

OUT OF AN INSANE ASYLUM.

A RELEASED PATIENT'S REMARKABLE STORY OF CRUEL TREATMENT.

OIL CITY, Penn., March 24.—Several months ago Robert G. Ingersoll lectured in this city, and among his audience was a resident named John Carroll. Some of the statements of the lecturer so worked on Carroll's mind that he became somewhat deranged. He was sent by his family to the Dixmont Insane Asylum, at Pittsburg. He was recently released, and now makes a remarkable statement as to inhuman treatment he alleges he received in the asylum. He says that when he entered the asylum he was suffering from the effects of brain fever. On undressing for his bath, his two attendants treated him roughly because he did not remove his clothing as quickly as they thought was necessary. He told them not to be so harsh, as he was still ill from fever, and was suffering with a blister on his back, which was covered with a plaster. One of the men said: "Oh, we've heard of you before," and, taking hold of the plaster, tore it from his back, pulling the skin of the blister with it. In giving him his bath, they rubbed his raw back with a flesh-brush, unmindful of his pleas and suffering.

He was then dressed and placed in a room by himself. He walked out in the hall, when he was put back, and the door locked. He knocked on the door with his hands. A keeper named Harper unlocked the door. "When I walked out," says Carroll, "he knocked me down, and, with three others, kicked and beat me until I was senseless. When I came to my senses I was in a cell. I had on a strait-jacket, and was lying on a bare, damp floor. There was no furniture in the room. About 8 o'clock in the evening Harper and two others came to the cell and wanted me to take some medicine. I was afraid it was poison, and refused. Then I was beaten; but I still refused to take the medicine. This was followed by more kicks and knocks, and then I was choked and the medicine poured down my throat. I was then left as I was—alone in the cell—with the strait-jacket still on. During the night I managed to get the jacket off. In the morning, when Harper came in and saw what I had done, he exclaimed, with an oath, "You'll pay for this!" He then brought in two men. They came at me. I defended myself as well as I could. They kicked and beat me, and one of them, by the name of Lovell, caught me by the hair and dragged me around the floor. The others kicked me in the ribs at the same time, breaking some of them. My spine was badly injured, and I suffer from that still, so much so that I am not able to do any work. After this abuse, I was dressed and put in the strait-jacket. I was taken to another cell, but when the blood was washed up in the first one, I was returned to it before the floor was dry. I was given a straw-tick and pillow, and remained there all that day and night. The next morning I came to my senses and understood my situation at once. Before my mind was not clear, and any stubbornness I showed was because of that. When the cell was opened I told the keepers not to abuse me, and I would do anything that was reasonable. Mr. Brown, the dining-room attendant, then took me to get my breakfast. I entered a room where half a dozen insane men were seated on the floor, eating. The breakfast was bread, coffee, cabbage, and boiled meat. The next day I gave Brown the sign of an Odd-fellow. He answered it. "Why didn't you give the "trailingsign" when you were being abused?" he asked me. I told him I did not think of it. When the keepers found that I was an Odd-fellow I was treated better than the other patients. I finally managed to smuggle a letter to a friend outside, giving the situation I was in, and this resulted in my getting my release."

"Harper, the keeper," Carroll says, "carried a bunch of keys that weighed between one and two pounds. With this he frequently struck the inmates hard blows. He also had a strap with a buckle on one end. This he used on them, sometimes wielding it with both hands. There was a patient in the asylum named Swanson, a young man from Warren County. One morning he could not find one of his stockings. An attendant seized him, and a scuffle ensued. When the men fell, Swanson was on top. Another keeper pulled him off, and held him while the other kicked him until he begged some one, for God's sake, to kill him. He was hurt so badly that he could not rise, and lay doubled up on the floor, crying, 'Oh, God, take me away from these bad men!' It was the most heart-rending sight I ever witnessed. While he lay on the floor, Swanson had three violent fits in succession. When he came to the asylum he was a strong, healthy young man, and quite inoffensive. In a few weeks he was reduced to almost a skeleton."

The New York Times

Published: March 26, 1880

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