

Second address to the Committee of the Rev. Paul Saumarez / [Richard Saumarez].

Contributors

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Saumarez, Paul, Rev.

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SECOND ADDRESS

TO THE COMMITTEE

OF THE

REV. PAUL SAUMAREZ,

*Rector of Much Easton, and Magistrate for the County of
Essex.*

In Chancery.

*In the Matter of the Rev. PAUL SAUMAREZ,
a person of unsound mind.*

THOMAS BROOK, Superintendant of the "Retreat for the Reception of Insane Patients," in King Street, Hammersmith, in the County of Middlesex, maketh oath and saith, "That from his knowledge of the said Lunatic and from an "experience of fourteen years, he this Deponent is persuaded "that the said Lunatic might with benefit return to his "home accompanied by an experienced person, because one "of the causes of excitement would be removed, and the said "Lunatic is a gentleman of acute and honourable feelings, "with a mild and gentlemanly deportment."

51, Manchester Street, Manchester Square,
27th March, 1839.

MY DEAR SIR,

I HAVE called on your brother, in Grosvenor Street, and had much conversation with him on a variety of subjects, in order to ascertain, if I could, whether his mind is in such a state that he might safely reside in some other house, in the town or in the country, without being placed in the charge of a medical gentleman residing with him; and I have arrived at the conclusion that he would be quite safe under the care of any good-tempered non-medical person of sound morals, and obliging, but firm disposition. He appears to be much distressed on account of being considered quite incapable of

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taking any charge of his own affairs, and not being permitted to purchase little amusing articles; and still more so, because he says he is not allowed to have free communication with you except in the presence of a third person; and I am decidedly of opinion that such restrictions are highly injurious to him, and ought not to be continued.

His delusions, so far as I have been able to observe during the short time I have seen him, appear to be all of a very harmless character, and I do not think he meditates any sort of mischief either against himself or other persons; but I cannot say whether he would be extravagant in the expenditure of money, if he had large sums entirely at his own disposal, although I am inclined to think that he does not much regard personal property, and that he would be rather profuse, or, as it is called, generous. I regret that I cannot have the honour of calling upon you, having to set out immediately for Bristol; but I assure you I shall be delighted to hear that your own and your brother's affairs go on to your satisfaction; and

I am, my dear Sir,

Your very faithful Servant,

ROBERT SCOTT, M.D.,

Principal Medical Officer of the R.N.H. Haslar.

Kensington, May 2, 1839.

DEAR SAUMAREZ,—Your brother's case, I conceive, admits of no delay: the question is, whether he shall be immediately restored to circumstances more natural to him—I do not mean to a perfect control over his own finances and ways, but to a certain degree of control; or whether he should stand daily at the brink of destruction, tempted beyond his strength, and ready through despair, and the effects of a long-continued system of deception and disappointment, to throw away moderation and self-control, to surrender his confidence in the protection of a Divine Providence, to break into acts of violence and desperate revenge against others and against his own

person, and at length become a confirmed and dangerous mad-man, and be confined in one of those abominable mansions for which so many inmates have been *manufactured* by the malice and design, or by the ignorance and duplicity, of those who have had the care over them.

Yours very truly,

JOHN PERCIVAL.

Hans Place, May 16th, 1839.

GENTLEMEN,

IT is now a recorded fact that the treatment of deranged persons in this country is very defective, and often disgusting to humanity; and as you have taken upon you, with all its responsibility and all its inconvenience, the care of the person of my afflicted brother, and the direction of the course to be pursued for restoring him to his health and to his home, I cannot but view with extreme anxiety an opinion expressed by one of you that he is incurable; and as your professional avocations leave you but little time to consider the subject, I make no apology for submitting to you my views, deduced from the writings of intelligent men, and practical attendants on such cases. Is insanity or unsoundness of mind a surgical case, or one for the physician? This is the first question which falls under your consideration; and it is to be hoped that another century will not pass away without subverting the ridiculous distinction between surgeons and physicians;—a distinction worthy of the barbarous age which gave it birth—a distinction reprobated by reason and experience. Can anything be more fallacious than for one class of practitioners to confine themselves, as the physicians of the London College are obliged to do, under a penalty, to the treatment of internal complaints, and such as do not require any manual operations; and another class, the operative or consulting surgeons, to the treatment of external maladies?

The former keep strictly within their province, because, if regularly educated, that is, are Fellows of the London Col-

lege of Physicians, they cannot trespass upon the province of the gentlemen of the lancet; but these latter gentlemen cut through the line of demarcation whenever an opportunity presents itself, and declare that the anatomist—the able and scientific surgeon only, has just pretensions to that honourable appellation—a physician.

Hence arises the increasing struggle to represent particular diseases as falling under particular branches of medical science; and in mental afflictions, where the profits are very considerable, neither party is willing to yield its pretensions. Sherford, though a lawyer, is tolerably correct in stating—“it is now known that insanity is as curable as any disease to which mankind are subject; that it arises from deranged bodily functions, not mental affections, and that by kindness and proper medicine there is often less difficulty in removing this complaint than many others of which juster notions have long been entertained by the faculty.”

Dr. Hewett and other eminent physicians, in their evidence *in re* Taylor, stated they would not undertake to say that any case was incurable; so that I think there must be a mistake in the assertion that any respectable practitioner has pronounced such to be my brother's case, though it was long since remarked by Cicero, there was nothing so absurd as not to have been advanced by some philosopher or other.

A learned physician says that in a very great proportion of cases the primary causes of the first symptoms of most invalids is a disturbed function of the brain; and he then proceeds to sum up the natural phenomena which occasion the disturbance of those functions. In confirmation of those opinions, Dr. Sutherland has stated that he has known an improper use of the bougie produce mental derangement, thus showing an immediate sympathy between the sexual nerves and certain organs of the brain. If the brain were a single structure only, entire derangement of *all* the functions would take place; but this is not the case. Dr. Scot, at

p. 35, in his valuable Lectures on Insanity, establishes beyond a doubt the plurality of the cerebral organs, and from twenty years' experience states "it is exceedingly rare to find a man insane on *many* points at one period, and *never* on all points. There may be congenital idiocy, or a maniac may lapse into absolute fatuity ; but insanity is always manifested either in the disarrangement of one faculty only, when it is termed monomania ; or it exhibits the jarring of two or more of the mental chords, and this dissonance is called general mania ; but of *universal* insanity I never saw an instance, nor do I believe any other person ever did or will."

The anatomy of the brain has only lately been thought of, and this subject, to the physician as well as to the surgeon, is of modern inquiry, yet neither class of practitioners are willing to give up the patient ; and while the dispute is going on, one of their order (Dr. Burrows) lets out the truth ;—" Recent experience has shown that we are in the infancy of our knowledge of the treatment of the various forms and complications of insanity, and we now see the happy issue of more enlightened views."

Disputes, when they grow warm, are ready to run into extremes ; and it is a marked feature of the medical profession, that they dress up the opinions of their adversaries as they please, and ascribe sentiments and opinions to them which they do not acknowledge ; and when they have, with a great deal of pomp, attacked and overthrown these images of straw, these *chateaux d'Espagne* of their own creation, they triumph over their opponents as though they had annihilated his positions. Fools are more to be feared than the wicked ; and it is quite evident nothing is more dangerous than the quackery of those who have not given their undivided study to this complaint, and yet pretend to give an opinion which permanently consigns a fellow-creature to be treated as an animal, as you are now treating my brother, by arresting the whole of the functions of social life, and retaining him as it were by a

chain, merely because one or two of the functions of the brain are disturbed, or rather, have the aptitude to become so. Commissioners, and the vast portion of medical men, only look for unsoundness of mind in the patient, and having detected it, they look not to the nature of the predisposing causes by which the temporary or periodical excitement is produced, and thus a temporary affliction is made an apparent permanent disease.

This manifest error is further kept up by the nature of our judicial proceedings, in which, when unsoundness of mind is proved, the natural causes which may have produced the complaint is not even sought for, and if found out, are not removed. A worthy old gentleman, who admitted that symptoms of unsoundness only sometimes manifested themselves in my brother's case, seriously told me that so long as the aptitude of unsoundness of mind appeared in him, he could not be allowed to be out of a medical man's house. Well, then, might he further say, that my brother's case is incurable; but surely you will not act upon such advice in direct opposition to your own promises of being governed by medical men of the first eminence in that branch of medical practice. Why not consult those who advised me with so much benefit to my brother? In my former letter I particularly sought to divest your minds from my brother's complaint being hereditary, or natural derangement; but I by no means intended to deny that he might have an inherent or even an hereditary predisposition to derangement: for it is difficult to say in what human being that predisposition does not exist; but predisposition is a dormant power of action, and in itself is perfectly harmless. It resembles the figures engraven upon a seal before they are participated by the wax; it is like wood before it is ignited—wood possesses the power to be ignited, and the seal to make an impression on the wax; but these attributes, which those different bodies possess, would never be displayed unless they were placed in a

medium, and under circumstances fitted for the nature of each; yet this predisposition, when acted upon by those causes which effect it, will produce derangement in that organ of the brain which is suffering from bodily disease; and furthermore, it will continue so long as the compound action is kept up. Thus, after the pains of child-birth Mrs. De H———d displayed unsoundness of mind, and had an excitement been kept up, so would have the derangement continued. You knew an amiable relative who acquired the unbounded confidence of a large society that repeatedly was affected, and his friends would have acted as mistakingly as I feel the Committee of my brother will be doing if they continue to consign him to the house of any medical man, and deny him the free action of those functions of the mind and body which are in a healthy state.

It is not by retaining my brother in the house of at best but a second-class general practitioner, that the case can be fairly examined; and I feel it a truly distressing circumstance that arrangements for his removal at a month's notice at any time are not yet made with the person at whose house my brother has been retained, at an enormous expense, a twelve-month longer than ever was contemplated or promised, and contrary to the earnest wishes of his brother and sister.—Gentlemen—your power is great—use it sparingly. Look at his noble frame, enervated feeling, his case hopeless and forlorn, pining in wretched melancholy! In the name of God bring him to light—do your duty by him—attempt his restoration, cheer and console him, and as each organ of reason becomes in a wholesome state attempt another, and should all your endeavours prove abortive, you will have this consolation, that you have done your duty, and bear this in mind—

“’Tis his fate to-day, it may be yours to-morrow.”

You possess a great influence, exercise it with judgment, and if medical advice is necessary, let my brother have the attend-

ance of those men who attend to that particular branch of disease, such as Drs. Sutherland, Clutterbuck, Birkbeck, and others. The only excuse for the treatment my brother has met with, and the oblivion to which he has been consigned by those whose duty it is to watch over his woes and afflictions, and to have shown him sympathy by every mark of affection and kindness, has been the fear of personal violence. But this fear you cannot but know those about him have unanimously admitted to be perfectly groundless—take him from his living tomb, though fitted up as a palace. Let the healthy functions of the brain be brought into exercise under the watchful eye of your consulting physicians, Dr. Williams and Dr. Sutherland. I repeat to you the offer of my house for that purpose, because it will awaken many affectionate associations, and because Dr. Sutherland approved of it—while, if you desire it, I will quit the country during the trial of the effects produced by his solicitations to be removed from the house of a medical man are being demonstrated. So long as he is where he is, or in any lodging not ostensibly his own, little good may be anticipated ; and so long as you pursue any other course than that of being governed by the advice of the first London practitioners, and resolve to be led by any particular influence unconnected by principle and honour, you will find yourselves surrounded by thorns, which will embitter your latter days, and you had better a hundred times throw up a charge which may be too burthensome for you to sustain—in justice to yourselves and families, than to go on in error and further oppression.

I am, Gentlemen,

Your Obedient Servant,

R. SAUMAREZ.

To Dr. HUE

R. WALTERS, Esq.

J. DE SAUMAREZ, Esq.

} Committee appointed by
the Lord Chancellor.

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