

VERMONT ASYLUM FOR THE INSANE.

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VERMONT ASYLUM FOR THE INSANE.

THE Second Annual Report of this well-conducted institution, which, it will be recollected, is located at Brattleboro', was made to the State Legislature in the latter part of October. The first part of the pamphlet

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is occupied by a detailed report of the Board of Visitors, who seem to have just and enlarged views of what is desirable—nay, what is necessary, for the convenience and comfort of the patients. They complain of a want of funds to complete the buildings. Another wing, the cost of which will be about eleven thousand dollars, is spoken of in a way that should have influenced the Legislature to grant the means of erecting it at once. There is a culpable tardiness in finishing these public establishments in this country, quite discouraging to philanthropists. The history of many of the most deserving and praiseworthy institutions in the United States, designed expressly for ameliorating the condition of the unfortunate of our race, is a history of hope deferred—of dragging, mispent time and money. When the public sentiment is in favor of a measure of this character, there should be no unnecessary delay—no obstacles—no want of energy—no, nor want of money, when it is raised directly from the people who sanction the measure.

The board state that during the past year, eighty-one patients have been in the institution. Thirty-four remained at the close of last year, and forty-seven have been admitted; forty-five have been discharged, and thirty-six remained at the date of the report. In less than two years from the opening of the asylum, *thirty-one* persons have been discharged who were restored to reason and usefulness. This one fact is a triumph of which the State may indeed be most proud.

Another portion of the printed pamphlet embraces an interesting document from the superintendent, Dr. Rockwell, at whose appointment much satisfaction was expressed. He has pursued a course of moral treatment that cannot be otherwise than successful—precisely the same as is adopted by Dr. Woodward at Worcester, and by Dr. Bell at the McJannet Asylum in Charlestown, which have long been regarded as models worth copying everywhere. The following are Dr. R.'s remarks on the religious exercises at the asylum:—

“Our religious exercises have been continued the same as last year. We have family worship every evening after tea, when all who are in a proper condition are present. The exercises at those times consist of reading a portion of the scriptures, singing a hymn, and a prayer. On the Sabbath in the afternoon, in addition to the above exercises, a short sermon or a part of one is read. These seasons are a source of great comfort to many of the patients, and we have received letters from those who have recovered and returned to their friends, who mention these seasons as among the most interesting of their lives. In no case has it appeared to have an injurious effect, and in many, it has been the commencement of that exercise of self-control, and hope of recovery, which has resulted in their restoration. One patient who could not control her feelings, language, or conduct, or refrain from tearing her clothing, would behave with propriety during family worship. Whenever the usual family worship has been prevented, a general expression of disappointment has been manifested. Those who are in a suitable condition attend church on the Sabbath. Attendance upon these exercises is entirely voluntary with the patients.”

To do Dr. Rockwell full justice, and at the same time show the professional reader in what this moral treatment consists, a portion of the report will be hereafter copied into the Journal. Were our pages sufficiently ample, nothing would afford us more satisfaction than to reprint the whole of these reports from the New England Institutions for the management of the insane, as they appear from year to year. Wishing

Dr. Rockwell continued success, we hope he will never find it necessary to change a system hastily, which has accomplished so much, thus far, for suffering humanity.

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