

MODEL HOME FOR INSANE

Features of the Alabama-Bryce Hospital in Tuscaloosa.

NO PHYSICAL RESTRAINT IS USED

Patients Have Concerts, Theatricals, and Picnics, and Work on the Farm No More than They Wish.

BIRMINGHAM, Ala., Aug. 31.—The Alabama-Bryce Insane Hospital is situated in the town of Tuscaloosa, on the Queen and Crescent Road, about sixty miles south of Birmingham. Under the management of Dr. Peter Bryce, who died last year, this Alabama State institution won a National reputation in the medical world. The institution bears the stamp of the genius of Dr. Bryce. His idea as to the treatment of insane patients has become as popular as it is successful. His theories on this subject might be well expressed in one word—"gentleness."

Dr. Bryce believed that the patient would be much better controlled without the straitjacket than with it, and during a lifetime devoted to the test of this theory at the hospital that bears his name he fully established its correctness. Dr. Bryce has been succeeded in the management of the institution by Dr. James T. Searcey, who was his intimate associate.

The hospital now owns about 1,200 acres of land, with three or four miles of river front. The property embraces very fine farm lands, and has upon it a coal seam that furnishes a very excellent quality of coal. About 500 acres of this farm are under a high state of cultivation, most of the work being done by the less violent patients, of whom there are between 300 and 400, who do some work every day. They are not compelled to work, but are allowed to do almost what they please.

Potatoes are the chief crop. As high as 10,000 bushels have been produced in a single crop, the prospects now being for a yield equally large, if not larger. The cabbage crop this year has been very fine, besides which a great many barrels of pickles have been put up for home consumption. The fruit orchard out on the farm is yet too young for bearing. There are more than 4,000 trees of different kinds—pears, peaches, plums, and apples. This year 6,000 bushels of oats were raised, and forty acres in millet produced more hay than could be stored. A good corn crop will also be raised.

The dairy, too, an interesting feature. The hospital now owns about 100 cows, 50 of which are now in milk. These 50 cows on Aug. 1 of this year gave 760 pounds of milk, being 2 gallons a day for each cow. This milk is used mostly for coffee and for sick patients. Two hundred full-blooded Berkshire hogs are now in very fine condition, and will be killed in the Fall.

The watermelon crop has been very fine, and for several days the whole population of nearly 1,500 persons has been fed just as much of this fruit as it wanted. This took from 300 to 400 melons a day.

There are now about 1,220 inmates confined in the hospital, and 175 employes and their families to care for them. The entire cost of keeping up this institution is less than \$2 a week for each patient. The statutes allow the Superintendent to draw \$3 per week for each indigent, but never is more than \$2 drawn, and this pays the salaries of all the officers, employes, and, in fact, all the expenses of running the institution. Out of this fund enough money has been saved to put up the addition now in progress, which will accommodate about 100 more male patients. This building will be ready for occupancy by the time cold weather begins.

A great many people have the idea that the hospital is a very noisy and dangerous place. A visit there will convince them that there is not a hotel in the country where so little noise is heard, or where such good order prevails. None of the inmates is ever put in irons, or, to use the technical expression, mechanically restrained. This rule was adopted more than fifteen years ago, and it has been found to work splendidly. Humane treatment instead is resorted to, and the results have been far-reaching.

A great many entertainments are gotten up for the benefit and pleasure of the convalescent and saner patients. These consist of concerts by the best local talent in the city, amateur theatricals and tableaux, and bi-weekly dances that are entered into and enjoyed by the patients in a degree that is highly gratifying. At all these entertainments the very best of order prevails; in fact, so noticeable is this, that there are many so-called sane people who might learn a lesson from the excellent good manners of these unfortunates, who know when to listen and when and what to applaud.

Occasionally large numbers of them are carried to Lake Lorraine for a picnic. These are the happy times for those people, who are supposed to be outside the world and to have no pleasure at all. Everything that can be done to make shattered lives pleasant is done. Those who work do as much as they want to do and no more. Very often one may see a man roll his wheelbarrow up to be loaded and he will go galloping off with it before two shovelfuls of dirt are in it. Some of the patients have a lot of life in them, and not a few are very witty and well informed on many subjects.

The colored patients have separate apartments, and they, too, are treated as well as can be. They have their dances, plays, and picnics just like the white folks, but they enjoy these a great deal more. There was a picnic at the lake last Thursday. They had music for dancing and refreshments in profusion, consisting of ginger cakes, lemonade and watermelons.

The hospital is not a house of detention or a prison, for, while it is true that certain restrictions are necessary, yet everything is conducted on humane principles.