

Minnesota Training School

FOR IDIOTS AND IMBECILES.

A. G. ROGERS, M. D., Superintendent.

Faribault, Minn., Nov. 1st 1886.

Hon. D. L. Kiehle,

Superintendent of Public Instruction,

Sir:-

I have the honor to transmit a brief statement concerning the Minnesota School for Idiots and Imbeciles.

Deeming that a general review of the nature, objects and accomplishments of the school, in consideration of its comparatively short existence, would be of more interest to the readers of your Report than a mere rehearsal of the administration for two years, I will first refer briefly to

The Class for Whom the Institution is Intended.

To those who have never given the matter a thought the number of children and youth in the County of Feeble, Imbecile or Idiotic Mind, is almost incredible.

The Federal census of 1880 gives the number in the U.S. at 76,395 of which number 792 are assigned to Minnesota, or one to every 936 inhabitants. Upon this basis there would be about 1412 in Minnesota in 1885.

Two Varieties Are of Common Observation,

with

An occasional child is recognized in the Public

Note,

It is customary to use the terms Idiocy Imbecility and Feeblemindedness, as denoting different degrees of Mental weakness, Idiocy denoting the lowest or most vegetative form.

Minnesota Training School

FOR IDIOTS AND IMBECILES.

A. C. ROGERS, M. D., Superintendent.

6

No. 2.

Faribault, Minn.

Schools as being a very "stupid;" goes to school for several years but never makes material progress; leaves at the end of each term to reenter the next, and go over the same work. The best that is ever said of him is, "He is good natured." The teacher having exhausted her patience and resources in teaching him, must of course let him drop out, or neglect the remainder of her school. This boy is "Feeble Minded." Placed at the proper age in a school in which the methods of instruction are adapted to his comprehension and the hand taught to do as the mind is taught to think, and he would develop into a useful (not brilliant) man.

Again a naturally bright little child is afflicted by Epilepsy until his mind is impaired. He cannot be trusted away from the immediate supervision of some member of the family or a hired care-taker for fear he will fall in the fire, or down in the well, or become injured in some other way; or, as is frequently the case, he may develop an irritable and dangerous disposition, the terror of the family and the neighborhood. These two varieties are the ones most frequently recognized. There is still another class; that composed of children farthest down in the scale of mentality, who are blighting the happiness of hundreds of families. They are indescribable burdens and are bringing prematurely wrinkles and gray hairs to the heads of loving Mothers and adding innumerable cares to whole families. These are the cases the world knows the least of; these are the burdens borne

Minnesota Training School

FOR IDIOTS AND IMBECILES.

A. C. ROGERS, M. D., Superintendent.

6-

No. 3.

Faribault, Minn.,

the most patiently because all these years no relief has been supposed to exist. No class appeals to the sympathy of mankind with more pitiful voice, than this, and none can ask for relief from the State with more assurance that justice is on its side.

These three types, with their intermediate grades and varieties, represent the class of unfortunates for which the Minnesota Training School for Idiots and Imbeciles, has been established, and in brief the following are

Its Objects.

First:-

To provide school and Industrial training to all children of arrested mental development who are deprived for this reason of the advantages of the common schools, with a view of making them self supporting, useful, rather than burdensome members of Society.

Second:-

To provide a home for the helpless Idiot where it can receive its share of comfort and happiness, without driving them from the homes from which it comes.

Third:-

To provide an Asylum for the Epileptic child, not otherwise provided for.

Fourth:-

To furnish a home and Guardianship for Adult Imbeciles

Minnesota Training School

FOR IDIOTS AND IMBECILES.

A. C. ROGERS, M. D., Superintendent.

6-

Faribault, Minn.,

No. 4.

where their work can be utilized to assist in maintaining the Institution, where they will not be subjected to imposition from unscrupulous persons.

The objects are accomplished according to the following.

"Theory and Practice."

In considering this topic it must be remembered that in general, a "Feeble mind," as the term is used in this connection, is a condition of arrested development. It may be that all the faculties are nearly equally affected but generally the condition is one of ^{marked} asymmetry. In one case the perceptive faculties are apparently normal while the will is weak and consequently there is no continuity of action. In another, judgement is absent, power of comparison feeble, with no conception of relation between cause and effect. In another, the perceptive faculties are especially deficient, the pupil being inert and indifferent to its surroundings. It is evident then, the efforts of the teacher must be directed towards stimulating latent faculties to act, not towards creating new ones or assuming to originate mind where none exists. To stimulate latent mental powers and at the same time to furnish them with material for occupation, is to do all that can be done by the teacher. Development and growth.

Minnesota Training School

FOR IDIOTS AND IMBECILES.

A. C. ROGERS, M. D., Superintendent.

6-

Faribault, Minn.,

No. 5.

of mind are subjective matters, and follow as the growth of muscle follows and is coexistent with its use. It is also evident that the methods to be employed must vary as the nature of the cases vary.

Varieties of object lessons, color and peg apparatus, form boards, puzzles and other similar devices, gain the attention and stimulate the perceptions; exercises with dumb bells, wands, rings, ladders and steps, are useful in strengthening the will; while music, calisthenics and dancing accomplish both objects and add a great degree of happiness to the school life.

Modifications of the Kinder-garten methods develop the imaginative and inventive faculties, train the fingers to obey the will and constitute the natural preparatory training to industrial work, by which he must eventually in part, or altogether become self supporting.

Development of character is of supreme importance and the most potent influence to this end is the constant association with cultivated and refined teachers.

"Example rather than precept" must always be borne in mind by all who are intrusted with the care of feeble minds.

History of the School.

The school has been in active operation since July 25th, 1879, and there have been Two Hundred and

Minnesota Training School

FOR IDIOTS AND IMBECILES.

A. G. ROGERS, M. D., Superintendent



No. 6.

Faribault, Minn.,

Thirty One applications received since that time, for admission; One Hundred and Fifty One of which were for males and Eighty for females.

By years they have been received as follows:

In 1879-~~4221~~

* 1830--- 4

* 1831---27

* 1832---35

* 1833---29

* 1834---29

* 1835---44

To Date, * 1836---42

Total-231

It will be at once recognized that applications are received continually in excess of accommodations provided for them. Out of the number of applications received there have been only One Hundred and Sixty One

Admissions principally from lack of room.

There are thirty five children enrolled at this time.

Practical Results of Education, are seen in all but a few cases in the school, but a definite statement of percentage rendered self supporting, and reaching other definite degrees of improvement, can only be made from careful records kept over a considerable length of time.

Three boys have been discharged, able to earn a living; several have become partially self supporting and quite a number have been kept at home by their

Minnesota Training School

FOR IDIOTS AND IMBECILES.

A. C. ROGERS, M. D., Superintendent.

6

Faribault, Minn.,

No. 7.

Parents at the close of vacation because they have found them helpful and useful, though they should have received the training of the school for a much longer period.