS.

Ere his thoughts brightened up. "This," said Mr. Beatty, "is the ward where the incurables are confined. We call this the filthy ward; for, although patients, without a single exception, are under abject control, they occasionally find opportunity to make the place unfit for even a brute to enter." To the writer's eye the place appeared as neat as any of the other places enumerated. This ward contained, at the time of our visit, thirty-two patients, as varied in features and corporeal lineaments, comparatively, as the signs of the zodiac. No mistaking their features; only one glance and the word idiot might be read in their faces. I remember seeing, years since, in one Fowler & Well's works, the profile of an idiot; the impression has never left my memory; there are not one but dozens, I might say, of similar profiles. It was useless to hold conversation with them, as they with a few exceptions, ejaculated with nods and grunts. One of these exceptions was a tall, well-built man, who, Mr. Beatty informed me, was a Methodist minister once. I saluted him and enquired how his health was. He gave me a very kind look; and, pointing to an inmate who continually kept muttering something to himself, said, "That man will never see heaven! he's as crazy as though he'd been moon-struck." We next directed our attention to the similar ward for females. This and the upper female wards are under the care of Miss Lizzie D. Hanson, one of the most kind and motherly matrons to be met with in any establishment of the kind in the world. Nothing could be gleaned from the patients here. I might say premature birth looks but too plainly in their meaningless features. This ward contains 28 incurables. After a glance at the innumerable comforts, such as bath-rooms, closets, dining-room, and the linen covering the couch of each of the women, we paid the Asylum assembly-hall a visit. The structure is situated in the immediate rear of the main building, and has lately been replastered and repainted throughout. The place will seat one hundred persons, and is used solely for the inmates of the institution. Service is held two or three times each Sabbath day, at which patients are

compelled to attend; happily no compulsion is needed, as our guide informed us, they evince a strong desire each Sunday to attend church. The pastors, to whose credit be it said, are revered by the patients, who sit with remarkable stillness during the sermon; a fact which reflects considerable credit on the clergy who preside, for their enticing manner of opening their sermons to them. On leaving the last place we entered the large enclosed yard used by the patients for play and recreation. There they can indulge to their hearts' content in leaps, foot-races, and almost every conceivable manner of paripatetics. The inclosure covers nearly an acre of ground, and affords ample space for indulging in their sports. The play-ground is undoubtedly one of the most commendable features of the institution. It not only affords good, healthy exercise, but moreover, has a wonderful tendency toward filling the void in the patient's conception. There he is restrained from nothing but violence, which, happily, there is no fear but from the one above-mentioned.

The laundry was next visited. In this building the patients' clothes, bed-linen, etc., are washed. The place is about seventy feet long by thirty in width, and furnishes hot and cold water to the inmates in unlimited quantities. The medical department, bakery and other places were visited respectively, and attested by their appearance the superior regime of the institution. A fact that should be mentioned is that the entire establishment is supplied with hose, and in case of fire the buildings inhabited can be flooded in very short time. The food supplied to the patients is of the very best quality that can be supplied, and none of the ward's island dieting processes are allowed. Good food and plenty of it is furnished to each person. With propriety the writer would suggest that, upon the plan pursued in Europe, an entertainment be given the patients once each month. The results accruing to science from such would more than compensate for the very slight expense. A magic lantern, a juggling performance, or any simple exhibition, would be sufficient. In France Italy and Spain were such entertainments are given, they have been most gratifying.

The officers of the Asylum are as follows: Dr. Hawthorne, proprietor and contractor; Dr. A. D. Ellis, State Visiting Physician; Dr. Ballard, Assistant Physician; J. Kenworthy, Assistant Superintendent; Lizzie D. Hanson, Matron; sixteen Wardens and four Matrons. Total number under treatment, 167; average yearly cures 40 per cent.

Stephen Girard, when he founded his great college at Philadelphia, made it a rule, for all time, that no clergyman should ever, upon any excuse, be permitted on the college grounds or within its doors. On one occasion, it is said, an individual with a white cravat was refused admittance. "Why can't I go in?" he asked. "Because you are a clergyman." "The h—ll I am!" said he, and he was permitted to enter the college at once as a one qualified.

The source of the Nile was discovered long ago by the Romans. They maintained that "Ex Nihilo nihil nascitur; ecce nihil," i. e., "The Nile rises from the Nile—that's its source."