

THE RECORD

OF

BENJAMIN F. BUTLER

SINCE HIS ELECTION AS GOVERNOR OF
MASSACHUSETTS.

BOSTON, 1883.

The principal objections urged by the governor against this school — that none of the pupils have been made self-supporting, and that those in whom some spark of intelligence has been awakened have become ashamed of their condition — are too frivolous for comment. The school fulfils a noble purpose, and no one can for an instant doubt that the lives of these poor creatures are made happier while under its care. The people of Massachusetts do not begrudge the \$22,500 spent for its support.

THE TEWKSBURY ALMSHOUSE.

In regard to this institution, the charges of the governor were as follows : —

“Have there not been scandals, public and well known, for years in that institution? Was it not charged, and never denied, that, for years, of the infants born in or sent to that institution, more than 90 per cent died as such? All of these did not fill an infant pauper’s grave, even; for it can be shown that from 150 to 250 infant corpses were annually sold as merchandise to a single medical institution in the State, for from \$3 to \$5 each. Many, if not all, came from thence, beside large numbers of bodies of pauper adults, furnished for other medical purposes, and sold as merchandise for very considerable sums; and that done secretly, and not under and in accordance with the provisions of the law, which, under certain safeguards, permit almshouses to furnish the unclaimed bodies of deceased paupers for dissecting purposes to surgeons and medical schools, according to the decent and humane provision of the statute. Was this not in testimony before a grand jury? Has it not been publicly known? What record has the State of these dead infant children, to whom it took the place of parent? What account, even, has ever been returned of the price of this merchandise of the ghouls? What record of birth or death or burial-place, by which such bodies could be identified or classified?”

Another charge was that one of the trustees had said that he made enough out of the commissions on what was bought for the institution to pay him for his time. Another was that the salaries of the penal and charitable institutions were 70 per cent of the appropriations.

1. The first count of his Excellency's indictment was this,—

“Have there not been scandals, public and well known, for years in that institution?”

The answer is: Yes, as there always may be in any institution of this kind; and, further, that most of these scandals, after investigation, were found to be groundless; and, when abuses were found, they were corrected at once.

2. The second count was this,—

“Was it not charged, and never denied, that, for years, of the infants born in or sent to that institution, more than 90 per cent died as such?”

The facts as to infant mortality in former years at Tewksbury are not in dispute. The evidence is overwhelming that the infant foundlings sent to Tewksbury were those whose chances of life were very small. The most of them came from Boston, and the Chardon-street Home was the central reservoir from which they were distributed. The attempt of the governor to compare the poorhouse at Lowell with the State almshouse as a place for keeping infants is grossly unfair. It has already appeared that those at Tewksbury were sorted out in Boston as unpromising; while those at Lowell are born there, and are very few in number. His reference to the record of babies from the Chardon-street home is also a gross perversion of fact. The record-book there kept was not made up by a physician. We shall be justified in quoting from the testimony of Phebe B. Spear, matron of Chardon-street Home (pp. 1697, 1698, Report Tewksbury Investigating Committee).

Q. Now, following those instructions, tell me what children out of those received at the Chardon-street Home you sent to Tewksbury.

A. The most miserable ones. Those that I felt were not suitable for adoption, and that they were not willing to take in other institutions.

Q. Those that were not suitable for adoption, or which other institutions were not willing to take?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. Was the Massachusetts Infant Asylum one of the institutions that came there to take children?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. During those three years?

A. Yes, sir. Well, they did more or less all the time.

Gov. BUTLER. I don't hear you.

The WITNESS. They took them from there all the time, whenever we had good, healthy children.

Q. Now, I open this record, vol. i., p. 139, date Nov. 9, 1872. Is that your handwriting?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. Now we go on with that until we come to May 29, 1876: "Sent to State almshouse at Tewksbury, Jessie Holgrave, doubtful." I notice on this register you use the terms "doubtful," "feeble," "fair," and "good." I want you to tell me who made that classification of children as they came in there.

A. I did.

Q. And have you ever been educated as a physician?

A. No, sir.

Q. Now I want to know, Mrs. Spear, in selecting children for Tewksbury, what children did you send out of all that were received at the Chardon-street Home during all those years?

A. The poorest; those that I felt I could not provide a home for elsewhere.

The GOVERNOR. Won't you repeat that?

The WITNESS. Those that were feeble and miserable, and that I felt I could not provide a home for.

MISS CROCKETT, connected with that institution, testified (p. 1642): "We always keep the best, and send the poorest to *Tewksbury*." Another former matron of this institution more than corroborated this statement. The testimony of Dr. Lathrop, Dr. Putney, Dr. Folsom, and others was that Tewksbury was not a suitable place for so many infants, and that mortality could not be prevented without an entire change of system, which was finally brought about; no one being more urgent in accomplishing the result than Captain Marsh, the superintendent. His official reports for many years furnish cumulative evidence of this fact.

3. We now come to the third and gravest charge in the indictment,—

“All of these [the 90 per cent] did not fill infant paupers’ graves even, for it can be shown that from 150 to 250 infant corpses were annually sold as merchandise to a single medical institution in the State for from \$3 to \$5 each. Many, if not all, came from thence, beside large numbers of bodies of pauper adults, furnished for other medical purposes, and sold as merchandise for considerable sums; and that done secretly, and not under and in accordance with the provisions of the law, which, under certain safeguards, permit almshouses to furnish the unclaimed bodies of deceased paupers for dissecting purposes to surgeons and medical schools, according to the decent and humane provision of the statute. Was this not in testimony before a grand jury? Has it not been publicly known? What record has the State of these dead infant children, to whom it took the place of parent? What account, even, has ever been returned of the price of this merchandise of the ghouls? What record of birth or death or burial-place, by which such bodies could be identified or classified?”

For proof of this charge the governor relied upon the unsupported evidence of Dr. John Dixwell, who graduated from the Harvard Medical School in 1873.

DR. DIXWELL’S TESTIMONY.

Q. Had you occasion while you were in that medical school to dissect any bodies?

A. I had.

Q. How many students were there connected with the hospital at that time?

A. There were a larger number than since, because there was no examination for admission. I should think there were 200 or 300, all told; a large number from Canada, etc.

Q. You were there three years. During those three years how many bodies of infants do you think you saw and knew of in connection with that school?

A. Bodies of infants?

Q. Yes, sir; young persons.

A. Well, I saw several hundred a year, certainly.

Q. Of what ages?

A. All infants ; all under a year.

Q. At what price?

A. Well, it varied with the supply. The demand was always good, but the supply was sometimes short. They paid from \$3 to \$5, and sometimes from \$2 to \$5, a part.

Q. Sometimes \$3 and sometimes \$5?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. During the time how many of those babies do you think you dissected yourself?

A. In the three years?

Q. Yes.

A. Well, I had several every week—two or three every week. I suppose I had 50 or 60 a year, certainly. I was very desirous of dissecting, and perhaps I dissected more than my mates ; but I certainly dissected several a week.

So much for the testimony of Dr. Dixwell. The reports of deaths in the Tewksbury almshouse which were made to the State board having the institution under its supervision show that 44 infants died in 1870, 30 in 1871, and 66 in 1872,—a total of 149 in the three years. Thus it appears, if Dr. Dixwell had 50 or 60 infants a year to dissect, he had at the lowest figure 150 in the three years,—or one more than the whole number that died. If he had 50 from Tewksbury in 1871, he must have had 11 more than died during the entire year ; making it necessary for him to get from that institution 11 living infants to gratify his thirst for anatomical knowledge. Again, Dr. Dixwell testified that there were between 200 and 300 students attending the Medical School while he was there : call the number 250. In his testimony he says, “perhaps I did more than my mates.” Admitting that he did, it is but fair to assume that his “mates” dissected the bodies of half as many infants as did Dr. Dixwell, or twenty-five a year. On the basis of an attendance of 250 “mates,” this would give 6,250 as the number of infants dissected in a single year, or 18,750 during the three years!

Let any candid, fair man take the entire evidence of Dr. Dixwell as it appears in the report of the investigating committee, and even admitting it to be true that bodies of infants were received at the Harvard Medical School for dissection, we submit that there is not a single word in his testimony tending to prove that an infant corpse ever went to that school from Tewksbury.

In contradiction of Dr. Dixwell's evidence, Dr. STEPHEN C. MARTIN, a classmate of Dr. Dixwell's, testified "that he never saw but *one* baby in the dissecting-room during the time he was at the Harvard Medical School, *and that was brought in from outside by one of the students.*"

Dr. WILLIAM L. RICHARDSON, a professor in the Harvard Medical School, testified "that he never saw an infant's body in the dissecting-room for the purposes of dissection."

Dr. RICHARD M. HODGES had official connection with the Harvard Medical School up to 1872. He testified "that during 1870-72 there were no babies, to his knowledge, brought to the school for purposes of dissection."

Dr. JOHN FOSTER BUSH testified to the same effect; as did also Drs. Charles B. Porter, William A. Dunn, Edward H. Bradford, Frederic C. Shattuck, Charles F. Folsom, Charles H. Williams, and others.

All of these gentlemen are physicians of the highest reputation, and well-known citizens: many of them were classmates of Dr. Dixwell; and they all testified that Dr. Dixwell was extremely eccentric and given to extravagant statements, and that his reputation for truth and veracity was bad.

"Was not this in testimony before a grand jury? [says his Excellency] and has it not been publicly known?"

And yet on page 48 of the report of the investigating committee, Gov. Butler denies that there was any accusation of the kind made before the grand jury.

The other charges we pass over, and content ourselves by citing the report of a majority of the investigating committee,—a report of seven honorable, fair-minded men. They report as follows:—

"We have visited Tewksbury, many of us several times, and examined the institution in all its parts. We have seen and tasted the food of the inmates, and had before us the men who have cooked it and served it for many years. We have had before us one of the late trustees, the superintendent, the clerk, the physician, matrons, the nurses, and attendants. We have examined the official reports of the State Board of Health, Lunacy, and Charity, which by agreement are made part of the case. Further, we have had before us Father Gigault of Lowell, the Catholic priest whose presence is such a benediction at the almshouse; also the official report of Mrs. Clara T. Leonard, one of the efficient members of the State board; also Dr. George A. Tucker, the eminent expert from Australia; and Dr. Charles F. Folsom. And, after hearing all the evidence in the protracted hearing, we declare the present condition of the State almshouse at Tewksbury to be good, and, with one single exception, entirely worthy the State. That one exception is that the appropriations have been too small. The evidence is cumulative that there should be more and better attendants, and better food for the sick and infirm, more amusement and recreation for the hopeless insane, and other things as recommended by Mrs. Leonard in her official report.

"We pronounce the main charges of his Excellency the Governor groundless and cruel. The question of infant mortality was an old one, well settled, as everybody knew. The delivery of dead bodies under the law was under the control of the trustees and superintendent, and any irregularity should have been remedied by them without publicity, if proof thereof had been furnished; and the people of this proud Commonwealth would have been saved from the shame and humiliation so recklessly and needlessly brought upon them. Surely the truth should have been ascertained before making such awful charges.

"Our order was to investigate the other institutions; but we have heard no cause of complaint, and have had no time to devote to them. We made the ordinary tour of inspection, and found them in good condition.

"We commend to the Legislature, and to the people, all our public charitable institutions, as still worthy this ancient Commonwealth; although, in the language of one of his Excellency's distinguished predecessors, they are constantly requiring changes to meet the recurring exigencies and the demands of a progressive philanthropy.

“ Your committee desires to place upon the record their strong disapprobation of some things said and done by the governor during the course of this hearing. We pass by the insults to the committee and to the chairman, who presided at this hearing by invitation of the regular chairman, with consent of the committee; also the reference in the argument to ‘clearing out this State House’ by his veteran comrades; and consider graver things. His Excellency announced on the first evening of the hearing, that he had not come into the case with a blacking-brush. But when, in cross-examining a young lady witness [p. 1839], in order to ascertain whether, in a certain campaign, a distinguished citizen of this State tarried over night at the State almshouse, he said, ‘*I don’t know what you knew by sleeping with him;*’ when he spoke of a matron who had been a witness as ‘*that little chit, who could do no good among old men except to excite their passions;*’ when he insinuated that the father of Charlotte Anderson’s child was the aged superintendent of the almshouse; when he tried in vain to make Thomas Kelliher, one of his witnesses, admit that he took money, and suffered imprisonment, for being the father of a bastard child on solicitation of the assistant superintendent; when he suggested that another respectable lady witness employed at Tewksbury belonged to ‘*the harem;*’ when he spoke of the State almshouse as a ‘*hell upon earth,*’ and the home for discharged females, at Dedham, as a ‘*den;*’ when he spoke of the eminent physicians who controverted Dixwell’s testimony as the ‘*refuse,*’ and again as the ‘*emptyings,*’ of Harvard Medical School, and again as ‘*rascals*’ and ‘*runts,*’ — your committee thought the blacking-brush had been brought into requisition. When he, in his argument, related his own disgusting description of the operation of craniotomy; when he brandished what he called a woman’s skin, and pointed to the audience the nipple of the woman; when, to defend the New-York witness, Eva Bowen, he averred, *that, under God, her seduction and fall are due to the school-system of Massachusetts;* when we see him flourish a piece of human skin, which had not been put into the case, with an alleged crucifix tattooed upon it; when he alluded to old and young men *whose jaded passions are to be excited by wearing slippers made from a woman’s breast,* — your committee blushed for the Commonwealth, and turned away in amazement. But worse than these was his portentous reference to the French Revolution. Can it be possible that the people of this Commonwealth are slumbering upon such a volcano as burst upon the people of France in 1789, whose fires are

to be kindled because four reckless medical students have caused to be tanned, for their own purposes, a few pieces of human skin? Is this what his Excellency means when he says we must see that the wheel don't go round once again?

"We have examined the 3,000 proofs of the testimony in this case with solicitude to be just: just to the management of the Tewksbury almshouse: just to his Excellency the Governor, who made the charges and conducted the prosecution; and, above all, just to the Commonwealth, whose servants we are."

THE GOVERNOR'S INSULT TO THE WOMEN OF MASSACHUSETTS.

Referring to his Excellency's deliberate insult of a young woman who had been a matron at the almshouse, we cannot do better than quote a letter on the subject, written by a distinguished lady in this Commonwealth.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE REPUBLICAN.

"There are too many mouths of officers, too many officers that do nothing, too many matrons just out of school and only fit to ride out with Charles Marsh or with Tom in the afternoon. Call that little chit a matron! and pay her from the State Treasury as a matron! She is hardly out of her leading-strings, only a few months out of school when she was appointed. Give us ladies advanced in life! You want them to look after this little critter, who can do no good among all the old men, except to excite their passions." — Gov. BUTLER'S *Tewksbury Argument*.

The young lady (for she is one in the true sense) of whom these vile words were spoken, and who was so unfortunate as to be obliged to appear as a witness where the prosecuting officer had no sense of decency, — as well as no regard for truth, — has given no reason for such treatment. Her only fault is that she is young and a pretty woman. She has been an attendant (she is not even called a matron in the annual report of the State almshouse) for four years, in which she has done faithful and efficient service in the care of the female insane. She has assisted a middle-aged married woman in her department, giving satisfaction, and conducting herself with entire propriety. She is old enough to do her work properly, which is merely to overlook the dressing, undressing, feeding, bathing, and employment of demented women. Many such young women may be found doing like service in the lunatic-hospitals, primary-school, women's

prison, and other institutions, with entire satisfaction. If the governor had struck her a blow with his fist, during the hearing before the committee, probably even such men as applauded his remarks would have been outraged; perhaps even some one might have been found with sufficient spirit to knock down the miscreant. A blow with the fist to a pure woman is a less offence than such a spoken libel as this, which makes every woman a partaker in the insult to the sex. May not a woman be useful, even when young and comely, and are we sunk so low in our Commonwealth that such words as these shall go unrebuked?

This outraged woman is of Irish parentage, and we presume a Catholic. When, at the instance of Father Gigault of Lowell, two young Catholic women were hired as attendants on the insane, they consulted this lady as to the nature and severity of her duties. Probably if they had then realized to what she was exposed in the public service from the ribald tongue of the "chief executive magistrate," they would have shrunk from the encounter. How long will Irishmen continue to lick the hand which smites them in so many directions? — starvation prices for care of their Irish poor; insults to unoffending women; and removing from office their distinguished countryman, that able lawyer, devout Catholic, and benefactor of the poor, C. F. Donnelly, merely because he did not vote for Gen. Butler. Miss Hannah O'Connell, the attendant above referred to, was not the only sufferer at the hands of Gov. Butler in unprovoked insult. He said at one hearing that "not one of the matrons were fit to take care of a hog!" It is unfortunate that the voters of the State cannot know what class of women are serving as matrons and attendants at Tewksbury. They are respectable women, every one of them, fit to be received on equal terms in any private family. Forced by necessity to earn their living, and performing daily the most disagreeable duties for sick and insane persons, — many with loathsome diseases, — they have lately been subjected not only to these grossly abusive words spoken of them, but to cross-examination, where questions were asked which implied things most revolting to a pure woman. If Butler's administration is to be extended over another year, — which God forbid! — it will be hard for decent men to take office, and well-nigh impossible for decent women to serve the State. X.

SPRINGFIELD, July 14, 1833.

These charges against the Tewksbury almshouse, made in a

spirit of mere wantonness, have served only to besmear the fair fame of Massachusetts. Other States have gloated over what they deem the fall of the proud old Commonwealth. Newspapers outside the State have fattened on the highly colored assertions of prejudiced witnesses, and have accepted misstatements and half-truths as undeniable verities.

Mrs. Clara T. Leonard of Springfield, a member of the Board of Health, Lunacy, and Charity, has given an honest, unprejudiced statement as to the real condition of the State almshouse. She says, —

“It is easy, when it is sought to produce a certain impression rather than to know the truth, to take exceptional instances as general conditions, to show all the evils and none of the good, to base falsehoods upon a slender foundation of truth. This is the most dangerous form of slander, and this is what has been done at Tewksbury. And probably many good people to-day believe that people with foul diseases bathe in the same water as others, which is utterly false; that nurses beat and ill treat sick women; that people have short allowance of bad food, when food is abundant and good, though too coarse for the sick and feeble for the most part. Tender hearts ache to think of the suffering there, when, in their own towns, the paupers never were half so comfortable or well cared for as people have been for the past few years at the State almshouse.”

And in regard to the governor's proposal to run the almshouse at a reduction of \$20,000 per annum, she continues, —

“I never expected to be ashamed of Massachusetts, but I am now ashamed. This rich and prosperous State year after year cries out, ‘Cut down pauper expense;’ and persons are found who point to some of the poorest-kept almshouses in the State as a model for Tewksbury. The taxes are paid in chief by the rich. The poorer class do not pay in taxes even the proportionate cost of the protection by police of their persons and property. For the purpose apparently of justifying this parsimony, gross misstatements are spread upon the columns of every paper in the land; and the proud old Commonwealth receives insult and cries of shame from States like New York and Ohio, when I read in their own recent reports of insane in county almshouses chained naked in outhouses, wallowing in their own excre-

ment, sexes mingling and bearing fruits of shame and neglect time and again.

"Most of all, Irish citizens of Massachusetts, legislators and voters, grudge to their own countrymen, — and nearly every inmate of Tewksbury is of foreign birth or parentage, largely Irish, — grudge to these, I say, the poor sum of \$109 per annum *per capita*, when sick or crippled or feeble or infant or insane. Political feeling should never enter into questions of charity; but, if one party asks for a just and fair expenditure, and another calls for a meagre and inadequate one in a spirit of niggardly and selfish greed, the God who hears the cry of the poor shall avenge their cause as he did the wrongs of the slave, and the party who goes for the wrong shall surely fall.

"I cannot see where to reduce expenses, but I can see very plainly where they ought to be increased very materially. The clothing of all in the hospital is of very cheap material, but decent and sufficient except for children and infants. The excessive economy practised does not allow as much soft flannel as these should have, nor proper outside garments for these little ones to get full benefit of the fresh air in cool weather.

"A great want for the sick at Tewksbury is a sick-kitchen for each of the two hospitals, male and female, such as is in use at the Sherborn prison and at Monson, with a special cook; where food is prepared more suitable than in the great common kitchen. But the appropriation is too scanty to admit of this. It is evident that \$108.68 per annum is a small sum for the support of an able-bodied man or woman. It will provide bare necessities of life, — food, clothing, warmth, and shelter. Yet this is what was the cost *per capita* at Tewksbury last year. But these people are not able-bodied. Three-fourths are sick or insane, or little children in arms, or old, feeble, or crippled. They must not only be warmed, fed, and clothed, but have bodily care, be washed, dressed, fed, and, many of them, have medical attendance, nursing, medicine. It is only in large aggregates that the expense can be brought so low. Where shall we cut it down? In attendance, when there are only nine nurses to 211 adults, and 40 infants under three years, or one nurse to 28 persons? Shall we give them less food? Cheaper it can hardly be, unless we cut off milk and butter and tea."

Let every voter procure and read Mrs. Leonard's full report upon the condition of the Tewksbury almshouse.

A perusal of it will convince even the most prejudiced of the falsity of the governor's charges.

NEGLECT OF PUBLIC DUTIES.

"It is both my pleasure and duty to give one year of the best energies of my life to the service of the Commonwealth." — *Inaugural Message* B. F. BUTLER.

"I think that to attend to the business of such a Commonwealth will demand every hour, every thought, every energy, every exertion, every quality of mind, that I possess, to bring her to that high plane which is the ideal of us all. And I say to you that she shall have it as far as I am concerned." — B. F. BUTLER, at North Easton, Nov. 14, 1882.

These are truly noble sentiments. Let us see how well the governor has lived up to them.

In the month of JANUARY, after his inauguration, he was absent in Washington for *one week* on private business; and during the same month he appeared before the Supreme Court at Providence as counsel in a private case.

In FEBRUARY, *private business* again called him to Washington for several days. He departed, leaving important appropriation bills unsigned; one of which became a law without his signature, and another was signed by Lieut.-Gov. Ames. His absence at this time gave rise to the long and expensive controversy over the veto of the bill incorporating the Union Safety-Deposit Vaults.

In MARCH, he appeared before the United-States Circuit Court, and was engaged several days in behalf of an accused distiller, whose case he had previously attempted to compromise with the Government. Before the conclusion of the trial, *private business* again demanded his presence in Washington. In requesting a postponement of the case, he said, "*I can take care of my public duties. The night is long enough to make up for what is lost in the day; and I can answer to those who have trusted me with these duties, that I give an equal amount of my own time to those duties that I take of theirs for other duties.*"