
REPORT

OF THE

SCHOOL FOR IDIOTS AND IMBECILES.

1881-1882.

SCHOOL FOR IDIOTS AND IMBECILES.

OFFICERS AND TEACHERS

SUPERINTENDENT,
GEORGE H. KNIGHT, M. D.

MATRON,
MISS LOTTIE HELMER.

MISS M. E. POWERS, TEACHER.
MISS HATTIE WILSON, "

WALTER GOODMAN, TRAINER

LOUIS GRONDAHL, ATTENDANT.
MISS MARY CORBETT, "

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT.

FARIBAULT, MINNESOTA, }
 December 19, 1882. }

To the Directors:

It is with a feeling of gratification that I make the second biennial report of the Minnesota Training School for Idiots and Imbeciles. The past two years have brought many changes.

Not only has the school passed through the experimental stage and become one of the permanent institutions of the State, but a building well adapted to the needs of this class has been erected at a cost of twenty-five thousand dollars (25,000).

The advancement in school-work has been very encouraging, and those acquainted with our children and the methods of teaching them cannot fail to be interested.

We have seen the child without speech,—because of insufficient mentality—acquire it; at first brokenly and unevenly, but finally successfully.

We have a few children using readers who but a comparatively short time ago did not know their letters; some who will perform quite readily at the black-board simple examples in arithmetic.

The quiet and order in the school-room, the improvement in habits of cleanliness, neatness and obedience, show that some progress has been made by all our children.

The record of our school-room work is as follows:

Fourteen (14) read in books.

Fourteen (14) read cards.

Seventeen (17) write by tracing.

Five (5) write from copies.

Four (4) count one hundred perfectly.

Six (6) count twenty perfectly.
 Four (4) count ten perfectly.
 Five (5) write numbers.
 Twelve (12) sing.
 Ten (10) sew.
 Twelve (12) play dumb-bells.
 Seven (7) weave mats.
 Twenty (20) dance.
 Ten (10) are mutes.
 Three (3) are semi-mutes.
 Five (5) do housework.

The following are a few of the instances of remarkable improvement:

Maggie R— when received into the institution was a mute, obstinate and very destructive. It was almost impossible to keep clothing on her. Had a ravenous appetite and ate voraciously, stuffing her mouth full of food with her fingers. She often gave way to violent fits of rage, sparing nothing within reach, and seeming to have the most intense dislike for some of the smaller girls. The expression of her face was sullen and she had apparently the most deep-seated distrust of everybody and everything. Now, though she cannot speak distinctly, she attempts many words with sufficient success to be readily understood, while a system of signs of her own invention generally makes her meaning perfectly clear when she cannot express it in language. Her face has lost its habitual sullen expression. She has developed a sense of humor, and laughs and plays with all the zest of any child. The change in her in every respect is very striking. She has become gentle in manner, more quiet in behavior, and often very affectionate, having frequently dressed and undressed the little girl who was the object of her most especial dislike, and in other ways having proved really helpful and trustworthy. She now delights in being nicely dressed, and manifests the greatest aversion to anything soiled or torn about her clothing. The method of treatment in her case has been unvarying kindness and firmness, and prompt appreciation and reward of any upward step.

Eddie L. when received was a confirmed epileptic, seemed capable of speech, but would use it only seldom. Would often cry out when no one was near "Let me be." Would stuff his mouth with grass, rags, or any filth that he could find, would eat salt and sugar with equal avidity. He had absolutely no sense of taste, was not deaf, but would not use his ears, and paid no attention to any passing sound. Was partially paralyzed, so much so that he could not

walk down stairs safely. Now he is one of our brightest boys. Will talk incessantly if any one will listen. Has been free from fits for nearly two years. Has learned to read and write, and enters heartily into all sports, and can run and jump as well as any boy, his paralysis having entirely disappeared. Is very clean in habits, and so desirous of learning as fast as possible that his teacher constantly finds it necessary to restrain him. Of course Eddie's condition was the result of disease, and before we could expect improvement of any kind that had to be combated with appropriate remedies.

The special treatment in his case proved very effective, and there is very little doubt that he will become capable of self-support.

I speak of these cases because they have been very interesting to me, and because they show a little of what has been accomplished and what the aim of the institution is. Not only to give these children a home and teach them something, but to stimulate their development by all possible means in our power, considering no step too insignificant to be noticed.

There have been connected with the school since its commencement fifty-nine children. Our present number is forty-one. The rest having been removed, either at the parents' request, or on account of insanity, or by death. One boy is earning his support, and has been doing so for the past year and a half, on his father's farm.

The health of our children on the whole has been very good. We have had but four deaths since the school was started three years and a half ago.

One (1) from quick consumption.

One (1) from typhoid pneumonia.

One (1) from double pneumonia.

One (1) from hemorrhage occurring during convalescence from pneumonia.

Notwithstanding the present prosperous condition of the school it still needs many things. We need more schoolroom, and more school material. We need *now* a Kindergarten teacher who will take the smaller children and devote herself entirely to them. More than all this we need some kind of a shop where the larger boys can be taught some useful occupation.

In other institutions, where the numbers are much greater, shops are carried on with marked success, and though we are now too small to attempt anything on a large scale, yet the art of caning chairs, or making mattresses could be successfully and advantageously taught to our present boys. It would serve a twofold pur-

pose. It would not only give them occupation out of school hours and teach them something useful, but in keeping their minds active would prevent, to a great extent, their forgetting what had been learned in the school-room. All superintendents agree that shops are good of themselves, and a stimulus and aid to the general instruction of these children.

I present this matter to you at this time that it may receive your careful consideration, for in carrying on a work of this kind if we fail to take *any* steps for the advancement of these children, we fall short of our duty and cannot reach the highest results in our work, and I trust my suggestion in regard to this matter may produce practical results in the near future.

I now come to the most important part of this report. There is immediate and pressing need of two more buildings, if the aim of the State is to be accomplished, in providing for all her unfortunates of this class. One building should supplement our present one in accommodating the large number of applicants who are capable of immediate improvement, and to whom the advantage of school training cannot be given too soon for their own benefit, that of their families, and the public at large. The urgency of this cannot but be apparent when you remember that the criminal class is largely increased from the more intelligent imbeciles, and that when they *do* become vicious they cannot be placed in institutions with other children without great harm resulting; so that if it were only a simple question of expense to the State her interests would be best conserved by caring for the imbecile before he can become a criminal. But that is not the side of the matter I wish to dwell upon, it is this: as its name indicates, this is a *school* for idiots and imbeciles, and its object is best attained when its advantages are given to those who will be immediately and most permanently benefited by them.

To this class belong nearly all the occupants of our present building, so many of whom are capable of instruction that our teachers are already overworked. Since we can only devote two rooms to schoolwork, and therefore can employ but two teachers.

In selecting, as I have done, only the most improvable cases from the applications made, I have striven to give the greatest good to the greatest number, and I could do this *only* by taking the *best*. Since it has been proved beyond the possibility of doubt that lasting harm is done by putting helpless idiots with imbeciles, for the powers of imitation in the latter are often more largely developed than any other, and while it is the aim of such an institution as

this to care for both classes, it cannot be properly done till suitable buildings are provided. Therefore I most earnestly urge upon you the immediate necessity of taking steps to supplement our present building by one of at least equal capacity, for already there stand waiting to enter more than applicants enough to fill such a building, most of these belonging to the class in whose case it can be truly said, delay is dangerous. That there are so many applicants, fifty-nine in number, to say nothing of the large number of letters of inquiry to which we could return no answer of definite encouragement, waiting for a new building to be erected, is a significant fact, and one of the strongest arguments possible in favor of immediate action in this matter, since no special effort has been made to let the people in the State at large know of the existence of such a school as this.

Equally important, though perhaps not equally urgent, is the need of providing, as soon as possible, a building for the helpless idiot and epileptic, which, properly considered, are simply custodial cases.

I know that many of the superintendents of institutions for the feeble-minded do not consider epileptics proper subjects for such institutions, but it seems to me that neither the Insane Hospital nor the Almshouse is the suitable place for such, and it is often impossible for even those who have homes and parents to be properly cared for. What shall we say then of those who, having no one to care for them, are left to the mercy of strangers? Surely ordinary humanity demands that such as these should find refuge in an institution where their sufferings can best be alleviated. What is true of the epileptics is true to an even greater extent of helpless idiots. Little can be done for them mentally, but physically they can and do secure much benefit, to say nothing of the relief it is to their unfortunate families to have a home provided where they can feel sure that every possible aid is given their helpless one; thereby lifting from many a home a burden and shadow oftentimes worse than death.

In summing up I feel that I *cannot* urge upon you too strongly the wants of all these classes; first, the imbecile, who is intelligent enough to respond to influences which will help to make him either a self-supporting, self respecting citizen, or, lacking these influences a care and expense to the State, either as a pauper or a criminal; next, the idiot and epileptic who, though always a burden and expense to the family or the State, must, in the interests of humanity be properly cared for.

Before closing this report I wish to make special mention of the faithfulness and efficiency of the officers and teachers associated with me in this work, and especially do I owe most sincere thanks to G. Weston Wood, M. D., for the giving of his valuable time and rare medical skill to the daily personal supervision of the children in this institution during my necessary absence of several weeks.

Respectfully submitted,

G. H. KNIGHT,

Superintendent.

ADMISSION OF PUPILS.

Feeble minded children, actual residents of the State of Minnesota for one year, who are not capable of being taught at public schools, and who are, in the opinion of the Superintendent proper subjects for this institution, may be received under the following conditions:

First.—That their admission meet with the approval of the Board of Directors.

Second.—That the sum of forty dollars (\$40.00) per annum for clothing and necessary expenses be provided by the parents, or guardians, or in case of indigences, by the county in which the child resides.

Third.—That the bond for parents or guardians and certificate for counties shall be properly filled out in advance.

Application for admission of pupils, and all general correspondence should be directed to

G. H. KNIGHT, M. D.,
Faribault, Minn.

A LIST OF THE PERSONS EMPLOYED IN THE INSTITUTE, WITH THEIR COMPENSATION.

GENERAL OFFICERS.

H. E. Barron, Steward, without board.....	\$1,200	00
R. A. Mott, Secretary " "	300	00
H. Wilson, Treasurer " "	100	00

CONNECTED WITH THE SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF AND DUMB.

NAME.	OCCUPATION.	COMPENSATION.
J. L. Noyes.....	Superintendent	*\$ 1,500 per an.
Geo. Wung.....	Teacher and editor, non-resident	1,200 "
Louis C. Tuck.....	Teacher, non-resident	800 "
Wm. Ki Barr.....	Teacher and printer, non-resident	800 "
Kate E. Barry.....	Teacher	400 "
Anna Wickton.....	Teacher.....	300 "
Nellie Franklin.....	Teacher.....	260 "
Fanny Wood.....	Teacher.....	400 "
Adeline R. Hale.....	Matron.....	500 "
Belle A. Huntington.....	Mistress of sewing room.....	250 "
Dr. P. G. Denninger.....	Physician, non-resident.....	200 "
Joseph Sendner.....	Fore. shoe shop, non-resident..	55 per mo.
Olof Norling.....	Tutor and foreman cooper shop	15 "
Theron T. Gage.....	Boys' supervisor	15 "
A. B. Irvine.....	Engineer, non-resident.....	60 "
Nils P. Rood.....	Watchman, non-resident.....	30 "
William Kelly.....	Fireman	18 "
Michael Kelly.....	Teamster, non-resident.....	30 "
Iver Westcott.....	Choreman and laborer.....	20 "
Sophia N. Blakie.....	Girls' hospital attendant.....	15 "
Ann Byrne.....	Boys' hospital attendant.....	16 "
Theresa Riesel.....	Cook.....	15 "
Rosa Lala.....	Baker.....	14 "
Nellie Murray.....	Cook's assistant.....	10 "
Annie Johnson.....	Laundress.....	17 "
Kate Carroll.....	Assistant laundress.....	14 "
Nora Berrigan.....	Chambermaid, S. wing	12 "
Sarah Carroll.....	Officers' dining room girl.....	10 "
Betsy Brusletten.....	Pupils' dining room girl.....	10 "
Tea. Buea.....	General assistant.....	12 "
Alice Crosby.....	Chambermaid, N. wing.....	12 "
Mary Crosby.....	Chambermaid, centre building.	12 "

*Office clerk hire \$200 per annum.

CONNECTED WITH THE SCHOOL FOR THE BLIND.

NAME.	OCCUPATION.	COMPENSATION.
J. J. Dow.....	Superintendent.....	\$ 1,000 per an.
Wattie Burns.....	Matron.....	250 "
Minnie Hegman.....	Music Teacher.....	250 "
Albert Fleckenstein.....	Mus c Teacher, non-resident. . .	150 "
Mary Kirk.....	Teacher.....	250 "
Alice Mott.....	Teacher.....	250 "
Dr. G. H. Knight.....	Physician, non-resident.....	100 "
Abram Phitman.....	Shop Foreman.....	30 per mo.
Michael Favro.....	Laborer.....	20 "
Mary Lyons.....	Cook.....	15 "
Dora Brandes.....	Laundress.....	13 "
Emma Mills.....	Ass't Laundress.....	10 "
Nellie Stimpson.....	Dining-room girl.....	10 "
Mary Shields.....	Chambermaid.....	10 "
Mary Cumford.....	Chambermaid.....	10 "

CONNECTED WITH THE SCHOOL FOR IDIOTS AND IMBECILES.

NAME.	OCCUPATION.	COMPENSATION.
G. H. Knight.....	Superintendent.....	\$ 1,000 per an.
Lottie Helmer.....	Matron.....	300 "
M. E. Powers.....	Teacher.....	500 "
Hattie Wilson.....	Teacher.....	200 "
Walter Goodman.....	Trainer.....	25 per mo.
Louis Grondahl.....	Attendant and foreman.....	22 "
Henry Remeis.....	Laborer.....	15 "
Mary Corbitt.....	Attendant and sewing woman.....	14 "
Mary Hagan.....	Cook.....	15 "
Katie Meirer.....	Waitress.....	12 "
Julia Sweeney.....	Waitress.....	10 "
Mary Anderson.....	Laundress.....	14 "
Mary Olson.....	Laundress.....	11 "
Jurena Christianson.....	Cleaning girl.....	10 "