

**Third annual report of the directors and physician of James Murray's Royal Asylum for Lunatics : with an appendix, containing Dr. Robertson's report and list of office-bearers.**

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**THIRD**  
**ANNUAL REPORT**  
**OF THE**  
**DIRECTORS AND PHYSICIAN**  
**OF**  
**James Murray's**  
**ROYAL**  
**ASYLUM FOR LUNATICS.**

**WITH AN**  
**APPENDIX,**  
**CONTAINING DR ROBERTSON'S REPORT**  
**AND LIST OF OFFICE-BEARERS.**

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**THIRD ANNUAL REPORT**  
OF THE  
**Directors and Physician**  
OF  
JAMES MURRAY'S  
**ROYAL ASYLUM FOR LUNATICS.**

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THE DIRECTORS and PHYSICIAN of this ASYLUM, in now publishing their THIRD ANNUAL REPORT, are happy to announce, that the extensive and important establishment over which they preside, has been attended with a degree of continued success which has equalled, if it has not exceeded, their most sanguine expectations. The experience of an additional year has made them still more sensible that the Institution possesses advantages of a peculiar kind, and leads them again to the gratifying reflection that they have not been left to struggle with difficulties which are too often experienced by those who watch over the infancy of similar institutions,



owing for the most part their origin to, and deriving their chief support from the fluctuating and precarious contributions of public charity ; but, on the contrary, have been furnished with resources so ample as to enable them to complete and conduct an establishment on an extensive and splendid scale, with all the modern improvements. Opening the Institution under these favourable auspices, the Directors had no doubt that its advantages required only to be known to excite public attention, and enable them to promote, in a suitable manner, the humane purposes for which it was established. Fortunately these expectations have now been fully realized : During the past year, the establishment has not only risen materially in public estimation, but increased greatly in usefulness, furnishing a comfortable retreat to many afflicted with insanity, and the best means hitherto devised for promoting their recovery and restoring them to the situation they formerly filled in society.

This result is naturally highly gratifying to the feelings of the Directors and Physician ; but they disclaim all pretensions to peculiar personal merit, being satisfied that the praise must be ascribed almost entirely to the philanthropy of the munificent Founder of the Institution. The success which has attended the Asylum during its progress, is indeed matter of little



surprise, when the various excellencies by which it is distinguished are considered. The internal construction of the building exhibits a combination of all the beneficial arrangements which architectural skill, guided by taste and experience, could devise for promoting the comfort and enjoyment of the patients. Before furnishing the design, Mr Burn made a tour over the greater part of the kingdom, for the purpose of inspecting the most celebrated hospitals for the insane ; and every effort has been made to unite privacy and security, with an advantage which might seem incompatible with the essential requisites in such establishments—namely, that of placing the whole so as to be under the almost simultaneous surveillance of the Superintendents of the Institution. By this happy arrangement, a constant and effectual check is provided against every thing like harsh and unbecoming treatment on the part of the keepers of the different wards ; while the patients are scarcely conscious of those encroachments on their personal liberty, which, in many cases of insanity, tends, by the irritation it excites, to aggravate their malady.

The extensive grounds, indeed, which surround the establishment, enables the Superintendent to exempt the patients almost entirely from personal restraint,—a circumstance which is not more conducive to their comfort, than it



is calculated to promote their recovery, whether the disordered state of their minds is to be ascribed to physical or moral causes. The situation of the building is elevated and healthy, commanding an extensive view of the surrounding country, which is remarkable for the beauty of its scenery. The airing-yards afford, to those patients who required to be most strictly watched, the invaluable advantage of enjoying exercise in the open air; while those who are convalescent are permitted to roam at large through the pleasure-grounds, where a gravel path, formed within a thriving plantation, surrounds the whole, and furnishes a secluded and pleasant promenade of nearly a mile in circumference. The Directors have been highly gratified at perceiving the admiration which these arrangements and advantages have excited in the minds of intelligent strangers who have visited the Institution. Many of them have expressed in the warmest terms the pleasure and surprise which they felt on seeing the patients, whom they expected to find subjected to painful coercion, and immured in gloomy apartments, walking about the grounds free and unrestrained, in the exercise of those occupations or the enjoyment of those amusements which were most agreeable to their taste and inclination: Some being engaged at work in the garden, and others employed in reading, drawing,



music, or at cards, backgammon, and bagatelle ; and all of them more or less occupied in pursuits or recreations calculated to divert their minds from those illusions which are the perpetual concomitants of lunacy. With these advantages, it is delightful to reflect that the patients of this Institution enjoy as much comfort and happiness as it is possible to communicate to persons in their unhappy situation. Experience has shown that the extensive view afforded from the grounds, and the infinite variety of objects which attract the attention of the patients, are of the most vital consequence to the present enjoyment and ultimate recovery of the insane.

During the past year, the Directors are happy to state, they have had great reason to be satisfied with the internal economy and excellent superintendence of the Asylum. The Weekly Committee, having the more active management of the Institution, have been most attentive and unremitting in watching over its interests and promoting its prosperity, and have given the most favourable accounts to the General Board of the conduct of all the officers, keepers, and servants, as well as of the regularity, quiet, cleanliness, and comfort which they have uniformly observed in every department of the establishment.

The degree of success which has attended



the treatment of the patients, may be estimated from the following statement of the number of those who have been admitted, and the progress made in effecting cures, from the opening of the Institution on 1st July 1827, up to the present period,—keeping in view, however, the fact that many patients were admitted who might be considered incurable, and that few of those restrictions were imposed with respect to age, or the duration and peculiar nature of the malady, which are usually adopted, and rigidly enforced, as to admission, in similar institutions.

Of 26 recent cases of lunacy, which have undergone treatment in the Asylum, 15 have been completely restored to reason; while of old confirmed lunatics, 64 have been admitted, and 6 have been dismissed cured,—making in this instance rather less than 1 in 10 who have recovered. When the aggregate numbers are put together, however, there will be 21 persons cured out of 90 who were admitted; and this appears on the whole a very favourable result, considering the circumstances which have been explained. The proportion of deaths which have occurred in the Asylum, the Directors believe to be much smaller than in any similar institution throughout the kingdom. Notwithstanding the number of old and incurable patients, not more than 4 persons out of the 90 who have been admitted, have died within the Asylum. The



fatality appears to have been much greater in other institutions. In the Asylum at Dundee, the proportion of deaths in nine years seems to have been 9 out of 100; at Glasgow, 10 out of 100; at the York Retreat, 20 out of 100; and lastly, at Lancaster,  $24\frac{1}{2}$  out of 100. This contrast, it is hardly necessary to say, is not made with the view of instituting an invidious comparison, but solely for the purpose of drawing the public attention to a remarkable feature in the history of the Institution, which is too important and gratifying to be passed over in silence.

From the statement which has now been submitted, the Directors and Physician are satisfied the advantages of early treatment in cases of lunacy will be immediately perceived. In the first stages of the malady, they believe, medical assistance is invaluable; but, after the prominent features of bodily disease have gradually disappeared, and left no trace behind to enable the physician to ascertain the original cause of the disorder, it is exceedingly difficult, and in many cases impossible, to effect a cure. In such circumstances, the physician may be led to administer those medicines which are usually employed for bringing the body into a natural and healthy state; but he must chiefly rely in trying to remove or alleviate the disease on the effect of moral treatment, which is necessarily very un-



certain and precarious. Notwithstanding the obvious truth of this observation, the Directors must state with regret, that the feeling throughout Scotland is so decidedly set against a public Asylum, that many of those who labour under insanity are not sent to such a retreat till their disease has taken root, and been confirmed beyond hope of cure. This circumstance is calculated to excite the most painful reflections; for it is not only prejudicial to the character of a public hospital, but in many cases completely destructive of the wellbeing of the unhappy patients. The Directors therefore trust they may be excused for saying, that it is the duty of every friend of humanity to break in upon a prejudice which is so prevalent, so injurious in its effects, and which, while it is founded on the most amiable feelings, is, in reality, any thing but kind or considerate towards the unfortunate persons who are the objects of so much care and solicitude.

The number of patients in the Asylum has now materially increased, 27 (15 males and 12 females) having entered during the past year. When these are added to the former inmates of the House, the whole patients who have received treatment will amount to 71. Of these, two have died,—the one a pauper-patient far advanced in life, and the other a gentleman who was carried off by a stroke of palsy; while four



have been removed at the request of their friends more or less improved, and eight have been dismissed completely cured.

It would, of course, be very fruitless to enter upon a minute detail of each of the cases in which cures have been effected; but a few of these may without impropriety be briefly alluded to. One of the females cured was a highly-accomplished young lady. Her malady originated in a severe fall from her horse, when in the act of dismounting. She was taken up apparently insensible, and afterwards became quite frantic. She long entertained peculiar notions, which no exertions of her friends could remove. It constantly preyed upon her mind that individuals were in search of her to murder her. If a coach came within her view, she instantly regarded it as destined to convey her to destruction. A steam-boat she fancied would inevitably explode and destroy her. On one occasion, she happened to see two gentlemen shooting; when, recurring to her unfortunate illusion, she became assured that they were approaching to murder her, and went and hid herself. It will readily be believed, that such ideas, constantly preying on her mind, rendered her quite miserable, and induced her more than once to attempt suicide. On her admission to the Asylum, a system of the strictest surveillance was adopted, and continued for the first six weeks; a servant watch-



ing her every moment. She gradually began to recover, and would at times engage in needle-work. At other times, she would play on the piano; and ultimately she was induced to join in a dance with the other ladies. At length the despondency wore off: She became convalescent; and, in five months, from her admission, she was again restored to her friends and to society. Another of the patients cured was a young man who had high ideas of his own importance, and had been thwarted in some of his favourite pursuits,—a circumstance which wounded his pride so much, that his mind soon became unsettled. He imagined that a great many individuals in public stations were conspiring against him, and entertained the illusion that he was an earl. After his admission, he talked and acted like one wearing the coronet, and supposed that the Asylum was the castle of a neighbouring peer, who had invited him to become his guest. By mild and judicious treatment, this individual gradually recovered, and was restored to his friends, completely cured in little more than three months. Another of the patients dismissed was a gentleman who at one time held a high rank in the army. Contrary to his own inclination, he found it necessary to retire; and, some family misfortunes having followed his retirement, insanity was the consequence. He had been in several asylums both in England



and Scotland, and experienced partial relief from the treatment which he received. After remaining some time in this Institution, his symptoms gradually improved. He became aware when the hallucination which afflicted him was coming on, and nothing could be more painful than to perceive the struggles which he made to escape from it. At length he was removed from the Asylum by a relation, who conceived that he was quite well: But unfortunately the malady in his case appears to be periodical, and it is much to be feared that the patient may experience a relapse; and the attacks to which he was exposed were so violent, that, if they again return with the same force, there is some danger of their producing sudden death. The next patient who was dismissed was a pensioner, who had been engaged in active service in the Rifle Brigade. His malady appears to have been in some degree hereditary; but the immediate exciting cause was loss of blood, occasioned by severe wounds. In a short time, he was restored to the use of his reason, and is now quite well. It were perhaps out of place to notice particularly the circumstances attending the other cures, or to enter upon any lengthened detail of the varied and ever-varying condition of the present inmates of the Institution, although few subjects could prove more truly interesting.

Upon the whole, the Directors are highly



gratified in taking a retrospective view of the affairs of the Asylum during the past year, and observing the uniform success which has hitherto accompanied their labours. In presiding over an Institution which has originated in the purest benevolence, which is distinguished both by the simplicity and efficiency of its Regulations, and which has attracted the highest degree of public admiration, by the superior nature of its accommodations, they are happy to reflect that it has already, during the short period of its existence, been the means of imparting comfort and happiness to many unfortunate beings who might otherwise have been exposed to the severest privations, and left in a state of hopeless neglect ; while, at the same time, under the blessing of Providence, it has restored so many to the enjoyment of the faculties indispensable to a rational participation in the business of life. The Institution, they trust, is now established on a permanent basis. Encouraged by these happy results, the Directors are resolved to pursue, with undiminished zeal, the benevolent purposes of the Institution, and to watch over its interests with all the ardour and attention which their high importance deserves,—under a humble persuasion that the gracious Being who is the “ Father of the spirits of all flesh,” will continue to bless their efforts, and to aid their endeavours to restore to their right exercise those faculties of the



understanding which His wisdom may have for a season seen proper to suspend, in the unhappy individuals who are committed to their care.

In conclusion, it is now right to record the unanimous and cordial thanks voted by the Board of Directors, at their annual general meeting, to David Beatson, Esq., their Chairman, for the persevering and unremitting attention he has continued to devote throughout the past year to the interests of the Institution ; to Dr Robertson of Alexandria, for his valuable services and assistance since the opening of the Institution to the present period,—services rendered peculiarly important, not merely from the patient and anxious manner in which they were rendered, but from his eminent medical talents and great experience as Inspector of Hospitals to his Majesty's Forces ; to the Physician, for his able and zealous discharge of his duty ; and to the Superintendent and Matron, who have continued to conduct their respective departments in a manner meriting the most unqualified approbation.



TABLE FIRST.

	Males.	Females.	Total.
Number of patients remaining in the Asylum, 8th June 1829, ... ..	30	14	44
Number of patients admitted, from 8th June 1829 to 7th June 1830, .....	15	12	27
	45	26	71

TABLE SECOND.

	Males.	Females.	Total.
Cured, from 8th June 1829 to 7th June 1830,.....	6	2	8
Removed by friends,.....	4	0	4
Died,.....	1	1	2
Remaining, 14th June 1830,.....	34	23	57

## APPENDIX.

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### DR ROBERTSON'S REPORT.

*James Murray's Royal Asylum for Lunatics,*

10th June 1830.

THE period of my observations on the management of this Institution being now at a close, I feel great satisfaction in being able to confirm, in every respect, all my former reports, in the most favourable terms I can express them.

I see the same zealous solicitude and cordial coöperation continued throughout all the branches of the establishment, and the duty carried on in the mildest and quietest manner,—having, in no instance, recourse to coercion, or any restraint whatever, that can possibly be avoided, for the security of the whole; and to this mode of treatment, in a great measure, I attribute the success of restoring to a sound state of mind so many of those who have been *happily* discharged cured.

I consider the principal point to be attended to in the commencement of any undertaking, particularly such a one as this, is, the selection of persons *properly qualified* to perform their several duties with ability and fidelity; and, so far as I am a judge of such matters, I am happy to bear witness that this has been, in an eminent degree, the good fortune of this establishment. I therefore most sincerely hope, that no change in this respect will, for many years, be found necessary; and that the original appointments of Dr Malcom, Mr



and Mrs Simmonds, with our worthy Chairman, *Mr David Beatson*, at their head, may be long favoured with their enjoyment of good health, to enable them, *collectively and individually*, to persevere in the course they have *hitherto* (with so much credit to themselves and benefit to the public) pursued in the discharge of their respective duties.

I now, in the most respectful manner, take my leave of this valuable Institution, with my best wishes for its permanent prosperity and usefulness to this part of the kingdom.

ALEX<sup>R</sup>. ROBERTSON,

Inspector of Hospitals to his Majesty's Forces.