

# WISCONSIN'S SHAME.

INSANE ASYLUMS

—OR—

THE AMERICAN BASTILE!

Narrative of the Kidnaping of the

MISSES TRAUTMAN,

Of Sauk City, Wis., on a Sunday Afternoon, and  
Running them into an Insane Asylum.

Their Two Years' Shocking Experience and Observation in the State  
Hospitals at Mendota and Oshkosh, as Written by Themselves.

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TO HIS EXCELLENCY, THE GOVERNOR OF WISCONSIN.

SIR:—The following narrative of our experiences as the victims of a foul and cruel wrong—having been incarcerated in an insane asylum, under a conspiracy to injure us, if not to compass our death—is respectfully dedicated to your excellency. We sincerely hope that such measures as are within your power will be employed to bring about a court of inquiry that will cause our State Asylums for the Insane to pass into the care of true philanthropists.

Very Respectfully,

THE AUTHORS.



## INTRODUCTION.

BY JAMES VINCENT, SR.

While editing *The American Nonconformist*, in Tabor, Iowa, among the most earnest of my subscribers was one known to me as B. Trautman, of Sauk City, Wis. I never inquired if B. Trautman were man or woman, but from the writing—a bold, good business hand—it never once occurred to me that it was a woman. When in 1886 I gave that journal into the hands of my two younger sons, I of course transferred the subscription list, and there ended what little knowledge I had of B. Trautman. September 10, 1887, I received a letter from B. Trautman, inclosing subscription for *Christna*, (when ready) and expressing the hope that “every subscriber of *The Nonconformist* would stir about and find readers for this noble work.” When *Christna* was started, in 1889, I sent a copy to B. Trautman. About the middle of January, 1890, I received a card from the postmaster at Sauk City, notifying me to discontinue the paper to B. Trautman. “Reason: removed to asylum for insane.” Still it did not occur to me whether B. Trautman was man or woman, but it did very forcibly occur to me that there was something wrong. What correspondence I had had, which was usually brief, indicated a mind of strength and intelligence.

On January 29, I wrote to the postmaster at Sauk City, requesting him to give me what information he could, touching the alleged insanity of B. Trautman. In reply I received a letter from Paul Lachmund, Sauk City, Wis., stating that “The Misses (not Mr.) Rose and Barbara Trautman, to whom you have sent your paper, are both detained at the State Hospital for valid reasons.”

## INTRODUCTION.

3

I doubted it. Accordingly, on February 8, I wrote to the superintendent of the hospital for the insane, at Mendota, Wis., requesting to be informed as to the form of insanity under which these two ladies were detained, and to be given such particulars in respect to them as were available. On February 12, Dr. L. R. Head replied:—

“The Misses Trautman, inmates of this hospital, have been confined here for over a year. Barbara, with whom you corresponded, is the victim of a very pronounced, delusional insanity. I regard her recovery as very doubtful. The sister, Rose, is much better than when admitted; I trust she will be able to warrant my discharging her soon. They were committed according to the law of this state; it is unnecessary to add, justly, or else they would not have been detained here.”

This letter, like that from Mr. Lachmund, impressed me more deeply than ever that they were the victims of wrong; and I commenced as vigorous inquiry as I could to obtain some clue to the facts. I do not feel at liberty to state through whom I obtained information, but I learned ultimately that one of the ladies was out of the asylum. I also learned, from a lady with whom I corresponded, that an attendant who had been home on a visit, and of whom she had inquired as to them, had been discharged because on his return to the asylum he had made inquiries about them.

I kept up a continual correspondence, so that if the air could be disturbed with inquiries I would keep it in motion. When I heard that one sister was free, I wrote to Dr. Head and informed him that success had at last crowned my efforts to get the facts in respect to these ladies; that they were most damning; that as one was at liberty, if the other was detained I would publish the facts, and he would be held responsible for any further indignities or injustice to them.

Shortly after I learned that these ladies were, or had been, active in the labor reform movement. Robert Schilling had



lectured in or near Sank City, and Miss Barbara had been injudicious (?) enough to send some copies of my paper to him for distribution among the audience. It was charged by some idiot that these ladies had become insane from hearing that lecture and reading reform literature! The history of these ladies—both accomplished and experienced teachers, whose intellects are among the brightest—is so shocking as to be almost past belief. Its object is not—by any means—to gratify a spirit of revenge, but to show to a confiding but outraged public, by an unvarnished statement of actual facts, that there exist grounds for instituting a thorough investigation. Also, that the outcome of any investigation which may be ordered shall cause these institutions to be kept constantly subject to inspection by anxious friends and a humane public, instead of, as now, being in charge of officials who make preparations for inspection by forcing those who are sane—but whom it is desirable should appear insane—to submit to hypodermic injections of henbane, or some other narcotic or stimulant.

This history is respectfully dedicated to His Excellency, the Governor of Wisconsin, in hopes that executive sympathy will be so kindled as to cause such action as shall redeem the asylums of Wisconsin—and indirectly those of other states—from the control of inhuman officials and attendants; that the laws of Wisconsin and of other states will be so changed as to make kidnaping and the incarceration of sane persons in insane asylums impossible; and that the question of sanity or insanity be no longer referred to physicians, as it has been abundantly proven that the soundest minds have oftentimes been pronounced unsound or insane by physicians. The whole question of sanity and insanity should be placed in the hands of philanthropists, and under no circumstances should any one be lodged in an insane asylum against his own protest, except in cases where his presence at home is dangerous to the life or health of self or others. In all cases of abduction, or kidnaping, the abduct-

ors, or kidnapers, should forfeit their liberty for life. The increase of offences under the charge of insanity, the complicity of those in charge of insane asylums in the crime of false incarceration, together with the fiendish cruelties to which, at all times, helpless victims are liable, demand prompt attention.

I sincerely hope that the shocking experiences of the Misses Trautman may have the effect to hasten this much needed reform.

JAMES VINCENT, SR.,

TABOR, IOWA.



## NARRATIVE BY ROSE TRAUTMAN.

### CHAPTER I.

THE "MODUS OPERANDI" OF TAKING US TO THE INSANE ASYLUM—"ACCORDING TO LAW!"

During the latter part of August, 1888, my sister Barbara and myself made a short stay on our farm, situated about two and a half miles from Sauk City, Wis., for the purpose of looking after our crops, which were then being harvested. On returning home, August 31, my sister remarked that she had again contracted malaria, to which she was especially subject while on the farm, it being located near a swamp. The next morning, Saturday, September 1, she had a fever chill, and proceeded at once to take a sweat for relief. Wrapping up in a blanket, she seated herself on the porch to take a sun bath. She also put the bedding out of her chamber window, on the roof of the porch, for an airing and sunning. It was a warm day, and our neighbors, seeing her thus wrapped up, must have thought it singular, and made remarks about it. It was also reported that we slept on the roof of the house.

Saturday afternoon, Martin Leikem, one of the most loathsome, debauched, and debased creatures of Sauk City, was sent to tell father, who was then on the farm, that both his daughters were insane. Father said he did not believe it, for we had been there the day before. Whoever employed a man of Leikem's stamp, had nothing good in view. Why not send for a physician, if something unusual was noticed to be the matter with us? Sunday morning, on awaking, my sister saw Dr. Hiddesen at the foot of her bed, and heard him say: "That's ten minutes; I think that's about enough." On turning about, she

TAKEN TO THE ASYLUM "ACCORDING TO LAW." 7

beheld Dr. Riley at her head. She asked them what they wanted, and ordered them to leave the room. They went away without saying a word, and did not return. I slept in another room and knew nothing about the physicians' visit. If they examined me it must have been while I slept. My sister said she felt very drowsy. What is strange, I felt the same way; perfectly conscious of all that was going on, but experiencing a sensation of lethargy. I have heard that hypnotism affects one similarly. My cousin, Mrs. Rommel, and her daughter, who stayed with us during the summer, were nowhere to be found. It was reported that they were afraid of us and had left.

We wondered what it all meant; why the physicians had called; why my cousin left without our knowledge, and why we felt so drowsy. We did not have to wait long for enlightenment. About two o'clock in the afternoon, the sheriff and two constables came to take us away. There were present among others, Tom Baker, an official of the county asylum, who seized my sister very rudely, and Lawyer (liar) Quimby, on whom she had locked the door the previous evening, when he came sneaking around. My sister refused to leave her home without knowing why, and where she was to go. Had she not the right to demand it? What right had these creatures, even if they were officials, to take us forcibly from our home, without even notifying us that we were considered insane? No one uttered a syllable relative to insanity, but to all our inquiries as to whither we were going, no definite answers were given; some said to take a ride, others, to visit friends in Baraboo.

Mr. Lachmund did not show himself that afternoon, though, as I found out later, he made an application to the court to cause our removal. Were we so dangerous, Saturday morning, that he found it necessary to employ a special messenger to Baraboo? Mr. Lachmund had not conversed with us two minutes. He came to me Saturday, about ten o'clock, and asked me to come to his office at two o'clock in the after-



noon, for the purpose of drawing up a program. (School was to begin the following Monday. Mr. L. was clerk.) At the same time the hypocrite had made an application for a judicial inquiry. Upon a second application he became our guardian! After performing these friendly (?) acts he kept himself aloof, but had his tools to attend to the rest.

When the sheriff and his co-brutes handcuffed my sister, she asked the bystanders why they permitted her to be taken like a vagabond, when she was conscious of having done no wrong, but on the contrary had tried to do only good. One of them has since told me that he knew they were doing wrong, but he did not dare oppose authority. On the road from Sauk City to Baraboo my sister complained of pain in her right arm, caused by the handcuff. She asked the sheriff to take it off, or loosen it that the blood might circulate. He paid no attention to her, though he saw her arm was getting purple and badly swollen. It became so sore that it had to be lanced at the asylum. We arrived at Baraboo about 6 o'clock Sunday evening, where we were placed in separate cells in the jail. The next day, Monday, September 3, my sister was taken to the insane asylum at Mendota. She says she took her morning meal all right. Some time after that she became unconscious, and remained so until about 11 o'clock, when on awaking she found herself in a large clothes-basket on the depot platform, waiting for the train. I was kept at Baraboo until Tuesday, September 4, when I also was taken to Mendota.

Setting aside all subsequent proceedings, what about the legality of the process by which we were forced from our home? What an exposition of the "Declaration of Rights," Section 11, Constitution of Wisconsin:—"The right of the people to be secure in their persons, houses, papers, and effects, against unreasonable searches and seizures, shall not be violated." We were not informed of the nature of the complaint against us, so we had no opportunity to defend ourselves. Then, having

been made nearly unconscious, people were summoned to see us in that condition, so that such treatment should seem justifiable. The intention was to hurry us off before full consciousness should return, but fortunately they were a little too late, and force had to be used. Our neighbors testified in court that they found us as usual two days previous, when we were on the farm, and when they heard of the charge they could not believe it.

Can Mr. Lachmund explain what hurry there was? We molested no one. If he noticed that all was not right, why not perform the friendly act of calling competent counsel in our case? Why delay and call for a judicial action first, unknown to us? Why not prevent the mean act of having us examined by doctors, at an unusual time of day, secretly and without calling relatives and friends to see that our personal feelings were respected, and that the whole proceeding was conducted with impartiality? Why assume guardianship without our consent and knowledge? We had a right to choose our guardian, if we needed one. Will our lawyers and judges interpret the law on this one vital point? Were we either justly or legally committed, when it can be proven that the physicians signed their names to what they knew were the most infamous, wilful, malicious, and deliberate falsehoods? Can they not be made to divulge from what source they derived their information, as given in the commitment papers? It would indeed make an interesting trial, and lead to exposing the iniquity. I doubt if Mr. Lachmund has any conscience; for how could he do as he did, and walk abroad under the sunlight? He ought to hide himself forever from a beneficent atmosphere. His actions show too plainly what object he had in view. Why are we always cautioned to let matters rest, and keep quiet about the manner in which we were taken, as well as the treatment received at the hospital? If all is right, what need of keeping quiet about it?

In closing this chapter, I would earnestly solicit the public to spare no effort in bringing about such changes and enacting



such laws as will prevent any one, sane or insane, being taken to an asylum without a fair understanding between the parties. All means should be tried to make patients comprehend their situation, and what is to be done with them. This will give them a fair chance to show how far they are capable of conceiving an idea and forming a judgment. If, by mistake or otherwise, there is no such understanding, provision should be made that the superintendent of the asylum to which patients are taken use all possible means to explain to them their whereabouts. Then if a patient asks for a trial, to prove his rationality, it should by all means be granted. To illustrate: when I asked Superintendent Buckmaster to show me the commitment papers,—I could not believe that I had been committed to an insane asylum,—he refused. I did not give up, but persisted until he brought me the papers. Sure enough, I had been committed! I said, "Dr. Buckmaster, will you let me go home, for only two days? If I do not succeed in proving that the M. D's have made out fraudulent papers, I will return. If you do not trust me, send some one with me." Should he not have granted my request? But no! He said: "It does not make a particle of difference, Miss Trautman; your county committed you, and we have to keep you." So I was kept, to be *made insane* if possible.

My readers, I beseech you, in the name of all the unfortunates taken to these institutions,—some insane, but many sane,—if the cases are not dangerous, *keep your patients at home!* If there is any hope of recovery, there are ten chances at home to one in the asylum. The best is on the outside in these places; the world may never know what dark things transpire inside. Only one who has tasted the death-like experience from strangulation or starvation, or has been in utter helplessness and despair of ever regaining liberty, can sympathize with them. You can see for yourselves that all cannot be right, when they suppress patients' letters, even those that pertain purely to business matters.

## CHAPTER II.

## TREATMENT RECEIVED AT THE HOSPITAL.

"Oh horrors!" "Oh shame!" are invariably the exclamations, when our treatment at the asylum is related. On entering the hospital, September 4, 1888, I was taken to the last cell on the left side of the wing of the "Female Ward, No. 2." This is a back ward on the third floor. I was kept there one day and one night, then transferred to the second cell on the right side. Here I could see the rear of the female wards, and discovered that I was in prison, all the windows being grated. I could see the forms of inmates passing to and fro. I noticed some one moving around the building with a lantern, and to attract attention I broke a pane of glass and called for help. It proved to be the nightwatch on his rounds, and as my cries were thought to be those of a maniac, of course they were not heeded. The attendants reported my misdemeanor, and I received a hypodermic injection of henbane. On becoming conscious, I found myself in the hall of the same ward, surrounded by about twenty lunatics. One especially, a Mrs. Taine, with whom I was obliged to eat my meals, nearly drove me wild. I felt miserable from the effects of the narcotic, and her continual cursing, laughing, and muttering nearly unsettled me.

The next day I was accused of having broken a pane of glass in the show-case. Had I been conscious of doing it I should have taken the punishment willingly, but as I was innocent, I protested. That made no difference. It had been so reported to the doctor, and he ordered that I should be brought to the wing of the sixth ward. This is considered the worst ward in the building. I told them to correct their report; that I did not break the pane. But they said I did not know anything when I did it. Then why punish me for doing a thing for which they were to blame? for they had given me the henbane to make me unconscious. Argument was of no avail.



Four of the attendants seized me and dragged me by my feet, down four flights of iron stairs, my head and body bumping from one step to another. I was taken to the last cell on the right-hand side of the sixth ward wing. Here I received another hypodermic injection of henbane. From the effect of an overdose of the drug, I felt as though the house were falling on me. My head whirled, my stomach convulsed; I wished that I might die, so as to be released from this hell.

A few days later, I was ordered to go to the hall of the sixth ward. Miss Kate Hoffman, a German attendant, had taken me out walking twice, when I asked to see the laundry. This was forbidden. I saw so many of the insane women going to the laundry, that one day I ventured to go in that direction; immediately three or four attendants rushed at me like wild cats and threw me on the ground, breaking my glasses. Dr. Armstrong saw the affray, and probably thought I intended running away; this the attendants always tried to make the doctors believe, in order to excuse their rash actions. With his aid I was taken back to the ward, and he proceeded to give me another hypodermic. I told him that he knew he was doing wrong; that he knew what effect they produced on me; that as I was in the building and could not go to the laundry anyway, there was no need of giving me a drug. He would not listen to my entreaties, but ordering Miss Gorman to hold my left hand, and Henry Martin my right, he said: "You are thick-necked, eh?" and cooled his passion by giving me a double dose of henbane. I had only strength enough left to tell him that he had better examine his own neck, for he exhibited a great deal of the thick-necked beast's nature. Then I became unconscious.

On waking, I again experienced the terrible effect of the narcotic;—a dry, parched mouth, convulsions of the stomach, and an indescribable feeling, as though the ceiling and walls were falling on me. I did not recover from this for two or three days. This was the end of my going out. Other patients, who

daily attempted to run away, were permitted to go out while I, who had taken these few forbidden steps, had forever forfeited my right. I told them the injustice of this, to which they replied: "The others did not know any better, but you are wiser, and know what you are doing." Then why lock me up with those who know nothing? If I was "wiser," then I deserved a better place, where I could divert my thoughts otherwise than being tempted to trespass on forbidden ground. When I asked Dr. Armstrong to send for my books and organ, as then I would not care how long they locked me up, he replied: "Oh! you want to play the big lady, do you?"

Shortly after this I was taken to the fifth ward, and told that I could go home in a few weeks. Everything went well until the first week of November, 1888. One afternoon, as the ladies were all going out walking, Hattie Hayes, the attendant, told me there was a chance for me, and opening the door, invited me to come. I did not wait to be told twice, but went to the door, which she quickly closed, laughing and saying: "Did you ever get left?" I meant to teach her a lesson, so seizing her keys, I said: "No, not for you will I get left." Had I intended to be disobedient or ugly I would have gone out, for there was no one to prevent me, Miss Hayes being the only one present. But I took the keys and went back in the alcove, to sit on the lounge. She followed me, saying: "Give up those keys!" I answered: "Say, if you please!" At this she went for the doctor. I intended to tell him that attendants had no business to fool patients, so as to excite them "for fun," as they often do, thus bringing a punishment on them if the poor wretches have enough sense to oppose their deviltry. Instead of Dr. Armstrong, Dr. Taylor, from the male ward, came to me. I did not know him, and took him for an attendant. He gruffly said: "Give up those keys!" Had he asked in a civil manner, or said the same words in an agreeable tone, I would have given them up immediately. As it was, I said, "I won't do it." He



quickly wrested them from me, and reported some wrong story to the superintendent. I was taken back to the sixth ward. When Dr. Armstrong came back (he had been absent a few days) he said it was too bad, and that now he could not tell when I could be taken from the sixth ward again, nor when I could go home. What charity! If I was well enough to go home from the fifth ward, I was just as well now. But the officials, noticing that I censured their actions, were afraid I would tell what I had experienced, so to have an excuse, they took me back and represented me as having had a bad spell.

In this ward, No. 6, was a large, strong patient by the name of Sarah Kannegeiser. She had the peculiar habit of turning open all the faucets in the bathroom, completely flooding the floor. No one dared forbid her doing it for she was easily excited, and at times became very dangerous. We were therefore obliged to wade through the water. I had been deprived of my leather shoes, and in their place had received a pair of felt slippers. I asked the attendants several times to give me my leather shoes, as I did not wish to have wet feet. They did not give me dry stockings every day. They said my shoes had been lost; that I must keep still or they would report me to the doctor. I did not keep still, but told them that if he was anything of a doctor he would know I was in the right. They reported me, and who should come but Dr. Taylor. He did not even listen to my explanation, but seizing me by the neck, he threw me on the floor and stepped on my breast with such force that the imprint of his heel could be seen for a long time; the effect of it remains to this day. He choked me so that the cartilage of my wind-pipe was dislocated. If he does not remember, (he is very apt to forget his sins,) I will tell him that Ella Wiggs called him on that occasion, and that the performance took place in the first cell on the right hand of the wing of ward No. 6. As he was standing over me with his thumb on my throat, I said, "Are you a monster?"

A few days later Mrs. Fairbanks, of Milwaukee, and an elderly gentleman were conducted through the ward by Superintendent Buckmaster. I mentioned the matter to Mrs. Fairbanks. She said that she could feel something was the matter with my throat, and called the attention of the gentleman to it. At this, Dr. Buckmaster became very anxious lest they should lose their boat or train, and so hurried them through the door. I afterwards learned that they were members of the State Board of Charities and Reform. They should not have allowed the superintendent to hurry them; they had all their "time to lose," for when on a visit of inspection they are paid for their time. Does Dr. Taylor remember now? I believe Mrs. Fairbanks mentioned the matter to him. The attention of Superintendent Buckmaster was also called to the indecencies practiced upon the patients by some of his attendants, which, should I give them here, would be sure to bring Anthony Comstock's censure on me for sending obscene matter through the mail, while the attendant, the doer of those acts, would pass as a "refined young lady."

I had not been allowed to see my sister until now, nine weeks after our admittance. When I saw her for the first time, the words, "*ecce homo!*" involuntarily escaped my lips. She told me she had been fed on quieting medicines and hypodermics. She could not understand the need of such treatment, for she was so quiet, weak, and sick that she could not have made trouble if she had so desired. Some time after, one Friday evening, I was ordered to go to bed directly after supper, at a quarter past five. I wondered why I must retire two hours before the other patients were obliged to, and said it was contrary to the rules of health and common sense; that I could not sleep. Dr. Armstrong came and said I had to go. I refused to undress while he was in the room, and told him to leave, two or three times. This he did not do, but tried to help the attendant divest me of my clothes. I became indignant at his ungentle-



manly behavior, and gave him a box on his left ear. He did not, "Christian-like," turn to me the other also, (as they used to tell us to do when we complained of their abuses,) but tore off my clothes, and twice injected his devilish drug into my arm and neck. It is impossible to describe my sufferings that night. The fire flashed through my brain and before my eyes; my tongue became dry and solid as a board; to my cries of "water! water!" I heard "All's men left!" from the dance room, for it was dance night.

Not long after this I was locked up in a cell for two days, without heat, having nothing but a half blanket to cover me, and the cold, hard floor to lie on. I do not know the reason for this, though I would venture to state that—as it was near the middle of the month, when some members of the State Board came on a visit of inspection—it was deemed best to get me out of the way, for fear I might make a complaint. The second day I was so thoroughly chilled that I was obliged to exercise to keep from becoming numb. Occasionally I pounded on the door to call attendants, for I needed protection from the cold. Instead of an attendant, came Dr. Armstrong, who put me down on the floor to give me another hypodermic injection. As he knelt on me, I said, "O Dr. Armstrong! do unto others as you would have them do unto you!" He arose and went away without giving me the injection. It was the last time he tried to apply his infernal machine on me.

The attendant that brought my supper that evening, left the door open. Whether she forgot to lock it, or left it open purposely, I do not know; but I took it for granted that I might go out into the hall. It was high time, too, for I was chilled through and through. No sooner had I taken a seat in the hall near a warm register, than an attendant came up, and asking me what I was doing there, told me to go back to my room immediately. I said I was very cold; that if she would please let me warm myself awhile longer, I would go back. She



I was thrown on the floor and two attendants seized one foot, and two the other—dragged, naked, through the hall, while one of these "refined ladies" danced behind, crying out, every little while, "Git there, Eli!" Date, January 18, 1889. See page 18.



called some attendants, and they began tearing off my clothes. I told them they need not act so like hyenas, that if I had to go, I would go by myself. But they said, "No, you sha'n't go. We are going to drag you there." My clothes were torn off, I was thrown on the floor and—two attendants seizing one foot and two the other—dragged, naked, through the hall, while one of these "refined ladies" (as President Luling calls them,) danced behind, crying out, every little while, "Git there, Eli!" To the everlasting shame of those attendants, I give their names—Hattie Nangle, Trina Olson, Sophia A. Dietrich, Kate Hoffman, and Nettie Gorman. In telling Dr. Taylor of this cruelty, I said that if ever I got out alive, that scene, with the place and date, should be engraved on the walls of many a parlor.

About February 24, 1889, Dr. Armstrong left, and Dr. Taylor, from the male side, took his place. I had heard from a sane patient that he had killed an inmate on that side. I was afraid of him, for had he not choked me nearly to death? I resolved to do nothing that would bring punishment upon me, and swallowed many a bitter pill when I saw attendants abusing patients. My first impulse, invariably, was to help the patients, for which, if I did, I was generally made to suffer.

Nothing of moment broke the usual routine until August 4, 1889. I had not been allowed to leave the building, but had been locked up, most of the time in a solitary cell on the north side, with no sunshine or pure air for more than eight months. On that day Dr. Taylor made his rounds as usual, passing through our ward about ten a. m. I heard him maltreat a patient, Miss Kate Rupert, who had expressed her opinion of him quite freely. I went into the box room—a room where the clothes are kept—to get a handkerchief, and to get out of his way. But he came into the room and said gruffly: "What are you doing in here?" I said that I was getting a handkerchief. Ruffian-like, he "wanted to see it." Instead of politely and (as he probably thought I would) cringingly, like a whipped

dog, placing it in his hand, I tossed it on the bed, saying, with the indignation any one would feel, "There it is!" He informed me that now I had to go to the wing. When I asked for what, he did not answer me, but seizing me by the neck with a savage grip, brought me, with the help of Miss Hoffman, to the door of the cell. I would not go in without having a reason given me, and braced my feet against the door. He threw me down and, taking me by the hair, pounded my head, face down, on the floor, until I was bespattered with blood. Miss Kate Hoffman was present the whole time; Miss Lizzie Digny was standing in the doorway looking at us, and Miss Sheahan, the supervisor, came in as I was wiping the blood from my face. Here were three witnesses, yet Dr. Taylor denied it, when I complained to President Luling. The president told me he believed the doctor; that I had *delusions*!! Does not Dr. Taylor remember that he had to change his beautiful white cuffs—because they were badly stained with the blood of his guilt—before he went to the chapel to preach the gospel of loving kindness? (In Mendota, the duty of reading a sermon to the patients, Sundays, devolves upon the physicians.) Delusion, was it? He knows there was no delusion about it.

On that day, I resolved to plan an escape. In my next chapter I will tell you something about it.

### CHAPTER III.

#### MY FIRST ESCAPE. TREATMENT RECEIVED FROM SUPERINTENDENT BUCKMASTER. HIS RESIGNATION. OBSERVATIONS.

I was again locked up in the wing. Yet to my comfort and satisfaction, patients would daily come to my door, expressing their sympathy for me, as well as their indignation at such outrages. One, especially, was bound to have me out, and brought me a teaspoon, to see "if that would do any good." A



thought flashed through my mind. If I could so shape the handle of the teaspoon as to make it work like a key, there was some hope. To my surprise, it worked well. The broad end of the handle served me for a screw-driver, and the narrow end, bent so as to form a kind of hook, proved an excellent key. With it I could open nearly every lock except the night lock.

August 14, I once more asked Dr. Taylor to allow me to go out for a walk the next day, it being my birthday. He refused, as usual, and I made up my mind to escape that night. About three a. m., August 15, I unscrewed the guards of my window, pushed them out, and reached the ground safely. As I went toward the barn, to gain the main road, the nightwatch came so near me that I leaned against a fencepost and held my breath for fear of being detected, but he did not notice me. I hurried on, for I heard the men moving about in the barn, feeding the horses, and I knew my absence would be noticed as soon as the rising bell rang. Oh, had I known then what I know now,—that my guardian was a traitor,—I should have gone home! But I was so sure Mr. Lachmund would come to our relief as soon as he heard that we were abused, that all I desired was to escape long enough to write and mail a letter to him. About two miles north of the asylum I ventured to enter a house and make known my purpose. At this good stranger friend's I partook of a hearty, wholesome breakfast. I then wrote the following letter to my guardian, which I mailed at Waunakee, a station about one mile farther on. I was afraid of being captured, and preferred going back of my own accord, with the hope of receiving a less severe punishment. Had I written to a perfect stranger, there would have been greater chance of receiving aid. Here is the letter:—

ON THE ROAD, AUGUST 15, 1889.

MR. PAUL LACHMUND, SAUK CITY, WISCONSIN.

DEAR SIR:—You may think me more insane than ever when you observe the heading of this letter. Neverthe-

less, I claim that I have never been insane. Will you be so kind as to let me know who brought a complaint against me? I understand no one ought to be attacked as I was, unless some one made complaint that I molested him, or that I was considered a nuisance if allowed to run at large. Dr. Buckmaster told me I was not insane, but that "they say" I am so ugly dispositioned that no one can get along with me at home.

In the name of justice, I beseech you, what must I think? Locked up in a cell for nearly a year, not permitted to enjoy a breath of pure air or take a bit of exercise, dragged about like a dog, pounded on the head until the blood issued from both nose and mouth,—do you wonder that I have acquired an ugly disposition? I have never been known as so obnoxious a person, either at home or where I have had the pleasure of teaching. It is a mystery to me how people will cling to a little outside show and glib speech, when if you tell them plain facts and the honest truth, they misuse and abuse you for it.

Like in "Tell, on Switzerland," I exclaimed this morning, "Ye crags and peaks, I'm with you once again!" so glad was I to breathe the pure air and see the sun rise. In short, I escaped from the window, showing that neither dungeon's bolts nor bars can confine the spirit of liberty. I begged and prayed to be permitted to take a walk, giving my most solemn promise not to make any trouble, but ever received the same reply: "No, we cannot trust you." So I came to the conclusion that to trust myself was the safest plan.

Did you ever receive lengthy letters from me? I have written several times, but received no answer. I have also written to my sister Anna, to my aunt, and several others without avail. When Mrs. Richards and Hortense were here last spring, the superintendent told them I was not fit to be seen, and sent them back. I write this at the house of a friend, to be sure it will reach you. I shall return to the asylum. I know I deserve better treatment than I receive. Come and



judge for yourself. It is wrong to abuse authority as the doctors and attendants here do. Please let me hear from you soon, that I may know what to do. Yours Respectfully,

ROSE TRAUTMAN.

I was now at ease. I felt so sure that my sister and I would soon be released, that I went back to the asylum in good spirits. Vain hope! The letter was not even noticed. At first, I thought Mr. Lachmund might be absent on business. As time wore on, I doubted his honesty—and was not mistaken.

I planned another escape, for I was determined to make known the diabolical work going on in this institution. Eight patients had died on our ward since my arrival; and, incredible and barbarous as it may seem, when I expressed my surprise, the attendant, Miss Riley, said, "and eight more ought to die." The first of July, a young woman, Myrtle Setzer, became ill with summer complaint. She was neglected, yet daily dragged out for a walk, although so weak that she was scarcely able to stand. She became weaker and weaker; finally, one day, on coming in from one of these walks, she dropped on a seat in the hall, unable to go farther. The attendant ordered her to go to the alcove. She could not; already in the agonies of death, clutching the back of the seat, she looked about in wild despair. The attendant gave her a violent shaking, saying, "Do you hear me? go to the alcove!" To this the poor, dying woman answered: "Oh, please don't, I'm so sick!" "Well, why don't you move, then?" was the inhuman reply. A few days later the patient died. I asked the attendant, Miss Hoffman, if she did not feel a bit remorseful. She replied: "She would have died any way; her grandmother died just that way."

The Misses Knudtson and Halverson, two Norwegian patients, were constantly employed doing all the filthy work on the ward. The attendants used to say that if they were obliged to do that kind of work they would leave in a minute. Yet these patients received for their work the most inhuman treat-

ment. A few instances will suffice to show how their services were rewarded. "Say, Kate, give Miss Halverson a kick, and send her down this way; here's another filthy patient to attend to!" Or, "Miss Knudtson, go to work, or I'll put a head on you," accompanied by a poke with the broom handle. One day, while the ladies were out walking, the above-named patients among them, the supervisor happened to come on our ward. Two attendants, Miss Riley and Miss Digny, were on the hall. In a side room lay Miss McIntosh, a bedridden patient, crippled with paralysis. The supervisor told the attendants that Miss McIntosh needed a bath and a change. How innocent they looked! They knew it long before, but were waiting for Miss Halverson and Miss Knudtson to come back and attend to her, as they did not like to do "filthy work." As it happened that I heard the supervisor's orders, they could not well refuse. So, after she had gone, they made a few remarks about her "a ways coming when she was not wanted," and proceeded to attend to Miss McIntosh. One took her by the leg and another by the arm, and in this way they dragged her, inch by inch, to the bathroom. On the hall they dropped her and laughed at the poor, crippled, naked form. I inquired if the bath had been prepared. "No, we will draw it when she's in the tub," was the reply. All who have had any experience with the bath know that there is danger either in chilling the patient by drawing the bath too cold, at first, or of scalding if drawn too hot. The bath should be drawn the right temperature, before immersing a patient. I could not help making a remark on their skill as nurses, when they exclaimed: "Shut up! it is none of your business!"

Anna Oyen, another patient, when ordered to leave the bathing-tub, did not obey immediately, and Miss Digny threw a pail of water over her, "to make her move," as she said. But Anna "moved" after her, and the attendant fled. Locking the door, she went for help. Anna started for her again, but was



seized and forced into the bathing-tub, with her head under the cold water faucet. Three attendants held her, and a fourth closed her mouth so that her screams of "Oh, I'm dying!" could not be heard. In this way she was held until she was completely immersed in cold water. Then she was forced to run into a cold room, locked up, and left with no clothing whatever. This was her punishment!

A few weeks later Mrs. Albert Burke, of Whitewater, an elderly lady, was brought on our ward. The alleged reason given for bringing her on the worst ward was, that "she was too noisy." I can say that I never saw a more Christian woman, or a more patient sufferer. She took the abuses and rough words without complaint. Before she died she asked me, if I ever escaped, to let her husband know that she had been murdered. The glands and muscles of her abdomen were knotted and felt like peas. This disease brought with it involuntary, convulsive cries, which she often tried to suppress for fear of disturbing others. One time when she uttered such a scream, Dr. Taylor forced her against the wall, and pounding her head against it, told her she could stop them if she wanted to. She made no further complaint than to exclaim, in her stifled indignation, "You are no doctor! You are a great big Nothing!"

One night she became very ill; I sat up with her, as we slept in the same room. She needed help the worst way. I wished to make this known to the nightwatch on her next round, but this young lady, when she heard us call for help, went through the hall without noticing us. I waited three hours at the door to get her attention, on successive rounds. When she found that I persisted in calling her, she would not even go through the whole length of the hall, as was her duty, but came in at one door and crossing the lower end of the hall, went out on the other side. I then took a few hair-pins and began picking the lock of our door; this brought attendants to us, showing that they must have heard our urgent cries for

help, but did not care to answer what they called "an old woman's cries." They were ready, however, to report me for picking the lock. Mrs. Burke dictated a letter to her husband for me to write, as her eyesight had failed her, and she had no glasses. This letter was taken away and never sent. She let me read a letter from her husband, in which he expressed his satisfaction at her doing so well. She said she could not see how Superintendent Buckmaster dared to write such a falsehood. She was taken away from me, and when I inquired about her they said she was much better and would go home soon. About Christmas I heard that her husband took her home. The intimation was that she had recovered, but in the spring I learned that she had died, and that her husband had taken her home in her coffin.

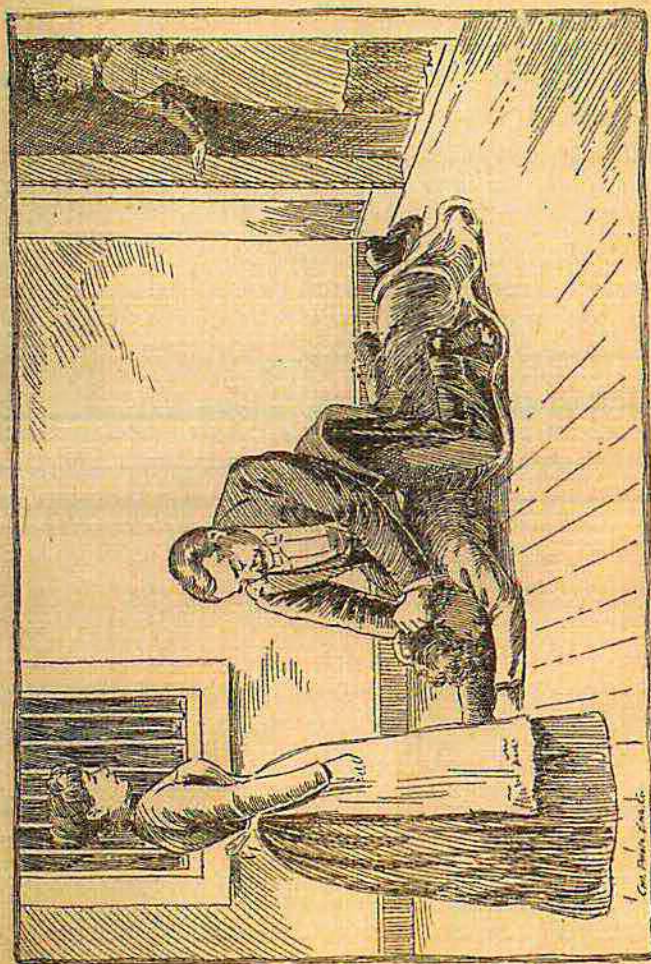
Friday night, September 20, 1889, I was surprised by the entrance of Dr. Taylor and several attendants. They demanded a key which, it was reported, I had taken out of Miss Hoffman's room. I told them I had not stolen a key, and could not give them what I did not possess. But I was ordered out of bed, and the straw tick, the clothes, and my body were searched without finding the desired article. The next morning I asked the attendant what made her report such a falsehood. As an answer, she threw a basin of cold water over me, then ran into a side room and locked the door. To make herself secure, she ordered it to be reported that I had threatened to kill her. Shortly after, Superintendent Buckmaster and Dr. Taylor came into my room. I thought Superintendent Buckmaster would be enough of the gentleman to at least ask for an explanation, and then he would find that the wrong was in the attendant and not in me. But without even a "Good morning," he said: "I'll teach you to let my attendants alone." With that he placed shackles on my arms above the elbows, strapping them together on my back. Dr. Taylor stood in the corner, looking on with the greatest composure. I felt so sure that Superin-



tendent Buckmaster was digging his own pit that I said nothing; I felt that if there was one mite of justice left in the world, it would follow him and see that he was punished for this outrage. In his rage he drew the buckles of the shackles so tightly that the blood could not circulate freely. I was taken back to the cruel cell. My arm soon began to swell, becoming a dark purple color. I asked Miss Hoffman to loosen the buckles at least one hole. She said she could not do it without permission; that Superintendent Buckmaster had gone to Hot Springs, Ark., having ordered me left thus until the assistant physician made his evening rounds. I showed my arm to her and Miss Digny; they admitted it was bad, but said they could do nothing for fear of losing their positions, and went away. My temples began to throb; I felt that something must happen before long. Concentrating all my force, I made a desperate effort and broke the strap, then quickly loosened the buckles and threw off the shackles. The next moment I was unconscious. When I recovered consciousness it was evening. I felt that I had grown old in these few hours. When I was permitted to go on the hall again, the patients said that they did not know me; I had so changed that I appeared ten years older.

Now, I would ask, what good can come from such infliction of pain? If no good end was to be accomplished, why do it? Does it not clearly show a low, mean, cowardly spirit, the spirit of revenge, in these physicians?

At my first opportunity I wrote to Governor Hoard, but the letter was stolen from me. By this time Superintendent Buckmaster had returned from Hot Springs. I was so carefully watched that I felt the superintendent feared me. But I was determined that his devilry should be revealed at all hazards. I prepared a second letter, and kept it on my body. One day the attendants came in in a hurry to tell me that I had to go to the wing; the doctor had so ordered. I was not aware of having done the least thing to merit punishment, so, hearing strange voices approach-



He threw me down and, taking me by the hair, pounded my head, face down, on the floor until I was bespattered with blood. Date, August 4, 1889. See page 19.



ing, I risked the threats of the attendants—that I would again be strapped if I did not obey—and forced my way into the hall, there to behold Superintendent Buckmaster and the State Board! This, then, was the reason I was ordered to go into the wing! Now I knew that I had been locked up so that false representations could be made about me, without their running the risk of being detected. Superintendent Buckmaster turned pale when he saw me, for he had an inkling of what was coming. I drew forth my letter and gave it to one of the gentlemen, with an earnest request that he would read it. He promised me to do so.

Dr. Buckmaster was very angry. He told me a few days later that he would like to knock me down and kick me ten rods. This was when I told him that he was the manifest trinity of Mephistophiles, Falstaff, and Iago. He had an oily tongue, was kind to many patients, and could show off everything to the best advantage. But what a character! Have you ever heard of a "black heart?" Could authority so abused, last any longer? I heard soon after that he had "resigned," and that Superintendent Head would succeed him. The change took place the first week in December, 1889.

#### CHAPTER IV.

MY SECOND ESCAPE. HARD TIMES OVER. DR. HEAD'S REGIME.  
MY DISCHARGE AND JURY TRIAL.

The new superintendent proved to be a very humane man. I say *proved*, though as yet I had had no occasion to test his temper or disposition. There is something about Dr. Head that makes one feel that he can be trusted. But why keep those cruel attendants? Is it not an imposition on the public, which liberally supports these institutions and expects that the sick are being treated in a measure to compare with the sacrifices made for their comfort? Does the State expend hundreds of thousands of dollars annually to hire officers and attendants—surrounding

them with every comfort and luxury desirable—for the purpose of abusing patients and robbing them of their food, clothes, health, and life? Who can deny that officers and attendants get the best food and do the least work? The former get board, washing, amusements, receive medical aid, and are paid for these privileges, while the patients must put up with starvation diet, do the work, and endure abuse,—for all of which *they must pay!* All I ask under this head—though that were not enough—is thorough investigation to prove whether Steward Putnam\* does not ask three-fold for patients' clothing, furnished at wholesale prices. I know he extorted sums of money from the State for clothing for patients which they never received. A thorough investigation will establish whether or not he certified to the truth of statements that were known to be false. The half has not been told. My desire and aim is to get these facts before the public, so that these many wrongs may be remedied.

On Monday, December 30, 1889, I asked Dr. Taylor to inform Dr. Head of my condition; that, although not insane, I was detained for reasons unknown to me. He replied that I was very insane. I realized that he would do nothing to effect my release; that, on the contrary, he would try to make Superintendent Head believe I was a very bad patient. As yet I had seen the latter only twice to speak with him. That afternoon I escaped from the building and went to Madison. This time I consulted a good lawyer, had interviews with several citizens and acquaintances, and staid with a friend until the next day. I did not wish to do anything to offend Superintendent Head, who was a stranger, and as yet unacquainted with nearly all the patients. I had shown myself to people who had known me before, and I was satisfied that they did not find me insane. I now made up my mind to go back and bide my time so that Superintendent Head could have a fair chance to prove my rationality; then I expected that he would discharge me as sane. I made this known to him, and feel that he ought to have granted my request. It was a small

\*Steward Putnam has since died.



favor, compared with all the injustice I had suffered. I try not to blame him, however, for he believed the reports of Superintendent Buckmaster and Dr. Taylor, and tried to satisfy them as well as me. He wrote to my guardian to take me home on trial. This was the first week of January, 1890. I would not go on these terms, for I had had trials enough to prove that it was a hard job to make me insane. I would either be discharged as sane or not at all. If Mr. Lachmund could not come when there was need, I did not care for him now.

I was placed on the best ward in the building, and enjoyed the time well. For this I am grateful to Dr. Head. How inconsistent this promotion was with the former regime of Superintendent Buckmaster, may be seen from the following circumstance. I never could understand why I was put on the worst ward, unless—knowing I was not insane—it was a deliberate attempt to drive me insane, if possible, by constant association with the insane, in connection with the cruel treatment I received. When I asked Superintendent Head for the reason, he said he knew of no reason why I should not be on the front ward, and that he would tell Dr. Taylor to have me removed. I waited a few weeks, but seeing Dr. Taylor made no mention of my removal, I again asked Superintendent Head, and then learned that Dr. Taylor had told him it was not best to put me on the front ward, as I might ruffle the patients' minds by telling them those "delusions" of wrong I had suffered. What a foolish remark! I would never have thought of ruffling patients' minds; to me this showed that Dr. Taylor was afraid his crimes and misdemeanors would be revealed. So for his security I was doomed to be locked up with the worst patients! I did not wish to annoy Dr. Head, so I took the chance of the escape last named, to obtain my end. If anything merited a punishment it was this escape to Madison; but on my return, greatly to my surprise, instead of being locked up and strapped as I thought I might be—judging from my former experience—I was

not only promoted, but every wish was gratified. Were they afraid some one would inquire? Be it as it may, I was now sure that no further harm would befall me, and that my stay at the asylum need be of no longer duration than I wished.

I only regret that Dr. Head did not see that I desired to forgive past offences, providing he would be just toward me. I cannot believe he considered me insane except by report; yet, February 12, 1890, a letter was written to my father that demands explanation. My father, having heard that I had been to Madison and was not insane, wrote to the superintendent about it. In reply he received the following letter:—

MENDOTA, FEBRUARY 12, 1890.

DEAR SIR:—Barbara Trautman is very insane; she is noisy and untidy in habits. Miss Rose has delusions on many subjects, about being brought here, etc., (here he probably had in mind the "delusion" of having my head pounded on the floor,) and is far from being well. She was in Madison for a day, but is now here.

Respectfully,

L. R. HEAD, SUPERINTENDENT.

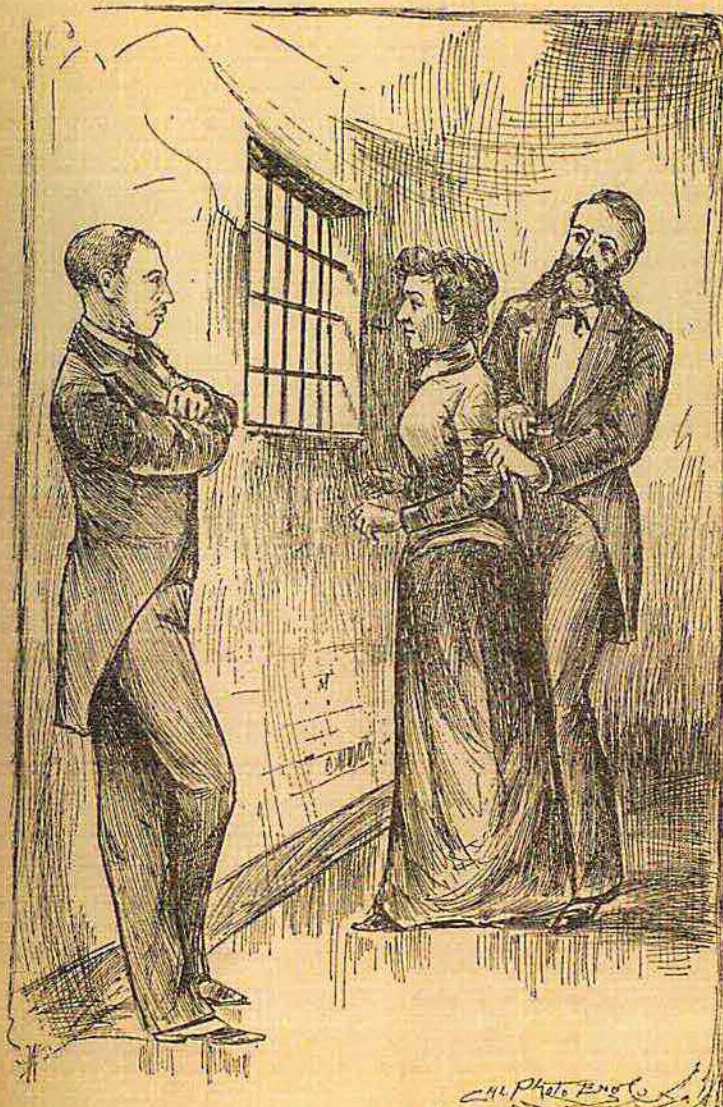
How does this letter compare with the one Superintendent Head wrote a few weeks previous, when I was well enough to go home on trial? But he knew nothing of this letter written by Dr. Taylor. What a forgery! When I came home in the spring, I at once noticed that it was not Superintendent Head's, but Dr. Taylor's, handwriting. I took it to Dr. Head, and he said that he never wrote such a letter. "But," said I, "there is your name!" There was no sign to show it was written in his name by Dr. Taylor. Now, had Superintendent Head written or dictated this letter, how ridiculous to write, in the one sent two weeks before, "she is well enough to go home," and in this one, "she is far from being well," and has "delusions." But this is like Dr. Taylor; he prompts wrong doing, does it himself, and then charges it to some one else. He told Superintendent Head that I had threatened to burn down the asylum, and Superin-



tendent Head was prompted to write that falsehood to the court, for the sole purpose of biasing my case before that body.

As Superintendent Head found it a hard matter to dismiss me as sane, and not offend the State Board and other officials by so doing, I not only demanded my discharge, but added that if it were not granted within a week, a writ of *habeas corpus* would be issued by my lawyers. This produced the desired effect. One morning I was called to the office, where I found the State Board; President Luling told me that I was discharged for good. I took the next train to Baraboo to get information from the court about our commitment, but the judge told me I was not discharged for good but was *out on trial*! What right had President Luling to say one thing, and mean another? I told Judge Young that now I would demand my rights. He kindly informed me as to the best method of procedure to get them.

Doctors Gorst and English, of Baraboo, were appointed to examine me. I expected that they would immediately pronounce me sane; but they delayed their decision two weeks (only!), and then pronounced me *insane*! What proof of insanity can these physicians mention? I think not one of my witnesses expected such a decision. But of course, the State Officials had to be supported! I next demanded a jury trial. This was held June 10, 1890. I was advised to take a lawyer, but was determined to risk my chance with an intelligent jury before me. If I could not convince them of my sanity, I would go back to Mendota. During the trial the court read a letter to the jury. This letter was written by Superintendent Head, who proved the whole infernalism by making the statement that he had all he could do to "prevent a writ of *habeas corpus*"; and further, that he was influenced to write that I "had threatened to burn down the asylum." Did he not know that that statement was cruelly false? What! burn down the asylum with so many human beings in it, my own sister among them! Dr. Taylor, who said this, would not hesitate to do the very thing himself, if by so doing he could cover up his own wickedness.



But without even a "Good morning," he said: "I'll teach you to let my attendants alone." With that he placed shackles on my arms above the elbows, strapping them together on my back. Dr. Taylor stood in the corner, looking on with the greatest composure. Date, September 21, 1889. See page 25.



But to return to the trial. When the judge had read the letter, one of the jury arose, saying, "I would like to know why he wanted to prevent a writ of *habeas corpus*? That is against the constitution." Aye, my good friend, did you but know what other things "unconstitutional" are being practiced in these institutions of public charity! As for the "threat to burn down the asylum," the jury did not believe it. Mr. Lachmund, who had had himself appointed, by some inscrutable means, our "guardian," did not present himself—though he was twice notified of my trial—as "protector" against possible injustice. "Guardian!" What blessed associations will be awakened on hearing that word! We read of "guardian angels"; I often thought I would like to see one and receive a feeling of pure, confiding love—the love that Apostle John says "casteth out fear, for fear hath torment"—but I don't think I care to see one now, for the vision of our "guardian," Paul Lachmund, would surely rise up before me, and I might do the angel an injustice. This gave me great distrust of guardians, the more so because on asking him to do something for my sister Barbara, who was failing rapidly, (she had been kicked, choked, and starved,) he said: "I can do nothing for your sister." Why could he not? Was it because if he did he might interfere with their object in putting us in that den? This man could do nothing for one who, out of the kindness of her heart, had waited on his sick mother for nine weeks, and was compensated by being thrown into an insane asylum!

So I was left to find my way alone. No, not alone. The jury pronounced me sane! Thanks to you, good friends, all strangers to me, but friends in the truest sense of the word. You protected my rights and liberty, while my so called "guardian" proved a very Judas.

## CHAPTER V.

EXPERIENCE WITH SO CALLED "AUTHORITY." MY ARREST AND IMPRISONMENT. TRANSFER OF MY SISTER TO NORTHERN HOSPITAL. HER RELEASE.

I could now do something for Barbara. On going to Mendota I found Dr. Taylor sole manager of the institution, Superintendent Head being still absent on an eastern visit. On seeing my sister, I was astonished at the change that had taken place in her during these few weeks. She said that every means had been tried to drug her; finding she was too wary, her food had been adulterated. She refused to eat any more of the hospital food, and wished me to bring her some from home; but Dr. Taylor would neither let me see her nor take her any food. When Superintendent Head returned, Dr. Taylor accused me of being the cause of Barbara's weakened condition, saying I had been there and excited her.

Yes, Barbara was much worse; yet who but Dr. Taylor had made her so? Certainly my seeing her did not excite her; it produced exactly the opposite effect. I found her excited, but my presence had an assuring and quieting effect. She had reasonably fair food, and was fleshy and well so long as Superintendent Head was there, but now she was thin and anxious; as she said, something was harming her, bodily and mentally. How insane she was, the reader may judge by reading, in the next chapter, what she wrote the first days in June, when she was so reduced as to be almost face to face with death. I asked Superintendent Head to let me take her home. He refused; not because he thought Barbara was dangerous and might do harm, (there being absolutely no ground for such an idea,) but to uphold the asylum officers and the State Board! It was enough that one was considered sane; the other *had* to be insane, by all means. I offered bonds to any reasonable extent; promised to bring her back at the least sign of danger, but all in vain. Reduced as she was, I knew that the excitement of a trial would be a great



risk, nevertheless I preferred it to leaving her in the asylum. She was brought before the court June 27, 1890. She had not eaten regularly for twenty-six meals; had taken no nourishment for six or seven meals, yet—almost past belief as it is—when she begged for a cup of strong, black coffee to sustain her during the trial, SHE WAS DENIED IT! What an application of the golden rule!

Before the trial, I was obliged to ask a lawyer about writing a petition that the court might accept and begin motion. What an unjustifiable nuisance! I could present the petition, for I knew better than any lawyer my reason for wanting an action of the court,—to determine whether my sister would not fare better if she were removed from the asylum,—since she suffered from an unwholesome and irregular diet, as well as from brutal treatment. But a lawyer was deemed necessary. Not once during the trial did he call the attention of the court or jury to the condition of my sister's face and teeth, the latter evidently showing the effect of some poisonous drug. Her teeth had crumbled away like sand; two of them had been knocked out on the edge of the bath tub by cruel attendants. Although—as if in reproof for his neglect and indifference—the jury said, "We recommend that Miss Trautman be permitted to take her sister out of the asylum," it was not heeded. In the Wisconsin State Journal, June 29, 1890, we find: "Barbara goes back." To me it seemed like going to her grave. I was forbidden to visit her. Forbidden? As well forbid me to breathe! I could not remain at home and know that my sister was subject to such horrible treatment, and, moreover, that she was famishing for food that she could eat and feel confident it was not drugged. "You know, Rose," said my sister, "I eat only what you bring me." I knew I would be defying authority to visit her, but what authority was entitled to any respect which bade me stand back while my sister was being tortured? Others might obey through fear. For myself, I recognized no authority that came between me and the fulfilment

of my duty to my sister in obedience to the sacred demands of humanity. "Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken to you rather than to God" (the instincts of right planted within me), "judge ye!" So said the apostles, Peter and John; so said I. For obeying the higher law rather than the human law, I was thrust into prison.

When I went home the day after the trial, I was notified that Barbara would be transferred to the Northern Hospital, at Oshkosh. I besought Governor Hoard to interfere and not permit the transfer,—a distance of nearly two hundred miles,—as I feared it would cause her death; but he said: "Oh! we all have to die once," as if it were of no importance if she did die. In the face of my entreaties, he denied my request. July 10, I went again to take her food. I was refused admittance; on going to the rear of the building and calling her name, she came to the window and said, "How glad I am to see you; come up." I told her I was not permitted to visit her; that they would not let me bring her any food. Just then two men came and ordered me away, saying they would arrest me if I stayed any longer. The superintendent said he would put me in jail if I persisted in staying about the hospital. Probably he thought I was insane. If earnestness is insanity then I was insane, for I was as much in earnest to know the condition of my sister as if I had known she was surrounded by wolves; and I had good reason to be anxious. I told him I would go to the hotel and get my supper, but would come back if he did not let me see my sister, as she had told me from the window that she had fasted for several days. When I came back from my supper, two sentinels had been placed on guard; they continually trotted about the building to keep me from entering. The superintendent came out to tell me I was arrested and would have to stay there that night. President Luling, of the State Board, was also present, and told me I was a prisoner. I was taken to the upper story and locked up till morning, when I was asked if I would leave. I said, not until



I had seen and spoken with my sister. So I was ordered to take a seat in the "bus," and was taken to Waunakee, where Justice of the Peace Francis sentenced me, providing I should make trouble. I went back to the hospital to learn how long I was to stay away from my sister, and for this purpose went *directly* to Superintendent Head's office.

Here I would ask the reader if he or she can imagine a human being of a lower, more contemptible order than a public journalist who publishes a deliberate falsehood to one's personal injury, refusing the real facts of the case? A journalist may, by being imposed upon, publish a deliberate falsehood, but when his attention is called to it, and he refuses to correct it, he makes the lie his own. This we all know to be true. The *State Journal* records the following: "No sooner had the officers returned from Waunakee, than Miss Trautman came back, screaming opinions of the institution in at the back windows," etc. This was the reason I was taken to jail. While in jail, I wrote an article to the *Journal*, which I gave to the reporter, Mr. Whalen. He assured me that if my statements were true, I would see the article in "to-morrow's *Journal*." The *Journal* came, but instead of the correction, which it was by duty bound to make, came a short notice that "Miss Trautman had sent a well written article to the *Journal*, showing that her arrest was without foundation, (or something to that effect,) but the article is too long for publication." The fact is, I did not go to the rear of the building on coming back from Waunakee, much less "scream opinions of the institution through the back windows." On the contrary, I went directly to the superintendent's office, and said: "Dr. Head, how long must I stay away now?" Whereupon he replied, "I will have you taken to Madison this evening."

I was taken to the county jail! For what? Simply and only because I would not yield my *RIGHT* to visit a cruelly treated, suffering, famishing, tortured sister, and do what I could to comfort her. I remained in jail from July 12 to July 18, 1890.

A few days later Barbara was transferred to Oshkosh. Though she was removed, I could not be kept from her. I wrote to Superintendent Booth, of the Northern Hospital, inquiring about her. He replied that she was just the same as when admitted. I could not be satisfied until I visited the Northern Hospital. I found my sister very much worse, being unable to speak: she was reduced almost to skin and bone. I asked Superintendent Booth to let me take her home. He said that if some of our neighbors would furnish \$5,000 bonds, he would let her go. This was a cruel and unreasonable demand, for my sister was not insane, as was demonstrated; and even if she had been, nearly dead as she was, she was not able to cause alarm if she had been so inclined. If Superintendent Booth could let her go under \$5,000 bonds, why could not Superintendent Head? It would have saved me much trouble and expense, besides the injury to my sister. I traveled back the two hundred miles and got the bonds, only to be confronted, on my return, with the additional and absolutely inexcusable, inhuman demand that I leave the place as soon as Barbara was released. Why leave immediately? Did he not want to give her the opportunity to tell of her treatment? I greatly feared she could not stand the journey, as she had not partaken of food for so long. I wished to take her to a hotel and give her at least one good meal before starting. Can any human being imagine why this should cause objection? The attendants who brought her to the depot would not allow it, and when I went to the Central depot—a few paces across the road—to send a message to Oshkosh, (the asylum is about four miles north of the city) they took Barbara between them and trotted her back to the asylum; before I could reach the building, she was securely locked up in the second story! President Luling arrived that evening. The next morning I was again told I could take my sister if I would leave the place immediately; I agreed to this providing she could have her breakfast. In the morning an attendant brought my sister to the depot, saying she had had



her breakfast, but Barbara said, "No." So I took her to the hotel, and as soon as I could get her up stairs I locked and bolted the door. Two employees (policemen) were sent to bring her back. They demanded that the door be opened, and when they found I would not open it, they tried to intimidate me by telling me they would force it open. I said I was ready to defend myself, and would risk it. They then went to obtain a warrant—so they tried to make me believe—but failed to come back with it. We had two good meals, then started.

Right here I want to say that our sincere thanks are due, and are hereby tendered, to Mrs. L. P. Worden for her motherly care; also to Mr. Walker of Winnebago, and Professor West of Reedsburg, for advice and friendly assistance during our time of trial. I also wish to ask how the following facts speak for these institutions: My sister was either sane or insane when taken to the asylum. If sane, then she was made insane, for Superintendent Booth discharged her as an unimproved, *insane* patient. If insane, then she was mentally and physically much worse when taken out, as all who saw her will testify. The physicians themselves testified in the commitment papers that Barbara's physical health was good. Then why run her down to a skeleton? Because it was hoped that by famishing her body, her mind would have to give way! It must be so, for so soon as my sister was properly nourished for a few weeks, to regain enough strength for an examination, the court was obliged to pronounce her sane.

With a few closing remarks, I am about to yield pen and space to my "unimproved, insane patient" sister, who will, in her own way, as I have in mine, detail her own experience and observation in an American Bastile. Some have called our asylums "slaughter-houses"; and one remarked that whenever his thoughts were called to insane asylums, they always, somehow or other, were associated with language said to have been used by Jesus Christ: "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites; for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed

appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness."

What power can compel the people to submit to the whims of ignorant and cruel attendants? If our State Board of Supervision will not listen to reasonable demands of sensible patients, but carelessly and heedlessly pass through the wards on a visit of inspection—not of inquiry—as is generally supposed, saying to well-meaning inmates; (when they get a chance to speak to them of the abuses to which they are subjected,) "Oh pshaw! these are all delusions!" and never exert themselves to find out the truth; if the word of a deceitful attendant and brutal physician is taken *bona fide*, and the word of a maltreated patient "don't count for anything," as the attendants say; if the Governor—on being informed that a sensible patient, as well as his friends and relatives, is opposed to being transferred from one State hospital to another, nearly two hundred miles distant; that such removal may cause the patient's death; that the friends prefer taking him home, giving ample security—instead of weighing matters carefully, says: "Oh! we all have to die once," and permits the transfer, is it not time to throw overboard all these superfluous parasitic officials, and by wise legislation bring these institutions under the immediate supervision of the public? Why allow them absolute authority? Asylums are public institutions, and as such, should at all times be open to the public.

Why are visitors received only at such times of day when all, or nearly all, the patients are out walking, and then shown only the best ward and the show-case? Why are patients not allowed to speak to visitors, or *vice versa*? Why this strict quarantine between insiders and outsiders? The people have the right, if they have the courage to demand it, to go into every nook and corner of these buildings, especially if foul play is suspected. They have the right, and should exercise it, to go through at meal times and see on what the patients of the rear wards are fed. Who has a better right to this knowledge—from their own observation—than the ones who establish and support these institutions? Such excuses as superintendents and physicians



are wont to make about "exciting" or "disturbing" patients, are only excuses to ward off well-founded suspicions, and hide hypocrisy under the mantle of benevolence, seeking to make the people believe their presence might be detrimental. They know that patients are not at all excited by strangers, for almost daily the workmen employed in repairing, pass in and out of the wards without even being noticed by them. Do you think my friends and my father were refused admission because Superintendent Buckmaster was anxious about my welfare? Not at all, or how could he say, "I'd like to knock you down"? etc. Let the superintendents and physicians look to themselves and their wicked attendants. No well-meaning person could excite patients to the extent they do.

I hope the lovers of justice and humanity who visit this institution hereafter, will not be satisfied with going as far as the third ward *Show-Case*. Ask your escorts to take you through all the wards, and if they refuse, mark the reasons, and see if they are such as should satisfy any reasonable person. Do not accept the "excitement" sham, but ask them to let you accompany them, that they may see to what extent you excite the patients; if this is found to be harmful, it need not be repeated. You will probably see *show-cases* of quite a different nature, if you keep your eyes and ears open—such ones as the public ought to see. Don't be satisfied with having your friend brought "dressed up" into the third ward parlor to visit with you, but go and see him in his lonely cell; there—when no attendant is present to catch the words or intimidate the patient by his presence—you will hear what he has to endure.

I do not doubt that there will be excitement somewhere, pretty soon. If the patient is excited, you may be sure it was brought on purposely, so that they may have some excuse for refusing other visits. I know this from experience. But I think the people should get excited, and they in turn should excite the officers. This, too, is the kind of excitement feared by superintendents, doctors, and attendants—not that of the patient.

My sister Barbara will now relieve me. Thanking my readers for their interest in following my narrative, I will retire.

## NARRATIVE BY BARBARA TRAUTMAN.

### CHAPTER VI.

WRITTEN JUNE 2, 3, AND 4, 1890, WHEN SICK WITH FEVER CHILLS.

Does a physician render proper service when, knowing a patient is sorely in need of medicine, and having it in his hand, he squarely denies it and says, "Now you can't have it," because the patient in the meantime had shown the superintendent that the cause of her sickness was the musty straw used in the ticks? Is it wrong to inquire into the nature of cause and effect? Instead of giving these ticks an airing every day, they are stacked away in the tick room, with pillows, mattresses, and blankets between them, and a white cover, the mantle of purity, spread over all, and tucked in tightly that none of the precious germs may escape.

Instead, as above stated, of rendering me immediate help, the doctor forbade my access to the bath-room, and in order that I might not even avail myself of the hot water, ordered my shoes taken off, and locked me in a screen room, where a deadly phosphoric gas escapes from one of the flues. Martha Cushing was also locked up, and, as she said, "smothered by electricity." The reason given for doing this was, that "we stuck our heads together," as he expressed it. She had told me of the treatment received from him. Besides this, the food was most cunningly adulterated; but having detected this, I did not partake of it. One day he attempted to drag me to the sixth ward, but when I told him he would not get me there alive, and that we would not "stick our heads together" any more, he let me alone.

One of the attendants complained of me to Dr. Taylor, but instead of coming himself he sent two ruffians, Mr. Martin, and



Mr. Rose, the fiddler. I was sitting in the alcove with my hands in hot water, when they came and dragged me across the floor, Mr. Rose throttling me while Martin held me down. Mr. Rose said, "I guess we'll take off her shoes and stockings." I suppose Dr. Taylor told them to do so, in order to find some papers I had secreted in my stockings, which he had probably noticed the day before as he stood on my body and throttled me when I reminded him and the attendants of the penalty attached to the abusing, maltreating, and neglecting of patients in insane asylums. Mr. Rose is a well-fed brute; he has nothing to do but fiddle on dance nights, and stand near with his cudgel while the poor, half-starved men fill the straw ticks, instead of doing it himself. He does not so much as even look to the quality of the straw stuffed into the ticks. The patients as a rule take no notice of the difference between sweet and musty straw; if they did, they would not mention anything, for they dare not speak, and scarcely dare look to the right or left, while this ruffian with his club is near.

A young woman, Rose Geiger, was fed with rotten egg-nog until she got the cholera. One morning when the sweat was pouring from her, she was forced out of bed and undressed in a cold room. When I proposed to the attendants to throw a blanket over her, they threatened me with a good "mouth holding." This consists in having a sheet thrown double over the face, and twisted so tightly that the sensation is that of being hanged. Then the attendants put their fingers in between the cartilages of the windpipe, and dislocate them. I was obliged to turn my head one side and downward when I swallowed, for more than two months after such a "mouth holding"; and for a long time afterwards my throat was very painful, and seemed ready to burst when I talked. Rose Geiger was taken from our room and I never saw her again. She was locked up in a room opposite mine, and one Friday night was taken out a corpse—and the hop went on as usual.

Last summer, a young woman named Singer was treated not much better. I saw her food one week before she died. It consisted of a few cold, blue, soggy potatoes, bread with a little rancid stuff on it, and tea that was *thick with a green deposit*. That was her supper. How long she had partaken of such a diet, I do not know. One afternoon I noticed that she had a burning fever; nothing was done for her, neither was I permitted to do anything. I would gladly have helped her, and because I desired to do so I was locked in a close room with a very filthy patient. The window had a wooden blind which was closed, although it was July. I could not endure the atmosphere, and was obliged to cover my head. I can conceive of no reason for such treatment.

We never receive anything with our meat, to give tone to our flabby stomachs, although there is quite a patch of horse-radish in the garden, the preparing of which we would be only too glad to do. The meat is the same the year round. I have not received one solid, palatable piece these two years, except when I begged the attendants to give me the scrapings of their table, and once when I ventured to go into the dining-room and snatched a piece from the leavings of the attendants' table. Any one with sound common sense, (he need not be a doctor) upon going through the sixth ward, can readily detect, through sense of smell and sight, that the rooms on the north side, and especially those on the east side of the wing, are regular malaria pits. The air from the basement constantly circulates through them. In wet weather the building on that side is surrounded by mud puddles, through which we were obliged to tramp on going in and out. At the rear, the projections of the building lock in the air, and an embankment so encloses the back yard that, with the heavy clay beneath, which holds the moisture, the atmosphere is made damp and unwholesome, owing to the impossibility of the air circulating freely. Why not expend a little money where it would do the patients some good? Fill



up the back yard with a porous soil, gravel, for instance, and construct a high sidewalk; the front yard, which has a sloping surface, is arranged to perfection.

It would seem as though everything on the back wards was calculated to destroy the health of the patients—food of the poorest quality; pitchy rosin toilet soap, that closes up the pores of the skin; musty, damp bedclothes; damp under garments (they are never ironed) which, thrown on the ground to dry, take up in their meshes the poisonous germs of the damp soil, in time bringing on disease; overwork of many of the patients, and neglect and brutal treatment by both physicians and attendants. Remember, I do not say these things of every ward in the building, but of the back wards! In them are confined the majority of the patients, and in them the work of destruction goes on unheeded. In the front wards, containing only ten or fifteen patients, it is quite different, as my sister informed me. But why this distinction? Why not give kind and humane treatment to all? Does Steward Putnam imagine that patients on the back wards are not able to appreciate the right and detect the wrong? And, acting on the assumption that they are not, can he longer be permitted to fleece them without detection? Can he deny charging forty dollars per head for clothing for patients on the back wards, who, during the entire year, get only a sack-cloth dress, and that an old one having been charged to some patient before? Very few of the back ward patients ever recover; if they do, they are removed to a front ward, and so carefully befangled that no impression of the back ward remains. Woe to a patient who has detected all! If the authorities see they cannot quiet him hereafter by a sugar-plum treatment, he finds his exit through the door whence none return. Attendants don't "talk out of school"—for fear of losing their positions.

There are patients who do vastly more work than some of the attendants; they receive food not fit for dogs, and have no recompense for their labor; on the contrary, they are obliged to

pay for the privilege of working. If one dares resent such injustice, or does not readily obey the half dozen bosses, she is cuffed or dragged about by the collar, by these female tyrants. "Tyrant" is a gentle word used in this connection. A word descriptive of savages would be more truthful! If a stranger could witness the treatment of those who are called insane, and were to judge by the treatment he witnessed which of the parties was insane, he could not possibly judge the so called sane person, attendant or doctor, to be less than a mad man or mad woman. And yet—while the stranger looks on the beauteous buildings (externally) and rejoices in his heart at the provision humanity has made for the kind care of the unfortunate; while the minister is exhausting his imagination in showing the superiority of Christianity over heathenism, in the magnificent display of its care of the suffering—it is a fact, as my own eyes and ears and experience can testify, that those structures are witnesses of the most shocking and revolting cruelties; those walls are the silent witnesses of such agonized beseechings for death to be merciful and release the poor sufferers from "man's inhumanity to man," as bid defiance to tongue or pen to describe. Yet none of the attendants have such ill-will against their fellow sisters when they first come. This manner of treatment is taught them by the boa-constrictor, Dr. Taylor, and by those whom they find here, and who have been instructed from the example set by the doctors. These doctors make the attendants regard them as demi-gods, and hold their despotic sway over the whole household. The old maxim, "to err is human," does not seem to apply here; yet doctors should be no exception to the rule, and hence, like the rest of the human family, should be liable to err. No matter how contrary his orders are to the health and welfare of the patients, (he often gives orders without having seen the patient,) the attendants have no alternative but to carry them out, hence to a certain extent they are not responsible; still, when it is possible for an



attendant to obey the direction of his conscience, he should do so; but here again, attendants are not allowed a conscience; are not allowed to speak of the transactions of the doctor.

Not to speak of trained nurses, if the doctors would only do something toward educating the attendants up to that degree of morality they should possess in order to act as ministers to the sick and helpless—but why write in this manner? Can we imagine such a thing possible as Dr. Taylor “educating” young people up to any such standard? No! On the contrary, every means is used to deprave the heart and mind of the youthful attendant. Would it not look better (since our all-wise Dr. Taylor cares so much about the “looks,”) and *be* better if he (Dr. Taylor) would assemble the young attendants of both sexes, statedly, and instruct them how to be of real help and comfort (not a terror) to those in their care, instead of leading them into temptation twice a week with a card party and a dance? These, it is said, are held for the benefit of the patients, (how many of the patients receive this benefit?) but in reality they are to amuse the employees, the idlers, and gluttoned lustlings that hang about the asylum. A few such parties and dances are sufficient to demoralize the mind and sensibilities of attendants. Even they themselves are not aware how rapidly they are losing their sense of right and duty. They forget the teachings of their good mothers, and all that fills their minds now is: “To-night is my night out, and to-morrow is yours!” “Didn’t he look handsome?” or, “How long he kept looking at her!” etc., showing the direction their minds are taking. I am quite sure their good mothers would rather know that their daughters were in the quiet of their own rooms at night, than of their going “downhill” to the boat-house, a fit place only for hop-toads and bull-frogs after night-fall, (being the most unhealthy spot on the grounds,) yet all their conversation the next day is about the “old boat-house.” Can an attendant, who does not know how to take proper care of her own person, be trusted to take

proper care of others, who, in nine cases out of ten, would take better care of themselves if they were allowed to do so?

I do not think I make any mistake when I say that at least one half of those brought here are *not* insane. They have been made to appear insane by home physicians or by home troubles. Husbands and wives tire of each other, and, in order to secure a change, are willing to destroy for life the happiness of their lawful companions, by trumped-up charges of insanity. They use the asylum for that purpose, and willingly pay a Judas’ gulden to get them out of the way. Thus, this wholesale murder system is conducted on a large scale, and to the eyes of an unwary State Board all may seem right. Yet, how can they feel satisfied that they have done their duty, when they do not speak to the patients themselves? Do they think the doctors and attendants will tell them they have abused patients? Dr. Taylor would put a padlock on every patient’s mouth if he could! Why are we threatened with abuse or life-long imprisonment if we mention our intention to speak to visitors? Why hurry them off so quickly? Let them come into the dining-room and partake of our starvation food; let them stay and converse with us awhile! They will not excite us so much as the attendants and physicians do, or so much as a card party or a dance.

The State makes bountiful provision for these institutions. But does it anticipate that its people, if they become inmates, will be subjected to treatment worse than that inflicted by the tyrants of the Dark Ages on their subjects? And all is so deceitfully accomplished as to wear the garb of seeming necessity. Yet any observing person can read, in the faces of the patients on the back wards, the despair of those who “cross the Bridge of Sighs.” Kindness and sympathy, which have such a powerful and healing influence on the broken heart and downcast spirit, are entirely unknown in this place. Instead of inquiring for the cause of derangement and endeavoring to overcome it, everything is done to cast down the poor heart and soul, until the



patient thinks there is no more hope for him in this world. Not a few have asked me, "Do you think we shall ever see a different time in this life?" Others have said, "Oh, if I could only see my folks once more before I die!" And all this while the doctor sends letters to the friends so longed for, to tell them that they need not come, their presence might disturb the patient; until his work is done and the patient has died—"in a fit." I learned what reported "fits" meant, when the murderer knelt on my chest and nearly throttled the life out of me. Had he knelt but one inch in another direction—where I received a nearly fatal injury some years ago—it would have been reported and credited that I had died in a "fit"; nevertheless, I would have been foully murdered.

One of my friends, Miss Mary Duenser, of Sauk City, was reported as having died in a fit a few years since. How was this brought on? Let me tell you. She was sent home in a coffin, ready for burial, with beautiful flowers on her breast and forehead, to hide the green and yellow marks of violence below. Dr. Buckmaster wrote a letter to her sister, saying that Mary did not die of a contagious disease; that she had died in a fit during the night, and it was best for them not to open the coffin. But my sister, being in the same room Mary had occupied, learned quite a different story, and from a reliable source. A new patient had come, and Mary was ordered to give up her room to her, which she did not like to do. She was spoken to and became excited. At last she was violently forced from the room, crying "as though her heart would break." To quiet her, some one gave her an apple, but the excitement was too much for her, and *she died with the apple in her hand*. Who killed Mary? A visit from her sister would not have "excited" her. So much for that "fit." Another citizen of Sauk City, John Weissen, had his son brought home in a coffin; but he opened it, and lo! his son exhibited the black and blue marks of violence all over his body!

A poor young woman, whose skull had not closed from birth, asked the doctor to let her go home. He took her by the arm, whirled her around a few times, threw her down, sat on her, and pounded her head on the floor. Her temples and about the eyes were yellow and green for weeks. If asked what was the matter with Miss Harding, the reply was, that another patient had hurt her. Mrs. Yeoman, a patient who has lived in the asylum for years, doing work which the attendants say they would leave if it were required of them, is worked almost beyond endurance. I know of one time, when she had a felon on her thumb, that the attendant ordered her around because she did not scrub faster; and when the old lady at last dropped into a chair from sheer exhaustion, she said: "Get out of that chair, you lazy old thing, and go to work!" It is not enough that the patients are obliged to do the work of their respective wards; they are forced to do the private work of the attendants. I have seen old, gray haired women in the bath-room washing their underclothes for them, or they would go to their rooms to do their sewing. When Mrs. Arnold did their dirty work for them, to coax her they would say: "There, darling, now will you do this for me?" But when the poor woman asked to see the garden, she was refused.

It is a sad thing for the State that with all the munificent provision it regularly makes for the support of these institutions, it allows such misappropriations of it to be made that it can afford only a starvation table for most of the patients. I believe that provision is made for good, wholesome food, and that the steward shows his bill to that effect,—but the patients Do Not Get It! Perhaps Steward Putnam can enlighten the public as to the manner in which this department is managed.

It is no satisfaction to me to think of, much less to write about, these things; but the public, which has a deep interest in all of its institutions, wants to know something of their management. The proper way to accomplish this is to gain



information from some one who *knows*, and to note facts and incidents as they transpire. I have such an estimate of the public virtue that I feel confident, if the people could but be aroused to compel a full and honest investigation, that they would place the care of their sick and unfortunate far out of the reach of such men as Dr. Taylor and those whose humanity has become corrupted by seeing such outrages as we have witnessed and experienced, and have tried truthfully, but briefly, to set forth, hoping public attention will be aroused.

## CHAPTER VII.

## EXPERIENCE AT NORTHERN HOSPITAL.

Upon my arrival at the Northern Hospital, July 25, 1890, after the supper hour, the State of Wisconsin managed, through her steward at this hospital, to procure from the larder, as good luck would have it, one quarter of a slice of dry bread and a little water. Whether it was anxiety for my health, or whether they measure the appetite of the patient accurately, this refreshment was sufficient to keep me in condition for my experience the next day, when I had occasion to get a foretaste of what the treatment at this hospital would be. It had been a rainy season, and the thick woods on the grounds where we were ordered to walk did not admit of the free passage of a breeze. I had a sick headache and could not endure to remain longer on the grounds, so I asked the head attendant if I might go back and sit on the door steps. She told me to wait a little longer, which I did. When I could endure it no longer, I asked again. She said she did not care, but to wait a bit if I could. I turned and walked slowly, with another patient from our ward, toward the house, looking at the flowers as we passed along. An attendant from another ward called to our attendant, "One of your patients is running away!" She saw we were not running but walking slowly. Several employees who were sitting on the

door steps could testify to that. Two attendants came after me, and taking hold of my arms, twisted them out and backward, thereby turning my right shoulder out of joint. I was taken into the house, on wards 11 and 12, north.

The grounds, conveniences, and accommodations at the Northern Hospital are better than those at Mendota, but the treatment is more inhuman, and more destructive to health and life. Here, the ignorant and brutal attendants do what should be done only by a competent physician; namely, give hypodermic injections of drugs, or drench the patients with chloral at their whim. My sister was informed from a reliable source that from eight to ten deaths per week was not uncommon, that spring, to which the remark was added, that, when buried, the bodies were thrown into the hole with little heed as to whether they went in head or feet first. This was told her by a gentleman, who spoke of burying patients at night. She went to see the graveyard, and found cattle desecrating the graves. This graveyard is situated in the north-eastern part of the cattle pasture, near the lake; another is nearer the asylum. She asked Superintendent Booth why a small sum could not be expended, sufficient to at least build a two-wire fence around their graveyard to keep off the cattle, when so much money was expended in decorating and beautifying the front yard, where none of the poor patients were allowed to walk and gratify their sense of sight. Superintendent Booth said he was not aware of the necessity for it.

Daily we received this order: "Ladies, get ready for walking"; but the moment we were out on the grounds, we were made to sit down on the benches and remain until it was time to go back. I told them the order was that we should go out *walking*, and I walked about in the grove, for I was tired of sitting. On such occasions, they would drag me by my feet over the shrubs and stones. Miss Anna McCool, of Oshkosh, said, "I wish I could dash her brains out," and twisted my arms around



young trees. One time they drew my arm through the back of the seat, and forcing it against the sharp edge, held it in that position so long that I lost control of my fingers for two days. Another time, they were abusing a Mrs. Button in the bath-room, when I took their hands off from her as gently as possible. Miss McCool winked at Carrie Inman, whereupon she (McCool), with another attendant, held my arms backward while Carrie Inman pinched my breast until I felt deathly sick from the excruciating pain. This is a torture the attendants in both hospitals excel in applying. When I first came to the Northern Hospital, Superintendent Booth told me that if I noticed anything wrong I should let him know; but when I asked Miss McCool to call him, she laughed at the idea of expecting any help from him, and said he did not come on the ward for weeks at a time.

My room opened across from a chandelier, and the night watch would turn on the gas purposely to annoy me, so that if I complained of it and remonstrated against it, she would have an excuse for reporting me, thinking I would then be given some drug. At night, instead of keeping windows open from the west to admit a refreshing breeze, they were all shut closely, and a door inside was opened, which led into a room containing damp, sour, stinking mops. These mops were used for cleaning the floors daily, and were then stored away without being dried or aired. This was the regular custom. I wished to wipe up my own floor with a rag and hot water, but Miss McCool said, "The rules of the house are that the rooms shall be mopped daily"; and so my clean, sweet floor had to be gone over with a disgusting mop. When she was through, I once more wiped up the floor with clean water, but she mopped it over again with her nasty mop, and I sighed, that sanitary rules had to give place to the "rules of the house." Were one per cent of the lawful penalties meted out to Miss McCool and Carrie Inman that they rightfully deserve, and which, under

other circumstances than those of an asylum they could not escape, they would be jailed for life. Miss McCool has no right to employ a strong, ignorant patient to help her when she is not able herself to handle the inmates. But this she did, and this strong patient would sometimes, unawares, assault the other patients to "knock their brains out," as she expressed it. It is Superintendent Booth who, after all, is responsible; for without his knowledge or consent such horrible treatment could not be possible, except as a result of his indifference, negligence, or criminal carelessness.

The attendants are generally from the lowest and most ignorant class of people. How much better, how much more satisfactory, and how great a relief it would be to the patients to have an intelligent, gentle woman at the head! But with intelligence, there would probably be compassion, kindness, and sympathy,—precisely the qualities such men as have charge of the Wisconsin hospitals dread to have around them. Intelligent attendants could not be used to inflict, or help inflict, unkindness or cruelties on patients; neither would they quietly witness or know of them without resistance; hence attendants are almost entirely selected from among those who are strangers to the finer instincts, or, if they appear to have them, can soon throw them aside, in a place where the predominating influence is cruelty, and be as cruel as the "cruellest." Must this always continue? No! No! No! If ever I regain my liberty, the prospect for which now looks dark enough, it shall not be said that it continues from any failure on my part to tell the outside world of the den of horrors I have witnessed, and, through bitter experience, proved the Wisconsin hospitals to be! If relief fails to come to the tortured unfortunates through investigation into their condition, it shall not be laid to my charge; neither will my sister allow it to be laid to hers that, having regained her liberty, she was indifferent to the sufferings of others. All that is needed is a systematic investi-



gation; not an investigation made for the special purpose of covering up wrong, but for the purpose of making clean work, probing thoroughly to the bottom. For *their own protection*, these slave-holders (the asylum authorities) are permitted to make the rules for regulating and carrying on these institutions of cruelty, in order to exclude any whom they suspect of being interested in learning facts through their own observations.

But the day is dawning! Not a few have feigned insanity, and, in the astonishing spirit of philanthropy, exposed themselves to the tortures of which they had heard, but of the credibility of which they could not be convinced short of actual experience, and have undergone the treatment dealt out to the poorest and meanest patients. The time is coming (it may be even nearer than we think) when superintendents, physicians, attendants, Boards of Supervision, and Governors—who, knowing there existed sufficient ground for inquiry, refused to institute it in behalf of suffering humanity—will be consigned to the bottomless abyss of execration to which an outraged public sentiment will condemn them. Repentance will come too late to be accepted. Can it give back the lives of the born and unborn which have been taken? Never! Can their repentance ever make whole the cruelly crippled bodies? Can it ever atone for the months and years of anguish during which the wronged and abused prisoners have pined for a single kind word or look? Outside of these institutions, such treatment as is common inside would not only be considered punishable by law, but no community would tolerate in their midst any one who would be guilty of it. If it is wrong to abuse a person outside of these institutions, how much more is it a double and cowardly wrong to abuse him within the walls erected for his protection!

## CHAPTER VIII.

THE TRUE DEMOCRATIC PLAN. MISS MARIA AGUR'S LETTER  
TO THE EDITOR OF THE GALENA GAZETTE. COMMENTS  
ON SAME, BY BARBARA TRAUTMAN.

MENDOTA, WISCONSIN, AUGUST 1, 1891.

EDITOR *Gazette*:—We are all happy up here today, which is a day of all days to the sick and dependent unfortunates who inhabit these frowning walls, whose guarded windows and strongly locked doors tell all too plainly their own story of the sickness and wretchedness that find sure refuge and safe hiding in this most stupendous, monumental charity of the generous hearted, whole souled people of Wisconsin.

The reason for our unbounded rejoicing can be told in few words. The State Board of Supervision, with wonderful forethought and far-seeing prudence, has chosen Dr. Edwin P. Taylor, late ladies' physician, and more remotely the gentlemen's medical attendant, to the high and honorable position of superintendent, and supreme authority of the State Insane Asylum, Mendota, Wis. Dr. Taylor is a young man, not yet twenty-seven years of age, but he thoroughly understands the management of such a place, and this hospital in particular, as he has been with us for more than three and a half years. He is loved by all the insane people, as well as by all the employees here at the present time, and those who have been here in any capacity during his stay in our midst. When he appears, whether on the wards, in the grounds, laundry, or elsewhere, the sick folks all know they've found a friend "to the fore"; all troubles and grievances vanish into thin air before a kindly word from him.

With the cunning of an insane (at times) woman, I've watched him more closely than he could possibly have been aware of, and am well convinced that he understands the needs of the insane as fully as it is possible for mortal man to do. Another most important thing is, that he is well aware of the fact that Wisconsin built this institution, not for a hot-bed for red tape to be nurtured in, but as a home and refuge for her afflicted sons and daughters, whose comfort and welfare will be his first, last, and sole aim. Red tape will take a back and very humble seat during his reign here; in fact, turn pale and faint away, never to recover. Wisconsin and the



world at large may be fully convinced that the State Board of Supervision has chosen wisely and well, and that things will be ruled and administered on a purely democratic plan. Now, do you wonder that we are all singing, "The Year of Jubilee is Come"?

At the present writing, I cannot say anything of our other officers. We are all democrats here, believe in the laws, are bound to support the constitution, and to uphold the statesman "Who don't wear socks."

MARIA A. AGUR.

#### COMMENTS.

I cannot pass over Miss Agur's letter, concerning the "true democratic plan," on which the Mendota Asylum is being conducted, without a few comments.

Miss Agur, personally unknown to me, says:—"We are all happy up here"; probably meaning a few patients on the first ward, the employees, and those who are induced to sing Mendota's praise. The German says, "Whose bread I eat, his praise I'll sing." Miss Agur must not imagine we are all so simple as to believe that "all" Mendota patients are happy, nor to suppose for a moment that she ever sees, much less is acquainted with, or has the right to speak for, all the patients. How many "happy" faces has she seen on the fourth and sixth wards? Does she know anything of even one tenth of the patients? I do not think Miss Agur intentionally sought to deceive those reading her statement; she must know that no thinking person will believe she had the privilege (though she has more privileges than many,) to see and converse with *all* the patients, to find out how "unboundedly" rejoiced they are. I do think that a few patients have good reason to wear happy faces, as they have every wish gratified. They are so carefully kept aloof from patients of the rear wards, that no knowledge of the latter's treatment may reach them, and they are made to believe that all patients receive the same consideration.

Miss Agur says: "The sick folks know they've found a friend 'to the fore'" in Dr. Taylor. On the sixth ward was a

woman, Mrs. Johnson, who was fed with the tube. When Dr. Taylor came to feed her, she always shuddered, for he would seize her by both shoulders and flop her on a chair, as if she were not a human being. Her throat and mouth became ulcerated from a continual use of the tube, and the egg-nog that was forced down. No attention was paid to it, however, and when Superintendent Buckmaster was informed, by my sister, of the patient's condition, *she was locked up*, and the woman removed up-stairs, where she died.

Another patient, Christine Ericsson, begged that she be allowed to select her own food from the leavings of the attendants' table, because the egg-nog would not stay on her stomach. But no! the tube was used; down the egg-nog had to go, to be thrown up the next minute. She died of cancer of the stomach. Who killed these two patients? It may be said, and perhaps truly, that their disease was incurable, but is that any justification for such cruel inhumanity? Miss Agur did not witness Dr. Taylor's kindness to the two ladies, Mrs. Johnson and Mrs. Ericsson. Neither did she see what "a friend to the fore" he was when he throttled me, first taking the precaution to shut the window that my cries should not be heard. What law did Dr. Taylor fear when he closed that window? It was the law that had the power to punish, that he feared,—for there is no other law that he knows anything about. I write advisedly, not from revenge, but to do what lies in my power to deliver the helpless sick from the power of such a tyrant. From my experience with him, from my observation of him,—and Miss Agur could not possibly have "watched" him more closely than I have,—I cannot think he has lost his conscience, for I cannot imagine he ever had any. This is the result of my experience with, and observation of, Dr. E. P. Taylor.

To Miss Mary Sheahan's (the supervisor) shame, be it said that she degraded herself so far as to assist him when he tried to bind me hand and foot. She also assisted him to put muff



and anklets on my sister. Fortunately, the anklets were too small. What good reason had either Dr. Taylor or Miss Sheahan for such conduct? What we ask is, that they and all the attendants be subjected to a rigid investigation, in our presence; we also to be investigated, to bring out the facts as to the conduct of these institutions. Miss Agur says: "His first, last, and sole aim will be the comfort and welfare of the patients." Why "*will be*"? Has it not been so for three and one half years, or does he deem it necessary to make promises of future good conduct? His past record certainly shows no bright spot. What "*aim*" was there in the last named act? Would Miss Agur feel particularly *comfortable* with her hands and feet tied, and a monster, or Dr. Taylor, sitting on her and throttling her? No! no! Miss Agur, Dr. Taylor's plan is as far from the "*true democratic plan*" as Captain Putnam's was from the "*true republican plan*,"—both are deceivers. Yes, he is "*young*"; far too young for such an important position. It should be filled only by a man of tried experience; one who has learned to control himself. He is not the man to resist Satan's offer of the kingdoms of this world. He is no friend of the broken-hearted, afflicted, and sick, or how could he resist the humble pleadings of Mrs. Hanson? Mrs. Hanson is *not* insane, yet why is she debarred the privilege of breathing the pure air of heaven? Why was she locked up in a room without a ray of sunshine? I wonder how many democrats feel flattered over the State Board's selection of their democratic superintendent, who, in their name and behalf, is to start, no, continue and perfect the "*true democratic*" plan in the Mendota Hospital!

In conclusion, my friendly advice to Miss Agur is: Do not write any more about "*the true democratic plan*" until you understand what you are writing about, so as to write truthfully. When that time comes you will find that your liberties, too, will be cut off. You will not be *permitted* to tell the truth. "*The true democratic plan*," as she understands it, and as Dr. Taylor

executes it, bears no closer resemblance than the devout and earnest prayer to cruel, wicked, scornful mockery. She may deem it all right; it may be all right, viewed from that part of the hospital where she is, but to write that "*all of us are happy*," is understood to include more than herself, the employees, and a few who are well supported by the "*stupendous charity*" of Wisconsin, to sing Mendota's praise. Not a great while longer will the people of Wisconsin tolerate the heartless inhumanities that have so long, but without the least suspicion on the part of the public, disgraced what are popularly understood to be Wisconsin's public charities.

The prayer I wrote will, if right and justice prevail, be fulfilled. Here it is:—

To the Dr. of the Black Art (Taylor):—

Our Father, who art not from heaven, cursed be thy name! Thy kingdom, which is not the kingdom of heaven, goeth! Thy will no longer shall be done! Our daily bread, which thou hast so uncharitably corrupted, shall be given us pure. Lead us no longer into temptations, but deliver us soon from thy presence, for thine no longer shall be the power, nor the glory to hurry poor souls into eternity before they are ready. Amen!

BARBARA TRAUTMAN.



### An Open Letter to Governor Peck.

SIR:—Two years ago we rejoiced to think Wisconsin was to have a Democratic Executive, hoping the change would insure means to uncover Republican misrule and corruption, and make the citizens of our state feel confident that their rights and liberties would be respected. We have been deceived.

The Constitution of Wisconsin says: "Every person is entitled to a certain remedy in the laws for all injuries or wrongs he may receive in his person, property, or character. He ought to obtain justice freely and without being obliged to purchase it; completely and without denial; promptly and without delay, conformably to the law."

Section 4,389, Revised Statutes of Wisconsin, reads thus:—"Any officer or other person in charge of, or employed in, any hospital for the insane, etc., who shall abuse, neglect, or ill-treat any person confined therein, or inmate thereof, shall be punished by imprisonment in the county jail not more than one year, or by fine not exceeding two hundred dollars.

When the District Attorney and Judge Keyes were interviewed to move in our cause, they dared insult us by telling us we were still insane. Judge Keyes, of the municipal court at Madison, said he "would not accept our case, any way"; and in defiance to the sacred guarantees of our Constitution, we were refused a hearing in court.

What, Sir, could we do but appeal to your Excellency, hoping an investigation would be made, that would prove there was ground to a vaken public attention to the (mis) management of these institutions, and to bring the guilty parties to justice? With this hope, we dedicate our narrative to your Excellency, the Executive of Wisconsin.

What had we done that we should have our home invaded by legal ruffians, that we should be torn from it, brutally hand-cuffed, without a single reference made as to the reason for such conduct, any more than as if a band of Indians were to break into your home and make you captive? Even if we were thought to be insane, is such treatment as we received either sensible or humane for insane

persons? Why should we be denied acceptance of our cause in court? Why should your Excellency simply shrug your shoulders and say that our redress was in the courts—that you could do nothing toward an investigation?

You were informed of the brutalities and indecencies committed by Dr. Taylor, who was then ladies' physician. Yet, instead of causing his removal, or ordering a thorough investigation that he might vindicate himself from the charges brought against him, you have appointed the State Board that elected this ruffian brute as Superintendent of the asylum. Even the corrupt Republicans replaced Superintendent Buckmaster by a more humane man, but the Democrats, especially the officials, (simply and solely for the selfish end of holding their position, or insuring a re-election,) deem it wise to cater to a power that, were it confident of success, would thumb-screw us back to the Middle Ages. To say you could do nothing to prevent this action of the State Board, is a very poor excuse. Every intelligent citizen in Wisconsin knows that you could have done something.

The people will henceforth be more careful in whom they place their trust. One who is clothed with authority and fails to exercise it in behalf of the weak, oppressed, and abused, is either a cold, hard-hearted clod, or a coward who dare not speak for right and justice independently, but is willing to sacrifice his own conscience, and God (good) idea to receive the applause from multitude, or to reap a reward from Mammon.

Sincerely hope that Wisconsin Officials (as well as those of the ) will see the folly of their ways and repent by amending the in time. "for the night cometh" (and it is not far distant) "wherein no man can work."

Yours for the Truth,

ROSE TRAUTMAN,

BARBARA TRAUTMAN.

THE END.



