

Extracts from the Retreat Committee minutes for 1892 on the appointment of Pierce as Medical Superintendent

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Comms. Report 29/7/92

We much regret that the Committee have not thought right to accept our colleagues' suggestion at the last visit, and appoint as Dr. Baker's successor, a gentleman "with considerable experience in Lunacy". Dr. Bedford Price has been chosen to fill the post of Medical Superintendent; he has had but very little practical experience in our Asylums, but is now striving to derive sufficient knowledge to fit him to undertake the duties of Medical Superintendent on Oct. 15th by spending the next two months with Dr. Rees Phillips at Holloway Sanatorium. The natural consequence of this is that Dr. Hind who has proved such an excellent assistant to Dr. Baker, and has spent so many years in this Institution, to the great benefit of the patients, is obliged to leave and seek work elsewhere, and in this we wish him every success.

29/7/92

2/ What has to be considered by us is what will be the effect of this thorough change upon the management of the Institution, and the medical treatment of the patients. In two months time there will be only one medical officer, (and he has only been here 3 months) who will be able to give to his senior officers any account of the peculiarities and idiosyncrasies (sic) of the insane patients. In these circumstances we are glad to find that the Hospital will, for five years, obtain the valuable services of Dr. Baker as Consulting Physician, though of course non resident.

Feb. 16. 1892

Dr. Baker's retirement - - owing much to his activity the Institution has been so greatly improved structurally, + the patients have been so well cared for, that it is but proper that we should in this, perhaps the last entry by us before his departure, testify to that activity.

My dear friend,
I have just received your letter of the 10th inst. and am
glad to hear from you. I am well and hope this
letter finds you the same. I have been thinking
much of late about the future of our country and
the state of the world. It seems to me that we are
approaching a great crisis, and that the result will
determine whether we are to remain a united people
or whether we are to be divided into warring
sections. I feel that it is our duty to stand
together and to support the Union to the last.

I am, my friend, very truly,
Your friend,
Wm. Lloyd Garrison

Much has been done to bring this Hospital up to the standard of other institutions for the insane, and we think we may fairly say that it is only now in the older building that excellent modern accommodation is not afforded. Dr. Baker leaves this Hospital at the end of September; he has done his work zealously and well, and leaves to his successor but very few improvements to carry out and complete the general satisfactory condition of the Hospital according to modern requirements. We much regret that the Committee have not thought right to accept our colleagues' suggestion at the last visit and appoint as Dr. Baker's successor a "gentleman" with considerable experience in Lunacy". Dr. Bedford Pierce has been chosen to fill the post of Medical Superintendent; he has had but very little practical experience in an asylum, but is now striving to derive sufficient knowledge to fit him to undertake the duties of Medical Superintendent on October 15th. by spending the next two months with Dr. Rees Phillips at Holloways Sanatorium. The natural consequence of this is that Dr. Hind who has proved such an excellent assistant to Dr. Baker, and has spent so many years in this Institution, to the great benefit of the patients, is obliged to leave and seek work elsewhere, and in this we wish him every success. What has to be considered by us is what will be the effect of this thorough change upon the management of the Institution, and the medical treatment of the patients. In two months' time there will be only one medical officer (and he has only been here 3 months) who will be able to give to his senior officers any account of the peculiarities and idiosyncrasies of the insane patients. In these circumstances we are glad to find that the Hospital will for five years obtain the valuable services of Dr. Baker as Consulting Physician, though, of course, non-resident.....

July 29th., 1892.

