

BLOOMINGDALE ASYLUM FOR THE INSANE.

AMONG all the diseases that afflict our fallen world, none is so dreadful as insanity. The wretched maniac not only suffers the waste and collapse of his physical organism, but is often tortured with the greatest conceivable agonies of mind. We can trace this disease back to the early ages. The Israelites were threatened with madness if they disobeyed the Divine command.—Deut. xxviii. 28. David feigned madness when he visited Achish. Nebuchadnezzar lost his reason; and Jesus of Nazareth wrought many miracles on the insane. The causes of insanity are various. Nearly one-third of all the insanity in the world is hereditary. The exciting causes from whence much of it springs are both physical and moral. In France the largest number of cases by far are said to result from moral excitement, but in England and the United States, from physical. Insanity, to a great degree, is an evil attending high civilization. Dr. Livingstone found but one or two instances of it among all the African tribes he visited, but one of the Bakwains, who was to accompany him to Europe, became insane from the throng of new ideas that entered his mind, and committed

suicide. Insanity was a rare thing in China under a galling despotism, but since the rebellion it is said to have much increased. In India and Japan there are few lunatics. In Italy, Austria, and Spain, less than in the more enlightened countries of Europe. In France one in a thousand is insane, in England one in seven hundred and eighty-three, in Scotland one in five hundred and sixty-three, in the United States one in seven hundred and fifty. These facts do not argue in favor of ignorance and despotism, but of a more serious attention and conformity to the established conditions of life and healthy activity.

The Bloomingdale Asylum for the Insane is a branch of the New York Hospital. The old South Hospital, erected in 1806, was for fifteen years wholly devoted to the insane. The Legislature assisted in the organization of this branch of the hospital from the first, and in 1816 increased the annual appropriation to \$22,500, on condition that the treatment of the various forms and degrees of insanity should be continued.

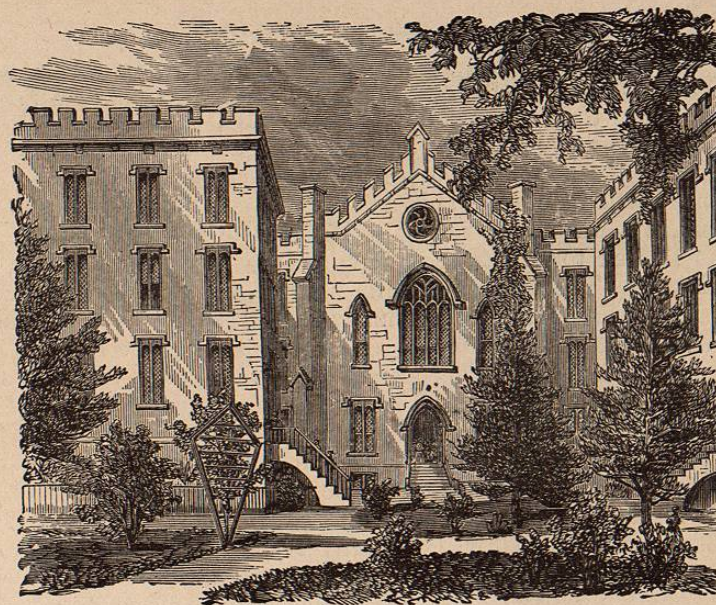
The propriety of removing the insane to a more quiet retreat than could be afforded in a great city was early felt by the "governors," and a committee to select a suitable location was appointed. The purchase of the present site and grounds, consisting of forty-five acres, was early recommended. Some considered the land at Bloomingdale too remote from the city, and the attention of the committee was called to several other sites; but, after examining each, they adhered to their original recommendation, saying that within forty years from that time it would be rather wished that the establishment were at a greater distance from the centre of population, a prediction that has been literally fulfilled. The Hospital at that early day was managed by a board of liberal and large-minded governors, who, without established precedents to guide them in their difficult undertaking, founded an institution for the insane, which, in its appointments and treatment, was far in advance of any in this, or in any other country. The Institution is situated on One Hundred and Seventeenth street, between Tenth and Eleventh avenues, seven miles north of the City Hall. The main edifice, capable of accommodating seventy-five patients, was completed and ready for the reception of inmates in June, 1821, and was at that time the finest building of its kind in the world. The "governors" resolved to give the

Asylum the appearance of a palace rather than a jail, and contracted to have the walls of marble, but, failing to obtain this, hewn brown stone was substituted. The ceilings are high, the stories furnished with ample corridors, the window frames are of iron, ingeniously concealed, the apartments spacious and exquisitely furnished with every comfort of the best-regulated home. Books, papers, pictures, music, indeed, everything calculated to awaken lofty and pleasant sentiments, are collected and grouped together in the happiest manner in this building. Lectures and exhibitions are at times added. The inmates are not closely confined here, as only the quiet and convalescent remain in this building. The edifice contains also the apartments for the warden and assistants, the reception and reading rooms, which are as quiet as if no lunatic were on the premises. A building for the more violent of the male sex was erected in 1830, at some distance to the north-west of the main edifice, and in 1837 another for females was added, situated in an opposite direction from the main building. These were originally sixty by forty feet, three stories high, constructed of brick, but were in 1854 much enlarged and improved. The original cost of the property somewhat exceeded \$250,000. The laundry is a separate building, seventy-five by forty feet, and three stories high. The washing is performed with machinery in the lower story, the second floor contains drying, ironing, and store rooms, and the third the dormitories for the domestics. The Asylum is capable of accommodating without undue crowding, which is never resorted to, about one hundred and seventy inmates, and is always full. The patients are classified and separated according to the form their mental ailments have assumed, whether monomania, mania, dementia, idiotism, or delirium à potu. Harsh treatment is never resorted to, and the appearance of the largest liberty is granted all except the most violent. The general treatment is arranged so as to recover from physical disease when necessary, and restore mental self-control by dissolving all morbid associations.

A part of the grounds is devoted to gardening, and a great variety of trees and ornamental shrubbery adorn the premises, making them a terrestrial paradise during the sultry season. The buildings are surrounded with separate and appropriate yards, where the patients enjoy prolonged out-door recreation during pleasant weather, without destroying the distinctions

established in their medical classification. Religious services are conducted every Sabbath by the chaplain, and are attended by many of the patients. The warden and matron appointed by the "governors" have charge of the buildings, supplies, kitchen, servants, etc. The superior officer of the Asylum is, however, the resident physician, who is required to be a married man, reside on the premises, give his undivided attention to the Institution, and who is solely responsible for the treatment of the patients. Patients are received from any part of the State, on such conditions as can be agreed upon, from eight to thirty dollars per week being required, according to their circumstances, three months' board being required in advance. The expense of conducting the Institution the last year was \$108,736, and the receipts from the patients \$107,852. The laying out of the Boulevard, which has become the great pleasure drive of the island, passing within a hundred and twenty feet of the Men's Lodge, where the most disturbed are domiciled, has laid upon the society the necessity of removing the Asylum to a more retired location. The experienced physician, D. Tiltan Brown, who has been connected with the establishment since 1852, has recommended that the new Institution be located where it can remain undisturbed by any large settlement for at least fifty years; that such ample grounds be secured that fifty acres may be appropriated for the exercise of each sex, leaving sufficient for gardening and farming purposes, and a still further extension for long walks and drives on the asylum property alone. He further recommended that the premises be not only supplied with an abundance of good water, but be as beautiful in their location and surroundings as could be obtained. The "governors" have recently purchased nearly three hundred acres of land at White Plains, with a view of erecting at no distant day at that place, unless a more eligible plot can be procured, large and commodious buildings, in keeping with the most advanced theories of treatment in this age. It will probably take a number of years, however, to remove the Asylum. The whole number of inmates under treatment during a year average from 275 to 335, from fifty to eighty of whom are said to recover; from thirty-five to fifty are pronounced "*improved*," a smaller number are returned as "*not improved*," and twenty-five or thirty die. The largest number are females, and the majority of all received between the ages of twenty and thirty years, after which the

number decreases with every decade up to eighty years. Early admission into an asylum is considered desirable, affording not only physical safety to the patient and his family, but greater probability of permanent recovery. The presence of relatives often greatly irritates the poor sufferer, enforced submission always proves sadly injurious, and but few possess the mental and moral faculties to successfully control the insane. The undertaking is the most difficult and dangerous in the world, requiring great sagacity, skill, and delicacy of treatment.



THE NEW YORK ORPHAN ASYLUM.

“The Orphan Asylum Society in the city of New York” is the oldest and one of the best endowed of its class in the United States. Mrs. Joanna Bethune was the original proposer of its plan, and has been pronounced the mother of the institution. This lady, before the Orphan House was planned, had been deeply interested in a society that cared for widows and young children, and as these widows died leaving helpless little ones, her kind heart often grieved that these, by rule, should be excluded from the assistance of the society, which they now more than ever required. Hence the step between a widows’ society and an orphan asylum became to her natural and necessary. The first call for the Orphan Asylum Society was from the pen of Mr. Divie Bethune, written at the request of his wife. Mrs. Bethune continued her earnest exertions in behalf of the society for more than fifty-four years, serving successively as trustee, treasurer, second directress, and first directress. She died in peace July 28, 1860, aged ninety-two years.

The act of incorporation passed the Legislature April 7, 1807, granting privilege to hold personal and real estate to

the amount of \$100,000, for the legitimate uses of the society. The power to bind out children was granted by a special act passed February 10, 1809, and in 1811 an act was passed granting the society \$400 per annum from the fund arising from auction duties. This annuity was continued forty-two years, but was discontinued in 1853. The original charter was limited to twenty-one years, and has since been twice renewed. The business of the society is conducted by a board of (lady) trustees, annually elected by the society, of which all ladies contributing one dollar and fifty cents per year are members. The operations of the society began in a small hired house in Raisin street, and in April, 1807, the society held its annual meeting in the City Hotel, on Broadway. The orphan children, more than twenty in number, were presented to the view of the public on this occasion, and an appeal made for means to provide enlarged accommodations. The public generously responded, four lots of ground in Greenwich were purchased, and the same year a brick building fifty feet square, and designed to accommodate nearly two hundred children, was completed, at an expense of \$15,000. Mr. Philip Jacobs bequeathed to the society two houses and lots on Broadway, a house and lot in Warren street, one in Pearl street, and a tract of wild land, the annual income of all amounting to about \$4,000. The litigation attending the acquisition of this property cost \$15,000, but in 1833 the court confirmed the bequest, which laid the foundation of the permanent prosperity of the society, and forms still the basis of its invested resources. The devastation produced by the cholera in 1834, which swept away the female teacher and a number of the children, induced the society to abandon the city and build an asylum in the country. Nine and a quarter acres of land were purchased west of Broadway, between Seventy-third and Seventy-fourth streets, and the corner-stone of the new edifice laid with appropriate services June 6, 1836.

The building was one hundred and twenty by sixty feet, with three stories and basement, and cost \$45,000. In 1855 two spacious wings, corresponding in size and style with the first building, were added at a cost of \$40,000, affording accommodations for more than have ever been received. The buildings are of brick, stuccoed in imitation of yellow marble; the yards and play-grounds are ample; the location

being on high ground, and near the Hudson, is one of the finest on the island.

The land purchased for \$17,500, with the growth of the city and the laying out of the new Public Drive, has increased in value to at least a million, and the managers have recently sold three and a half acres of their grounds for the handsome sum of \$300,000.

The society has purchased thirty-seven acres of land at Hastings, and contemplates the removal of the Asylum to that place at no very distant day.

Orphan children under ten years of age are admitted from any locality; they are clothed, boarded, educated, and trained to habits of industry, the girls in the several departments of the house, and the boys in the garden and yard. None admitted are allowed to depart until they have spent one year in the Institution, and have made some progress in reading, writing, and arithmetic. Children are indentured to married persons, keeping house in the State of New York, regular attendants of Protestant churches, and duly recommended by their pastors.

During the first thirty years of its existence the society received 931, and had an annual average of 170 inmates, which were supported at a trifle less than \$42 per annum for each child. Its family has at no time since much exceeded two hundred, but the doors of the Asylum have never been closed against a proper applicant. One room is devoted to infant orphan children, who are reared with great carefulness. No death has occurred in the Asylum in three years. The invested funds of the society bringing an income of about \$10,000, less than half the annual expense of the Institution, while on the one hand a blessing, have nevertheless proved a bar to shut away the donations of the benevolent, leaving the managers to annually struggle with their expenditures. The Superintendent, Mr. Charles S. Pell, is an educated gentleman, formerly principal of Public School No. 8, New York city, and has successfully conducted the affairs of the Asylum for twenty years.



COLORED ORPHAN ASYLUM.

(One Hundred and Forty-third street and Tenth avenue.)

This Institution was the first established in the city for the relief of the colored people, who had been for ages crushed under the tyranny of caste, and excluded from nearly every public and private charity. But the period arrived for a change in public sentiment. The emancipation of the colored population in the West Indies was followed by marked results in this country. About 1833 Miss Anna H. Shotwell and Miss Mary Murray boldly took in hand the matter of establishing a Home for colored children. Their earnest and continued appeals to the public secured in small sums at length about two thousand dollars, and in 1836 a board of twenty-two lady managers were elected, with an advisory committee of five gentlemen. A constitution was adopted, and the enterprise fully launched, under the title of the "Association for the Benefit of Colored Orphans." But so violent was the prejudice against the colored race, that three long months were spent in a fruitless search for a suitable building. Property-owners could be induced, on no conditions, to lease an empty dwelling for such uses. A small frame cottage was at length purchased on Twelfth street for \$9,000,

which the friends of the enterprise furnished with their half-worn furniture, a mortgage of \$6,000 remaining for some years on the property. In 1838 the society was duly incorporated by act of Legislature. The building purchased soon proved too small, and after repeated applications to the Common Council, a grant of sixteen city lots on Fifth avenue, between Forty-third and Forty-fourth streets, was made, to which several were subsequently added by purchase, and a suitable edifice erected at an expense of \$7,000. Here the operations of the society were successfully conducted for sixteen years, amid the waning prejudices of the people. But one last great storm gathered and finally broke upon this excellent Institution. The frenzied rioters of July, 1863, burst open its doors, heaped together its light furniture, which was saturated with highly inflammable material, and despite the efforts of a few brave friends to save it, was set on fire, and in twenty minutes the edifice was a smoking ruin. Thirty minutes previous to their entrance the matron had no apprehensions of danger. The Asylum at that time contained 233 children, who under the prudent management of the officers of the Institution, and covered by a special providence, nearly as striking as when the Hebrews were in the furnace, were marched through the midst of this screeching mob to the station-house in Thirty-fifth street, without receiving the slightest harm. Here they remained three days, crowded together to make place for the bleeding, groaning ruffians arrested by the policemen. When order was again restored, the children, under a strong guard, were removed to the almshouse on Blackwell's Island. When the children were marched out of their loved Asylum, so soon to be destroyed, a little girl picked up the large family Bible in the dining-room, from which she had been accustomed to hear read twice each day those lessons of Heavenly wisdom, and putting it under her arm she carried it to the station-house, and thence to Blackwell's Island. The apparel of the children, the clothing and private effects of the officers and teachers, and the records of the society, kept by the same secretary for twenty-seven years, were nearly all destroyed.

The managers now wisely resolved to remove the Institution to a more retired locality. Their grounds, with the rapid growth of the city, had now greatly increased in value, which they were enabled to sell for \$175,000; and a beautiful plot of ground, at One Hundred and Forty-third street and Tenth ave-