

Twenty-first annual report of the directors of James Murray's Royal Asylum for Lunatics. June, 1848.

Contributors

James Murray's Royal Asylum for Lunatics.

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TWENTY-FIRST
ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

DIRECTORS

OF

JAMES MURRAY'S
ROYAL ASYLUM FOR LUNATICS.

JUNE, 1848.

PERTH :

PRINTED BY ORDER OF THE DIRECTORS,

BY R. MORISON.

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REPORT.

JUNE, 1848.

It is now the duty of the Directors to present the Twenty-first Annual Report of the Institution, in which, according to the usual practice, a short review will be taken of such matters as are deemed deserving of notice, which have occurred in the proceedings and management of the Establishment since the date of the last Annual Report, and its present state and condition adverted to.

Since the last Annual Meeting, the Institution has, by his lamented death, been deprived of the valuable services of Robert Smythe, Esq. of Methven, who held the office of a Life Director. It thus became necessary, in order to keep up the number required by the Royal Charter, that another Director should be chosen, and the Directors have unanimously elected Major William Moray Stirling of Abercairny to that office.

The Epidemic-Influenza which became so prevalent last winter, not only in this country, but over Europe, did not visit the Asylum till the first week in December, when the patients generally were affected with it; but in most cases the attack was mild, and soon yielded to treatment.

Some time after the Bill to amend the Law relating to Lunatics and the better management of Lunatic Asylums was introduced into Parliament, it was considered necessary to call a Special Meeting of the Directors to take the same into consideration, and to determine what should be done in regard to it, so far as its provisions, would, if passed into a Law, affect the Institution.—The Bill contained two provisions, in particular, which appeared highly objectionable. By one of these the whole management of the Institution would have been virtually withdrawn from the Directors, and vested in the Board proposed to be constituted by the Bill ; and by another, a considerable sum would fall to be exacted annually from the Establishment for obtaining a License.

At the Special Meeting the Directors, while they abstained from expressing any opinion in regard to the general provisions of the Bill, and while they did not object that this Institution in common with others, should at all times be open to thorough inspection on the part of any Inspector appointed by Government, were unanimously of opinion that they were called upon emphatically to protest against sections 8th, 19th and 20th, being the objectionable portions of the Bill above referred to. It was accordingly agreed that a Petition should forthwith be presented to the House of Commons embodying the above views, and craving that this Institution should be exempted from the operations of the Bill ; and the Secretary having read the Draft of a Petition to the House of Commons prepared in anticipation of the resolution which would be adopted, the Meeting approved of the same, and authorised the Chairman of the Meeting to subscribe the principal copy.

It being further understood that Mr Peddie, the Chairman of the Institution, was then in London, and had expressed his readiness to give all the assistance in his power in protecting the interests of the Asylum, while there, the Meeting instructed the Secretary to write Mr Peddie, informing him of the resolution of

the Directors—enclosing the Petition to Parliament, with a request that he would intrust the same to Mr Home Drummond, the Member for the County, for presentation, whom failing, to any other member he might deem suitable—and empowering Mr Peddie to co-operate with those representing other Asylums, then in London ; and if necessary to employ a Solicitor and Counsel to attend to the interests of the Institution before the Select Committee of the House of Commons ; and generally, to do whatever he might think prudent and necessary with the view of opposing the passing of the Bill as then framed.

Through the combined exertions of this and other Institutions similarly affected, the Promoters of the Bill were prevailed upon to modify and alter its provisions so as to remove the objectionable features above alluded to ; but the measure has since been withdrawn, at least during the present Session of Parliament.

The past has been by far the most prosperous year in the annals of the Institution, both as regards the number of admissions and cures. Forty-nine Patients have been admitted,—23 Males, and 26 Females ; 26 have been dismissed cured,—10 Males, and 16 Females ; 9 have been removed by their friends more or less improved,—4 Males and 5 Females ; and 10 have died,—5 Males and 5 Females ; and there now remain in the House 164 Patients, 94 Males and 70 Females.

The Physician is particularly gratified with the number and excellence of the cures. In most cases those who have been restored to convalescence have resumed their positions in the world, and are again conducting their own affairs and discharging the active duties of life. From the confined locality which supplies the majority of Patients in a Provincial Asylum it would obviously be improper to enter into particulars in regard to cases of cure, as persons might thus be traced to their present homes, and the feelings of themselves and friends wounded by an exposure that would serve no good purpose.

The deaths since the date of last Annual Report have been somewhat numerous and amount in all to 10. None of these however proceeded from any epidemic, but resulted from the course of nature, by the gradual exhaustion of the animal powers or that species of paralysis which is so often the close of the mortal career in Insanity.

As might naturally be anticipated from the preceding remarks the Directors are enabled, and have much pleasure to announce, that the Institution continues to enjoy the same steady prosperity, and to be conducted with the same efficiency in its various departments, as have heretofore characterised it.

It is one of the pleasing features of the present age that Institutions are established to meet the various and complicated wants of the community. We have Schools of Industry for our Neglected Young—Infirmaries for our Sick—and Asylums for the Insane ; none of which could be dispensed with, without seriously injuring the interests of society. It is due to the promoters of the Bill above noticed to acknowledge that they recognise, and proposed practically to secure the adoption of two most important principles heretofore but imperfectly asserted, viz.: that those who are suffering from mental alienation shall be the special objects of care on the part of the state, who is to adopt effectual measures to secure for them all that protection and guardianship to which their helpless condition entitles them ; and also to render it impossible that any shall be classed among the rank of the Insane (through the interested and selfish views of friends and dependants) who may not actually belong to it, although they may be devoid of that firmness of character which is necessary to qualify them for asserting their own rights when opposed by persons of greater mental endowments.

In conclusion, the Directors desire to record their satisfaction with the manner in which the different officers of the Institution have, during the past year, discharged their respective duties.—

They trust they will continue to merit approbation for the future ; and that through their zeal, fidelity and attention, and the Divine blessing, the Institution may long continue to enjoy the confidence of the Public, and to confer important benefits on that unfortunate class of the community which are the immediate objects of its care.

TABLE I.

	Males.	Females.	Total.
Number of Patients remaining in the Asylum, 14th June, 1847,.....	90	70	160
Number admitted from 14th June, 1847, to 12th June, 1848,.....	23	26	49

TABLE II.

	Males.	Females.	Total.
Cured from 14th June, 1847, to 12th June, 1848,.....	10	16	26
Removed by their friends,.....	4	5	9
Died, :.....	5	5	10
Remaining 12th June, 1848,.....	94	70	164

LIST OF OFFICE-BEARERS,

1848—9.

WILLIAM PEDDIE, Esq. of BLACKRUTHVEN, *Chairman.*

DIRECTORS.

I.—EX-OFFICIO.

The Right Honourable the EARL of KINNOULL, Lord-Lieutenant of the County of Perth.

ROBERT WHIGHAM, Esq. Sheriff of the County of Perth.

HUGH BARCLAY, Esq. Sheriff-Substitute of the County of Perth.

DAVID CLUNIE, Esq. Lord Provost of the City of Perth.

WILLIAM IMRIE, Esq. Dean of Guild of said City.

ROBERT GREIG, Esq. First Bailie of said City.

JAMES CONDIE, Esq. President of the Society of Procurators.

ALEXANDER TULLOCH, Esq. Convener of the Trades of Perth.

The Rev. JOHN MURDOCH, Minister of the Middle Church, Perth.

II.—LIFE DIRECTORS.

WILLIAM PEDDIE, Esq. of Blackruthven.

ALEXANDER H. M. BELSHES, Esq. of Invermay.

MAJOR WILLIAM MORAY STIRLING, of Abercairny.

ANDREW KELTY, Esq. M.D. TAYHILL, Perth.

III.—ANNUAL DIRECTORS.

DAVID BOYTER, Esq. M.D. Kinnoull Cottage.

Sir THOMAS MONCREIFFE, of Moncreiffe, Baronet.

Rev. Dr. JOHN CROMBIE, Minister of Scone.

MAJOR H. JELF SHARP, of Kincarrathie.

J. B. BELL, Esq. of Glenfarg.

Dr F. THOMSON, Crescent, Perth.

JOHN CONNING, Esq. Writer, Perth.

ALEXANDER STODDART, Esq. of Ballendrick.

Sir JOHN MUIR MACKENZIE, of Delvine, Bart.

GENERAL ALEXANDER LINDSAY, of Early Bank.

Lieut. Col. ALEXANDER BALMAIN, of Dalvreck, Perth.

HENRY B. MACFARLANE, Esq. M.D. Perth.

WILLIAM MALCOM, Esq. M.D. *Physician.*

Dr. PAUL PIERIDES, *Surgeon.*

Mr WILLIAM GLOAG, Commercial Bank, Perth, *Treasurer.*

Mr DAVID MACKENZIE, Writer, Perth, *Secretary.*

The Rev. JOHN BELL, *Chaplain.*

Mr CHARLES WALSH, *Superintendent.*

Mrs WALSH, *Matron.*

Miss SHAW, *Housekeeper.*