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The Lancaster Intelligence  
LANCASTER, JANUARY 28, 1885.

### What Is It?

In view of the trouble the state seems to have with the trustees of the Norristown insane asylum and other insane asylums and charitable institutions we are induced to suggest that this class of officials be dispensed with. The office has no salary attached to it, we believe, and yet appears to be much desired.

Whether its loveliness springs from the fact that it gives an opportunity to the philanthropist; or whether its pleasantness is found in the associations or the side board, we cannot surely tell. The trustees may say that they like to be trustees because they like to do good, in company with good fellows, around handsome mahogany; and probably they do. It is a very pleasant way of doing good, evidently, that has been discovered by the trustees of asylums.

The Norristown concern has been especially noted for the eagerness with which the trustees have been sought. There must be something peculiarly delicious about the air of the town or the flavor of the asylum. Our governors have been wont to look upon its trusteeships as among the nicest of their sugar plums; and our Senate now is so excited over the need of having only first-class men to get them, that Governor Pattison's two appointees are rejected as unworthy of the great dignity.

Mr. Ashmead is now in office under the governor's appointment. He seems to have already made himself a target in the side of his fellow trustees, and they want no more of him. He says that they have not been doing their duty, and they say that any associate of theirs who is so low in his instincts and un-gentlemanly in his tastes as to suspect them of a failure to do and be all that they should do and be, is not fit to be a trustee of the Norristown insane asylum; and the Senate says aye. Mr. Ashmead is not the most agreeable man in the world perhaps; and Mr. Walters, his comrade, cannot be classed among the most delightful of associates. But the question of interest is how it comes about that fine social qualities and a talent for agreeable associations are essential to a Norristown insane asylum trustee? Certainly it is not important to the lunatics that these trustees should have a pleasant time of it together when they settle back in their luxurious chairs in the council chamber, around their fragrant bunch of crackers and cheese. Nor can it be particularly essential to the interest of the state that there should be a condition of hilarious enjoyment and good feeling in the Norristown board.

The fact certainly is that the members of this board in the past have generally been very clever men; and Col. Boyd, of Norristown, and Baker Jamison, of Philadelphia, have been up to the high tide mark of the conventional requirements for the place. Governor Pattison did not reappoint them. He has nominated men of a very different stamp. Their politics have not caused the heads of Boyd and Jamison to fall in the basket, for they are of the same household of faith to which the governor belongs; or is supposed to. Evidently he wants a different class of men entirely for trustees of the insane. The Senate seems to like the old kind. Governor Hartman has interested himself to preserve that kind. Chester N. Far, who, we believe, is the secretary or book-keeper of the board, is also anxious to have that kind. It is his kind, and a very good kind, by the way. Whether it is the best kind in an insane asylum trusteeship, we cannot positively say, having no very precise knowledge of what that position requires in its occupant. We should say it did not require much of any thing; that a good keeper was sufficient for the asylum, and that all the superintendence he should have should come from the board of charities especially established by the state to keep its charitable institutions in good running order.

We entirely fail to comprehend the state's system of charity. There seem to be no system. A proper system would make the authorities of each institution subordinate to the central authority, created in the board of charities. What place in such a system has a board of trustees for each institution? It has none. There should be but a keeper, appointed by the central authority, and supervised by the directors.

### LONDON'S System of Sewers.

It is interesting to watch the progress of the science of sanitation in its application to drainage in the greatest cities of the world. London was a thriving mart of commerce in 1851, but there was at that time no official control of the sanitation of the city. In that year an act of Parliament was passed constituting a commission of sewers and by progressive steps from that day, London has attained one of the best sewage systems in the world.

In those days and for years afterward sewers were only intended for the rainfall and for surface waters, it being a penal offense to empty house drainage into them. Gradually the overflow domestic sewage began to find its way into the surface sewers, until in 1854 an act was passed rendering this permissible. Soon it was made compulsory to empty all household drainage into the sewer-pipes that supplied the open gutters. Here was an illustration of how a penal offense became sue-

cessively a permissive right and a compulsory duty.

Twenty-five years ago London became twenty-five years old in the tremendous amount of sewage that passed into the Thames, and was washed up and down before the city in the same manner as half of the sewage of Philadelphia now flows past one of the pumping stations for the city reservoir on the Delaware. A board of works was formed, and the city divided into thirty-nine districts. Thirteen hundred miles of sewers were built at a total cost of \$25,000,000, and eighty-two miles of these are intercepting sewers.

The sewers of London run in three levels, the high, middle and low levels. The first drains an area of ten miles square and its fall varies from 1 foot to 7 feet to 1 in 376 feet. The middle level drains an area of seventeen and one-half square miles, and its fall ranges from seven and one-half feet to two feet per mile. The low level sewer carries off the sewage of eleven square miles. This is pumped up to join the drainage of the other two sewers, and the aggregated sewage is conveyed by aqueducts to Backing creek, fourteen miles below London bridge, and from thence it flows to the river. At this point it is impossible for the sewage to be conveyed back to the city.

Some idea of the magnitude of the operations may be conveyed by the statement that 180,000,000 gallons of sewage are daily conveyed into the Thames from London. In the success which has crowned the London system there is much of an ingenuity for American cities contemplating improvements in this vitally important matter.

### "The Shades of Stevens?"

In his indignation at the leniency of performances of Cooper and other Republicans on the state Senate—rejecting an appointment for notable public on the pretext that he had been a rebel soldier—Senator Wallace said, as reported, "Shades of the noble Stevens. How are the mighty fallen."

Mr. Wallace probably ascribed too

little an elevation to the "shades of the noble Stevens"—if he meant That.

That illustrious Republican's shade no doubt rejoiced in the narrow partisan spirit displayed by his political successors in the state Senate the other day.

When in Congress he was wont to ascertain the merits of a contested election case about the air of the town or the flavor of the asylum. Our governors have been wont to look upon its trusteeships as among the nicest of their sugar plums; and our Senate now is so excited over the need of having only first-class men to get them, that Governor Pattison's two appointees are rejected as unworthy of the great dignity.

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