

River State Hospital. I have seen the good effects of such occupation and mental stimulus, and think it should be everywhere adopted. As you must know, mental exercise is important for the insane, and systematic application wherever incorporated has had its good effect. I believe all asylums would be better if they were detached, and smaller buildings and more of them. I believe every asylum should have a pathological laboratory and training school for nurses, and I am glad to see the adoption of these departments by certain progressive institutions.

If you will use your influence to antagonize the entering of politics into the management of the insane, you will help the superintendents in their work more than you can imagine.

In this State we are suffering from an incubus in the shape of an inefficient and overbearing commission, closely allied to doubtful political parties who, unfortunately, in a measure, have secured the support of certain party organs, and some medical men, who are at best but ill-informed as to their doings.

Very truly yours,

ALLAN McLANE HAMILTON.

FROM DR. A. JACOBI.

April, 12, 1894.

*Dear Doctor :*

I beg to apologize for not writing before, but I had nothing to say that was worth while. Nor have I to-day. I cannot give particulars, no dates, no names, that would be of any importance, only general impressions, which, however, are all based on facts. One fact which I believe can be substantiated is that our insane asylums have contributed very little to psychology or psychopathology. The plea of the youth of the country and of our institutions is not valid, for the whole doctrine is young, both here and in Europe. The actual fact is that our asylums have always been more or less gentle and genteel prisons for the mentally sick rather than hospitals. Recoveries are plentiful in our statistics. From them and from my own experience I know that the same person recovered four or six times from what was styled "acute mania." When I asked in several institutions for histories there were none; date of admis-

sion and almost nothing else; in many instances nothing else. Anatomical diagnosis was seldom, if ever, made. I know of a number of cases that died in institutions after years. Post mortem examinations had not been made, nor had they been asked for. The same thing in many instances. No histories, no diagnosis, no treatment, autopsy; only safe keeping and board regularly paid.

I know of a few men connected with this one institution who are away above the average. But they, I believe, will be the first and most anxious to admit that what I submit is correct. Further, deponent sayeth not.

Very sincerely your friend,

A. JACOBI.

FROM DR. ALFRED H. LOOMIS.

New York, February 9, 1894.

*Dear Dr. Mitchell:*

In reply to your letter, I do not think the present management of asylums in America as good as it can be made, (1) because asylum management, especially in the State of New York, is largely under political control, and the State Commissioners who are immediately responsible for their management receive their appointment on a political basis, rather than for their professional standing. In New York State the same methods are being introduced into their management as were heretofore in vogue in the county poor houses. No attempts are made to treat the insane according to the scientific advancements of the present day.

If I had the power to change it, I would have State Commissions composed of men having the largest amount of scientific and practical knowledge of mental diseases. I would give such a Commission absolute power of the appointment of the medical heads of all asylums, and such officers should be selected only on the basis of their professional attainments and executive ability, and their salaries should be liberal; they should have the power of appointing their medical and non-medical assistants. The asylums should be divided into two classes, one for the treatment of acute cases and the other for chronic ones. Each asylum should be equipped with laboratories and appliances for the advanced study and treatment of mental diseases.

ALFRED H. LOOMIS.