

Second annual report of the trustees of the New-York State Asylum for Idiots.

Contributors

New York State Asylum for Idiots.
Spencer, John C.
Wilbur, H. B. 1820-1883.

Publication/Creation

[Place of publication not identified] : [publisher not identified], [1853?]

Persistent URL

<https://wellcomecollection.org/works/cb8t69zj>

License and attribution

This work has been identified as being free of known restrictions under copyright law, including all related and neighbouring rights and is being made available under the Creative Commons, Public Domain Mark.

You can copy, modify, distribute and perform the work, even for commercial purposes, without asking permission.



Wellcome Collection
183 Euston Road
London NW1 2BE UK
T +44 (0)20 7611 8722
E library@wellcomecollection.org
<https://wellcomecollection.org>

State of New-York.

No. 29.

IN ASSEMBLY, FEB. 10, 1853.

SECOND ANNUAL REPORT

Of the Trustees of the New-York State Asylum for Idiots.

To the Legislature of the State of New-York :

In compliance with the act establishing the Asylum for Idiots, the subscribers, trustees of the institution, respectfully submit this their second annual

REPORT :

For a history of the organization of the asylum, the measures adopted to make a fair and equal selection of pupils from the different judicial districts, and for an account of the system devised for the government of the institution, and for an accountability for all moneys received and for all property in charge of its officers, we respectfully refer to our first annual report to the Legislature of 1852, which is printed as No. 30, of Senate documents for that year.

The suggestion there made of an additional appropriation of \$1,500, for the support of ten additional pupils, was approved by the Legislature, and a law was passed to that effect. The whole appropriation for the present year (1852), amounts to \$7,500, and the whole number of State pupils is limited to thirty. The original appropriation of six thousand dollars for each year, made by chapter 502 of the Laws of 1851, expires on the 10th of July,

1853; while that made by chap. 407 of the Laws of 1852, of fifteen hundred dollars, was only for the current year. The Legislature of 1853 is therefore to determine whether the institution shall be continued or abandoned; and if continued, whether its capacity shall be enlarged to meet the urgent demand for its advantages to the most helpless of our race.

A recurrence to our first report will show with what caution, not to say doubt, the trustees entered upon the discharge of their duties. The popular and current opinion that this class of afflicted humanity were incapable of any essential improvement, had not been entirely changed by the imperfect information we possessed of the efforts made in other countries. Still, enough had been ascertained to justify an experiment on a moderate scale. It had been discovered that the term "idiot" very inaccurately described the different conditions of imbecility of intellect; that there were grades and degrees at great distances from each other; that the effects of bodily injuries had been confounded with original organization; that ill treatment and neglect had obscured minds naturally healthy, and finally that by proper discrimination and training, adapted to each case, in many instances the intellect had been aroused or developed, and new creatures born into the world. Fearing to trust too much to the sympathies and glowing hopes which such facts were calculated to excite, the trustees determined to test the experiment which the Legislature had authorised, by the same rigid rule which they would apply to any new theory in physics, viz: to see for themselves how it worked; to compare the condition of the pupils when admitted, with their condition at subsequent periods.

They have done so; and they now say, as the results of their observations, of their comparisons and of their deliberate convictions, that the experiment has entirely and fully succeeded. *All* the pupils have improved, some in a greater and others in a less degree. But the single fact of some improvement settles the question; for all experience shows that if a lodgment in the mind can once be made, it furnishes a foundation upon which further ideas, facts and combinations may be erected. This first lodgment is the turning point, and when it is accomplished, every

thing follows with more or less rapidity, according to circumstances. We have witnessed this rapidity in some instances with surprise, not to say astonishment. The process is as curious as it is interesting, and the manner of it, by commencing with efforts to teach what many animals are capable of learning, and advancing gradually and carefully, from step to step in the scale of intelligence, is admirably described in the appendix to the report of the superintendent which accompanies this paper, and which will be found exceedingly interesting.

The trustees therefore repeat and confirm absolutely what they intimated as their belief in their first report; that in almost all cases, and with very few, if any exceptions, those usually called idiots, under the age of 12 or 15, may be so trained and instructed as to render them useful to themselves, and fitted to learn some of the ordinary trades, or to engage in agriculture. Their minds and souls can be developed so that they may become responsible beings, acquainted with their relations to their Creator and a future state, and their obligations to obey the laws and respect the rights of their fellow citizens. In all cases, we believe, for we have seen what has been accomplished in apparently desperate cases, they can be made cleanly and neat in their personal habits, and enabled to enjoy the bounties of Providence and the comforts of life, and to cease being incumbrances and annoyances to the families in which they reside.

All the pupils to be supported by the State, will be, from the pecuniary condition of their friends, proper subjects for public beneficence, and of those from whom compensation for board and tuition is received, many will be charged with small sums, adapted to the ability of their parents. Such is the plan of the asylum, which, from its nature, must be beyond the scope of individual enterprise. In this respect it differs from ordinary schools and is like the institutions for the deaf mutes and the blind.

It should be understood therefore, distinctly, that the institution is not designed for the wealthy, unless in a few cases where ample, equivalent compensation is required for the benefit of the establishment; but that it is designed for the poor and needy, who are also idiotic, and who can not be redeemed from that sad con-

dition without the aid of the government. This is the simple and single proposition. The character of the State of New-York for its noble charities continued for many years under all circumstances, in providing for similar, but none more severe cases of affliction, such as the blind, the deaf and dumb and the insane, and for its munificence in furnishing education to all its children, who have capacity to acquire it, shows that the people of the State have sanctioned and approved the enlightened policy of their legislatures, and are ready to sustain other legislatures in judicious and economical appropriations to continue and perpetuate the same policy ; and the great interest taken by our fellow citizens in this asylum for idiots, evinces their appreciation of its peculiar blessings.

Assuming then, that this enterprise is not to be abandoned, the next inquiry should be, to what extent shall provisions be made for its continuance ? Various causes conspire to render a change of the present location of the asylum indispensable. It is found to be too much exposed to a great thoroughfare constantly crowded. Two railroads are proposed, and one in the course of construction, passing in the immediate vicinity of the present building and exposing the helpless and imbecile children to constant danger, however great may be the watchfulness exercised. The title of the property is such that it can not be purchased, and any additions must be made to the house at the risk of losing them. Land in that vicinity is much higher than in other places equally eligible. Although the building has so far answered a good purpose, its arrangements are not adapted to such an institution. A separation of the sexes cannot be effected, entirely, nor can closets and baths be placed conveniently.

In any event, we should recommend the procuring another location. It is very improbable that any suitable house can be hired, and if it be now determined that the institution shall be continued, its best interests will be promoted and true economy observed, by the erection of a plain building adapted in all respects to the purpose.

The size of the building and its consequent expense, will depend upon the number of pupils to be received. This number

must have reference to the probable extent of the demand for such provision, and to the capacity of one institution to meet it.

There are many reasons for doubting the accuracy of any census or other official returns of this class of persons. Their parents are unwilling to acknowledge to themselves that their children are idiotic, and are still more unwilling to proclaim the fact. Their condition, unlike that of the blind or the deaf mute, is often not likely to be known to public officers. The returns of the number in this State, directed by the act of the last session, are very imperfect. More than one-half the towns have made no returns; there are none from the city of New-York, and those from other cities are known to be defective. In those received at the office of the Secretary of State at the date of this report, there are returned 892 idiots, of whom 174 are under 14 years of age, and 718 above that age. If an equal number be added for the deficient towns, the whole number would be 1800. That a large addition must be made to this total, on account of the city of New York, and other cities, is evident. In 1825 the State census showed 1421; in 1835, 1684; in 1845, 1610; and the U. S. census of 1850, 1739. Since 1825 our population has doubled, and there is every reason to suppose the number of this class has kept its relative proportion to the whole.

From the above returns, as well as those made in England, where there is one idiot to every 1,033 inhabitants, and from other sources of information, we are of opinion that there is in this State one idiot to every 1,070 inhabitants, and that the present number of that class is about 2,800; of these we are of opinion one-fourth are under the age of 14 years of age, which would give 700 of that description.

This number is far too large for one school. In our report of last year, we expressed the opinion that more than 150 pupils can not be properly attended to by one superintendent. We are disposed now even to reduce that number. From the peculiarity of each case, the pupils can not be arranged in classes embracing large numbers; and when in classes, the training and education of each must be guided by an experienced and steady hand; assistants require constant oversight, and too many of them would di-

vert the attention of the superintendent from his appropriate duties.

A building that would accommodate about 100 pupils with the necessary teachers, servants, &c., would enable us to receive eight pupils from each judicial district, making 64, and leave room for 36 pay pupils, a number which would soon be filled.

There should be room for pay pupils, to afford an opportunity to those who are able and anxious to pay for that kind of training and instruction of their children, which can be obtained nowhere else in the State, and also materially aid the revenues of the institution.

Some enquiries have been made, and it is believed that sufficient land can be procured in an eligible situation, and a plain substantial building, with all necessary out-houses, can be erected, at an expense not exceeding twenty thousand dollars for the whole.

The State now supports one hundred and ninety-two pupils at the institution for the deaf and dumb in New-York, at an expense including the appropriation of \$5,000, of about \$155 for each. It also supports at the institution for the blind in New-York, ninety-six pupils, at an expense including the appropriation made in 1850, of \$10,000, of about \$200 for each pupil. Deducting the special appropriations, the ordinary expense of a pupil in each of these institutions is \$130 annually.

The children received at the asylum for idiots, must, necessarily, from their tender age and physical disabilities, require more care, and a larger number of servants than either the deaf mutes or the blind, and the latter contribute something by their labor to their own support. Still, it is believed from past experience and careful calculations, that sixty-four pupils can be supported and instructed at an average expense to the State of \$150 each. The deficiency, if any, would be supplied by the compensation received from 36 pay pupils, many of whose parents would be glad to pay large sums. In our judgment, an appropriation of \$10,000 each year, will be adequate for the support of an institution for 100 pupils classed as before mentioned.

The very able and interesting report of the superintendent, Dr. Henry B. Wilbur, which is herewith submitted, besides full information respecting the present condition of the asylum, contains some very valuable remarks and suggestions on the subject of an enlargement of the capacity of the institution.

We are convinced of the propriety of the suggestion made in the last report, in respect to the mode in which provisions should be made for all the indigent idiotic children in the State. From what has already been said, it is obvious that they could not all, nor could any considerable portion of them, be provided for properly at one school. Several schools should be established in convenient localities, where pupils may be sent from different surrounding districts. These schools would in time be furnished with practised teachers, trained and prepared at the central institution, by which uniformity and economy would be secured. It is obvious, therefore, that the sooner the central school is permanently founded, the sooner will this great object of educating this unhappy class be attained.

The trustees feel that they have now performed their duty in submitting all the facts within their knowledge, and all the considerations that careful enquiry and deliberate reflection enable them to present, respecting the continuance and extent of the asylum ; and they leave the subject to the enlightened judgment and sympathy of the Legislature.

There is a provision in the act establishing the Lunatic asylum, authorizing the managers to take and hold in trust for the State, any grant or devise of land, or any donation or bequest of money or other personal property, to be applied to the maintenance of insane persons and the general use of the asylum. A similar authority to the trustees of the idiot asylum may induce benevolent persons to bestow their charity upon an institution that so strongly commends itself to the noblest sympathies of the heart.

Our report of the last year exhibited an account of money drawn from the treasury up to 1st January, 1852, and of the expenditure thereof, amounting to,..... \$4,595 22

There has been drawn from the treasury for nine months, between January 1, and October 1, 1852, the sum of,..... 5,392 00

\$9,987 96

The appropriations were for the 1st year,..... \$6,000 00

The appropriations were for the 2nd year,..... 7,500 00

\$13,500 00

Leaving a balance on hand October 1, 1852, ... \$3,512 04

This balance will enable the institution to support the present number of pupils until July 1, 1853, when the appropriation ceases.

To the sum above mentioned as having been drawn from the treasury during the 9 months ending 1st October last, \$5,392 74

is to be added the sum received from pay pupils, ... 750 00

making the total sum received,..... \$6,142 74

This amount has been expended as follows :

In fitting up the buildings,	\$274 77
For furniture and furnishing bills,.....	650 91
“ stable stock,.....	72 00
“ salaries, wages and labor,.....	2,661 50
“ subsistence bills,.....	1,763 43
“ annual supplies,....	465 70
“ sundries of a miscellaneous description,.....	254 43
	<hr/>
	\$6,142 74
	<hr/>

These expenditures are examined and certified by the executive committee of the trustees, and on being presented to the comptroller, are paid by his warrant on the treasurer, pursuant to the request of the committee. The accounts are then audited and passed at once by the proper officers of the State, so that the trustees keep none.

There have been during the past year sixteen pay pupils in the asylum, of whom two have been removed on account of sickness, one has died of an old disease, and one removed to make room for a state pupil. There are now twelve of that description of pupils.

The full number of State pupils, authorized by law, are in the institution, viz, thirty. Of them, there are four from each of the first, second, third, fifth, seventh and eighth judicial districts, and three from each of the fourth and sixth districts.

From a regard to the feelings of their parents, and the future interests of the pupils, their names are not reported; but a full list of them will be exhibited to any member of the Legislature, on application to either of the trustees, or to the superintendent.

The teachers and instructors in the asylum, consist of

HERVEY B. WILBUR, M. D. *Superintendent.*

MISS ADELINE E. COLEY, *Assistant teacher.*

MISS FRANCES H. CLARK, do

MISS ELIZA LORING, do

Miss Mary Brown has the superintendence of the children out of school hours; one of the female servants assists, also, in exercising the younger pupils.

The applicants for admission, that have been refused for want of room, have been equal to the whole number received; all of them, it is believed, were proper cases to be selected.

The trustees cannot close this report, without expressing their highest and unqualified approbation of the fidelity, assiduity and devotion of all the officers and teachers of the asylum, to their painful duties. We again congratulate the State on the good

fortune of having secured, as superintendent, a gentleman so eminently and so peculiarly adapted to that place, as Dr. Wilbur. The success of the institution is owing to his unremitted services. The other teachers have caught his spirit, and a better corps could not be selected. To their united and constant attention to the bodily health, as well as their mental discipline of the pupils, are they indebted, under Providence, for a remarkable and almost total exemption from disease. Never have we seen so many children of their age collected in a school, and boarding together, so hearty and healthy; and when we recollect their natural physical debility, and their incapacity to take that care of themselves which is expected from ordinary children, our surprise is equalled only by our admiration of the system adopted, and the fidelity with which it is pursued.

The trustees desire it to be understood, that the asylum is, at all reasonable hours, open to the inspection and examination of our citizens, but especially of the members of the Legislature; and they earnestly invite the members to avail themselves of the opportunities to visit it, afforded by public carriages running every half hour from the city to Troy, passing the asylum. While their hearts will melt at the sight of mental deficiency, so hapless and miserable, a feeling of joy and hope will soon come over them, on beholding the successful application of those means of alleviating and removing the calamity which were devised by science and faith, and put in operation by the honored representatives and rulers of a people ready, always hitherto ready, to share their abundance with the children of misfortune.

JOHN C. SPENCER,
W. L. MARCY,
JAMES H. TITUS,
FRANKLIN TOWNSEND,
WILLIAM I. KIP,
WASHINGTON HUNT,
SANFORD E. CHURCH,
HENRY S. RANDALL,
J. C. WRIGHT.

Albany, December 29, 1852.

REPORT OF THE SUPERINTENDENT.

NEW-YORK IDIOT ASYLUM, }
Dec. 29, 1852, }

To the Trustees of the New-York Asylum for Idiots :

Gentlemen—It is now a year since I was called upon to make a report to your board ; but six months had then elapsed since the establishment of our asylum, by an act of the Legislature, and a less period since its opening for the reception of pupils. I could only, then, remark upon the favorable circumstances which had attended us at the very threshold of our labors ; report the number and general condition of the pupils that had been received up to that time ; notice the leading features of idiocy as illustrated by our pupils ; describe the general means adapted to their improvement, and finally mention what we anticipated as the result of our system of education in such cases.

We were then in a somewhat peculiar situation ; with one or two exceptions, those engaged in the management and in instruction of the pupils, were entirely inexperienced in the peculiar cares and duties of their positions. Excepting two or three, the pupils had never been subjected, either to discipline or instruction : they were very different in their habits, their character, and their age. The two or three, who had received any previous training, were not enough in number to form a proper nucleus about which the other and discordant elements would arrange themselves.

The first year in the history of the asylum has passed, and I think with very satisfactory results. We are called upon, at this time, to express our thanks to an all-wise Being, in whose sight

the distinctions of human intelligence are but as mote-wide, that he has blessed us with a remarkable exemption from sickness ; and that while His hand has quenched in death intellects of the highest order, it has been extended with a fatherly care over these, the most helpless, dependent and unfortunate of His children.

Our number of pupils has nearly doubled ; every judicial district is fully and fairly represented in our school, and the whole number allowed by law are now, and for some three months have been, in attendance. We have refused, while there was yet room, but one applicant of a suitable age. That was a case described by the family and examining physicians, as one of continued, violent and almost hourly recurring convulsions, and where in their opinion the life of the subject was very uncertain.

We have sent away three of those received during the year, after a residence of some time at the asylum, and a fair trial. One was in consumption, and died but a few weeks after leaving. Another was a marked case of hereditary insanity, while the third was afflicted with chorea, that rendered him entirely unfit for instruction or discipline.

Some degree of system has been established in all departments of the institution. All engaged in the instruction, in the management, and even in providing for the physical wants of the children, have been benefitted by the year's experience. Especially may I say of the teachers, that they now labor with more interest, a better understanding of the nature of their duties, and a stronger faith in the ultimate good results of their efforts. Justice demands of me this expression of my appreciation of the fidelity, patience and industry of all connected with the institution under my direction.

But, above all, it gives me pleasure to call your attention to the very marked improvements in the condition of the pupils ; to the fact that their present comfort and happiness have been promoted by their residence with us ; and, also, that the results of this brief period justify liberal expectations as to the ultimate benefits that our pupils will receive from such an asylum and such a system of instruction.

Even this brief existence of our asylum has sufficed to show the wide range of the benefits of such an institution ; embracing all persons of a teachable age, not otherwise provided for by the good policy and charity of the State, and limited only by its capacity and its means. It has sufficed to convince those who have witnessed our efforts, that we were attempting nothing beyond the reach of probabilities ; that our means were adapted to the ends we had in view, and that success must attend those means, in relation to those ends, as surely as effects follow causes.

It has been seen (to notice some general results) that our pupils are capable of some degree of order, as they take their places and conduct with decorum, in the school-room and at the table ; that they are capable of enjoyment from sources suited to their various conditions ; that we have been successful in finding a starting point in their instruction ; that we have adapted the steps of the educational course to the varied capacities of our pupils, as manifested in the marked interest with which they engage in the exercises of the school. It has been seen that there has been a positive improvement, in all cases, in the habits, in the diminished amount of trouble and care involved in their management, in their mental development, and in their moral character.

The special results will be best appreciated by a personal inspection of the school, and a particular observation of each individual case. I have, however, in an appendix to this report, given a list of the state pupils, and a brief description of their condition when received, and progress since.

I may add, that we have from time to time received from the parents and friends of our pupils, expressions of a grateful appreciation of what has been accomplished thus far, with many of the children.

In view of what has been done in so short a time, when all have been placed in new positions, to so unaccustomed duties, without the faith to animate them in the path of their labors that successful experience alone can give ; with but a moderate degree of system, so essential to success in any undertaking ;

with a class of pupils, certainly, in the aggregate, not above the average of idiots in the State ; in short, under all the disadvantages attending the infancy of such an institution, may we not expect still higher results under the more favorable circumstances and influences that are, I trust, about to dawn upon us ?

May we not feel the assurance, that all the faculties, or germs of faculties, in every case will be more or less developed, if there shall only be faithful instruction and a proper understanding of the idiosyncrasies of the subject ?

May we not feel certain (even when the most moderate anticipations only are allowed us), that each grade of idiocy will pass by such educational process into grades higher ?

May we not confidently hope, that some of these children upon whom the stamp of idiocy has been set by an erroneous public opinion, will pass in the future, and as the direct result of our labors, beyond the line of social disability, the line between idiocy and ordinary human intelligence ?

It may be well to state, here, that the means by which thus much has been already accomplished, have not exceeded the expectations of the originators of the asylum, nor the resources appropriated to the objects from the State treasury. I have all confidence in the sufficiency of our funds to carry us through the two years for which the appropriation was made, beside leaving us, at the end of that period, with some \$2,000 worth of furniture and stock.

With this experience as to the practicability of educating idiots, practicability as relating to the object, and the expense of accomplishing that object, there remains a question for your consideration, at this time, relating to the future condition and success of this asylum.

Two legislative years have elapsed since a law was passed establishing the New-York asylum for idiots, and making provision for its support for the space of two years, the extent of the constitutional power of the Legislature. To you was entrusted the carrying out of the provisions of that act. Scarcely had six

months elapsed, when, as a result of your suggestion, in the first annual report, of our having room for a few more pupils, and after an opportunity, very generally improved, had been afforded to the members of the two Houses and our citizens, for the personal inspection of the commencement of our labors, an additional appropriation was made. This addition was for the support of a number of pupils, to the very extent of the buildings which we now occupy. The expectation of the Legislature originating the asylum, and of the succeeding one, was, that if, at the expiration of the two years, the reasonable hopes of the friends of the institution should have been fulfilled, then should it be placed upon a more permanent basis, a scale more commensurate with the wants of the class for whom it was designed.

To you, as I have before mentioned, was entrusted the guardianship of the asylum, and in your testimony as to the success of the experiment, and your reasonable recommendations as to future State provisions, it may be, with propriety assumed, that future Legislatures will repose great confidence. The very constitution of the board is designed to give importance and force to any opinion or recommendation that should emanate from its members; consisting as it does of gentlemen, well known throughout the State, and residing near the asylum, and of some of the leading State officers, representing other portions of the State, and who might add to the influence of private character, the weight of official dignity.

It is for me only to present the facts at this time, and to make such suggestions, for your consideration, as would naturally occur to me from my experience in the education of idiots.

You understand, better than I possibly can, the deep-seated nature of the principle relating to public charitable institutions that has pervaded every successive Legislature for more than thirty years, and which has made New-York pre-eminent in acts of public benevolence and philanthropy. You, always resident in the State, and conversant with her legislative history, have witnessed the growth of this principle, from its first manifestation in a partial assistance to institutions of that character, founded by private endowments, till by successive steps they have learned

to lean, almost entirely, and with full confidence, on the strong arm of the State for support.

You understand, equally well, how, from the very nature of our free institutions, the obligation springs on the part of government, to care and provide for those wants of its subjects, the supply of which, are beyond the reach of private ability. Nor is that obligation diminished, but rather increased by the low degree, the infirmity, or the affliction of the subject.

Education, the highest want of any individual in a Republican State, becomes a necessity when he is thrown without the pale of society by any infirmity of his nature ; when deprived of any organ of sense, as in the case of the deaf mute and the blind, or when the reasoning faculty is measurably undeveloped, as in the case of idiots.

You understand, too, that such an asylum as ours, furnishes the only means of development to a class that can never be benefitted by ordinary methods of education ; the only means of enlarging their capacities for useful occupation and rational enjoyment, and the only means for removing or diminishing their disabilities for ordinary human relations.

You will appreciate the bearing of the fact, that idiots, for the most part, must be supported somewhere at public expense, if not in a State institution ; and when they are not thus provided for, the burden of their support and care often falls heavily upon those who, from pecuniary and other reasons, are not adequate to it.

You will appreciate the relation of such educational institutions to the police system of a State, when you call to mind how emphatically the want of intelligence in the class we have to deal with, leads to the commission of crimes often of a serious character. The annals of crime furnish abundant and forcible illustrations upon this point.

You must also feel, if convinced at all of the worthiness of our plan for the education of idiots, how grossly disproportionate are our present means, compared with those of other State institutions of a kindred character.

I should add a consideration, drawn from my own experience, that it is a mistaken notion that such children as we propose to educate, are all unconscious of their deficiencies, or unsolicitous entirely with regard to their position as compared to their equals in age. Many of them feel their inferiority, and have desires for improvement and elevation in the scale of being, but the desire, from the very nature of their infirmity, is not accompanied by the energy necessary for its fulfillment. Many of them experience delight in the acquisition of knowledge, for they can appreciate, to some extent, the good results of such increased knowledge upon themselves.

What, then, shall be done for our asylum? From what I already know of your feelings and opinions, I am assured that you would not consent to its abandonment; that you would not consent that our present pupils should be deprived of the means of continuing their education. The question can only be, in your minds, ought the institution to be continued in its present form, or should it receive enlarged capacity and increased means of doing good?

For the former, a continuation of the present annual appropriation (\$7,500) will amply suffice for the maintenance and instruction of the present number of State pupils (30), and give us, also, an opportunity of taking care of ten pay pupils, some of whom, as now, can be received for a very moderate compensation, when the pecuniary condition of their parents require a reduction of the ordinary charges.

On the other hand, to increase our number of pupils, we shall have to seek new quarters, for we now have all the present building will accommodate. We cannot purchase the building we occupy, and the policy of improving it to the necessary extent (even with the present very low rent), with any lease we could obtain, is a very questionable one. New buildings would therefore be necessary. These, with the land and additional furniture requisite, would cost some \$20,000, giving us accommodations for 120 pupils. With such buildings, a very moderate increase in the annual appropriation would provide for more than double the present of State pupils, besides giving room for a

large class of pay pupils, whose friends would willingly pay remunerating prices for the care and instruction they would receive. Moreover, with the widening of this channel of public benevolence, private charity would very naturally flow into it. Human sympathies can in no higher degree be enlisted, than in witnessing even what one may now witness within our walls.

The buildings proposed would meet the wants, which we now feel constantly, even in what would be regarded, from a casual inspection, as our present very comfortable building. We need apartments arranged with reference to the separation of the sexes; better classification of our children; greater conveniences for bathing and washing; better modes of ventilation and warming, and improvements that will suggest themselves to your minds. The very nature of the class for whom such asylum is designed would convince of the almost absolute necessity of having a building constructed from the foundation-stone, with reference to their peculiar wants.

That such increased accommodations are not uncalled for, I may mention, that we have already refused more applications than we have granted; I may mention that the number of idiots in the State equals that of the insane, and equals if it does not exceed that of the deaf and dumb and the blind together. I make this assertion after a careful examination of the returns upon the subject, made by the assessors of sundry towns and wards in the State, to the Secretary of State, in pursuance of a Law of 1852.

Neither could a recommendation, on your part, of such enlargement, be regarded as a premature one; nor legislation growing out of it a hasty measure. Seven years ago, a bill making an appropriation of \$25,000 for buildings alone, for this very purpose, passed both branches of the N. Y. Legislature. Dr. Backus, the originator and able advocate of that bill, presented such an array of incontrovertible facts gathered from the experience in Europe upon the subject, such a collection of opinions from gentlemen in this country (who from their peculiar experience were best qualified to form correct opinions), as to secure its passage.

That bill was finally defeated by a small majority in the Assembly, on a motion to reconsider, solely on the ground, that, at that time, with public sentiment entirely unenlightened upon the subject, so large a sum was inexpedient. No such objection can now exist. The favorable impression made upon the minds of the members of the last Legislature and a multitude of others, who have visited our asylum, has been carried to all portions of the State. Its reflex influence has been seen in the number of applicants who now seek to avail themselves of its advantages.

I trust I shall not be regarded as over-zealous in thus urging the claims of our asylum to increased State patronage. I have no ambition in behalf of the class of unfortunates, to whose education I have devoted myself, but that they may be provided with accommodations of the plainest character. I desire only that they may have such an education as they are capable of, an education of the most practical character, promoting their usefulness, their happiness and the public good; and such an one as is consistent with a prudent expenditure on the part of the State.

Shall an appeal in their behalf for such a moderate relief be urged in vain, when the deaf mute and the blind have received from that source with so liberal a hand?

Feeling, as I do, so deeply for the class in question; and convinced as I am of their just claims upon the State, on the score of philanthropy and a wise political economy, I leave, with full confidence, their interests in your hands, who are their proper advocates before the Legislature. I know your feelings of sympathy and your sense of responsibility in their behalf, and I trust your good judgment will sanction such a line of conduct in this matter as your impulses direct.

In conclusion, gentlemen, I hope that my administration of the affairs of the institution for the year past have generally met your approbation. I know that much allowance will have to be made for my inexperience in a post of so varied duties; but with whatever of short comings, you may have observed in the performance of

those duties, I have never faltered in my desire for the highest good of the asylum and its inmates, and that my labors might win your intelligent approval.

Respectfully submitted,

H. B. WILBUR, *Superintendent.*

Albany, Dec. 29th, 1852.

(APPENDIX.)

It may be well to introduce the following description of individual cases, with a brief outline of the general system of management and instruction we have adopted, and a description of the manner in which the time is occupied by the pupils.

The great principles of education are very general, if not universal in their application. The specialty of our system of instruction is only an adaptation of those general principles to the peculiar uniformity of our pupils. We have to deal with idiots, and I use the term in its generic sense, for our pupils present a great variety of grades and shades of intelligence. From what we know of the wondrous connection between the material and immaterial nature of a human being, we are led to infer, amid all such diversities of mental and moral endowment, that these varied manifestations of want of development are all the result, either of some defect in the physical organization, or some derangement in the natural and proper functions of that organization; both of which conditions may be innate or acquired. I may also add, that amid all the diversities just alluded to, there is one common point of resemblance not of a physical character, and that is the want of attention.

This want of attention, however differing in degree, is from an inability (resulting from some physical cause, as we have supposed) to concentrate the faculties and powers upon any given object; that is, the powers and faculties are not under the control of the will, to the natural and proper extent, from a comparative deficiency in the force or vigor of the will itself.

One peculiarity of our system of instruction consists, then, mainly in creating this power of attention; in the first place, by

exciting the will by appropriate stimuli, and then by its continued exercise giving it the capability to control the other attributes of the individual.

It should be mentioned, because of its relation to our mode of education, that there is a natural order both in the succession in which the will obtains the supremacy over the other powers, and also in the means by which that will is developed and strengthened. We see it in the infant naturally well endowed, and especially in the idiot, because of the more gradual progress in the control it first acquires over the muscular system; then over the intellect, and finally over the desires, the appetites and the passions.

That natural order in the means by which the will is developed, is learned by a similar observation, and the knowledge of it has its practical value in our course of instruction. It is first excited by the instincts, then by the appetite; still again by the desires, the intellect, and finally the moral powers. Thus a child is sometimes seen who, with no lack of muscular power, is unwilling to take anything in his hand. The fear of falling (one development of the instinct of self preservation) will, however, lead him to grasp with firmness the rounds of a ladder rather than suffer injury. Then he will hold food in his hand, or a cup of water, to gratify his appetite. Next he is induced to hold an object in his hand, to gratify his senses or his curiosity with reference to it. And so he goes from one step to another, the discipline acquired in accomplishing the lower enabling him to achieve the higher.

Physical training will, then, form the basis of all well directed efforts for the education of idiots: first, because of its direct effect to obviate the existing peculiarity of physical condition; and, secondly, because the gymnastic exercises constituting the physical training may be designed and adapted to develop the power of attention, in conformity with the natural order of succession, I have mentioned.

Passing, then, to the next stage of developement, it deserves to be mentioned, because of the same practical bearing upon our la-

bors of instruction, that there is a natural order in the development of the senses, and also, in the order in which different properties are perceived through the medium of a particular sense. We witness in succession the exercise of touch, of taste, of smell, and finally of hearing and of sight. We notice, for example, that distinctions of form are perceived before those of color, &c. These distinctions, at the outset, must be of the broadest possible character, to be properly comprehended by the pupil, and to constitute the starting point in acquiring perceptions of lesser differences.

Again, as soon as the pupil, by the habitual exercise of his senses has acquired an ease and readiness of perception, it will not be a difficult step to the reception of ideas of some of the more palpable relations of the objects of sense. No matter how simple the first ideas, for with proper effort they will prepare the way for more complex ones.

All through this educational process, the mutual relation and dependence of the will and the other powers is constantly manifested.

The apparatus we employ is of the simplest character; a series of ladders in various positions; wooden and iron dumb-bells; a tread-mill; simple blocks; boards with depressions of various shapes and sizes, with blocks to fit the depressions, to teach distinctions of form and size; cups and balls of various colors; pictures; the simpler forms of common school apparatus; black boards everywhere; special contrivances for individual cases; and last though not least, the extensive apparatus of ordinary childish sports.

With this imperfect statement of some matters that have occurred to me as aiding any one to comprehend our general plan of instruction, I will proceed to some particulars.

A certain portion of the younger and more backward pupils are placed in what may be termed the nursery department, coming into the school room only for a few moments at a time, at the opening and close of school sessions, when there is singing or

other general exercises. These children are watched carefully with reference to their habits of body and mind, to the best mode of commencing our course of instruction with them—the most appropriate first steps in their pupilage. Every means that can be thought of are attempted to attract their attention to exercise their senses, to awaken perceptions, to excite their curiosity and encourage their imitative faculty.

These efforts at the outset will be somewhat empirical and would be entirely so, without a knowledge on the part of the instructor of those principles I have already mentioned as constituting the basis of our art. Such, however, is the variety of our educational means and appliances, that a new comer, unless of the very lowest natural capacity, if allowed to range within the influence of those means and appliances for a while, will sooner or later furnish some clue, by some manifestation of observation or interest, to the best mode of commencing his education. Properly belonging to these preliminary measures is the imparting an idea of language; they learn their names; they learn to obey a few simple commands, at first aided by appropriate gestures; they learn the names of different objects, names of form, of color and other properties of matter, and finally of pictures.

Arrived at this point, we may commence with exercises more resembling those of ordinary schools. We have cards with the names of familiar objects printed upon them which are learned by the pupil. Before learning the names of the letters of the alphabet they are taught to distinguish their differences of shape and even to form them into the words previously learned. With such preparation, the step is not a difficult one to learning to read by the ordinary word method. They can receive instruction in drawing on the black board, gradually passing into exercises in writing; they can receive oral lessons in geography with exercises upon the outline maps; they can be taught the simple relations of numbers.

Within the year past, the range of instruction has been very wide. We have taught a child to walk when we first had to awaken and cultivate a fear of falling as an incentive to any efforts on her part. We have awakened perceptions of sounds in

ears where the sense of hearing resided without the use of it. We have developed perceptions of sight through eyes that had never performed their appropriate office. We have been teaching children to speak in every stage of articulation, and we now have very creditable classes in Webb's First Reader, in geography, in writing and in simple numbers.

I need hardly add, that with such a variety of subject and exercises, great care and judgment are always requisite (on the part of the teachers) in adapting the steps of instruction to the pupils' capacity; great patience in dwelling, sometimes with faint hope upon the points of difficulty; and I beg your attention to this fact in justice to the teachers under my direction, they have always to depend upon principles rather than rules.

I ought not to omit, even in a brief account of our daily exercises, to mention that we have a class of girls in sewing for an hour each day. Some of the little girls can do little more than hold a needle in their hands or even a piece of cloth, but they gradually acquire a curiosity to notice what the others are doing, and will in the same gradual manner make the first attempts towards sewing. During the summer past, the elder members of the class have made twenty-four sheets; twenty-four towels; forty pillow-cases, besides hemming a large number of pocket handkerchiefs. Their success already gives promise that they will in time be able to do much of the sewing required in such an institution.

Nor need this, or will this be the only industrial occupation to be profitably carried on in the asylum, when a series of years shall have given further development to the pupils.

Out of school hours, there is the same systematic employment of time on the part of the children, though with a studious concealment of anything that may seem like restraint during those periods.

The children rise early, the older ones taking a walk in the open air or active exercises within doors in addition to their preparation for breakfast. Considerable time is spent with the younger and lower grades of pupils in teaching them step by step,

and little by little in the matter of dressing themselves, from barely holding out an arm for the reception of a sleeve up to all the mysteries of buttons, hooks and eyes and shoe-ties.

After breakfast, the older ones make their beds and assist in other simple household duties. All take as much exercise as possible, till nine, the hour of school. At eleven there is a recess of half an hour with a slight lunch. School ends at $\frac{1}{2}$ past 12 for the forenoon session. Dinner is at one, consuming some time, as we regard it of great importance to inculcate habits of decorum, of moderation, and general propriety. Each is required to wait till all are helped, and then to eat slowly.

After dinner they are occupied in plays of various sorts, till 3, when school begins again. At $\frac{1}{2}$ past four school closes for the day. Then follow, with a short interval for supper, under the supervision of intelligent persons, a great variety of exercises and amusements. We have military exercises for the boys; gymnastic exercises for the girls; dancing, singing, games of various sorts. These all deserve as high a place in any system of education for idiots as the more customary matters of instruction, and they are carried on here under as much supervision as the school exercises. It is in these out of school employments that the pupils acquire that little every day knowledge and judgment, that they are so entirely destitute of when they come to us.

On the Sabbath, they are divided into smaller companies and scattered through the house, to encourage a more quiet deportment than on other days. We are compelled, however, to have systematic exercises on that day. In the afternoon, the older children have a sunday-school, in which they are taught simple moral duties, scripture history in its simplest form, and children's songs.

In the evening they spend an hour in listening to the reading of such stories as are adapted to their comprehension, manifesting much interest and pleasure.

Were we at a more convenient access from any house of religious worship, we have quite a class that would conduct them-

selves with propriety in attending it, and would certainly receive one benefit from it, that of increased reverence.

From a residence of a longer or shorter period under the circumstance and influences I have mentioned, the results have been as described in the following cases.

These descriptions are given without any reference to scientific order of accuracy; and as far as possible, in the very language of the reports sent us by the family physicians in every case, and upon which they are based, and in the testimony of the parents. As to the results given, the approach to and progress in the ordinary acquirements of children are not fair exponents of their real mental development.

CASE No. 1.

A lad of 10 years old, well formed, healthy and cleanly in his habits, though of rather irritable temper, and quite mischievous; he came October 29th, 1851; he did not speak at all till five years old; could not tell his age; did not know a single letter; could not count or distinguish colors; was excessively timid.

Cause—had severe convulsions when a year old, lasting for ten days.

He is now much less mischievous; less irritable and nervous; he knows two-thirds of the letters of the alphabet; can spell quite a number of words; can count 15; has quite an idea of forms and colors; can form some letters on the black-board, and is in a class in drawing, and also in Webb's First Reader.

CASE No. 2.

A boy of 10 years old, idiotic from birth; well formed, healthy, good tempered, though somewhat passionate; he feeds himself with his fingers, not stopping to masticate his food; he is inattentive to the calls of nature; came October 29th, 1852; could not speak a word; had no idea of language, not even knowing his own name when called; would not hold anything in his hands except food; was excessively timid; he now feeds himself very well with a fork; knows his own name; will obey some simple commands; holds anything in his hands; will sit or stand still

when required; can assist himself more in dressing or undressing; will pick up blocks and place them in a wheelbarrow, when commanded; will go up and down ladders when told, and takes pleasure in marching.

His father wrote, after seeing him at the end of his first three months with us: "I can truly say there was more of a change in him than I expected to see in so short a time."

CASE No. 3.

A boy of 8 years old; well formed, though walking badly; healthy, and excessively irritable; feeds himself with his fingers, and has no idea of cleanness; has a constant habit of biting his hands, and is always covered with saliva to the waist; he came October 30th, 1852; he did not speak a word, and knew the meaning of but few words, if any.

Cause—the idiocy is ascribed by the parents to the sudden disappearance of a cutaneous disease of the scalp, when one year old.

This boy was so entirely unmanageable, when first received, that we were compelled, for awhile, to forego any attempts to govern. He had not been accustomed to wearing shoes and stockings, and he resisted all our efforts to keep them on him. He would pull them off as often as they were put on, and when his hands were confined, he would stoop down and tear them off with his teeth; he screamed regularly every day, till nearly noon; in an attempt to conquer him by holding him, I was compelled to retire from the conquest vanquished, carrying the marks of his teeth in my hands for some time; I then thought I would trust to time, and the influence of the discipline of the school, to acquire control over him, taking care never to require anything of him but what I could compel him by main force to do. This course of proceeding is beginning to have the desired effect; he now obeys many little commands; is very much under the control of my will; though one of our lowest pupils, he still manifests a very decided improvement in all respects; such was the gratifying testimony of his father who lately visited him.

CASE No. 4.

A boy of 11 years old; well formed, healthy, good tempered, and cleanly in his habits; came Nov. 7th, 1851. He speaks with occasional stammering; he was slightly mischievous in his propensities; could not be taught to read or write, or count, or distinguish colors by ordinary methods of instruction; he is now reading in a class in Webb's Reader; is in our first class in arithmetic, adding simple numbers; he is in a class in geography, and quite familiar with all the leading features of several of our series of outline maps; he is in a class in drawing on the black-board, and can also make any of the letters of the alphabet; he has much more confidence in himself; takes the lead in all the sports of childhood, and will unquestionably finish his education in a common school.

CASE No. 5.

A girl of 11 years old; peculiar from birth; now healthy. There is a peculiar form of the head in her case, and a slight deformity of the limbs; she came November 27th, 1851; she was quite mischievous, with a propensity to hide herself; could not be left alone with children, from a propensity to hurt them; very frank to confess her offences, and very penitent after committing them; she was excessively nervous and talked very indistinctly; she knew many of her letters, but could not read or write.

She has now been with us thirteen months; she is steadily improving in mental condition, as in all her habits; she is much less nervous; articulates much better; she has gone through nearly all of Webb's First Reader, and reads well what she does read; she is learning to form the letters in writing; is studying geography and arithmetic, and I think no one who should now see her, would doubt her ability eventually to master all the common school studies of children.

Her wayward propensities have almost entirely disappeared under the influence of the constant occupation of her time; she now sews very well; assists in many little domestic matters, and will in time be capable of performing all customary household duties.

CASE No. 6.

A boy of 12 years old ; very small of his age, but with an old looking face ; peculiar from birth ; has always been healthy.

Came May 5th, 1852 ; he did not speak but a few words ; could not distinguish colors ; had no idea of numbers, and did not know a letter. He was, in general, good tempered, though very obstinate at times.

We began with teaching him to notice distinctions of forms ; then of colors. He very soon began to improve in all respects, and has been jumping from one class to another, so that he will soon be in our first class in all branches.

CASE No. 7.

A boy of 13 years old ; pretty well formed, but with rather a singular face ; healthy ; not bad tempered, but from having frequently been teased by other boys, was rather quarrelsome ; he did not attempt to speak till 9 years old ; idiotic from birth.

He came Nov. 7th, 1851 ; he could speak only a few words, and those quite indistinctly, and could not give his own name so as to be understood ; he did not know a single letter ; could not read or write, or count, or distinguish colors by name ; he had a strong propensity to take what did not belong to him ; a daily search in his pockets resulted almost invariably in finding something thus taken. He would show considerable ingenuity in secreting such articles. This propensity would have brought him, sooner or later, to close confinement, had he been left without a proper education.

We commenced in this case with teaching him to put away the letters of the alphabet in their appropriate places on the letter board, then with forming them into words, together with daily exercises in articulation, taking advantage of an idea of form which he possessed more than most of our pupils ; we gave him lessons in drawing on a black board with a crayon ; at first, from a want of control of the muscles of the hand, his attempts in imitating simple marks, were very clumsy, but he now writes well and rapidly, either with a copy or from print ; he can draw houses

and other simple objects ; he speaks with much more distinctness, and is in our first class in reading, in geography and arithmetic.

The change in his moral character is no less marked ; he is getting to be quite an affectionate boy, and is now regarded with very different feelings by all concerned in his care and instruction ; the habit of petty thieving is almost entirely broken up.

One peculiarity in his case will strike the observation of any one, and that is, the power of utterance is far behind his real knowledge of language ; he has picked up from some of the other boys the deaf and dumb alphabet, and when asked any question, his first impulse is to spell the answer on his hands.

CASES NOS. 8 AND 9.

Natty and Willie—boys of 7 and 8 years old, taken from what is called the idiot-house, on Randall's Island, an island occupied by the alms-house department of the city of New-York, for the residence of the children supported at the city's expense.

There were no applications from the first judicial district at the opening of the asylum, and I, in company with one of the board of trustees, visited the island. These two were selected on account of their age. Both had been regarded as idiots from birth ; both were partially paralyzed ; both entirely dumb, though comprehending some simple commands, and the names of a few familiar objects. The resident physician of the establishment, who was absent when I made the selection, thought it an unfortunate one, as he feared the pupils in question would never do any credit to the new State charity. They made their appearance, however, on the 14th of Dec., 1851, in company with another child taken from a cellar in New-York city.

I hurried them into the bathing room, to be washed, and brushed, and combed, and aproned, after their journey, before they should be seen by the teachers, for I feared the discouraging influence upon my new assistants of seeing these poor unfortunate children.

But they soon felt the genial influence of our special system of instruction adapted to their wants and deficiencies, and

returned a daily recompense for the care and labor bestowed upon them, in increasing intelligence, increasing animation, and increasing desire of knowledge.

We commenced at first by teaching the names of objects about the room, then those in a wider circle. One of the first lessons was the names of different parts of a door, as the lock, the handle, the bolt, and key; then the command to open and shut it. After a while came the study of forms and colors, and size; then lessons with pictures. They were taught to notice the differences in the forms of letters, by exercises upon a letter-board. Then followed words printed on cards, as the representatives of objects. Sufficient regard, I must confess, has not been had in these cases to the physical training or to exercises in articulation, for their wondrously rapid mental development has engrossed our attention.

They were taught to spell words at command, by pointing out the letters composing them on an alphabetical card. Then came lessons upon the outline maps, designed, at first, mainly to cultivate the power of attention and a habit of rapid thinking. They learned to count, and also some of the simple relations of numbers.

Finding that their progress in articulation did not keep pace with their improvement in other respects, we were compelled to teach them the deaf mute alphabet. During all this course of instruction they have kept nearly side by side, the one excelling in one branch to be left a little in the rear by the other in some other study.

Nor has their moral education been neglected. Willie was described as very irritable by those who had previously had him in charge. He is now very much more easily governed. Natty, amiable and affectionate from the beginning, is now still more lovable and interesting, because his countenance is now more radiant with the expression of the kindly feelings that animate him, and because he is now more capable of expressing his affections.

They can now both spell almost any word of one syllable with rapidity with their hands. They can speak much better; can form some letters and words upon the blackboard; understand simple relations of numbers, and are familiar with three of our series of outline maps.

I might almost say that from the very outset of their educational course, I have myself been daily astonished by the rapidity of their progress, and their facility of instruction.

CASE No. 10.

A boy of eleven years old; well formed, healthy, except slight chorea; good tempered, and cleanly in his habits; idiotic from birth, and has a sister a little older than himself, who is an idiot. He came December 13th, 1851; talked imperfectly; could not read or write, or count, or distinguish colors by sight; did not know a single letter, and could not even distinguish one picture from another. He had none of the practical every-day knowledge of childhood.

After seeing him at his home, in a cellar in New-York city, standing, with an effort at concealment, partly behind the door, devouring, rather than eating a piece of bread, with the saliva running out of his mouth, ill clothed, and not over clean, and with a nervous twitching about the face, I candidly told the gentleman who accompanied me, that I felt some reluctance at including him among the number of experimental pupils. Nevertheless, he was allowed to come, and I ought properly here to enter my acknowledgment, that I was entirely mistaken in his case. We have now no more promising pupils. We have none who have profited more by instruction already received. His whole appearance is changed. There has been a radical change in his habits of body and mind. He is very playful; very attentive in his various mental exercises, and conducts himself, under all circumstances, with propriety.

I cannot better illustrate this fact, than by giving an account of a visit his mother made him during the summer. When he was

brought into the room to her, remembering how utterly helpless he had always been, and his probable condition when left after her death to the cold charities of the world, unfortunate and miserable, she threw her arms about his neck, and expressed a wish that he was dead. When she had become more calm, I let her see his improvement in all respects, in the school room and elsewhere; and when she left, she begged me, if there should ever be room, that I would receive her other unfortunate child, so much had her despair given place to hope, from what she had seen of improvement and promise in her child.

CASE No. 11.

A boy of 14 years old, very large of his age, well formed and with a fine head; he had convulsions in infancy, to which the idiocy is ascribed. In the very intelligent description given me by the family physician, he is spoken of as being both insane and idiotic; an opinion I have seen no reason to question, after my acquaintance with him.

He came May 6th, 1852; he was amiable in his disposition, very easily excited, particularly to laughter; was disposed to wander away from home, talking and laughing to himself; had a great faculty of imitation and a good memory of persons and things. He talked very indistinctly, and could not be brought to look at any thing like letters, and only the most prominent features of a picture.

He was described as having improved somewhat during the five or six years last past, as being much more calm and teachable than formerly, but that many of his faculties were an entire blank.

This case was received with much reluctance, from the manifest complication of insanity with the idiocy, and I confess I had very great misgivings as to any very marked results from our system of education. Two members of the same family had, however, been educated at that noble charitable institution, the deaf and dumb asylum of New York, and I could not refuse an application from a family thus peculiarly afflicted, at least for a fair

trial of such a course of instruction, as should seem adapted to his case.

His improvement thus far has been beyond all reasonable expectation; he has become more calm and attentive; he has lost all disposition to wander. After passing through a variety of preliminary exercises, he is now in a class in drawing; is beginning in geography, giving all the names of the different states in the Union; he speaks much more distinctly; has some idea of numbers; knows all his letters and a great many words, and is now doing well in a class in Webb's First Reader.

For such gratifying results I may well feel some degree of pride in the industry and fidelity of my assistants.

Nor has the success that has already attended the labors of instruction in this case been the only reward we have received, or the only stimulus to our zeal in future efforts for his improvement. The nature of such additional reward and incentive may be seen in a letter received by one of my teachers from a deaf mute, sister of the boy, which I take the liberty of adding here as illustrating the excellent results of that other and kindred State charity, I have already alluded to, and the deep interest which is felt by those most concerned in the objects of our care and instruction.

To John's Teacher :

Excuse us for we are unknown to your name. We hope you will be kind enough to answer us as soon as this reaches you, as we are very anxious to hear from John.

I am a deaf mute, and I have been at school in New-York city seven years. I think you had better write a letter to us about John, instead of Dr. Wilbur, because he may be engaged in his business. We wish to know what John does in school, and wish you to tell us about him particularly, as we love to hear from him. Tell John that he must be a good boy, and must obey you and Dr. Wilbur's commands. We hope you are good and kind to teach him, and hope God will reward you for your kindness to a poor afflicted boy. Tell John that his dog (Penn) is lonesome

without him, because he used to play with him. I expect that my father will go to Albany on a visit next spring. Does he have a mind to learn? Tell John that my mother gives a great deal of love to him. We wish to know if he feels homesick, and does he love to learn? Please to ask if he remembers all our names, and what town we live in?

Has John grown any since he left our home and went to school, or has his appearance changed?

I must bring this to a close, as I have no more to say at present. Please tell us what your name is. We give our best love and sweet kisses to John, and give our respects to you and Dr. Wilbur.

Yours with respect,

LUCY G——.

CASE NO. 12.

A little girl of five years old. She was bitten by a rabid cat, in July, 1847, being at that time one year and nine months old. Previous to that time she was a healthy child, and intellectually forward for one of her age; talking a good deal, and very distinctly. Soon after the bite, she was taken with diarrhea and vomiting, which lasted six weeks, during which period her voice changed, and the sore on her face occasioned by her bite reopened. On the disappearance of these symptoms she was taken with violent convulsions continuing for 12 hours. Her face was afterward red and distended, and her eyes possessed an unnatural glow. For the three following days she had all the terrible symptoms of hydrophobia; tearing the bed-clothes, and attempting to bite those around her; unable to bear the sight of water and also to swallow any, together with a frequent recurrence of the spasms. At the end of this period, animation was suspended, and to all appearance she was dead. At the expiration of half an hour she revived, but with returning spasms, not, however, as severe as the previous ones. These continued for more than 24 hours, when it was found that she had forgotten everything previously acquired, and had lost the power of speech. In a few weeks she gained strength to walk, and then walked incessantly during the day for five months, disregarding

everything. She continued to have spasms occasioned by fear, as at the sight of a dog or cat. She remained in this condition for fifteen months, not recognising her own parents, ignorant of her own name, and utterly incapable of imitating anything. From that time, owing to a change of medical treatment, she began to improve in her bodily health, sleeping well by night, though still very restless by day.

She came under my charge not quite two years ago, a child of prepossessing appearance, of wonderful activity and fearlessness, (to such a degree, as to give currency to the opinion in the village where she resided, that she had received by her bite some of the feline nature), of a sweet disposition, and with her intellect only needing to be brought under the control of the will though without the power of speech. She had a great imitative faculty and tried to talk, but had lost control over the muscles necessary to articulation.

She is now very much more quiet ; understands every thing that is said to her ; can distinguish colors ; has learned the names of many objects on printed cards, speaking the names of a few of them ; she can put away all the letters of the alphabet in their places on a letter-board, and is beginning to learn their names.

In the matter of articulation, her progress has not been as rapid as I anticipated, owing to an apparent paralysis from her hydrophobia, but from the success I have already had, I do not hesitate to predict that she will yet learn to speak. No one who has visited the school will fail to recognize the subject of this description, or I think to doubt the fulfillment of this prediction on my part.

