

Second annual report of the directors of James Murray's Royal Asylum for Lunatics : with an abstract of the medical report, list of office bearers, and an appendix.

Contributors

James Murray's Royal Asylum for Lunatics.

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SECOND
ANNUAL REPORT
OF THE DIRECTORS
OF
JAMES MURRAY'S
ROYAL
ASYLUM FOR LUNATICS.

WITH AN
ABSTRACT OF THE MEDICAL REPORT,

LIST OF OFFICE-BEARERS,

AND AN
APPENDIX.

PERTH.

Printed by order of the Directors.

MDCCCXXIX.

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SECOND ANNUAL REPORT
OF THE
Directors
OF
JAMES MURRAY'S
ROYAL ASYLUM FOR LUNATICS.

IT is with feelings of no ordinary satisfaction that the DIRECTORS of this ASYLUM now present their SECOND ANNUAL REPORT. As Directors of an Institution which has for its object the removal or alleviation of one of the most dreadful maladies with which humanity can be afflicted, they are sensible of the importance of the situation which they occupy; and that the utmost zeal, attention, and assiduity, are necessary to a proper discharge of its duties. Impressed with these feelings, they have sincere pleasure in stating, that the Establishment over which they have been called to preside, continues to be attended with uniform and marked success. In making this statement, which cannot fail to be gratifying to every benevolent mind, the Directors trust that they will not be suspected of merely courting the approval of their

measures: Their object is to lay before the public an impartial account of the result of their labours. While the Directors state that their exertions have been unremittingly devoted to promote the prosperity and extend the usefulness of the Institution, it must be obvious, that the principal cause of its flourishing condition has been the philanthropy of the Founder; who enabled them to raise that structure, and complete those arrangements, which excite universal admiration, and render the Asylum a model for the formation of similar establishments. Under this conviction, the Directors cannot but turn once more with feelings of gratitude and respect to the memory of JAMES MURRAY; who, in this Institution, has left behind him a monument which must transmit his name to posterity as one of the most generous and enlightened benefactors of his native province. To give expression to these feelings, is not only a pleasing, but, to the Directors of this Asylum, an imperative duty: For, while those who preside over similar institutions are too often compelled, in their annual addresses, to place themselves in the attitude of supplicants, appealing to the benevolence of the public, this Establishment has been so amply endowed by Mr Murray, that it is only necessary for its Directors, on such occasions as the present, to detail the progress they have made, and to point out the various excellencies by which the Institution is distinguished.

The experience of the Directors, since their last

Report, has strengthened their conviction that Mr Murray's Asylum possesses peculiar advantages as a quiet, secure, and comfortable retreat for the insane. Having been recently established, and the fund for its establishment having been ample, it unites all those modern improvements in the arrangements of the buildings and style of accommodation, both internal and external, which could be derived from the experience of similar institutions. Satisfied that much depends on the internal arrangements of the Establishment, the Directors have framed mild, and, they think, salutary and efficient Regulations, with the view of securing the comfort and promoting the recovery of the patients. The observance of these Regulations, they believe, has been attended with the happiest effects; and the tranquillity, comfort, and happiness which prevail within the precincts of the Asylum, are the surest indications of its prosperity. The external appearance of the edifice must strike every visitor with admiration; and this feeling will be increased in no small degree if he be admitted to a view of its internal accommodations, which are as remarkable for the taste and ingenuity which they display, as for the comfort and enjoyment which they are calculated to afford. While due regard has been had to privacy and security, there is no appearance of harshness or restraint, nor any thing which can offend the most fastidious delicacy or wound the most refined sensibility.

The Directors are led to believe that an erroneous opinion is prevalent with regard to the comparative advantages of a public and a private institution for the cure of insanity. By some, it seems to be imagined that a private establishment must be preferable to a public one, not only as affording greater security and seclusion from the world, but also in the degree of attention that may be given in the former to the comforts of the patients and the means of promoting their recovery. But, to every one adequately acquainted with the manner in which this and various other public institutions are conducted, it must be evident that the opinion is entirely unfounded. There is plainly nothing in the nature of a public asylum to prevent it from possessing the same advantages of security and seclusion, and vigilant attention to the wants of the patients, which any private asylum can have; whilst, on the other hand, the public establishment must generally be superior in accommodation and systematic arrangement, and, above all, in that extensive experience on the part of the physician, superintendent, and matron, upon the results of which the alleviation or cure of insanity must ever greatly depend.

No general description, it is obvious, can apply to the various patients who are at present inmates of this Institution. The malady with which they are afflicted appears in forms endlessly diversified, and is more or less inveterate, according to the cause which has produced it, the period of its duration, and

the previous mode of treatment. Solitary confinement and want of employment being in all cases highly prejudicial, every effort is made to prevail on the patients to engage in some occupation, and thus divert their minds from their favourite illusions. Many are employed at work in the grounds surrounding the house; and those who take a pleasure in this occupation are led to consider it as a privilege rather than as a task. Those individuals who, either from taste or habit, feel an aversion to manual labour, are induced to engage in other avocations or amusements,—such as reading, drawing, playing on musical-instruments, or at cards, backgammon, bagatelle, &c. The females are employed at needle-work or knitting; and some of them voluntarily assist the servants in the work of the house. The fatuous and imbecile, whose mental capacity is too limited to enable them to take any part in such pursuits, exercise and recreate themselves in the airing-grounds.

At first, it is sometimes difficult to prevail on the patients to make the slightest exertion, or employ themselves in any way; but, by studying the peculiarities of their temper and disposition, it is generally possible to discover something that possesses a charm to occupy their attention. The paramount importance of employment and exercise in the open air, in cases of lunacy, is demonstrated by the experience of this Establishment. To these causes, aided by a mild and soothing system of treatment, must be ascribed no small share of the success which has at-

tended the remedial measures that have been adopted. One of the patients, who had been closely confined in another asylum, was, when removed to this Institution, apparently beyond all hope of cure or amendment, and utterly devoid of intellect. He was encouraged, and, after some time, prevailed upon to engage in work ; from which, and the other treatment he received, he soon derived evident benefit ; and he is now so far recovered as to be able, with the assistance of another patient, to pump all the water required for the use of the house.

Where insanity is not of recent origin, it is generally difficult to effect a cure ; and the necessity of proper treatment at the earliest stages of the disease, cannot therefore be too strongly enforced. At the same time, it is proper to observe, that many who have laboured several years under this afflicting malady have, nevertheless, recovered the entire enjoyment of their faculties. Several instances of such cures have occurred in this Asylum,—and one of the cases was that of a patient who had been confined no less than five years in several other asylums.

Throughout the last year, the Weekly Committee have been most assiduous and unremitting in watching over the interests and promoting the prosperity of the Asylum. With the internal economy and superintendence of the Establishment, they have always expressed the highest satisfaction. No appearance of carelessness or improper conduct towards the patients ever fell under their observation : On the con-

trary, they invariably observed the most tender and vigilant watchfulness on the part of the keepers and servants, and the utmost regularity, cleanliness, comfort, and tranquillity, throughout every department. Regulations, which have been framed with care, and appear beautiful in theory, are sometimes, when brought to the test of experiment, found to be defective, or imperfectly adapted to existing circumstances: From impartial observation, however, the Directors are happy to say that the Regulations which have been established for the government of this Institution are in every respect suitable, and have fully realized all the expectations which the reflection and care bestowed in framing them were calculated to excite.

Various improvements have been carried into effect during the past year, to promote the comfort by increasing the accommodations for the patients. The grounds surrounding the house were originally laid out with great taste, and no exertion has been wanting to render them as useful as they are ornamental. Within the belt of planting which surrounds the grounds, a gravel-walk has been recently formed, to a great extent by the labour of the patients themselves; and, to those who are convalescent, a quiet and agreeable promenade of nearly a mile in circumference has thus been furnished. Being partially shaded by the trees on each side, it affords a delightful shelter from the oppressive heat of summer, and it commands a prospect of the most varied and picturesque de-

scription. Here they can, unobserved, survey those scenes which have recently attracted the graphic pencil of the greatest novelist of the age,—the beautiful environs of the city of Perth; the river Tay for a considerable part of its course; the villas which adorn its banks,—in short, a combination of hill and dale, wood and water, mountain and plain, in every variety of light and shade,—furnishing objects highly calculated to divert the disordered mind from those hallucinations the recurrence of which it is of so much consequence to prevent, and to communicate, even to disordered minds, sensations of happiness and delight which it must ever be beneficial to foster.

The Directors have thus the satisfaction of thinking that no exertion of theirs has been spared to accomplish the philanthropic object of the Institution. To this they have been prompted not less by a sense of duty than by feelings of commiseration for their afflicted fellow-creatures. Every one must feel that there is no class of human beings with greater claims to sympathy and assistance than the victims of mental derangement,—removed, as they are, from the pale of social life, haunted by the phantoms of a diseased imagination, incapable of ministering to the common wants of nature, and deprived of the exercise of those intellectual faculties from which the most varied, exalted, and refined enjoyments are derived. If, after brooding over their misfortunes in cheerless solitude, they approach the busy scenes of society, their very appearance excites alarm and distrust; and, while the

hand of benevolence is stretched out to relieve their distress, the generous impulse is not unfrequently checked by the apprehension of personal violence. But it is in the domestic circle that this dreadful malady is most deeply and painfully felt: Under its blighting influence, domestic comfort and happiness disappear, the current of the social affections is stopped, love is often succeeded by hatred or aversion, and the abode of happiness becomes the gloomy receptacle of wretchedness.

It is scarcely possible, therefore, to conceive any institution that ought to be regarded with deeper interest than a well-regulated asylum for the insane; and the important improvements which have recently been introduced, in the treatment of these unhappy outcasts of our species, are honourable to the age in which we live, and calculated to encourage the hope, that, though the sudden fluctuations of condition, and other exciting causes incident to a refined state of society, render insanity more prevalent now than formerly, the increased skill to which the frequency of the disease has given birth will prove the means of mitigating its violence and shortening its duration.

Hospitals, no doubt, were many years ago erected for the reception of the fatuous and the insane; but these apparently owed their origin not so much to the unsolicited efforts of public benevolence as to the cold dictates of public utility. The stern system of treatment which prevailed in these receptacles was

too much in unison with the principles which led to their establishment ; and, in place of eradicating, it was not unfrequently calculated to aggravate and confirm the disease. Too often the rash opinion was adopted that insanity was incurable ; and, while such an impression existed, it need not have been matter of surprise that cures were seldom effected. The advantages of the modern system were totally unknown. Harsh restraints, clanking chains, gloomy apartments, and cruel keepers, were the inseparable accompaniments of the insane, and exhibited to actual observation scenes more revolting to humanity than the most laboured representations which the fancy of the poet and the novelist had conceived of fictitious suffering. How delightful, then, is it to turn from so melancholy a picture, and contemplate the treatment of the inmates of this Institution !—every individual within its walls watched over with the utmost tenderness and solicitude—the wants of all duly supplied—their varying whims and caprices studied and humoured—kindness and attention returned, not unfrequently for violence, insolence, and abuse—the utmost cleanliness and comfort observed—exercise and recreation—the total absence of apparent restraint, and, at the same time, unremitting vigilance to protect the patients from injury and prevent their escape : Add to this the services of an eminent Physician, the inspection and care of a Superintendent and Matron of experience, and it cannot be denied that

the situation of the patients is rendered as comfortable and happy as in their unfortunate condition it is possible to make it.

In conclusion, it affords the Directors the greatest pleasure to embrace this additional opportunity of tendering their warmest thanks to their able Physician, for the zealous and enthusiastic vigilance he has uniformly displayed in the discharge of his important duties; and to the Superintendent and Matron the expression of the unqualified approbation of the manner in which they continue to conduct every thing under their charge.

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ABSTRACT
OF THE
MEDICAL REPORT
TO THE
DIRECTORS OF JAMES MURRAY'S
ROYAL ASYLUM FOR LUNATICS.

8th June 1829.

IN addition to the medical reports which have been, at the close of every three months, laid before the Directors of the Asylum, it will now only be necessary to give the results of the medical treatment for the last quarter, with a brief recapitulation of the year's proceedings. Before going into details, it will be well to give an abstract list of the number of patients admitted into the Asylum since last Annual Report.

Since that period, twenty-four patients have been received into the Institution,—of whom, eight have been cured, and happily restored to their friends and to society; three have been removed by the wish of their relations, and two by death.

Although the number of cures during the last year bears a fair proportion to the number of admissions, yet, viewing the whole body of patients in the house, the proportion must be allowed to be trifling. This may be easily, and, it is hoped, satisfactorily accounted for, by recollecting the hopeless condition of many of the patients first admitted on the opening of the Institution. In the majority, the disease was of long standing, and of such a nature as precluded the hope of recovery.

In the abstract, mention was made of three patients who left the house by desire of their relations. The first of these (a female) was removed from the Asylum, from the inability of her relations to continue her board.

The second instance is that of a man who had become so troublesome, and even dangerous, to his friends and neighbours, that his confinement was deemed necessary for their safety. At length, being otherwise provided for, he was removed from the Establishment.

In the third case, from the origin of the malady (injury of the head), recovery was hopeless. Idle, dissipated, and regarded as a dangerous neighbour, he was admitted into the house with a view to his acquiring habits of industry. This accomplished, he returned home.

In July last, was discharged from the Asylum, altogether cured, a man who had been insane upwards of six years. In France, where his malady first seized him, he was for a short time in confinement. Since that time, he has been an inmate of the greater number of the metropolitan asylums,—St Luke's, Bedlam, Warburton's, &c. So rare is the occurrence of recovery, in lunacy of such long standing, that a cure was, in this case, unlooked for, and beyond hope. This man's great propensity to mischief being observed, and its peculiar activity when he was altogether idle, care was taken to have him constantly employed in little jobs about the gallery. By degrees, he began to make himself useful in the house; and, after some time, becoming more quiet and orderly, he was permitted to work in the garden. He now rapidly improved both in his general health and in the tone of his mind, till at length reason was completely restored.

The case next in importance is that of a female, brought into the Asylum from a distance. This case is important, alike on account of the origin of the disease and of its violence and obstinacy. Married very early in life, this poor girl became the

mother of six children before the twenty-fifth year of her age. Her husband, a day-labourer, was unable, with all his industry, to find bread for so large a family. Harassed by poverty and the cries of her starving children, the mind of this unfortunate creature sank under so many miseries. Her first symptom of insanity appeared in an attempt at suicide. Thwarted in this attempt, she several times in vain endeavoured to find an opportunity of murdering some of her children. When she entered the Asylum, her symptoms were violent : She screamed incessantly, and slept so little, that fear was entertained lest she should die exhausted. After a long time, however, and under proper treatment, she recovered ; and, a very unusual occurrence after so violent an attack, she could recollect every --the slightest circumstance that had happened to her during the whole time of her insanity. In consideration of the severity and long duration of the disease in this case, it was deemed prudent to prolong the stay of this patient in the house considerably beyond the period of recovery. When the moment of her removal arrived, she wept bitterly, and was loath to depart.

The next case worthy of remark, is that of a labouring man, who was seized in the winter 1827-8. Being employed as a quarrier in a sequestered part of the country, he became associated with one of his fellow-labourers, and both slept in the same hut or bothie. Returning, one very dark night, from a smuggling adventure, his associate fell over a quarry, and was killed. The body was found next morning, and brought home. The solitude of the scene, and the dreadful nature of the accident, which hurried an unprepared fellow-mortal into the presence of his Maker, wrought so powerfully on the originally weak mind of the poor survivor, that he became deranged, and attempted to commit suicide. He constantly raved about the enormity of his sins, and his despair of salvation ; and the strictest watch was necessary upon his conduct.

In less than two months, his mind regained its balance ; and he was dismissed, in the beginning of harvest, to earn a subsistence for his wife and family.

There is nothing remarkable in the origin or progress of disease, in the other cases in which cures were effected. And though perhaps no two cases of insanity exactly resemble each other, yet these cases present nothing sufficiently interesting to entitle them to detail. The majority, also, have been already reported to the Quarterly Meeting of Directors.

Of the two cases which ended fatally, the first is that of a middle-aged man, who was brought to the house from another asylum, in which he had been confined several years. Insanity, in this instance, originated from the abuse of mercury, administered to the unfortunate patient by an empyric in London. He was altogether fatuous, and ate, drank, moved about, or sat quiet, as he was desired. This poor man died a victim to insanity,—being so exhausted by the disease, that he sunk without a struggle.

The other death was that of a gentleman from a distance. Sixteen months before he entered this Asylum, he had a paralytic affection, which merged into insanity. While in the house, he had a second paralytic attack, and died on the 2d May. A relation visited this gentleman before his death, and expressed himself highly satisfied with the care and attention his unfortunate kinsman had met with in the Asylum.

The system of discipline followed in this Institution is found to be admirably suited, both in kind and in degree, to the purpose for which it is intended. No accident has ever occurred in the house.

In the last Report, an error was made as to the number of patients in the house,—32 was stated as the number that remained, instead of 33. There are now in the Asylum 43 patients.

TABLE FIRST.

	Males.	Females.	Total.
Number of patients remaining in the Asylum, 9th June 1828,	25	8	33
Number of patients admitted, from 9th June 1828 to 8th June 1829,	17	6	23
	42	14	56

TABLE SECOND.

	Males.	Females.	Total.
Dismissed cured, from 9th June 1828 to 8th June 1829,	6	2	8
Removed by friends,	2	1	3
Died,	2	0	2
Remaining, 8th June 1829,	32	11	43

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TABLE FIRST

Year	1829	1830	1831	1832	1833	1834	1835	1836	1837	1838	1839	1840	1841	1842	1843	1844	1845	1846	1847	1848	1849	1850	1851	1852	1853	1854	1855	1856	1857	1858	1859	1860	1861	1862	1863	1864	1865	1866	1867	1868	1869	1870	1871	1872	1873	1874	1875	1876	1877	1878	1879	1880	1881	1882	1883	1884	1885	1886	1887	1888	1889	1890	1891	1892	1893	1894	1895	1896	1897	1898	1899	1900																												
Number of persons admitted to the Society	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49	50	51	52	53	54	55	56	57	58	59	60	61	62	63	64	65	66	67	68	69	70	71	72	73	74	75	76	77	78	79	80	81	82	83	84	85	86	87	88	89	90	91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99	100

LIST OF
OFFICE-BEARERS,

1829-30.

TABLE SECOND

Year	1829	1830	1831	1832	1833	1834	1835	1836	1837	1838	1839	1840	1841	1842	1843	1844	1845	1846	1847	1848	1849	1850	1851	1852	1853	1854	1855	1856	1857	1858	1859	1860	1861	1862	1863	1864	1865	1866	1867	1868	1869	1870	1871	1872	1873	1874	1875	1876	1877	1878	1879	1880	1881	1882	1883	1884	1885	1886	1887	1888	1889	1890	1891	1892	1893	1894	1895	1896	1897	1898	1899	1900																												
Number of persons admitted to the Society	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49	50	51	52	53	54	55	56	57	58	59	60	61	62	63	64	65	66	67	68	69	70	71	72	73	74	75	76	77	78	79	80	81	82	83	84	85	86	87	88	89	90	91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99	100

DAVID BEATSON, Esq. of Kirkpottie, Chairman.

DIRECTORS.

1. EX OFFICIO,

His Grace the Duke of ATHOLL, Lord Lieutenant of the county of Perth ;
 DUNCAN MACNEILL, Esq., Sheriff-Depute of the county of Perth ;
 CHARLES HUSBAND, Esq. of Glenearn, Sheriff-Substitute of the county of Perth ;
 ROBERT ROSS, Esq. of Oakbank, Lord Provost of the city of Perth ;
 JOHN WRIGHT, Esq., Dean of Guild of the said city ;
 JAMES NORWELL, Esq., First Merchant Bailie of the said city ;
 JAMES PATON, Esq. of Glenalmond, President of the Society of Procurators practising before the Courts of Law in Perthshire ;
 JOHN MACEWAN, Esq., Convener of the Trades of Perth ;
 The Reverend JAMES ESDAILE, Minister of the East Church of Perth.

2. LIFE DIRECTORS.

DAVID BEATSON, Esq. of Kirkpottie ;
 THOMAS BEATSON, Esq. of Mawhill ;
 JOHN MURRAY, Esq. of Cordon ;
 WILLIAM PEDDIE, Esq. of Pitcullenbank, writer, Perth.