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NATIONAL DOROTHEA DIX MEMORIAL ASSOCIATION.

DECEMBER 17, 1900.—Referred to the Committee on the Library and ordered to be printed to accompany S. R. 140.

Mr. HALE presented the following

LETTER FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT OF THE GOVERNMENT HOSPITAL FOR THE INSANE, TRANSMITTING A MEMORIAL OF THE NATIONAL DOROTHEA DIX MEMORIAL ASSOCIATION PRAYING FOR AN APPROPRIATION FOR THE BUILDING OF A MONUMENT TO MARK THE BIRTHPLACE AT HAMPDEN, ME., OF MISS DOROTHEA LYNDE DIX.

GOVERNMENT HOSPITAL FOR THE INSANE,
Washington, D. C., December 15, 1900.

MY DEAR SIR: My attention has been called by Mrs. Helen Coffin Beedy, president of the Dorothea Dix Memorial Association, to the desire of the association for a small appropriation by Congress for a suitable memorial to the memory of Miss Dix, to be located at her birthplace, near Bangor, Me.

As superintendent of this hospital I desire to add a word to this request and to express to you my earnest hope that the great work that Miss Dix did for this hospital and for the cause of the insane in general throughout the United States may find a small recompense by this suitable memorial. No one in the history of this country did as much for the insane as Miss Dix, and in the inception and early development of this hospital she was especially influential. Her energy and industry were remarkable, and her efforts were all given without hope of reward. You doubtless know from others what valuable services she rendered to the soldiers of the civil war, as head of the department of nurses in Washington, and I hope you may find it consistent with your duties to lend the weight of your influence to the accomplishment of this desire of the association organized to perpetuate her memory.

Very respectfully, yours, A. B. RICHARDSON,
Superintendent.

Hon. EUGENE HALE,
United States Senate, Washington, D. C.

BANGOR, ME., *November 20, 1900.*

The President, Senate, and House of Representatives:

The National Dorothea Dix Memorial Association respectfully petitions your honorable body to take such action as may lead to the granting of an appropriation for the building of a monument to mark

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the birthplace at Hampden, in Maine, of Miss Dorothea Lynde Dix, who stands in history as the most eminent philanthropist of modern times, and it respectfully calls your attention to the resolution which was passed unanimously by the Society of the Army of the Potomac at its last meeting at Fredericksburg, Va., in May, 1900:

The services of Miss Dix as chief of the hospital nurses of the United States during the civil war and her extraordinary success in establishing institutions for the insane—over thirty in number—in the South and West and elsewhere in this country and in Europe, before and after the civil war, place her among the noblest examples of humanity in all history. The Society of the Army of the Potomac now asks that the birthplace at Hampden, Maine, of this grand woman be marked in a manner worthy of a grateful and humane people.

The nation can not neglect the memory of its illustrious dead.

HELEN COFFIN BEEDY,
President of the National Dorothea Dix Memorial Association.
EUNICE H. FRYE,
Vice-President at Large.
SOPHRONIA C. SNOW,
Vice-President.
ELLEN N. CUSHMAN,
Recording Secretary.
LOUISE M. REED,
Corresponding Secretary.
JANE H. SPOFFORD,
Treasurer.

THE NATIONAL DOROTHEA DIX MEMORIAL ASSOCIATION.

Dorothea Lynde Dix was born at Hampden, Me., April 4, 1802. She was educated at the home of her grandmother, in Boston. Here, even when a child, by establishing a school in the barn chamber for the poor neglected children, she began her life work of love and sacrifice. To the improvement of methods for the treatment of the insane and to the alleviation of suffering she devoted her early womanhood. At the breaking out of the civil war, though nearly 60 years of age, she entered Washington with the wounded soldiers from Baltimore as a volunteer nurse. Her services were accepted by Secretary Cameron, who appointed her superintendent of the women nurses. Without waiting for the Government, in its distracted state, Miss Dix provided her own means of operation by laying upon her country's altar not only herself but her fortune. At her own expense she hired two houses in Washington, to be used as headquarters for nurses and convalescent soldiers as well as for depositories of supplies, for which she was constantly appealing to the people. During the four long years of the war she took not a day's furlough, even remaining at the capital eighteen months afterwards, that she might fulfill the promises made to her dying soldiers, in behalf of their mothers, wives, and children; and when others had failed in the enterprise she collected $8,000 and superintended the building of a monument to the memory of the nation's heroes sleeping at Fortress Monroe.

Inasmuch as Miss Dix builded for others, not for herself, and in order that her deeds of self-sacrifice and love may not fade from the nation's memory, the National Dorothea Dix Memorial Association was organized at Hampden, April 15, 1899. Though it is incorporated under the laws of Maine, it is national in its scope. The association now owns the tract of land on the banks of the Penobscot River, including the birthplace of Miss Dix. July 4, 1899, by the erection of a liberty pole, with fitting ceremony, the river-side farm, now a wild pasture land, was dedicated the Dorothea Dix Park. Here the flag Miss Dix loved and honored has since floated to her memory.

It is the design of the National Dorothea Dix Memorial Association to appropriately decorate the park and to erect a monument to the memory of Miss Dix.

The society would have the monument represent the free-will offering, not of a few generous contributors alone, but of the many—the widow's mite and the penny of the child. Miss Dix worked for humanity, and do not all in turn owe her a debt of gratitude?

By the payment of $1 any person may become a life member of the National Dorothea Dix Association; by the payment of $25 an honorary member. Societies, clubs, schools, and other organizations may become life members by the payment of $2; honorary members by the payment of $25. There are no annual dues.

The names of all members, individuals, or societies are to be written upon an honor roll which is to be kept among the archives of the association and a copy of the same placed under the monument. The name of any child or adult contributing 5 cents toward the funds of the society will be written upon the honor roll.

Membership fees or other contributions may be sent to the treasurer, Mrs. Jane H. Spofford, Hampden Corner, or to the president, Mrs. Helen Coffin Beedy, 208 Essex street, Bangor, Me.

You are most cordially invited to aid in the enterprise by becoming a member of the association.

DOROTHEA LYNDE DIX—A MAINE-BORN WOMAN WHOSE WORK FOR SUFFERING HUMANITY ENTITLES HER TO THE MEMORIAL WHICH MAINE WOMEN ARE WORKING TO SECURE FOR HER.

The insane asylum of to-day is a place in which science and art unite to make as comfortable and as happy as possible the life of its unfortunate inmates. The architect and builder have exerted their utmost skill in the construction of the buildings. Around them the landscape gardener has turned the land into parks and pleasure grounds. Farther from the buildings smiling fields and green pastures compose the farm which furnishes healthful food for the inmates. Within these dwellings of those who suffer from mental disease the visitor finds every appliance for the treatment of their malady. It is difficult to realize that with few exceptions these hospitals are the growth of the last sixty years. Still more difficult is it to appreciate the fact that the agitation which led to their erection was prompted and carried on by one frail woman.

Beginning her task by calling attention to the many cases where the insane were treated with less consideration than that shown to the beasts of the fields, this woman, who was all her life an invalid, traveled from State to State the country over presenting memorials to the legislatures, talking with public men, and so stirring the conscience of the people that money by the million was appropriated for the building of asylums, while the laws governing the treatment of the insane were radically changed for the better. State after State heeded her call, and the good work was not confined to this country. Hospitals in Canada, in Japan, and in England were due to her efforts. In her own country to such an extent did she win the approbation and confidence of the people that in many cases after the money was appropriated she was asked to oversee its expenditure and in this way over $1,000,000 passed through her hands. All this she accomplished in the twenty years previous to the war of the rebellion. When that great conflict came she was a woman well advanced in years, whose life work might have been regarded as finished, but she was among the first to answer to the call of the nation, and her great ability found a new field, for to her was intrusted the work of organizing the woman nurses and supervising their labors in the hospitals. As a reward for her great work, after declining testimonials of various kinds, she asked for the flag of her country and was given a set of the national colors made for her by order of the War Department. These at her death she willed to Harvard University. Following the war she again took up her work in behalf of the insane; and when illness at last compelled her to relinquish her active life, she was given a home in the first asylum which had been erected as a result of her efforts, that at Trenton, N. J. Here, surrounded by every comfort, she lived for a number of years still taking an active interest in her life work, her mind unclouded as her bodily strength failed.

The woman who did this great work was Dorothea Lynde Dix, and she was a Maine-born woman. Certainly no American woman is more deserving of a suitable memorial, and a little band of Maine women have taken the lead in the effort to provide one for her. Dorothea Dix was born in Hampden April 4, 1792. Her birth occurred during a temporary stay of her parents in that town, but she was the descendant of a family which did much for the State of Maine. Her father, Joseph Dix, was a man of unstable character, who wandered often from place to place, engaging in various enterprises which turned out to be unprofitable, but her grandfather, Dr. Elijah Dix, was a man of strong and rugged character. Obtaining a good medical education for the times, he practiced in Worcester, Mass., but in 1795 removed to Boston. There, besides establishing a drug store, he built chemical works for the refining of sulphur and purifying camphor. These enterprises were successful, and he next

turned his attention to investments in public lands in the province of Maine. He bought immense tracts here and became the founder of the towns of Dixmont and Dixfield. It is supposed that it was business in connection with his father's interests that brought Joseph Dix to Maine. Hampden is near Dixmont, and a century ago was the only town thereabouts which would afford decent quarters for the son of the proprietor of such holdings as those of Dr. Dix. Thus it was that Maine gave to the nation this woman who did so much for her fellow-Americans.

The childhood of Miss Dix was not a happy one. Her father's improvidence was not calculated to make the lot of his children one to be envied, and finally the little Dorothea went to live with her grandmother, who, after the death of Dr. Dix, lived in considerable state in her house in Boston, an establishment of such pretension that it was known as the Dix Mansion. Here the girl grew to womanhood, early showing her independence and strength of character by the establishment of a school for poor children, which she held in a chamber of the barn. Later she conducted a private school for girls. With the recollections of her pinched youth fresh upon her, she struggled to obtain a modest competency. This result she had attained when in 1836 her health gave way, necessitating a change of climate, and the following eighteen months she spent abroad. The death of her grandmother added to her possessions, so that in after years she was able to carry on her life work without reference to her own support.

It was not until 1841 that this gifted woman found herself face to face with the labor of love to which she dedicated her life. Hearing stories of the horrible treatment accorded lunatics in the East Cambridge jail, she went there to see for herself, and what she saw led her to make an investigation of the almshouses and jails throughout the State. It is difficult to believe that such a condition of things as was revealed to the public by her reports could have existed at the middle of the nineteenth century. Then it was the custom to keep many insane patients in town poorhouses, and they were treated in a manner far worse than that used in the care of confirmed criminals. Miss Dix published many accounts of what she saw. One will suffice to show the general character of all the cases:

"A few rods removed from the poorhouse is a wooden building upon the roadside, constructed of heavy boards and plank. There is no window save an opening half the size of the sash and closed by a board shutter. In one corner is some brickwork surrounding an iron stove, which in cold weather serves to warm the room. The occupant of this room is a young man who has been declared incurably insane. He can move a measured distance in his prison—that is, as far as a strong, heavy chain depending from an iron collar which invests his neck permits. In fine weather—and it was pleasant when I was there in June last—the door is thrown open, at once giving admission to light and air and affording some little amusement to the solitary in watching the passers-by. But that portion of the year which allows of open doors is not the chiefest part, and it may be conceived without drafting much on the imagination what is the condition of one who for days and weeks and months sits in darkness and alone without employment, without object."

Many more cases might be mentioned—cases in which the insane were shut up in dungeons without light and air. In one case—it seems too horrible for belief—the unfortunate, to keep him from freezing in the winter, was lowered into a pit dug in the floor of his prison and a trapdoor closed over him. One man long confined in some such place had suffered so from freezing that his feet were only shapeless stumps. These horrors were found in the town poorhouses. There had already been an awakening in the treatment of the insane in asylums. The need was of more asylums and the stopping of the ignorant cruelty practiced outside of them in the care of the mentally afflicted. So from State to State went Miss Dix with her cry for help. She wrote and talked; she traveled in weather which would have threatened the health of a robust man; distance or climate could not deter her; the warnings of friends were in vain. She said that the needs of her charges were greater than hers and she allowed nothing to turn her from the path of her duty as she saw it. To tell the story of her life would require much more space than can here be devoted to the subject, and it has already been admirably done in Mr. Francis Tiffany's biography.

In passing, however, mention may be made of one or two instances in which Miss Dix showed the greatness of her heart and her ability to do good. When Boston and Chicago were swept by fire she soon after sent to the relief of the sufferers large sums of money which she had, by reason of her wide acquaintance, been able to collect. When others had failed in the enterprise, she collected at the close of the war $8,000 for a monument to the soldiers and sailors buried at Fortress Monroe and superintended its erection. Her work for the soldiers was, in fact, prolonged for a year and a half after the close of the great conflict that she might fulfill the promises made to the soldiers in behalf of their wives, mothers, and children. This time she gave after four years of service in which she did not take a day's furlough.

It is to this woman that the National Dorothea Dix Memorial Association seeks to erect a monument. The association was organized at Hampden in 1899. Although incorporated under the laws of Maine, it is national in its scope. It already owns a tract of land on the banks of the Penobscot River. In this tract stood the story-and-a-half house in which Miss Dix was born, and the cellar may still be seen there, although the house itself disappeared many years ago. The association aims to improve the property, making of it an attractive park, and ultimately placing there a monument to Miss Dix. The officers of the association are:

President.—Mrs. Helen Coffin Beedy.

Vice-president at large.—Mrs. George C. Frye.

Vice-president.—Miss Sophronia C. Snow.

Recording secretary.—Mrs. Ellen N. Cushman.

Corresponding secretary.—Mrs. Louisa M. Reed.

Treasurer.—Mrs. Jane H. Spofford.

Custodian of the park.—Joseph H. Snow.

Trustees.—Mrs. Jane H. Spofford, Mrs. Louisa M. Reed, Mrs. Ada C. Patten, Mrs. Annie C. Burleigh, Mrs. Elizabeth K. Norris, Mrs. Clara R. Tolman, Mrs. Mary A. Jackson, Mrs. Georgeana Rogers, Mrs. Helen Coffin Beedy, Mrs. Hannibal Hamlin, Mrs. Alice M. Hodgdon, Mrs. Helen A. Harriman, Mrs. Ellen N. Cushman, Mrs. Delia C. Chase, Miss Sophronia C. Snow, Mrs. George C. Frye.

Honorary trustees.—Col. Charles A. Jones, Mrs. Mary A. Livermore, Mrs. Margaret T. W. Merrill, Miss Julia Harris May, Mrs. Isabeth Lennan, Rev. Francis Tiffany, D. D., Col. Augustus Choate Hamlin, Mrs. Julia Ward Howe, Miss Susan B. Anthony, Mrs. L. M. N. Stevens, Mrs. Mary E. Emery, Mrs. Hannah J. Bailey, Gen. Joseph S. Smith.

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