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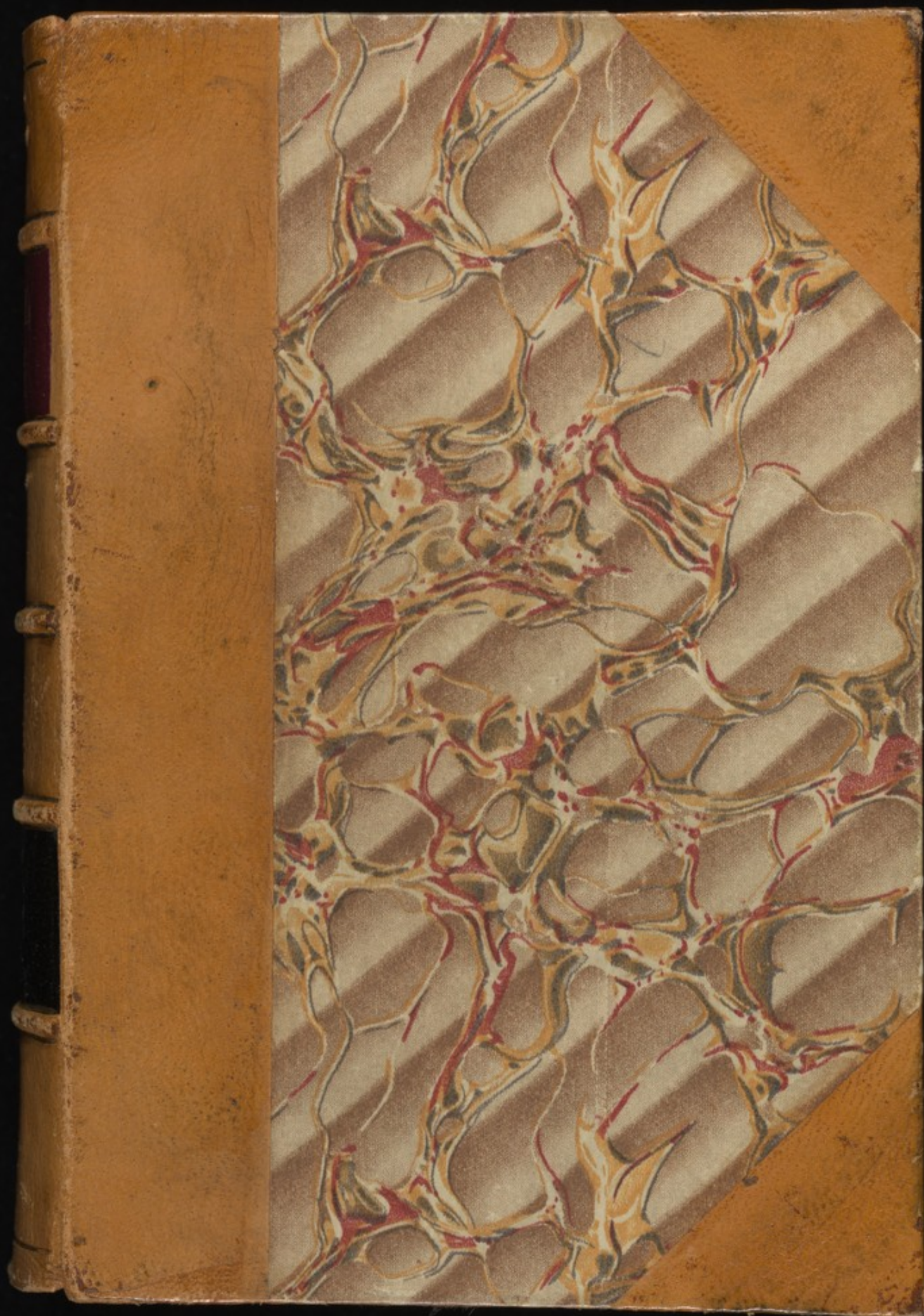
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EARLSWOOD AND ITS INMATES:

A LECTURE

DELIVERED AT THE LITERARY AND SCIENTIFIC INSTITUTION,
CROYDON, SURREY, ON MONDAY, DEC. 22, 1862:

BY

THE REV. EDWIN SIDNEY. A.M.,

Rector of Cornard Parva, Suffolk, and Chaplain to the Viscount Hill.

Published by the unanimous request of the Audience, and of the
Board of Management of the Asylum.

"'Tis not decreed the Idiot born,
Should a poor Idiot die."

CROYDON: PRINTED BY GRAY AND WARREN, HIGH STREET.

1863.

EARLSWOOD AND ITS INMATES

A LECTURE EARLSWOOD AND ITS INMATES

DELIVERED AT THE LIBRARY AND RECREATION INSTITUTION

GEORGE STREET, ON MONDAY, DEC. 22, 1892.

The importance of the subject of the present lecture, touch-
ing the pleasure I felt in the prospect of addressing
you, I may say, you have no doubt seen from the railway,
the spacious and tasteful reception I am about to describe;
and I have heard with astonishment that it has excited a
benighted interest in the subject. How truly it merits that
interest I have already stated in two "Notes," which may
have been read by some of my audience. I shall avoid re-
peating what may be found in those pages, and shall more-
over confine myself strictly to the working of this asylum,
which will sufficiently occupy my time, without diverting to
other European or American institutions. I have twice
last summer accompanied persons to Earlswood, whose task
and I have endeavored to render valuable service to
the cause; and I believe, till they inspected the establish-
ment for themselves, they had a sort of suspicion that in
my zeal I had at least slightly exaggerated as to its aspect
and efficiency. After spending some time amongst the
inmates, more than one of them remarked to me—"You
have not the least exaggerated; indeed, you have hardly
said enough;" and, without an exception, they all expressed
both surprise and admiration. For myself, having no concern
with the official duties of the Board, I go as an unbiased
visitor, and was one of the first to point out the necessity of
new and larger workshops, and certain other changes the
managers are most anxious to effect, and some of which are
in progress. Every fresh inspection, I find some attractive
improvements, and am more and more impressed with the
arrangements and the energy of Dr. Down, the matron, and

EARLSWOOD AND ITS INMATES.

THE acceptance of the subject of the present lecture, much enhanced the pleasure I felt in the prospect of addressing you. Many of you have no doubt seen from the railway, the spacious and tasteful erection I am about to describe; and I have heard with gratification that it has excited a benevolent interest in this place. How truly it merits that interest I have already stated in two "Visits," which may have been read by some of my audience. I shall avoid repeating what may be found in those pages, and shall moreover confine myself strictly to the working of this asylum, which will sufficiently occupy my time, without adverting to other European or American institutions. I have twice this summer accompanied persons to Earlswood, whose rank and station have enabled them to render valuable service to the cause; and I believe, till they inspected the establishment for themselves, they had a sort of suspicion that, in my zeal, I had at least slightly exaggerated as to its aspect and efficiency. After spending some time amongst the inmates, more than one of them remarked to me—"you have not the least exaggerated; indeed, you have hardly said enough": and, without an exception, they all expressed both surprise and admiration. For myself, having no concern with the official duties of the Board, I go as an unbiased visitor, and was one of the first to point out the necessity of new and larger workshops, and certain other changes the managers are most anxious to effect, and some of which are in progress. Every fresh inspection, I find some attractive improvements, and am more and more impressed with the arrangements and the energy of Dr. Down, the matron, and

those who are under their direction. The architectural taste shewn in the building, good as is the effect, will not, on close examination, be found expensive in its simple details; while the spaciousness of the interior, and its thorough ventilation, commend themselves to cordial approbation. A handsome corridor runs along the whole length of the range of apartments, which are entered from it. It is not only remarkable for perfect cleanliness, but it is rendered extremely attractive by the various objects it contains, which receive frequent additions. From the ceiling there are suspended birds in cages of tasteful forms, gold and silver fish in glass globes, and baskets of ferns and of flowers, which impart an air of cheerfulness and life most beneficial to the pupils. On the walls are prints in frames and numerous drawings, several of them by one of the youths, whose special powers as a copyist of the finest engravings, and skill as a modeller and cabinet-maker, have been developed from what appeared to be a condition of hopeless imbecility. His late Royal Highness, the beloved and much lamented Prince Consort, who laid the first stone of the asylum, and afterwards opened it, condescended to permit me to shew him one of these drawings, "The Siege of Sebastopol," partly original and partly copied from the "Illustrated London News," and which is now framed and hung up in the reception room. He examined it with his usual kind attention, and with evident surprise asked me, "Is it possible that the person who drew this could ever have been an idiot?" My reply was, "That there was no doubt of that, since it had taken some months to make him distinguish the difference between a dog's head and his tail; and besides, he never could learn to write, nor read, nor speak properly." I hope I may be allowed also to mention, that, after this, the Queen was graciously pleased to accept one of his copies of a well-known picture by Landseer, and to send the poor fellow two guineas for pocket money; which, under due advice, he partly laid out, and partly saved for future use. These are the appropriate decorations of Earlswood, the interior of which has an air of pleasantness which entirely harmonizes with the charm of its situation, the neatness of its gardens and lawns, the vigorous growth of its evergreens, and the pastures and fields of its farm. In the walks which surround this demesne, groups of the pupils may be constantly seen taking their exercise in fine weather, and more than twenty of them may be observed cheerfully working, or attending on the cows, or carrying to the house the produce

of the dairy. The care of domestic animals, and of fowls and birds in an aviary, has a happy effect, and affords them the greatest enjoyment; and it is most pleasing to observe their kindness to the dumb creatures, and their anxiety to supply their wants; while their remarks upon these objects of their willing solicitude, are often most humorous and original. There is scarcely one so occupied who will not tell an inquirer "I am a farmer," with pride and glee. The neatness of all, without and within, is connected with every kind of comfort that can solace the most forlorn of conditions: and I rejoice to be confirmed in this opinion by the high authority of the Lunacy Commissioners, who report—"though much necessarily remains to be effected, the present state of this establishment shows how earnest and meritorious have been the exertions of the medical superintendent, since whose appointment improvements have been steadily progressing; and we notice with pleasure the efficiency with which the principal officers assist him, and the superior class of attendants provided for both divisions." Indeed, it is not easy to say which is the most satisfactory, the division for males or that for females, in both of which improvements are being continually projected as increasing experience suggests them. I never approach this refuge of the unfortunates of the human family without admiration, and a sense of thankfulness that it exists amongst us—a model for one of the most remarkable experiments of Christian philanthropy; and which is not only an inexpressible boon to its afflicted inmates, but the source of some of the most important lessons that could be learnt by inquirers into the more recondite phenomena of human physiology, the development of the intellect, and the best methods for bodily training and mental education, which are more intimately connected than we have hitherto sufficiently perceived.

I. I cannot prolong these introductory remarks, but must at once request your kind attention, in the first place, to the peculiar characteristics of these pitiable imbeciles for whose benefit Earlswood was erected. Let me observe in the outset, that it is a great mistake to place the idiot and the insane in the same category. This was perceived by Mr. Locke, long before the subject was viewed in its present clearer light. He regards idiots as "those who cannot distinguish, compare, and abstract," and points to the importance of "an exact observation of their several ways of faltering," for discovering their state and its causes. On the other

hand, he regards madmen "not as affected by want of quickness, activity, and motion in the intellectual faculties, whereby they are deprived of reason," like what he calls "naturals," but as suffering "by the other extreme." He considers that "having joined together some ideas very wrongly, they mistake them for truths, and err as men do who argue right from wrong principles." Though it may be said that the insane do not always "argue right," yet the separation between the two unhappy conditions is most just. I do not wish to repeat here the observations on idiocy made in a former lecture to the Society of Arts, eight years ago; but I may add to them what I have since gleaned, in confirmation of my views which remain the same.

In treating the question of idiocy, it seems to me far from true philosophy to argue from physiological theories, the aspect of which is perpetually varying in the advancing light of new investigations; but that the safest way is to use general terms, which must remain the same amidst every change of science. If therefore I define the condition of an idiot as a consequence of corporeal infirmity, hindering more or less the manifestation of the ordinary powers, I cannot easily mislead. It is, as Mr. Locke says, more observation of their ways of faltering that will lead to correct ultimate conclusions, and true induction must ever wait for a sufficiency of facts before it comes to generalization. It is clear, however, that where there is a partial paralysis, sluggishness, inactivity, torpor, the nervous and muscular energy is defective, and the circulation in the extremities will probably be found feeble; where there is restlessness and vehemency, the contrary is the case. These corporeal defects are attended by peculiar unhealthy looks, by an awkward and irregular gait, by an involuntary flow of saliva, by automatic motions of the limbs, head, lips, and tongue; while the ear heeds not the instruction it receives, and the eye sees the light, but makes no definite distinction of form, colour, or size; and the organs of speech make no certain sounds. Gross appetites, and tastes, and passions, are often the only perceptible instincts; or again, every will and power is veiled by a vacant *inertia*. What is still more remarkable, as we shall see hereafter, there exist strong distinctive specialities and powers, while others are lost. Some, too, are blighted in the bud, for ever gone, and capable only of being made more comfortable.

These mournful specimens of defective human nature exist throughout our own country and other nations, in numbers

of which, till these efforts in their behalf commenced, the most assiduous in endeavours to palliate the maladies of our race had no idea. The governments of all civilized communities will do well to make a statistical inquiry into their existence; and the experience gained in this and kindred institutions, will enable them to consider how most effectually to provide for the necessities of a class long ignored by the public, and often in private treated most cruelly. Ignorance, prejudice, and other false notions of humanity, have shrouded them in painful darkness, the shadows of which we desire to chase away. Even Luther would have persuaded the Elector to put an idiot to death, as a brutal creature full of the devil; and there are in this day rationalists who pronounce the amelioration of their condition no benefit to mankind, since they are natural human dregs, and so ought to continue. But the enlightened Christian philanthropist would fain discover a compensation, diminution or remedy, for all deprived of any faculty; and believes that the sight of a fellow-creature's bereavement or degradation tends to demoralize those who let him remain without help or pity. The very idea of an idiot is repulsive to those who have not reflected on his condition; and many persons have said to me, that they would not see the asylum on any account. When such individuals have been persuaded to go there, it has been curious to mark their surprise, at finding many of those horrible objects, in their preconceived ideas, forming a lively and happy family.

Stupor in some faculties, as said previously, does not prevent the activity and manifestation of certain isolated powers, as wonderful memory, music, drawing, and handicraft, to which I shall have to allude. The humour, too, of idiots, is often inimitably keen and pointed, while it is made more telling by singularity of manner. I said to one, "You shall not go to church next Sunday." "Why not?" was his quick inquiry. "Because," said I, "you did not behave well last Sunday." "How do you know?" he asked eagerly; to which I replied, "I saw you." With the drollest possible look, he instantly rejoined, "You should have looked at your book, and you would not have seen me."

Not many weeks ago I made a visit to Earlswood, accompanied by a clergyman of distinction, and we were greatly amused by one of the pupils, whose extraordinary memory for all he has read, I have noticed elsewhere. First he gave us a long history of Thomas à Becket; and then of Talleyrand, whom he described as a person of infinite cunning,

always saving himself from every chance of a scrape—and this in no complimentary terms. On our being unable to refrain from laughter, he looked up at us as archly as possible, and said, “He was one of the clergy”—not having forgotten his being Bishop of Autun. The humour with which he made this remark was irresistible; and then looking at the costume of my companion, he observed, “You do not dress now as the clergy did in the reign of Richard the Second; they were fine, indeed, then.” In most respects, except that he helps to cook in the kitchen and makes shoes, this poor funny creature is an absolute imbecile; yet he remembers and can recite accurately, whole pages of books of history.

We certainly do not yet know the mystery of that organization, which is accompanied by such a strange modification of intellect. Generally, in idiots, the temperament and health of the body is found abnormal, and accompanied by numerous accessory infirmities. Often there is a peculiar configuration of the skull, and a strange expression of face, and not unfrequently an inequality in the two sides of both. There is constantly an ill proportion of body and members, attended by bad habits: the head, the wrist, the hand, the lower extremities, are not duly controlled by the will; and the chest in many is very bad. We do not therefore wonder at the spasmodic movements, the epilepsy, the chorea, and the faulty prehension, deglutition, mastication, touch, smell, perception, feeling, which constantly attend their condition. Nor can we hope to find in such cases powers of attention, will, comparison, judgment, reflection, inference, combination, precision, invention, foresight, nor, alas! morals. The absence of all these may be expected in any idiot. We may also look for a vacancy of thought, a frivolous fancy, an eccentric bearing, and, in most respects, a wretched degeneration of a rational and immortal being. No idiot meets all the necessities of nature normally, but their dispositions vary extremely, from the mild, affectionate, and tractable, to the depraved, obstinate, filthy, and disgusting. If, before such training as that adopted at Earlswood, a set of idiots were placed at table, a scene very different from the pleasing one which may be daily witnessed in its dining hall, would present itself. Some would be found merely sucking, others would snatch their food and bolt it like dogs, or would put burning morsels into their mouths and reject them, or bite their fingers instead of their fare, and cry out, or make horrid noises, being as speechless as the brutes. There are idiots,

too, whose feeling seems to be entirely blunted, as is instanced by the boy, once an inmate of the establishment belonging to this charity at Highgate, and alluded to by Mr. Dickens, who thrust a buckle through his tongue, felt no pain or inconvenience, but was as vain of it as an ornament, as a woman of Polynesia would be of a nose-ring. Some idiots are much affected by changes of weather; the state of the barometer somehow remarkably influencing their nervous system. In short, the phases of idiotcy are illimitable, both bodily and mental, and the pointed remarks idiots make are perfectly inexplicable. For instance, one of them had heard that I had said in a speech, they could not play at cricket; so he criticised me by observing, "It is very easy for a man to speak, but he often says what he does not know." However, he certainly could not play at cricket, though that game has now been achieved by many. A clerical friend of mine was shewing some of the little ones his hunting watch, which he blew upon, and then touched the spring, as if it opened by his breath: some larger boys were looking on, and said, "He looks like a clergyman, but he practices deceit." In fact, it is necessary to be most careful as to what is done or said before them, for they often remember everything and make strange observations, especially as to any promise the fulfilment of which may have been forgotten. Yet I have seen a nice little fellow who spoke well enough, but could not recollect what he had said for a moment; the impression was gone directly. It should be known by all visitors, that they are frequently much pained by thoughtless remarks upon themselves. Music generally delights them; an obstreperous pupil may often be calmed by an air played on some instrument, and the moping will be roused by it. A few have considerable imitative powers, and can mimic most drolly. What is still more curious, an impracticable one will manifest the oddest conceivable inventive powers. There is a boy now in Earlswood who seems as if he could learn nothing, and yet has quite a passion for getting hold of a newspaper; and nothing seems more welcome to him than the gift of one. He will take it with a most polite bow, and offer to read a portion, all of which is pure invention, and generally has reference to some imaginary accident and an inquest. The last time I saw him, the secretary handed him a paper he had brought from London; and he directly took it up and commenced thus, as fluently as if he had been actually reading:—"Shocking accident in the City. A fat lady with a very large muslin dress, was run over in Bishops-

gate street by an omnibus, and her dress was torn all to tatters and scattered to the wind: an inquest was held at the public house to which she was carried; verdict, *a shower of pig's feathers.*" All this was pretended to be read, with a serio-comic voice and countenance: in itself it is very droll nonsense; but what peculiar circumstances of body or mind gave origin to it in a complete imbecile, might be a study for the most profound inquirer. I remember another idiot who had a like fancy for a paper, but he only seemed to read to himself, while he could not read a word; muttering all the time, "He'll be hung, he'll be hung!" Evidently some early impression as to a capital crime and its punishment, had been made on him.

Singular as these facts are, and in the latter cases harmless, still all are truly pitiable. Yet there is one peculiarity in great numbers of these melancholy specimens of the human species, which gilds the dark cloud in which they are enveloped. It is this, that there is nothing of which most of them to whom a ray of light can be imparted, are so susceptible as of a feeling sense of religion. Indeed, I believe Earlswood owes much of its success to keeping this constantly in view, and to the touching and simple lessons of the Gospel, most anxiously imparted to those whose state in the gradations of their malady enables them to receive such instruction, which they seem to remember with more interest than anything else. The late Joseph John Gurney published the following lines as written by an idiot: and from my own observation, I am by no means surprised at the authorship. The lines are:—

Could we with ink the ocean fill,—
 Were the whole earth of parchment made,—
 Were every single stick a quill,
 And every man a scribe by trade:—
 To write the love of God above
 Would drain the ocean dry;
 Nor could the scroll contain the whole
 If stretched from sky to sky.

In other publications I have given several instances of piety in poor idiots, from which I have learnt to perceive the mercy and the beauty of the words of the Lord: "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for their's is the kingdom of heaven;" a beatitude still realized by many regarded perhaps as outcasts from the privileges of earth.

I have now given as much time as can be allowed, to the description of those from whom the inmates of Earlswood

are selected. I must next address myself to the methods adopted, which cause it to merit what I once heard a servant there say of it emphatically, "It is a happy home."

II. These methods are, in fact, practical inferences from a careful and enlightened study of the bodily defects of those to whom they have been so successfully applied. The principle of action has been, that there is *mind* where the bodily functions are deranged, but that this derangement prevents its due manifestation. To an inexperienced observer, an idiot of almost any grade, first brought into the asylum, would seem a hopeless case; but a few months within its walls, and a change will be found mostly to have been induced, which was beyond all expectation. Out of thirty-one discharged since last year, their times being completed, only two went away unimproved: seventeen had received great benefit; and twelve—seven boys and five girls—had so much profited as to be able to work for their livelihood; some of them have indeed obtained regular employment, the girls in domestic service, and the boys as carpenters, tailors, and mat-makers. Connect your thoughts of such idiots as you may know with these happy results, and you may conceive the amount of judgment, patience, and skill, brought to bear upon this work. The able physician who superintends Earlswood, has most properly devoted himself to inquiring into the physical deterioration of imbeciles; and to marking the accompanying variations in the respective cases of mental phases. Hence, he has carefully studied the methods of rectifying, as far as possible, their corporeal anomalies: and from the observation of these, on the reception of any case, he can almost foresee the prospects of mental improvement. All persons who have carefully studied the subject, will tell you, that there is scarcely a bodily organ which is not materially different in idiots from its usual condition. The functions of the skin are out of order, respiration and perspiration are faulty, nutrition is imperfect, innervation wrong, and the entire form more or less defective. Perhaps about twenty per cent. will be found to slaver at the mouth; an infirmity, except in childhood, old age, or disease, seldom seen in other persons. These views entirely confirm the wisdom of applying, in the first instance, methods which tend to the amelioration of the physical condition of idiots. How much vigilance is required for every case, can only be conceived by experience. The first reception of an inmate needs the greatest tact; and it is surprising how practice has en-

abled the officers of the asylum, to obtain a speedy and decided influence over those whom it would greatly puzzle ordinary persons to know how to settle at all, unless they were poor miserales lost in apathy. The physician has to study the bodily defects, and the constitution; the matron to caress and yet to make obedient; the attendants to watch; the master and mistress to teach; and every official to perform some most difficult duty. All their ailments, real or apparent, every wrong propensity, all evil habits must, as far as possible, be discovered. I say apparent, because there are now in the asylum idiots, received as hopeless mutes, who can talk and sing too; and their ability to do so has only been accidentally found out. Circulation and respiration must be improved, and then appear better muscular power and nervous force, with an opening of the clouded mind. For the amelioration of the defects in muscular power, the requirements are,—a due system of gymnastics, beginning with the simplest imaginable movements when necessary, and managers of the exercises perfect in patience. Such have seen boys, who, when they began, could neither stand, nor balance, nor grasp anything, converted into creatures almost as active as monkeys, and in the fullest enjoyment of the apparatus that was at first to them a horror and a dread. Their pleasure, too, in accomplishing feats of agility, is most amusing, as they invite attention with “Look here, look here!”—“See me!” The fact is, the bodily motions have become obedient to the mind, and both are improved. Numerous idiots are totally unable to use their members, even when not defective in structure, in the commonest offices of daily life. They cannot get themselves into their clothes, nor button, nor buckle, nor tie, to say nothing of folding, washing, and combing. All this is accomplished by extreme patience and perseverance; and the higher powers of being able to work in trades, follow in time. His late Royal Highness the Prince Consort, to whom I have previously alluded, as taking a vivid interest in these efforts for the poor idiots, asked me if I did not think fencing would be an excellent exercise for the advanced pupils. I replied, “Nothing could be better, Sir:” on which he gently said, “Why?” when I observed, the reason was that “every good voluntary muscular movement requires the exercise of will and attention, and so promotes the health of the mind.” His Royal Highness was kind enough to say, “I see; a very good reason.” We have senses, mind, powers, and cannot educate them till we call forth activity, intelligence, and will.

It must be remembered that in an idiot there is not any such thing as a compensatory sense. We cannot compensate for loss of sight by feeling, nor for loss of hearing by vision, as in the instances of the blind and deaf mute. An idiot's seeing is not perception, nor his hearing comprehension of the distinction of sounds. It is a task beyond all ordinary conception to elicit and educate the senses of a real imbecile; his touch, his vision, his hearing, his taste, and his smell—besides inducing habits of order, decency, and obedience. It would weary you to enter into details, but by the most enduring patience and endless repetitions, the teacher proceeds until, if any capability exists in the pupil, his task is more or less accomplished. For such duties, the instructor must be a teacher born, naturally endued with uncommon gifts; so that I ventured before a Cambridge audience, the vice-chancellor presiding, to say, that when the care for idiots became general, it would be more easy at first to find professors for the talented youth of our universities, than teachers for the least gifted of our species. The education of the speech has always been a great difficulty; and the paper of Dr. Down, addressed to the "Lancet" in the beginning of the present year, on the condition of the mouth in idiocy, is very curious and instructive. It was the result of the examination of more than two hundred cases, none of whom could be regarded as able to manage their affairs, or as responsible beings, though capable of much culture—learning to write letters, the practice of mechanical arts, decorous deportment, music in a degree, and even languages—one of them, with scarcely a gleam of judgment, reading French and Latin well! In many of these the palates were inordinately arched, and in some the two sides were unsymmetrical; in others, the palate was excessively flattened, while in some it was prominently keeled; and in a few the palate bones did not meet. Their dentition also was found to be peculiar, and the tongue in an abnormal condition; sometimes the size being inordinate, and occasionally larger than common. That therefore so many are mute, or semi-mute, or indistinct in utterance, is no wonder; but, as I have mentioned elsewhere, the apparently mute break out into speech under strong excitement, either of anger or pleasure, as the long speechless boy who exclaimed in plain language, that some one rubbed out the writing on his slate; and the boy thought to be dumb from birth, who sung chaunts in the night after hearing them in the day. There are other defects connected with the region of the mouth, but sufficient have been mentioned for a popular dis-

course. Many inventions have been applied to the purpose of speaking lessons, and with more or less success. The present mode is ingenious. A number of familiar objects are provided, generally three for each elementary sound, shewing it in three different positions. For example, if the sounds were those of the letter *t*, the teacher would first hold up a *top*, which the pupils are made to name collectively; then a *letter*, and, lastly a *pot*. For *d*, he would shew a *dog*, a *ladder*, and some object coloured *red*. Hence, when a learner can name every object in the collection, he can utter the required sounds correctly. The result has been that many who could scarcely articulate a sound, can now speak intelligibly and with tolerable correctness. The two hardest common words to the majority, have been found to be *thimble* and *velvet*. Of course various lessons are regarded as tests of the mental powers, and none is better than learning to tell the hours of the clock. Last June, out of 134 pupils, only 3 could tell the time to a minute, 12 to a quarter of an hour, 22 only the hour, and 97 could not tell the time at all—except meal times! Yet there was a most remarkable boy at Highgate, who, without any clock, (and I have tried him myself,) knew the time within five minutes, night or day. The great Lord Stowell had precisely the same special faculty, and required no watch; and what that peculiar power is, and whence it is derived, is beyond the present reach of any physiologist. It is a great point to make the lessons amusing and instructive at the same time, of which the shop-lesson is a good specimen. The Report of the Commissioners in Lunacy remark on it, “We liked especially the shop-keeping lessons, introduced since our last visit, by which the boys, while amused by a game in which a shop or counter is set out with various articles in daily use, at which some act as buyers and others as sellers, are at the same time instructed cleverly in the elements of knowledge as to the value of goods and money, number, and weights and measures.” When the shop is set out with the usual fittings, the drawers having their contents legibly marked on the outside, a boy is selected to take the part of shop-keeper, who steps behind the counter and solicits custom. Several hands are directly held up by the pupils in the gallery, and one boy is selected to come down and buy. The shopman reads the labels on the drawers, till he finds the article asked for. It is most curious to see what a puzzle it often is to find the correct weight; when that is found the class is well questioned upon it, and indeed, on every other weight the shopman touches before it is put into the scale. Then there is further

perplexity as to getting the correct quantity of the required substance, as, for instance, sugar, into the scale. When the quantity is large, they will often begin with little spoonfuls, and when at last the balance approaches, it is sometimes a thorough poser to know whether they are to remove some of the commodity or to add to it. All this causes a regular excitement, till the due proportions are achieved; and then comes the moment of pay, which is one of great excitement, the whole class trying to check every step in the reckoning. Combinations of pence and half-pence are trying things to get over; and sometimes the purchaser, who cannot calculate them, uses cunning, and tries to pay with a silver coin, and asks for change, thus throwing his perplexity on the shopman. I have twice witnessed this unique scene, and was never more interested, and, I may say, amused.

It is impossible for me in this division of my lecture, to describe the details of all the methods adopted for awakening, directing, and educating the dormant faculties of imbeciles: I can simply give a general idea.

On the reception of a pupil, the first step is to inquire, if possible, from friends, what is the history of the case, and to discover the peculiar traits of character, and the predilections and repugnances of the individual. Certain objective facts, as weight, height, shape, condition of the organs of sense, and powers of prehension and locomotion, are carefully registered. Then follow personal observation and comparison of habits and propensities, with the account received from friends. These are the *data* for treatment, and instructions in accordance with them are given to the attendant or nurse. The first efforts are directed to the eradication of bad habits—such as tearing the clothes, for instance—a very common practice with the idiot—and others, which need not be enumerated. After this, if there exists sufficient power, the pupil has proposed to him occupations, the result of which brings him praise instead of blame. Such are, unravelling cocoa-fibre for matting, splitting rods for baskets, or preparing horse-hair for mattresses. Where the pupil is indolent, morose, or stubborn, the example of good fellow-pupils is tried, and the imitation of their conduct is encouraged. If a pupil proves incapable from low physical power, the physician's skill is exercised on diet, attention to the condition of the skin, and due medical treatment. The physical state is of the greatest importance, and the appliance of gymnastic exercises is regulated by it. They are, as before noticed, of great value, and are directed first to the upper extremities, and then to the lower and

trunk. These lessons are enlivened by music, and while the feeble pupils are led up inclined planes or over narrow planks, the advanced ones jump, vault, and run along horizontal ladders with great glee and agility, though perhaps at first they trembled and tottered at a very little elevation above the ground. At present the gymnasium is entirely in the open air, but a covered one is in contemplation, and is extremely desirable. A great step is gained in the training of an idiot, when his muscles are brought to obey the will. All processes should be very simple at first, and the expression *cannot* must never be allowed,—but only *he does not*. The pupils are often placed where they may watch others, and latent tendencies to some particular employment are thus frequently educed. Those unfit for one thing sometimes take to another and succeed. The lame may become shoemakers, those whose sight is defective, basket-makers, and such as shew a fondness for animals mostly do well on the farm. Idiots should not be collected for improvement in too small numbers, as example and stimulus are found to act most beneficially. The hopeless cases can only be placed under supervision. I should weary you if I detailed the ways in which the teachers promote imitation, educate the senses, elicit the faculty of speech, direct the ear and the eye, and graft upon these improvements the desired instruction in whatever else it is expedient the poor idiots should learn, as well as to induce them to recognize authority and obey command. You could hardly think of a well-considered appliance for such purposes that is not found at Earlswood; and nothing can exceed the gentleness, firmness, and judgment manifested in its use. In the different schools for writing, drawing, reading, arithmetic, object lessons, and other instruction, everything is provided that can quicken the interest of the learners, both male and female; and this will appear, and be more attractive to listen to, when I come to the successes which have crowned these labours of true benevolence. You will naturally suppose the aspect of teachers and pupils rather different from what would be seen in ordinary schools, where most of the learners have healthy corporeal faculties already brought under subjection to the will. Besides, the imbecile must never be over-worked in any way, for he, as well as the pupil in the normal state, comes under what Sir Benjamin Brodie called his “simple rule,” that to make the most of the intellectual powers, the animal system should be maintained in a state approaching, as nearly as possible, to that of perfect health; so the times of school are never allowed to be fatiguingly long, but are

exchanged for the other employments or exercises in quick succession. After a time, it is interesting to remark how the pupils themselves persevere, struggling, as it were, with their own defects. Some one, rather too hastily, said to a boy of this kind, "You will never learn"; to which the poor fellow replied, "Wait a little, patience is a virtue." He has advanced, and actually superintends the little imbeciles. To those patient with them, the inmates become deeply attached, and a change of servants is often regarded, on this account, with much anxiety. They love those who tenderly care for them, and there is great truth in the words usually sung at the Anniversary, and which thus express the pleasing fact of the idiot's attachment:—

"Use him fairly, he will prove
How the simple heart can love;
He will spring with infant glee
To the form he likes to see:
Gentle speech, or kindness done,
Truly binds the witless one."

Nothing is more remarkable than the cheerful aspect of the schools, workshops, and other portions of the establishment, where the various employments proceed. The learners enter into the work of the classes in reading, writing, arithmetic, and other lessons, with surprising evidence of pleasure, and curiously, sometimes, do the rules in arithmetic quickly and accurately, yet often without knowing their names properly or their meaning. Thus, a droll girl being asked what rules she was in, and which she did cleverly, replied, "Con-
trition, Consumption, and, I think, Distraction;" yet she could add, subtract, and divide well. Often, also, unexpected and odd answers are given in the object and other lessons. For example, a girl was thus questioned—"What do you do with your eyes?" the reply was, "Go to sleep with them." Time, however, fails me to tell you more of these particulars. I must now come to the last part of my subject—the successes which have crowned these patient labours of the philanthropic friends and teachers of the idiot.

III. In the specimens * before you there is ocular evidence of some great things which have been accomplished. The desk from which I address you was made by one of the pupils. Not only are the beautiful drawings now shewn, the unaided performance of a youth previously alluded to, but

* Numerous specimens of the work of the pupils were exhibited in the room, having been sent for that purpose by the Board.

the framing also is the work of the same hands. You see here many examples of neat handicraft, all performed by the once apparently lost and degraded children, the butts of the thoughtless youth around them, or avoided, or neglected, or maltreated by those who now see the duty of cherishing them. On inspecting these examples of progress in the different employments, you will not be surprised to be told that the wardrobes of the house are furnished by the industry of the pupils. Male attire, female garments, sheets, and mats, to say nothing of fancy needlework, some of which are before you, are all made in the house. More than this, a boy who before he came to Earlswood was obstinate, sulky, impracticable under attempts to teach him, who carried dirty books and papers in his pockets, and was followed constantly by boys who teased him, is now affectionate, simply and touchingly conscientious and religious, and so industrious, that he reads his bible well, writes nicely, draws, is a good tailor, and has lately become so expert a mason that he is employed in building certain new works belonging to the asylum. Three cases went away last year which are now entirely self-supporting. One of these, a boy who appeared sullen and good for nothing, could not learn the simplest things, and would not try, made a sudden start, and became a good carpenter. He at length advanced so satisfactorily, that Dr. Down encouraged his self-reliance, by sending him to the shop to purchase hinges and other matters, which he did properly; and the result is, that he now resides in lodgings at Notting Hill, and earns four shillings a day. At this time in the establishment, fifteen of the pupils are employed in the carpenter's shop, twelve are shoemakers, fifteen are tailors, and five make mats. Nine pupils work on the farm, and the same number in the garden; and manifest the greatest diligence and zeal. Fourteen boys assist the attendants, and help to carry on the house-work, in which they take singular pride and pleasure; cleaning shoes, knives and forks, and plates, or scrubbing heartily. Seventy-three are in the industrial training school, and many making progress. Twenty girls perform the duties of household servants; and thirteen are really adepts at needlework. Really good slippers have been made by one girl who, when she came to the asylum, had no use of her hands; neither did she know a letter, yet she reads well; and is so good a singer, that she can take a part in a trio. To see the pupil cooks in the kitchen is most curious; they are dressed in white culinary costume, and enter into the prepa-

rations for dinner with all their might. The droll youth, who repeats whole pages of history, is quite absorbed in these duties, which he does not always like to have interrupted. One day, when busy with some meal used in cooking, a person inclined to test his historical memory, asked what he knew of the Rye-house plot, when he answered, "He could not stay to tell, for he was engaged in the *meal-tub plot*:" at another time, he would have gone on for a long while with an accurate account of it. Indeed, no one can ever guess what these eccentric beings may say; but you could not pass an hour amongst them without hearing something unexpected. A visitor praised the beautiful work of one of the females, which really deserved commendation, adding good-humouredly, "You are quite a genius:" "No, no," she said, "I am too fond of a red herring or a crab, and a drop of good tea, for that." I once went up to a group of boys in the company of a well-known physician, and observing they looked coldly at him, I said "Why do you not pull off your hats to the doctor?" "'Dare say," cried out one of them with the most comic expression, "we don't like salts and senna."

I relate these anecdotes, that you may picture to your imaginations the peculiarities of this interesting refuge, for those who are so fortunate as to become its inmates: but I may say, generally, with truth, that all the pupils are improved, though not to the extent of the better cases adverted to, yet in personal appearance, health, habits, and comfort. A majority are found to have increased in vigour, decency, self-control, perception, speech, knowledge of objects, and proper demeanour. Many have become able to manifest powers of every description, more or less; as to observe, to behave well, to think on various things fairly, to maintain good habits, to engage in the pursuits and occupations of which you see results in the things shewn this evening; and above all, in the sense of duty and the exercises of religion, with a lively consciousness of right and wrong. A person who was with me on a visit to the asylum, for instance, heard the mason I have mentioned as working so cleverly at the new buildings, rebuke a boy who was desirous to conceal a fault he had committed, by saying, "Deceiving the master when you are doing wrong, is adding sin to sin." Who would have looked for such an observation from one, who at his coming under the care of the officers of the asylum, appeared hopeless in all respects, and had been the game of the young and thoughtless!

The routine of the day generally terminates at eight o'clock, when most of the pupils go to bed; but advanced classes of boys and girls are allowed to sit up for some time longer. The boys read books from a circulating library, or play at draughts; and the girls employ themselves in fancy work; and to deprive them of this privilege is regarded as a severe punishment. Some of these were hindrances when they tried to help, and could not at first be left alone for an instant, besides being often pilferers and story-tellers; but they have become cheerful, intelligent in many respects, and useful. Under the enlightened modes adopted, no case need be abandoned.

A few months ago Dr. Down was sent for to London by a medical man, that he might see and advise relative to an idiot living with his mother and sisters, but who was past all control. He was filthy, obstinate, and so dangerous as to inspire constant dread. Dr. Down recommended his being sent to Earlswood—an advice reluctantly yielded to; and he came in a state horrid and wretched. For a time he actually refused food, and his menaces were outrageous: but they were met by gentleness and kindness, till at length he was won, and in the space of a month he became quite tractable. Report was made to his anxious parent, who was alarmed, fearing violent measures had been used; and she came to the asylum. And though it was not thought prudent for her to have an interview with her son, she was placed where she could see him. To her astonishment she witnessed him cross the garden quietly, and heard him asked to go and gather a rose for Dr. Down, which he did; and his amazed parent saw him pluck the flower, and hand it pleasantly to his benefactor. At the end of two months the mother was allowed to visit the boy, and she spoke with joy to her altered son, who is now to be found cheerfully working in the carpenter's shop. Brute force would have ruined the poor creature; kindness and gentle perseverance won him; and if Itard had used the same methods with the wild boy of Arveyron, found rolling naked in the snow, and treated him as an idiot instead of a savage, he would not have failed.

One lad never could be induced to do anything; all he said was, "Want to be a gentleman." But he showed a fondness for music, and when he found that several of the tailor boys could play on the concertina, he was brought to join them, and now makes excellent trousers.

Twenty boys were taken to the Exhibition; and the artist youth, who had previously made a fine and correct model of

a ship, was so interested in the naval display, that he is now constructing a model of the *Great Eastern*, thirteen feet and a half long; and it will be a marvellous example of special power. Many pupils delight in being taken to the Crystal Palace, and have actually a Savings' Bank for securing sums put away for that coveted excursion.

You could not visit a livelier scene than Earlswood often exhibits. In the summer a balloon goes up once a month, and on this occasion there are processions headed by the band, in which some of the pupils are performers. A great kite, made by the boy who has been noticed before as artist, carpenter, and modeller, is sometimes flown with similar indications of pleasure; and tea is spread out upon the lawn, when the weather permits, to add to the enjoyment. In the winter, concerts take place: Punch and Judy are brought on the scene, well performed by an attendant; and every species of in-door recreation is resorted to,—one of the great pleasures being the magic-lantern, brightly and attractively shewn. When this instrument is used to exhibit diagrams of natural history, botany, or astronomy, it becomes a valuable method of instruction; and I have repeatedly, when at Essex Hall, given the inmates lectures by its aid, with a superior collection of slides, kindly lent by the eminent firm of Messrs. Carpenter and Westley, who have generously supported the Institution. Where it is known, so much interest is taken in the garden by eminent nurserymen, that they readily send handsome supplies of plants for the borders. Out of the frames have come cucumbers which have gained prizes at shows, to the great pride of the gardeners. Print-sellers, of high standing, have also given beautiful prints for the rooms and corridors, which are framed by the pupils, and are suspended on the walls surrounded by their own works. Nor have generous friends forgotten instruments of music, even to the extent of a grand pianoforte, which is used at the concerts in winter. At all the meetings for instruction or amusement, the behaviour of the pupils is most striking; and at the dining tables, whether in the public hall, or private rooms, though there are of course eccentricities, nothing indecorous appears; and to hear the grace sung before and after meals, never fails to elicit sensible emotion from strangers who may be present.

It is time, however, that I cease from these descriptions of a place, where such successful experiments on the seemingly obliterated faculties of the defective imbeciles have been made, and which are the most recent that have been engaged in by

the friends of the most pitiable of the human family. Yet I must ask to be permitted to say a few concluding words on the moral and religious benefits which have accrued. I have, more than once, been present and assisted at the hour of prayers, and have been greatly delighted with the attention manifested by many, and the decorum of almost all who attend. The slightest undue attitude or gesture on the part of the younger children, is voluntarily repressed by the others, who are farther advanced, by a shake of the head or a movement of the hand. In being questioned on the simple truths of the gospel, their answers have often surprised me; and it is certain, that under their influence, lying idiots have become truthful, and pilferers honest;—nor does the impression leave them when they quit the asylum. Only a few weeks ago, after a public meeting in Sheffield, a gentleman brought up to me a young man who said he knew me. I recognized him as an old pupil, greatly improved under training, but not a first-class case. I enquired how he went on; and the answer was, "Pretty well in all respects, but he is extremely fond of his religious duties." I could adduce several examples of a similar kind, but I may content myself with assuring you that reports from other Institutions, especially those in America, are precisely similar. More than one case I have myself seen in illness, from which there was no hope of recovery; and have witnessed a patience under pain most exemplary, and have heard the poor sufferers say their hope was in their Saviour, and that with a gentleness and a smiling expression of countenance that I think would have moved any heart however cold. In every way, therefore, the enlightened friends of the poor idiot have had their reward; and I am convinced, that not only are the results cheering to the Christian philanthropist, but they are deserving of being presented to a scientific audience, as likely to have the most important reflex influences on our knowledge of ourselves. The psychologist and physiologist may find ample scope for study here; and those who train the young may learn not a little of the importance of connecting due care of the body, with the development of the intellect. Long confinement in crowded schools, learning lessons by fatiguing methods, instruction merely by printed books, too long stretch of the young intellect, absence of attractive illustrations, sternness and severity on the part of the masters, and other educational errors of past days, will find, in the experiments made so happily on the imbeciles, their corrections; and may be exchanged, through hints derived from them, for a better

system. We may learn, also, from experiences with those in the condition it is the object of Earlswood to ameliorate, that while mind exists independently of bodily organs, yet our acquaintance with its manifestations being limited to corporeal conditions, we cannot study it without reference to them, and an acquaintance with the physical influences exercised upon it, affecting its modes and instruments of expression.

Thus these charitable and enlightened efforts for the restoration of almost obliterated human faculties, may become extensively instructive as to the best methods of perfecting those which are in the normal condition; and that which was first designed to be a limited act of benevolence, may become, as indeed I see much reason to think it will, not merely the pioneer to universal care of the feeble-minded, but a boon for the entire human race.

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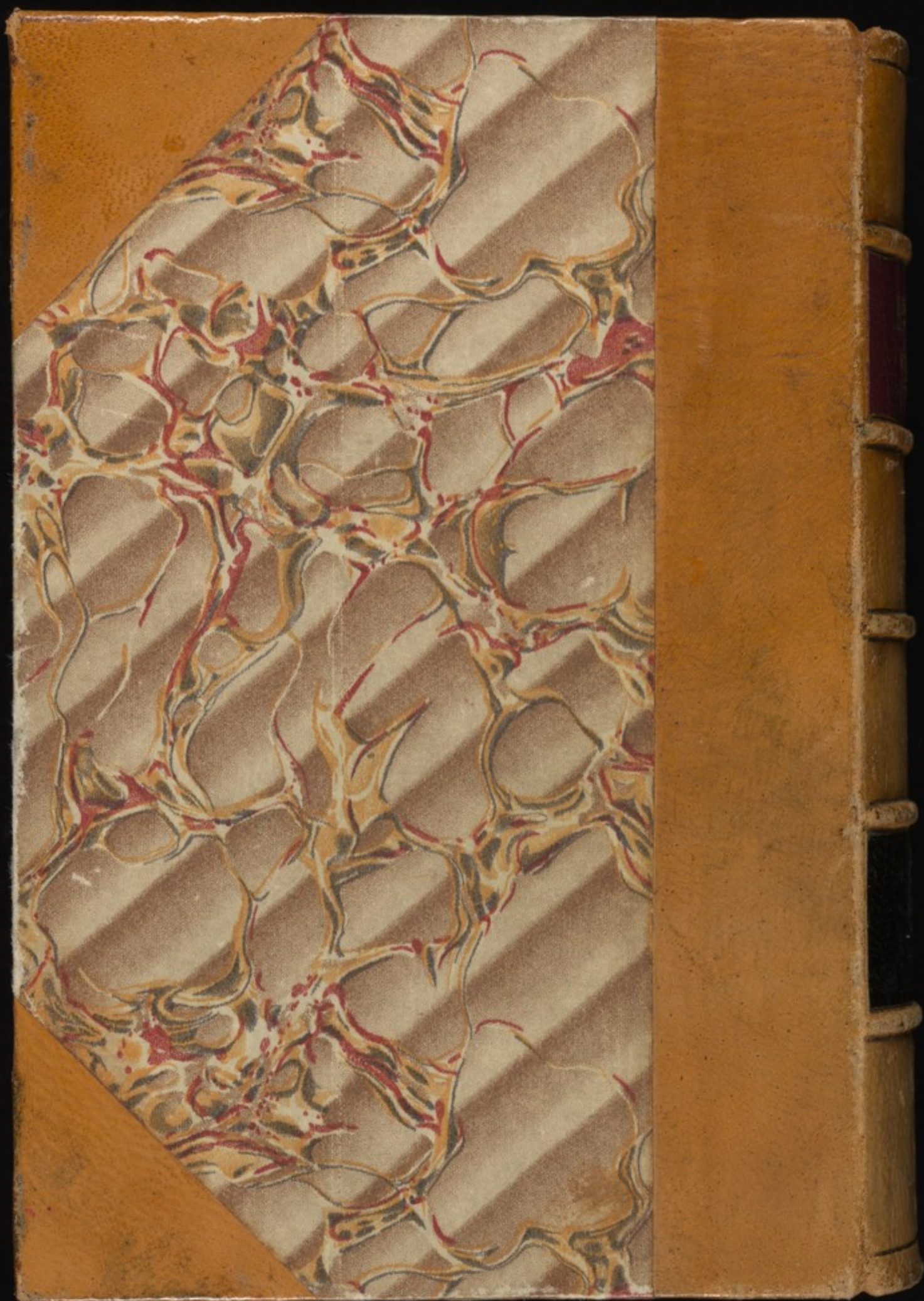
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