

drastic purges and starvation, and the substitution of baths, narcotics, tonics, and generous diet, is not less to be appreciated in the improved condition of the insane, than the change from manacles, chains, by-locks and confining chairs, to the present system of kindness, confidence, social intercourse, labor, religious teaching, and freedom from restraint. In this age of improvement, no class of mankind have felt its influence more favorably than the insane. But we should not be satisfied with present attainments. Much undoubtedly remains to be done for them. Good influences are everywhere operating, and we may confidently hope that what is overlooked by the passing generation, which might have been beneficial to them, will be supplied by their successors.

ARTICLE II.

REPORT ON THE PAST AND PRESENT CONDITION OF THE INSANE IN CANADA EAST.

By DOCTOR FREMONT, one of the Managers of the Quebec Lunatic Asylum.—*Read at a Meeting of the Association of Medical Superintendents of American Institutions for the Insane, June, 1850.*

Until comparatively lately in Canada East, no attempts were made to treat insanity as a disease, in many cases susceptible of alleviation and of cure. From the settlement of Canada until 1845, this unfortunate class of the human family were kept confined, either in close apartments in private dwellings, in the gaols of the different districts, or in cells made in buildings attached to and under the care of some one of the religious com-

munities devoted to the relief of the sick and infirm in the districts of Montreal, Three-Rivers and Quebec.

Before entering more particularly into the description of the condition of the insane in this part of the British Provinces, I would wish to be distinctly understood, that no remark or opinion expressed in this report is intended or meant to censure any community or individuals connected with the care of the insane, but merely the *systems* pursued and not the execution thereof.

The cells above alluded to, were nearly similarly constructed in each of the three districts. They were made in some buildings, one story high, surrounded with a high fence—they were from eight to nine feet square, and the same in height. Each had a small glazed and grated window in the outside wall, of about a foot square, and in the passage dividing the two rows of cells, there were small openings, also grated. Through these windows, light was admitted, and when opened, air. In winter, stoves were placed in the passage to diffuse heat. In summer, some very imperfect ventilation was procured by opening a window at either end of the passage. To each cell was affixed a wooden trough in the side, leading to a covered canal outside, which, if the patient would use it, conveyed his evacuations to a main sewer.

Little or no medical treatment was given to the cases thus in confinement, although a medical man was nominally attached to each establishment, who gave his services gratuitously when called upon.

The patients were ministered to by a man keeper for the male patients, and a woman keeper for the females. To keep them clean, the patients were, one by one, removed to a spare cell, while their own gloomy and miserable abode underwent the necessary process of washing and ventilation.

The patients in question were all at the charge of

Government, and cost the Province at the average rate of \$2 50 per week for each.

It is evident that neither the cells, nor the attendance on the unfortunate people confined therein, could allow of the enjoyment of external air or exercise, nor of moral or even medical treatment upon any system affording a reasonable hope of mental cure. They were simply places of confinement, without the possibility of beneficial effect upon the unhappy persons afflicted with the dreadful malady of insanity, further than placing them out of the reach of danger to others, and diminishing that to themselves which would have resulted from their personal freedom. Indeed, they were more likely to produce or increase insanity, than to cure it. The remark of one of the patients, removed from the cells, was original, and pretty correct; he incidently observed, "that if the Judge and the seven individuals who condemned him to be so confined, had themselves been retained there, as he had been for nearly eighteen years, he thought they would then be fully as mad as he was." This case, a complete wreck in mind, is an example of a large majority of the cases which had been confined in those cells.

This state of matters relative to the insane, seems to have been a mere extension of the accommodation which was found to exist at the conquest. At that time, four cells destined to the safe-keeping of the insane, were attached to the Grey Nunnery at Montreal; four to the General Hospital at Quebec, and two to the General Hospital at Three-Rivers, all communities of ladies, originally founded for the relief and care of the sick and infirm.

As early as 1824, many efforts were made by the late Honorable John Richardson, one of the members of the Legislative Council, for the establishment of a Lunatic

Asylum upon the improved principles which were the guides of such institutions in Europe and America. It is from a report made by a committee of the Council, of which this truly excellent man and philanthropist was chairman, that some of the foregoing information was obtained.

To show how little insanity, as a disease, was understood, it is stated in the evidence attached to the report "that the patients undergo medical treatment for their cure, agreeably to Pinel of Paris, and Haslam of London; instructions for which treatment are in the hands of the nuns!!!" It is obvious that the modern improved plan of treating the insane under those circumstances, was quite impracticable—medical treatment perfectly useless, and any attempt at moral treatment, not only absurd, but in truth, bordering on the ridiculous.

It was not till the year 1843, shortly after Sir Charles Metcalf, assumed the Government of the Province, that any successful attempt at a change in the deplorable condition of the insane in Canada was made.

Moved by his benevolent disposition, he directed minute investigation to be made in the matter, and from the information received, he deemed it imperative not to delay any longer some amelioration in the painful and distressing condition of this interesting class of afflicted humanity. Accordingly, a temporary arrangement was made with some medical men in the city of Quebec, for the maintenance, care and treatment of such insane as were then at the charge of the Government, in the districts of Quebec and Three-Rivers. Shortly afterwards, a similar arrangement having failed in Montreal, the insane from that district also, were transferred to Quebec.

A property was leased at Beauport, in the neighborhood of the city, comprising a manor house, an exten-

sive block of out buildings of stone, and about two hundred acres of land.

In September, 1845, the arrangements were completed for the reception of one hundred patients. Soon after, the patients from the cells at Quebec, were removed to this new temporary asylum. They were removed in open carriages and in cabs. Many of these unfortunate people had been from one year and under, to twenty-eight years in close confinement; and as a natural physiological consequence, most of them presented body and mind equally broken down and diseased; nevertheless, they appeared delighted with the ride, and the view of the city and river, trees and passers by, appeared to excite in them the most pleasurable sensations. One, a man of education and talent, whose mind was in fragments, but whose recollections of a confinement of twenty-eight years was most vivid, wandered from window to window. He saw Quebec and knew it to be a city; he knew ships and boats on the river and bay, but could not comprehend steamers. They were placed together at table to breakfast, and it was most interesting to witness the propriety of their conduct; to watch their actions, to listen to their conversation with each other and to remark the amazement with which they regarded every thing around them.

A few weeks after, the insane patients from the other districts were also removed to the temporary asylum at Beauport. Attempts had been previously made in Montreal, to ameliorate their condition by removing them from the cells to the Gaol; and the effects of even this change, were apparent in their improved state and condition. They were less violent, and their minds less weakened by close confinement.

The whole number in the asylum in October, 1845, was eighty-two.

The history of *no one case* accompanied the transfer of these unfortunate beings, but there was reason to believe that few, if any, were cases of recent date. Certainly, at least three-fourths had been in confinement for many years, and under circumstances that precluded the reasonable hope of any benefit being derived from any moral or medical treatment whatever. Very many arrived, chained and excoriated, furious and excited by restraints, and impaired in health by long continued seclusion. Indeed, the question with many was not whether they would recover their reason, but how long they would live. Of this number, five only have been discharged either cured or relieved. Since then, a number of recent cases have been admitted and as will appear by the returns, a proportionate number of cures have been effected.

In Lower Canada, before being removed into an asylum or deprived of his liberty, an individual, if of age, must be interdicted and declared incapable of managing his own affairs. This is done before a judge by the advice of seven persons, who are, or are supposed by law to be, relatives or friends, and as such, this assemblage is styled an *assemblée des parents*.

The establishment to which these patients were then removed, although vastly superior to those whence they came in means to allow the reasonable expectation of improvement to many, was far from possessing all the requirements necessary to the most advantageous treatment of such diversified cases as they presented. Nevertheless much was done towards the comfort and alleviation of their truly deplorable condition.

As soon as their muscular powers were sufficiently restored, the patients were induced to employ themselves in occupations most congenial to their former

habits and tastes ; some worked in the garden, others preferred sawing and splitting wood. The female patients were taken out daily and many of them engaged in weeding in the garden. The effects of this system were soon apparent in their improved health and spirits ; they became stronger and ate and slept better.

Considerable difficulty was experienced in finding suitable means of employment for our patients during our long Canadian winters. Whenever the weather would permit, those who could be induced to do so, were employed at various out-door work, and in shovelling snow and removing it on small sleighs to a little distance from the premises. In the evening, most of the patients, both male and female, amused themselves in dancing, of which they seemed to be passionately fond. Music and dancing, as a source of amusement and recreation, were found to be admirably adapted to the insane ; it seemed to divert their minds from their disordered fancies, without unduly exciting them ; and it induced many of them to take exercise, who could be induced to do so in no other way. Even as remedial agents, they were found of benefit. In one case, they roused a patient from a state of the most abject melancholy, and gave a stimulus to his mental faculties, which resulted in perfect recovery. In another case, they effected a change from a state of melancholy with strong suicidal propensities, to a state of cheerfulness and enjoyment, which still continues, and may yet result in a cure. Drafts, backgammon, books, and the daily papers, were also the in-door means of amusement and recreation at their disposal. The approach of spring, however, was always hailed by them with great delight, as the time when they could again employ themselves in the garden and grounds.

The total number of patients who were admitted into the asylum during the first three years of its establishment was 234, viz :

Males,	-	-	-	-	-	122
Females,	-	-	-	-	-	112—234

Of these there have been discharged during that time :

Recovered males,	-	-	-	-	16
“ Females,	-	-	-	-	14—30
Improved males,	-	-	-	-	7
“ Females,	-	-	-	-	5—12
Not improved : males,	-	-	-	-	6
Females,	-	-	-	-	6—12
Died : males,	-	-	-	-	24
Females,	-	-	-	-	26—50
					—104
And there remained : males,	-	-	-	-	70
Females,	-	-	-	-	60—130

234

Of the cases admitted into the asylum during the same period of time, forty-three were brought in within one year from the first attack of disease, and of this number there have been discharged, cured, 21 ; improved, 2 ; not improved, 2 ; and 1, died ; leaving 17 cases, of which five have subsequently recovered. The twelve remaining are improved, and with two or three exceptions are likely to recover.

The building then occupied as an asylum, though the best that could be obtained at the time, was not built for the purpose and was manifestly inadequate. It did not afford the means of carrying out the wishes and intentions of the managers as to the complete separation and classification of the patients, and from their increasing number, it became necessary to remove several to an-

other building in the vicinity. These circumstances, under an arrangement with Government, for a further period of seven years, led to the erection of an Hospital of such an extent, and with such arrangements, as to combine every thing necessary to the cure of persons afflicted with mental disease. The necessary contracts were entered into in December, 1848, for the erection of the Hospital, a view of which is hereto annexed, and the building was finished and occupied under the name of Quebec Lunatic Asylum in March last.

The grounds purchased for the use of the establishment, comprise 70 acres, varied in surface, well wooded and watered, and commanding a perfect view of the city, harbor and surrounding country. The Asylum itself is a mile and a quarter from Quebec, is situated on the north side of the Beauport turnpike road and is surrounded on three sides by the river *des Taupieres*.

The building is of gray limestone, hammer-dressed in courses, and is covered with slate. It is two stories high, surmounted by a dome, and possesses a basement story and attics. Its *facade* towards the road is 217 feet in length, with two wings at right angles to the front, each 132 feet long.

The entire building is heated by four hot air chambers and flues, all of which are placed under ground.

The establishment is abundantly supplied with pure soft water, which is conducted from the river *des Taupieres* into the building by pipes, and conveyed into cisterns in the attics by a powerful force pump. This pump is also fitted with hose to serve the purpose of a fire engine.

The building is thoroughly lighted by gas, which is manufactured from coal, in a separate building erected for the purpose in the rear. This building, similar in con-

struction to the main building, contains also a wash house, and other offices.

The establishment is fitted up with ten cast iron water closets on an improved principle. The contents are conveyed by iron pipes to large cess-pools placed outside of the building.

Sixty feet of the main front is used in the basement for kitchen purposes. On the first floor by the hall, the reception room, physician's office, and servants' dining room.

The second story is occupied principally, by the warden and his family, and the attics are used as bed rooms by the house and farm servants. The remainder of the front and the entire wings are devoted exclusively to the use of the patients. The male patients occupy the east and the female patients the west front and corresponding wing.

The patients on each side are subdivided into four classes. The idiotic, and those patients who are intractable or filthy in their habits, occupy the north ends of the wings; two day rooms, two water closets, and bath rooms, and twelve sleeping rooms are devoted to this class of the inmates in each wing. A corridor on the first flat, 130 by 120, and four dormitories, are occupied on each side by a class whose habits are more orderly. Corresponding day rooms and dormitories in the upper flats are devoted to a still more orderly class of patients. The front, on each side of the centre building is used by convalescent patients. Two large day rooms and six dormitories are devoted to this class of patients.

The establishment, as now completed, is capable of affording ample accommodation for 200 patients and their necessary attendants. The attic story, except sixty feet of the main front, is not fitted up, nor used, but is susceptible of division into dormitories and small bed

rooms to accommodate at least one hundred additional patients. As to the numbers at present in the Asylum, I beg leave to annex a copy of the last monthly return.

MONTHLY RETURN

Of Patients in the Quebec Lunatic Asylum, from the first to the thirty-first of May, 1850, inclusive.

Description.	Remained.	Since admitted.	Discharged.	Dead.	Remaining.
Men, 77	-	6	-	2	- 0 - 81
Women, 84	-	1	-	3	- 0 - 82
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Total, 161	-	7	-	5	0 163
(Signed,)	G. WAKEHAM, Warden, Q. L. A.				

REMARKS.

Of the seven admitted during the month, four are likely to recover; one is doubtful, and two are likely to be incurable cases.

Of the five discharged during the month, four were quite well and one much improved.

(Signed,)

J. DOUGLAS.

Quebec, June 2d, 1850.