

Report from the committee of the House of Commons appointed to examine the physicians who have attended His Majesty, during his illness, touching the state of His Majesty's health.

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First
Report of the
King's
Physicians

1788

Handwritten text in a cursive script, likely a signature or a short note, written in dark ink on aged, yellowish-brown paper. The text is arranged in three lines, with the first line being the most legible, appearing to read "John Smith".

887

R E P O R T

FROM THE

C O M M I T T E E

OF THE

H O U S E O F C O M M O N S.

THE

REPORT

OF THE

OF THE

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Parliament, House of Commons,

R E P O R T

FROM THE

C O M M I T T E E

OF THE

H O U S E O F C O M M O N S,

APPOINTED TO

Examine the Physicians who have attended

H I S M A J E S T Y,

DURING HIS ILLNESS,

Touching the State of His Majesty's Health.

Wednesday, Dec^r 10th 1788.

D U B L I N :

PRINTED BY P. BYRNE, No. 108, GRAFTON-STREET,

M,DCC,LXXXVIII.

R E P O R T

FROM THE

COMMITTEE

OF THE

HOUSE OF COMMONS

APPOINTED TO

EXAMINE THE PETITIONS WHO HAVE APPLIED

IN 1854

TO THE HOUSE

OF COMMONS

IN 1854

IN 1854

AND

IN 1854

IN 1854

R E P O R T.

The Committee appointed to examine the Physicians who have attended His Majesty, during His Illness, touching the State of His Majesty's Health; and to report such Examination to the House;

HAVE, pursuant to the Order of the House, proceeded to examine the said Physicians; which Examination is as follows:

Doctor *Richard Warren* called in, and examined.

Whether, in his Opinion, the State of His Majesty's Health is, or is not, such as to render His Majesty incapable, either of coming to Parliament, or of attending to Public Business?

His Majesty's State of Health is such as to render Him incapable of coming to Parliament, or attending Public Business.

What Hopes has Dr. Warren of His Majesty's Recovery?

The Hopes of His Majesty's Recovery must depend on the Probability of Cure; and that can only be judged of by what has happened to others in similar Cases; and, as the Majority of others have recovered, there is a Probability that His Majesty may recover likewise.

Can Dr. Warren form any Judgment, or probable Conjecture, of the Time which His Majesty's Illness is likely to last?

No.

What Degree of Experience has Dr. Warren had of the particular Species of Disorder with which His Majesty is afflicted?

In the Course of 27 or 28 Years Practice I have seen many Persons disordered in a Manner similar to that of His Majesty; some have soon recovered under my sole care; when that has not happened, I have always called in the Persons who make this Branch of Medicine their particular Study, and have sometimes attended in Conjunction with them, but have oftener left the Patients to their Care, and have afterwards attended in Consultation only, and in many Cases not at all.

Whether, when Dr. Warren speaks of others in similar Cases to that of His Majesty, he means to include all the different Species of the Disorder, or to confine himself to that particular Species with which His Majesty is afflicted?

I do not mean to confine myself to that particular Species with which His Majesty is afflicted, but to include all the different Species of the Disorder.

Can Dr. Warren state how many particular Species there are of this Disorder?

No.

Can he state any distinct Species of the Disorder?

Yes—though the immediate Causes of the Disorder cannot be ascertained, yet some of the remote ones are well known.—Injuries received from Blows or Falls—sudden Affections of the Mind—the Effect of Fever.—Besides these, there are several Internal Causes of this Disorder; namely, Exostoses, Indurations, and Ill-Conformation of the Parts.

Whether

Whether this Disorder may not sometimes exist, when it cannot be referred to any of those Causes which Dr. Warren has specified?

Yes.

Is His Majesty's Disorder, in your Opinion, referrible to any of the Causes enumerated by you, or can you assign any known Cause to which, in your Judgment, it is referrible?

I cannot assign His Majesty's Malady to any Cause whatever, as I have not Data sufficient to ground an Answer upon.

In those Species of the Disorder, which are not referrible to any assignable Cause, is the Probability of Cure greater or less than the Probability estimated on all the Species taken together?

I cannot tell.

Can Dr. Warren state what the comparative Probability is, in each of the Causes which he has assigned?

The Disorder proceeding from External Injuries, such as Blows, is frequently cured if Medicine be expeditiously applied.—When the Malady arises from sudden Affections of the Mind, it is very frequently cured—when from the Effect of Fever, it is oftener cured than when from any other Cause.—When the Malady proceeds from the Internal Causes mentioned above, no Good can be done by Medicine.

Can Dr. Warren state what Proportion, of the whole Number of Persons afflicted with this Malady, have been so, owing to each of the Causes he has enumerated, and what Proportion, where it can be referred to no assignable Cause?

I cannot state any precise Proportion; but, out of a great Number, there are few Cases where it is possible to ascertain that it proceeds from any assignable Cause.

Is there any one of the particular Causes enumerated, to which Dr. Warren can say, that the Disorder with which His Majesty is afflicted is not to be referred?

I do not think His Majesty's Disorder appears to proceed from any one of the Causes enumerated by me.

Can Dr. Warren say with Certainty, whether His Majesty's Disorder may, or may not, have proceeded from Injury by Blows or Falls?

I cannot.

Can Dr. Warren say with Certainty, whether His Majesty's Disorder may, or may not, have proceeded from sudden Affections of the Mind?

I cannot.

Can Dr. Warren say with Certainty, whether His Majesty's Disorder may, or may not, have been the Effect of Fever?

I can say with Certainty it has not.

Can Dr. Warren say with Certainty, whether His Majesty's Disorder may, or may not, have proceeded from any of the Internal Causes he has mentioned?

I cannot.

Whether, in these Species of the Disorder which cannot be referred to any assignable Cause, the Probability of Cure may not be various in different Cases, according to the Symptoms of the particular Case, or the apparent Degree of the Disorder?

I think not, unless Signs of Convalescence are coming on.

Whether the Knowledge of the remote Cause is of Assistance towards promoting the Cure?

In many Cases I think it is, but sometimes not.

Whether, in His Majesty's Disorder, Dr. Warren sees any present Signs of Convalescence?

No.

Whether

Whether every Cure, in the same Person, of a Disorder which has returned, is included in the Calculations of the whole Number of Cures?

I consider every Case that comes as a New Case, and have included them in that Calculation; but I believe that, excluding them, the Majority still are cured.

Whether, of those Persons whose Disorder cannot be referred to any assignable Cause, the greater Number have, or have not, been cured?

I cannot answer that with Accuracy.

Has the greater Number of Men, that have been afflicted with this Disorder, recovered?

Yes.

Has the greater Number of Persons recovered, whose Disorder has lasted, without Signs of Convalescence, as long as that of His Majesty has already done?

Yes.

Withdraws.

Sir George Baker called in, and examined.

Whether, in your Opinion, the State of His Majesty's Health is, or is not, such as to render His Majesty incapable, either of coming to Parliament, or of attending to Public Business?

I think that the State of His Majesty's Health is such, as renders Him incapable of coming to Parliament, or of doing any other Public Business.

What Hopes has *Sir George Baker* of His Majesty's Recovery?

I hope that His Majesty will recover, because I think it probable. My own Experience, and the
Experience

Experience of other Physicians, leads me to think that His Majesty's Disorder is curable.

Can Sir George Baker form any Judgment, or probable Conjecture, of the Time which His Majesty's Illness is likely to last?

I can form no Judgment or Conjecture as to the probable Duration of his Majesty's Disorder.

What Degree of Experience has Sir George Baker had of the particular Species of Disorder with which His Majesty is afflicted?

I was formerly a Pupil of Dr. Batty's, who attended an Hospital where I had an Opportunity of seeing many Instances of this Disorder.—I have likewise had private Patients, from Time to Time, under that Disorder; but whenever the Disorder has been of some Continuance, I have desired the Assistance of Physicians who particularly attended Persons so disordered.

Whether Sir George Baker founds his Opinion, in his Answer to the Second Question, upon the particular Symptoms of his Majesty's Case, or upon his Experience of the Disorder in general, or upon both?

Upon my Experience of the Disorder in general.

Whether, in His Majesty's Disorder, Sir George Baker sees any present Signs of Convalescence?

I do not see any present Signs of Convalescence.

Whether Sir George Baker learns from Experience, that the greater Number of Persons, who have been afflicted with this Disorder, have recovered?

Upon general Experience, the greater Part have recovered.

Whether

Whether every Case, in the same Person, of a Disorder which has returned, is included in the Calculation of the whole Number of Cures?

I will not undertake to answer that Question.

Has the greater Number of Men, that have been afflicted with this Disorder, recovered?

I think so.

Has the greater Number of Persons recovered, whose Disorder has lasted, without Signs of Convalescence, as long as that of His Majesty has already done?

Yes, I can answer that in the Affirmative.

Was Sir George Baker in Attendance upon his Majesty, as His Physician, previous to His being afflicted with His present Disorder?

Yes.

Whether Sir George Baker can assign any known Cause, to which, in his Judgment, His Majesty's present Disorder is referrible?

I can assign no known Cause to which His Majesty's present Disorder is referrible.

Was the Attack of His Majesty's Disorder sudden, or gradual?

Sudden.

When did that Attack take Place?

The first Suspicion I had of this Disorder, was in the Evening of Wednesday, the 22d of October last.

Whether any Fever, or other Complaint, had preceded that Attack?

There had been Fever, and other Complaints; but on that Morning His Majesty had no Fever.

Whether, in Cases where the Attack had been sudden, the Recovery has been sudden also?

My Observations on this Disorder do not enable me to answer that Question.

Withdraws. *

The Reverend Doctor *Francis Willis* called in, and examined.

Whether, in his Opinion, the State of His Majesty's Health is, or is not, such as to render His Majesty incapable, either of coming to Parliament, or of attending to Public Business?

He certainly is not capable.

What Hopes has Dr. Willis of His Majesty's Recovery?

I have great Hopes of His Majesty's Recovery, If it were any other Person but his Majesty, I should scarce entertain a Doubt: When His Majesty reflects upon an Illness of this Kind, it may depress his Spirits, and retard his Cure more than a common Person.

Can Dr. Willis form any Judgment, or probable Conjecture, of the Time which His Majesty's Illness is likely to last?

I cannot.

What Degree of Experience has Dr. Willis had of the particular Species of Disorder with which His Majesty is afflicted?

A great deal, for 28 Years; I imagine I have never had less than 30 Patients every Year of the Time.

Whether Doctor Willis founds his Opinion, in his Answer to the Second Question, upon the particular Symptoms of His Majesty's Case, or upon his Experience

Experience of the Disorder in general, or upon both?

Upon both.

Whether, in His Majesty's Disorder, Dr. Willis sees any present Signs of Convalescence?

I cannot say that I do; at the same Time there is every Thing leading towards it, as the Irritation has in a great Measure subsided, which must precede Convalescence, or any Appearance of it. It must come on very gradually.

Whether Dr. Willis learns from Experience, that the greater Number of Persons, who have been afflicted with this Disorder have recovered?

A very great Majority; I do not think I should speak false, if I said Nine out of Ten, of those that have been put under my Care, within three Months after they had begun to be afflicted with the Disorder.

Whether every Cure in the same Person, of a Disorder which has returned, is included in the Calculation of the whole Number of Cures?

If a Person has been Twice brought under my Care, and Twice cured, I reckon two Cures, as I should of a Fever.

Has the greater Number of Men, that have been afflicted with this Disorder, recovered?

I never calculated that; I did not think there was any Difference between the Two Sexes as to the Facility of Cure.

What State of his Patients does he consider as a Cure?

Their being able to take upon themselves the Conduct of their own Affairs, and to do the same Business they were used to do before they fell ill.

What is the shortest Space of Time within which, in his Experience, he has known Persons, affected as His Majesty is, restored to Health?

Six Weeks, or Two Months, is the shortest, I believe.

Does Dr. Willis see any Thing in His Majesty's Case, which enables him to pronounce that His Majesty may not be restored to Health within that Compass of Time from the Commencement of his Attendance on His Majesty?

I do not see any Thing to enable me to pronounce that he may not.

Does Dr. Willis see any Thing in His Majesty's Case, which enables him to pronounce that His Majesty will be restored to Health within that Space of Time?

I cannot presume to say that he will.

What has been the longest Space of Time for which the Disorder has lasted, in the Case of such Patients as have been brought to him within Three Months from the Beginning of the Attack, and as have recovered?

A Year and an Half, I believe, has been the longest of such Patients as have been brought to me; and few have been so long.

What is the most ordinary Space of Time he has found necessary for the Cure of such Patients?

I should think Five or Six Months, as near as I can calculate.

How long has Dr. Willis attended His Majesty?

Since Friday Morning last.

Whether

Whether, from your own Observation, or from the Particulars which have been communicated to you, you can assign any known Cause to which, in your Judgment, His Majesty's Disorder is referrible?

From my own Experience with Regard to his Majesty, I cannot say any Thing; but from a very particular Detail of His Mode and Manner of Life for Twenty-seven Years, I do imagine, that weighty Business, severe Exercise, and too great Abstemiousness, and little Rest, has been too much for His Constitution.—It is very early to give an Opinion, and I may be mistaken, but I am the more inclined to think myself right, because the Medicine that has been given His Majesty ever since Sunday Morning, and was intended to meet and counteract those Causes, has had as much Effect as I could wish; and His Majesty has certainly been gradually better from the First Six Hours of His taking it.

Whether you have Reason to believe, that the Circumstances you have enumerated are frequently Causes of this Disorder?

I believe they are very frequently.

Where the Disorder has arisen from such Causes, have you frequently known it cured?

Very frequently.

Have the greater Number of those Cases been cured, or not?

Certainly. I believe they are more easily to be cured, than where the Disorder proceeds from excessive Drinking, or other Intemperance, or some other Causes.

Withdraws.

Doctor

Doctor *Thomas Gisborne* called in, and examined.

Whether, in his Opinion, the State of His Majesty's Health is, or is not, such as to render His Majesty incapable of coming to Parliament, or of attending to Public Business?

I think He is absolutely incapable.

What hopes has Dr. Gisborne of His Majesty's Recovery?

I think there are Hopes.

Can Dr. Gisborne form any Judgment, or probable Conjecture, of the Time which His Majesty's Illness is likely to last?

I think that is impossible.

What Degree of Experience has Dr. Gisborne had of the particular Species of Disorder with which His Majesty is afflicted;

Not much particular Experience. I have seen Persons affected in the same Way, even to a greater Degree, who have recovered.

Whether Dr. Gisborne founds his Opinion, in his Answer to the Second Question, upon the particular Symptoms of His Majesty's Case, or upon his Experience of the Disorder in general, or upon both?

Upon both.

Whether, in His Majesty's Disorder, Dr. Gisborne sees any present Signs of Convalescence?

I think that can hardly be said.

Whether Dr. Gisborne can assign any known Cause to which, in his Judgment, His Majesty's present Disorder is referrible?

No.

Withdraws.

Doctor

Doctor *Anthony Addington* called in, and examined.

Whether, in your Opinion, the State of His Majesty's Health is, or is not, such as to render His Majesty incapable, either of coming to Parliament, or of attending to Public Business?

I think He is incapable, at least He was when I saw His Majesty last : It was about a Week ago.

What Hopes has Dr. Addington of His Majesty's Recovery?

I think there are very good Grounds of Hope.

Can Dr. Addington form any Judgment, or probable Conjecture, of the Time which His Majesty's Illness is likely to last?

It is a very hard Matter to form any certain Judgment or Conjecture.

What Degree of Experience has Dr. Addington had of the particular Species of Disorder with which His Majesty is afflicted.

I had Patients, in a House that I built at Reading, for Five Years antecedent to the Year 1754, when I came to London.

Do you found your Opinion, in your Answer to the Second Question, upon the particular Symptoms of His Majesty's Case, or upon your Experience of the Disorder in general, or upon both?

I think there is some Reason to found it upon Symptoms, as well as Experience.—Though I have seen His Majesty very unquiet, it did not arise to that Degree of Inquietude which denoted a Disease that would be of very long Duration. I thought there was something in the very Habit of Body, as well as in His Majesty's Complexion,
and

and in what had been His Way of Life, that was very favourable to a Cure.—Where there is not a very great Exertion of Body or Mind, Persons who have lived in the Way His Majesty has done, are very rarely liable to this Illness.—From the Account I had from my Brethern, who had the Honour to attend His Majesty, I had very great Expectations that it would end happily, from this Circumstance—that it had not for its Forerunner that Melancholy which usually precedes a tedious Illness of this Sort.—I never knew an Instance of an Illness, that, under proper Care, run to any great Length, which had not been so preceded.—As for Experience, I have visited a considerable Number of Patients in that Disease, in and round Reading.—Finding they could not be taken so much Care of as they ought to be in their Houses, and that I might be as little interrupted as possible in the Practice of other Branches of my Profession, I built a House, contiguous to my own, for the Reception of such Patients.—I visited them there constantly every Day. I had from 8 to 10 Patients there usually at a Time.—During that Time, Two Patients were admitted, who were reasonably deemed to be incurable at the Time of their coming, and for Years before.—During the Charge of my Patients, for Five Years together, at that House, I never had more than Two other Patients that were not cured within the Year, and continued well, as far as ever I knew. Some recovered in much shorter Time; and I had several that were quite well within a Quarter of a Year.—If any of those Persons had relapsed, I believe, from the partial Opinion of their Families, I should have heard of it.—Where there is a relapse, I should not call it a perfect Cure.

What

What State of the Patients did Dr. Addington consider as a Cure?

When the Patient was able to do every Thing that a Man in Health does.

What were the particular Circumstances of the Two Patients before mentioned by Dr. Addington, which occasioned their being deemed incurable?

One of those Persons had been for many Years under the Care of a very skilful Physician, in an House for the Reception of Patients under this Disorder. It was a Case that was different from all others with which I have been acquainted, both in the Cause, and in the Circumstances which preceded and attended it.—The other was a Patient, who I believe, had been ill very many Years; she had been for some Time under the Care of an eminent Physician, who wished her to be put into a House where she might be taken Care of for Life; she was Atrabilious in the highest Degree, and died, from the Effects of that Disorder, in about a Week.

Whether the Majority of the Patients under your Care were Men, or Women?

I think nearly equal.

Whether Dr. Addington professed to take, and did in Fact take, all Patients that were offered him?

I had not always Room.—I excluded none on Account of the Nature of the Disorder.

What has been Dr. Addington's Attendance on his Majesty?

I saw his Majesty for Three Days successively, and for twice each Day for a considerable Time.

Whether, during the Time of that Attendance, he observed any Signs of actual Convalescence in His Majesty?

No.

Whether, from your own Observation, or from the Particulars which have been communicated to you, you can assign any known Cause to which, in your Judgment, His Majesty's Disorder is referrible?

I cannot pretend to say what the Cause was, either from what I saw, or what was communicated to me.—I do not chuse to hazard a Conjecture.

Withdraws.

Sir *Lucas Pepys* called in, and examined.

Whether, in your Opinion, the State of His Majesty's Health is such as to render His Majesty incapable, either of coming to Parliament, or of attending to Public Business?

The State of His Majesty's Health is certainly such as to render Him incapable of coming to Parliament, or attending to Public Business.

What Hopes has Sir *Lucas Pepys* of His Majesty's Recovery?

I have the same Hopes of His Majesty's Recovery as I should have if he were labouring under any other Disease, of which I knew that the Majority labouring under it did recover. That the Majority do recover, I am satisfied from my own Experience, and from the Assurance of a Person who has most Experience in Cases of this Sort.

Can Sir *Lucas Pepys* form any Judgment, or probable Conjecture, of the Time which His Majesty's Illness is likely to last?

It is impossible to form any Conjecture on that Subject.

What Degree of Experience has Sir *Lucas Pepys* had of the particular Species of Disorder with which his Majesty is afflicted?

I have

I have occasionally seen several Persons under that Disorder, some times alone, but more frequently with those whose Practice leads them more particularly to attend to it.

Whether, in His Majesty's Disorder, Sir Lucas Pepys sees any present Signs of Convalescence;

His Majesty is more quiet than He has been; but there are no present Signs of immediate Convalescence.

Are there any actual Symptoms at present, which lead Sir Lucas Pepys to entertain more favourable Hopes of His Majesty's Recovery, than he has hitherto had during his Attendance?

I think there are very material Symptoms, as His Majesty's general State of Health is certainly much better than it was.

Is the Amendment that has taken Place, only in His Majesty's general State of Health, or is there any Abatement of his particular Disorder?

From His Majesty's general State of Health being better, His Sleep is more quiet, His Appetite is better, and he is more in His usual State; all which Circumstances must previously occur before Recovery: But these are only leading Steps towards Recovery—the Disorder still remains; it is difficult to say whether it is actually abated.

What does Sir Lucas Pepys mean by His Majesty being more in His usual State?

More quiet and in a less perturbed State.

Whether it is Sir Lucas Pepys's Opinion, that there is, or is not, at present any Abatement of His Majesty's Disorder?

I have answered it, by saying that it is difficult to say whether there is any actual Abatement, and I wish
to

to explain my Meaning in these words.—The only Way of explaining it is by Analogy to some other Complaint. In the Case of a Mortification, where the Bark would most probably effect a Cure, I could not say, during several Hours after its being taken, whether there was, or was not, any Abatement of the Mortification: So, in the Case of His Majesty, I cannot say, whether the Return of general Health has, or has not, yet produced any actual Abatement of the particular Disorder; but such a Return of general good Health would lead me to be of Opinion that an evident Abatement might be expected. I can however say, that no actual evident abatement has yet taken place.

When Sir Lucas Pepys, in his Answer to the Second Question, states that the Majority of Persons labouring under the same Disorder with His Majesty do recover, does he mean to include all the different Species of the Disorder, or to confine himself to that particular Species with which His Majesty is affected?

I mean in that Estimate to speak of the Disorder generally, and not specially.

Can you assign any known Cause to which, in your Judgment, His Majesty's present Disorder is referrible?

I know no evident, or assignable Cause.

Is His Majesty's a frequent Species of the Disorder?

It is a frequent Species of the Disorder.

In this Species, do the Majority recover?

Certainly, in this Species the Majority do recover.

Withdrawn.

Doctor

Doctor *Henry Revel Reynolds* called in, and examined.

Whether, in your Opinion, the State of His Majesty's Health is, or is not, such as to render His Majesty incapable, either of coming to Parliament, or of attending to Public Business?

His Majesty is certainly incapable of it.

What Hopes has Dr. Reynolds of His Majesty's Recovery?

I think there are well-founded Hopes of His Majesty's Recovery.

Can Dr. Reynolds form any Judgment, or probable Conjecture, of the Time which His Majesty's Illness is likely to last?

No.

What Degree of Experience has Dr. Reynolds had of the particular Species of Disorder with which His Majesty is afflicted?

I have been almost Twenty Years in Business, and in the Course of that Time I have seen a great Number under this Disorder, both singly and together with others.

Whether you found your Opinion, in your Answer to the Second Question, upon the particular Symptoms of His Majesty's Case, or upon your Experience of the Disorder in general, or upon both?

Rather upon general Experience; though I think there is nothing peculiar in His Majesty's Case which forbids the Presumption of Recovery.

Whether, in His Majesty's Disorder, you see any present Signs of Convalescence?

I do not see any present Signs of Convalescence; though I think His Majesty's being quieter, and in a better

a better State of general Health, would lead me to hope that it is a Step towards it.

Whether Dr. Reynolds learns from Experience, that the greater Number of Persons afflicted with this Disorder have recovered?

The greater Number, I think, have recovered.

Whether Dr. Reynolds apprehends, that in Calculations founded on general Experience, every Cure in the same Person is included?

I apprehend that it is—they consider every Relapse as a new Disease.

Whether Dr. Reynolds can assign any known Cause to which, in his Judgment, His Majesty's Disorder is referrible?

No; I cannot.

Withdraws.

F I N I S.



