

12/407

AN ACCOUNT

OF THE

RISE, PROGRESS, AND PRESENT STATE

OF

THE BOSTON FEMALE ASYLUM.

TOGETHER WITH THE

ACT OF INCORPORATION.

ALSO, THE

BYE-LAWS,

AND RULES AND REGULATIONS,

ADOPTED

BY THE BOARD OF MANAGERS.



BOSTON :

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.....

1810.

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ADVERTISEMENT.

IN publishing the following pages, the Managers of the "BOSTON FEMALE ASYLUM" are influenced by no wish of unnecessarily intruding on observation, by no motive of vanity, by no expectation of applause. But as the acting Trustees of an extensive and respectable Society, as the guardians of a small, but not wholly unimportant part of the community, they feel, that this brief account of the Institution, over which they preside, is due to those friends, who have so liberally supported it, and to those, who are yet undecided, if it be an object worthy their patronage.

Of the edition printed in 1803, none are now to be obtained ; and frequent demands for a publication of a similar nature are made by those who are, and others, who wish to become members of the Society. To satisfy this claim, and in the hope of diffusing a more general and correct knowledge of the institution, the subsequent statement is offered with confidence in the candour of a liberal and benevolent Public.

ACCOUNT, &c. &c.

THE object of this Institution is so well known, and its value so generally estimated, that to expatiate on its utility, or attempt its defence, would be at this time superfluous. For what heart but acknowledges, that destitute Female Orphans are of all human beings those, who excite the strongest interest in the feelings, and have the greatest claim on the active virtue of the benevolent? And an extensive and permanent system, which provides for their present relief and protection, is adapted to the promotion of their future usefulness and respectability, and aims at laying a foundation for their everlasting happiness, must surely be deemed more beneficial than those casual charities, which, however estimable their motive, are frequently ineffectual, and necessarily confined in their operation.

It was these and similar considerations, which, in the commencement of the year 1800, induced a number of the ladies of Boston to participate in the views of the

present First Directress, and become the founders of an Asylum for Female Orphan children. Subscription papers were circulated; but objection and delay were naturally consequent upon a proposition so new, and the prospect of a task so arduous. The names of an hundred subscribers being at length obtained, a general meeting of them became necessary; and in conformity to private notifications they convened for the first time on the 26th of September, 1800, at the house of Mrs. Mary Mason, whose kindness in offering it for their accommodation, on this, and future occasions, is but one among many evidences of her early interest in a cause, to which she has ever continued a friend and supporter.

At this meeting, a plan for the organization of the Society was proposed, considered, and, after having had three several readings, adopted. First and Second Directresses, a Treasurer, Secretary, and Board of twelve Managers, were then elected from the Subscribers.

At the stated meeting of these officers, held on the 27th of the succeeding October, they made choice of a Governess for the children, who were then claimants of the promised charity. To this Governess,

agreeably to an article of the "Plan," which had been adopted, a weekly stipend was paid for the board and tuition of each child.

During the year, the number of subscribers was increased to Three Hundred.

On the celebration of the first Anniversary, September 25th, 1801, a Sermon was delivered by the late Rev. Dr. Stillman, who thus added another to the many instances of his friendly interest and cheerful exertion, which have been so frequently experienced and constantly enjoyed during his life, and are so gratefully remembered. Twelve Orphans, partakers of the "first fruits" of this charity, were present on the occasion ; and a collection of 500 dollars was obtained for the funds of the Society. Still more auspicious prospects brightened the commencement of the year 1802. Mr. Samuel Smith, whose name will ever stand conspicuous in the annals, and is impressed by gratitude on the remembrance of a Society, who have since been so continually indebted to his active benevolence, obtained by voluntary and unremitting exertions subscriptions from the gentlemen of Boston to the amount of nine thousand dollars, for the purpose of building, or purchasing a house for the accommodation of

the Orphans. To these benefactors, the Society with undiminished sense of obligation again offer their acknowledgments.

From the interest of the above named sum, the rent of the Asylum has since been paid, and its present amount will be found under the head "Building Fund," in the subjoined statement; which fund, it is hoped, will at some future time enable the Managers to fulfil the expectations of the donors, and the wishes of their own hearts.

In the year 1803, an Act of Incorporation was granted by the General Court, and Bye-Laws and Regulations established by the Board.

During succeeding years, the prosperity and usefulness of this Institution continued to progress. It's friends were many, it's funds increasing, and the number of it's dependants greatly augmented. A circumstantial notice of these years is necessarily omitted; for as it is intended to give a general view of the establishment, rather than a minute detail of transactions, no events are mentioned but such as materially affect it's interests. Of this nature is considered the alteration of the general plan of Management effected in the year 1808. The

system hitherto pursued was such as necessity imposed at a time, when, with comparatively few friends, and slender resources, it's founders had struggled against the prejudices and obstacles, which an undertaking so novel and so little understood was calculated to excite. Success, almost beyond their expectations, had rewarded their efforts, and the adoption of a more enlarged mode of conducting the establishment was suggested by the wish of extending to greater numbers of the destitute this relief, and of further promoting the welfare of their Orphan charge.

Accordingly, on the resignation of the Governess with whom the children had been boarded the last five years, the house was furnished at the expense of the Society; a capable and respectable person appointed Superintendant and Governess at a yearly salary of two hundred dollars, with an Assistant Instructress, and one female domestic. An estimate of the probable expenditures, resulting from this arrangement, compared with the disbursements of past years, produced the conviction, that economy would warrant its accomplishment; and the superior advantages which must arise from having those, who are most deeply interested, the imme-

diate directors of the domestic regulations, and providers for their Orphan family, were sufficiently obvious.

A committee of six Managers conducted the business consequent on this alteration. Nor has the effect of this amendment in any one instance disappointed the hopes which produced it.

Seventy-seven children have been admitted into the Asylum. Of these thirty-eight have been bound by Indenture to persons approved by the Board, six have died, and thirty-three are now supported by the funds of the Society.—Saved from certain want, probable vice, and threatening destruction, they are acquiring those habits of neatness and industry, and those rudiments of morality and religion, which may form them to become faithful and capable domestics, useful members of society, and humble christians.

Applications for the admittance of children are frequent, and the number admitted is regularly proportioned to the increase of the funds.

It is the wish of the Managers to find constant employment for the children, and early to impress on their minds the neces-

sity of present, and future exertion. The needle-work of the family did not sufficiently supply the means of effecting this ; and the information is offered to those who may wish to avail themselves of it, that every kind of plain sewing is done at the Asylum with great neatness, and on moderate terms

The house, it's accommodations and regulations, the children, and specimens of their proficiency and industry, are ever ready for the inspection which is invited and requested. For this was not a scheme of visionary enthusiasts, fading at the touch of examination, and destroyed by the test of experience. Personal and minute observation of its effects will, it is believed, substantiate its claim to the continued patronage which is solicited.

Again this Institution is recommended to the charity of the liberal and wealthy ; but, above all, is implored the blessing of that God, who is the " help of the needy, and the Orphan's stay."

The Anniversary is commemorated on the Friday preceding the last Tuesday of September. At these celebrations liberal contributions have been made for the funds

of the Institution by numerous and respectable audiences.

Those members of the Reverend Clergy, who have on these occasions exerted in behalf of this Charity the talents consecrated to the service of God, and the promotion of Piety and Morality, will, it is hoped, receive a more satisfactory reward than the thanks of its friends, while experience of its importance evinces that they have not sanctioned an unprofitable experiment, or aided in supporting an unworthy cause.

COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS.

In the year of our LORD, One Thousand Eight Hundred
and Three,

A N A C A T,

To Incorporate HANNAH STILLMAN, and others, into a
Society, by the name of

THE BOSTON FEMALE ASYLUM.

WHEREAS HANNAH STILLMAN and a number of
other Ladies of the town of Boston have associated for the
Charitable Purpose of relieving, instructing, employing,
and assisting FEMALE ORPHAN CHILDREN; and to carry
their Association into effect, have petitioned to be incorpo-
rated:—

SECTION I. BE it enacted by the Senate and House of
Representatives, in General Court assembled, and by the au-
thority of the same, That the said HANNAH STILLMAN,
and her Associates, together with such others, as may be-
come Subscribers to the same Institution, in the manner
hereinafter provided, be, and they hereby are, incorporat-
ed into a Society by the name of

THE BOSTON FEMALE ASYLUM;

and by that name shall be a Corporation forever; with
power to have a common Seal; to make Contracts, rela-
tive to the objects of their Institution; to sue and be su-
ed; to establish Bye-Laws and Orders for the regulation
of the said Society, and the preservation and application
of the Funds thereof:—*Provided*, the same be not repug-
nant to the Constitution or Laws of this Commonwealth;
to take, hold, and possess, any Estate, real or personal,
by subscription, gift, grant, purchase, devise, or other-
wise, free from Taxes, and the same to improve, lease, ex-
change, or sell, and convey, for the sole benefit of said In-

stitution: *Provided*, That the value of the Real Estate of said Society, shall never exceed *Fifty Thousand Dollars*; and the annual Income of the whole Estate of said Society shall not exceed *Twenty Thousand Dollars*.

SECTION II. *And be it further enacted*, That every married Woman, belonging to said Society, who shall, with consent of her Husband, receive any of the Money, or other Property of said Society, shall thereby render her said Husband accountable therefor to said Society; and every Woman, whether sole or married, who shall subscribe and pay to the Funds of said Society, the sum of *three dollars*, annually, shall, by such Subscription and Payment, become a Member of said Society; liable, however, to be removed, whenever she shall refuse, or neglect to pay her said annual Subscription.

SECTION III. *And be it further enacted*, That the said Society shall meet in *Boston*, on the last Tuesday of *September*, annually, for the purpose of electing, by ballot, from their Members, a First and Second Directress, a Treasurer, a Secretary, and a Board of not less than six, nor more than twelve Managers; all which Officers shall hold their said offices for one year, and until others shall be elected to succeed them. And the Managers, for the time being, shall publish a Notification of the time and place of each annual Meeting, in two of the Newspapers printed in *Boston*, at least seven days before the time of holding the same. Upon any urgent occasion, the First or Second Directress, or, in their absence, the Secretary; or, whenever requested, in writing, by fifty Members of said Society, any five of the Managers, may appoint a Special Meeting of said Society; to be notified in the same manner as annual Meetings. And at any regular meeting, the Society may remove any Manager from office; and, by ballot, fill any vacancy in the Board of Managers, or any other corporate office;—*Provided*, That, in case of removal, two-thirds of the Members present, being a majority of the whole Corporation, shall concur.

SECTION IV. *And be it further enacted*, That the Treasurer of said Society shall always be a single woman, of the age of twenty-one years, or upwards, and shall give Bond with sufficient Surety or Sureties, to account annually, or oftener, if required by said Society, or the Board

of Managers, for all Money and other Property of said Society coming to her hands ; and, in general, to discharge the duties of her said office with fidelity.

SECTION V. *And be it further enacted,* That the Board of Managers, for the time being, shall have the management and application of the Subscriptions, Funds and Estate of the Society, solely for the purpose of this Institution ; and no sale or transfer of any real or personal Estate of said Society shall be valid, unless approved by them ; and no Money shall be paid out of the Treasury of said Society, except by their order. They shall likewise have authority, at their discretion, to take into their Asylum such Female Orphan Children, as they may judge suitable Objects of Charity, to enjoy the benefits of the Institution ; and also, to accept a surrender, in writing, by the Father, or, where there is no Father, by the Mother, of any Female Child or Children, to the care and direction of said Society ; and to bind out, in virtuous families, until the age of eighteen years, or marriage within that age, any such Orphans, or Children thus surrendered, or any Female Child, or Children, who, being destitute of Parents within this Commonwealth, shall have been relieved and supported by said Society ; *Provided,* That any Parent, whose Child, or Children, during the absence of their said Parent out of this Commonwealth, shall have received relief and support, or been bound out as aforesaid, shall have liberty, on his or her return, to receive such Child or Children, upon paying to the Treasurer of said Society the Expence incurred in her, or their relief and support, as aforesaid. And the Managers shall have authority to establish any Rules and Bye-Laws for the regulation of the proceedings of said Board, and the concerns of said Society, not repugnant to the Laws of the Commonwealth, or the Bye-Laws and Orders of said Society. Not less than three Managers shall constitute a quorum for transacting business ; and all questions shall be decided by the votes of a majority of the Managers present.

SECTION VI. *And be it further enacted,* That any Writ or Process against said Corporation may be served by the Officer's leaving an attested Copy thereof with the Treasurer of said Society, or at her usual place of residence, thirty days before the Return-Day thereof ; and the said Treasurer, or any Agent appointed for that purpose by the

Society, or by the Managers, may appear, by Attorney, and defend or prosecute any Suit in behalf of said Society.

SECTION VII. *And be it further enacted*, That all Instruments of Conveyance or Contract, which may lawfully be made by said Society, if approved by the Board of Managers, shall be signed by the First or Second Directress, and countersigned by the Secretary, and, if necessary, sealed with the common Seal of said Society; and, when so executed, shall bind the said Society, and be valid in Law.

SECTION VIII. *And be it further enacted*, That *Hannah Stillman* shall continue First Directress; *Sarah Bowdoin*, Second Directress; *Elizabeth Perkins*, Treasurer; *Elizabeth Thurston*, Secretary; *Mary Hubbard*, *Sarah Parkman*, *Hannah Smith*, *Mary Gray*, *Abigail May*, *Margaret Whitwell*, *Elizabeth Dorr*, *Mary Greer*, *Ann Green*, *Margaret Cooper*, and *Elizabeth Goodwin*, Managers; until the last Tuesday of *September* next, and until a new Election shall be made as aforesaid; and shall be, and they hereby are, invested, during said time, with all the powers which are herein given to the Managers to be annually elected by the Society.

In the House of Representatives, Feb. 25, 1803.

This Bill having had three several Readings, passed to be enacted.

JOHN C. JONES, *Speaker.*

In Senate, Feb. 26, 1803.

This Bill having had two several Readings, passed to be enacted.

DAVID COBB, *President.*

Feb. 26, 1803.

By the Governor approved,

CALEB STRONG.

A true Copy—Attest,

JOHN AVERY, *Secretary.*

BYE-LAWS AND REGULATIONS,

ESTABLISHED BY THE BOARD OF MANAGERS.



RULE I. A MEETING of the Board of Managers shall be held on the last Tuesday in every month, at the Asylum House, for the purpose of attending to the concerns of the Society. The time of meeting, from October to April, shall be at 10 o'clock, A. M. and from April to October, at 4 o'clock, P. M.

II. It shall be the duty of the Secretary to notify and attend all meetings of the Society, and of the Board of Managers; keep a fair and correct Record of their proceedings, and do all necessary writing, relative to the business of the Corporation. In case of the sickness or absence of the Secretary, or vacancy of the office, the First Directress, in her absence, sickness or vacancy of the office, the second Directress, and in the absence or sickness of the second Directress, or vacancy of both offices, the eldest Manager, shall notify meetings of the Society, or Board, when a Secretary pro tem. shall be chosen; and four days notice shall be given of any meeting of the Society, or Board, except on some extraordinary occasion.

III. The first Directress shall preside at the meetings of the Board of Managers, preserve or-

der, and in equal divisions have the casting vote; in her absence, the second Directress shall preside at the meetings of the Board; and if both be absent, the Managers shall choose a member to preside for that meeting.

IV. The Treasurer shall attend the meetings of the Board of Managers; render every three months an account of monies received, paid out, and remaining in her hands; and shall at the end of every six months settle her account with a committee to be appointed for that purpose by the Board; and not any monies, or other property, belonging to the Society, shall be paid or delivered to the Treasurer, until Bonds, in the penal sum of Twenty Thousand Dollars, with sureties sufficient in the opinion of the Board, shall be duly executed, conditioned for the faithful performance of the duties of her office.

V. After the Annual election of a Board of Managers, they shall choose from their number a Collecting Secretary, whose duty it shall be to receive payment of Subscriptions, give receipts, and account with the Treasurer for the same.... And all transactions, relative to the money concerns of the Society, shall be conducted solely by the Treasurer and Collecting Secretary.

VI. All accounts against the Society shall be laid before the Board of Managers for examination, and, if allowed, an Order shall be drawn by the Secretary on the Treasurer for payment of the same; and no monies shall be paid without such Order drawn in pursuance of a Vote of the Board or Society.

VII. A Committee, consisting of three Managers, shall be chosen every quarter, whose duty shall be to examine into the circumstances of children offered for admission into the Asylum, and also to enquire respecting those persons, who may apply to take any child out of the Asylum; and likewise to provide, and attend to the clothes of the children; and shall make report to the Board of Managers.

VIII. It shall be the duty of the Secretary to place in the Managers room at the Asylum the names of this committee, with their places of residence; that any person may know, to whom to apply respecting the admission into, or taking of any child from the Asylum.

IX. A list of children, proposed by subscribers for admission into the Asylum, if approved by the Board, shall be kept by the Secretary; and priority of application shall give right to admission, unless, in the opinion of a majority of Managers, at a regular meeting, the circumstances of any child shall require immediate relief.

X. Twenty Subscribers in any town adjacent to Boston shall be entitled to place a child in the Asylum, for so long time as they pay their Annual Subscription.

XI. No child shall be received into, or dismissed from the Asylum, or placed in any family, without a Vote of the Board, at a regular meeting, duly notified.

XII. No child under three, or more than ten years of age, shall be received into the Asylum;

and, at a suitable age, the children shall be placed in virtuous families, "until the age of eighteen years, or marriage within that age," except such, as may from infirmity be taught some other business.

XIII. In case of sickness, the children shall be committed to the care of those gentlemen of the Faculty, who will attend them gratis, and recommended for Medicine to the Charity of the Boston Dispensary.

XIV. A Committee of two Ladies shall be chosen every month, to examine the children of the Asylum respecting their proficiency in learning, enquire into their treatment, and report at every meeting of the Board.

XV. Every person, applying for a child from the Asylum shall, previous to taking her away, provide for her suitable clothes, and leave those belonging to the Asylum.

XVI. No relative or friend shall interfere in the management of the children of the Asylum, nor visit them but in presence of the Governess, nor at any time that such visits are disapproved by the Board.

XVII. A sample of the Bread, Meat, and other provisions, used in the Asylum, shall be produced, whenever required, to the Board, or Monthly Committee.

XVIII. The Governess shall not be absent, or sleep out of the Asylum without permission from one of the Board, unless upon some urgent occasion. She shall visit the children's rooms every night before going to bed.

XIX. In putting out the children of the Asylum, Subscribers shall always have the preference.

XX. No child shall be placed out of the Asylum until she has reached the age of eleven years.

Form of Obligation to be signed by a Parent or Guardian on surrendering a child or Ward to the protection of the Boston Female Asylum.

I, the Subscriber, solicitous, that my child shall receive the benefits and advantages of the Boston Female Asylum, and the Board of Managers being willing to receive and provide for, and also to place her out in a virtuous family until the age of eighteen years, agreeably to the rules and regulations of the Society, provided I do relinquish my child to them ;....I do hereby promise not to interfere in the management of her in any respect whatever, or visit her without their consent. And in consideration of their benevolence in thus receiving and providing for her, I do relinquish all right and claim to her and her services, until she shall arrive to eighteen years of age. And I do engage, that I will not ask, or receive, any compensation for the same, nor take her from, or induce her to leave the family, where she may be placed by the Board of Managers of the Asylum.

Witness.



Signed.

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RULES AND REGULATIONS,
FOR THE GOVERNMENT OF THE CHILDREN IN
THE ASYLUM.

RULE I. ALL the Children (if the weather permit) shall regularly attend Public Worship with their Governess, every Sunday, at such place as the Board shall direct ; and, in the intervals of Worship, they shall read in the Bible, and other religious Books.

II. The Governess, to whose care the Tuition and Management of the Children is more immediately confided, shall attend them at their Meals, see that proper decorum be observed, that Grace is said before and after. She shall also read a Chapter in the Bible, and Pray with them every morning, and endeavor, by Precept and Example, to instill into their young and tender Minds, the Principles of Religion.

III. The Children shall be taught to pay a sacred Regard to Truth, and to the performance of every moral Duty.

IV. The Governess shall teach them to Spell, Read, and to Work in plain Sewing, Knitting, and Marking ; and those who are old enough, shall mend their own Clothes, and assist, by weekly rotation, in the domestic business of the

family. She shall instruct and bring them up in habits of Neatness and Industry, and inculcate the importance of an habitual course of Improvement, Industry and Virtue.

V. The Governess shall not suffer any of the Children to be absent from the Asylum, without special permission, in writing, from one of the Managers.

GENERAL DIRECTIONS.

*From the Middle of APRIL to that of
OCTOBER.*

THE Children shall rise at 6 o'clock in the morning, say their prayers, wash themselves with cold water, comb their heads, and clean their chambers; breakfast at 8 o'clock, play until 9; when the Governess shall read a chapter in the Bible, and pray with the children; then attend school until 12; dine at 1, play until 2, attend school until 5, after which play one hour.

In the evening, say their prayers, and go to bed at 8 o'clock; wash their feet 3 times a week, and wash all over on Saturday night.

*From the Middle of OCTOBER to that of
APRIL.*

THE Children shall rise at 7 o'clock, say their prayers, wash themselves, comb their heads, and then clean their chambers; breakfast at 8, attend prayers, school and play hours as before.

In the evening, say their prayers, go to bed, at 6 o'clock, wash their feet twice a week.

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CLOTHING.

The Cloathing for the Children in Winter.
Shall be BLUE SHALLOON SLIPS, &c.

In Summer.
BLUE COTTON, &c.

Sunday Morning.....Chocolate or shells, with bread.

For Supper.....Milk-porridge, sometimes thickened with flour, other times with Indian meal, and a slice of bread and butter.

All the other mornings and evenings in the week, to have hasty-puddings, boiled rice with molasses, or milk, or milk-porridge, as the season will admit.

Sunday.....Roast meat and pudding.
Monday....Soup.
Tuesday...Boiled meat and pudding, or vegetables.
Wednesday....Soup.
Thursday...Beans or Peas, with Pork.
Friday....Broth, made of mutton or lamb.
Saturday....Fish.

C I



FORM OF A BEQUEST.

ITEM....I give and devise unto the "BOSTON FEMALE ASYLUM," the sum of _____ to be paid the Treasurer thereof by my Executor, within _____ months after my decease, and applied by the Board of Managers, for the time being, towards carrying on the Charitable design of said Society.

PROPRIETORIAL

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