

Dangerous Tools for Lunatics.

The lunatic problem is very troublesome in Louisiana just now in consequence of the rapid increase of the insane, especially among the negroes, due probably to the general use of cocaine and other drugs. The increase in lunacy in the State has been so rapid of late that although the insane asylum at Jackson has been added to every few years, it is unable to accommodate a large number of the insane, who are accumulating in all the parishes, but especially in New Orleans, awaiting for a vacancy to occur in the asylum by death or discharge. These lunatics are confined in the local jails, places usually unsuited to them, and in which they suffer the greatest hardships, being usually without the necessary attendance and treatment. An investigation by the authorities in New Orleans a few days ago disclosed such a frightful condition of affairs among the lunatics that the city has decided to erect a temporary asylum where they can be confined until the State has room in which to quarter them. Meantime, they are confined in a private institution, the city paying their board.

This overcrowding of the State Asylum has led to another evil. In view of the fact that there was no accommodation for the lunatics, except the noisome police jail the milder lunatics—those who were believed to be sane and quiet, have been allowed to run at large. On June 24 a severe lesson was taught when one of these harmless lunatics, Richardson, by name, ran amuck through the principal streets of New Orleans, killing a former friend, Schloessel, and a boy, Whitaker. The lunatic himself would have been lynched by a mob, who knew nothing of his insanity, but for the sheriff.

Several other affairs of this kind have impressed upon the people of Louisiana the fact that no lunatics are harmless, and a demand has been made on the Legislature for a large increase in the appropriation for the asylum, so as to enable it to provide for all. There are 1,157 insane persons confined in the asylum and the total would be increased to 1,500 if there was room enough in the institution. The increase in the inmates has been at the rate of five per cent a year, showing a remarkable development of insanity in Louisiana. Some of the increase may be due to the fact that cases of lunacy were concealed before; whereas now that the State Insane Asylum enjoys such enviable reputation as one of the best in the country, with an extraordinary percentage of cure, the wealthiest families in the State prefer to send their weak-minded to the Jackson asylum rather than to private institutions as they did formerly.

Of the inmates, 422, or nearly one half are negroes, and it is remarked as a curious fact that whereas among the whites the males exceed, at the rate of four to three, the female lunatics, the contrary is the case among the negroes, where the woman lunatics are in a majority.

In the last few years, under the administration of the present superintendent, Dr. G. A. B. Hays, the methods pursued in the treatment of the insane have been radically changed with a most salutary result. Some change became necessary when the number of inmates increased so rapidly without a corresponding increase in the revenues provided by the legislature. It became necessary to economize, and Dr. Hays decided to try to make the institution self supporting believing that this would be beneficial, not only from a financial point of view, but would tend to support the mental health of the lunatics. The result is that the asylum is one of the most cheaply run in the country, at a cost of only \$80 per capita a year; although most comfortable and convenient in all respects. The asylum is surrounded by handsome flower gardens, with here and there fountains playing around the flowers and looks more like a public park or pleasure ground than an insane asylum.

This is accomplished with the meagre allowance made by the Legislature, mainly through employing the labor of the lunatics themselves, and this labor not only gives the lunatics pleasure and comforts they would not otherwise have, but it has, the superintendent thinks, a decidedly good physical and mental effect, employing what minds they have left and in many cases restoring the physical health.

It has been a matter of some years to perfect this system of working the lunatics. A number of them of course, could not be employed at all at any useful occupation, the violent lunatics and idiots.

As to the others, it was necessary to determine by trial and experience what work they were suited for, how far they could be trusted and how long they could work. It can be stated as a general proposition that the lunatic, no matter how wild his mental make-up, cannot perform anywhere near the same amount of work in any line as a sane person. He becomes tired or restless in a few hours and it will not pay to work him after he shows the slightest fatigue or dissatisfaction. Up to that point, however, he will work well and efficiently and even seems to become interested in what he is doing. By studying the tendencies and methods of each individual lunatic, it is possible to get out of him nearly as much work as a sane man can do, and during these working hours he is capable not only of crude, rough work, but even of tasks requiring very considerable skill. Thus all the carpentering work in the asylum is done by lunatics, and the bread eaten as well by the inmates as by the inmates, is baked by lunatics, and possibly the greatest achievement of all, the engineer who runs the engines which supply the asylum with water, heat and light, is a lunatic.

Perhaps the most serious problem in this connection is the fact that the lunatics are necessarily provided with tools or implements that may become dangerous in their hands should their madness assume a homicidal form as is always possible. The asylum raises all the vegetables it needs with lunatic labor, and its magnificent garden is kept in order by the inmates themselves. The men are furnished with spades and pickaxes, while the workmen those who cut fuel, carry axes. It would seem a most serious risk to work with men who are liable to break out into maniacal fury at any time, but so far this plan has worked admirably, and there has not been a serious accident to any of the inmates because of a man injuring himself or attempting to injure the others. The only

assault made was by one of the female lunatics employed in housekeeping work. In a fit of mania she attacked one of her companions with a mop and attempted to beat out her brains, but was restrained in time. In furnishing the lunatics with implements and tools that can be used as weapons the greatest care and attention are required. The lunatics are tested before the axes are given them. At the slightest evidence of any dangerous mental disturbance they are deprived of these weapons.

The amount of work got from the lunatics in this way is almost beyond belief; and it is probable that the lunatics contribute more to their own support than the state itself does. The women do all the house cleaning work, run the laundry, make all their own clothing, as well as the suits and underclothing used by the male lunatics. All the cooking is done by the inmates, the kitchen force being equally divided between men and women—for the sexes are necessarily separated in the asylum. In the matter of wearing apparel the asylum provides only shoes, socks and stockings and the heavier wearing apparel of the men; everything else needed is made in the asylum.

So far has the self supporting system been carried that the lunatics raise their own tobacco, which is cured and distributed among those male inmates who are smokers, without the loss of a cent to the asylum. As a consequence the asylum needs a very small force of nurses and guards. There are only twenty male and twenty-two female attendants.

There are in addition superintendents who direct the work. The attendants work side by side with the lunatics and encourage them to labor; but labor is not compulsory in any way; nor do they receive any reward or compensation. It is found, however, that except in the case of the more violent, a lunatic, when he sees the others at labor, is anxious to join in himself.

But while the Insane Asylum has accomplished so much good, it cannot keep up with the increase in lunacy in Louisiana and the Legislature declares that it cannot give all that is asked or needed, and has cut down the appropriation \$20,000 this year, with the result that a great many persons who should be confined in the asylum will be shut out. And if the increase in negro lunatics keeps up, as it is likely

to do, now that the use of cocaine and other drugs has become so general, it is likely to prove more than troublesome.

INFLAMMATORY RHEUMATISM.

Symptoms That Point out That Dreaded Disease.

The name rheumatism is applied to a great variety of affections accompanied with pain in the joints or muscles, some of them more of a gouty or uric acid nature, others probably of infectious origin, and others still the expression of some disease of the nervous structures. Acute articular, or inflammatory, rheumatism, is a disease characterized by pain and swelling in one or more of the joints, usually the larger ones, such as the knee, together with fever of more or less intensity. It is a disease of temperate climates, especially in cold and damp regions, being seldom seen in the tropics. It occurs in this country chiefly in late winter and early spring, although it may occur, particularly on the seacoast, at any time of the year. In England it is said to be most frequent in the autumn.

It attacks persons between the ages of fifteen and forty more commonly than those who are older or younger.

Physicians are not yet agreed as to its nature, although many now incline to regard it as a germ disease. It begins gradually, with slight aching in the limbs, sore throat, and a general feeling of depression. The appetite fails, the tongue is heavily coated, often there is complaint of headache and of chilly sensations, and the sufferer is generally "out of sorts." There is feverishness, and as this increases, pain and swelling appear in one or more of the large joints. The joints attacked are hot, red and exquisitely painful, and have every appearance of being severely inflamed.

All these symptoms may disappear in a single night from one joint, and appear at the same time in another; and so the disease may go on, attacking one joint after another, those first affected recovering much of their tone and function. One of the characteristic symptoms is profuse perspiration; the skin is not red and dry, as in most fevers, but cool, moist, and sometimes actually dripping with sweat.

The disease may come to an end in a week or ten days, or it may go on attacking joint after joint, and when all have suffered it may begin over again, and so go

on indefinitely. As long as the rheumatism is confined to the joints there is little danger, although occasionally death results from excessive fever; but there is always danger that it may attack the lining membrane of the heart and cripple the organ permanently. Rarely it attacks the membrane of the brain, causing violent delirium or death.

SAVED HIMSELF.

Pretty Girl in a Railway Car Suppresses a Smart Drummer.

"Anything wrong?" asked the hotel clerk of the drummer who had just got home from the east.

"I was thinking," was the reply. "I rode from Buffalo to Toledo with the prettiest girl I ever saw."

"But that didn't hurt you. Who was she?"

"Can't tell."

"You didn't introduce yourself and get her card in return?"

"No."

"No particular trouble, eh?" politely insisted the clerk.

"Well, it was this way," replied the traveler, as he braced up for the explanation. "She sat opposite me, you know, and I tried for an hour to catch her eye. She simply ignored me, and gazed out of the window. Then I rose and opened her a magazine, but she declined with thanks. Ten minutes later I bought her a novel out, but she said she didn't care to read. Then I bought some fruit which would accept none. She also ignored me when I tried to draw her out of music."

"But you persisted?"

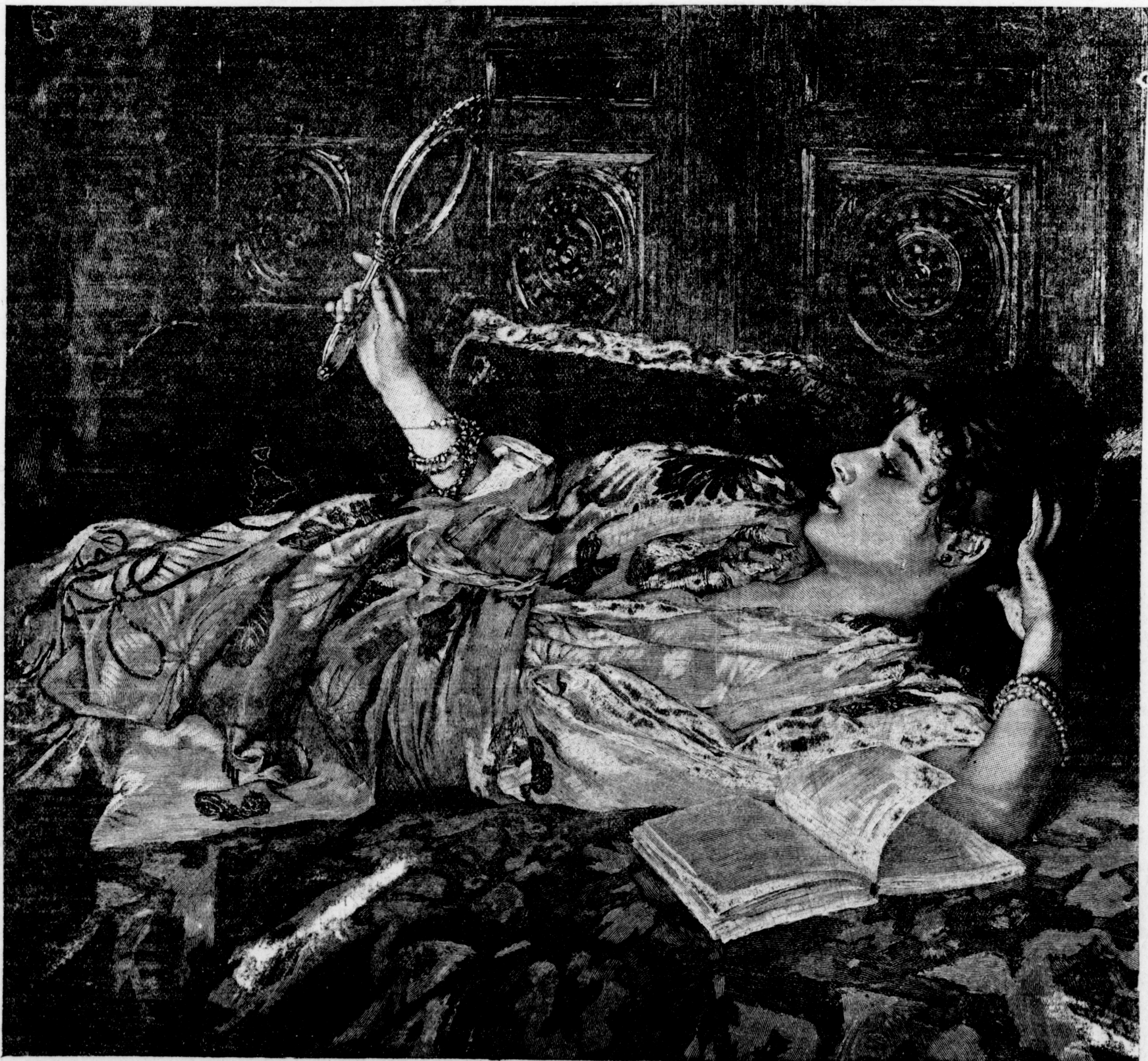
"Oh, yes. That is, I was about to make another attempt to enter into conversation when the train came to a halt at town, and the girl beckoned me over. I was there in an instant, and with the sweetest smile you ever saw she asked if I would do her a slight favor."

"With all my heart," I started to say.

"Well," she said, smiling even more sweetly, "suppose you leave the train here and take the next one that will stop at your home. I have made me dead tired, and I feel like taking a nap."

"Go graciously," whispered the clerk.

"Yes, sir," said the drummer, as he reached for a cigar, and I went to go up to my room and sit and think and try and figure out. Perhaps I'll find it if the road is settled down at home."



PLEASANT REFLECTIONS.