

79-MSR-JLN

Prior to 20-AMO; State Inst - Fair. G. C. I. T.

The people at that time looked upon the enterprise as unnecessary, and did not seem to appreciate the fact that ten imbecile children existed in the whole State of Iowa; and having the idea that such children cannot be improved, they argued that it was extravagant to establish a new institution, and looked upon the enterprise with a great deal of suspicion and prejudice; the general opinion seemed to be, that it would be a great charity to starve us to death.

On September 5, 1876, we organized our school with only two children, but gradually received new recruits, until, at the end of fourteen months, we had in our school eighty-five pupils.

At the present time, just two years and a half from our opening, we have one hundred and thirty-six children, with fourteen others accepted, making our school number one hundred and fifty, which is the utmost capacity of our building, and already have rejected sixty-five urgent applications for want of room.

Our present accommodations are not quite ample for the number we already have, but we trust our next Legislature will appropriate sufficient to provide for at least two hundred pupils.

Those who have seen the workings of our institution have expressed themselves much gratified and surprised at our rapid and efficient school-work and the aptness with which our children apply themselves in the various exercises, and all seem to appreciate the fact that our support is too little for the perfect accomplishment of the true object of this charity; and just as soon as we can show to the people and their representatives that an institution of this nature is the most humane and beneficial for the care of said class of unfortunates, I feel sure that we shall have no difficulty in securing all the means requisite for ample buildings and the proper management of the same.

The Legislature has only convened once since our opening, and that fourteen months after organizing.

This being a bad year for State appropriations, we succeeded in getting only a small appropriation of about five thousand dollars for building purposes. But we were very thankful for this, knowing that this Legislature was the most economical towards State institutions of any since Iowa was made a State.

I have four teachers employed. All grades of our children have made marked improvement. Even the lowest grade child has been awakened and made to enjoy its life, and is less burdensome to those whose duty it is to care for it.

The better class of our children are not only improved in the various elementary branches of common-school education, but are taught to per-

form important household duties in the different departments, saving us at least one-half hired help.

We also educate our boys to do all kinds of out-door work. We have no work-shops of any kind. They saw all the wood, assist largely in stables and field, and in grading and beautifying our grounds.

The only hospital improvement introduced in this institution during the past year is that of setting apart a quiet, well-ventilated room for the care and treatment of any child that may be ill. I mention this to show that we are making progress even in this new asylum home, because the first two years we could not possibly afford this advantage. Upon the whole we certainly have great reason for encouragement. I beg leave to acknowledge the many kind acts and useful information so willingly and earnestly rendered by all of you having charge of older institutions. Our work in Iowa has been made comparatively easy by the experience of you gentlemen who have been many years engaged in this specialty.

*Minnesota.*—Prof. J. L. Noyes reported at the Lincoln meeting, 1879, as follows :

I was instructed by the trustees of the Minnesota Institution for the Deaf, Dumb, and Blind to visit you, and to express through you the thorough committal of our trustees and the people of our State to the proper care of our feeble-minded children, and by next July expect to commence with an experimental class in Faribault, Minnesota.

In the thirteen years' experience in the management of our Deaf and Dumb Institution we have encountered annually two, three, or four of these afflicted children, who were thrust upon our care. Our attention has thus been called to their necessities, and last year we devoted one page of our report to an appeal in their behalf,—this was endorsed by our State Board of Health. After frequent meetings of our board of trustees and consulting the State Board of Health, whereby this matter was freely discussed, it was determined to bring it before the Legislature. Concurrent with this movement there had been discovered a number of imbecile and idiotic children improperly confined in our asylums for the insane, and a commission of excellent men—Drs. Wood, Boardman, and Leonard—had been appointed to reorganize those institutions. A bill was passed authorizing this commission to remove to their homes, or to send to the custody of the trustees of the Institution for the Deaf, Dumb, and Blind, such feeble-minded children as should be found in the Asylum for the Insane, and for whose support an appropriation of thirteen thousand dollars was made. Said commission in due time found and reported in favor of fifteen children to be sent to Faribault. The trustees had accepted this proposition; and had provided a large, airy, well-appointed

building,—large enough for thirty or forty children,—admirably situated on a bluff near the Deaf and Dumb Institution, where the good work is to be initiated by Dr. H. M. Knight, of Connecticut; and it is hoped that under the future administration of the son of Dr. Knight, and the blessing of God, the foundations are surely laid of a noble State institution for Minnesota. He referred also to the good spirit of the people of Minnesota in these philanthropic matters.

*Kentucky.*—Dr. J. Q. A. Stewart reported at the Lincoln meeting, 1879, as follows:

We have eight boys employed in our carpenter-shop, who make some really good work. All the shoes are made in the place. Four boys under one man perform this work. The sewing is mainly done by the girls. A laundry building is in process of construction, which will be specially occupied by a teacher to teach *hand* washing. Numerous tubs are arranged on one side, and ironing-tables on the other. Ten boys labor in a ten-acre garden. At least seventy-five per centum are in course of training in industrial occupations.

Dr. Stewart explained that the authorities of the institution were peremptory in refusing all *idiots*. Incurrigibles were taken, if reported to be feeble-minded; and as there is no reformatory for juvenile offenders in Kentucky, doubtless the tendency to crime in a child was easily interpreted to be what it probably is in fact, imbecility.

From the Kentucky School Report for 1879 the following extract is taken:

“A new feature has been introduced into the institution which promises remunerative and pleasing returns,—namely, education in the industrial arts. By this means physical culture will be made productive, and the pupils prepared to earn a livelihood when discharged from the institution. We were shown the extensive wainscoting executed by the boys, the walnut stair-rods, the shoes, etc., and their handicraft would do no discredit to expert workmen. The apprenticeship to this system is made to contribute to the health and happiness of the amateur artisans, by strengthening their physical powers, and improving, by engaging their minds in useful pursuits. And it is not permitted to interfere with their intellectual studies, but is made ancillary to them. In a short time all the carpentry needed by, and all the shoes used in, the institution will be supplied by the craft of the pupils. One of the boys is now a trustworthy engineer. The girls are being taught all the domestic arts, including free-hand and machine sewing.”