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Sommario/riassunto	Elaborately conceived, grandly constructed insane asylums-ranging in appearance from classical temples to Gothic castles-were once a common sight looming on the outskirts of American towns and cities. Many of these buildings were razed long ago, and those that remain stand as grim reminders of an often cruel system. For much of the nineteenth century, however, these asylums epitomized the widely held belief among doctors and social reformers that insanity was a curable disease and that environment-architecture in particular-was the most

effective means of treatment. In <
