

## **Report of the Committee of Visitors for 1851 / Littlemore Asylum.**

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LITTLEMORE ASYLUM.

R E P O R T

OF THE

COMMITTEE OF VISITORS

FOR

1851.

REPORT

REPORT

REPORT

COMMITTEE OF

1851

REPORT



# LITTLEMORE ASYLUM.

[*comprising an union of the Counties of Oxford and Berks, the City of Oxford, and the Boroughs of Abingdon and Reading, for the maintenance of their Pauper Lunatics.*]

At the Monthly Meeting of the Committee of Visitors of the PAUPER LUNATIC ASYLUM at LITTLEMORE, OXFORDSHIRE, held at the Asylum on Wednesday the 31st day of December 1851—

## PRESENT

HUGH HAMERSLEY Esquire, <i>Vice-Chairman</i> ,	}	Justices of Oxfordshire.
GEORGE GRANVILLE HARCOURT Esquire, M.P.		
HENRY PEYTON Esquire,		
HENRY EDWARD FRANCIS LAMBERT Esquire,		
and		
The Reverend RICHARD PRETYMAN,	}	Justices of Berkshire.
The LORD NORREYS, M.P.		
JOSEPH ARNOULD Esquire, M.D.		
EDMUND CURRIE Esquire,		
EDWARD TULL Esquire,		
and	}	Justices of the City of Oxford.
The Reverend NATHANIEL DODSON,		
and		
WILLIAM HENRY BUTLER Esquire,		
and		
WILLIAM THORP Esquire,		



The Committee agreed to the following

## REPORT

to be presented respectively to the ensuing Courts of Quarter Sessions of the Counties of Oxford and Berks, to the next Meetings of the Councils of the City of Oxford and Borough of Reading, and to the ensuing Quarter Sessions of the Borough of Abingdon.

We have the satisfaction to report that the Asylum has throughout the past year been conducted with its wonted regularity in respect of the duties assigned to the several Officers and Servants; and that the treatment of the Patients has been uniformly mild, judicious and successful.

The number of Patients now in the Asylum is 347; (namely 151 Males and 196 Females.)

During the present year 23 Males and 30 Females have been discharged cured, and 17 Males and 16 Females have died.—The age of the oldest of the deceased Persons was 81, and the youngest 16 years; and the average age of the whole number was 45 years.



The number of Patients admitted since the commencement of the year has been 114\* (of which number 57 were Males and 57 Female Patients; and of whom 4 Males and 8 Females had previously been confined in this Asylum.) The greatest number of Patients in the Asylum at any one time in the year 1850, was 340; whilst in the present year such greatest number has been 353:—whereas the number of Patients for which the Asylum was built was only 270,—if tested by the number of cubic feet in the Dormitories allocated to each Patient by the Commissioners' standard.

Although then, the total number now in the Asylum exceeds that of last year only by 12, yet,—as will readily be understood,—it is in an almost crowded state; and the Visitors having regard to the fact that the number of Patients has gradually increased to its present complement, and that the Population of the Counties and Towns in union is always more or less on the increase, resolved in May last that it had become necessary either to enlarge the Asylum or to

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\* Namely—

Oxfordshire Patients	..	..	..	61
Berkshire ditto	..	..	..	34
Oxford City ditto	..	..	..	12
Abingdon ditto	..	..	..	2
Reading ditto	..	..	..	4
Out-County ditto	..	..	..	1
TOTAL				114



arrange for the chronic portion of the Lunatics being maintained in some separate Establishment: And the Committee of Visitors being unanimously of opinion that it was not desirable to provide for the care and maintenance of any of the Patients elsewhere than within the walls of the Asylum, and that it was imperatively necessary to provide additional accommodation for the present and some prospective increase of the Patients, by an enlargement of the House,—reported this (in conformity with the Statute) to the Courts of Quarter Sessions in July last and obtained the sanction of the several Bodies in union to the proposed Expenditure; and the Committee have since received the Secretary of State's approval of the Plans for the new Buildings, as prepared by Mr. Underwood of Oxford,—whereby additional sleeping Room will be provided for 56 Male and 70 Female Patients; with a new Day-Room on the Male side, and a Retiring-Room for the Attendants and Patients engaged in the Laundry—as they at present take their Meals there without any relief or change from the heated atmosphere they are employed in.

The Contract for the new Buildings having been offered to competition in the usual way, the Tender of Mr. John Castle of Oxford, Builder, for executing the Works for the sum of £2997 has been accepted, and he will shortly commence the Work.



The Report of the Committee for 1850 having set out the terms of a Resolution then existing as to the admission of Criminal Lunatics, it should here be stated that in February last this Resolution was rescinded, and the following substituted for it :—

That Prisoners in the several Prisons of the Counties and Towns in union becoming insane [excepting such as shall have been acquitted by a Jury on the ground of Insanity, or whose Parochial Settlement shall not be within the said Union,] shall be admissible into this Asylum, if the Visiting Justices select it for recommendation to the Secretary of State and an Order be made accordingly.

The hardness of the Water of the Wells of the Asylum, and, recently, an insufficient supply of Water,—has engaged the attention of the Visitors at intervals during the year; but no expense has been incurred in consequence, excepting in the repair of Boilers which have been injured by the calcarious deposits.

The Institution has suffered a loss this year in the decease of Mr. George Hitchings, the Consulting Surgeon; whose Office has been supplied by the appointment to it of Mr. William Cleoburey of Oxford.



The Superintendent having, (now that the Asylum is so much increased in its number of Patients,)—represented the necessity for the aid of some qualified Person in order to his more satisfactorily complying with the provisions of the Law as to recording and classifying the exact diseases of the various Patients, and on other points,—the Committee deliberately considered the question, and at length determined to appoint a Person of Medical Education under the title of “Clinical Assistant”; and Mr. Bernard Rice lately of Saint Bartholomew’s Hospital has been elected to the situation at a Salary of Seventy pounds, with board and residence in the House.

The Asylum was visited in October last by the Earl of Shaftesbury, Chairman of the Commissioners in Lunacy,—who recorded his approbation of the House and the treatment of the Patients in all respects,—pointing out only a want of improvement in the ventilation of some of the Wards;—and to which the Visitors immediately attended.

The weekly charge for the maintenance of the Patients has been twice reduced in the course of the year, till it is now



Eight shillings per Patient; and the Visitors look forward to effecting a further reduction.

The Annual Report of the Chaplain is appended to this.—

On behalf of the Committee of Visitors,

**HUGH HAMERSLEY**

**Vice-Chairman.**

*Littlemore, 31st December 1851.*



## APPENDIX.

*To the Committee of Visitors of the Littlemore Asylum.*

GENTLEMEN,

In presenting to you my Annual Report, I must crave your indulgence for repeating in substance, if not in words, what I have already said in my preceding Reports.

My duties are so little varied, that one year differs very slightly from another; and consequently my Annual Statement both as regards myself, and the Patients under my charge, cannot avoid being substantially the same.

During the past year I have been regular in the performance of my duties; which consist of two Services on Sundays, Good Friday and Christmas Day; Prayers daily in the week, and visiting the Wards and hearing the reading classes.

The number of Patients now in the Asylum is 347, viz. 151 Males and 196 Females; and the average number attending Divine Worship in the course of the year, has been 202; namely 80 Males and 122 Females.— Since the 1st of January 55 cases of epileptic fits have occurred in Chapel, and 6 Patients have been removed in a state of excitement.

The Reading Classes still continue to be well attended; averaging, throughout the year, 24 Male, and 40 Female Patients; and the Lending Library is also much valued by the more rational of the Inmates; in addition to whom the Attendants take great pleasure in reading the Publications.



I have administered (privately) the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper to several of the Patients, but have always applied previously to the Superintendent for his approval, giving him a list of the names of those who wished to communicate ; in compliance with Rule 19, which states that the Superintendent " shall possess full and entire authority as to " the classification, employment, amusement, instruction, management " and medical treatment of the Patients, both Male and Female," &c.

I have also been summoned to the bed side of several of the sick and dying Patients, for the purpose of praying with them ; and my visits have always been most thankfully and gratefully received.

One Patient, E. J.—I continued to pray with two or three times weekly, for more than two months.—When first brought to the Asylum, she was in a very weak state of body and mind ; but was sufficiently well to go to Chapel, until, as her strength gradually kept failing, she was at length compelled to keep her bed : I then commenced my visits.—At first she was of a most desponding turn of mind, thinking that it was impossible for her to be saved ; but after repeatedly praying and conversing with her, she became very much more comfortable, and I trust departed this life full of the hope of a happy Eternity.—She died on Tuesday the 12th of August, and I had prayed with her the Sunday afternoon previously ; when she told me that she had " great hopes of going to Heaven after death." These were her simple, but, as I confidently feel, her sincere words.

Some of the Patients who have died, were originally admitted into the Asylum in such a deplorable state of mental and corporal weakness, as to preclude the possibility of my affording them any con-



solation, either by conversation or prayer. And others were in their last illness, so totally deprived of the little reason they had previously possessed, as to render my visits perfectly useless.

The orderly and apparently attentive behaviour of the Patients in Chapel, (which has been invariably remarked by strangers who have attended the Services;) is, no doubt, in a great measure attributable to the fact, of the more sane and composed Patients being selected to form the Congregation; but still I feel certain that it also proceeds in a very great measure from a knowledge of the meaning of the assembling, and from early associations.

Of those who generally attend Chapel, many are induced to do so from much higher motives, and more rational views than mere custom.

Having so much intercourse with them, I can speak from my own personal knowledge, that very many of the Patients attend as an act of religious duty, and are never absent excepting on account of illness.

That great comfort is afforded to the Patients, by their having the opportunity of joining Divine Worship regularly, the following instance, (out of many that have occurred to me,) will be sufficient to prove:— A. S., who has been servant in several families of distinction, has frequently told me that nothing but religion, and his constant attendance at Chapel, could support him under his present affliction, and altered circumstances.

It is satisfactory for me to be able to state, that the Patients who have been discharged in the course of the year, as cured, were particularly



attentive to their religious duties; and on leaving the Asylum, they have expressed themselves in grateful terms for the comfort which I, in my ministerial capacity, was the humble means of affording them.—

I have the honor to remain,

Gentlemen,

Your most obedient Servant,

EDWIN W. R. PULLING,

Chaplain.

*Littlemore, December 31st 1851.*

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*Oxfordshire Epiphany Quarter Sessions 1852. Resolved that the REPORT of the Committee of Visitors of the LITTLEMORE ASYLUM be printed and circulated.*

*By the Court,*

JOHN M. DAVENPORT

CLERK OF THE PEACE.

*County Hall, 5th January 1852.*



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I have the honor to ...

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