

**Pamphlet titled Glasgow Royal Asylum, Gartnavel, by D Yellowlees,
Physician Superintendent**

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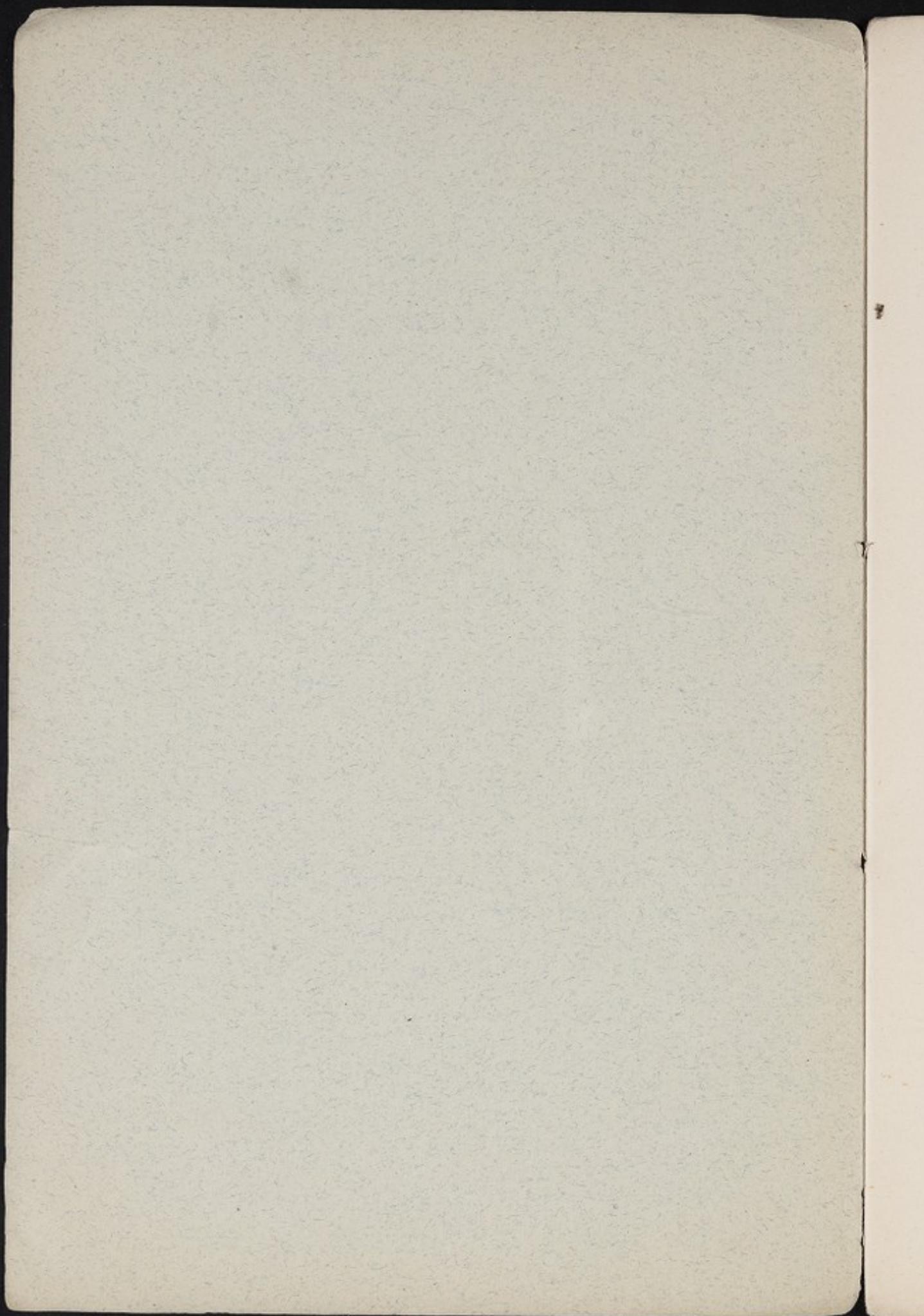
GLASGOW ROYAL ASYLUM,
GARTNAVEL.

BY
D. YELLOWLEES, M.D.

Reprinted from "The Medical Institutions of Glasgow."

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PRINTED BY ALEX. MACDOUGALL, 81 BUCHANAN STREET.

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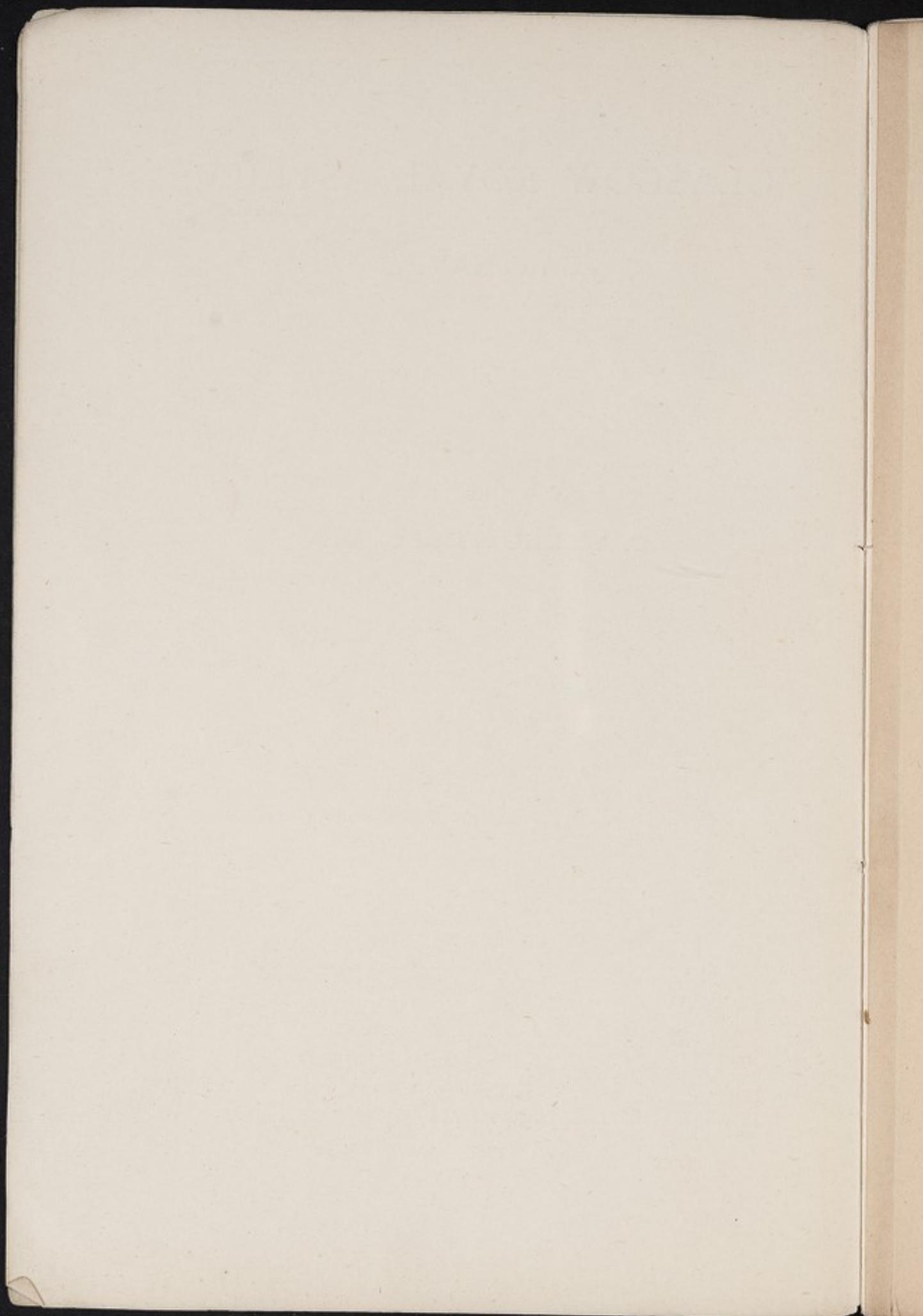


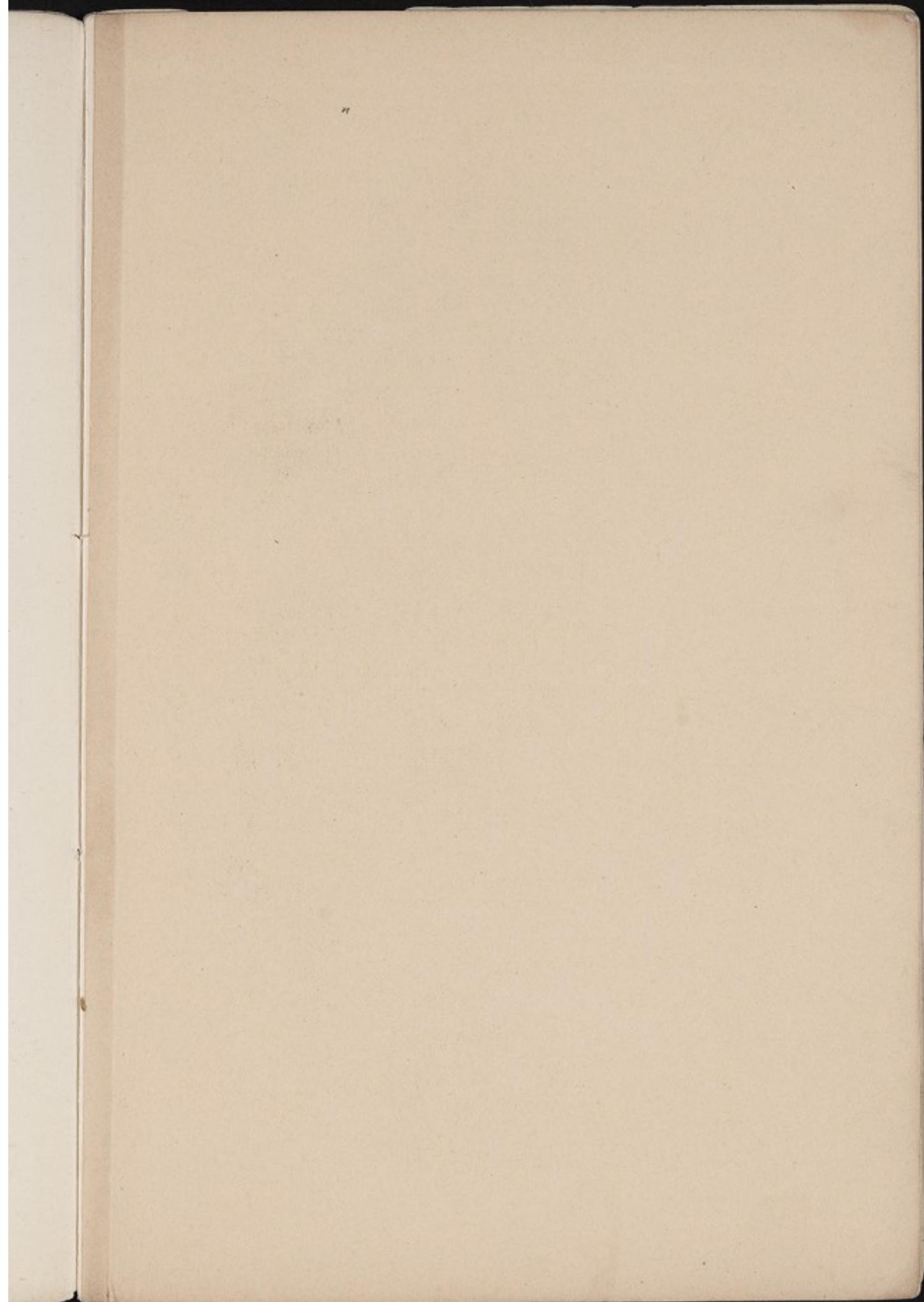
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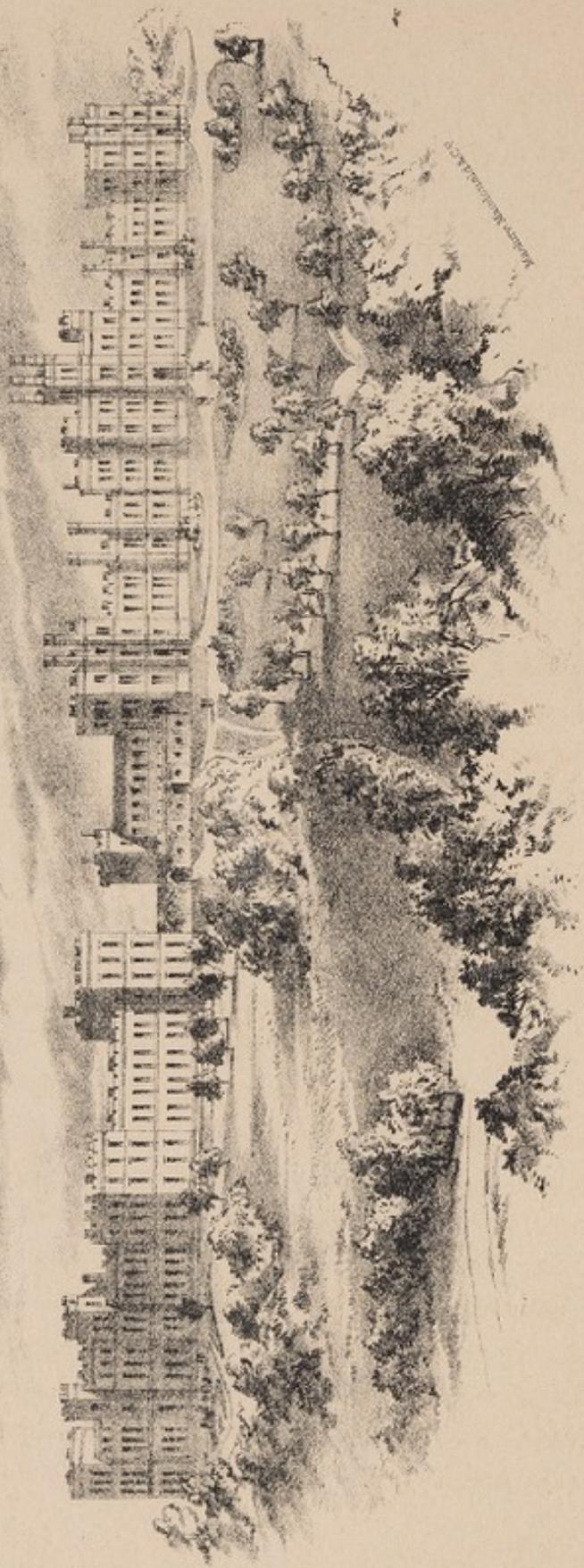
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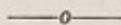






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SCOTLAND is singularly fortunate in the provision it has made for the care and treatment of the insane. The *pauper* insane who require asylum care are all accommodated in rate-provided asylums, where no profit requires to be made out of their maintenance; while of the *private* patients who require asylum care about 90 per cent are accommodated in the Royal Asylums, where no proprietary interests exist, and where the thought of a dividend never hampers the administration. These Royal Asylums of Scotland are seven in number, and are conveniently distributed throughout the country at Aberdeen, Dundee, Montrose, Perth, Edinburgh, Glasgow, and Dumfries. They are all public institutions in the sense that they are the property of the public, by whom their directors are appointed, and that they exist for the public benefit, no individual deriving any direct profit from their revenues; but they are private institutions in respect of the privacy the patients enjoy, and in respect that they derive no support whatever from Government or from public funds, but depend entirely on the boards paid for patients. At their foundation and in their early history they of course depended largely on private

benevolence, but this source of income is no longer required, as they are now self-supporting. They correspond somewhat to the Lunatic Hospitals of England, but they seem to do more for the lower middle class, and to aim rather at being useful to the masses than at becoming luxurious homes for the few.

The Glasgow Royal Asylum may be taken as a type of these Scotch institutions, and its history resembles more or less that of the others. The records show that this institution owes its origin to the philanthropic exertions of one gentleman—Robert M'Nair, Esq. of Belvidere, Glasgow,—who was latterly for many years collector of H.M. Customs at Leith. While acting as a director of the Town's Poorhouse, the heart of this good man was touched by the wretched condition of the insane folk, who at the beginning of the century, whatever their social position, were kept in "the cells" at the Poorhouse on the banks of the Clyde; and, as improvement of the cells was impossible, he determined to procure for them better care and treatment elsewhere. After years of personal solicitation he collected £7,000. The foundation-stone of a "Glasgow Asylum for Lunatics" was laid in 1810, and in 1814, ten years after Mr. M'Nair began his benevolent labours, the institution was formally opened by the Lord Provost and Magistrates of the city. The directors consisted, and consist still, of 14 representatives from various public bodies in the city, 8 from the general subscribers, and the physician superintendent of the Asylum. They were formally incorporated by the city authorities, and their incorporation, thus constituted, was, ten years later, confirmed and established by Royal Charter under the title of "The Glasgow Royal Asylum for Lunatics." The institution thus established was for many years regarded

as a model asylum, and enjoyed the highest reputation. In course of time it became quite unequal, notwithstanding repeated enlargements, to the demands made upon its accommodation, and the extension of the city around it interfered with the privacy and amenity of the institution.

In 1841 the need for more and better accommodation had become urgent, a new site three miles from the centre of the city was selected, the original buildings were disposed of to the directors of the Town's Hospital, and the present Royal Asylum at Gartnavel, in the western suburbs of Glasgow, was opened in 1843. The institution is built in the Tudor Gothic style, and stands in a lofty position in the centre of its pleasure grounds, which, with gardens, extend to 66 acres. It consists of two separate houses, for the higher and the lower class of patients respectively, with all the needful administrative buildings. The plans were prepared by Mr. Charles Wilson, architect, under the direction of Dr. Hutcheson, then physician superintendent, with whom the architect had visited, by desire of the directors, all the best institutions of the kind in England and France. The construction is more institutional and concentrated than would be adopted now, but it was greatly in advance of the time when it was erected nearly fifty years ago, and even now will bear comparison with many more modern asylums. It accommodates 500 patients, at boards varying from the pauper rate to £400 a year or upwards, according to the accommodation, care, and service required.

The history of an asylum for the insane which dates from 1814 must have many points of interest, and in its oldest records it is striking and instructive to find all the best treatment of to-day foreshadowed and approved.

In its earliest Rules, dated 1814, "the keepers," as they were then called, are absolutely forbidden "to strike or

strive with a patient," or "to subject a patient to confinement, privation, or punishment of any kind, without express instructions from the physician or superintendent." To deceive, or terrify, or irritate a patient in any way is equally prohibited. Further, "No keeper shall indulge or express vindictive feelings; but, considering the patients as utterly unable to restrain themselves, the keepers must forgive all petulance and sarcasms, and treat with equal tenderness those who give the most and those who give the least trouble." A weather register is to be carefully kept by the superintendent "to determine how far the weather does or does not influence maniacal paroxysms." Case books shall be regularly kept by the physician recording the treatment and progress of each case. "All will be encouraged to employ themselves in useful occupations, in innocent amusements, and, above all, in taking regular exercise in the galleries, and, whenever the weather permits it, in the open air."

In 1815 the Report laments large expenditure, but justifies it because "it proceeds from the principle of sacrificing everything to the comfort and cure of the patients." "If the system of locking up the patients for hours together, or of putting them in chains whenever the keepers could not attend, were to be adopted, some of the keepers might be spared; but instead of being a dwelling of comparative comfort, the Asylum would then put on the appearance of a jail; patients would become sullen or vindictive; and the chance of recovery would be reduced almost to nothing." "Medicine avails little without such a regimen as may restore the patient to proper habits and soothe his troubled passions." "Harmless amusements, wholesome exercise, and useful labours" promote contentment and recovery. Two looms have been erected for the patients' use, and spinning, knitting,

and sewing are engaged in. One patient is rewarded for his skill and industry in weaving by having part of the money he earns placed in the savings bank in his name. Some patients write poetry, others work at mathematics, and others are public readers, to whom their fellow-patients listen with pleasure. The public are invited to contribute books or magazines for the use of the patients; also "draught boards or back-gammon tables; in short, anything which can serve to occupy the attention, and call off the thoughts from the objects or associations which disturb them." The Regulations of the Asylum are distributed throughout the West of Scotland, that ministers, doctors, and magistrates may be fully informed as to the mode of sending patients; and when patients are discharged, written directions for their care are sent to the relatives. Already the difficulty of finding and retaining good attendants is experienced, and a justly high estimate is expressed of the qualifications required.

In 1816 the Report tells of the pleasure afforded by little concerts at which the patients are the performers, and of letter paper being liberally supplied to all who desire to write, the risk of unwise letters going out being accepted on "the principle of removing from the Asylum, as much as possible, all appearance of a prison." The various occupations of the patients are detailed, and, "every encouragement is given to the exertions of industry, because nothing contributes so much to promote a cure or prevent a relapse." The importance of early treatment is insisted on, and the need for relieving the institution from the accumulation of incurable cases.

In 1817 the Report tells of a patient being allowed to visit her friends in town, to attend church, and to take another patient with her, and of former patients returning voluntarily to the Asylum when they feared a relapse. It speaks of

erroneous ideas as to the value of drugs, recommends the prevention of violence by a show of overwhelming force, which makes resistance hopeless, and advises the leaving of food within reach of a patient who is refusing his meals that it may be taken unobserved. A billiard room and a bowling green are added to the list of amusements. The difficulty, which exists to this day, of getting reliable information about patients sent to the Asylum is ground for serious complaint.

In 1819 Divine service, with a sermon as in church, was first observed in the Asylum.

In 1820 the advantage of out-door labour is strongly urged, although patients are also employed in all the various handicrafts. Gardening is recommended as an occupation for gentlemen patients. Cottages, or suites of apartments separate from the ordinary wards, are to be provided for high-class patients, where "they will be permitted to enjoy the greatest possible degree of personal liberty consistent with the necessary treatment."

Thus in the very earliest years of this institution we have the essential principles and an ample earnest of all that is best and most enlightened in the modern treatment of the insane. To Dr. Cleghorn, its then physician, all honour is due for so worthily laying down the great lines on which the Asylum has ever since been conducted. It is a genuine pleasure to recall the Christian sympathy, the enlightened philanthropy, and the practical wisdom of the founders of this institution. Their views were far in advance of the age, and supply a wholesome rebuke to the too prevalent spirit of to-day, which weakly worships novelty and notoriety, and loudly proclaims a discovery when it has only called an old truth by a new name.

At the same time these old records contain curious reminders of ideas and methods long since obsolete. In

1817 one of the officers is specially thanked by the Directors for inventing a leather muff which is better, and much less irksome, than a strait waistcoat, while "it is more seemly than handcuffs of iron, and in cold weather less disagreeable"; and in 1819 we read that "rotatory motion, by means of a whirling chair, has of late been tried in a great number of cases, and in some of them, with wonderfully good effect."

The wise and philanthropic spirit of the founders was well sustained by their followers. Thus, in 1826 Dr. Balmanno, a very able physician, and worthy successor to Dr. Cleghorn, writes:—"The treatment has been conducted as formerly. Due attention has been paid to those two important points—viz., the greatest practicable degree of personal liberty, and the use of proper means of employment. We are inclined to concur in opinion with those who judge that lunacy, like fever, has a certain course to run. And as the malady in most of our patients, when they are admitted, is in the progress of that course, a great part of our treatment consists in the use either of the means of moderating excitation, or of promoting convalescence. The most useful of these means, especially for the latter purpose, are such amusements or occupations as may engage attention and afford some degree of bodily exercise."

It is needless to follow the history of the institution, or to detail the many changes, improvements, and additions which the years have brought. The spirit in which the institution was begun has always animated the management, and throughout its history the first aim has been the welfare of the insane. Now that the administration is no longer hampered by want of funds, nothing is withheld that can promote recovery, and the benefits of the Institution have been placed within the reach of the less affluent classes by reducing the payments to the lowest practicable rates.

Great and unknown charity is constantly exercised by the directors in the reduction of board in necessitous cases.

The financial history of the institution has been chequered, necessary expenditure having outrun the available funds at the erection of both the original and the present buildings. At one time the debt exceeded £45,000, and this amount the directors had to borrow on their personal security. Not until 1879 was this building debt extinguished by the margin of profit which each year contributed, and the institution now possesses a reserve fund of £28,000 available for any extraordinary expenditure, and for pensions.

The present buildings afford suitable accommodation for 500 patients—300 private cases and 200 paupers. This great field is available for clinical instruction, the Physician-Superintendent being the University Lecturer on Insanity.

From the opening of the Asylum in 1814 till the close of 1887, 14,765 insane patients have been received for treatment, and of these 6,476, or 43·8 per cent, have been discharged recovered. The percentage of recoveries on the admissions of last year (1887) was 45·1, while the deaths were 5·5 per cent of the average number resident, and 4·1 per cent of the total number under treatment.

The benevolent exertions of the founders of the Glasgow Royal Asylum have thus borne noble fruit. The institution has been an unspeakable blessing to multitudes, and age has not lessened its efficiency and usefulness.

