STATE COMMISSION IN LUNACY

SPLENDID WORK ACCOMPLISHED BY IT IN FIVE YEARS.

Method of Caring for the Indigent and Insane Poor Entirely Revolutionized Under Its Direction-Composed of Men Eminently Well Equipped for Their Duties-Opposition of County Supervisors to the Creation of the Commission.

ALBANY, May 12.-The most humane work ever undertaken and maintained by the State, the care of the insane poor, is now thoroughly and firmly established on a permanent basis. This end has not been attained without encountering and overcoming the most determined position. From the outset of its career the commission in charge of this work has struggled against and crushed almost overwhelming odds. It has met and defeated, first, the intrigues of the County Boards of Supervisors, who resorted to every expedient known to adroit and unscrupulous politicians to retain control of the miserable and unfortunate persons who, as county charges, were intrusted to their care; and, secondly, the more powerful machina-



Dr. Carlos F. MacDonald, President of the Commission in Lunacy.

tions of the boards of State institutions. which resolutely attempted to deprive the commission of that paternal supervision over their management which the operation of the system had rendered inevitable.

To a few zealous and earnest women in New-York City and to a number of divines throughout the State the credit for this philanthropic undertaking should be given. To the able and disinterested men who constitute the commission, which was originally appointed by Gov. Hill and reappointed by Gov. Flower, belongs the absolute credit of placing it upon a plane that is the recognized model to-day for all the other States in the Union. After a session of unexampled animosity to the scheme, a bill was passed by the Legislature of 1889 creating the State Commission in Lunacy. The board was to consist of three members, to be appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the Senate—one a reputable physician of ten years' actual experience in the medical superintendence of hospitals for the insane, who was to act as Chairman of the board; another a reputable member of the bar of at least ten years' standing; the bar of at least ten years standing; the third a lay citizen. Gov. Hill promptly appointed Dr. Carlos F. MacDonald, the insanity expert of Auburn, as President of the board; Goodwin Brown of Buffalo, who had been for seven years Pardon Clerk in the Executive Chamber, the lawyer representative, and ex-Congressman Henry A. Reeves of Suffolk the third member. The nominations were promptly confirmed, the Senate being Republican.

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Before this result was accomplished, however, the Boards of Supervisors from many of the counties of the State, who had accumulated wealth, patronage, and influence from controlling the pauper insane, had swarmed into Albany to protest and to lobby against the bill and the confirmation of the nominations. But with a solid press, an intelligent Legislature, and a Governor who had shown a keen interest in behalf of the insane poor, the nominations were confirmed and the first step toward practi-

an intelligent Legislature, and a Governor who had shown a keen interest in behalf of the insane poor, the nominations were confirmed and the first step toward practical humanity in the handling of the State's wards was accomplished.

From the first the scope of the commission's work was broad. A number of needed reforms confronted it that could not be accomplished without engendering the most bitter animosities. To begin with, the law specified that all physicians must, before certifying to the insanity of a person, file a certificate of their qualifications, approved by a Judge of a court of record, in the office of the commission. Another section provided that the names of all persons in hospitals or asylums for the insane at the time the commission was created should be recorded in the office, and within ten days of the commitment of any person to an institution a copy of the order or certificate on which the commitment was based should be filed. The law also requires that a report be made within three days of each person who dies in an institution or is transferred.

By the use of the card system, a complete registry is kept similar to that of the War and Pension Departments at Washington, which enables the commission to keep itself informed constantly of all the movements of the insane in the State—in which



Commissioner Goodwin Brown, Lunacy.

institution the inmate is confined, when he entered, a perfect description of him, whether he has been released at any time and recommitted. Over all orders and commitments the closest scrutiny is exercised, and in case of any irregularity, or if the order is found to be defective, the patient is ordered discharged. So thorough is the work that each Commissioner not only visits every institution in the State at least twice a year, and examines into its condition, but, under the law of last year, which was fought stubbornly at every step of its progress by the managers of the different institutions, he is required to examine an itemized statement of all their receipts and expenditures. An innovation which has been found to work with great success has been that of allowing patients to converse alone with the Commissioners, if requested. Under the law, the commission has the right of visiting institutions without notice at any time of the day or night.

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One of the first discoveries of the commission sent a thrill of horror throughout the Commonwealth. Upon an investigation of the poorhouses of the State, the commission found that 2,200 lunatics were confined without proper food, clothing, shelter, and medical attendance. For years the efforts of philanthropic people had been frustrated through the selfish greed of the keepers of county poorhouses, who desired to retain the patronage and profits arising from the wretched county system of caring for the insane poor. The commission made a thorough investigation of the poorhouses of the State. Its discoveries were something appalling, and the recital of the wrongs, indignities, suffering, and cruelties was such in many instances, that it was unfit for publication.

The following year, in 1890, recommendation was made to the Legislature that these unifortunate persons be transferred to State hospitals. The Supervisors of the counties where the profitable poorhouses were swarmed into Albany and overwhelmed the members of the Legislature with appeals and petitions against the proposition, particularly against the item of appropriation of \$500,000 to carry it out. Humanity, however, carried the day, and in 1891 the Legislature made the appropriation.

The work was pushed energetically by the commission, whose sympathies had been

keyed up to the highest pitch by the deplorable condition of the paupers, and within fifteen months the buildings had been so far completed that a certificate was made that sufficient accommodation for all the insane poor in the county houses would be provided by October, 1893. In the meantime the Legislature of 1892 had passed a law, upon the recommendation of the commission, providing for a general State tax sufficient to care for all the insane poor in all the counties of the State except New-York and Kings, which were excempted upon the request of the respective local authorities. This law carried an appropriation of \$1.346,000, which, with the receipts from patients who are supported by relatives and friends, was found to be sufficient to maintain the State hospitals for the next fiscal year. The Legislature, however, provided that this sum should not be expended except upon estimates submitted to the commission, which was given authority to cut down such estimates at its discretion. No money can be drawn except for the amount specified after revision.

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Another reform inaugurated by the commission was in regard to private institutions. One of its first acts was to revoke the licenses of all the private asylums then known to be in existence. Licenses thereafter were given only to institutions that were conducted upon lines laid down by the commission. It was found that under the old system some of these private hospitals were conducted by persons who not only were not physicians, but who had never had any experience in the care and treatment of the insane. No license is now given to a private hospital for the insane except to physicians who have had at least five years actual experience in the care and treatment of the insane, and no subordinate physicians are permitted to assist, except upon the approval of the commission. The law also compels the filling with the State board of the plans of all private institutions. All cases of alleged illegal detention are promptly investigated by the commission, and where necessary the proper orders to discharge the patient or correct the abuse are issued.

To guard against the re-employment of improper and faithless persons a report of the discharge of every employe is made at once to the commission, which, in turn, notifies all the institutions in the State. The correspondence of the insane is also humanely cared for. Once in two weeks every inmate is permitted to write without inspection. He may also communicate with the Governor, Attorney General, Judges of courts of record, and District Attorneys twice a month. Detained letters are forwarded to the State board for inspection.

The uniform system which has been adopted by the board for blanks, forms, correspondence, for keeping track of the current prices of all articles of food, wearing apparel, medical supplies, and the necessaries for hospitals, has tended to simplify its work and arouse admiration in all who have

What is more to the point is the enforcement by the commission of the law which



Henry A. Reeves, Commissioner in Lunacy.

provides that the public institutions for the insane shall be for the benefit of the ininsane shall be for the benefit of the insane poor. The days when private patients could occupy expensive suites of rooms to the detriment of the pauper patients have passed. The price per week for a private patient has been limited to \$10, thus reducing to a minimum favoritism of the rich patient at the expense of the pager.

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Under the admirable law which brought the commission into existence, trial visits at home are now granted lunatics under strict regulations, which prescribe the duration of the visit and forbid a lunatic who is homicidal, suicidal, or destructive or dangerous being paroled at all or discharged, except under special conditions. This wise provision insures protection for the public against dangerous lunatics. The commission requires that every lunatic, upon admission to an institution, shall be informed by a medical officer of the fact that he is to be detained because of his insanity, thus effectually preventing the practice of deception which has been productive of so much evil in the past.

In New-York and Kings Counties a higher standard of care has been required and adopted. Increased accommodations have been provided in New-York. Better diet, better clothing, better attendants, and improved medical service have followed an order of the commission in Kings County. A State hospital, better adapted for the criminal insane, has been established. The clinical teaching of insanity has become one of the features in the public hospitals for the purpose of improving the condition of the patients and raising the standard of the medical profession, particularly of those who are required to determine the question of mental soundness. All physicians employed in the State hospitals are now required to pass a competitive examination, and no person can be employed as Superintendent who has not had at least flve years' actual experience in a hospital for the care and treatment of the insane. Subordinate physicians must have had from one to three years' experience.

What produced the schism between the commission and the Boards of Managers of certain of the State hospitals was the proposition made by Gov. Flower that the widest differences existed in the prices for articles purchased throughout the Boards of Managers. Protests were made against the plan. But the Governor stood behind the commission and insisted upon the enforcement of what came to be regarded as his pet idea. There were several methods by which the boards might destroy it. First it was necessary to manufacture public sentiment. To that end a meeting was called at Syracuse which was largely attended by the managers. After a prolonged debate the following set of resolutions was unanimously adopted:

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Whereas, It having been made apparant that the several managers are of one mind in their approval of the system commonly known as State care, and, furthermore, agreeing that the State, through some representative committee, Commissioner, or commission, should have ample powers of visitation, inspection, and report, with authority to exercise the same whenever by it deemed incessary or advisable; and

Whereas, The powers now given by law to the State Commission in Lunacy enable that commission to go beyond the exercise of the powers mentioned and interfere at every stage with the detail of local administration of the several State hospitals, whereby the authority of the Superintendents and Boards of Managers are practically all exercised in subordination to the orders of such commission, thus tending to diminish the dignity and authority of the Boards of Managers, and consequently their sense of responsibility, by giving entire management to one central bureau at Albany;

Resolved, That it is the sense of this meeting that the lunacy law should be so amended as to secure to the local boards and Superintendents the entire management of their respective hospitals, subject, however, to the power of visitation, inspection, and report before mentioned;

Resolved, That the Governor of this State and the Legislature be respectfully requested to recommend and enact legislation conformable to the views herein expressed.

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views herein expressed.

Having proceeded thus far, the managers went even further. From Syracuse they went to Albany. The attendance was not so large as it was at Syracuse. Representatives from only five of the State hospitals were present. The feeling of revenge had at last assumed the form where nothing would gratify the managers but the abolition of the Commission in Lunacy. Two members of Boards of Managers sat in the Sengte—Messrs. Parker of Albany and O'Connor of Binghamton. Those present at the meeting were confident that the support:

of these two legislators could be counted on. When the motion was put that it was the sense of the meeting that the Legislature repeal the law which created the commission and insured comfort, humane care, and treatment to the pauper insane, three votes supported and two were thrown against it. The introduction of the O'Connor bill in the Senate followed. Its enactment would have destroyed the usefulness of the commission totally. In justice to its introducer, it need only be said that the instant he discovered the true situation of affairs he repudiated the s'sheme and abandoned the bill.

The managers were by no means discouraged. One of the new members of Assembly, Mr. Glenn of Seneca County, was persuaded to introduce a bill the intent of which was to destroy the State Board in another manner. It provided that a Committee on Lunacy, modeled after an absurd Pennsylvania statute, should be appointed at a high salary, whose qualifications, as stated in the measure, would insure the appointment of any ordinary practitioner, and particularly one having no special qualifications, as under the existing law. The remainder of the committee was to be composed of laymen, without compensation, a scheme well calculated and undoubtedly intended to reduce effective supervision to a minimum. There was never any public sentiment in favor of this measure. One hearing was given it. No one appeared to advocate it, and only two letters were read in its favor, while strong protests were received in opposition from a large majority of the Superintendents. The bill never leit the committee, and died with the Legislature.

The opponents of the State Board had expected much from the last Legislature dand whatever influence it ever possessed injured by the reforms and innovations which had been introduced in the hospitals. When the item of tobacco was stricken from the list of necessaries for the inmates a protesting howl of rage went up from the managers, as impotent as it was unrighteous. For years the use of tobacco had been a cur

sion.

The effect, however, was the reverse of that which was intended. Instead of curtailing appropriations, the Legislature granted the commission all that it asked; instead of diminishing, the Legislature increased its authority; instead of voting a want of confidence, the Legislature expressed its unbounded confidence in the commission.

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The Chairman of the Finance Committee of the Senate, Mr. Joseph Mullin of Watertown, and the Chairman of the Ways and Means Committee of the House, Mr. Danforth E. Ainsworth of Sandy Creek, both insisted that the plans for all buildings to be constructed for State hospitals should be approved by the Lunacy Commission, and to that end every special appropriation for this purpose in the Supply bill contained that provision. The Legislature also passed a general statute which provides that no buildings shall be erected or repairs or improvements to the same be made except upon plans to be approved by the commission, and of expenditures for all other purposes that they shall only be made upon estimates in conformity to the provisions of the estimate law of 1893, thus enormously extending the jurisdiction of the commission over the expenditures of the institutions. Two other State institutions were placed under the absolute care of the commission, the Rome State Custodial Asylum, the salaries of whose officers and attendants must hereafter be approved by the State board, and the new Homeopathic Asylum in Eric County, whose Trustees will hereafter be subject to the authority of the Lunacy Commission.

But the enemies of the commission had not abandoned all hope of destroying its power. A committee was appointed for the purpose of procuring the insertion of an order in the general appropriation bill for the support of the insane, limiting the powers of the commission, but this was crushed at its inception. Two more attempts were made to injure the commission. The first was the introduction of a resolution into the annual meeting of the State Medical Society condemning the commission. It was defeated by a vote of two to one. The second

ciety condemning the commission. It was defeated by a vote of two to one. The second was the introduction of a similar resolution in the Medical Society of the County of New-York. It was unanimously voted down.

The great success of the commission and the great confidence in it are due to the high character and ability of the gentlemen who constitute it. Selected for their special fitness for the work before them, known by all who have ever come in contact with them for the purity of their motives and their unimpeachable integrity, the State board has successfully met and overcome every obstacle and every opposition that was intended to thwart its aims and to destroy its authority. The President of the commission, Dr. Carlos F. MacDonald was born in Niles, Trumbull County. Ohio, in 1845, being descended from a line of sturdy Scotch ancestry, which is traceable directly back to the famous claim. MacDonald was born in Niles, Trumbull County. Ohio, in 1845, being descended from a line of sturdy Scotch ancestry, which is traceable directly back to the famous claim. MacDonald was born in Niles, Trumbull County. Ohio, in 1845, being descended from a line of sturdy Scotch ancestry, which is traceable directly back to the famous claim. MacDonald was born in Niles, Trumbull County. Ohio, in 1845, being descended from a line of sturdy Scotch ancestry, which is reachled the control of the war of the rebellon, when, in 1862, at the age of sixteen years, he enlisted in the Sixth Ohio Volunteer Cavalry as a private soldier, and remained in the service to the close of the war, serving in the respective capacities of Crosx Keys, Cedar Mountain, Second Bull Run, Chantilly, Antietam, Fredricksburg, Chancellorsville, Brandy Station, Aldie, Upperville, Gettysburg, Mine Run, the Wilderness, Todd's Tavern, Cold Harbor, Spottsylvania, the slege of Richmond, and Petersburg, Hatcher's Run, Five Forks, and Appomatox, besides taking part in numerous skirmishes and in the famous cavalry raids of Klipatrick, Custer, and Sheridan, being under fire for the last time at Lee's surrender at Appomatox, and was mustered out of the service with his regiment in August, 1855, at Cleveland, Ohio.

After leaving the army and passing about one service as an in

adapt them to the use of the insane. He resigned the Superintendency at Binghamton in 1880.

Louis D. Pilsbury, then Superintendent of Prisons, offered him a reappointment to his former position of Superintendent at the Auburn Asylum, which he finally accepted in 1881, remaining at the head of that institution until 1889, when, at the request of Gov. Hill, he accepted the position of President of the newly created State Commission in Lunacy, which office he still retains. During his connection with the Auburn Asylum, Dr. MacDonald conceived and, with the aid of the Legislature, successfully carried out the idea of establishing, apart from the prison, a hospital for the exclusive care and treatment of insane criminals, an institution which is now in successful operation at Matteawan, N. Y. He not only procured the necessary legislation and plans for the construction and equipment of this institution in accordance with his own ideas, but was an active member of the commission charged with selecting the site and erecting the buildings—a work to which, in addition to his other duties, he gave much time and personal attention for a period of nearly six years.

Dr. MacDonald is a member of the American-Medico Psychological Society, the New-York State Medical Society, and of the Lotos Club of this city; also ex-member of the

New-York State Medical Association, the Rings County Medical Society. and the Cy. He has been Professor of Medical Diseases in Bellevue Hospital Medical Colege in 1882 and 1803. He is also a member of Medical Diseases in Bellevue Hospital Medical Colege in 1882 and 1803. He is also a member of them for the following the subject of the care and treatment of the insane and the management of institutions for that class, Dr. MacDonald has made personal observations of the insane and the management of institutions for that class, Dr. MacDonald has made personal observations of the mission of the insane and the management of institutions for that class, Dr. MacDonald has made personal observations of the mission of the insane and the management of institutions for the class medical counsel at the first execution by electricity in this State, that of Kemminer and Europe and in Cuba and Mexico.

Gov. Hill requested Dr. MacDonald to act as medical counsel at the first execution, by electricity in this State, that of Kemminer and the committed of the Governor. The attended seven consecutive executions, making a report which was brilliant in description, thorough and masterly in its handling of details, the methods of application, the condition of the subject by the command the attention of the medical world, but laymen found in it a clearer elucidation of the subject by the commission, is a native of Henderson. Jeff. Grandfather, the late Judge Jesse Hopkins, removed a few years after the close of the Revolution. His education was received at the academy in the village of Mexico. Henderson and the subject was member of the Psi Upsilon and Phi Kappa Psi Greek letter societies. He was recently and the provided him at the beginning of his term in January, 1888, and reappointed him to the position at the beginning of the second appointment was the provided by the commission and was delayed or hunger of the Board for the Board of the Suprimer of the State on the Suprimer of the Suprimer State Hospital, which had recently been

cology," published in 1894.

In 1891, Union College, in recognition of Mr. Brown's services to the State, conferred upon him the honorary degree of A. M. Mr. Brown's chief claim, however, to recognition arises by reason of his efforts, together with his associate Commissioners, in behalf of the insane poor of New-York. He has also been active with his associates in reforming abuses in the private asylums, compelling the reorganization of all and revoking the licenses of those improperly conducted; providing for the appointment of properly educated and trained physicians, and placing all such asylums on a common standing in ability to care for their inmates. The condition, too, of the State hospitals was greatly improved by the commission, Willard and Binghamton no longer being conducted as incurable institutions, both having been placed upon a high standard of efficiency and classed with other State hospitals—all State hospitals under the new system being conducted with reference to the cure of their inmates.

Henry A. Reeves of Greenport, Suffolk County, the lay member of the State Commission in Lunacy, was born at Sag Harbor, Suffolk County, in 1832; pursued an elementary course of study, and prepared for college, entering the University of Michigan at the age of fourteen and graduating from Union College, at Schenectady, N. Y., in 1852. He read law at Sag Harbor and received a diploma from the New-York Supreme Court at Brooklyn, intending to locate in Wisconsin. Circumstances changed this purpose, and in the Winter of 1858-9 he became proprietor and editor of The Republican Watchman, published at Greenport, which paper he still owns and publishes.

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In the early stages of the civil war an unpleasant incident brought him into undesired notoriety. On Sept. 2 he was elected a delegate to represent the eastern or First Assembly District of Suffolk County in the Democratic State Convention about to be held at Syracuse on the following Tuesday. On Monday, the 4th, while en route to the convention and when purchasing his ticket at the old Chambers Street Station of the Hudson River Railroad, he was arrested by two deputies of United States Marshal Robert Murray, upon a telegraphic order from Secretary Seward, sent from Washington that day, put into a coach, and taken to Fort Hamilton, where he was conveyed by boat across to Fort Lafayette and handed over to the custody of Col. Martin Burke, the commandant.

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casemate, and next day was conveyed by boat across to Fort Lafayette and handed over to the custody of Col. Martin Burke, the commandant.

There was no legal process, no formal complaint, no writ or warrant, and the only charge which he could ever ascertain (and that from newspaper report) to have been preferred against him was the publication of articles in his paper deemed objectionable by political opponents or censors. Subsequent inquiries satisfied him that personal malice on the part of a resident of the county who stood in near relation with Secretary Seward had much to do with the arrest, the Secretary's confidence being imposed upon and abused. It was also alleged that the arrest was designed to have an overawing influence upon the State Convention. It was the first, or one of the first, of what came afterward to be known as "arbitrary arrests," made in any Northern State not involved in actual hostilities, and if any such arrests had previously been made, they had been kept carefully concealed, while in this case pains were taken to send immediate information, through the press, to Syracuse, so that the delegates read of the arrest of one of their number to send immediate information, through the press, to Syracuse, so that the delegates read of the arrest of one of their number before the convention assembled. After a detention of five weeks, he was released upon giving a parole of honor and subscribing the customary oath of allegiance, which he cheerfully consented to do.

In 1868 he was nominated on the Democratic ticket for member of Congress in the First Congressional District, and was elected over Col. Alfred Wood, ex-Mayor of Brooklyn, by a majority of 1,400. In the year following the close of his term of Congressional service he was elected Supervisor of the town of Southold, and has been relected every year since except one. In 1887 he was elected member of Assembly from Suffolk County by a plurality of 9 over Capt. Henry E. Huntting, the Republican candidate. In May, 1889, without any previo