

Report of the Whitworth Fever Hospital Drumcondra ... / By W.I. Morgan.

Contributors

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REPORT

OF THE

WHITWORTH FEVER HOSPITAL

DRUMCONDRA,

(Written at the Request of the Managing Committee.)

By W. I. Morgan, A. B. M. D.

LICENTIATE OF THE KING AND QUEEN'S COLLEGE OF PHYSICIANS;
ATTENDING PHYSICIAN TO THE WHITWORTH FEVER HOSPITAL;
AND ONE OF THE PHYSICIANS TO THE DUBLIN GENERAL
DISPENSARY.

DUBLIN :

PRINTED BY CHRISTOPHER BENTHAM,
19, Eustace-street.

1823

1P/WH1

NOTICE.

I.

This Hospital is now open for the reception of Patients labouring under other medical diseases as well as fever.

II.

Every Annual Subscriber is privileged to have one Patient at a time in the Hospital.

III.

A ward is appropriated to such Patients as may be able to defray their own expenses.



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Whitworth Fever Hospital,

OPENED 18TH MAY, 1818.

PATRON :

His Excellency The LORD LIEUTENANT,

PATRONESS :

Her Grace The DUCHESS of DORSET,

Vice-PATRONESSES :

Countess of Charlemont,
Viscountess Lorton,
Honorable Mrs. Le Poer Trench,
Dowager Lady Hutchinson.

PRESIDENT :

His Grace The DUKE of LEINSTER.

Vice-PRESIDENTS :

His Grace the Archbishop of Tuam,
Earl of Charlemont,
Earl of Roden,
Earl of Longford,
Earl of Blesinton,
Viscount Lorton,
Bishop of Meath,
Lord Mayor,
Right Honorable J. O. Vandeleur,
Right Honorable St. George Daly,
Sir Robert Shaw, Bart, M. P.
R. W. Talbot, M. P.
Colonel Handfield,
Joseph Goff, Esq.

COMMITTEE :

Mr. Adair, Mountjoy-square,
 Mr. Ball, High Park
 Reverend W. Bushe, Hardwicke-Place,
 Alderman Cash, Rutland-square
 Mr. Cowley, Gloster-street,
 Mr. Ellis, Hardwicke-Place,
 Mr. Fitzgerald, Eccles-street,
 Mr. French, Eccles-street,
 Mr. Geoghegan, Leeson-street,
 Mr. Hall, Gloster-street,
 Sir J. K. James, Baronet, Rutland-square,
 Mr. M'Clelland, Summer-hill,
 Mr. Monsarrat, Summer-hill,
 Mr. Morgan, Sackville-street,
 Mr. Parnell, Merrion-square,
 Mr. Pollock, Capel-street,
 Rev. W. I. Purdon, Temple-street,
 Mr. Rainsford, Mount Pleasant,
 Mr. Studdert, Summer-hill,
 Honorable Judge Vandeleur, Rutland-square,
 Mr. Webb, Great Britain-street.

CONSULTING PHYSICIAN :

John Cheyne, M. D. Physician General, &c.

ATTENDING PHYSICIAN :

W. I. Morgan, A. B. M. D.

SURGEON :

Robert Adams, A. B.

RESIDENT APOTHECARY :

Mr. Jackson.

MATRON : Mrs. Anne Tinkler,
COLLECTOR : Mr. W. G. Hulbert,

R E P O R T.



FIVE years have elapsed since the opening of the Whitworth Fever Hospital. Within this period, many of its first benefactors have ceased to cherish it, whilst others have arisen in their place, who still continue their patronage; but though many of the latter have occasionally witnessed some of its advantages, they have never been fully informed of their extent, and without such information, the continuance of their support cannot reasonably be expected.

That some who were at first zealous advocates for the establishment of this Hospital, should no longer appear amongst its friends, is a vicissitude which most new institutions experience; but in this instance, circumstances concurred to deprive it of their subsequent co-operation and support: any enquiry into which, would be unnecessary and uninteresting at this remote period.

That a spacious and commodious hospital has been erected by voluntary contribution, in a most healthful situation; that it has afforded an asylum to 1,309 individuals; that it has restored 1,239 in health to their families; that its benefits have followed them to their own abodes, through the means of its nourishment

dispensary, and provided food for those who no longer needed medical aid, but could not resume their employments; that it has the countenance and support of many who are persuaded that there was occasion for a Fever Hospital on the north side of the city; that this persuasion has been verified by the number admitted, and the many more to whom admittance was reluctantly denied,—all afford a sufficient answer to objections made before experience had proved its utility, and furnish conclusive evidence that it was worthy of patronage.

Its best friends are not fully aware of its value. The name of a Fever Hospital seems to have circumscribed the institution with a magic circle, within the precincts of which few would venture, to obtain minute information. To enable them, therefore, to form for themselves a dispassionate judgment, unbiassed by feelings of terror or compassion, and to give to it the opportunity of pleading its own cause, a brief review of its foundation, internal œconomy, and the advantages resulting from them shall now be submitted.

The year in which the erection of this hospital was suggested was one marked by a peculiarly severe dispensation of providence. Fever had most alarmingly prevailed over Ireland; it had visited this city; numbers were falling by its ravages, and the principle of self-preservation roused the prudent man to provide for the safety of himself and his family: for not only were those its victims whom hunger, cold, and consequent depression of mind predisposed to its influence, and whose want of almost every necessary seemed to have abandoned to its rage, while the severity of the season augmented their sufferings by the want of that fuel, of which the

incessant rains had deprived them; but it had entered even the more comfortable dwellings of the rich, where the rigor of the atmosphere was softened, and cheerfulness tended to preserve health.

The epidemic which had commenced at a distant part of the kingdom was making rapid advances towards the metropolis; its progress being, without doubt, much accelerated by various causes. The hospitals of the city were filling with its own poor, and others were hastening from the country in order to procure admission, diffusing contagion in their way: many, who were ill, concealed their symptoms, lest they should be refused shelter; others, mixing with their families, were admitted to the bosom of society, simulating health, while secretly bending under the increasing force of disease. Such is the truth—a truth perhaps unknown to those whom duty did not call to witness such facts, and whom self-indulgence confined to scenes where even the thought of human misery would obtrude itself as an unwelcome guest. But to those who visited the poor in their miserable dwellings, such facts at length became familiar. Indeed, in the district under my care, as one of the Physicians to the Dublin General Dispensary, every one seemed to suspect his neighbour; wherever I visited, the anxious eye watched me, and I was interrupted at every flight of stairs till I had answered the suspicious whisper—“Has he the sickness, Sir?” The consternation which every new case spread, and the horror with which the individual was viewed, was such, that some were seriously indisposed before they would complain, and many were willing to persuade themselves that they were not infected; and thus contagion gained strength

and spread. In one house in Church-street fever commenced in the cellar; in this was a water-pipe, and thither the other inhabitants resorted for a supply of water; one of its poor inmates had fever, and, either through ignorance or design, no mention was made of the nature of his illness; at length he was sent to an hospital, and died. It next appeared in the attic: there a woman took ill in the seventh month of pregnancy; after some days she was prematurely delivered, yet recovered: but her husband, a healthy strong man, a guard of the Derry Mail coach, whose employment obliged him to be up all night, and whose affection led him to watch over his wife at every spare moment, being predisposed by cold, want of sleep, fatigue, and anxiety of mind, next became its prey, and soon its victim. From these it spread progressively to every room in the house.

But I remember with horror a scene I then witnessed. I was called to attend a young woman in fever, a resident of Bow-street. Her father was in the same room with her, ill of the same disease; with difficulty I obtained for him a note of admission into one of the Fever Hospitals, but he expired in the carriage. For her I could not procure admission, and while attending her, an inhabitant came to request me to visit a young girl in the upper part of the house. On entering the room I could see no one in it. The poor old woman who brought me there, bursting into tears, requested me to pardon her, and informing me that her family consisted of an aged husband who was very dear to her, and an orphan whom she employed as a servant; that the girl had taken ill of fever, and could not obtain admission into an hospital, and that, lest

her husband should catch the infection from her, she was obliged to seclude her thus.—She opened a press, at the bottom of which, on some straw, lay a girl of twelve years of age, some days ill of fever, and covered with spots.

To those who knew that this city possesses two extensive Fever Hospitals, it may appear strange that there was such difficulty in obtaining admission for a case so urgent; yet the fact was so, and, to prove how full those Hospitals were at that time, I shall mention that this was one of the cases detailed in my letter, which was read from the pulpit of St. George's Church, by the Rev. William Bushe, on the occasion of the first charity sermon for the Whitworth Fever Hospital, when his Excellency Earl Whitworth, then Lord Lieutenant, was present, and which excited so much the sympathy of an excellent Prelate, that early on the following morning His Grace not only came to enquire how they could be relieved, but went in person to the Hardwicke Fever Hospital to solicit admission for the patients, but it was two days before he could succeed. At such a time, and under such circumstances was the Whitworth Fever Hospital founded.

At a meeting of the inhabitants of the several parishes of St. George, St. Thomas, St. Mary, St. Michan, St. Paul, Glasnevin, and the suburbs contiguous to the north side of the city, held at the Rotunda on Friday the second of February, 1816, convened by public advertisement, for the purpose of taking into consideration the expediency of establishing, on the north side of the river, an effective Fever Hospital, the object of which should be to extend relief to the poor of the several parishes and contiguous suburbs before

named, the Right Honourable the Earl of Charlemont in the chair. Several resolutions were adopted, which have already been made public.*

From these it is manifest that one of the chief objects of the general meeting of subscribers was to afford immediate relief to the suffering poor, by opening a temporary Hospital for their accommodation. In furtherance of this object, as soon as the Managing Committee was appointed, a Sub-Committee was formed to seek for an eligible situation with the least possible delay, and they soon reported that they had found one. But so great was the terror excited by the idea of the vicinity of a Fever Hospital, that a deputation of the neighbouring inhabitants waited on the Committee to express their apprehensions, "that their property and health would be affected, should the Committee persevere in converting the proposed house into a Fever Hospital;" and when the Committee, with a becoming consideration for their feelings, consulted competent authorities, and assured them that their apprehensions were totally unfounded, and then, with a due adherence to the trust reposed in them, authorized their Sub-Committee to purchase the house, a memorial was forwarded to his Excellency the Lord Lieutenant, patron of the institution, praying his interference; in consequence of which a letter was received from the Right Hon. Robert Peel, then Chief Secretary, conveying the desire of his Excellency that the Committee should abandon the proposed situation, and choose some other. In obedience to their noble Patron they proceeded to search for other places, but their ob-

* Vide "Proceedings relating to the establishment of the Whitworth Fever Hospital at the north side of the city of Dublin, 1816."

ject was still further frustrated by the fears of the neighbouring inhabitants; and, after an ardent, but fruitless search for a house fit to be converted into a Fever Hospital, and after frequent disappointments and opposition, which had consumed the space of fifteen months, the Committee agreed that it was but a loss of the opportunity of serving the suffering Poor to delay longer in search of such a house, and they therefore turned their attention to the object of building an Hospital in an eligible situation.

A plot of ground on the new road that runs by the Royal Canal, between Drumcondra and Glasnevin, opposite the 3rd Lock, part of the estate of the Earl of Blessinton, containing two hundred square feet, and remote from every dwelling, was that which was selected for this purpose. An annual rent of £35 was agreed on, and the lease for 999 years was drawn in the name of trustees. On this a spacious building was erected, three stories high, with a basement underground, containing kitchen, &c. &c. On the 1st floor the Apothecary's, the Matron's apartment, and a ward; on the 2nd two wards separated by the stairs and the Apothecary's shop; and on the 3rd two wards, separated by the stairs and the Nurse's room. The accommodation devoted to the patients, consisting of five large wards, each 30 feet long, 18 feet wide, and 13 feet high, each capable of containing ten beds, and ventilated not only by the door, the fire-place, and a large window in each extremity, but by four air-shafts, introduced through the floor and ceiling, and opening vertically opposite to each other, by iron regulators. And this building was so constructed, according to the plan laid down at the request of the Committee, by an eminent Architect,

that at a future period, should necessity require, and the funds of the Hospital permit, this house might form the centre of a more extensive building. A straw house was subsequently erected, and a carriage on springs provided for the conveyance of the patients to the Hospital. Four Physicians, and two Surgeons, (whose services were gratuitous,) an Apothecary, a Matron, and a Register were elected. Two Nurses, two Ward Maids, and other Servants were appointed, and on the 18th of May, 1818, the Hospital opened for the reception of patients; of these the number to be under the care of the institution at any one time, has been regulated by the Committee, varying according to exigency; the greatest number being forty-eight, and the least twelve.

So long as the epidemic prevailed, no recommendation was required for admission, the liberality of Subscribers, and the bounty of Government enabling the Committee to admit almost every applicant. When a patient arrived he was received at the back entrance, and introduced by an easy descent into the reception room in the basement. There his hands, face, and feet were washed with warm water, and he was assisted to his bed. His clothes were then fumigated with sulphur, immersed in water, and lastly washed. Two Physicians attended daily for a month in rotation; and the other two visited such persons as applied for admission; the Apothecary resided in the house to take the superintendence, and to fulfil their directions, and either he, or the Matron was always at home. Such was the general attention to the health and comfort of its inmates, that the Hospital soon became a favourite; so great indeed, that many whose cir-

cumstances were considered above the assistance of a public charity, offered to support themselves if they were but admitted ; and, in a few instances, the relatives of the sick subscribed, to entitle them to recommend the individual. The recoveries were often remarkable and rapid, no doubt, owing to the free circulation of pure air ; for often, when the physician had sent in a bad case from the miserable and confined abodes of the sick, a very considerable amendment was observable on his visit to the hospital, and that before any other remedial measure had been adopted.

At various times the fever appeared under a most malignant type, and the Apothecary, the Matron, and the Nurses, all of whom duty required to come within its influence, were more than once attacked. Of the Physicians also, two had very severe fevers, one of whom, in the prime of life, and distinguished by eminent talents, fell a victim to it in a few days. Comparatively few relapses occurred, the majority of which arose in those who, impatient of the wholesome restraints of an hospital, had gone prematurely home.

The following tabular view exhibits the number of admissions, &c. &c. in each year respectively ; in the perusal of which it should be remembered that the year ends on the last day of January, as the meeting of the Governors and Subscribers is held on the second day of February in each year.

<i>Year.</i>	<i>No.</i>	<i>Viz. :</i>	<i>Died</i>	<i>To- tal.</i>	<i>Average.</i>	<i>Dis- missed.</i>
1819	355	{ Males 153 Females 202	10 3	13	One in $27\frac{4}{13}$	342
1820	346	{ Males 148 Females 198	15 4	19	One in $18\frac{4}{19}$	327
1821	268	{ Males 113 Females 155	11 10	21	One in $12\frac{6}{21}$	247
1822	172	{ Males 66 Females 106	8 1	9	One in $19\frac{1}{9}$	163
1823	168	{ Males 71 Females 97	6 2	8	One in 21	160
Total	1309	{ Males 551 Females 758	50 20	70	One in $18\frac{7}{10}$	1239

Of the seventy deaths, many were the consequence of other diseases. The power of fever, not only to develop latent diseases, but to hasten to a fatal termination those which have already appeared, is long and well known; and in many cases, the frame, reduced by a recent attack of fever, has not strength to contend with the subsequent malady. Besides, many diseases, not purely fever, commence with its symptoms, and, until the characteristics present themselves, cannot be distinguished from it, and then it is too late to reject the patient: but even with these additions, the proportion of seventy deaths in 1309 patients, or one in eighteen, is small. That this Institution has been so useful, must be a cause of thankfulness in the bosom of every subscriber; and, as many contributed from a sense of duty to those who were placed under their protection, as heads of manufactories, or as persons of influence in parishes, to whom the poor apply from long experience of their beneficence, it may be interesting to them to have a statement of the number received from each parish, in each year, subjoined.

<i>Parishes.</i>	1819	1820	1821	1822	1823	Total
St. GEORGE,	105	108	70	48	60	391
St. THOMAS,	89	86	93	62	39	369
St. MARY,	79	32	25	38	17	191
St. MICHAN,	8	4	10	1	21	44
St. PAUL,	4	8	0	8	1	21
GLASNEVIN,	26	6	4	2	3	41
FINGLAS,	1	73	41	4	4	123
DRUMCONDRA,	16	22	19	3	14	74
CLONTARF,	12	4	2	2	7	27
VARIOUS,	15	3	4	4	2	28
Total	355	346	268	172	168	1309

This table, however, can afford no criterion of the extent of fever in the parishes named; for, as the admissions were regulated by the state of the funds, many were refused, whose numbers must therefore be sought for in the registry of other hospitals. The Committee were anxious to afford relief to the fullest extent of, and, indeed, beyond their means;—and some of its Members, contributed most generously in addition to their subscriptions. The numbers received from the parishes of Finglas and Glasnevin appear comparatively great. Fever was prevalent there, and of a very bad type; but it deserves to be recorded that The Lord Bishop of Kildare, and the gentry in the neigh-

bourhood, formed themselves into a board of health, and extended to the sufferers every relief in their power. They entered into an agreement with the Committee for a number of beds at a certain rate, and as all, or most of their sick, were sent to this Hospital, the numbers appear proportionately great. Some were received from Coolock, Santry, and even Howth, although these parishes have not contributed to their expenses. The greater number of admissions from the parishes of St. George, St. Thomas, and St. Mary, and the diminution in the two subsequent parishes, arises from the vicinity of the former parishes to this Hospital, and of the latter to the Hardwicke Fever Hospital.

In such a number of fever patients, many cases, of course, presented themselves, which were highly interesting to the practitioner; but in a report not purely medical, their introduction would be irrelevant; and many scenes were witnessed in the abodes of the sick, the mention of which might excite the feelings, and perhaps serve to extort subscriptions from those to whose bounty there was no other avenue: but if it be a public duty to support an hospital, the necessary supplies should flow from an appeal to the judgment, and not to the passions. The following case is therefore mentioned, only with the intention of proving by exemplification the value of a Fever Hospital, in points which would require many words to establish by reasoning.

I was requested by one of the Curates of St. Mary's to visit a poor man in Denmark-street; I found him lying behind the counter of a small shop, the floor of which was below the level of the street; the door lay

open to admit air, and of course, with it entered every passing sound. In the room above was a day-school for poor children, the incessant hum of whose voices, and patting of whose feet, had greatly disturbed him. He had been ill many days, and was then in a low delirium, and unable to express either a want, or a pain. To give him a probability of recovery, and to secure his little family from a longer exposure to contagion, he was removed to the hospital; the quietness of which, and the free circulation of its pure air, seemed to act as a cordial in his drooping state, and he soon gave signs of amendment. In a few days the fever subsided: but it had been discovered on his admission, that a serious evil had occurred in his neglected state at home. Long pressure on the same surface, in his extreme debility, want of watchfulness against such an occurrence, and want of cleanliness, had caused mortification of the parts on which he lay. The prominent parts of the back were sloughing, and although the constitution was able to subdue the fever, and even make wonderful exertions towards recovery, it had also to separate the dead from the living parts, and to heal the latter when the separation had taken place; but to this task it was unequal, and he sunk, not under fever, but in consequence of the neglect he had experienced at home.

Few whose professional duties do not lead to an acquaintance with the fact, form an adequate idea of the value of a Fever Hospital. Other diseases may be treated at home, with impunity to the other inmates, and without danger to society. Not so fever: With every facility that suitable medicines, careful nursing, and scrupulous cleanliness could supply, the

Physician would have an almost insuperable impediment to contend with in the dwellings of the poor,—namely, want of pure air; and if even their apartments were neither small nor crowded, the closely-inhabited neighbourhood, and its consequently impure atmosphere, would form an equivalent evil, which no benevolence could obviate, except by the removal of the individual. But such facilities are only imaginary, for they exist not among the poor of this city: and though the funds of a dispensary, or the bounty of an individual might furnish drugs, yet fever often requires such delicacy of treatment, that the very food must be administered like medicine, with as much precision as to time, quantity, and quality, which their own ignorance, or the interference of some neighbour might in one moment, perhaps fatally, subvert. Other diseases may impoverish the inmates by wasting that time in nurse-tending which ought to be spent in industry; but they do not menace life. Not so fever: it increases in malignity in proportion to the unfavourableness of the circumstances under which the infected is placed, and from the same causes, and in the same ratio, do the surrounding persons become predisposed to receive that contagion; and as every individual infected becomes a centre from which contagion may be radiated in all directions, it is impossible to calculate of what injury one case of fever may be to society at large. Persons of rank and wealth may suppose themselves safe beyond its reach. True, they come not into personal contact with the infected, but contagion may find its way even to them. The duties of their domestics expose them to the exciting causes of fever, the ordinary intercourse of society must lead

them to mix with that in which infection is found both most prevalent, and most highly concentrated; and often their own clothing comes from the apartments, and the very contact of infected persons; and such, at times, is the subtlety, the tenaciousness, and the virulence of contagion, that it is most difficult to ascertain its presence, to dislodge it, or to stay its progress, when it once breaks forth. An apposite exemplification of these truths may be adduced from the awful visitation of the village of Eyam, in Derbyshire, in the years 1666, and 1757. In the former year, the contagion of plague was conveyed thither in patterns of cloth sent from London to a tailor in the village, and swept away four-fifths of the inhabitants. The church-yard soon ceased to afford room for the dead, and they were afterwards buried in a heathy hill. In the summer of 1757, ninety-one years after, five labouring men, inhabitants of Eyam, digging on this spot, came to something having the appearance of linen; conscious of its situation they instantly buried it again, but in a few days they all sickened of putrid fever, and three of the five died. It was so contagious, that the sick could procure no attendance out of their own families, and it proved fatal to seventy persons.*

It has been well observed that prevention is better than cure, and the early removal of the infected, at the same time that it places him in the most favorable circumstances for recovery, affords the greatest certainty of protection to society at large. The value then of such an

* Typhous, or putrid fever precedes and follows plague, which, with other circumstances, seems to prove the plague to be a highly malignant form of typhous fever.

hospital, not only to the individual, but to his family, to his neighbourhood, and to society, must be fully acknowledged, especially when we call to mind that contagious diseases constitute no less a proportion than that of one-sixth of the ordinary maladies; that paupers have always abounded in this city; that declining trade has sunk many into the lowest rank, who were once above it; that this vast poor population is all, more or less, under the predisposing causes of fever, namely, poverty, depression of mind, inebriety, cold, damp, filth, and, too often, vice; that any one of these may, after a certain continuance, become an exciting cause, and that thus fever often makes a sudden appearance, and, bursting forth, spreads destruction through a whole district.

“ The very elements, though each be meant
 “ The minister of Man, to serve his wants,
 “ Conspire against him. With his breath he draws
 “ A plague into his blood; and cannot use
 “ Life’s necessary means, but he must die.”

We are now, however, under Providence, in circumstances different from those of the last five years. Fever has ceased to be epidemic; yet there are, and must be, numerous cases of this disease amongst the poor of a populous city; and the applicants for admission are frequently disappointed, not from want of accommodation, but want of funds; the particular situation of this hospital, in the suburbs, and on the confines of the great northern entrance to the city, besides the esteem it has obtained for itself among the poor, inducing many to make to it their first application: and though we cannot but feel some reluctance in refusing the relief they so earnestly crave, we have

the satisfaction of knowing that there is ample accommodation for them in the other fever hospitals.

Our capital has long since been exhausted, and our annual contributions are inadequate to the support of the institution, but so far are we from having cause of dissatisfaction on that account, that we must acknowledge with gratitude, that so long as public necessity required, public liberality flowed for its support, and such has been the generosity of our humane patrons, that we had only to state our wants, and to indicate the channel into which their bounty should be directed, to experience the fulness and freeness of their benevolence.

This, therefore, should embolden us again to plead before them the cause of the sick poor, and to expect with confidence that they will not withhold the small additional means required to maintain this building as an hospital, and continue it an instrument of mercy to many.

The fact that the decrease of our funds has kept pace with the decline of the epidemic, is sufficient intimation of the minds of our subscribers: they will not support it now exclusively as a fever hospital. Is fever the sum of all the ills that flesh is heir to? are our friends aware that, in this city, hospital accommodation, for diseases requiring medical aid, is distressingly deficient? Hospitals, 'tis true, abound; but they are all, with but one or two exceptions, exclusively devoted to surgical diseases. The suddenness and violence of cases requiring surgical aid, the case itself being so appalling to the spectators, and its danger in general so obvious to the senses, have all conspired to address the feelings themselves to provide for them in

suitable institutions: while the very accompanying circumstances so often being such as to become subjects of curiosity, or of ephemeral intelligence, form a perpetual advertisement to the public of the necessity and value of surgical hospitals. On the contrary, cases requiring medical attendance, with the exception of the class of fevers, arise from causes remote in their origin, slow in their progress, and far beyond the cognizance of our senses. Reasoning, indeed, may reach them, and assign to each its true period, its cause, and seat; yet the eye cannot see it, nor the touch explore it, nor can any but those who have been accustomed to reason on such subjects, form for themselves a satisfactory judgment of the real danger. The disease may be advancing with sure, though silent progress, and the patient may pine in wretchedness and want, because no sudden calamity has announced his situation, nor involved others in his ruin; he has not been hurried in a moment from the summit of health and vigour, into the extremes of helplessness and danger, and therefore our feelings have not been startled into sympathy. But is his disease the less real? his danger the less imminent? Should his situation be discovered and meet commiseration, yet he must present himself amongst a crowd of applicants, in the miserable competition of extreme disease, for one or two vacant beds; and if he be not then one of the most wretched objects in the whole assembly, he must return again, till increase of sickness has qualified him to be the next successful candidate, on some future day. So insufficient are our medical hospitals to meet the urgent wants of the poor; much more so to afford that prompt assistance by which many a life might be saved!

Just at this period, also, an hospital for medical diseases, on such a scale, and in such a situation as this is, would prove a most desirable and interesting institution. Commercial affairs, formerly so flourishing, have of late evinced themselves but too deceitful, and have sunk many from comfort and affluence, into poverty, affliction, and disease. With all the refinement of sentiment,—with all the delicacy of feeling which their previous education engendered, and their former circumstances countenanced, they find themselves lost in the multitude, and confounded with the mass of those, who have but one characteristic in common with them—that of being poor. But their minds cannot be degraded: they cannot mingle with the herd: principle, not pride, revolts from the idea. They cannot allow their eye to be offended, and their ear polluted with the sights and sounds which defile the wards of the best regulated extensive hospital; nor can that hospital eject its other inmates, who have equal claim on, because in equal need of, their protection, through any deference to their feelings. Surely the necessities of such a class of patients need not the painter's nor the poet's touch to excite in the bosoms of their more favored fellow-citizens the most tender commiseration. They must, and they do possess it; and for their relief alone, this hospital would meet with ample support.

Finally: this hospital was erected at considerable expense; it was built with attention to every circumstance, both as to its construction and situation, that could facilitate recovery;—it is not destitute of funds; though these funds are not sufficient to enable it to exert its full efficiency, and its debt is not now greater

than it was at the time of its being opened. If this hospital be now closed, all the money that has been expended, and all the advantages that would result from its continuance, must be lost for ever to the public. But if the wards, at present unoccupied, be opened for the reception of persons labouring under other diseases as well as fever, all its benefits will be continued, increased by the relief it will afford to such patients; its new form will excite that interest in it, which has now declined with the epidemic fever; its funds will increase; its debts will be paid, and it will be found, not only in existence, but in full operation, to lend its former aid, should it again be the will of the Almighty to visit this city with a similarly afflictive epidemic.

W. I. M.

33, North Cumberland-st.
Feb. 1823.



REPORT

OF THE

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IN

STATEMENT OF THE

THE YEAR

1885

FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31st DECEMBER, 1885

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