

Account of 'Drawing-room meeting at the Retreat, York', reprinted from the Yorkshire Herald

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The After Care Association for Poor Persons Discharged Recovered from Asylums for the Insane.

DRAWING-ROOM MEETING AT THE RETREAT, YORK.

PROPOSED BRANCH FOR YORK AND DISTRICT.

No more humanitarian work could anyone engage in than that of supporting the efforts of the After-Care Association for Poor Persons Discharged Recovered from Asylums for the Insane. The oft-heard remark, "once insane always insane" has been proved to be a fallacy; many who have suffered from afflictions of the mind have thoroughly recovered and returned to lead useful lives among their fellows, and what nobler work could one enter upon than the assisting of such unfortunate people to attain recovery that will be permanent? The satisfactory work accomplished by the After-Care Association and the great need for the increased support of the people of the country were prominently brought before a number of York citizens yesterday afternoon, when a drawing-room meeting was held in aid of the organisation at The Retreat, York. The chief objects of the association, it may be mentioned, are to facilitate the re-admission into social life of poor persons discharged recovered from asylums for the insane by various methods, the principal of which is the obtaining for them, when needful, an interval of change of scene and air, often so beneficial on recovery from ordinary sickness, by boarding them out when thought desirable in families in the country under proper care and by placing them in various institutions in London and other large towns, until work can be found. Then the association endeavours to further its objects by finding suitable employment and by giving grants of money towards maintenance while seeking work, providing clothing, or procuring tools when occupation is found. At the meeting yesterday afternoon,

The Dean of York presided, and there was a large attendance, including the Bishop of Hull, Mr. H. Thornhill Roxby, Dr. Bedford Pierce, the Lady Mayoress of York (Mrs. Border), Dr. Swanson, Mrs. Oscar Rowntree, Dr. Louise and Miss Fraser, Major Simpson, Miss Mary Kitching, the Misses Barstow, Rev. A. and Mrs. Willan, Miss Heath, Dr. and Mrs. E. M. Taylor, Miss Bowness, Mr. and Mrs. F. C. Mills, Rev.

W. and Mrs. Johnson, Mr. Kitching, Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Peters, Dr. and Mrs. F. Wright, Mr. and Mrs. John Kitching, the Hon. Mrs. Wilkinson, Colonel and Mrs. Tucky, Mrs. and the Misses Wilberforce, Major and Mrs. Lindberg, Mr., Mrs., and the Misses J. R. Wood, Mrs. Crosthwaite, Miss Wilkinson, Mrs. and Miss Bentley, the Misses Simpson, Mrs. Fowler Jones, Mr. and Mrs. Gayer, Dr. and Mrs. Archdale, the Rev. and Mrs. Plume, Mrs. Walter Glaisby, Mr. and Mrs. R. Thompson, Mr. and Mrs. Taite, Mrs. W. Walker, Mrs. Bird, Miss Wilson, Miss Hirst, Dr. Bird, Mrs. Raimes, Miss Chadwick, Mrs. Platnauer, Mrs. Luden, Mrs. Trundle, Miss Clack, Miss Tennant, and Mr. and Mrs. Foster.

Apologies for absence were received from the Archbishop of York, the Lord Mayor of York (Alderman S. Border), Mr. J. G. Butcher, K.C., and Mrs. Butcher, Mr. Hamar Greenwood, M.P., the Bishop of Beverley, the Sheriff of York (Councillor Meyer), Canon Watson, etc.

The DEAN of YORK, in the course of his opening remarks, said everyone who was brought into contact with afflictions of the mind, knew how difficult it was after the visitations seemed to have mitigated or passed off, to provide for those who had been afflicted so that their recovery would be made permanent. He could not imagine anything more difficult than the after care of those poor people, and nothing that needed more careful consideration. There could not be a work that could appeal more forcibly to kind-hearted people than the objects of the after-care association. (Applause.)

Mr. H. THORNHILL ROXBY, secretary of the association, then addressed the meeting on the objects and work of the organisation. He said he was pleased to come to York to try to interest the people in the work of the association. The society, he said, was formed in 1879 by the late Rev. H. Hawkins, chaplain of Colney Hatch Asylum. It was not, however, until 1886 that the association commenced active work, and at that time Lord Meath was appointed president in succession to the Earl of Shaftesbury, the late Dr. Tuke, who took a very practical interest in the association being appointed the first chairman. There were, explained Mr. Roxby, similar societies now formed in America, and in Italy, France, Switzerland, and Belgium. He proceeded to describe the methods adopted in the endeavour to facilitate the readmission into social life of poor persons discharged recovered from asylums. Most of the cases dealt with by the association at the present time were from London and the south of England, but there had been received from time to time cases from all

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parts of the country. The boarding-out system had been adopted in preference to the establishment of an institution. In dealing with women they had in many cases been successful in finding domestic employment, and many of the association's cases had received medals for long service. Needlework was also provided for women who might be past the stage when they could be sent to domestic service. The men were sometimes sent to convalescent homes, and others boarded out in London until work was procured for them. Grants of money were given towards maintenance while seeking work, and in cases where intemperance was suspected, help was given in kind and not in money. Last year the Association had 308 applications before them, and their income was £972 4s. 7d. He often thought that it was a disgraceful income for an association charged with such a splendid work; and it seemed to him that the people of this country ought to consider if they could not do more to support the Association. He thought the income ought to be at least £3,000 or £4,000 a year to be able to do the work thoroughly. (Applause.) He hoped that Yorkshire would take an interest in the work. The Association had helped one or two cases from the North Riding Asylum, and only recently they had had an application from Middlesbrough. He hoped that as a result of the meeting that afternoon a branch would be formed for York and district. Dr. Norah Kemp, of the Retreat, York, had kindly consented to act as hon. secretary of a local branch, and he sincerely hoped that it would be supported financially by people of all classes and creeds. (Applause.)

The Bishop of HULL, in a brief speech in support of the work of the Association, and he hoped the meeting that afternoon would be the beginning of an important section of the society in the city of York. It so happened that for the greater part of his life he had been interested in this matter. When he was quite a youth he was present at the opening of Colney Hatch Asylum, and the first sermon he ever

preached was in a lunatic asylum. It so happened that his ordination took place in a district where there was an asylum, and the Sunday following he preached to the patients. When he was a curate in London, he acted for a time as hon. chaplain at Bethlem Hospital, and had come in contact with numerous cases of insanity. He could not tell how intensely interested he was in the question. Of all forms of human sorrow and suffering nothing appealed more to his heart than the sufferings of those who had lost their reason. Of all afflictions, the saddest was the loss of reason. He hoped that a branch would be formed in York and supported as it deserved to be, and that their meeting that afternoon would be like a small seed sown in due season, which would bring forth a very rich harvest. (Applause.) They in Yorkshire ought to do something to support the work and do a little towards helping the insane to a happy issue out of their affliction. (Applause.)

Dr. SWANSON also spoke in sympathy with the movement, and remarked that it seemed to him a reflection upon the people of York that there was no branch or organisation of the kind in a district where institutions for the care of the insane were numerous. There were two institutions in York itself which he thought could supply many cases for after care with great benefit.

Dr. BEDFORD PIERCE associated himself with the remarks of the other speakers, and promised to support the formation of a local branch.

On the motion of Mr. R. THOMPSON, seconded by Dr. BEDFORD PIERCE, the Dean of York was heartily thanked for presiding.

The DEAN, in acknowledging the compliment, said that one great difficulty seemed to be the placing of people who had recovered from afflictions of the mind under the care of persons who had sufficient tact to deal with them. In many cases relapses were brought about by the want of a little care.