

S I X T H
ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

MASSACHUSETTS SCHOOL

FOR

IDIOTIC AND FEEBLE-MINDED YOUTH.

B O S T O N :

WILLIAM WHITE, PRINTER TO THE STATE.

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OF THE

MASSACHUSETTS SCHOOL FOR IDIOTIC AND
FEEBLE-MINDED YOUTH,

FOR 1854.

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*In behalf of the
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*In behalf of
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TRUSTEES' REPORT.

*Massachusetts School for Idiotic }
and Feeble-Minded Youth,* }*

Boston, December 31, 1853.

To the Corporation:—

Gentlemen: The undersigned, Trustees of this Institution, herewith submit to you the various documents required by law.

The Report of the Treasurer; the Inventories of Property, and the Report of the Superintendent.

The Report of the Treasurer shows a cash balance of \$636.34.

There are a few bills yet unpaid, but there are good debts due, which more than cover this amount. The Institution then, is, at last, entirely free from debt, and owns its furniture. The inventory herewith presented, shows this to be worth about \$2,500; it would probably sell at auction for \$2,000. This represents the material worth of the establishment after paying its debts. It is indeed a very small sum, and altogether inadequate as a basis of operations; nevertheless, in view of the fact that the Institution started without a dollar,—that furniture was purchased upon credit,—that all the donations received amount to less than \$100,—that it has fulfilled all the conditions of the grant from the State, by receiving and training indigent pupils, and has, besides, given its benefits to many private pupils,—in view of these things, it is satisfactory.

A work of beneficence has been carried on, with limited means, upon a small scale; it follows, that with more ample means, it can be carried on upon a larger one.

This result could not have been obtained except by the most rigid economy, and by the fact that we have had the gratuitous services of one of our Board for the management and direction of the Institution. Dr. Howe, to whom it owes its origin, has continued, thus far, to give it his personal care and attention. He has had the direction of, and responsibility for, every thing except the financial department, and he has discharged his trust faithfully and satisfactorily to the Trustees and the Corporation.

The Report of the Superintendent shows, that January 1st, 1854, the number of pupils was thirty-seven; that fourteen have been received, and nine discharged since, so that the number is now forty-two. This is altogether disproportionate to the wants of the class, even in Massachusetts alone. The applications for admission have been numerous and pressing, but the establishment could not accommodate more pupils.

The undersigned can testify to the good order and neatness of the household arrangements; to the tidy and cheerful appearance and deportment of the pupils; and to the general air of comfort and happiness which pervades the establishment.

Whoever visits the school more than once, and observes the pupils closely, sees great improvement in their condition of being. Children who at their admission were noisy, dirty and turbulent, in a few months become quiet, cleanly and docile. The change is most manifest when they are at their meals, for then, those who were once more voracious and gluttonous than animals, sit quietly until they are helped, eat their food decently and temperately, and having folded their napkins, await the signal to rise and go to their sports.

A still more gratifying proof of improvement is given on the Sabbath. About half of the pupils (some of whom were formerly kept out of sight as disagreeable and unpresentable subjects)

now go regularly to church, clad in neat attire, and there deport themselves so as to be attractive rather than repulsive objects. But if these unfortunate children have thus become attractive objects to men, what must they be to Him in whose kingdom on high the greatest are they who were the least of the little ones here below !

Most earnestly and most confidently is this humble Institution commended to the attention and the fostering care of the Corporation, the Public, and the Legislature. It needs ampler pecuniary means ; it needs a larger and more commodious building ; but above all it needs the moral support of that public sympathy without which, individual effort can give to charitable institutions only a sickly and short-lived existence.

For the Trustees,

E. JARVIS, *Secretary.*

REPORT OF THE SUPERINTENDENT.

Boston, January 1, 1854.

To the Trustees :—

Gentlemen: The undersigned, in his capacity of Superintendent *pro tempore*, respectfully submits the following Report for the year 1853.

The number of pupils reported in January, 1853, was thirty-seven. Fourteen have been since admitted, and nine discharged, so that the present number is forty-two. Of these, thirty-one are State beneficiaries, and eleven are private pupils.

Of those discharged, two were much improved; the others were not improved in any considerable degree. They were retained only long enough for us to ascertain that they were not capable of such improvement as was to be hoped for in others who were waiting for admission.

Some of them gave little expectation of any improvement when they were admitted; nevertheless, the chance of a trial was given them, because it is only by actual trial that the capacity for improvement can be ascertained.

One of the lessons learned by experience in this school is, not to rely upon first appearances; to promise little; to hope ever; to despair never. There are cases which defy calculation; for while some that seemed to promise most at first sight do not improve at all; others again, that seemed beyond hope, improve greatly.

Those who were discharged as not improved, were not considered as absolutely incapable of any amelioration at all, for there is hardly a supposable case in which an idiot of low degree would not be improved by being removed from an ordinary family and placed in charge of persons who make the care of such cases, their study and their business. This school, however, can receive but a limited number; and as it is in no sense an asylum for the life-long care and keeping of idiots, a selection must be made of those who by possibility can be so much improved as to become industrious and useful.

Most of those discharged had been for years subject to severe and oft recurring fits. This is always an unfavorable symptom. It is not even a satisfactory explanation of the cause of the idiocy; for the fit is only a symptom of some serious derangement. We must go behind the fit and look for its cause in order to account for the resulting idiocy. Nevertheless, the fact of the applicant being subject to fits, even of an epileptic character, is not alone a sufficient reason for refusing him admission upon trial.

There are eight of our present pupils who were subject to epileptic fits before admission. Some of these have now been so long free from recurrence of attack, that there is hope of a permanent cure; and the others are decidedly better than they were.

The pupils are all young, but their looks and actions do not give signs of that exuberance of health and strength so usually characteristic of youth. On the contrary, their appearance denotes that although they are in a better condition than when they entered the school, their general standard of health is still low as compared with the common one.

Indeed, if we consider that in all cases whatever, idiocy results from abnormal structure or condition of some of the bodily organs, or else from some lack, or excess, or irregularity of their functional action, it is almost a matter of course that idiots should have less vigor, and less duration of life, than other persons.

Life, real life, is enjoyed in its fulness by very few, and by idiots it is hardly tasted. Life results from the normal functional action of certain organs during a certain time. This functional action may manifest itself in motion alone, as in plants and the lowest animals, in motion and intelligence, or in superadded affections. The oyster lives its life, and seems to manifest intelligence, but to be without affection, and without love even for its offspring. The cow lives her life, which is more varied in action and affection, for she roves about, and loves her young. The life of the dog is wider and higher still. Each of these may be perfect in its kind, and in its health. But the life of man is vastly above them all; it is wider in action, immeasurably higher in aim; more varied in capacity for knowledge, and more intense in affections. Man alone can know himself; and know enough of the Creator of all life to revere and to love Him.

Now each of the animals, from the very period when their species were created, may, and many do, live out their whole lives, that is, manifest their whole natures, and be perfect each in its own way, as oyster, cow, or dog; but it is not so with man, (and herein he differs from them,) for his race is progressive, although it comes not to perfection, except through long, and to us inconceivably long culture. As yet the individual man rarely, if ever, enjoys all the possible fulness and beauty of life; for, if by others fault, or by his own, any part of his organization is not perfect; if any of his faculties are not developed; if he does not enjoy all ordinary human relations, and exercise all human affections; if he reveres not God, and loves not all his creatures, he lives not a perfect life, though he eats and breathes as long as did Methusaleh. Nay! he does not even enjoy perfect health, for the highest perfection of health comes from the harmonious development and action of every part of his nature, and cannot be had without it. In this sense, it may be said that an idiot cannot be perfectly healthy, because his intellectual faculties are stunted; and a vicious man cannot be perfectly healthy, because his moral sentiments are undeveloped. This may seem absurd to those who estimate health by mere

bodily strength and activity, by roundness of limb and ruddiness of cheek; but those who carefully consider the matter will see, that the habitual condition of the intellectual and moral faculties has great influence even over the automatic functions. What is seen in extreme cases is only the excess of what is continually happening in ordinary ones. The eye of one man may be lightened, and his countenance continually animated by joyous and virtuous emotions; while in another the light and animation may come from activity of selfish and malevolent feelings; and who can doubt that their effects upon the corporeal system are different? It is not the heart alone that beats responsive to the emotions and passions, but every function of the body, even to the coloring of the hair may be affected by the habitual condition of the moral nature.

We may even consider health as of different qualities—as more or less gross; for instance, that a slight and graceful Apollo is in higher and more perfect health than a brawny Hercules, who could slay a bull with his fist, and digest even his hide in a dreamless sleep. In this sense, other things being equal, (which of course implies equal cheerfulness,) the health of the intellectual man is higher, and more perfect than that of the fool; and the health of the intellectual man who is at the same time amiable and good, is higher and more perfect than that of the merely intellectual man.

But even supposing that such speculations are fanciful, it is in no fanciful sense that idiots are said to enjoy less than average health; for, using the words in their ordinary meaning, and speaking of health as it is usually understood, idiots, in general, enjoy but little of it. They usually come of “poor stock,” and that which is deeply tainted with scrofula. They are, for the most part, the offspring of parents one or the other of whom was of feeble structure, or in an unhealthy condition either of body or mind. Many of these unfortunates are so feebly and imperfectly organized from their very conception, that they cannot resist ordinary exposure after their birth, and the feeble flame of life goes out in infancy, or flickers awhile, and is extinguished in early childhood.

Epilepsy and kindred disorders, destroy many while yet in tender years. Others, that survive awhile, are so weakened by fits, by gluttony, by self-abuse, and by unwise treatment of various kinds, especially by the use of drugs, (which are so generally and profusely administered,) that their systems cannot resist diseases which are not ordinarily fatal, and they too die young. Comparatively few reach maturity, and far fewer still survive to old age; so that the census is but an imperfect indication of the extent of the evil. It tells, indeed, a sad tale of human degradation and wretchedness, but it does not tell the whole truth. Some men may rejoice that it does not. They may be glad to be spared part of a painful sight, from the whole of which they would fain turn their eyes, if they could. But alas! God will not let us look away with impunity. He will continue to scourge society until it becomes conscious of its sin, repents and amends. Men have been worrying themselves about their souls, and the souls of their neighbors, in utter disregard of the fact, that the character and condition of the soul, as evinced in its manifestations here below, are indissolubly connected with the character and condition of the body. It is high time to consider that much may be done toward the cure of souls, by care of bodies.

It was stated in a Report made in 1847-8, by the undersigned, as chairman of the Massachusetts Commission for investigating the condition of idiots, that minute, personal inquiries had been made concerning the parents and immediate progenitors of three hundred and fifty-nine congenital idiots. It was found that almost all these came of very poor and feeble stock; stock such as, in animals, farmers would never breed from. It was found in every case except four, that is in three hundred and fifty-five, out of the three hundred and fifty-nine cases, that the parents were closely related by blood,—or that one or the other of them had a decided hereditary tendency to mental derangement,—or was of a marked scrofulous habit of body,—or was impaired in health by disease, or by intemperance, or by sensual excesses,—so that the

idiocy of the child was clearly explicable upon physiological principles.

Additional experience, gained during several years, and the examination of many new cases, corroborates this opinion. The same conclusion would be drawn by any physiologist, from *a priori* reasoning, and one would suppose that common sense must lead most persons to adopt it; nevertheless, it is not so. There is the most profound ignorance, or utter indifference to these considerations. It is very seldom that the parent of an idiotic child thinks of looking within himself for the cause of his child's infirmity, or suspects that he is in any way responsible for it. Indeed, the parents are very slow to perceive the child's deficiency, and are the last to admit that it is idiotic. They see that the child, though four, five, or six years old, cannot talk, cannot learn to dress, or take care of himself, but still they fondly dwell upon some things which he can do. They themselves have learned to understand his ways and his expression of his wants, and they insist upon it that if the poor thing could only speak and express what he knows, all would be well. They do not consider that the child continues to be mute after infancy because it has not mental capacity enough to learn to speak.

Sometimes parents bring a child for examination, saying, deprecatingly: "We would not have you think he is an idiot, for he is not, nor any thing like it,—but somehow he is strange,—he cannot learn things, and we cannot account for it," whereas, before they have done speaking, a practised eye sees idiocy in the very appearance of the child, and sees the probable causes of idiocy in the very appearance of one or both the parents.

In other cases, when the causes are not apparent at first sight, they come out upon a little questioning. The parents say, that they, and even their doctor, were satisfied that every thing was "right" about the child until it had "fits." They do not reflect that the fits are only symptoms of internal disorder. They get from the elephant down to the tortoise, and think they have reached bottom.

A regular series of questions,* framed with a view to ascertaining all the important facts of the case,—the antecedents if not the causes of the idiocy,—generally brings out one or more of the following circumstances:—

That the family of one or both the parents is peculiarly scrofulous;

That one (if not both) of the parents inherits this scrofulous temperament;

That the family of one (if not of both) of the parents is peculiarly subject to some form of insanity;

That one (if not both) of the parents (or one of their immediate progenitors) had been greatly impaired in health by disease, intemperance, or sensuality; or,

That the parents were nearly related by blood.

In this matter of intermarriage of relatives, my experience with various classes of infirm children, goes to show that nature protests against it, and sometimes with terrible vehemence. Where both parties are of sound constitutions, and without marked tendency to any particular form of disease, the liability to infirmity among the *immediate* offspring is small. Where one party is of unsound constitution, the liability is greater. Where both are unsound, it is very great.

Where one party has a constitutional tendency to a particular form of disease, and the other either has no such tendency, or a tendency to some other form of disease, the diverging tendencies seem to correct each other, so that the liability is not great; but where both have the same constitutional tendency, then the danger is so great that some kind of infirmity is almost sure to appear in some of the offspring.

Before going into any detailed statement of the operations of the school, it may be well to make a few remarks explanatory of the general principles upon which it is conducted. It is well that the parents of the pupils, and all who take an interest in the school, should understand them.

When we find a child whose mind is not developed at the

* See Appendix.

usual period, or is developed very imperfectly, that is, a child who seems to be more or less idiotic, we infer that there must be structural and radical defect in some part of that child's bodily organization, or else some obstruction to the performance of its functions. We infer this just as a watchmaker, who finds a watch keeping time badly, infers that it was not made right, or else that its "works" are out of order. If there is any important malconstruction or defect, the difficulty is in the very organization of the child, and we cannot remove it; we can but partially remedy it. We cannot, like the watchmaker, put in a new spring or cog, for we have no creative power. If, however, the parts are all well formed, and all in their places, then it is only the functional operation that is deranged, and we may hope, as the watchmaker does in respect to a dirty, but well-made watch, to remedy the evil. We must not shun or flinch this materialistic view. It is the only sound one, and those who would treat idiotic children successfully, must act upon it trustfully and fearlessly. They are weak who deny it. They kick against the pricks who oppose it. It stands manifest. It is an ordinance of nature; and it is characterized, like every other ordinance, by divine wisdom and benevolence.

Nor is it important that teachers alone should admit this principle. Parents, in the true interest of their children, should understand it, and act accordingly. It has already been remarked that parents are usually slower than others to see, and when they see, slower to admit the idiocy of a child. Sometimes, when the fact is too manifest to be concealed even from the partial eyes of affection, they keep the little one out of the way, and lose precious years in inaction. There is no reluctance to admit that it is sick, or puny, or subject to fits; but any mental deficiency is blinked out of sight. Among the numerous cases where parents come to consult us about a child, there is rarely one where they admit frankly, at the outset, that it is idiotic. They always begin a great way off, and approach the subject gradually, saying that the child can't do this or that; cannot understand one thing or another; but then they

state eagerly something else that it can do, or can say, and they apologize for what it cannot. They beg us not to suppose the poor thing is an idiot; but especially not to suppose it was born so. We know what they mean, and how they feel, and can usually infer the truth from their efforts to conceal it.

This greater reluctance to admit the fact of mental than of bodily infirmity, is so general as to be interesting psychologically. It is not conventional; it springs out of the very nature of man, and shows his disposition to esteem more highly things spiritual, than things material. The mother weeps for the bodily infirmity of her child, but she blushes for his mental infirmity. The tear is natural; and the blush is not all conventional.

Now if it were generally understood that the mental deficiency or peculiarity is usually the direct consequence of bodily imperfection, and that this imperfection is subject to hereditary laws of descent, the infirmity might, perhaps, be of less frequent recurrence; and when it did occur, the parent would be spared some unnecessary pain, and would resort at the earliest moment to the proper treatment of their unfortunate offspring.

Starting, then, with the general principle,—which cannot be too often recurred to,—that the very existence of idiocy implies an unsound condition of the structure or the functions of some part of the bodily organization, it is proper, always to begin with attempts to improve the general health. Even in cases where the immediate cause seems to be smallness of brain, and where the general health seems good, still, even here we should strive to make it more vigorous.

The doctrine of the *vis medicatrix naturae*—the curative tendency of nature—ever holds good, and should be kept continually in mind, in the treatment of idiotic children. Just as a bent plant continually strives to grow perpendicularly, so an abnormal or diseased body tends to become normal and sound, during its period of growth. The energy of this tendency is greatly increased by every thing that increases the healthy action of the great organs of the body. Putting

these organs into vigorous, healthy action, enables them to throw off disease, as increasing the speed of the wheel makes it throw off in tangents foreign substances that would adhere to it in slower revolutions. This does not imply that there is any material peccant humors which constitute disease; on the contrary, disease may be only inactivity, or insufficient activity in the performance of a function, of which perfect performance is health. Still, it remains true, that when the changes are most rapid, when the daily and hourly waste of the system is greatest, and the daily and hourly growth most exceeds the waste, then it is that the tendency towards a normal condition is most likely to prevail.

Take even the most untoward case; take a boy whose brain is so small that the aggregate result of its functions, to wit, his intellect, is so much less than ordinary that he is an idiot. In this case we are to proceed as we would with any other organ, or with a limb, that was not duly developed in size, or that lacked vigor. The growth and the strength of the brain are to be promoted by means addressed immediately to it, that is by exercise of the mental and moral faculties. It is to be aided and encouraged to act, by every possible means; just as we encourage and aid a child of weak limbs to walk, by holding it up, by leading strings, and the like.

Moreover, we are to bear in mind that the growth and strength of the brain depend upon the health and vigor of the great central organs of the trunk. If these are in full vigor, they affect the brain favorably, which consequently attains its maximum of power, and then the person feels particularly bright; but if the great organs are in any way embarrassed in their functions, the brain partakes of the embarrassment, and the man who owns it becomes stupid. We frequently and plainly see this in every day life. We sometimes find a man who seems to stand upon the dividing line between average sense and stupidity. During youth and early manhood his body is in vigorous condition, and his brain, stimulated by fresh blood, is then at its maximum activity, if not of power, and the man shows average ability. But when the period of

greatest intensity of the automatic functions is passed over, the brain slackens in its action, the mental manifestations diminish, and the man is seen to be a weak man, if not a fool, long before he dies.

What is the imbecility that so frequently afflicts old age, but a melancholy evidence that the highest and noblest functions have ceased to be performed, while those of a lower order are still in play, and have ceased too, very often, in consequence of some abuse? The sun of the intellect that shone brightly at noon, and which should set in subdued but still in clear light, is obscured by clouds, goes down unseen, and night closes slowly in, without a parting ray to give promise of a brighter morrow.

Nor is this difference in the manifestation of intellect confined to great periods of morning, noon and evening of life. It may be seen many times in the life of a man; many times in a year, even, of his life, according as he uses or abuses his powers. Thousand are sane or insane, are wise men or fools, according to the varying condition of belly and brain. To say nothing of those who get up wise every morning, and go to bed foolish every night, how many men manifest uncommon brightness for a considerable time, and then uncommon stupidity for a considerable more.

When the schoolmaster shall have taught the people to see the beauty and sanctity of the body, and the close connection between its condition and that of the spiritual nature, then the preacher may avail himself of the labors of the physiologist, and teach that He who numbers the very hairs of our head, does continually hold us responsible for the condition of the body; and punishes us, and through us, our children, for every sin of omission or of commission. Until then, great must be the harm, and sin, and suffering, arising from the gross ignorance and grosser errors concerning this matter, that so generally prevail. When even our leaders are blind, of course we all fall into the ditch. We have honest and earnest preachers, who set forth, continually, the immeasurable value of the soul, and who warn us against every thing that may put it in peril, but

all the while they themselves do daily and openly so live, as to lessen its power, and impair its beauty during part, at least, of eternity; and who shall say that what is done in this part of it, shall not have lasting effect during the whole of it. It is true that there are distinctions made between the mind of man and the soul of man, but these are as likely to be false as to be true. If false, then they lead to grievous errors in practise, which, if consciously made, would be heinous sins against the spiritual nature. Men who would shrink with horror from the thought of selling their souls to the devil, do, nevertheless, so live in the body, as to give it over to his dominion during this life, and it may be, give him a mortgage upon it forever.

What may be the precise condition of the soul or spiritual nature after the death of the body, it is not given for man to comprehend; but this we know from universal analogy, that, where existence is continuous, causes acting in one part must have effect upon another. He who over-stimulates, who stupefies, who brutalizes, or who in any way distorts his spiritual nature in time, may be affecting its condition for eternity.

If we would make our ten talents twenty, or our five talents ten, we must take care that this organism of the body, our earthly stock in the trade, is ever kept in the highest working condition; and we must see, too, that our brother and our ward, the poor idiot, has not his single talent so buried in the napkin of the flesh, that it shall fail of returning to God who lent it, the increase which is required from all.

Vague and speculative as these general considerations may seem, they are intended to set forth and to illustrate, the importance of attending to and caring for the condition of the body, especially in the training and education of youth, and more especially in the training and education of idiots. Numerous cases can be cited, to show that there is really a close relation between physical causes and moral results where none would be suspected by the casual observer. Take, for instance, the following case among our pupils:—

W——, a lad of ten years old, was brought to us because

he could not be taught in common schools, nor governed by common methods. There was nothing in his appearance to indicate any mental deficiency, or any bodily defect or ailment. On the contrary, he was a bright-looking, hearty, active little fellow. He was well formed in all respects. His flesh was hard and elastic, his skin clear, his eye bright, and his bearing and actions showed that he was full of the elastic vigor of youth. He showed no sign of imbecility, or deficiency of any particular faculty. He conversed well, and seemed to be docile and affectionate; nevertheless, he could not be taught by the common methods, and he was, moreover, the very incarnation of mischief. He had a genius for tormenting people, and it manifested itself in a thousand ingenious and striking ways. He seemed possessed of an evil spirit, which would not be exorcised by any prayer, nor subdued by any rod. It continually prompted him to mischief; and it was feared that, as he grew older, he would become dangerous to be left at large.

Now, but for one additional symptom, it would have seemed absurd to attribute this boy's perversity of disposition, and of behavior, to any physical cause. He would have been whipped as a naughty, wicked boy; and when grown older, have been punished, perhaps, as a perverse criminal. This additional symptom is the occurrence, at irregular periods, of severe fits of an epileptic character. The spirit suddenly rends him; he falls down; is convulsed, and then, after a few moments' struggle, becomes again the mischievous imp that he was before.

Here is a clear indication of physical affection of the brain, or some part of the nervous system; but, whether structural or functional, has not yet been ascertained. It was, however, soon discovered, by close watching, that he had the habit of slyly chewing and swallowing bits of wood, straw, strings, or any thing that he could force down his throat. Every effort was made to break up this habit, but in vain. No entreaties could prevail with him to forego it; no watching could prevent him from indulging it. A wire mask was fastened upon his face, and taken off only at meal times; but even then, if unwatched for a moment, he would contrive to

work a straw, or crooked stick, under the mask and into his mouth. Of course every one of these indigestible substances remained for an indefinite time in the alimentary canal, and caused irritation, which extended to the brain, and tended to produce fits.

Now this boy was so intelligent and apparently so rational, that this habit of swallowing sticks and the like, might be set down by unreflecting persons, as only another sign of his perverse disposition. But the boy swallowed these substances because he felt at the stomach, an irresistible craving for them; and this craving was, probably, only the symptom of a morbid condition of the brain. He could no more stop the craving than he could prevent a fit. He had less power to resist the craving than the toper, the opium eater, or the smoker has to resist the craving for the favorite stimulus, for his moral sense had never been fully developed, and could not be appealed to.

This case is interesting, because it shows the intimate relation between the condition of the brain and the appetites; and such appetites, or cravings rather, are very common among idiots. Nor, indeed, are they confined to idiots. Many sensations which are supposed, by those who have them, to be hunger and thirst, and gratified as such, are, in reality, only morbid appetites, and symptoms of an unhealthy brain. What we call hunger, depends as much upon the condition of the brain as upon that of the stomach; nay, but for the agency of the brain, the sensation could never be felt, though the stomach were a vacuum and its sides collapsed.

The empty stomach does not, necessarily, make a man feel hungry; and the full stomach does not always stop the craving for food. It is true that, in a perfectly natural and healthy condition of body, the sensation of hunger is a sure sign that the stomach is empty, and that the system needs nourishment; but few are in this happy condition! Very few are there, who have not committed excesses, especially in eating and drinking. Now among the punishments of excesses are morbid appetites; and if the excesses are frequently repeated, the appetites be-

come habitual, and continue so even after the excesses are discontinued, until what seems hunger is hardly any more a reliable sign that the man needs victuals, than what seems thirst is a sign that the toper needs drink.

Pampered appetites grow into ravening propensities, which, like Actæon's hounds, rend and devour their master. If all the people of this country should suddenly change their habits, and take only such a quantity of nutritious food and drink as would best sustain their bodies in healthy and vigorous condition, there would be a general glut of fish and flesh in the market; the spices, and many other of the grocer's goods would waste in his boxes; the breweries, the distilleries, and the grog-shops would speedily disappear, and the apothecary shops would soon follow.

It is easy to see how millions upon millions of material value would be speedily added to the common capital. But, what arithmetic shall compute the moral gain, and show how greatly sadness and suffering, and crime would be lessened, and how pleasure, and enjoyment, and virtue would be increased! Who can calculate what an immense increase of productive power there would be when the lets and hinderances to free action of brain and muscle should be removed, by relieving the system of its repletion and its over work!

Besides, there is often a deeper cause of intemperance than is suspected. The craving for the stimulus of alcohol not unfrequently comes from a morbid condition of the brain, which had its primary source in the alimentary canal. Excess of one kind begets excess of another; one morbid appetite begets another; and the worst of the whole is that the vice dies not out with its victim, but it is transmitted to his children, who inherit such disposition to morbid appetites, that they yield to temptations which others, more favorably organized, would easily resist. This is manifested in the case of idiots and insane persons, born of intemperate or dissolute parents, the number of whom is becoming fearfully great. The morbid appetites above mentioned are very common among these two classes of persons, and they are interesting and important psy-

chologically, as they show the close connection between the intellectual and moral, and the physical condition of man. But, be it borne in mind, what we see among these unfortunate men is peculiar to them only in degree, not in kind; they are the extreme cases; they have descended to a depth in the scale of bodily deterioration towards which thousands are tending.

Among the insane these morbid appetites are very common. In some hospitals, a large proportion of the patients will swallow things that they would have turned from with disgust when sane. The extent to which the morbid appetites prevail depends much upon the treatment. In some hospitals, one-third, or even one-half of the patients are given over to the most disgusting appetites, and no systematic effort is made to remedy the evil; while in other establishments, among the same class of patients, not one-tenth part will be so afflicted. nor will even they be left without attempts for their relief.

These morbid appetites disappear or are greatly diminished in most of the idiotic children who are brought to our school, and subjected for a few months to its discipline.

In the general physiological management, the same system of diet and regimen, bathing, friction, exercise and the like, has been pursued during the past as during former years, and with success.

In several cases, children who were subject to periodical fits, have been restored; in others, the attacks have become less frequent. There has been no death; and very little sickness among them during the past year. The general standard of health has been evidently raised; and the result is, upon the whole, highly gratifying.

THE SCHOOL.

The same course of instruction in school, has been pursued during the past as during former years. The most important thing is to arouse and keep up the attention of the pupils, and to make them perceive the forms, qualities and attributes of objects. The next is to teach them to attach to these their

several names. This, in other words, is learning language; and idiots cannot get beyond the mere rudimentary part of language, because they cannot perceive, comprehend, and remember any thing more than the general forms, and sensible qualities and attributes of objects. Not all of them can do thus much; but those who can, since they have the same disposition to talk that ordinary persons have, use very freely their limited vocabulary; they ring a great many changes upon a few words, and are supposed, by unreflecting spectators, to talk pretty well.

They do not, however, in reality, pass beyond the rudiments of the simplest kind of language. When it comes to that subtle but real transition from language expressive of the qualities and attributes of material objects, to language expressive of immaterial and moral relations, they stumble at the very threshold. An idiot may, perhaps, make the transition perfectly enough, from the pleasure of tasting sweets, to pleasure in society of another, to say, understandingly, I love John, or Mary; possibly to say, John or Mary, is sweet—good—kind; but here he stops; or, if, as we are sometimes told, he does not stop here, but goes on to acquire the more complex parts of language, then he is no longer an idiot.

Those who give us such wonderful accounts of the intelligent use of language by idiots, do not mean to deceive others, but they either deceive themselves, or they comprehend in the class of idiots persons of a higher grade of intellect than we do.

Great wonder is expressed, when a blind deaf mute, like Laura Bridgman, or Oliver Caswell, can be taught to use, understandingly, words expressive of purely moral relations; but in reality they make the mental transition, from the use of signs expressive of their perception of material qualities and attributes, to signs expressive of their moral sensation, just in the same way as all children do. Of course it makes no difference in the mental operation that one uses an audible and the other a visible sign. There is this difference, however, that blind mutes can never go so far, nor nearly so far as

others can go, in the use of language expressive of moral relations.

There never was a deaf mute, and there never will be one, who can use and understand language as he would have done, if, with the same talents and opportunities, he had possessed the sense of hearing. He must ever be far behind others; and the deaf mute who is also blind, must ever be far behind him.

It is most interesting to observe this process of transition, from words expressive of material relations to words expressive of immaterial relations, in children between the ages of two and of five or six years. Any one, by close attention, may see how, after having mastered the names of objects, and the names of their sensible qualities, white, black,—hard, soft,—sweet, sour,—and the like, they gradually learn to attach these names of material qualities to things immaterial,—to thoughts, feelings and sensations; at first using those where the analogy is closest, and then branching off into those where it is remote. The child understands what a beautiful rose is, long before it understands what a beautiful character is. Now the idiotic child does not get through this process; the transition is to him the real *pons asinorum*; and he who gets fairly over, has demonstrated that he is not an idiot, and ought to have his discharge from a school for idiots.

None of our pupils then use language in the more complex and subtle forms. A few make use of all the common parts of speech, and the principal inflexions as applied to things which they see and comprehend. Six use substantives only. Seven are speechless, or use only interjectional expressions.

Exercises, therefore, with a view to cultivating and improving the faculty of speech, are important to all, and are used for all. A few can read simple sentences and comprehend them. Some can associate the audible with the visible sign, and pronounce words which they see pointed out, without really knowing the meaning.

It is not certain that any of the pupils will ever learn to read so well as to be of any immediate and practical

benefit to them in after life; but it is certain that the efforts which they make in learning to read, are of very great use in developing, exercising, and thus strengthening their feeble faculties.

Arithmetic is another branch of study, and it is pursued steadily, because it is an excellent gymnastic for some, at least, of the mental faculties.

As a general rule, the faculty of combining numbers is feeble in idiots, that is, when compared with other faculties; but now and then one is found who excels in this particular. Certainly their ability to comprehend the relations of numbers does not always correspond with their ability in other matters. It is with them as with ordinary persons, quickness at figures does not necessarily imply quickness at any thing else.

Ciphering, said an eminent philosopher, is done in a small corner of a man's brain, and he might have added, that it may be done in a small corner of a very small brain. Men of quick parts are sometimes so deficient in the faculty of number, that they can hardly understand simple arithmetical processes; and some are even perplexed about reckoning change for money. On the other hand, there are persons of less than average general ability, who have what seems to be an intuitive perception of the relations of numbers, and who can see at a glance, the result of intricate combinations, which ordinary persons can arrive at only by long and laborious ciphering. Some of these mathematical prodigies, as they are called, not only have no other faculty well developed except that of number, but even this ceases to work after they pass the period of youth; and from being tolerably bright, they become intolerably stupid. Such cases go to confirm the notion of the independence of the faculty by which we perceive the relations of number.

A few years ago, when one of these prodigies was at the height of his renown, he was examined by Mr. G——, a rude but very able mathematician, who tried in vain to perplex him by arithmetical questions. These were solved instantaneously and correctly, as Mr. G. was obliged to acknowledge, after a

quarter of an hour's work, with slate and pencil, upon each of them. He then examined him a little upon other subjects, and being asked whether the youth would not make a great mathematician, he replied contemptuously, "No! he will never be any thing but a thundering cipherer!"

He might have said even more; for this youth, when grown to man's estate, manifested no extraordinary faculty whatever, having lost even that of "ciphering."

Many years ago, I saw a young man who was blind, and was supposed also to be an idiot. He was, undoubtedly, quite idiotic in most of his faculties, and yet he had an extraordinary faculty of reckoning. The faculty seemed, moreover, to work spontaneously, and to give him pleasure, for it was his delight to solve questions. The range of his faculty, however, was not very great. His memory of dates and facts was wonderful. If asked on what day Christmas or New Year's fell, two or three years ago, he would answer immediately and correctly, stating the day of the week, how many weeks and days ago it was; what remarkable event happened on that day; and always close by telling what he ate for dinner.

None of our present pupils have any extraordinary quickness of perception of the relations of number. On the contrary, several are even more deficient in this than in other respects. One youth who was a short time connected with the school, was found to have too much intellect to be classed with idiots. He learned to write a "handsome hand," and could even compose a letter pretty well, and express himself with tolerable correctness, upon common matters. He copied drawings very well; he read intelligibly, in simple books; he studied geography with some success; and seemed merely a backward and awkward youth. Numbers, however, were hidden mysteries to him. Days, weeks, and months were spent in trying to make him comprehend the difference between numbers higher than four, and to remember the names which denote the differences; but all in vain. He could *count*, as it is called, very glibly, up to twenty, thirty, and so on, but in reality only by rote. He understood that two objects were

more than one, three more than two, four more than three, and five more than four, and so far he could learn and remember the words significative of these differences; that is, *two, three, four, five*. He could even perceive, *in certain states of his system*, that is, when his brain was in good working order, that six objects—as six apples, or six cents—were more numerous than five, and if the name was *then* given him he would repeat it; but he could not retain it a moment after the objects were removed out of his sight. So long as he had to do with the concrete,—that is so long as he could take three cents and put them with other three cents, so long he knew that three and three make six. But if asked, five minutes after the objects were out of sight, how many three and three make, he would be as likely to say seven, or nine, as six.

Subtraction was, of course, even a greater mystery than addition. When a fillip was given to his mind, by putting the question in a quick, sharp voice, “How many do three and two make?” he could, by a vigorous effort of attention, see that the result of the union was five; but no effort could make him perceive, *with any assurance of being right*, that three taken from five would leave two.

He is now about twenty years old. Great pains and labor have been bestowed upon him, and in most respects he has greatly improved; but, it may be safely said, that unless some remarkable change takes place in his physical organization, he will never comprehend the mysterious process by which eight pieces, of six and a quarter cents each, make a half a dollar.

The case is not a very singular one, but it shows clearly, that where any faculty is feeble, the mind requires objects in the concrete to lean upon; and the moment these are taken away it loses balance and totters.

About half of the pupils study geography. One class can name the great divisions of land and water, the mountains, rivers, and the like. They can give the names of the States, and tell what is the capital of each. With an expert teacher, they can make a recitation that excites the admiration of a charitable audience. Their unfortunate condition disarms crit-

icism. Were it not so, the close examiner would find that they have not a clear conception of what the map is intended to illustrate; indeed that they do not think of much else except its party-colored surface. One State is a red spot of a certain shape; another is green, and of a different shape; the red is associated in their minds with one name, the green with another name. One river is very crooked and runs zigzag towards the blue paint that represents the ocean, on the right;—another runs towards the blue paint that represents another ocean, and with another name, on the left. Here is a fish-hook called Cape Cod. There is a boot called Italy, with the toe about to kick the foot-ball called Sicily. Much beyond such vague associations of spots of a certain shape and color, with certain vocal sounds,—words of a certain number of syllables—much beyond this, idiotic children do not go. Nor, indeed, is this peculiar to them, for if we rigidly examine classes of small children in schools that are carelessly taught, we shall find many reciting glibly in geography, and even drawing maps, who have no definite idea of what a map represents. There is this difference, however, between them and idiotic children, (and it is an immense one,) that later in life, when the reflective faculties are developed, all these little detached and crude items of knowledge, that have been gathered by the busy perceptive faculties, are digested, and out of them are formed general ideas and conceptions of principles, in spite of the bad method of instruction; whereas the reflective faculties of the idiot are never well developed, and he remains in mental childhood even when he comes to man's estate.

Linear drawing and writing are taught to all who are capable of learning. In these and other branches, we have in view not only the immediate end of imparting something useful in the particular branch, but the remoter though all important end, of developing and strengthening the mind as far as it may be done. While we recognize the severalty of the faculties, we forget not the unity of the mind. We consider that the exercise and improvement of parts, favors the culture and development of the whole.

The result of the year's instruction in school has been, upon the whole, quite satisfactory.

More important, however, than school learning, are those daily exercises, and that course of training which have for their object to improve the habits, the manners, and the general condition and behavior of the pupils. The success of this depends upon those who have the immediate charge of the household, and care of the pupils. Theirs is the labor—theirs will be the reward. Mrs. McDonald, the Matron, has continued, as in former years, to discharge her important duties with diligence and with success. She has been aided by her son, Mr. Alexander McDonald, during most of the past year. He has acted as principal teacher, and has had the immediate charge of the boys. Miss Myra Newton, and the other persons employed, have continued to give satisfaction. They constitute the household; and it is their constant intercourse with the pupils which moulds their characters, and modifies and improves them in various ways.

The change which has been brought about in many of the unfortunate children, is very great. Their dirty and disorderly habits have been corrected. They can take care of themselves in respect to many wants which formerly had to be ministered to by others. They can dress and feed themselves with much more readiness and propriety. Some are beginning to be useful in various ways. Nothing, however, need be added upon this matter, to what has been said in former reports, except that there is a gradual and steady improvement. This must be obvious to those who knew the former, and who see the present condition of the pupils. Many who were formerly noisy, dirty, gluttonous, violent and unmanageable, are now quiet, tidy, temperate, docile and obedient.

The regular habits and the strict discipline which pervade the household, have visible effects upon all but the very worst cases. It is seen, at a glance, in the general demeanor of the pupils when they are in school, when at their exercises, when at meals; but most especially when, catching the spirit

about them, they make extra efforts to appear well; as for instance, on the Sabbath. Then all endeavor to dress with more than common neatness, and to behave with more than common propriety. A large number go regularly to church, clad in their best attire, and share at least in that decorum of manner, and in that show of outward devotion which pervades all our religious assemblies. Nay! they do even more than this; for surely we may recognize, in their child-like and imperfect forms of devotion, the faint dawning of that religious spirit, the full development of which is the distinguishing attribute and the crowning glory of humanity.

Respectfully submitted, by

S. G. HOWE.

TREASURER'S

DR. *Massachusetts School for Idiotic and Feeble-Minded*

1853.							
Jan.	14.	To Cash paid on Auditor's order,	\$893	97			
	14.	" " " "	700	00			
						\$1,593	97
March	4.	" " Globe Bank, interest,				44	50
April	25.	" " Auditor's draft,				1,121	16
July	27.	" " collecting draft,				25	
	27.	" " on Auditor's order,	1,453	91			
						1,454	16
Sept.	3.	" " Globe Bank, interest,				30	00
Oct.	22.	" " on Auditor's order,				1,000	00
Nov.	22.	" " " "				1,000	00
1854.							
Jan.	5.	" " note, to Globe Bank,	1,000	00			
	5.	" " interest on above,	20	67			
						1,020	67
	5.	To Balance, to new account,				636	34

\$7,900 80

REPORT.

Youth, in account with STEPHEN FAIRBANKS, *Tr.* CR.

1853.

Jan.	12.	By Cash, balance old account,	\$1,118 42	
	12.	“ of William Ross, on account,	\$75 00	
	12.	“ of J. Boardman, “ “	40 00	
	12.	“ of J. Collingwood, “ “	30 00	
	12.	“ of H. C. Smith, “ “	304 00	
	12.	“ sale of Cow,	20 00	
	12.	“ of J. Devol, on account,	15 00	
	12.	“ of R. L. Smith, “	125 00	
				609 00
April	2.	“ of Commonwealth of Massachusetts, second quarterly payment,	1,250 00	
	25.	“ of Mr. Ross, on account,	75 00	
	25.	“ of Mr. Boardman, “	30 00	
				1,355 00
May	4.	“ of J. Collingwood, “	30 00	
	4.	“ of C. McFarlane, “	50 00	
				80 00
July	21.	“ of Commonwealth of Massachusetts, third quarterly payment,	1,250 00	
	26.	“ of State of Rhode Island,	284 45	
	26.	“ of R. L. Smith, on account,	239 52	
	27.	“ of William Ross, “	113 00	
	27.	“ of Mr. Avery, “	28 50	
				1,915 47
Oct.	1.	“ of Commonwealth of Massachusetts, fourth quarterly payment,	1,250 00	
Nov.	21.	“ sale of old Wagon,	10 00	
	21.	“ of Richard Collingwood, on account,	30 00	
	21.	“ of J. Boardman, on account,	30 00	
	21.	“ of J. O'Brien, “ “	21 25	
	21.	“ of J. Rennie, “ “	32 66	
	21.	“ of J. Savory, “ “	39 00	
	21.	“ of James Lee, “ “	100 00	
	21.	“ of Mr. Mooney, “ “	20 00	
				282 91
1854.				
Jan.	3.	“ of J. Savory, on account,	19 00	
	3.	“ of Mr. Mooney, “	20 00	
	3.	“ of Mr. Mahoney, “	1 00	
	3.	“ of Commonwealth of Massachusetts, first quarterly payment,	1,250 00	
				1,290 00
				<u>\$7,900 80</u>

APPENDIX.

Form of Questions to be answered by the Parents or Friends of Applicants for admission to the School.

What is the applicant's name and age ?

Please give the date of the birth ?

Were the father and mother related by blood ; and if so, in what degree ?

Have there been any cases of insanity, epilepsy, idiocy, blindness, deafness, or of any infirmity of body or mind in the family of the father or of the mother, or any among his near relations ? If so, please to state what they were.

Do you know of any peculiarity of constitution, or of bodily condition in any of the relatives of the father or of the mother ? For instance, are the members of either family consumptive or scrofulous, or subject to salt rheum, or eruptions of any kind ?

What manner of man was the father bodily ? That is, was he strong and healthy, or weak and puny ?

What was his age at the time of the birth of the applicant ?

Was he a person of average mental ability ?

What was his business or calling ?

What were his habits with regard to temperance ?

What manner of woman was the mother bodily ?

What was her calling ?

What were her habits with regard to temperance ?

At what age was she married to the father of the applicant ?

Was she a person of average mental ability ?

How many children has she had ?

How many before, and how many after the birth of the applicant ?

How old was she when the applicant was born ?

Was there any thing peculiar in the bodily or mental condition of any of the other children ?

What was the state of the mother's bodily health during the time she was pregnant with the applicant ?

Was she subject to any bodily injury, or disease, or to any extraordinary mental emotions, as fright, grief, &c. ?

Was the child born at the full period of gestation ?

Were there any extraordinary circumstances attendant upon the delivery ? If so, describe them.

What has been the general health, and the bodily condition of the applicant ?

At what period was it first observed that there was any thing peculiar about the applicant ?

Has there been observed at any time since birth, any thing peculiar in the shape or condition of the head ?

Does the head now differ in shape or condition from the head of ordinary persons of the same age ?

What is now the general health of the applicant ?

Is the applicant now subject, or has he ever been subject to epilepsy ?

What is now the weight of the applicant ?

What is now the height of the applicant ?

Is there any infirmity of body, or any striking peculiarity ?

How is the appetite for food and drink ?

Is the applicant active, vigorous, running about and noticing things, or the contrary ?

What is the state of the sense of sight ? Is the eye bright or dull ?

What is the state of the sense of hearing ? Is it quick or sluggish ?

Does the applicant show any sensibility to musical sounds ?

What is the state of the sense of smell ?

What is the state of the sense of taste ? Is the applicant particular about what he (or she) eats ; or will he (or she) swallow things without regard to taste ?

Is he (or she) gluttonous ?

What are the habits of the applicant with regard to personal cleanliness ?

Can the applicant talk, and if so, like a person of what age ?

Can he (or she) make a regular sentence, containing nouns, verbs in the conditional mode, adjectives and adverbs, &c. ?

Does he (or she) use understandingly such words as *or* and *if* ?

Please give several specimens of his (or her) mode of talking, and be careful to put down the words exactly as he (or she) uses them.

Can he dress and undress himself ?

Can he feed himself ?

Does he use a spoon, or knife and fork ?

Can he tie his shoes in a regular knot ?

Can he do any work, and what kind ?

What are his personal habits ?

Does he hide, break or destroy things ?

Does he get up in the night and wander about ?

Is he (or she) obedient ?

Does he (or she) come when called ?

Does he (or she) go astray ?

Is he (or she) passionate ?

Is he (or she) given to self-abuse, or masturbation ?

Has there been such watchfulness that you can be sure he (or she) is free from all habits of self-pollution ?

Please state any facts that may show the peculiar character of the applicant.

TERMS OF ADMISSION, & c.

The best age for admission is between six and twelve years.

The institution is not intended for epileptic or insane children, nor for those who are incurably hydrocephalic or paralytic, and any such will not be retained, to the exclusion of more improvable subjects.

Children will be received upon trial for one month, at the end of which time a report upon the case will be made to the parents.

Children must come well provided with plain, strong clothing, and stout shoes for walking in any weather. They must be renewed as often as is necessary, at the expense of the applicants. Those who tear and destroy their clothing must be provided with garments made expressly for them, and of such form and texture as not to be easily torn.

The children of indigent parents, in Massachusetts, will be received gratis. For others, a charge will be made proportionate to the trouble and cost of treating them.

Sufficient surety will be required for the removal of the pupils whenever they may be discharged.

Persons applying for the admission of children as beneficiaries of Massachusetts, should address the Governor. They must also fill out certain blanks, the form of which is as follows:—

FORM OF APPLICATION FOR BENEFICIARIES IN MASSACHUSETTS.

185 .

To His Excellency the Governor:—

Sir,—The undersigned, citizen of Massachusetts, and inhabitant of the town of _____ respectfully represents that his son [or daughter],* named _____ and aged _____ years, is so deficient in intellect that he cannot be taught in the Common Schools, as other youth are; and he therefore requests that your Excellency would recommend him for admission as a pupil to the Massachusetts School for teaching and training Idiotic and Feeble-Minded Persons, as a State beneficiary.

Respectfully yours,

_____.

* If a town pauper, the overseers of the poor may apply as for their ward.

The application should be accompanied by two certificates, in the following form : *

I.

185 .

I, _____ one of the selectmen of the town of _____ hereby certify, that in my opinion _____ is not wealthy, and could not well afford to pay \$150 per year for the instruction of _____ at the School for Idiotic and Feeble-Minded Persons.

(Signed,) _____.

II.

185 .

I, _____ citizen of Massachusetts, physician, and practitioner in the town of _____ hereby certify, that I have examined _____ and find that he is not insane, but is so deficient in mental ability, that he cannot be taught in the Common Schools, as others of his age are.

His bodily health is _____, and he has no cutaneous or contagious disorder.

(Signed,) _____.

N. B. The physician is earnestly requested to state, in writing, his opinion of the *cause* of the person's mental deficiency ; to state whether he is or has been epileptic ; also, to mention any organic or functional peculiarity that he may have observed. It may be greatly for the advantage of the person, that the physician should send in writing a full and minute account of the case, with his own thoughts and suggestions in regard to it.

If the applicant is admitted as a beneficiary, he must be provided with a paper signed by two responsible persons, in form of a guaranty for removal, as follows :—

185 .

We, the undersigned, citizens of Massachusetts, and householders in the town of _____ respectively pledge ourselves, that, should _____ be received into the Massachusetts School for teaching and training Idiotic and Feeble-Minded Youth, he shall be kept properly supplied with decent clothing, that he shall be removed during vacations, (if his removal be required,) and that whenever he shall be discharged, he shall be removed at once, and the institution relieved from all responsibility for his support.

(Signed,) _____.

For further particulars, address Dr. S. G. HOWE, Boston.

* The same may be used in Rhode Island.

O F F I C E R S
OF THE
MASSACHUSETTS SCHOOL FOR IDIOTIC AND
FEEBLE-MINDED YOUTH,
FOR 1854.

PRESIDENT.
S. G. HOWE.

VICE-PRESIDENT.
GEORGE B. EMERSON.

TREASURER.
STEPHEN FAIRBANKS.

SECRETARY.
EDWARD JARVIS.

TRUSTEES.
JOHN A. ANDREW,
SAMUEL DOWNER, Jr.,
SAMUEL ELIOT,
SAMUEL HOAR,
SAMUEL G. HOWE,
EDWARD JARVIS,
JAMES LODGE,
WILLIAM MINOT,

} *In behalf of the
Corporation.*

ROBERT W HOOPER,
GEORGE OSBORNE,
MARSHALL S. PERRY,
STEPHEN M. WELD,

} *In behalf of
the State.*