







Report of the Board of Health.

Notes and Observations.

The Act of the Legislature, entitled "An Act to prevent the spread of Leprosy," requires that the Board of Health give an account of their proceedings to the Assembly at its meeting, biennially.

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Let us land on the southern side of Moloai, in the thick forest of Kanaikoa, take horse, ride over the gradually ascending plain in a north-easterly direction to high pasture lands, passing the farm of Mr. Noyes, until we arrive at the foot of the famous precipice of "Kalapaupa" 2000 feet above the sea level. This precipice we shall have to descend, for it is the only communication by land with "Kalapaupa" (the landing place of the settlement from sea.) A zigzag road has been cut down this nearly perpendicular hill, which will certainly take an old and scoundrel mountaineer nearly one hour to descend. Arrived at its foot, however, and following the trail, we soon arrive at the "Flat" or landing-place, where several natives generally in picturesque vegetation in luxuriant, apart from the lepers themselves, pleasant and agreeable. The first house we arrive at is the dwelling of the Luna Mahai; it is a well furnished room, with apartments for stores of various descriptions, to be distributed weekly to the lepers under the rule.

A little further on, the house of the Keeper is reached. He has a neat commodious house with two rooms to himself, the other portions of the house being appropriated for stores of various descriptions, out-door for the supply of medicine, books, &c. The buildings adjoining the principal keeper's house are two hospitals (male and female) for those of the sick unable to attend to themselves—separate houses being provided for both sexes and persons of the leper valley who require special attention in regard to diet, accommodation and medical aid—in fact, for all those too far advanced in the disease to take care of themselves.

The children are taught the ordinary school instruction of the islands—reading, writing, arithmetic, geography and singing. The school-room is a separate building for boys and girls, with the separate building for a school-room; an instructor for which establishment is generally to be obtained amongst the lepers themselves. There are several other buildings included here, namely, a room for general purposes and the special control of the stock and material of the establishment.

Care is taken that the patients received here have suitable food, a number of milk cows furnish plenty of milk, morning and evening, and the food is prepared by a Chinese cook (a leper) belonging to the establishment. The children are taught the ordinary school instruction of the islands—reading, writing, arithmetic, geography and singing.

The scene presented to a stranger on visiting these school-rooms must necessarily be a sad one, yet he cannot but reflect that it is well for the country and the whole race that these young people—poisoned in their blood,—are taken away from the community at large. The children, with an exception or two, do not seem to feel their misfortune; when they leave school they act as others of the same age, ranging or playing their way home, apparently unconscious of the fate that awaits them.

A little distance from this central place, near the seaside, a little church has been built, where every Sunday a native minister, a leper himself, holds a service. It is situated on a spacious grassy ground, the rays of the sun being tempered by the cool, refreshing northerly breeze. It is well attended by the poor people for whose benefit it has been specially erected.

The house of the lepers is reentered throughout the valley, in the stream at the head of the settlement, and a visitor will meet numbers of lepers on an ordinary line day, some leading horses, carrying bundles of clothes in the direction of the stream; others carrying calabashes of poi, sweet-potatoes, &c.—in fact, the ordinary life of a Hawaiian village will be seen there in its usual routine and manners.

The lepers are generally well kept and clean, and in the care of the leper themselves, the Lunas placed over them. Included in the number of lepers are several half-castes, two or three Chinese and one European. The females are admirably industrious, making mats and other material for the internal comfort and accommodation of their cottages. The males who are able and WILLING to do something, work in the potato fields, the banana case, bananas, &c. A great change for the better has taken place amongst them during the past two years. They now raise considerable quantities of food, which supplements the supplies granted by the Board; at the same time they still claim equality for all, that is to say, that the able-bodied shall have the same supply of food as those who are unable to do so.

By referring to Table A, at the end of this report, it will be seen that the sum appropriated by the last Legislative Assembly for the support of the Leper Establishments, has been exceeded by a considerable amount; this result is wholly due to the fact that a greater number of persons afflicted with the disease have been brought under control of the Board than was anticipated at the time the appropriation was made for; however, the actual expenses of the Establishments, per capita, have been considerably reduced—the cost per head for the last two years having been about ten cents per diem as against fifteen for the previous biennial period. The Board has not thought it necessary to ask for a larger appropriation than that which, in the preceding two years, viz. \$25,000, having and believing that the expense can be kept within that amount by a rigid and judicious economy. The policy of appointing lepers from the lepers themselves has been inaugurated, and produced a very satisfactory result. Kaloohohi, formerly a Captain in the King's Guard, was installed as Superintendent in April, 1871, by the President of the Board, in succession to Mr. Walsh, widow of the former incumbent, and the result has been gratifying—no complaints have been received from the settlement until very lately, all parties appearing satisfied and contented—a thing previously unknown since the foundation of the settlement. It is much to be regretted that illness, resulting from the "lethal leprosy," in succession to Mr. Walsh, widow of the former incumbent, and the result has been gratifying—no complaints have been received from the settlement until very lately, all parties appearing satisfied and contented—a thing previously unknown since the foundation of the settlement.

Daily experience confirms this. Whole families, and those who have lived with them, member by member, becoming diseased; such being the nature of the disease, it is a terrible sight to see sometimes, on entering a native house, a leper, some relative or friend of the family, sitting among little children, and perhaps eating with them out of the same calabash, with several of the fingers and poisonous breath. The lives of half a dozen persons are endangered by the aloha to one person who should already be considered lost. It is a poor way of showing love to other members of the family by assisting to keep such a person in the family. Still, it is done in many cases, and every obstacle is thrown in the way of the relatives who endeavor to secure the isolation of the diseased man or woman.

We repeat again here that these people are well taken care of, and by no means unhappy. Let us think for a moment and imagine what a state we should be in, if all these lepers, instead of living together at Kalapaupa, were running free and scattered around the islands, and the new settlements and settlements and families. We could not go anywhere without meeting a leper: there would be hardly a valley on the islands without having lepers among its population. The consequence must ultimately be the ruin of the Hawaiian race, and the foreigner would soon be included in the catastrophe. But that would not be all, strangers not used to such a sight would receive evil impressions, the opinions of foreign countries would be very different in regard to us to what they now are. The islands would be shunned on all occasions, and no vessel or stranger would enter our ports unless forced by sheer necessity, and would make their escape from the plague-stricken spot as quickly as possible. The conclusion to be drawn from this is that at least though the cost connected with the establishment is large, yet it is a matter of absolute necessity that it be continued, and the money so spent may well be looked upon as an encouragement to the trade, agriculture and enterprise of the islands.

In Europe the lepers are collected in large stone asylums, in fact, in other countries, they have been rounded by high stone walls. The strictest seclusion is enforced between the inhabitants of these asylums and other people, and we do not hesitate to say that the settlement of Kalapaupa will compare favorably with any institution of the kind in the world.

The annual table marked B will show the number of births and deaths throughout the islands for the last two years, as returned to the Bureau of Public Instruction, by the officers to whom those duties are confided by law in the several districts; it is believed to be nearly correct; the Census of 1868 showed an excess of deaths over births, for the preceding six years, of 10,000 annually, and twenty thousand in all; the same result is made to the Board of Education, for the three years ending 1870, showed an excess of one thousand one hundred and fifty five deaths annually. And those now made show an excess of two thousand three hundred and forty nine—or eleven hundred and seventy four and a half annually. The return is not a pleasant subject to the general mind, but the fact that the births have steadily increased for the last five years ought not to be overlooked. They have been as follows:

Table with 2 columns: Year, Deaths. 1867: 1707, 1868: 2104, 1869: 2113, 1870: 2113, 1871: 2088.

The fever which was so prevalent throughout the group, in the years 1870 and 1871, has almost entirely disappeared, and the people have improved somewhat since the appointment of Traveling Physicians on the three Islands of Hawaii, Maui and Kauai, as authorized by the last Legislative Assembly. The policy thus inaugurated may be continued and developed with advantage. The Board have to regret the loss of Dr. Berzant—died accidentally in the District of Hawaii, in 1870, a most faithful and competent physician, who had proved himself by the native population and appreciated by foreigners generally. His place will be difficult to fill—the qualifications thereto being somewhat peculiar and not easily found in this community.

The Statute of the Kingdom known as the "Act to Mitigate," has not worked satisfactorily, owing perhaps to the want of necessary hospital accommodations. The Board have always regarded it as a sanitary measure, and as long as that result appeared to be produced, even in a limited degree, the enforcement of its provisions seemed desirable; but the reports of medical men from Honolulu itself, and also from the outer districts, would appear to show that, whatever its results may have been in former years, it has ceased to have any good effect now. The Board are informed that during the last two years the disease peculiar to this class of people have been more prevalent than in the ten previous years. The probability is that syphilitic diseases are often disseminated by women not registered than by those brought under control of the Act. The whole subject is one worthy of your serious and careful consideration.

The use of opium is on the increase among the native population of these islands. The example of another race, coming more and more in contact with the people produces this result. It is much to be regretted, but nevertheless too true, that the opium pipe may often be seen in the hands of young natives of both sexes, and it would be very desirable if the evil could be checked in some way or other; but it would seem that this must be the result of a moral control of the people themselves over the pernicious habit. It is ascertained by many that the law allowing its sale should be repealed; but the result would probably be that a larger consumption would take place as numerous parties would engage in the trade. The habit is too strong amongst those who have once become habituated to its use, and the profits to large to hope for its suppression as a traffic.

It will be worthy of the consideration of the Assembly whether the law regulating the sale of opium may not reasonably be amended. Its use is general with all classes, and is very injurious to many persons as a dangerous and pernicious drug; it is very doubtful if it be so; its effects are of a very mild character, unless taken in very large quantities. Under the present system any person ill or well can obtain permits to use opium, as physicians, and the idea prevails that the physician is paid his prescribed fee simply for the labor involved, and not for any professional skill required to prescribe the article. It is a fact that the physician is very often taken by the physician for ordering it. In a luxury, why require a medical certificate for its use. Like tobacco and other articles of that class, it should be within the province of the tradesman and not the physician to sell it to the public. Consistently with the mode of using and selling opium in this Kingdom, the law is too strong amongst those who have once become habituated to its use, and the profits to large to hope for its suppression as a traffic.

On the first day of April, 1870, there were present in the Hospital thirty-two men and women, and there have been admitted since that date forty-three persons making a total of seventy-five under treatment during the last two years; of these nineteen have died, twenty three have been discharged as cured, one has escaped, leaving the number at present in the Asylum, on the 1st of March of this year thirty-two patients.

Table with 2 columns: Nationality, Number. Native Hawaiians: 48, American: 1, English: 5, German: 5, Portuguese: 2, Chinese: 12.

and exhaustion. One death arose from consumption, and another from an accident caused by the falling of stones and earth from a precipice at the foot of which the man was working; a strict inquiry into all the circumstances was made, the result of which left no doubt that the manner of death was as described, and entirely accidental.

Under the efficient supervision of the Superintendent, Mr. Davison, such useful work has been accomplished by such of the patients whose condition would allow it, and who were benefited both morally and physically by the exercise. They were not permitted to labor more than four or five hours daily, and only at such times as the weather was favorable. The patients have had all possible care; close confinement has been necessary in but two instances, and then not longer than twenty-four hours.

The large hall, for which a sum of money was voted by the last Legislative Assembly, has been erected, and found well adapted for its intended purpose. It has materially assisted in promoting the comfort and treatment of the inmates.

The modification of the law of 1870, allowing, on the recommendation of the attending Physician, patients not perfectly restored to health, has worked well, and had a beneficial result in the treatment necessary in a large number of cases. On the whole, it may perhaps be said that the Insane Asylum is one of the most satisfactory institutions under control of the Government, in the results produced and its economical administration.

The Asylum has been visited by several medical gentlemen who had considerable knowledge of syphilitic diseases in other countries. They have expressed their satisfaction, and it may be considered an additional proof that the country has provided well for these unfortunately afflicted people.

MAY GOD PRESERVE THE KING. For the Board: FERD. W. HUTCHISON.

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