

Papers relating to William Banks

Publication/Creation

1876 - 1877

Persistent URL

<https://wellcomecollection.org/works/smspab5b>

License and attribution

You have permission to make copies of this work under a Creative Commons, Attribution, Non-commercial license.

Non-commercial use includes private study, academic research, teaching, and other activities that are not primarily intended for, or directed towards, commercial advantage or private monetary compensation. See the Legal Code for further information.

Image source should be attributed as specified in the full catalogue record. If no source is given the image should be attributed to Wellcome Collection.



Wellcome Collection
183 Euston Road
London NW1 2BE UK
T +44 (0)20 7611 8722
E library@wellcomecollection.org
<https://wellcomecollection.org>

My son William Banks was born in London and during his childhood he was remarkably intelligent, and also during his school life which lasted from five to about fifteen years of age; he particularly excelled in Scripture knowledge, Arithmetic, and drawing, for these and other subjects he mostly took the head prizes, at the different schools he attended. His memory was remarkably good. A gentleman told me that at twelve years of age he drew a map of Europe from memory. At the school examination the most perfect which he had ever seen. On leaving school he learned the business of a telegraphist at which he was employed about three years. At the age of ~~seventeen~~ ^{seventeen or eighteen} he ~~became~~ became decidedly religious, and manifested great earnestness to do good to others. At eighteen years of age he was admitted by the Rev. C. D. Spurgeon, as a student into his college and remained in this institution about two years and three months. At the end of this time he was sent to Farnworth Lane ¹⁸⁶⁹ by the Rev. C. D. Spurgeon, on probation with a view to be the pastor of the Baptist Church. After a month or six weeks probation, he was unanimously accepted as pastor of the said Baptist Church. On leaving the college the Rev. C. D. Spurgeon made him a present of all his sermons neatly bound, a suit of new clothes, and paid during the whole time he was in the college - fifteen shillings a week for his board and lodgings. He entered upon his work at the age of twenty years and three months with considerable promise, and for three years and a half he laboured with acceptance and considerable success. The church during this period

was more than doubled; and also by his earnings
he got cleared a considerable debt off the School
Chapel and obtained in money in money and promises
about £ 800. towards a new chapel. He was much
respected by the different ministers and congregations
of the town and neighbourhood. In the beginning
of Oct. 1843 Sawney and Elbrody went at his invita-
tion to Jarrow. With them he laboured fifteen nights
in succession. After this he manifested some
strangeness of conduct both in private and in
his pulpit. On the Sunday morning, not many
weeks after he broke out during his sermon in
the most wild manner and used language very
unbecoming and ~~indecent~~ indecent, and such was
his state of mind that I was telegraphed for on
the day following. On arriving at Jarrow I found
him in the care of a number of friends in an insane
and frantic state of mind. He said to me what
business have you here? who sent you? He stated
that he had two special enemies in his congrega-
tion, who were having influence over him, first
mentioning one name then the ^{other} other. He then would
go to the window and look through the side of the
blind as though he apprehended their coming, he
would then turn the gas out and put all into
darkness expressing himself as though he was
much alarmed. We then with great difficulty
got him to his lodgings, when I sent for Dr. Ham-
mond; On his coming into his bedroom, he said
to the Doctor. Dr., what business have you here?
and who sent for you? You smell so strong of
tobacco ^{but the doctor by tact soon got to be his friend} to approach me, and myself and two or
three other gentlemen who were with him, he
said to the doctor were were his enemies, and.

he would start up in a most wild manner, and look round the room using language the most insane. Dr. Hammond on leaving that night said that he considered him in a serious state of mind, and advised to have him placed in an asylum. But wishing to avoid this if possible, the next day I arranged for him to go to Bristol Spa. He was however difficult to manage in the mean time. On one occasion he took advantage of our absence and locked himself in his bed-room, fearing he might do himself harm. I broke the door open, when I found him naked in the act of putting his flannel shirt on, after dipping it in cold water, and he raved out most vehemently at me not to come near him or he might do me harm. We managed to get him dressed, and into the cab, and on the way to the Railway Station, he said that a large amount of money was coming to him. Then next moment he wept most piteously, addressing me he said Father. My father is dead, and I have to supply his place. Then he would start as though he was alarmed, saying, what is that building, apprehending we were taking him to an asylum. A gentleman belonging to his church accompanied us to Bristol as we feared we could not manage him. On his retiring to bed before being many minutes laid down, he cried out most piteously, by saying he wanted woman's sympathy, and he could not be managed until the lady of the house was called up and came into his room, when he said to her do kiss me, I want sympathy. On another occasion

he threatened to throw something at his mother's head. And on another occasion when a gentleman touched the Key of the piano he snatched down and began to play. In this state of mind he continued a fortnight. We then left Croft and I went with him to Matlock, and there got the advice of a medical man who attended at Mr. Smedley's water establishment; the said medical man said he could not admit my son unless some one remained ^{with} him to take charge of him, as he said Mr. Smedley's establishment was not a place for persons who was mentally unsound, therefore I was obliged to stay with him until my younger son came who remained with him at Matlock. He stayed about six or seven weeks under this treatment with cold water ^{baths} &c. When at the end of this time he seemed improved, and would return to his duties at Jarrow, although by no means fit. Hence from this time he could not read or preach as he had before, although he maintained he had got into a higher spiritual life. His church however bore him out of sympathy they had for him on account of his past labours amongst them as at that time they were much attached to him, and him to them, and on this account we allowed him to remain hoping this might be the best course for the time being. But doubtless this would have been the time for him to have left as we found. From this time his whole and dispositions changed. Previous to this he was most affectionate to me and his mother, but now he became hostile and conducted himself in a manner that pained us very much only.

we attributed this to the state of his mind. At length the people belonging to his church seeing he was incapable of doing duty they locked the chapel up, and it was closed for a short time. This conduct on the part of the people had no doubt a very serious effect upon his mind and made him worse. But he still persisted in not leaving the town, and opened a small room in the mechanics institution in which he conducted services seven or eight months. From this time I only saw him occasionally, he being hostile to my visits, and instead of talking him away by force, he being comfortable in his lodgings the lady with whom he lodged being much attracted to him, I concluded it might be better to gradually get him to see the folly of remaining under these circumstances. But from this time he evidently grew worse. This was ~~worse~~ manifested by his strange actions in various ways. Some I may name. He wore large pieces of leather about 10 inches long by ^{1 1/2} inches wide on each side covered with blue ink ^{saying} he had two enemies, and these would prevent them doing him harm. He also gathered old pipes and old shoes and burnt them saying the scent of them had a good effect as he had an impression he was bewitched. He became exceedingly untidy in his dress also during the year 1845 he was effected periodically once or twice a month at these times he seemed ~~impressed~~ ^{impressed} ~~troubled~~ ^{any} to do and say such things as only an insane man would do. On one of these occasions he pledged his watch value £25 for £9, this watch was a present from his friends at Garrow. At another time he pledged his life for

Once I met him at Sunderland at a commercial hotel where we were in the company of a number of gentlemen when the benefits of the Railways was the subject of conversation, when he commenced to contradict them in a manner that startled them, saying, that railways were a curse and a nuisance, and such things. Then he went out in his usual strange way, as he could not sit still for a few minutes at a time anywhere. A gentleman wanted to know who he was and if he was right in his mind. The same day he took tea with a gentleman who told me afterwards that his conduct was that of an insane man. In December 1845 he called at Mr. Chapman's in Newcastle a friend of mine and told Mrs Chapman that he had buried some money for safety. And he had either forgot where he had buried it or some had stolen it. And at this time he was considerably excited. At times he came home and stayed with us about a week. We observed that his conduct, conversation, and his clothes were in a strange condition. That left no doubt upon our minds but his mind was gone. And this led us to insist that he should not go back, but he said that if we did not give him money, he would walk to Farrow, and so we allowed him to return on conditions he should return in a week or two. During the week he was at home his conversation was about Kings and queens. And then he would say excitedly the Prince of Wales would never reign on the throne, ~~his~~ ~~and~~ He was also much excited about "Man rights"

which caused
execution and other deaths at the same time.
About the first week in January 1876 he wrote
a note to us, saying he had made ~~up~~
his mind to leave the Baptist and make
application to the Wesleyans to become of their
ministers. On the 12th of January 1876 it was
arranged for him to come home, but he
did not come home the next day, having
to go to Newcastle on business, I went forward
to Garrao, and on going to his lodgings Mrs
Stibner with whom he had lodged for seven
years, said as Mr. Bant's come home?
I replied no. when she became excited and
said to me there is a strange rumour that
my servant has ~~got~~ gone away with him and
they have married, and gone to Croft, but I
cannot believe it although she left my house
two hours after him, and she has not returned,
if it is so, it is no marriage for I will swear
in any court in England that he was mad and
she ~~said~~ knows it. Oh! that bad woman. On
hearing this I went at once back to Newcastle
and telegraphed to Croft to Mrs. Winkington
where we had lodged at different times and
where we lodged when my son was first
attacked ~~is~~ with insanity. The words of my
telegram was. Tell my son if he is at your house
to meet at Darlington Station. at 4 o'clock.
I arrived at Darlington ~~but~~ but he did not meet
me. I then went home to York by the next
train hoping it was all false, but when I
got there, I found it was too true, for he had
written home stating he had married and
wanted some money. it was a most strange letter

clearly shewing his insanity. Next day I sent another telegram to leave to meet me at Darlington. When he met me at the time appointed, I found they had got married at South Shields register office, and from there they had gone to Bristol and engaged two rooms at 30 a week. Neither my son or his woman had suspicion in their pockets. I then asked him how it was that he had done such a mad act, when he became much excited he said he had some bodies else damnable blood in his head, he must have justice or vengeance. On referring him to the last two letters he wrote to us a week before telling us that he was going to leave the Baptists and become a Wesleyan minister, and remarking he had done the act that would prevent him from getting in, when he said, if the Wesleys don't accept me it will be worse for them, and again became much excited. On my referring to the inequality to the person he had married, that could neither read nor write, especially the religious inequality, professionally a Roman Catholic and practically a low, swearing blackguard, and this I had been informed an authority that I could not doubt, that when he said religious connections must never interfere between the sexes, it is all humbug. After finding the marriage had formally taken place, I was bewildered not knowing what to do, whether to have him put in an asylum at once, or to hope he might get better, and then try to make the best of this sad act. After a few weeks however, finding his mind had so far gone, it was hopeless for him to follow his vocation or any other, I got him home

and placed him under a medical man, and under whose care he ~~for~~ was for at least two months, at the end of which he pronounced him unfit to take care of himself, and recommended him to be put into an asylum. After this I got Dr. Butler the head doctor at the friends asylum in York to examine him privately, when he pronounced him to be of an unsound mind of a very serious nature and gave me a certificate to that effect, after which two medical gentlemen filled in the certificates for him being admitted into the said asylum, where he has been for some time, and is now with no apparent ~~any~~ improvement.

I might have mentioned many sayings and doings in my son's case both before and after this ^{unlucky} marriage that would prove beyond doubt, that he was not responsible for his actions, such, ^{as} his stating ~~that~~ to us that he had had a presentiment that his brother was dead, so that he would and did wear black for him but this was all false. He was not, nor is he at present able to read or write ~~at~~ ⁱⁿ a few minutes together, and before he had a passion for reading, and would ~~have~~ sit all the day, but now he can only walk about apparently in a maze, with his head ~~do~~ head down in a most distressing way. And again at intervals he became greatly excited in this state sometimes he would swear. At other times he would say Jesus Christ must have vengeance, infidels may blaspheme God but his sons must have vengeance. At other times he would say I am destined to be a star about ~~30~~ thirty years of age. John Wesley was about that age when he shone, I shall preach to crowds

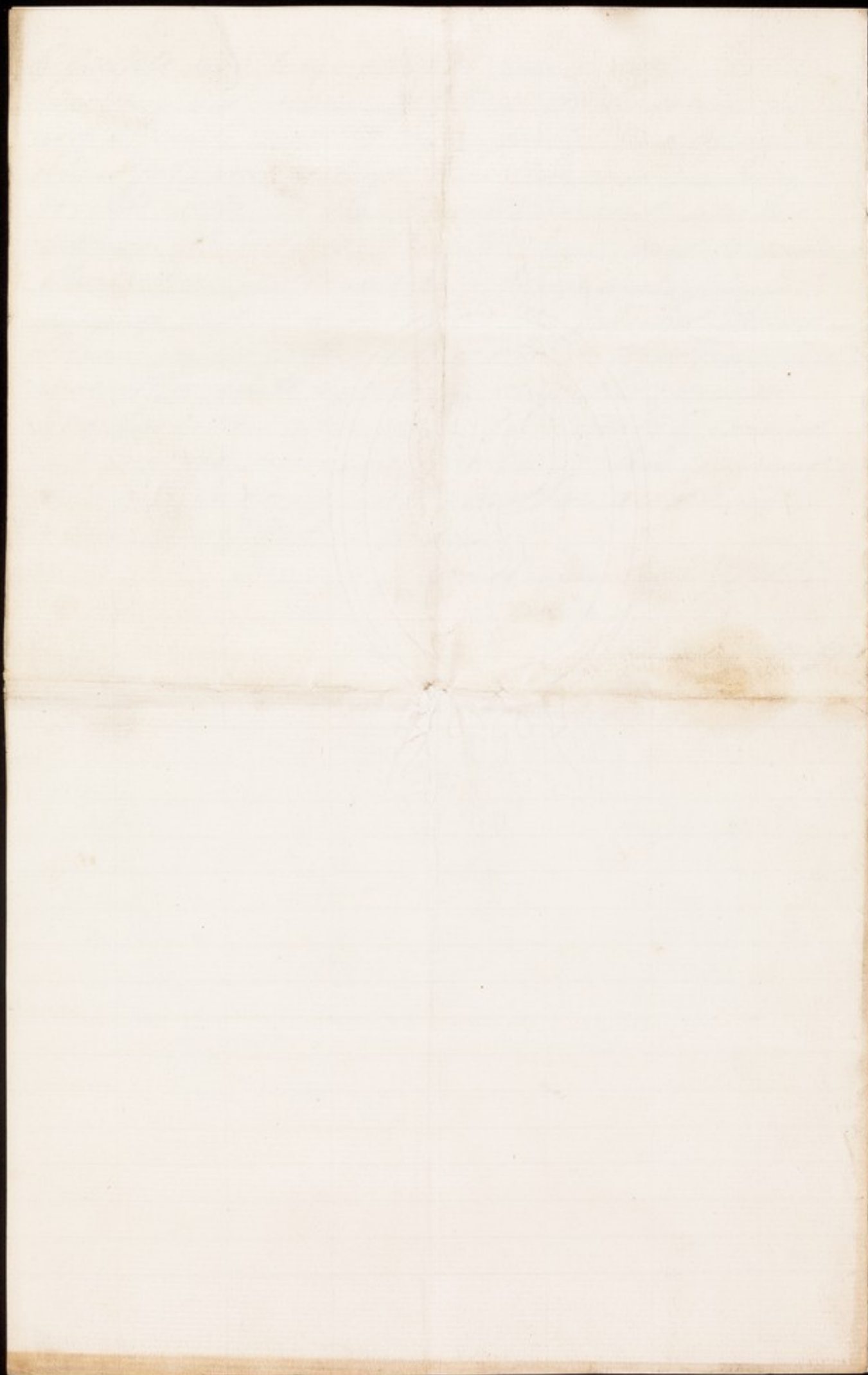
of people in a large chapel some day. I take
his writing the number of letters ~~that~~ he wrote as
as a special mark of his insanity, and especially
when I take into account the persons he wrote
to. He wrote to the Queen and sent her his
witness. He wrote to Mr. Gladstone, and to many
others. I might multiply these and similar
sayings and actions, but for the present I omit.
I have given sufficient to show that my son
was not ⁱⁿ a state to marry. And the person
who has taken advantage of his state of mind
and married him, unknown to his parents,
could not be doing right, neither according
to the Law of God or man

James Cantle York C.,
Father of

William Cantle
9th Dec 1876.

the
as
ally
of
his
many
for
multitude.
non
in
ind
cuts,
of,
entire





No 1283.

William Banks, Oct. 28.

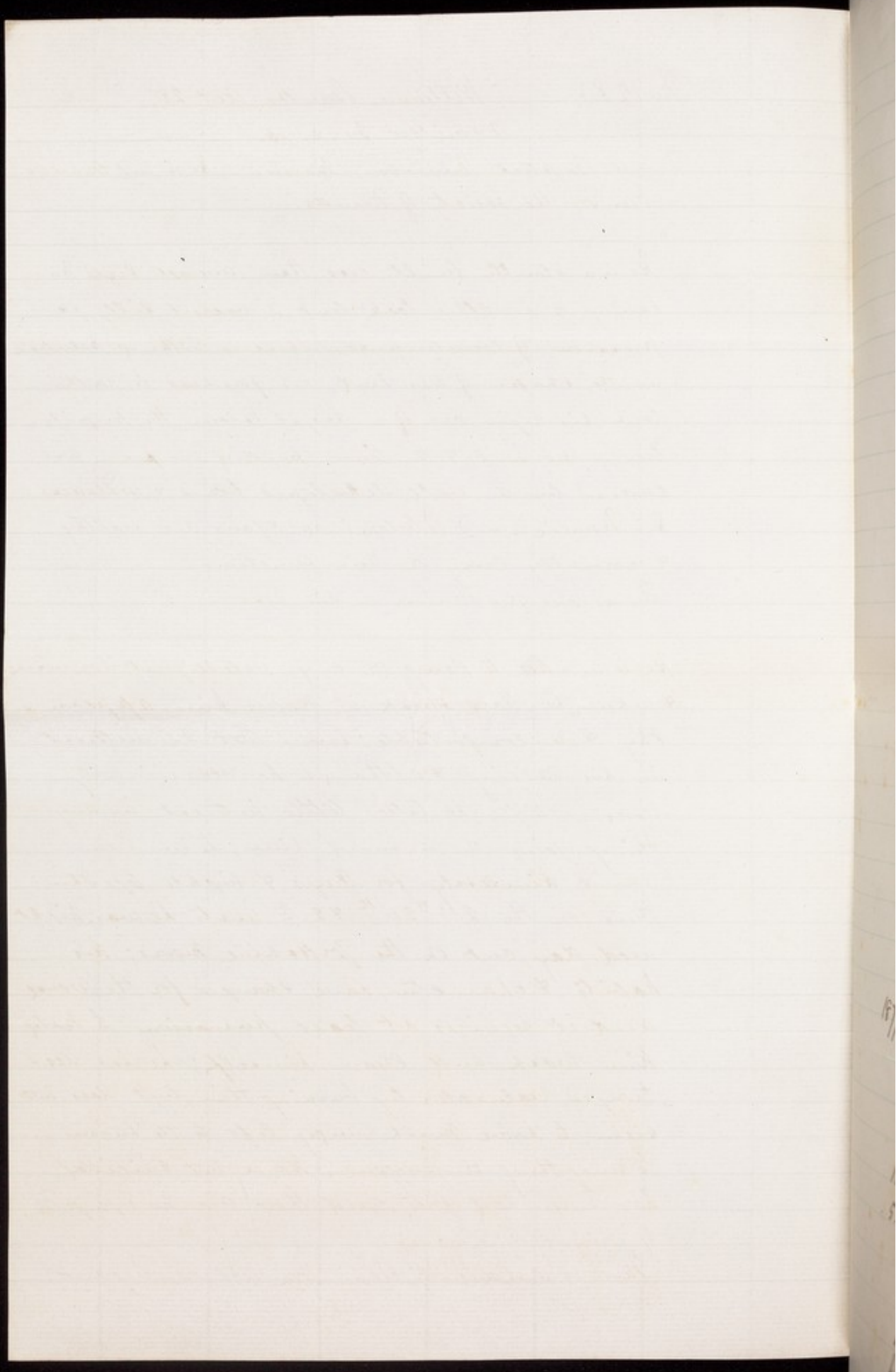
Admitted 30.x.76.

A Baptist Minister, married. He is not connected with the Society of Friends.

He is a stoutly built less than average sized man having a healthy look but a vacant silly expression of countenance. There is nothing peculiar in the shape of his head, his forehead is rather low, his eyes are of a hazel colour the pupils being normal & the lower parts of his face are covered by a well developed beard & whiskers. His Thoracic and Abdominal organs are healthy & normally carry on their functions. There are no bruises on his person.

He is unable to carry on any intelligent conversation & when he does speak it makes him appear shy & uncomfortable; he has lost all interest in his calling & although he occasionally reads a little he takes little interest in anything going on around him; he wanders about aimlessly for days & nights together thus on the 23rd 24th & 25th insts he was, night and day, out on the Yorkshire moors; his habits & character have changed for the worse and it requires at least persuasion to make him wash and clean himself; he has destroyed valuables by burning them but does not seem to have much energy left to do harm to anything or anyone. He is not suicidal has never had fits and there are no symptoms of general paralysis.

This is a case of Dementia which began



about two years ago & is supposed to be due to overwork in the Ministry. It began shortly after Moody & Sankeys visit with whom for 15 nights in succession he laboured very energetically. Shortly after this he first exhibited signs of mental aberration breaking out in the pulpit into incoherent wild exclamations and behaving in a very irrational maniacal manner. Shortly after this he got married to an ignorant servant girl who can neither read nor write. He lived with her for about six weeks during which time he behaved in a very eccentric insane manner and having finally shown that he was unfit & unable to take care of himself he was removed to this Institution: He was a remarkably bright intelligent industrious boy & as a man his character was all that could be desired.

7.XI.77. Since admission this patient has remained quiet and amenable; he is rather inclined to be dirty or rather not cleanly in his habits; his bodily health is good.

14.XI.77. There is nothing further to report in this case.

10.XI.77. This patient appears to be improving, he is brighter & less sulky than when admitted, his bodily health continues good.

1877. 16.1.77. Remains much the same.

28.IV.77. Mr. Banks remains in the same quiet semi-demented condition, his bodily health continues good.

18.4.77. Do Do

5.VII.77. Mr. Banks continues in the same condition, he reads occasionally but spends most of the day walking about in the airing court, he rarely converses with anyone. His bodily health continues good.

Copied by. John D. Flempet.

1. The patient is a male, aged 45, with a long history of chronic disease. He has been under medical treatment for many years, but the disease has not been cured. The patient is now in a very weak state, and it is necessary to take measures to improve his health.

2. The patient's diet should be carefully regulated. He should eat small, frequent meals, and avoid all rich and indigestible food. He should also abstain from all alcoholic and stimulating liquors.

3. The patient's exercise should be carefully regulated. He should take short, frequent walks in the open air, and avoid all violent exertion.

4. The patient's sleep should be carefully regulated. He should go to bed at a regular hour, and avoid all stimulants and sedatives.

5. The patient's mind should be carefully regulated. He should avoid all mental exertion, and keep his mind as quiet as possible.

6. The patient's general condition should be carefully watched. He should be kept in a warm, comfortable room, and his pulse, temperature, and other vital signs should be carefully watched.

7. The patient's treatment should be continued until he is completely cured. It is necessary to be patient and persistent, and not to give up until the disease has been completely cured.

8. The patient's diet should be carefully regulated. He should eat small, frequent meals, and avoid all rich and indigestible food. He should also abstain from all alcoholic and stimulating liquors.

9. The patient's exercise should be carefully regulated. He should take short, frequent walks in the open air, and avoid all violent exertion.

10. The patient's sleep should be carefully regulated. He should go to bed at a regular hour, and avoid all stimulants and sedatives.

11. The patient's mind should be carefully regulated. He should avoid all mental exertion, and keep his mind as quiet as possible.

12. The patient's general condition should be carefully watched. He should be kept in a warm, comfortable room, and his pulse, temperature, and other vital signs should be carefully watched.

13. The patient's treatment should be continued until he is completely cured. It is necessary to be patient and persistent, and not to give up until the disease has been completely cured.

