

Handbill on the projected new House of Recovery [Manchester], c 1803

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HOUSE OF RECOVERY.



THE Committee, appointed by the Board of Health, to prepare plans and estimates for the erection of a new House of Recovery, having now ascertained the amount of the sums which will probably be required for that purpose, beg leave to submit the following statement of their views to the supporters of the Charity.

The experience of nearly eight years has sufficiently proved the utility of removing Patients sick of Fever, from their own habitations, to clean and well-ventilated Wards: it is therefore unnecessary to press the consideration of the general plan any farther on the public mind. But it is proper to explain, why the Committee recommend that a large building, which will require the expenditure of a considerable sum of money, should be provided for this end; and why the Public are called upon for additional aid, after the liberal Subscriptions which they have already contributed.

It must occur to every person, who has attended to the facts already published by the Board of Health, that the causes of contagious Fever are rapidly multiplying in this town and neighbourhood. The number of large Cotton Manufactories lately erected, the introduction of other branches of manufacture by Machinery, and the consequent increase of inhabitants, without an adequate increase of dwellings for their reception, cannot fail to inspire apprehensions in those who have watched the progress of sickness and mortality in former years. The only security against a recurrence of evils, similar to those which were formerly experienced, consists in providing accommodations for the removal of many Patients on the first appearance of an epidemic. It is calculated, that a House capable of receiving an hundred Patients will probably be equal to every emergency, in the present state of the town.

Many difficulties presented themselves to the Committee in determining on the choice of a situation for the new House of Recovery. It must necessarily be placed as near the centre of the Town as possible, to equalize the distances from which the Sick are to be removed; and to render the requisite frequency of attendance more easy to the Physicians. It is also desirable that the House of Recovery should be situated near the Infirmary, for the readier supply of medicines and wine from the shop. The Committee hope that all these objects may be accomplished on the piece of ground which they have purchased, adjoining Portland-street, Ayton-street, and Chatham-street, and nearly opposite to the present House of Recovery.

A situation so eligible in many respects could not be obtained without considerable expence: the premium required from the Trustees is £735, and the ground-rent £300 per annum.—When the value of the buildings in front of the land is considered, and a deduction is made of the sum of £200 per annum, for which they are let at present, the purchase will appear sufficiently advantageous. The Committee propose to let the buildings to Portland-street remain in their present state, and to erect the House of Recovery on the back part of the ground, parallel to Chatham-street, as it appears in the annexed plan. From a comparison of estimates made by different builders, the Committee find that a plain, but substantial and commodious building, of the requisite size, cannot be completed for less than £4500, a sum which, added to the above premium, exceeds their present building-fund by £1400. A further sum in addition to this is very desirable for the purpose of reducing the chief rent.

One additional source of expence in the plan has arisen from annexing Wards for Patients in Scarlet-Fever; a disease so infectious, that it is necessary to separate the Sick and their nurses from all

Wardens, priests.



all communication with the convalescents from Low-fever, and their attendants. The ravages occasioned by Scarlet-fever for many months past, in the neighbourhood of Manchester, too clearly prove the necessity of providing a barrier against its future attacks. As it may sometimes be requisite to remove the greater part, or even the whole of a family, infected with this disease, at the commencement of the Epidemic, the Wards appropriated to their reception must occupy a considerable space in the building. It is the wish and the hope of the Committee, that a small part only of the intended House of Recovery may be in general tenanted by Fever-Patients. But seasons of general distress must be expected sometimes to recur, when, from complicated causes, the Poor become unusually liable to Fever. At such times, the House of Recovery will not be found too large; and the Committee confidently expect, that it will then furnish effectual means of arresting the progress of the Epidemic, and of rescuing many industrious families from destruction. When accommodations shall be provided, which shall enable the Physicians to clear an infected house of all its inhabitants, and to put their wearing apparel in a train of cleansing and ventilation, while the emptied house is fumigated and white-washed, the dangers arising from crowded population may be greatly checked, if not entirely counteracted.

Much difficulty has been hitherto experienced, concerning the admission of Patients, who live beyond the districts of the Home-patients. It frequently happens that Patients are recommended, whose residence is at Ardwick, beyond the Crescent in Salford, or at the extremity of the houses in Newton-lane; distances at which neither the Physicians nor their Clerk can be expected to attend. It is the wish of the Committee, that a person of medical education should be appointed as resident Clerk in the new House of Recovery, a principal part of whose duty should be to visit patients recommended beyond the Districts, and to send them, if necessary, into the House of Recovery. The Physicians' Clerk at the Infirmary will take care, after the new House of Recovery is opened, to send such recommendations to the resident Clerk at the Fever-Wards. By this arrangement, much delay and many disappointments will be saved, both to the Trustees recommending, and to the families of patients.

One or more Wards will be set apart for the reception of domestic Servants, to be admitted, after proper examination, on the recommendation of a Subscriber, the Master or Mistress of such Servants undertaking to pay a reasonable sum for their wine, subsistence and medicines. Another Ward will also be appropriated for such Servants in a state of convalescence.

The Committee think it proper to mention another proposed alteration, which it is expedient to adopt, from the peculiar circumstances of the Subscription to the House of Recovery. All recommendations have hitherto passed through the medium of the Infirmary, and the objects admitted into the House of Recovery have been considered as Home-Patients of that Institution, from which they have been accordingly supplied with medicines and wine. But it is now found, that there are upwards of two hundred Subscribers to the House of Recovery, who do not subscribe to the Infirmary; and according to the rules originally formed, none of these Gentlemen can recommend a Patient to the House of Recovery. As a matter of justice to this class of Subscribers, it is proposed, that when the new building is opened, they shall have the power of recommending patients, who will be removed into the House, if necessary, by order of the Physicians; and that medicines and wine shall be provided for Patients thus introduced, at the expence of the House of Recovery, under arrangements which may be hereafter made with the Board of the Infirmary.

Under these circumstances, the Committee trust, that they will appear to be acting strictly within the line of their duty, when they apply for an extension of the Public liberality, for the completion of a plan, the benefits of which will accrue entirely, and most extensively, to the Public at large.