

**Second visit to Earlswood, (The Asylum for Idiots,) May 17, adjourned to June 8, 1861.**

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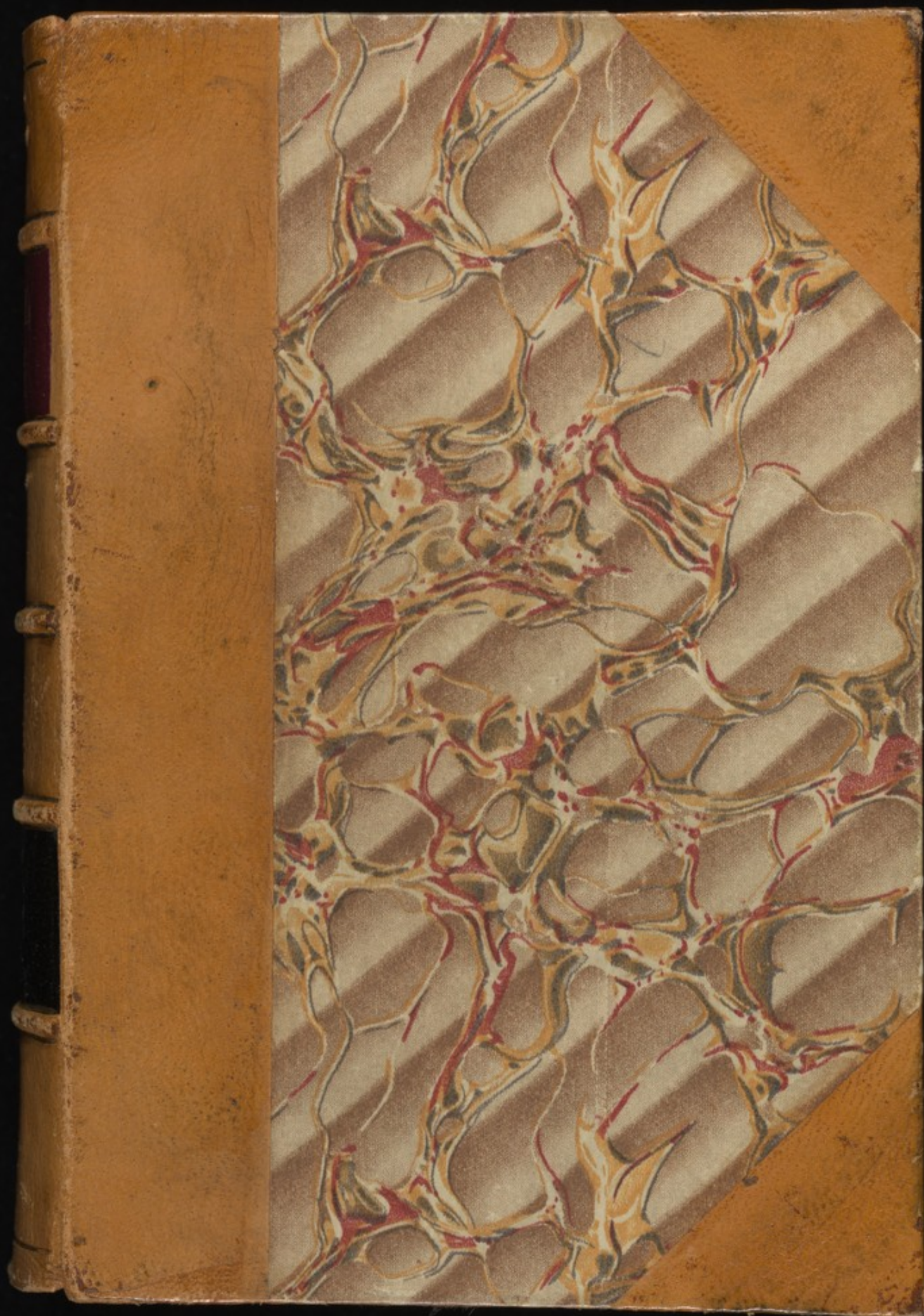
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## 2 SECOND VISIT TO EARLSWOOD,

(THE ASYLUM FOR IDIOTS,)

MAY 17, ADJOURNED TO JUNE 8, 1861.

“ HAVE you been at Earlswood lately, and how does the Asylum go on?” are questions which have for some time been so frequently asked me, that I could not refrain from qualifying myself to answer them by a second and minute inspection of that admirable Institution. The Board having sanctioned my intention, I called at the office, 29, Poultry, soon after it was opened on the morning of Friday, May 17, and told the able and active Secretary, Mr. W. Nicholas, I was ready to go, and that I wished to take the superintendent and officials by surprise, in order that I might see the daily routine unprepared for a visit. He at once proposed to go with me, and in about half-an-hour we were in the train. The sun shone brightly on the highly-cultivated scenes through which we were carried rapidly along, and in the midst of which are so conspicuous those striking edifices that are such exemplary monuments of English science, art, and charity. I could not help exulting in the thought of the favourable impression they must make on foreigners travelling from the Continent to London. We soon reached Red Hill, and one of the first persons we saw on our way through the village, was a pupil of the Idiot Asylum, who acts as postman, and is most proud of the trust, with the letter-bag over his shoulders. He owes



his admission to the gracious patronage of the Queen ; and no bearer of royal despatches thinks more of his charge than he does of that of the daily post. His improvement has been great, and he has been permitted to send some mats of his own making to one of the royal palaces. He is a tall well-made youth ; and whenever he meets any of the gentlemen who manage the affairs of the Asylum, he draws up, and makes, as he has been taught in the drill, the military salute with a grave and respectful demeanour. On entering the pretty grounds in front of the Asylum, I was delighted to see that scarcely any of the evergreens, and not one of the beautiful avenue of deodoras, had been added to the vegetable obituary so largely extended by the last winter's frost. Let us hope they will now live and grow to adorn the place, and form a grateful shade from the summer's heat, to many a poor imbecile who may enjoy a seat beneath them. The garden had a most cheerful appearance, the spring-flowers all coming into bloom, and the grass being neatly mown and kept. The flower-beds, too, were carefully raked and thoroughly weeded. As before, I found the reception-room in trim order, and decorated by the fancy work of the female pupils, carefully arranged in a case containing a large variety of specimens. Portraits and drawings by a pupil who will be frequently referred to in these pages, as he was in the last visit, were on the walls, and they are well worthy of the pains which have been bestowed on them. A copy of Landseer's celebrated picture of Bolton Abbey is really a remarkable production of this youth's pencil ; and there is also by him a most curious imaginary drawing of the Siege of Sebastopol, partly his own and partly suggested by a print in the *Illustrated London News*. In this room I found a newly-elected boy just arrived. He was brought by the good friend who had promoted his election, and seemed delighted with his journey, with the kindness shown him, and especially by a nice new coat furnished him before he left home. There was every indication of his soon becoming contentedly settled. Dr. Down quickly appeared, and told me how glad he was I had come without previous notice, observing, " You now find us just as we are always, which is what I



like." The pupils were assembling for dinner, and he proposed to us to look at them from a corridor upstairs. As I ascended, I could not fail to be struck with the handsome ventilating shaft which does its work so well. We looked down on the noble dining-hall; no pupil, no attendant saw us or was aware of the inspection. From the window of the corridor we saw the tables gradually filled: at last, when all were seated, the order seemed perfect—no noise, no eagerness, not the slightest indecorum. They had been trained well in the probationary room to take their meals decently. An excellent dinner, wheeled in from the kitchen, soon appeared, and the portion of each having been previously put on a separate plate, the service occupied a very short time. The diners ate their food as quietly as any other company would have done, using their knives and forks in the most orderly manner. When they had fairly commenced, we descended and made the tour of the tables; and I was soon heartily greeted by old acquaintances, most of whom I could see were much improved. One of them, always a promising case, had become a most useful mason, and had lately assisted very skilfully in laying the bricks of some new buildings. Before he came to the Asylum, he was a poor miserable creature; stuffing his pockets with every dirty bit of paper he could pick up, the butt of the boys who lived near him, and of course sullen and distrustful. He has now the singularities consequent on his imbecility; but is a truly conscientious, and I may add, pious youth; a good tailor, and in the capacity just mentioned, most useful in helping on any new erection. Another poor fellow, whom I had long known, I asked, "Well, do you clean the shoes and plate still?" "Yes, yes," he said, "shine them both bright as ever," looking the personification of happy contentment. Next came a "How d'ye do?" from one of the drollest boys I ever saw, and whose time I thought had long ago expired. I told him I did not expect to see him, when he looked very serious and said, "Why, I went to see my friends, but did not like being from home so long, so came back, you see." Dr. Down then explained that he had, when his time was up, gone to his family, but soon became so anxious to return,



that one day he packed up his clothes in a bundle, thrust a walking-stick through it, and carrying it over his shoulder, went round to everybody he knew, saying, "Good bye; can't stay here longer; must go home again." Accordingly, he was indulged by being taken in as a journeyman mat-maker. Near him at table was a pupil I had never seen before, with a pleasing, amiable expression of countenance, but very singular, so that I stopped to inquire about him. "Oh," said somebody, "he is our house-almanack; and on referring to him we can find the exact date of any particular event." I asked him a few questions which he answered in a way that confirmed this description; it is an example of one of the unaccountable special qualities peculiar to idiots, and which they have so often in a greater degree than those in the normal condition. The general mental powers of this youth are very feeble, but his memory of dates is wonderful; and he can draw well, and is fond of working in the garden. The dinner consisted of good beef and vegetables, followed by a nice plain pudding, with sweet sauce, which we left the diners to enjoy, while we went into the kitchen which communicates with the dining-hall. It is most commodious, and well arranged for every culinary purpose. Here we found no less than twelve of the pupils, not one of whom, a few years ago, could have been trusted near an oven or a fire, neatly dressed in white, each having the usual man-cook's cap, and helping the regular officials of the kitchen with the greatest order and zeal. One boy was pouring sweet-sauce on the pieces of pudding in the plates for the dining rooms. "Look here, Sir," he cried, "sweet sauce." "Did you make it?" I asked. "No, Sir," he replied, "not yet; hope I shall, by-and-by." I soon found my old acquaintance, described in my first visit as the "Historical Cook," from his singular remembrance of so many of the leading points both in ancient and modern history. On my asking him how he was, he looked very demure, and said, "Not in a good humour, Sir." "Why, what is the matter?" was all I could say. He quickly grumbled out—"Look now, I was promised to go and play at cricket, but I am here; can't go; it has put me out all the morning, it has; yes, it has." Pray, Sir, do you



know the song of the 'Rat-Catcher's Daughter?' " So jumps a poor idiot from grave to gay ; but the grave soon clouded his face again, and he began chattering about cricket, and bustled pettishly over his work. Another boy observed to me,—" He is very wrong to do so ; very sulky, too bad ; let him alone, he will soon come all right ;" a prediction which I verified shortly afterwards. One of the cooks was working a most ingenious apparatus for mincing the food of those who cannot, or will not cut and masticate it, a provision most essential to their health. The food is reduced by this operation to a state like that of potted meat. The pupil cooks seem greatly to enjoy the work of the kitchen, and are very proud of it. One acts as scullery-boy, cleaning and preparing the green vegetables, and peeling the potatoes. To show how completely his heart is in his humble occupation, it is only necessary to mention, that on being asked which he liked best, Earlswood or the establishment where he was before it was opened, he answered, " O, Earlswood, great deal ;" and on being further questioned, " Why ?" added, " Because we have a bigger sink." Poor fellow, the sink was his great convenience, everything in short to him.

After examining all the appurtenances of the kitchen and adjacent offices, we returned to the dining-hall, and passed down the female side. Here I saw a manifest improvement in several cases known to me before, and by them I was at once recognized. One girl, whom I could formerly never understand, had gained a power of more articulate speech. She seemed to be thoroughly enjoying her pudding and sweet sauce, and looking up, told me, " I was going home, only I was too late for the train ; never mind, no beef and pudding in the train." Strange as such sayings were, I could not but perceive in them indications of happiness and contentment, without which no poor idiot can improve. Two boys, on the opposite side of the room, I had omitted to speak to, having known them at Essex Hall, kept smiling and bowing, so I crossed over to them. One of them used to be a good tailor, so I inquired, " Are you a tailor now ?" He replied, like one who fancies he has made a step upwards, very emphatically, " No, Sir, I am a farmer." He was as proud of working on the land as any villager could



be, who had left the board and the thimble to cultivate some acres of his own.

We next proceeded to the private dining-room of the pay cases. That for females is a most comfortable, well-furnished, airy apartment. The table is supplied with a neat china dinner-service; there is also a side-board duly furnished, and there are all the usual concomitants of a family dinner customary in the houses of persons of property. The object is to teach them to live as they would probably do in the private circles of their homes, and they practise all the due methods of taking their meal, being kindly waited upon by attendants, who appear exceedingly ready to serve them carefully. All is in character with the stations in life of the inmates, and the furniture is excellent, while the walls are hung with agreeable pictures, neatly framed. To see these afflicted imbeciles from families in affluent or easy circumstances, whom all home appliances had failed to benefit, associating round a common table, in order and comfort, with every social propriety, and seemingly enjoyed with the best possible behaviour, mixed, of course, with some eccentricity, must be a great solace to their relatives when they come to mark their progress. Indeed, it is a spectacle that would well repay a visit from any philanthropist, however long the journey taken to make it. Except for their odd sayings now and then, and the singularities of manner incident to their condition, the spectator might fancy himself looking at the pupils' dinner of some well-conducted superior girls' school. The boy's dining-room, for similar cases, is provided for and managed in the same admirable manner. There was no mistaking the state of the party round the table, but the utmost order prevailed, and they all seemed as happy as their friends could imagine or desire. At one end of this table sat the funny pupil who, two years ago, pretended to play a tune on his walking-stick. He told me he had a new instrument now, and when he had dined, volunteered to go and fetch it. He soon returned with a large brown paper horn, and a quantity of pictures from illustrated papers pasted in a great book, which he called his "Notes." These he put on a table near the window, and looking at them, began imitating, in a most extraordinary manner, the



tones of a trumpet, by blowing on the paper edge of the mouth of the horn. He trumpeted out, in an animated manner, and in good tune, "*Partant pour la Syrie*;" but he did not succeed so well in other attempts. He was quite in a playing humour, and would have gone on to any extent, if I had not thanked him, and told him I must return to the great dining-hall directly. The pupils had finished there, and were quietly awaiting our coming back to hear them sing the grace. As soon as we appeared, Mr. Wood, the master, made a signal, and they all rose, when he commenced the singing, and was followed by a large proportion of them, in really good tune, and with an expression so much better than I had formerly heard, that I could not help regarding it as a sign of the general advancement of the whole body. Though the singing has long been surprising, yet the effect was always in a measure marred by the bleating, deadening tone common to the voices of imbeciles. That bleating, mindless, sound was no longer perceptible; and for the first time since I have been used to hear idiots sing together, I was delighted to find it gone. The last time I was there it was disappearing, now I could not observe it; and but for seeing the singers, I should have taken the sounds to be those of a class of intelligent pupils in some public school. After the grace, the dining-room was quitted in the most quiet orderly way; only now and then there was some droll remark or gesture, but all indicating good humour and happiness.

From the hall I went to look at the private rooms of the inmates who pay the highest sum for their board, attendance, and accommodation. Each has a good sitting-room and bedroom, with two beds, one for the occupant, the other for an attendant. They were furnished in the style of a superior hotel, and the cleanliness and tidiness were most remarkable. On the way, I met a youth who has been long in the Asylum, and is now elected for life. Before his admission, his father declared him in every way impracticable; he was vicious, violent, noisy, and dirty. Now he is singularly amiable and docile. He greeted me with a most polite bow, which I returned, and remarked, "Well, you are as polite as ever, and I am glad to see you." "So are you, Sir," he said, in a merry tone, and told me his office



was to "mind the little boys," which he does with the greatest gentleness and care. Instead of being intractable and troublesome, he is of real value to the Institution, and most attentive to the feeble little ones he has the charge of. There could scarcely be a more decided proof of the judicious treatment which has wrought in him so conspicuous a change.

It was reception day for newly-elected cases ; and on going with Dr. Down to one of his private rooms for some refreshment, I found Mrs. Down paying the kindest attention to a mother and her idiot son, who were waiting for the Doctor. The poor woman was naturally much affected, and the neat appearance of her unfortunate boy showed the tender care she had bestowed on him. I shall not soon forget the way in which she was treated by Mrs. Down, who was trying, in the most judicious manner, to comfort the afflicted parent. Though Mrs. Down has no office in the establishment, she evidently is prepared to advise and assist her husband when her help can be useful, and that with the greatest delicacy. By their joint efforts the good woman soon became assured, and would have confided to us, if there had been time, the whole history of herself and her husband, and her idiot boy. But she was asked if she would like to see the house, an offer she eagerly embraced, and an attendant was sent round with her and her son, while we partook of our luncheon. I afterwards met her in one of the passages, her face beaming with pleasure ; and she declared that she felt quite comfortable at the idea of leaving her son "with such people, in such a beautiful place." It is a pleasant fact, that newly-received idiots are generally, if they have any vivacity, so attracted by the building and its contents, and so assured by their reception, that they seldom exhibit much emotion at being quitted by their friends. Yet when their friends are gone, no small degree of judgment is needed for beginning well with each particular case. Dr. Down, whose qualifications for these duties are of the highest order, has to mark everything in his patient, physical condition, feeble, or ill-balanced powers, specialities, mental aptitude. He must discover predilections, if they exist, and they gene-



rally do, for certain pursuits, and follow that leading as far as may be. To these ends, the pupils are first introduced to the room called the Probationary Room; there they are gradually brought to be influenced by the teachers, and their habits are strictly watched, in order to subsequent classification. The Asylum is at once a hospital, a school, and a workshop within; without,—a gymnasium, a garden, and a farm. Whether the two last pay or not, is not the question, but how far they promote the great object of the Asylum; and I believe they do this in an eminent degree. No fresh inmate is classed till the close of the probationary period. Before any pupil is allowed to dine at one of the common tables, the trial of fitness must be passed in the probationary dining-room, and habits of cleanly feeding with the use of spoons, and knives and forks, become familiar, or, at least, sufficient for good demeanour at table, which is justly regarded of no small importance to general amelioration. The due use of a knife and fork is a step in an idiot's education; it helps on other advances. The amenities of life are important elements in palliating the sad maladies of those for whom this Asylum has been provided. When at first only a few were brought to use the implements of the table aright, others soon followed their example. The force of example is most powerful, and idiots, troublesome, obstinate, unteachable when alone, on being made social beings, fall insensibly into improved habits by the influence of companions who have acquired them. It is for this reason that I have been so particular in details too trifling to be narrated under other circumstances, but essential here, as being indications of the exercise of will and intelligence, however feeble, and in consequence capable of being made instruments of improvement.

Nothing is more curious than the endless varieties in the aspect of idiots. Some are conscious of their defects to a certain degree, and you see in them examples of an imperfect organization, and feeble, nervous energy struggling with latent mind, which cannot be developed by reason of abnormal bodily faculties. Others do not appear conscious of their own deficiency, but can see it in their fellows. One



boy, looking at another whom an accident to his foot had lamed, said, "It is a pity he is lame, though he is not quite right," seemingly not knowing that he was quite as imbecile himself. Another remarked, on something being said to him, "I am too good to be here." An attendant said, "Why —— is here," alluding to one of the best cases. "O, pooh!" he exclaimed, eagerly, "—— is all abroad; but I have got every one of my buttons on;" though, in fact, he was far inferior to him. In general, the more improved pupil here alluded to is exceedingly well behaved, but at times has a most curious battle with himself for control of his anger, if excited. One day he was excessively enraged, because some one had deranged his paint-box. He cannot speak well, nor write well, but he is a capital artist in drawing, so he made a pictorial representation of himself in pencil, under every grievance he could remember. On showing it, he said to the person to whom he brought it, "Be very careful, so angry I am; may hurt you." Then turning away, he attacked a door and broke it all to pieces. On coming to himself, he was told as he had certain resources from pocket-money, it must be stopped to pay for it, to which he assented. Afterwards, however, on behaving well, he was offered a sum towards an excursion to Brighton, but the poor fellow refused it decidedly—"No, no; broke door, won't have it."

In going through the workshops described in my last visit, I perceived much improvement; but greatly enlarged accommodation is now evidently wanted. Corridor matting, and matting for churches, besides fancy mats, are capitally executed, and can be supplied to purchasers, who would be doing a service to the funds by ordering them. The occupants of these rooms seemed quite absorbed in their work. In the tailor's room there were eleven tailors on the board; and as a proof of how much they bring to pass, it must be mentioned that all the clothes for the elected cases of boys are made here. In this room now, work cannot, as formerly, be taken in. Also the uniform of the attendants is done by the same hands, under the direction and assistance of competent leaders to cut out and arrange the work. I found them in high glee over a humorous job. Mr. Punch, of whom I shall soon have occasion to say some-



thing, had been brought in to have his nose and jacket mended, preparatory to a grand performance I was invited to attend. They set about his repairs in earnest, and soon put this capital figure of that distinguished personage, very like his portrait in the celebrated paper which bears his name, into performing order. Here I found one of the best assistant cooks, who had changed his white dress and cap, diligently plying his needle, and doing his sewing extremely well. His reception into the Asylum has been a great boon indeed to him. He is naturally amiable and gentle, though visibly imbecile; and, I believe, is truly influenced by genuine piety. He has a knowledge of the Scriptures that is quite surprising, and a really enlightened appreciation of the simple truths of the Gospel. The happy effects of this knowledge are marked in all he does; he is clearly one of the "poor in spirit," blessed indeed in his feeble condition, whose "is the kingdom of heaven," knowing his Saviour, and humbly obeying His precepts, and striving to follow His blessed example. There are others besides him on whose minds good impressions have been made; and who would on no account say or do anything they thought wrong. I have testified in previous writings to the capability of idiots, who can receive even a few rays of intellectual light, to learn the essential lessons of religious truth. The same testimony is largely given in the reports of the American, and other institutions. This pure and gentle Christian light is a gracious gift of compensation for the dim mental vision of these objects of philanthropic solicitude, and is a special mark of the divine goodness that so mercifully makes up for the deprivations to which our race is subject in the body, the infirmities of which veil, but do not destroy the mind.

The shoemakers were just as busy as the tailors. The historical cook is one of this fraternity, and he had recovered his good humour, as predicted. He exhibited, with great apparent pleasure, some specimens of his work. Proud as he was, he assured us, to make shoes for the ladies, he avowed himself an implacable enemy to crinolines. All his troubles seemed forgotten, and thoughts of cricket were replaced by history, shoemaking, crinolines, and the song of "I was



going to Greenwich East." What a curious creature such an idiot is! Still, this pupil is generally willing to do his work; but he has, now and then, a spice of mischief in him. Yet, as is the case with nearly all the pupils, he yields at once to the authority of Dr. Down. Idiots know their superiors, and have a keen perception of the possession of power in those over them. This youth was carrying some water upstairs carelessly, and one of the inferior attendants rebuked him for spilling it about, adding, "I will tell the Doctor of you." He became angry, and threw the contents of the jug at him, with "Take that; the Doctor is out." On the Doctor's return, being complained of, he made a most humble apology, confessing, "I was very naughty, I was," adding, "but I *cheeked* the official." These little anecdotes I mention, that the reader may have an exact picture of the interior of the Asylum, without which he can form no conception of its character. Thus alone can an idea be had of the cases its managers have to deal with, and how they bring about the success of one of the most interesting experiments of the day. Friends of charity, who may be induced to go there, will see what they can see nowhere else, and will become delighted witnesses of the triumph which kindness, firmness, and perseverance have achieved over those who were deemed, only a few years since, as beyond all hope of amelioration.

On looking into one of the smaller apartments, I saw completed with guns and everything, the splendid model of a man-of-war, referred to in my first visit, and now complete. It will probably be transferred to the Exhibition of 1862. It seems impossible to believe that the constructor of such a beautiful piece of naval architecture in miniature, could be an idiot. The same remark is often made when his drawings are looked at, and his carpenter's work examined. Nevertheless he is a true idiot, with special powers above the common run, yet with defective qualities below the least gifted of ordinary men. He could no more regulate the expenditure even of a cottage than a child, nor manage the simplest routine of daily life. He speaks most imperfectly, cannot write intelligibly, though he can copy writing well, and reads badly; but excuses the last defect by muttering, "No need read book, when can read



pictures; pictures best." He showed me his drawings with the greatest animation of manner, pointing out what he considered the best parts, but with so confused an utterance, that I could only guess at his meaning.

The following letter which he wrote to his mother on learning the death of his father, which had been for a time concealed from him, will afford some idea of his confused expression. I have given only blanks for the names, as I have abstained, for obvious reasons, from mentioning the name of any poor idiot I have described.

"MY DEAR MOTHER,—Mr. — were what name house you live, and our mother, Henry, Mary Ann. Mr. — Jushire Henry ——. And Mr. —\* very sorrow is got no Father, never see more; and poor mother very kind, no Father, and Mr. — is love mother, and Mr. — is, say prayer, our Father, is God heaven, soul."

To this strange jargon—just the kind of thing his talking is—he added a beautiful postscript, of which I give an extract, and till explained, will puzzle every reader as much as it did me. "O, my dear mother," this postscript concludes, "do begin to pray. I want you to go with me to heaven. I love you; I love your soul. Dear mother, I know you have a great many trials and troubles in this world, where I can't help you; but, dear mother, you must pray the Lord to help you, and I am sure He will if you put your trust in Him. He died for you. He is our ever-blessed Saviour." Now it is quite evident that this could not be the composition of the writer of the first part of this letter, so I made particular inquiries through Dr. Down how the letter and the postscript came to be in the same hand. On asking him about it, he said, pointing to the word "soul," that he wrote all to that, but "no more could come from his head," so he took the rest from a letter in a little book, called "The Story of Thomas Ward." He must have worked hard at it, for he reads but little, by slowly spelling out the words, and that with much difficulty. After this explanation, wonderful as his drawings are, no one will doubt his idiotcy, and a more singular psychological study could not be found; it is an

\* "Mr. —" means himself.



almost unparalleled instance of imbecility and power; and the latter would never have been developed but for this Institution.

The letters of idiots are most curious. One boy had lost his uncle for years, but fancying he should like a little pocket-money, he wrote to the widow: "My dear Aunt,—I am sorry to hear my uncle is dead; please send me half-a-crown." Sometimes they write really pretty letters. I will give an example from one that had left the Asylum:—

"Dear Dr. Down,—It was very kind of you to tell me to write you a letter, and I shall now try to do so. Dear Doctor, I often think of you, because you was very kind to me. I hope you are quite well. I shall be very glad to come and see you again. I hope Mr. Simmons, my late attendant, is well. Also, my dear brother Alfred, and all my schoolfellows. Dear Doctor, I send my kind love to you, and remain yours, with much affection, ———."

This letter was entirely the youth's own; and the gratitude expressed to Dr. Down was, I believe, a genuine feeling. Generally, however, what an idiot, though far advanced in improvement, will write or say, no one could predict. There is one boy who has little or no appearance of his unfortunate condition, who was met by a visitor and asked, not very wisely, perhaps, "What, are you an idiot?" "O, no," he answered, "I am an *individual*." Parents, too, when bringing their children, naturally make the best of them. A mother, for instance, described her child as "perfectly sensible about everything that was not of any earthly use to him."

In continuing my inspection of the apartments, I was much pleased to find that there was a remarkable absence of all offensive closeness. The dormitories, thanks to the indefatigable matron, Mrs. Grimshaw, were clean and well aired. The baths are all white-tiled, and have a very neat appearance; and there are abundant supplies both of hot and cold water all through the house. From the windows the views are very lovely, which add much to that cheerfulness which promotes the health and comfort of the pupils. Still, it must not be inferred, from my description of the best cases, that there are no different ones in



the establishment. Yet, I believe, every one is bettered by being in it; and it is a consolation to see the lame, the epileptic, and the impotent, unable to feed or dress themselves, well looked after in the nursery. The sight of these poor helpless beings awakens emotions very different from such as are experienced in the class-rooms, the workshops, and the schools. Palliation of this pitiable state is the great object with such cases, and it succeeds. Not to speak of their existence and presence, however, would have been to have given only a partial, not a complete view of the Asylum as it is. From amongst these apparently most unpromising subjects, there comes occasionally a pleasant surprise as the reward of the immense and constant pains taken with them. There is a pupil who was, indeed, a miserable spectacle, with no powers of speech or locomotion, confined in a chair, and distorted with chorea, throwing about his arms and legs without any control of their movements. He is the son of a kind parent who pays the highest sum received for such boys, and he has an attendant to himself. I never saw in any one an aspect more utterly hopeless; but the happy result of the care and skill bestowed on him is that he is now able to read and write, and to do sums in arithmetic accurately and with a fair degree of neatness. I perceived also in him a great fondness for music; and he seems mostly cheerful and contented, while his smile indicates much amiability.

To dress these poor idiots properly, and to arrange their clothes without confusion, is by no means an easy matter; but the wardrobe is really perfect. All the wearing apparel is tidily arranged in separate compartments, each compartment belonging to one owner. The clothes are conveyed to the rooms in baskets ticketed with the respective names to which they pertain, and are distributed by pupils appointed to this duty, who convey them to the bedrooms where they are put on. All the making of these clothes is done in the house. The linen apparel is made by the girls, aided by a very effective sewing machine, worked by a treddle, and capable of sewing five yards in ten minutes. That the apparel of both sexes of inmates should thus be made at home, is a most praiseworthy instance of economy; but no one knows, but the patient trainers themselves of the



pupils, what labour it has cost to bring them to the state needful for bearing their part in such employment.

The drilling and imitation rooms afford abundant evidence of the required perseverance. To teach an idiot proper carriage and precise movement is labour indeed that knows no remission till its object is achieved; but it may be seen going on at Earlswood daily, and the results surprise all who witness them. In the imitation room, where the learners are taught form, colour, and number, the arduous character of the undertaking is fully apparent. For these purposes, pieces of wood of all colours, and capable of uniting to form figures and letters, are ingeniously contrived, and become, in the hands of the untiring teachers, effectual instruments of instruction. I watched these proceedings with intense curiosity and interest; in no other way, I imagine, could one of those under this patient training be brought to name a letter or a figure, and declare its colour.

In the writing and drawing-room I found a diligent and cheerful assembly. They were eager to show their copy-books and to have their drawings examined. One poor boy, who is subject to sudden convulsions of his arms and hands, and could not be trusted with ink, had achieved a marvellous copy with a lead pencil. "I did it—did it all myself," he said, when he showed it me; "yes, did—did do it," and seemed most proud when it was commended. One droll creature gave me a nod, with "Very happy to see you, Sir, because I never saw you before." He then added, "I like reading the paper," which he cannot do. Mr. Nicholas, knowing his humour, gave him one of the morning papers out of his pocket. He received it with a bow, turned it upside down, and pretended to read off an accident, with an inquest; and, looking knowingly up, pronounced the verdict to be "Natural importance;" and all this with a most absurd gravity. Then another boy, who was once addicted to bad language, assured me he had quite left it off, adding, "I have been a very good boy for the future." When I told him, at all events, I hoped he would be, he exclaimed, earnestly, "Yes, I will, Mr. Sidney; yes, I will." Here the "House Almanac" showed me his drawings, which were really incredibly well-



executed; he would remember the exact time by the clock any one was begun, and also at what hour it was finished.

To form any idea of such a spectacle as this without witnessing it, is simply impossible; but I never knew any one who could behold it unmoved, or who did not say the impression made by it would be permanent.

In a passage near this room I came upon a quantity of scenery carefully stowed away. It was the scenery of the Christmas charade performance, which was described to me by Dr. Down as having been a marvellous success. It also had the effect of stimulating into lasting vigour several whom it had been previously impossible to rouse from idiotic depression and apathy. The attendants took the leading parts, assisted by no less than forty of the pupils. All the costumes and scenes were executed by the staff. The artist youth, so often alluded to, painted the proscenium in a manner so effective, that any visitor would have been incredulous as to his imbecility. Yet he could not describe it intelligibly, nor refer to it, but in a jumble of incoherent words. All the wood-work was done by the boys in the carpenter's shop, and as neatly planed and fitted as if the work of regular mechanics. Dr. Down wrote the dialogues, and Mrs. Down designed the costumes and scenic arrangements.

One of the most agreeable portions of the Institution is the carpenter's shop. The chests of tools are kept in excellent order. The veneering seemed to me particularly good, and, indeed, so was the work altogether. The visitor, however, must take care of himself here, for the inmates of this room are very proud of their work, and will crowd around him, one carrying a heavy door, another a window-frame, another a great heavy box, crying, "Look here, look here, I made this;" and all with no small chance of some one of their weighty specimens coming down on his feet. It was very difficult to get away from them at all, and certainly I found it, on the whole, a most attractive place—every face cheerful, every hand well employed.

In going to the garden I passed the gymnasium, where the various appliances for athletic and other exercises seem to be well used; but a covered place for cold and wet weather is, I think, much needed, and I believe the



managers of the Asylum think so too; so that probably in time it will be provided. The soil of the garden is rather heavy, and the last winter's frost made sad havoc with the culinary greens. There is adjoining a very nice seed house, and abundance of tools are at hand. A fine rose-bed, I was glad to see, had escaped without injury from the severe cold. Several pupils were diligently at work, and they were very proud of some long cucumbers produced this season. They are taught to raise young trees in a nursery, and all the methods of cultivating a plain kitchen garden. The crop of peas and the promise of strawberries were very great, and a good supply of vegetables is generally kept up for the house. For the idiots who take to this occupation it is invaluable. The garden is fringed by a pretty wood where I saw some donkeys browsing, and altogether is well worthy of the attention of those who kindly visit Earlswood. A group of boys hoeing most diligently, plainly showed why the borders were so free from weeds, and taking the flower-garden and kitchen-garden together, they add greatly to the usefulness and interest of the establishment. It is a most attractive sight to stand on the terrace and look upon the land before it. The fields of the farm to which I shall hereafter refer, form part of the prospect at some distance below the pleasure grounds. In fine weather a promenade of children from the Asylum may be often seen winding through the walks all in order, others sitting under the trees, while close by a cheerful party may be noticed working the machine for mowing the grass on the lawn; then two or three will be observed weeding, or a party going off to the garden, or the "polite" youth tending a group of young imbeciles. All is alive, every one capable seems cheerfully and duly employed.

I could have lingered here long, but it was hinted that time was flying, and that Mr. Punch, with nose and clothes both mended, was awaiting me in the great hall. Here I found two hundred and ten pupils, and Punch at the further end, the frame made by the carpenters, and painted by the painter of the proscenium for the charade. One of the attendants, concealed by the frame, was the performer, and did the whole most humorously. The delight of the spectators was intense, and I must confess that they



relished amazingly the blows inflicted on poor Judy by her tyrannical husband; but far more did they applaud when Judy, in return, banged him till his skull rattled again, which seemed to please them greatly. Excited as they were, Mr. Wood kept excellent order, and I slipped out, as the fly was waiting to convey me to the station; and I was obliged to adjourn the completion of an inspection, which gave me a satisfaction I hope will be imparted to those who are good enough to read this plain but true description of what I heard and saw.

The adjournment was a short one. By eight o'clock on the eighth of June, I went again to Earlswood with Mr. Nicholas and two gentlemen of the Board, who were called there by business requiring their attention. Mrs. Grimshaw, the good matron, met us in the hall, and quietly directed my attention to a clever picture by the idiot artist who surprises every one, just freshly framed and suspended in the reception-room. The flower-garden looked excessively pretty from this room, and as the day was warm and bright, everything had a cheerful aspect. Dr. Down was quickly with us, and told us that the family were assembling in the dining-hall for morning prayers. They came in with the utmost regularity and took their places, the boys on one side of the room, the girls on the other, and the attendants in the places usually assigned to them. It was a most gratifying spectacle; no whispering or levity of any kind occurred, but a silence apparently quite becoming the occasion. Mr. Wood, the worthy master, read a portion of the ninety-eighth psalm, and the whole of the pupils joined in chanting it in the same effective manner which I have described in my account of their singing the grace after dinner. At a signal all resumed their seats, and Mr. Wood then read a portion of the tenth chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, in the midst of a silence which showed how well the listeners had been trained to order. After this, a hymn was given out. One of the pupils brought me a hymn-book, and the hymn was sung most creditably. At the end of the room, Dr. Down, the gentlemen of the Board, the matron, and others united in this portion of the worship, and the whole was truly impressive. At the termination of the singing, I went to the desk and offered up



a prayer. All knelt, and not a sound besides my own voice was audible. No prayers in any family could be better conducted, and at the conclusion all departed quietly without the least confusion. We then adjourned to the board-room, where a breakfast had been prepared for us by the attentive matron, and I could not but be delighted with the view from this apartment, and with seeing some of those who had just come out from the prayers busily mowing the lawn with a machine. After breakfast, Mr. Brown, the steward, invited us to hear the band in the dining-hall. It is composed chiefly of the attendants, but one of the drums was played by the artist-pupil so often mentioned, and to my great surprise he had learned to count time and to play a little from notes. This is the first instance I have ever met with of an idiot having arrived at the power of doing so; their music is all by ear, and till now this member of the band could never be taught in any other way. They performed several pieces, and amongst them "The Blue Bells of Scotland," in an animated style, ending with a chant, and "God save the Queen." The poor inmates enjoy this music extremely, and it is very beneficial to them. It is quite curious to observe the lively expression of their faces while the performance is going on. The boy who cannot leave his chair sat by the door in a perfect ecstasy; he signified that he should write to his mother and tell her I had been there again. I came at this time across the whimsical historical cook, and I found him not in the best humour. "Sir," he said, "I have not been in a good mind for more than a fortnight; I am quite out;" and then made a remark which caused Mrs. Grimshaw to shake her head at him, and to tell him he was "very ungrateful." He roused up and laughed out, "Yes, ma'am, I am afraid I am indeed; but you see it is being out of humour makes me so;" and then he made a sort of apology, and began talking about some song which he wanted to hear, and took himself away. One of his companions said, "Let him alone; he only wants to be of consequence; that's what it is." These are the sort of odd things which show the visitor where he is, and can scarcely be imagined till they are seen; but no true notion of the place can be conveyed to inquirers without describing them.



Dr. Down, and the gentlemen from London, now addressed themselves to their business, and I began my tour of the apartments not visited before, under the able guidance of Mrs. Grimshaw. I first went to the girls' probationary room, and painful as several of the cases appeared, I was struck with the great neatness which prevailed. Here they learn all sorts of little things, and were being taught to distinguish right hands from left, putting them on their heads when named. It seemed to be a great amusement to them, but they were quite as often wrong as right.

From this apartment we passed to the cripples' room; they are kept very clean; they seemed happy and orderly; but most of the inmates were described as subject to fits—a sad hindrance to their progress. The great attention bestowed on these helpless ones renders the attacks less frequent; but epileptic patients are the most hopeless of all.

The room visited after this was tenanted by more pleasing and hopeful cases, and is called the first class girls' schoolroom. One singular girl, whom I had known before she came here, put out her hands, and exclaimed, as I entered, in rather thick and broken accents, "Mr. Sidney, I lay awake dreaming of you all last night." I told her that I did not see how she dreamed if she did not sleep, so she then said, "I could not sleep for thinking of you; but I did go to sleep before morning too." She seemed prodigiously amused with her blunder, and laughed heartily. Here the girls are employed in useful work in the morning, and in the afternoon are allowed to make the fancy articles exhibited in the reception room. Numbers of them rose eagerly, and brought me their work to look at, and praised themselves not a little, scarcely waiting for other commendation. They read in this school by the aid of large letters chalked on black boards, and often make considerable progress. They were a cheerful set; I did not see a single unhappy face amongst them.

On going into the play-room, I found the girls, with a few little boys amongst them, forming a singing procession. One of the latter was a droll creature, who, on being asked by Mrs. Grimshaw, imitated a person he had heard speak



in public, and though I could not make out a word he attempted to utter, his gesticulations were most humorous. This is a low class, and their instruction consists mostly of finger lessons.

The principal girls' school, under Miss Allam, was in great order. It is surrounded with large maps on rollers, of which good use is made, and there were stands of flowers and ferns prettily arranged, making the whole very attractive and agreeable. Here I requested a reading class to be formed, and heard them read a portion of the chapter they had heard at the prayers. They read it, on the whole, surprisingly well, and answered the simple questions I put to them, with a little leading, with as much intelligence, though now and then oddly, as most classes of girls in any school would have done. Their remarks on prayer being heard, were really quite to the point, but they were a little puzzled as to what a centurion was, though they seemed quite to comprehend the difference between Jews and Gentiles, and that they had the Gospel as Gentiles. When this lesson was over, they brought their copy books for inspection, and they were most creditable to their unwearied instructors.

In another room there was a baby class taught entirely by pictures. A new play-room is in the course of erection, with a capital and very airy dormitory over it. The girls' dormitory is the perfection of tidiness, and eighteen of the improved idiots assist in making the beds here, and in other rooms. They seem to like their work. One of these, a girl nearly grown up, was the first I had seen out of spirits. She began crying when I spoke to her, but I found the reason was that she was grieving at the idea that her pleasant occupations would soon end, as her time for remaining had nearly expired. The thought of leaving seemed a bitter sorrow to her, and it is to be wished that if possible she might be kept where she is so contented. Being Saturday, the pupils who give out the clean linen were busy passing to and fro, under the superintendence of Miss Bryan, the sub-matron; and the doors in the corridors were being fresh varnished, part of this work being extremely well done by the artist pupil and another. The way in which the whole place is kept, and the order



prevailing, even in the probationary bed-rooms, where watchers sit up the whole night, is quite beyond all that could be conceived, considering by whom they are occupied.

In the Sanatorium and Infirmary the same attention produces similar results; but there is very little illness, and the health which prevails seems due to the excellence of the air, and the skill and constant attention of Dr. Down. Nothing appears to escape him. In the infirmary he has erected an elevated platform, that the convalescent patients may sit and look out of the window, and see the view, and amuse themselves by the passing of the trains. All these are accessories to recovery. Immense attention is also paid to diet; and every appliance that ingenuity and talent can contrive, is brought to bear on the physical and mental wants of the patients, to keep their bodies in an improving condition, to elicit dormant faculties, and to correct, by attracting to what is good, the sad tendencies to evil incident to the low condition of idiotcy.

When I had finished my round with Mrs. Grimshaw, I found Dr. Down was still engaged with the gentlemen of the Board, so, instead of going to him, I determined to visit the series of school-rooms with Mr. Wood. Here I found them going diligently through the customary routine of writing, reading, counting, finger lessons, geometrical and other forms, and methods which have been previously noticed. I desired a class of the most hopeful boys to be collected round me; some were at work on the farm, and it was too far to send for them, but all that were near at hand were quickly brought together, and behaved most properly. I first asked them what chapter was read at the prayers. Several instantly replied, "Tenth of Acts." I told them to find it, and they began to read it verse by verse; and their reading was, with some eccentric exceptions, that of an ordinary class in any school of boys. When they had read a considerable number of verses, I began to question them, and they answered well. On the whole, this class responded to simple questions from the Scriptures as creditably as any boys would have done in most schools, and great and constant pains must be taken with them. The capacities of these imbeciles seem to expand under the influence of religion, and in nothing do the best of them



exhibit the same interest and intelligence; and what is more, it has a great directing power over their daily lives, and endues them with a discrimination and tenderness of conscience that is often beautifully exemplified.

Having a little time to spare, I thought I would once more run through the workshops, and was again strongly impressed with the conviction that they need great enlargement. The boy who packed up his bundle to come home, as he called it, was working away at a mat, which I thought appeared a little ruffled. I advanced to look at it; "Nonsense," he cried; "don't look at me; I have got a pain here," pointing to his stomach, and looking very archly. "You are a rogue," said I. "What's that?" he rejoined in the gravest tone possible, looking very demure. "What's that?" I replied; "why, a boy that shams to have a pain in his stomach when he has none." He began laughing heartily, and put his arm over my shoulder, patting and coaxing me. I jumped away as quickly as I could, and he went on vigorously with his work, and cried out, as I left, "Good bye, good bye!" It is impossible to be long with these singular objects of the care of the friends of the asylum, without such droll incidents occurring, and the phases of their condition are as various as the possible modification of their peculiar organisms, no two being ever alike.

It was now time to go to the farm. I had not taken many steps in that direction, before I was joined by one of the *farmers*, who, with his country coat, and broad-brimmed hat, looked the very image of a working agriculturist. With great importance he said, "I go with you." "Who are you?" I naturally asked. "I am *Farmer P*——," he replied, and walked on before us, leading the way. We soon came to some pig-styes; he looked over the high sides of the first with an expression of great satisfaction, and pointed to the interior. On examining it, I soon saw a most beautiful sow, with a litter of eleven fine sleek sucking-pigs, crowding round their mother, and their black glossy skins shining with health and cleanliness. "Do you attend to these?" was the natural question. "How many are there?" He could not tell. I directed him to try and count them. "One, two, three, four," he



began, but was soon lost, and he could not announce the number. I said, laughing, "You are a pretty farmer, not to count your stock." "I am; yes, must try;" so I counted them over for him, and he went on whispering to himself—"eleven, eleven, eleven." He soon showed us some more, and took us to the cows, a really fine set of animals. "Feed 'em well, feed 'em well; keep 'em clean," said our farmer-guide; and the bailiff soon appeared and told us how pleased he was to attend to them. Taking care of these creatures occupied him in a manner that made him quite happy; and the work of the farm is a great boon to others besides him. At present the cow-sheds and their appendages are only temporary, but it is to be hoped they will be put into due order by-and-by. Twelve poor idiots now work regularly on the farm; and hay-time and harvest bring out others from the work-shops, who profit extremely by the change. And this is the profit most to be desired; the gain is in the advantage of the pupils; and it can hardly be expected to be worked with the same return as would be the case if cultivated in the ordinary way. The fields also composing the whole occupation, are excellent places for the pupils to go to in their walks. It seems to me that its continuance as it is now is most desirable, and the idea of letting it a great mistake. It has been thought it might be let to a tenant who would pay rent and allow the idiots to go to it when they pleased. It would be just as well to propose to let the garden or any other part of this superb establishment. Its excellence consists in its entirety, and of this the farm, in my opinion, is a most desirable part. Poor Farmer P. and his colleagues would be in a sad state of grief if their occupation was gone, and they were told they could only go where they would do no mischief; they look upon themselves as by no means despicable help, and the very notion quickens their dormant faculties. If this account shall bring visitors to Earlswood, they will with one consent, I believe, agree with me; and this is the decided opinion of Dr. Down. If I were to say the crops and the tillage were first-rate, I should be suspected of exaggeration, but they are all and more than could be supposed; and there are no better attendants on



the animals of a farm than persons of imbecile mental powers if they delight in them; they would neglect themselves before they would omit the attention required by one of these dumb creatures.

The inspection of the farm finished, I ended a day which gave me extreme gratification. The very looks of the poor idiots, and those to whose care they are committed, prove the kindness of their treatment, and their obedience shows that it is accompanied by the essential firmness, without which it would be impossible to make it of lasting advantage. The manager of an idiot must be obeyed, and he may secure obedience without any harshness. Dr. Down seemed to me perfectly obeyed, and no manner can be gentler or kinder than his; indeed, I perceived the same qualities in all the principal officials, and they appeared to pervade the demeanour of the attendants. I never saw one of the pupils show any fear, but evident trust in those over them. Letters perpetually received by Dr. Down confirm my view. One parent says of a pay-case:—"We thank you much for all that you and those under your direction have done for the poor boy." Another writes of a similar case who went home for a short time:—"He seems to feel the want of the changes afforded the inmates of your excellent Institution, as well as its great privileges," adding, "we are more than ever persuaded that our little afflicted one has derived great benefit from his short residence in it, and hope that he will shortly be able to return, and be more and more improved." The brother of a pupil writes:—"My dear mother requests me to give her compliments to yourself and Mrs. Grimshaw, and to express her sincere thanks for the care taken of, and the kindness shown to my brother. We all think he was looking very well indeed; and his dress and appearance altogether show the care that is taken of the pupils at Earlswood."

The promoters of this invaluable Institution are thus receiving their reward, and may justly congratulate themselves on the fruits of efforts directed to the relief of a class involved in a calamity, till these days thought incapable even of mitigation. Here, too, great lessons may be learned. The phrenologist will find opportunities of observation of the most instructive kind; the psychologist



may study the development of mind, as the corporeal feebleness which overshadowed it approaches to strength; and the Christian philanthropist may note the efficacy of the plain and verifying truths of the Gospel, as it causes light to beam forth from darkness. These are proved to excel all other instruments in awakening right emotions in the gloomy recesses of enfeebled intelligence, liberating imprisoned affections, and investing those considered as degraded beyond hope, with the new and attractive aspect of unpretending genuine piety. Here also the teachers of youth may gain instruction in the due mingling of bodily with mental training, so as thereby to improve the mind's powers, and the school of the idiot may become an example in many ways to that of children endued with ordinary faculties. Charity, too, has a fine field in this direction, and will rouse itself throughout the land to meet the exigencies of the thousands of pitiable human beings who are awaiting, cast down, silent, and impotent, the help, without which, they must inevitably fall into an abyss beyond all reach of human aid. Mysterious as is the state of the idiot, one thing is clear; it is part of our probation to raise up those thus bowed down, and it is demonstrated that it is possible, at least, to an unforeseen extent. This discovery is one of the great facts of our day, and its value is extensively acknowledged, and the appreciation of it will, it is hoped, speedily become universal. There is an anecdote in a striking little book which is called "Light out of Darkness, as seen at the Pennsylvanian Training-School for Feeble-minded Children at Media Penna." The pupils were listening on a Sunday evening to an instructive story called "Help each other," when an interest not uncommon in such an auditory was clearly perceptible. After a silence, a small hand was held up in the back part of the room, and the little fellow who raised it was invited to stand up, and he stammered out, "I want to tay toomething." His "tomething" was, "Yesterday, when I wa' out in the road, I taw a poor old woman wi' a ba'ket in her hand, picking up coal, and I went and helped her; and while I helped her, te turned and looked at me and taid, 'God blet you, my child; thit coal it to teep my tick baby warm.' That made me pick coal fa'ter; and ten te



turned again and taid, ' God blet you, my ton ;' and then I went away and left her. I went to my room and got a five tent piete I had, and went back to her, and intead of putting coal in her ba'ket, I put that five tent piete in her hand, and then I went away." This question was asked the good boy on this touching recital, "How did it make you feel to act in that way towards the poor woman?" In reply, he turned his hand over his breast and said, earnestly, "*It made me feel big in here.*" This lowly idiot's sensation will be the reward of all those who devote their efforts to the poor imbecile, and I believe it must be largely experienced in the mental emotions of the Board of Earlswood, the benevolent gratuitous secretaries, Dr. Conolly and Dr. Reed, and by all those connected with them in carrying on this truly Christian work. A sure consequence of genuine benevolence is the "enlarged heart," and in no act will it be conscious of nobler expansion than in reclaiming the feeblest of the human race, and bringing them to that social and religious level to which it has been shown they may be, in so many cases, raised, while all have their condition bettered by tender and judicious care. If the wealthy and charitable of this great nation were personally acquainted with the working of Earlswood, and could only have one day's bright holiday within its walls, and its gardens, farm, and gymnasium, they would speedily release it from every pecuniary burden, and leave it with large and free resources to enable it to become, even in a greater degree than it is now, a model for like institutions, till every poor idiot should be duly cared for.



# THE ASYLUM FOR IDIOTS,

EARLSWOOD, RED HILL, SURREY.

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Under the Patronage of Her Majesty the Queen.

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## ADDRESS.

ENGLAND, our beloved country, is greatly distinguished amongst the nations by Divine Providence. On her head there rest many crowns; but the fairest and the brightest is that of Charity! Her power in arms, her skill in arts, her discoveries in science, her boundless commerce and dominion, do neither distinguish nor glorify her so much as her benevolent Institutions. They should seem to be, like our oaks and our elms, indigenous to our land. They are not the creatures of the State, but the nurslings of the people; and well have they been fostered.

Every form of evil by which humanity suffers has been searched out; and ingenuity has been tasked to devise methods of cure or of mitigation. Defects of the eye, the ear, the tongue, the foot, have separate and skilful attention; the maimed, the sick, and the insane are supplied with a house of refuge, and soothed by the kindness of Charity; and, as might be expected, where the voice of Religion is heard, the widow and the fatherless have been so fully and earnestly regarded, as that their affliction and mourning are turned into joy and praise.

Yet it must be admitted that there is one class, and that, in some respects, the lowest and the worst, which has been overlooked. WE HAVE DONE NOTHING FOR THE IDIOT! How is this? It cannot be that, feeling aright towards every other class of misery, our charity should fail here. It must be, that we have laboured under the appalling conviction that idiotcy is without remedy, and therefore we have left it without help.

It is happy for the interests of humanity that this opinion is now exploded. The experiment has at length been made—made by several persons—made in several countries,—France, Germany, and Switzerland, and in all cases with success. It may now, therefore, be pronounced, not as an opinion, but as a fact—a delightful fact—THAT THE IDIOT MAY BE EDUCATED.

While this is now to be received as an ascertained and registered fact, it is especially true as applied to the earlier periods of life. There can be no doubt that the evil in this case, as in that of insanity, is wholly physical. We cannot even conceive of mind, apart from the body, as either idiotic or insane. In itself it is neither; and it only becomes so from imperfect or distorted manifestations through a diseased or defective organization. If this is correct, it is evident that the EARLIER we attempt the recovery of the Idiot, the more hopeful. In fact, the young—the very young—are greatly susceptible of improvement. If they are regarded as hopeless, they will indeed become hopeless,—for the tendency of neglect is to fatuity; but if they are taken early, and are carefully trained and educated on the principle that *there is mind*, and that it only demands *physical manifestation*, much, in most cases, that is essential to life, if not all that is desirable, may be secured. For vacancy there may be sense; for frivolousness, a serious regard to the habits and duties of life; for a joyless and unconscious



being, lower than the brutes that perish, a capacity for thought, for enjoyment, for religion, for an anticipated immortality!

It is not possible that these facts can be known and believed, and yet neglected. **SOMETHING MUST BE DONE FOR THE IDIOT.** In charity it must be done—in consistency it must be done—for very shame it must be done—unless we would allow other nations to outrun us in the noblest course of man—that of benevolence.

Yet it must not be concealed, that this service is especially one of great difficulty and self-denial. It requires skill as much as earnestness, and earnestness equally with skill. Of all the spheres of charity, it supplies the least aliment to vapid sentiment, and demands that it be fulfilled under a rigid and extraordinary sense of duty—the duty which man owes to man.

The purport of this appeal is to invite and concentrate effort on this object. It proposes to educate the Idiot, especially in the earlier periods of life. It proposes to do this by the strenuous application of the most skilful means, appropriate to the object before us, and worthy of the country in which we dwell. It proposes that the benefit of the first efforts shall supply relief chiefly to the *middle* and *poorer classes*; and, at the same time, become a model and a motive for improvement in our pauper institutions. It will be, in the fullest sense, an effort of charity. It will help those who cannot help themselves; and it will proffer assistance to those who would otherwise be called to bear a burden that was intolerable.

Those who make this appeal do it with confidence—the confidence of those who have before challenged public benevolence, and not in vain. Can it be in vain now? It is for the poor, poor Idiot they plead!—for the Idiot, the lowest of all the objects of Christian sympathy,—for the Idiot, most needing charity, and for whom charity has done nothing. We ask that he may be elevated from existence to life—from animal being to manhood—from vacancy and unconsciousness to reason and reflection. We ask that his soul may be disimprisoned; that he may look forth from the body with meaning and intelligence on a world full of expression; that he may, as a fellow, discourse with his fellows; that he may cease to be a burden on society, and become a blessing; that he may be qualified to know his Maker, and look beyond our present imperfect modes of being to perfected life in a glorious and everlasting future!

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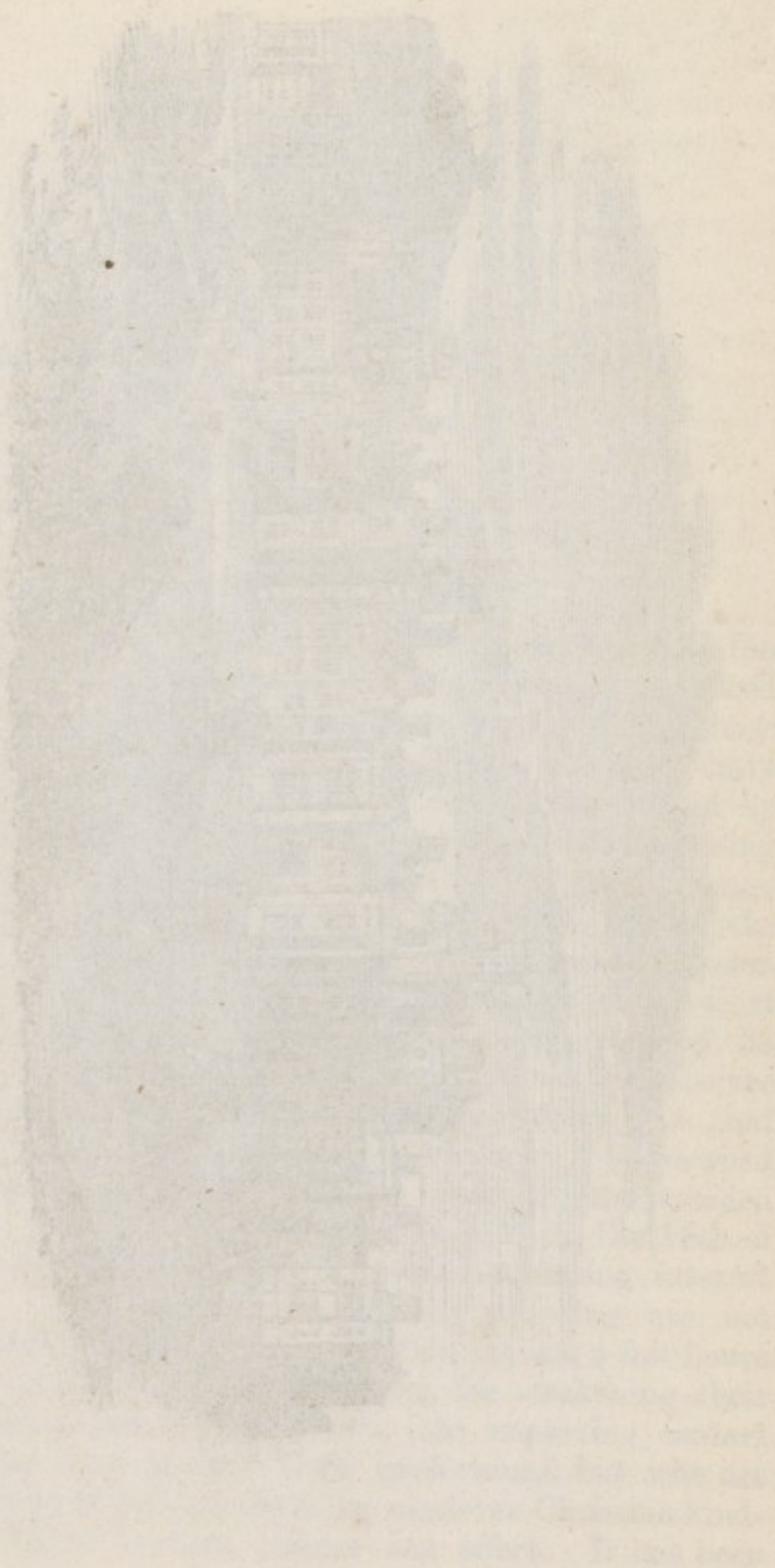
Where Forms of Application may be had, and all Communications are to be made. Subscriptions thankfully received by the Secretary, Mr. WILLIAM NICHOLAS, to whom all Orders should be made payable, at the General Post Office. Attendance daily, from 10 till 4 o'clock. Saturday, 10 till 2 o'clock.

### FORM OF BEQUEST.

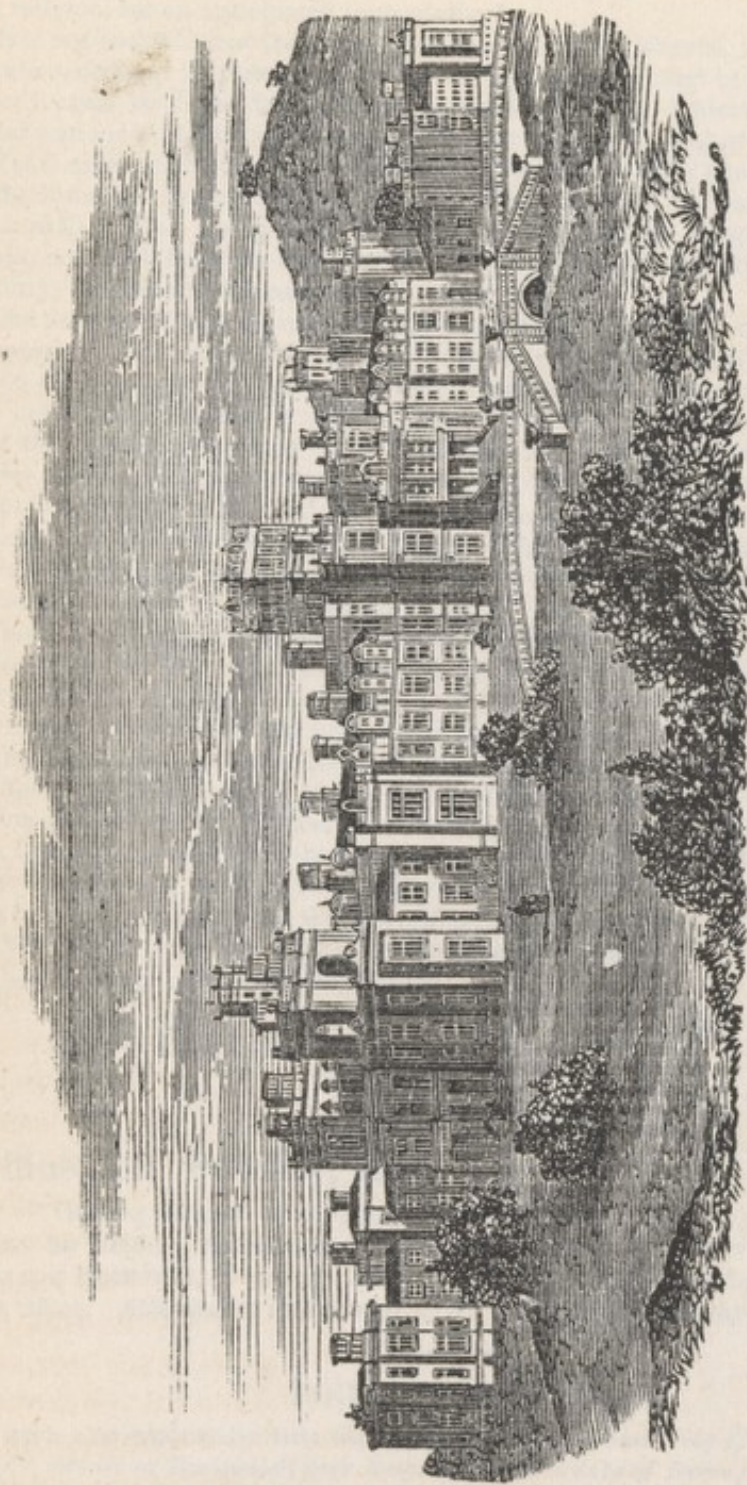
I GIVE AND BEQUEATH unto the Treasurer for the time being of the ASYLUM FOR IDIOTS, situate at Earlswood, near Reigate, in the County of Surrey, and instituted on the Twenty-seventh day of October, One Thousand Eight Hundred and Forty-seven, the sum of \_\_\_\_\_, to be raised and paid by and out of any part of my pure personal estate, which by law I may or can charge with the payment of the same, and not out of any part of my real estate, and to be applied towards accomplishing the charitable designs of the said Institution.



THE HISTORY OF THE CITY OF LONDON

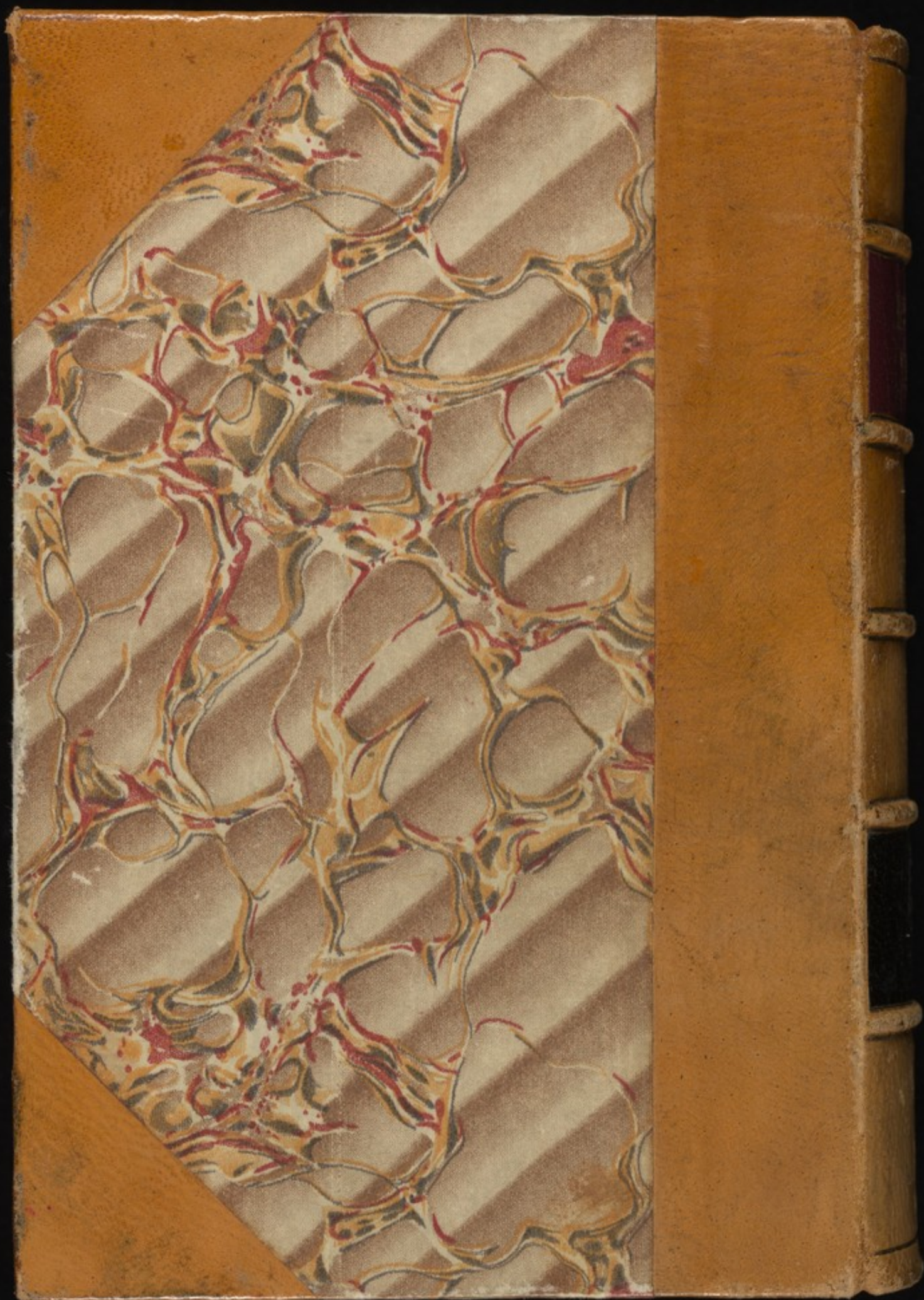






THE ASYLUM FOR IDIOTS, EARLSWOOD, RED HILL, SURREY.







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