

**Invalid institution : Institution for the Social and Temporary Retirement of Invalids.**

**Contributors**

Institution for the Social and Temporary Retirement of Invalids (Denham Park, Buckinghamshire, England)

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# INVALID INSTITUTION.

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## INSTITUTION

FOR THE

*Social and Temporary Retirement of Invalids.*

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HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS THE DUKE OF SUSSEX.

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*Member of the Royal College of Physicians of London.*

(The Female Department superintended by Mrs. HUNT.)

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MESSRS. COUTTS & CO.

### Secretary.

JAMES TAYLOR, Esq.

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\* \* \* All Communications will be considered as strictly confidential, and may be addressed to any one of the Committee of Management under Cover, to the Secretary, JAMES TAYLOR, Esq., addressed, Denham Park, near Uxbridge, Bucks.

# INSTITUTION

FOR THE

## *Social and Temporary Retirement of Invalids.*

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THE object of this Institution is the restoration of the mental faculties of persons in the upper walks of life when disturbed by disease or other causes. Persons of fortune, whose nervous temperament may make a temporary retirement desirable, will here find protection and a home,—the Institution being conducted on principles involving most important advantages, as connected with the ultimate recovery of the Invalids, and the security and satisfaction afforded to their friends; namely, FIRST, that of studying the happiness and amusements of the Patients, and preventing them, as much as possible, (though at all times under proper moral and medical restraints), from feeling that they are excluded from the ordinary privileges of society; secondly, that of classifying the Patients in separate Establishments, and not allowing those whose disease assumes a permanently violent, or in any way permanently offensive character, to reside in the Establishment appropriated to such as are capable of enjoying the privileges of social intercourse; and, thirdly, that of placing each Establishment at all times under an entirely disinterested surveillance.

The great and most important novel feature of this Institution is, that, while each of its Establishments is in the strictest sense a Private Asylum as regards the names and family connexions of its inmates, and the special accommodation provided for those who require it, it is, in the most important sense, a Public Asylum, inasmuch as the visits of the usual Medical Attendant of the Patients, or their friends and relatives, are allowed without any previous notice; while every opportunity of searching into abuses or mismanagement, as well as the power of restoring the Patients to their friends, or to general society, when it may be done with propriety, is given to persons of the highest rank, talent and acknowledged integrity, and who have no interest whatever in the pecuniary arrangements or emoluments of the Institution; thus affording opportunities for the Patients to make complaints, whether frivolous or just, without the fear of being afterwards harshly treated, of which so many distressing instances occur.

It is a melancholy fact, that, while the Pauper Lunatics in the County Asylums are protected by the disinterested surveillance of the independent magistracy of the country, and are blessed with the medical attendance of a resident paid officer of first-rate talent, whose emoluments do not depend in any way on the number of Patients he can retain in the County Asylum; the unfortunate sufferer in the higher walks of life has no refuge but the ordinary licensed madhouse, or private residence, where there is no surveillance, and where the interests of the medical man, and of every one by whom

the Invalids are surrounded, are notoriously so much more promoted by their remaining lunatic than by their recovery, that a constant struggle between principle and self-interest must be the result, while their friends often dare not encounter the reproaches of the world for thus consigning them to what is too often not unjustly considered as a cruel and heartless oblivion; and are, therefore, induced, at any sacrifice of comfort or convenience, to keep them at home,—an arrangement at all times, it is well known, least likely to promote their recovery.

To provide a remedy for this obvious and crying evil—the bane of all existing Private Lunatic Establishments for the Upper Classes—the present Institution has been founded, and placed under the disinterested surveillance of its Vice-patrons, Noblemen and Gentlemen, whose high public character and station in society cannot fail to insure public confidence, and who have no other interest in the Institution but what is prompted by a noble desire to benefit mankind. To these Vice-patrons is given the power, whenever they choose to exercise it, of visiting the Institution, of instituting inquiries, of communicating with the Resident Medical Officer of the Institution, or with the friends of the parties, and of restoring any Patients to them, or to general society, without reference to the Committee of Management, or to the Proprietors of the various Establishments of the Institution. To the Committee of Management are confided the arrangements for receiving Patients into the Institution, and the superintendence of the detailed management of its Establishments; so as to secure the perfect carrying out of the social, disinterested, and effective Plans which it embraces. To remove the temptation to detain any Patient beyond the period necessary to establish a cure (where a cure is practicable), the Resident Medical Officer of each Establishment has a salary wholly independent of the emoluments of the Institution, in which he will not be allowed, directly or indirectly, at any time to participate, so that his disinterested attention is at all times exclusively directed to the cure of the Patients, and the discharge of such as recover under the treatment, or whose friends wish them to be removed; while as a further stimulus to his exertions in this respect, a premium is awarded to him by the Institution for every Patient permanently cured, according to a fixed scale dependent on the shortness of the period during which the patient has been under his care. On him alone devolves the entire responsibility of the medical treatment of the Patients; it being obvious to those who confide their invalid friends or relatives to the care of this Institution, that this responsibility is of a nature that cannot be shared by the Committee of Management.

The great hope of the promoters of this Institution is, that they may be able to set an example of a more attentive, benign, social, active, and effective system of treatment for persons afflicted with mental diseases than has hitherto been adopted; to prevent the Patients feeling that they are outcasts from society, and unfit for social intercourse, and to direct and encourage that portion of the intellect which yet remains into amusing sources of occupation, while strict attention to health, air, and exercise, works the restoration, rendered hopeless only by neglect of these important considerations. Every object of luxury or taste which the eye of the Patients has been

accustomed to dwell upon, if suddenly removed from them, works evil, which, however gradual in its progress or imperceptible in its origin, is not the less certain in its ultimate injurious effects; and if a permanent cure be the honest intention of the parties entrusted with their care, the Patients should not be allowed, for one moment, to feel that their removal from the noise and bustle of the world as Invalids, is more than a temporary retirement for the more effectual cure of a temporary disorder—an object which can only be obtained by giving them every social and domestic comfort and amusement which their disturbed state of mind may leave them capable of appreciating. This system, which reason dictates and humanity approves, once fairly introduced to public notice, it is hoped will lead to its extension, if not voluntarily, at least by some act of the Legislature; for it is surely impossible that the present wretched and supine, if not worse, treatment of the Upper Classes in Private Lunatic Asylums, can be endured by an intelligent and enlightened people, who, while their best energies are directed to ameliorate the condition of the Pauper Lunatic, leave the more affluent but equally helpless class of their afflicted fellow beings a prey to the unmitigated miseries of mental inaction in those Establishments, where their bodily wants are too often made the only objects of attention or solicitude.

The principal Establishment belonging to the Institution, and at present open for the reception of Invalids, is Denham Park, near Uxbridge, in the County of Buckingham, seventeen miles from London, where a sane society of persons has been provided, whose mixing judiciously with the patients, both male and female, together with the other numerous appliances of the place, prevent their feeling that they are outcasts from society, or unfit for social intercourse. Denham Park is a noble mansion, fit for the reception of persons in any rank of life; containing a private consecrated chapel, where the family, and such of the Patients as may be benefitted by it, assemble daily for morning and evening prayers. The country round it is very beautiful; horses, carriages, gardens, billiards, archery, fishing, music, a library, and, in short, every recreation and amusement, both in and out of doors, calculated to rouse the mind and promote the health, are provided. The house is remarkably dry and airy, replete with spacious suites of apartments, on a scale seldom met with; the situation is pleasantly retired, and celebrated for its salubrity.

The Terms of Admission for both Sexes at Denham Park, though necessarily higher than at other Establishments on a less advantageous and extensive plan, are regulated by the means of the parties, and the extent of accommodation required; and the Committee of Management are most anxious in all cases that the friends of the Invalids should personally inspect the Establishment before the terms are finally agreed upon.

The payments are required to be made quarterly, and each quarter's payment to be made in advance; but if the patients are removed before the end of any quarter, allowance is made for the time they do not stay, and a return made accordingly. Terms for the admission of friends or relatives visiting or residing with the Patients at Denham Park, in cases where the Resident Medical Officer approves of such an arrangement, are regulated by special agreement.