

A fête day at Earlswood, June 16, 1864.

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Sidney, Edwin, -1872.

Publication/Creation

[London] : [Published on behalf of the Asylum for Idiots Earlswood, Red Hill, Surrey], [1864?]

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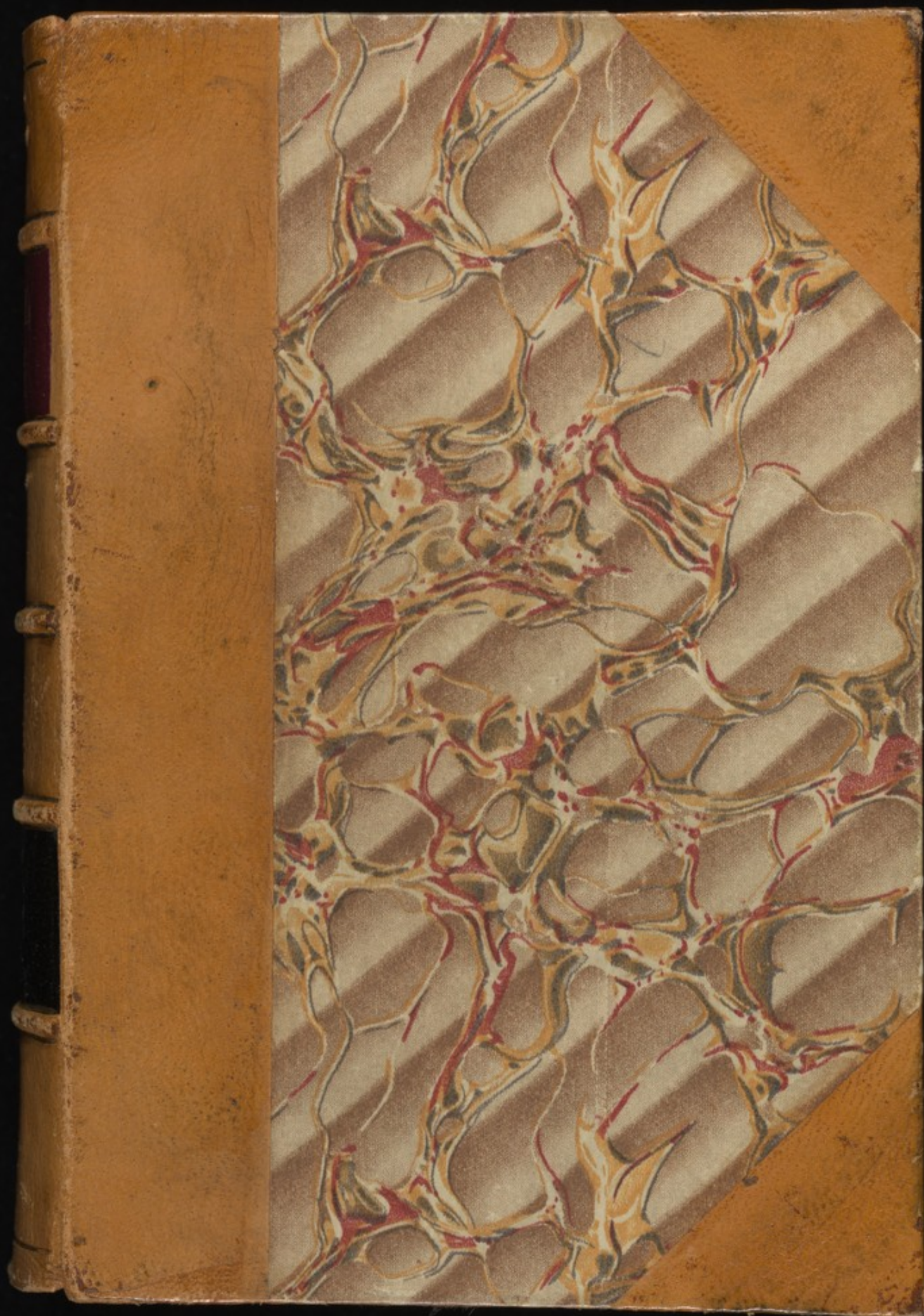
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A FÊTE DAY AT EARLSWOOD,

JUNE 16, 1864.

It is a characteristic of the principal achievements of the present day, that they are such as would have been pronounced the wildest dreaming if they had been predicted to those who lived only a half-century ago. Who could then have believed that London, or any part of it, would be traversed by one railway underneath its buildings, and by another crossing the Thames and running over their tops? Still more strange would it have seemed had it been foretold that any of the passengers by either of them would be on their way to London Bridge, to go on by another line of railway to one of the most agreeable of holidays, the attraction to a company of its generous and kind citizens, being a summer fête for the pleasure and the benefit of an assemblage of poor Idiots! He that prophesied of such a day, would have been lucky if he escaped by being regarded only as a harmless madman, and avoided confinement. This event, however, happened on the 16th of June, and not for the first time, but with increasing interest and success. The proceedings at this gathering are not merely intended to give the idiots of the Asylum a few hours gratification, but form part of a system for awakening their dormant faculties, and bringing them into improving contact with those who have escaped their misfortunes, but who are earnestly desirous to palliate them by whatever Christian kindness and the skill of modern science can effect. It has been

my privilege to describe Earlswood, as it is seen daily, in two small pamphlets, a first and second visit to this home of the imbecile ; and the way in which they have been received, and the assurance that they have been useful to the Charity, induce me to yield to the wishes that have been expressed, that I would give a description of the same place on its Gala-day. With this view I agreed to meet the members of the Board and the worthy secretary, Mr. Nicholas, at London Bridge, in time to see the entire proceedings. As these benevolent promoters of the good cause came, one after another, with the ladies and friends who were to be present, the animation of their manner plainly showed that they were full of that pleasurable anticipation, which is derived from the union of personal enjoyment with the benefit and happiness of others, especially the objects of charitable solicitude. The men of business of the metropolis have many of them learnt to find their happiest holiday in giving one to imbeciles, to fatherless children, and others, who, but for their munificence would be the sons and daughters of unmitigated misery. The late Duke of Wellington used to say, that one of the distinctive peculiarities of England was, that all classes met together on festive occasions for the purposes of pure charity. This noble tendency to such reunions is yet on the increase, and is, doubtless, under Providence, one of the main secrets of our social prosperity and stability. That which I shall endeavour to describe, will, I trust, be thought a happy example.

The day was delightful, and the journey by rail was soon made. As we passed the noble building for the fatherless, of which the late Dr. Reed was the prime mover, as well as of that to which we were going, one of my fellow-travellers said, " Our fête there is fixed for next Tuesday, and I hope we may have a day like this." I mention his remark, because it is a proof of the large benevolence to which allusion has been previously made. They are the happiest of men who thus diffuse happiness. On arriving at Earlswood, a gay scene opened to our view. The garden before the principal entrance was most tastefully laid out, and the arrangement of its border-plants, kept clean by the gardeners selected from the inmates, promised a brilliant summer dress of

colours, mingled with great taste. From the terrace at its extremity, the undulations of the pretty country in the foreground, gave a rich and picturesque character to the landscape, and the meadows below were studded with the preparations for the fête. Five or six ample tents, with a booth of great length for the refreshments, were most gaily and appropriately decorated. Flags innumerable were waving in the breeze, which was light and cooling, and the various spots for the different games were all marked out and prepared. This in any common instance would have called for no particular observation in the neighbourhood of London, but the marvel was that every tent, every pole, and nearly every flag were made in the establishment. Not a single accessory of this kind, save a few flags, was brought from any other place. The attendants and pupils had accomplished all with a good will and a skilful hand. After a few glances at this gay spectacle, we entered the building, where most of the inmates were engaged in preparations of various kinds, or waiting for the time to begin the sports after dinner. The house appeared, as usual, the perfection of neatness and order, and the corridors were decorated with pictures, partly presents, and partly from the pencils of the pupil-artists, especially the one I have before noticed so largely in my visits, and with baskets of flowers arranged in moss, globes of gold and silver fish, and Wardian cases of ferns. The visitors were, as they well might be, lavish of their admiring remarks on this attractive part of the Asylum. I inquired for the post-boy, who carries the letter-bag, and is the greatly improved case graciously sent in by the Queen. I was told he had been in a real dilemma, having been invited elsewhere by some kind friends; but, after much deliberation he had chosen their invitation, stipulating that some cake should be saved for him, and concluded by saying, "So, you see, I shall have my holiday and the cake too; well, that will do." It was soon visible that preparations were making for an early dinner, and I passed through the dining-hall, where the cloths were laid, into the kitchen. There the attendants and the pupil-cooks were preparing for the coming meal of the inmates, and for the collation designed for the Board and visitors. All was perfect cleanliness and order, and

the youths assisting in the kitchen were neatly dressed in white, with the usual caps. The droll creature whom I have described in the pages of my former visits, as having such a marvellous memory for historical facts, looked the busiest of the busy. "Sir," said he, "I cannot stop to tell you much to-day—I am very busy; only I was twenty-two in April, and have lost a good many teeth, but am going to have a new set by a first-rate dentist." Then he added, "But I should like to be examined in theology, for I think I am fit for the Church." "What is theology?" I asked. He replied, with an air of surprise, "Why, the study of divinity to be sure! And they say that if I was to preach, and the people did not listen to me, I should throw my book at them; but they might have left out that." So away he went to his cookery, and then others came up to shake hands and speak of the prospects of the day. One said, "We do not make sweet sauce now, Sir; we have rhubarb-pudding, and plenty of sugar." Another, observing that I was making notes, said, "Put my name down; I answered all Mr. Wood's questions on Sunday; so mind now, Sir, that you speak to Dr. Down, and tell him I mean to have a great treat to-day, and to have a dance with the ladies." Then he said in a whisper, "Mind, I mean *the ladies—the visitors—not the attendants*; please to mind this, for I spoke about it last Christmas; and we are to have a grand band of soldiers to play to-day." Thus, almost all of them manifested their pleasure by some innocent eccentricities. The history-loving cook overhearing us, came running up, and said hastily and was off again—"Tell you what, Sir, I think dancing frivolous; but, I must say, if I do dance, I should like it to be *with the ladies*." Then a boy told me, "I should have won the race last year, but I fell down, and so did not get in so soon." Presently, another wished me to know that he meant to play cricket, and that he was "a good batsman;" at the same time the losing racer hasted to explain, that "his foot knocked against something, and so he tumbled down." All these things were said with an indescribable vivacity and good humour, and showed how thoroughly happy these funny cooks were. A boy who aspired to a pun, said, "We are to have Punch; if any one keeps away Punch, I will give him a *punch*; indeed, it is quite

right he should have a *punch* or two." I only describe these sayings of the merry pupils that some idea may be conveyed to those who have not seen them, of the little restraint they are under, and of the happy way in which they are managed. Thus their affections and confidence are won, which is essential for all instruction and improvement. While a poor idiot dreads his teacher there is no hope of his amelioration, and yet he must be under entire command.

That this command is well established at Earlswood, was soon seen by the way in which the large assembly of pupils took their seats in the dining-hall, after the culinary preparations were complete. They arranged themselves at the tables, coming in in regular order, joyous as were their expectations, with the most perfect quietude. They stood up before their food was served and sung the grace admirably; as well as any other company of juveniles could have done. There is one boy who is excessively pleased if a daily newspaper is given him, which he pretends to read, though he cannot. I gave him one, for which he said "Much obliged to you, Sir; I fully expected you would bring me one." Then he began, looking as if he were reading, "'Yesterday morning, a musician passing down Cheapside lost his tuning-fork, and instead of going home, lost his way'—sad thing, Sir, but I must finish it after dinner;" and so he put the paper in his pocket and commenced eating. Presently, a little merry fellow looked up and told me, "I am a tailor now, but I am going to be a nigger to-night!" meaning that he was to play the bones in the Negro Melody Troupe, which he did, as we shall see, most cleverly. Almost everyone, as he was approached by a visitor, looked up from his plate to boast of what he was going to do. The climbing of the highest pole seemed to be the special object of ambition, and a brisk little fellow asked me—"Now, won't you cry hurrah! for me if I get to the top?" He was interrupted by a mat-maker, who told me, "I make mats now with a coloured border." But all this was said without the slightest infringement of the order or decorum of the table, or any moving from the seat. A very promising and improved pupil came in late, and I asked him how he did, to which he answered, "Very well, but have had hard work all the morning; not sat down once; had no

breakfast, and do not much care for any dinner—I am so busy.” Then a good-humoured boy put in a word; “Sir, I mean to get up my steam for running, and to win the race.” “Poh!” said his next neighbour, “he can’t run; he is all *puff*!” but whether he meant boasting or want of breath, I cannot say.

Thus pleasantly the dinner went on, and the same quiet cheerfulness was diffused over the tables occupied by the females, whose neat appearance was most striking, and their conduct perfect. When I got rid of the droll remarks from all sides, some of which I have given that the scene may be well imagined, I took a quiet glance around to see if I could observe any striking changes in particular cases. I asked for two which I had known in the rough before admission, and both of which, I confess, I thought almost beyond hope of amendment. I should not now have recognised either of them, and do not wonder at parents coming to visit their children not having been able, so great was the change in them, to select them from a group. The first of the two in question was a little quiet, cheerful, neat fellow, eating most properly, and looking full of health and contentment. When I saw him last he was a candidate, and was very troublesome, and as mischievous as an ape. If spoken too, he whistled or hissed in the face of the person addressing him, and occasionally, in spite of vigilance, would break away. He did so one summer’s evening and crept into a lady’s garden, who saw him crawling on all fours amongst the flower-borders, and taking him for a pig, called her footman to drive him away. But before he could reach him, he had disappeared. Soon after, a noise was heard upstairs in the lady’s room; some one went up and found the supposed pig, who was no other than this boy, sitting in the circles of a crinoline he had taken for that purpose, and engaged in pulling her dresses to tatters. Now, the able treatment of Dr. Down and his assistants, has completely changed him into a boy of a quiet, tractable, and pleasing demeanour. The other case was not more promising, for a greater instance of violent and repulsive rejection of all attempts to please or soothe, I never witnessed. He shrieked, rolled in the mud, and repelled all efforts to make friends with him. He appeared to me as he

sat at table, clean, happy, and truly cheerful, shaking hands with evident pleasure, though unable to speak intelligibly. Nothing could more clearly show the admirable treatment of such pupils in this Asylum, than the marvellous transformation in these two most trying and difficult instances.

When dinner was concluded, the pupils all rose at the usual signals, without excitement or noise, and sung the grace in the same good style as before dinner, separating afterwards in excellent order. I took a little stroll with a gentleman of the Board, when the youth so celebrated as an artist, came up to us in smart attire, with chain and watch, of which he was very proud. I soon found that my kind companion had given him the watch, and his shewing it off was in grateful recognition of the handsome present. It is almost impossible to understand any thing he says—his speech is, and always will be so confused—yet I managed to make out that he was employed in making a new model, in iron, of the “Great Eastern,” and a cutter, and in getting a drawing ready for the approaching bazaar, all of which he pronounced “Very fine, very fine.” At last we made out that they were “too fine” to shew on this occasion, for “too many people;” but if we would come quietly with him, he would “fetch key, unlock,” and we should see them. My companion had not only given him the watch, but also the guns for the fine model of a ship of war he had previously made, and he had written to him “Be sure send them real gun-metal, brass no use.” In this letter the ship’s anchor was drawn, as well as the shape and size of the guns, that all might be exact. As we passed along the corridor he pointed to a beautiful Wardian case, full of nice ferns, and said, “I made that; very fine; very hard; took three months.” When he opened the door of his model room the first ship was before us, kept in the highest trim, and the words, “Princess Alexandra,” the name he has given it, nicely painted on the proper part in varied colours. The diagrams he had made, and the models of portions of ships seemed endless, but the gentleman with me, whose occupation requires first-rate drawings, declared he should be quite satisfied with as good ones in his own business for his men to work from. He pointed out to me how capitally he had put the ship’s timbers together for strength. In fact,

this youth is a wonder of ingenuity and skill, combined with an unconquerable inability to reason upon common things, to express himself intelligibly, or to conduct any affairs requiring management, for himself or others; yet his carpenter's work, and painting, and varnishing, and cabinet-making, and other of his handicrafts, are of great value to the Institution, of which he is by no means unaware, entirely identifying himself with it, and thinking, I fancy, that they could hardly get on without him. After we had looked at the model of his original ship, he called our attention to his new one of the great vessel, which is to be thirteen feet three inches long, two feet seven inches wide, and three feet high. He has imagined it complete, and made a drawing of the launching in a pond, himself the most conspicuous figure, the Committee looking on and hurraing. His "boys" are helping behind him, and all the rest of the establishment looking on from a distance. "All kind to me now; everybody," he said, as he shewed his presents, his tools, his model of a new cutter, the drawing of a patent anchor, and things I have not space to enumerate. This unique youth naturally excites great interest, and particularly so when it is perceived that but for the defective organism, which has been so carefully treated and ameliorated, he would have the power in a high degree of real genius, of which the germs are now imperfect, and the development, marvellous as it is, only partial. After he had shewn us his models, and taken us to his pictures in another room, he said suddenly, "Good bye; going to dinner," and he set off to join the attendants, with whom he has his meals. The boys now began to move, and we saw a long procession of them, every one carrying a pretty flag worked in the house. As we went away a pupil met me, and I remarked that I hoped he was a good boy. He replied in a significant manner, "Was a good boy; will be again, if he will let me go into the first class."

The invited visitors and the Board met together in the committee-room to partake of a cold collation before joining in the sports. All were much struck by the animation of the scene from the window of the room, and the manifest enjoyment of the pupils and the spectators who were coming rapidly

in, seemed to add zest to the repast. I never saw a happier and more unanimous gathering around any table; and the acknowledgments made by the chairman to the friends and officers of the Institution, of the appreciation of their zeal and efficiency, were marked by an evident sincerity and good feeling which shewed how well all worked together, and their anxious desire to promote the interesting cause before them. It seemed as if they were all enlivened by the communication of so much happiness, and by the great success of the laudable and effective efforts made in behalf of the most pitiable, and long the most neglected of the human family. As may be supposed, but a short time was occupied by the necessary refection, but that all were eager to go out and witness the various portions of the programme for the day, which were about to come on in succession as announced.

The weather was most propitious and the sun never gladdened a merrier or more curious festival. One of the girls joyously told the matron, "It is a beautiful day; I have been a good girl lately, and I prayed for it, and the prayers of those who try to be good are heard." It was very difficult to persuade all the inmates that the amusements were for them; they regarded the sports as a great treat for the company, and thought it would have been a sad drawback to the pleasures of the visitors if it had been wet—not as spectators only, but as partakers of the fun. Thus mercifully is the pressure lightened of the weight of the severest of afflictions. The bereaved of powers are not painfully conscious of their loss, nor aware of their own exact condition as perceived by others. No idiots have an idea of their own defects or the appearance they manifest in consequence. All our deprivations are thus graciously palliated to those who are bowed down by them, while they awaken a sympathy in the Christian's heart which is beneficially directed to the sufferers, and becomes in its reflection a reward and a comfort to the beneficent spirit, constrained to active good by the love of his Saviour.

Just before the games commenced, the fine band of the Coldstream Guards was seen advancing to its standing-place, the poor idiots greatly admiring the gay uniform. On their beginning to play the "Faust March," a little fellow near me

became greatly excited, and shed tears. On my asking him kindly what was the matter, he sobbed out, "Music, music." I enquired, "Do you like it?" "Oh! yes, yes!" he said, and after a few more tears, became laughingly joyous. The excellence of the playing, with the intensity of the sound, was overpowering to his sensitive system for a moment, till he was able to bear the repeated impression. I only saw one instance of an epileptic fit, which speedily passed off, and I was much struck with the quiet patience and the smiling countenance of the sufferer as he gradually recovered. Dr. Down, who regulated everything, now appeared amidst the pupils, followed by one of them carrying a gong, a stroke or two of which was the signal for the amusement called red, white, and blue, colours on cubes, raised by sticks in the ground, to be thrown at. The boy who pretended to read the paper at dinner came up with a swagger, crying out, as he pointed to me, "Let him see how I will knock one down!" but his aim was far wide of his mark, and he ran off laughing. Though all appeared much pleased, the most of them had literally no distinct aim at all, some throwing with the right hand and others with the left, so that each throw appeared almost a measure of capacity. It was the same with Aunt Sally, stuck upon a short pole, in a bright pink and white dress, a black face, and a short tobacco-pipe for a nose, which the throwers, limited to a certain distance, in vain tried to break with their missiles. None could touch it; but the visitors who tried their hands did not do much better, till at last a member of the Board smashed the pipe with a decided aim, which seemed to please the pupils even more than if the feat had been their own. It was curious to observe that the artist-pupil so often noticed was one of the worst hands at throwing; all his attempts were abortive. But the strangest thing was, that the boy who cried when the music began, came up and hit the pipe, and clapped his hands in an ecstasy. A great orchestra would have failed to make him cry after this. Several pupils of the payment classes were here with their attendants, and I remarked with great satisfaction the manifestations exhibited of confidence and kind feeling towards them. There was no sign of restraint, while obedience was ready, and the pupils seemed greatly to

enjoy those who are obliged to be vigilant over them, joining in their games. Thus the holiday proceedings testified to the judgment, firmness, and kindness of every-day management. The most difficult of all cases, are those who have been allowed by false tenderness to do just as they liked at home. Some of the pupils were of course unable from their peculiar infirmities to do more than look on, and I noticed amongst them now and then a listless one, but by far the majority were quite alive. At croquet they certainly did not shine, but they excused themselves by saying it was their first time of trying it; the best hand was a pay case, who probably had tried the game at home, and who seemed good friends with his attendant, but declared he did not want him, as he was quite able to take care of himself, which, however, was a great mistake. "I have often asked," he told me, "to be left alone and go out by myself, but as they do not choose to let me, I shall not ask any more;" and on he went with his game, only adding, "I want to go to church by myself every Sunday." It was very pleasing to see many of the relatives of the pupils enjoying the day, and to hear them expressing themselves in terms of the liveliest satisfaction. The children often quitted the amusements to sit by their friends, some of them unable to speak articulately, and yet shewing pleasure at the meeting in their own imperfect way. I have scarcely ever witnessed any thing more touching than the kind parents' manner of regarding their well cared for and improving imbecile children, affected deeply at their helpless state, thankful for the pains bestowed upon them. Many a parental blessing attends the Managers of Earlswood. I could not help quietly withdrawing occasionally from the busy crowd, to see those caresses by fond fathers and mothers of their afflicted offspring, and they seemed to court conversation on the subject of their previous and present conditions. But I was soon attracted elsewhere by some excitement, or by some vociferous pupil making his observations, or by some eccentric pupil observing the whole quietly. To such a one I said, "What are you doing, my boy?" "Well," he answered, "I am looking on;" then a boy came up, heated by his play, and seeing me taking notes, told me earnestly, "I shave twice a week now; please to put that in the Report;" so that what

would come next with these lively specimens it was impossible to divine. When "Punch and Judy" came on there was great moving to see the performance, which was well managed by one of the attendants. The apparatus was all of home manufacture, and the front was capitally painted and varnished by the artist youth. As I was looking on, a shoemaker whispered to me, "I have made two pair of shoes for the bazaar; if the Doctor would give me sixpence now and then, and a good strong cup of tea—I don't like it weak—I would make another pair; just give him a hint." The cricket was chiefly played by the attendants; there were a few pupils in the game, but one played remarkably well. A looker-on, who calls himself "Monsieur," and plays French tunes by blowing on the edge of a roll of card paper, exclaimed, "Beautiful! only too many mischiefs—break my music all to pieces—but I like to be here, like it well."

Of all the inmates of the place none are more devoted to their occupation, than those who are employed amongst the animals of the farm and in the dairy, and who milk the cows. They are of course milked regularly at certain hours, and when the afternoon hour arrived, not all the attractions of the fête could keep the two pupils who undertake this duty from their work. They came exactly at the usual time, with two milk-pails each, swung over their shoulders, passed through the crowd to the cow-house, and came back again laughing and proud of their burdens when they had filled them, and went off in high glee to the dairy. A good lesson to many a careless person, might have been learnt as to punctual performance of duty even amidst the fascinations of pleasure, from these two trustworthy youths. Any animals might be placed under their care with a certainty that they never would be neglected for a moment, and that they would deny themselves anything, rather than that the dumb creatures committed to their charge should lack the most minute attention. Give an idiot, fond of such creatures, the charge of poultry, oxen, or pigs, and they are sure to prosper. To see these two poor fellows thus perform their daily task in the midst of the excitement on all sides, and to observe the real pleasure they had in it, was to me, one of the most interesting circumstances of the day. A

poor imbecile has often a great love for animals, and when well treated himself, is soothed and comforted by shewing kindness to them. Every one who inspects Earlswood admires the management of the cows, each in a separate stall with her name at the head of it, and kept admirably clean, while the "farmers," as they call themselves, are as proud of these animals as any winner of a prize at a first-rate cattle-show. I believe the farm and its appurtenances to be a great aid to the beneficent purposes of Earlswood, without which, and the garden, it would be shorn of two of its efficient instruments for good in training the idiots who take to them, and be deprived of the fresh and valuable supplies from each brought every day into the house. I have never heard the pupils say anything with more glee, than "We are farmers now!" and their work in the garden is the surprise of every one who sees it. A great many of them, too, spoke to me of their pleasure in hay-making.

I must, however, return to the particulars of the fête. The gong sounded for the races for prizes, to be competed for by boys engaged in the different branches of industry. The starts were made in good order, and the first prize, for tailors, was won by a pupil who has greatly profited by the treatment he has received, and has manifested a deeply religious feeling; he is altogether a very engaging case, and is an excellent tailor. I have alluded to him in my visits, and see improvement in him after every interval. The second prize, for the shoemakers, was won by "All-puff," notwithstanding the prophecy to the contrary of his neighbour at dinner, and he was not a little elated, and came to me saying, "There! I told you I would win; and should last year, only something caught my toe." The mat-makers' race was won by the fattest fellow in the house, who danced for joy on receiving his prize, to the great amusement of the spectators. He was the same boy who boasted of the beauty of his mat-borders, and he has some curious arithmetical powers. When he showed the money he had won, holding it in his open hand, I asked him how many farthings there were in it; he told instantly the correct number. Climbing the poles followed the races; one youth had been quietly waiting for this, and whispered me,

"I got up last year, *all but*." I told him I expected to see him playing cricket, for he was once affronted with me because I said he could not play well. "Oh," said he, "bother that cricket! the ball hit me on the cheek; but I must go to the pole, for time waits for nobody, good or bad." He was, nevertheless, this time only "*all-but*;" but some of them climbed wonderfully. It was an admirable test of their physical power, and it was remarked by Mr. Alderman Abbiss that he noticed a great advance this year in its general development, as compared with that he had observed on former occasions. Dr. Down was much gratified by this opinion, for he lays great stress on the improvement of the physical capabilities as leading to the drawing forth the latent mental faculties. The gymnastics are a most valuable branch of the Earlswood training. Many reached the top of the pole now; only one last year.

The tea of the inmates of the Asylum on the lawn was a very engaging sight; the grace was excellently played by the band, and while this meal was proceeding the visitors had tea in the long tent. The artist youth followed his mother there, and his attentions to her were extremely affectionate; she has a younger son in the establishment, and the elder brother shows him the greatest kindness. The little fellow, only eleven years old, beat him at one of the throwing matches, hitting his mark while the other missed it, and it was evidently a source of pleasure to him to be so beaten, for he cried out, "good, good, well done!" and laughed heartily. The amiable mother, out of a large family, has had two imbeciles, and spoke to me with tears of gratitude of the benefit they had derived from the Charity, and with a smile of joy at the wonderful artistical and other achievements of her eldest son. The reciprocations of affection between this worthy parent and her children, formed one of the most remarkable spectacles of this notable day. As they were going to the tea on the lawn a nice little girl spoke to me smilingly, and told me she had written me a letter, "for my advice to be a good girl," and added that she should send me another; and was much pleased when I told her she should certainly have that advice. Thus something unexpected and amusing meets one here at every step. Presently a boy came up to me, and boasted, "I have won

five-and-sixpence, two shillings more than the Doctor said I should; I have done the Doctor! Perhaps he was only joking. I say, do you think my name will be in the paper?" Thus the desire to figure in the paper is not limited to the vain who are in possession of their normal powers; the idea of notoriety is cherished by the imbecile and, adroitly managed, may be turned to good account.

The amusements seemed almost endless, for, tea over, there came the gaudy fire-balloon, which rose amidst clamorous cheers, and a jovial scramble for lots of oranges. At intervals the charming military band played most excellent music, and were relieved by the performance of glees by the Earlswood Singing Class, chiefly composed of attendants. Three pupils—two males and one female—were allowed to join it, and sang in perfect time and tune. While they were singing the pretty glee, "Spring's delights are all reviving," the boy with the gong came to the chair on which I was sitting, and placed himself close to it on the grass. Looking up archly he said, "Mr. Sidney, the Doctor has given me the charge of this gong all this day. Now, you see, I must have some sense or he would not have done that." He then told me in a low voice and with a most humorous expression of countenance, that he was very much attached to one of the female singers, but that he had a rival in one of the attendants, adding, "Whip him! I think I shall fight him." I observed, "that will never do." "Well, then," said he, "let the Committee settle it;" and away he went laughing.

After this came the Negro Troupe, who sustained their parts with great humour; one of the pupils played the bones and the other the triangle, and sang heartily. The performance met with vociferous applause, and the zest of the boy with the bones was extreme. He generally carries them about with him, and sometimes rattles them to frighten the birds from the fruit in the garden. One little fellow looked in exquisite pleasure, and was a picture of fun and frolic. Of course all the inmates could not, from their infirmities, take an active part, but they promenaded the grounds, and were taken to the different points of attraction by those to whose charge they were committed. A few races between the attendants concluded the sports of the

day. I stayed till the last train, and was pleased to see the artist youth accompany his mother with great attention to the station, and just before we left he came up to our carriage, with the attendant who was to see him home, and saluted us most courteously. The arrangements of the day were admirably planned and carried out by Dr. Down; and the worthy and intelligent matron, Mrs. Grimshaw, was almost ubiquitous amongst the pupils, with a kind smile for every one. Much of the attraction of the whole place is due to the energy of Mrs. Down, who plans the flower-borders with great taste and skill, and enters fully into the solicitude of her able husband for the pupils. All the day, successions of visitors were shown through the establishment, greatly admiring the whole aspect of the interior. Some well-selected improvements are constantly being introduced, and of late gas has been used for illumination, and is made on the premises. It is hoped a covered gymnasium will soon be accomplished, for it is much required. The neatness of all the rooms called forth warm approbation; and the kitchen, the bakery, the laundry, with its steam machinery, were specially commended. The workshops, too, were visited with much curious interest, though the operatives themselves were having their holiday, but their productions seemed to astonish all who saw them. One capital copy of an elaborate engraving by the artist so often alluded to, which was intended for the bazaar, attracted great attention. He was standing near when some persons were examining it, and said, in his confused way of speaking, meaning to describe the group of things represented, "Big picture, bazaar, man, three donkeys, one horse, big dog, fruit; long time to do, very fine, very hard, three months, three weeks, three days!" This was the best description he could give of the principal figures, and the time it took him to do it, and is a specimen of his way of telling everything he wishes to make known. He can state nothing clearly, either orally or in writing, yet he can make drawings of almost any elaborate portion of a ship or other work, and construct accurately from them. If he has a grievance or a pleasure he makes a pictorial representation of it, and sketches himself looking either discontented or gratified, as the case may be.

"Much better this than writing, they can see what I mean," he says. He is a strange mixture of feebleness and power; but, thanks to the Idiot Asylum, his powers have been developed, and he is a happy, very useful, well-conducted, and I believe a conscientious young man. There are other kindred cases, if not equally striking on account of the greatness of his special powers, and in two particular instances accompanied by a high moral sense springing from the impressions of religion, thus truly raising up "those that are bowed down."

At first sight it may seem singular that I should have thus described a day of idiot frolic and glee, noting down and recording their eccentric actions and sayings. But the whole proceedings have more in them than appears till we reflect upon them; nor could I otherwise make the reader comprehend what such a place is, and what its inmates are. Knowing the apparently hopeless state of idiots, we may imagine the care, the pains, the unremitting attention that must have been devoted to this benevolent enterprise before such results could have taken place. It is easy, and it is revolting, to think of a miserable, drivelling fellow-creature, the scorn of the unfeeling, the butt of the mischievous, neglected by the thoughtless and ignorant, and rendered vicious by ill-treatment; but it can be only fully appreciated by description, or by inspection, how changed he will become when dealt with as he is in this most valuable Asylum. If all the idiots that have never been subjected to such methods for their amelioration, could be collected from any considerable area where such might be found, for a fête, it is too easy to conceive what a day of misery and confusion it must prove. But here were order, obedience, regularity, cheerfulness, mingled with drollery, eccentric sayings and doings, emulation without seeming envy, decent enjoyment of the good things provided, and displays of skill and intelligence, combined with the most encouraging symptoms of genuine gratification. Consider, let me urge, what must have been done to produce such a result, and then the narrative of the idiots' holiday will not be despised. This day may be contrasted with the occasion on which the first-elected idiots were brought together to Park House, Highgate, when mischief, violence, and sulkiness were so horribly mani-

fested as to seem to render all attempts with the degraded beings a hopeless chimera. Mark the fête I have endeavoured to describe—there was not a single instance of misconduct seen the whole of the several hours it occupied. What, then, must have been the amount of medical skill, untiring patience, kindness, firmness, brought into action day after day, determined to yield to no discouragement and to be daunted by no difficulty? There were boys, who, when they came to the Asylum would have tottered and trembled on a plank raised a foot from the ground, now eager to reach the top of a lofty pole, and accomplishing the feat. A short time since the droll creatures, who made the odd remarks I have recorded, would, many of them, instead of thus manifesting their friendly confidence, have shunned a stranger, or sulked and pouted in his presence. It could be no ordinary process that had wrought in them such a metamorphosis, both mental and bodily. Though the success is not equal in all instances, yet I believe there has never been a prolonged stay of any idiot in this Asylum, which has not effected some palpable amelioration in at least his or her capabilities of comfort. An idiot is not insane, and should never be so regarded, but may become worse than insane by improper treatment, while the pains bestowed on him with a view to improve his defective bodily faculties are sure to succeed in some degree, except in the very worst cases blighted by epilepsy, chorea, or water on the brain, qualities hidden by an organism so disordered as to be incapable till improved, of the influence of the will. Diet the constitution wisely, exercise the muscles, strengthen the nervous system, give a healthy character to the blood, and it is most encouraging to see the power of the mind commanding the service of the bodily members according as they more or less approach the normal condition, which in the idiot, however, they cannot ever entirely reach.

If any one should think the account of the proceedings of the Earlswood Fête scarcely of a kind to write and print, I would venture to say that reflection will alter his opinion, for I know of no other gala which suggests topics so instructive and important. The festivals now connected with the poor of this country, the labourers in husbandry, operatives in manu-

factories, children of schools, inmates of establishments for the bereaved and afflicted, are in the truest spirit of the injunction of our Divine Lord and Master, when He commanded those who made a feast to call the poor, the maimed, the halt, and the blind. In the capabilities of enjoyment manifested by the poor imbeciles, we have a most valuable proof of the possibility of ameliorating the condition of those lowest in the human scale, and the consequent duty of aiding in such a truly Christian work. Whatever may be the mysterious reasons why such defective human beings are permitted to exist, the course of the benevolent man is clear, and he will not fail of his reward. We have also demonstration of the wondrous connexion between bodily organism and mental development, teaching the instructors of youth to keep both well in view in their training, or deterioration will result. I believe all present at Earlswood on the day of this fête, felt it to be singularly successful and instructive. It was most gratifying to see the Board, the talented superintendent, the matron, the master, and the whole household, as full of enjoyment as the imbecile pupils themselves, and everyone seemed to depart with the satisfaction which results from participating in cheerful acts of kindness. The managers of the Institution are, I trust, on the eve of extricating it entirely from debt by their own munificence and that of generous friends, and if there should be some kind and indulgent readers of this simple and true narrative who may be induced to aid in promoting such an important object, or in rendering other assistance, the advantage of the fête of Earlswood will have extended beyond the brief hours of keen enjoyment it yielded to those for whom it was principally destined, and, indeed, to all who were present.

THE
ASYLUM FOR IDIOTS,
EARLSWOOD, REDHILL, SURREY.

INCORPORATED BY ROYAL CHARTER.

UNDER THE IMMEDIATE PATRONAGE OF
Her Most Gracious Majesty the Queen.

OPEN FOR CASES FROM ALL PARTS OF THE KINGDOM.

CONTRIBUTIONS towards this National Charity are earnestly requested. There are, at the present time, more than 380 Inmates, and the number of applicants varies from 150 to 180 at each half-yearly election. For a full account of the daily working of this excellent Institution, the Board refer the public and their supporters to two Pamphlets, by the REV. EDWIN SIDNEY, A.M., Rector of Cornard Parva, Suffolk, entitled, "Visits to Earlswood," and to their last Annual Report, both of which may be had gratuitously on application to the Secretary, Mr. Nicholas, at the office, where subscriptions will be thankfully received, and every information cheerfully supplied.

An Annual Subscriber has one Vote for Half-a-Guinea, and an additional Vote for every additional Half Guinea. A Life Subscriber has one Vote for Life for Five Guineas, and an additional Vote for Life for every additional Five Guineas.

The Elections occur regularly in April and October.

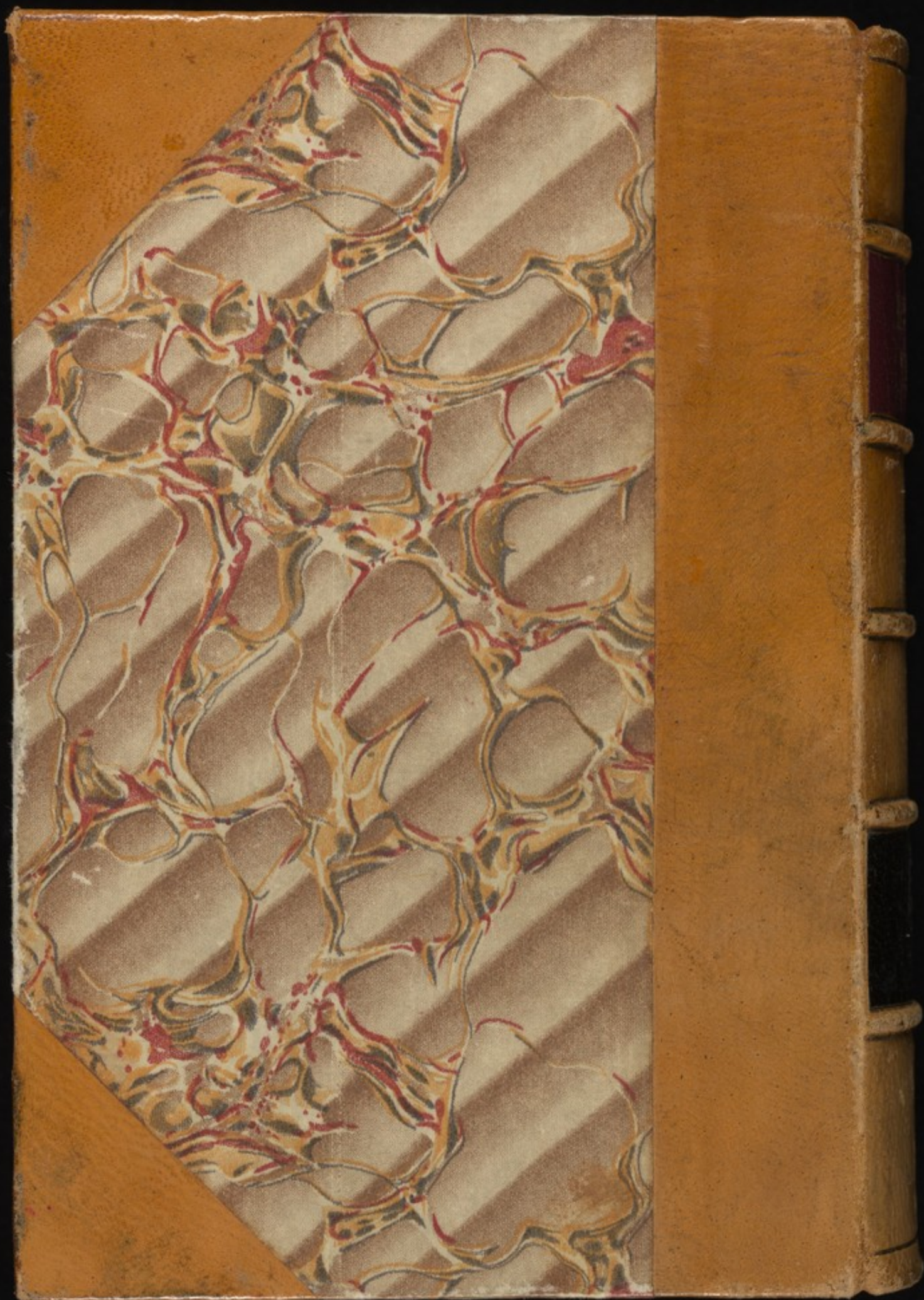
The Asylum is open to visitors. Tickets may be obtained at the Office.

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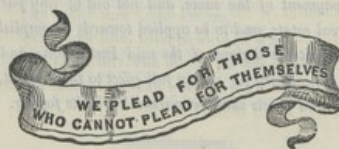


Table with financial data, including columns for amounts and a list of names (e.g., Mann, Taylor, Westall) under the heading 'Auditors'.

THE ASYLUM FOR IDIOTS.

INSTITUTED OCTOBER 27, 1847.

INCORPORATED BY ROYAL CHARTER, 1862.



ESTABLISHMENT:
EARLSWOOD, RED HILL, SURREY.
OFFICE—29, POULTRY, LONDON, E.C.
1865.

GEORGE CUNY, GRESHAM STEAM PRESS, BUCKLESDURTY, LONDON.



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