

organized during the following summer, the first commitment to it from the court occurring June 14, 1849. The original act contained no provision for buildings, and the inmates were for some time boarded at the Almshouse. The corner stone of the edifice was laid November 2, 1850, by Mayor Woodhull, and the building completed several years afterwards under the administration of the Ten Governors. The surface around it, now so smooth, was originally exceedingly broken, and more than a thousand cubic yards of rock were removed in preparing the site for the southern wing. The edifice is a vast longitudinal structure, consisting of a northern and a southern wing, with a large four-story central portion, and a traverse section containing work-shops extending across the end of each wing. The edifice is constructed in part of hewn stone, and partly of rubble masonry. The entire length is 680 feet, or more than one-eighth of a mile. The expense of its erection was at first estimated at \$75,000, as much convict help was employed, though a larger sum was required to complete it.

The central building contains the kitchen, store-rooms, offices, private apartments for the superintendent and others, and a spacious and elegant chapel, in which service is stately conducted by the chaplains.

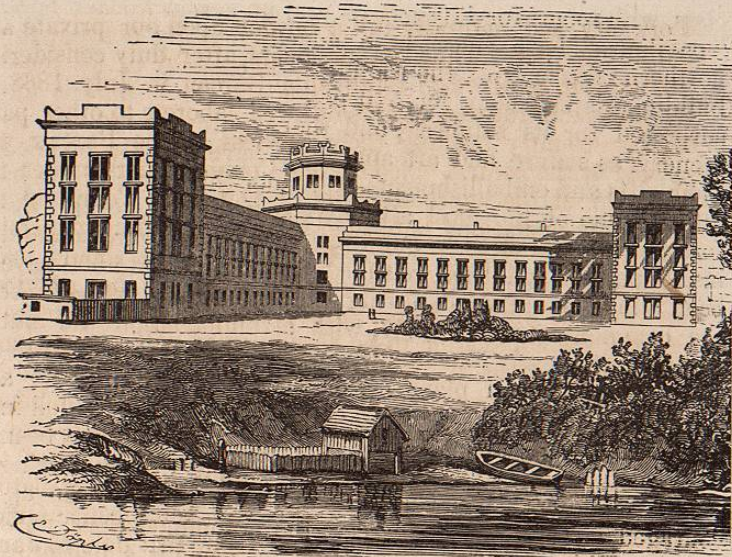
The long wings consist of a broad hall, skirted on either side with a succession of cells and sleeping apartments, which rise three stories high, fronted with iron corridors and stairways. Each wing contains 150 of these cells, which are wide, containing four single berths each, with grated doors, and are separated from each other by brick walls. The building is well arranged and well ventilated. One hundred and fifty lunatics have for some time been domiciled here, awaiting the completion of the new asylum on Ward's Island. The original intention of the building was not wholly for a house of correction, but an Institution in which the poor, unable to obtain employment, might be committed, and be, both to themselves and the authorities, profitably employed. As an industrial Institution for the virtuous poor, it has not succeeded, and is now devoted entirely to the vagrant, dissipated, and disorderly classes, who are committed by the police courts for terms of service, ranging from ten days to six months each. The larger number of commitments are for intoxication. It is mandatory on the magistrates to impose a fine on persons convicted of intoxication,

and in default of payment to commit them to the Workhouse. The larger portion remain but ten days, but many are committed over and over again for the same offence, called by the clerks "repeaters," having served twenty or thirty terms for drunkenness. The warden has recommended a change of the law, so that habitual drunkards should be committed for from six to twelve months, giving small wages to the more industrious. He believes that with an army of permanent laborers, large contracts might safely be made, securing a much larger income to the Institution, and the long confinement a permanent benefit to the convicts.

The men are kept at work breaking stones, grading, building sea-walls, cultivating the grounds, etc. The carpenters make the coffins for the various institutions, make and repair wheel-barrows, and carts, and toil in the erection of new buildings. Blacksmiths, tinsmiths, and tailors are employed at the respective trades. Companies of laborers are dispatched daily to toil on the neighboring islands. The women are detailed to toil in the numerous institutions, and are kept busy making and mending the garments of this immense population, and in knitting their stockings. From 15,000 to 20,000 of these convicts are annually received and again discharged, costing the public from \$50,000 to \$60,000 more than they are made to earn. But few of them are of American birth, Ireland, as usual, contributing the larger number, and Germany the next largest. If New York were purged of these dregs of European society, and her liquor traffic suppressed, there would be no need of this ponderous and expensive Institution. But as the tide of emigration is likely to still roll heavily upon our shores, and the legislation of the State to favor the rum traffic, there is little hope that the Workhouse will be deserted for many years to come. The establishment of this Institution has had a wholesome effect on the Almshouse population, as seventy persons were known to leave the Almshouse on the organization of this department. Many hundreds more, during the last twenty years, would, no doubt, have pressed their suits at the Almshouse if it had not been for its next door neighbor, the Workhouse, to which they were certain to be consigned.

THE LABOR BUREAU, though not specially connected with the foregoing, we still notice here as a matter of convenience. A much larger number of unskilled laborers than can find employment during the winter months are always in New

York city, and naturally fall a burden upon our private and public charities. The Commissioners, after duly considering this subject, resolved to establish a Bureau in July, 1868, to facilitate the transfer of unemployed laborers to other parts of the country needing their services. The Bureau was opened at the central office of the Commissioners, under the direction of the superintendent of Out-Door Poor, and the plan of its operations published in several leading papers of the country. It was proposed that employers should make application, setting forth the number of persons they required, the kinds of work to be performed, and the rate of wages to be paid, the application to be accompanied with a remittance sufficient to cover the travelling expenses of the laborers. The applications received did not offer sufficient compensation to laborers, and as none of them contained the money to defray the expenses of travel, the scheme failed. But the leading thought had been produced, and the next Legislature made an appropriation for a Labor and Intelligence Office. This was opened June 15, 1869, and from that date to January 1, 1870, there were 6,670 male applicants for employment, 11,813 females, and situations were obtained for 3,965 males, and 11,013 females. The labor of this office constantly increases and its success is very gratifying.



NEW YORK CITY LUNATIC ASYLUM.

In the year 1826, separate wards were set apart in the Bellevue establishment, for the accommodation and treatment of the insane paupers and patients. The large Institution on Blackwell's Island devoted to this use was begun in the spring of 1835, the western wing of which was completed in 1839, and the southern in 1848. The building is of stone, and consists of a central structure, octagonal in form, eighty feet in diameter, and fifty feet high, with spiral stairways rising to the cupola, a spacious and splendid observatory, overlooking the river, the island, and a portion of Long Island, and New York. The two wings, at right angles to each other, are each 245 feet long, and several stories high. The building at the time of its erection was one of the finest of its kind in the country, with accommodations for over 200 patients. A short distance from the main building, on the eastward side of the island, was also erected in 1848, another stone edifice 60 by 90 feet and four stories high, which has been exclusively devoted to the more violent class, and denominated "The Lodge." This has rooms for 100 patients. Another stone structure called "The Retreat," is devoted to the quiet

class, with rooms for 110 persons, and numerous wooden ones, "pavilions," have since been added, literally dotting the northern extremity of the island. The capacity of all these buildings is sufficient for 576 patients. The locality is unsurpassed for its salubrity, and the exquisite beauty of its scenery, as nature and art appear to have sweetly blended their gifts and embellishments, to render this home of the irrational one of the most attractive spots of the world. Before the erection of these buildings, more than four thousand insane persons had been received, and from 400 to 800 have been annually admitted during the last twenty years. At the commencement of 1847, with accommodations for but 200 patients, nearly four hundred were crowded into the Asylum, destroying all plans of classification, and proving a source of constant irritation to each other. In no period in the history of this Institution, have the accommodations been fully adequate to the wants of this large and ever-increasing class of sufferers. The Commissioners have never been encouraged nor allowed to increase the accommodations, until the over-crowding of the Institution has made it a matter of positive necessity. And it is an anomalous fact, that while every benevolent heart has throbbed over the woes of the aged, the crippled, the orphan, the dumb, and the blind, almost nothing has been attempted in the line of private charity for the relief of the insane, ten or fifteen hundred of whom now evidently exist in the county of New York, beyond what can be properly treated in existing Institutions.

A larger percentage of those admitted would have doubtless recovered if suitable space had been provided. The sensibilities of an insane patient are generally extremely acute, and the will often intensely perverse. His future character, even if incurable, depends largely on the treatment he receives during the first few months of his insanity. Harsh treatment, or excessive annoyance occasioned by discomforts, usually render him noisy and intractable; while pleasant surroundings, with government which wisely blends firmness and gentleness, exert a soothing and healthful influence upon him. Comparative solitude is often desirable, and essential to the recovery of a patient; but this is unknown in a crowded institution. The blame of failure can neither be charged upon physicians nor Commissioners, until adequate means are granted, thus securing accommodations and appliances for the successful conduct of an Institution. In their report of

1868, the Commissioners presented a detailed statement of the capacity of the buildings constituting the Lunatic Asylum. This was stated to be sufficient for 576 patients, but no less than 1,035 were in custody at that time, and the year 1869 closed with 1,181, of whom 150 were lodged in the Workhouse. Having received the requisite authority from the Legislature, the Commissioners have just completed the erection of a new Asylum building on Ward's Island, a few hundred yards west of the Inebriate Asylum. The edifice, a three-story English Gothic, with Mansard roof, was constructed of brick and Ohio free-stone. The central section and two wings present an imposing front of 475 feet, with accommodations for 500 patients. It has cost in its erection \$700,000. This building, which may still be indefinitely enlarged, contains every improvement yet devised for the safety and comfort of the insane, and will no doubt be a credit to the metropolis. But as over 1,300 patients were committed to the care of the Commissioners during 1870, they still need another Institution. In the early history of the Asylum, convicts from the Penitentiary were largely employed in taking charge of the lunatics. A violent prejudice naturally arose against this class of nurses, both among the patients and their friends, which very seriously detracted from the success of the Institution. It was difficult convincing the insane that they were not in prison when constantly surrounded by convicts. But it was found that for the restoration of reason, the ministries of persons eminent for their intelligence and goodness were required, and not of those whose whole career had shown an abandonment of the very quality they were now employed to restore. In 1849, the power to appoint and remove attendants was vested in the physician, from which period there has been a steady advancement in the management of the Institution. In 1850, a night watchman was appointed; the Croton water was introduced; knives and forks, and various other articles of comfort were supplied in the halls; and hired attendants substituted for convicts in most of the departments. The halls were many years without lights, and the inmates compelled to retire early or spend their evenings in the dark; but in 1868, oil lamps were introduced, which have since been displaced by gas fixtures, marking an important change in the history of the Institution. In the early years of the Asylum scurvy frequently prevailed, adding greatly to the mortality of the

inmates. With the abundant supply of fresh vegetables and other dietary and sanitary regulations, this form of disease has now almost entirely disappeared. During 1868, eight deaths occurred from scorbutic difficulties, and in 1869 but one.

The rate of mortality in 1847 amounted to 19 per cent.; in 1848 to 13 per cent.; in 1849 cholera prevailed in the Institution, and over 23 per cent. of the inmates died. In 1868, the death rate was  $8\frac{1}{2}$  per cent., and in 1869, but 7 per cent. In the autumn of 1864, typhus fever appeared in the Asylum, which caused the death of the chief physician, and of many subordinate officers and some of the inmates. The number of recoveries are usually reported in Institutions of this kind, though it is a matter very difficult to correctly ascertain. Of the 905 treated during 1852, 208 were discharged "recovered," 90 "improved," and ten "unimproved." The number reported "cured" amounted at that time to 23 per cent. of the number under treatment. In 1868 the cured amounted to  $31\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. of all under treatment, and in 1869 to 27 per cent. The smaller percentage of cases during the last year was caused by the over-crowding of the Asylum, and the necessity of dismissing many as "improved" who would soon have been pronounced "cured," if space had allowed them to remain.

A very large proportion of those admitted into the Institution are in a diseased or debilitated condition. Some have organic diseases of the lungs, others are epileptic, or anæmic. As they are usually unwilling to submit to thorough examination and treatment, the acumen and skill of the medical attendants are often severely taxed. Careful medical treatment is administered in all such cases, and a history of the treatment of each case written in a book and preserved. But having counteracted with medicine manifest physical disease, the treatment becomes simply moral. The patients are classified according to the nature of their disease and their susceptibilities. Appropriate employment is provided for those who have sufficient strength, and can be induced to labor with their hands, mental toil for others, and sufficient recreation and sources of amusement for all. A large amount of labor is annually performed by these persons. The men toil at building sea-wall, assist in the erection of buildings, follow their respective trades in the shops, and are made generally useful around the grounds. The women are no less useful. The report of the matron shows that during

1869, 5,561 articles of bedding and clothing were made by them, and 3,208 articles repaired. Some work at embroidery, and in the preparation of fancy articles for the benefit of the "Amusement Fund" of the Institution. Some sort of general amusement is now provided once each week to which the more orderly class are invited. These consist of stereoscopic views, readings, lectures, and musical entertainments. Concerts of sacred and secular music are often held. Books and the periodicals of the day are furnished to those who have any inclination to read. Some volumes are worn out with constant reading. But the most acceptable amusement to the great mass of patients is said to be dancing. A number of those most likely to be benefited by the exercise are assembled weekly in the gymnasium, and spend the evening dancing, which appears to be enjoyed by those who look on as much as by those who participate. The holidays are made seasons of rich and varied entertainment to those sufficiently quiet and thoughtful to enjoy them.

While the different forms of insanity present a subject of profoundest study, the various and often changing hallucinations, coupled with the freaks and idiosyncrasies of the individual sufferers, afford matters of lively amusement. On the return of reason, some awake as from a Rip Van Winkle sleep, to finish the conversation or complete the task that occupied them many years before, when they were plunged into insanity. Some during their mental disorders are transported to higher planes of thought, and are gifted with a power of conception, and a skillfulness of utterance, hitherto unknown.

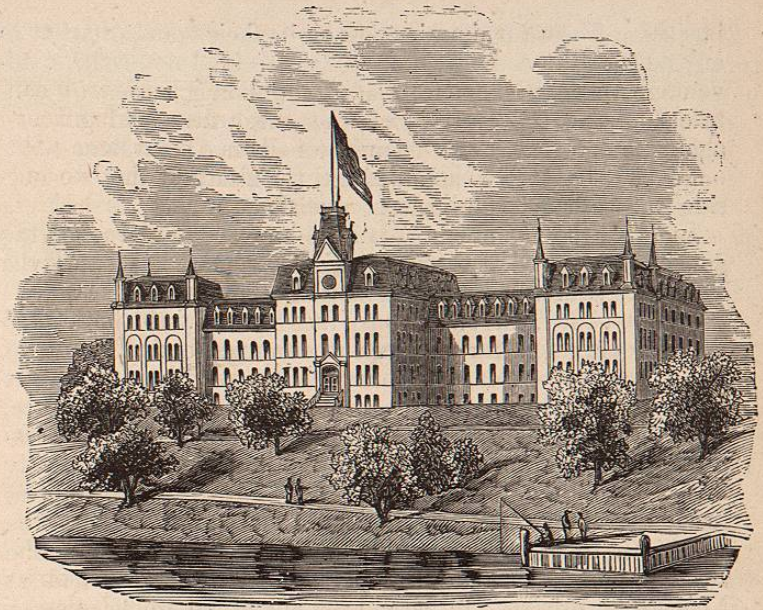
They declaim with great ability on profound subjects, and quote from memory whole chapters of standard works, which had been long forgotten. In this state of mind they compose poetry, and various other contributions for the press. The most amusing freaks occur among those suffering under what is termed *perfect mania*. With these all power of correct reasoning is suspended—one hallucination possessing the whole mind, though a hundred arguments lie all around to convince to the contrary. Dr. Rush mentions a man who persisted that he had a Caffre in his stomach, who had got into it at the Cape of Good Hope, and all the world could not convince him to the contrary. A maniac during the French Revolution insisted that he had been guillotined—that after his execution the judges had ordered him restored, and that

the clumsy executioner had placed the wrong head on him, which he had worn ever since. We saw a fine looking man at this Asylum who believed himself Jesus Christ, and was ingeniously inventing a language to address the world. Some believe themselves kings, queens, or angels; to be the Father of Light, the queen of heaven, the Virgin Mary, or the sister of Jesus. Inflated with such lofty conceptions they not infrequently remain speechless for months, counting it a disgrace to stoop to common mortals. We heard a friend describe an insane lady who for many months fancied herself a china teapot. She would sit for hours each day with her left hand resting on her hip, the arm bowed a little behind her to represent the handle, while the right arm she held upward in the opposite direction, to represent the spout. During all those weary months she suffered indescribable fear, lest some unwieldy foot should kick her over and she be broken to pieces.

As in the Almshouse and Penitentiary, most of the inmates are of foreign blood. Of the 680 admitted in 1869, only 157 were born in the United States, 308 came from Ireland, 156 from Germany, and 17 from England. Of the same class we notice that 375 were Roman Catholics, 206 Protestants, 27 Jews; the faith of the remaining 72 was unknown. Of these 284 were married, 267 single, and 46 widows. Of the 680 admitted 298 were males, and 382 females. 210 were between the ages of thirty and forty, 184 between twenty and thirty, 129 between forty and fifty, 30 were under twenty and 9 over seventy years of age.

The net expenditures of the Institution during 1869 were \$128,780.59 or a trifle more than twenty-eight cents per day for each inmate. The expenses of 1870 exceeded \$152,278.75.

The medical board is composed of cultivated physicians who with the accommodations now provided are certain to make the Asylum take rank among the noblest public charities of the world.



IMMIGRANT HOSPITAL.

## CHAPTER VII.

## INSTITUTIONS OF WARD'S ISLAND.

## COMMISSIONERS OF EMIGRATION.

THE Board of Commissioners of Emigration consisting of six citizens of the State of New York, appointed by the Governor with the consent of the Senate, to which are added as *ex-officio* members, the Mayors of New York and Brooklyn, the Presidents of the German Society and of the Irish Emigrant Society, was first organized May 5th, 1847. The Legislature has at different times enlarged and modified its powers.

The Commissioners are charged with the reception of all immigrants landing at New York, their protection from swindlers, and also the protection of the State from financial burdens in consequence of their arrival.

The Act of April 11th, 1848, requires each member of the Commission to annually depose before a proper magistrate that he has not directly or indirectly been interested in the