

THE
FIRST REPORT
OF THE
Directors
OF THE
DUNDEE ASYLUM
FOR
LUNATICS:

From 1st April 1820, to 31st May 1821.



DUNDEE:
PRINTED BY ALEX. COLVILLE,

1821.

1757

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The First Report

OF THE DIRECTORS OF THE

DUNDEE ASYLUM FOR LUNATICS.



THE Directors of the DUNDEE ASYLUM for LUNATICS submit to their constituents and the public the following statement of their proceedings, from the opening of the establishment on the 1st day of April 1820, to the 31st day of May last.

The number of patients admitted into the Asylum, during the above period is fifty, viz. 22 males, and 28 females.

	Males.	Females.	Total.
Of whom dismissed cured,	3	5	8
————— much improved,	0	1	1
————— by desire of friends,	1	0	1
————— died,	2	1	3
————— remain convalescent,	2	3	5
————— improved,	7	3	10
————— as before,	7	15	22
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
	22	28	50

From this table the number of female patients appears considerably to exceed the number of male patients—a circumstance of rare occurrence in similar institutions, and to be accounted for perhaps from the complete retirement in which the patients are kept in this Asylum (visits of idle curiosity being

in no case allowed), and from the uniform kindness with which indeed all classes are treated.

This table shews also that three patients have fallen victims to disease. One died of fever, at an early period, from the exhaustion of a long illness previous to admission; and the others under convulsive fits. Of the two last, one had been subject to convulsion fits, and some other alarming complaints, for many years: the other was subject to violent paroxysms of head-ache for more than twelve years before, occasioned by a severe blow on the crown of the head; this gave rise to a tumour in the brain, which ended in an abscess, the immediate cause of death.

In such cases there could be no hope of recovery; but they establish the opinion with regard to the connection that often holds betwixt insanity and a diseased structure of the brain, and perhaps of other viscera besides.

Two relapses have taken place: one now convalescent, after a short illness; and the other promising speedy amendment.—It is pleasing to remark, that both patients applied for re-admission of their own accord, sensible of the benefit they had formerly received.

The following table gives a connected view of the several cases that have occurred since the Asylum was open; and furnishes some facts, which not only serve to convey to the public a correct view of the present state of the Institution, but which may also be of use for future reference—an object that ought never to be lost sight of in the recorded annals of the Establishment.

TABLE OF CASES ADMITTED INTO THE DUNDEE LUNATIC ASYLUM, FROM APRIL 1, 1820, TO MAY 31, 1821.

No.	Age of Males.	Age of Females.	Single or Married.	Old or Recent Cases.	State when Admitted.	Date of Admission.	EVENT.	APPARENT CAUSES.
1	50	29	M.	C.	Melancholy	1820, April 1.	Remains as before	Disappointment in business
2	19	48	M.	C.	Mania	3.	Dismissed cured, August 26th	Hereditary predisposition
3			S.	C.	Mania	4.	Remains improved	Harsh treatment
4	45		R.	C.	Mania	May 16.	Dismissed cured, August 16th	Family misfortune
5	42		M.	C.	Mania	31.	Remains the same	Intemperance
6	40		M.	C.	Mania	31.	Remains improved	Hereditary predisposition and jealousy
7	28		S.	C.	Mania	31.	Remains improved	Hereditary predisposition
8	40		S.	C.	Mania	31.	Remains improved	Hereditary predisposition
9	21		S.	C.	Melancholy	June 13.	Died June 27, mind previously much im-	Excessive sensibility
10	38		M.	C.	Melancholy	15.	Dismissed cured, September 14th	Disappointment in love
11	31	59	M.	C.	Mania and ditto	19.	Dismissed cured, December 18th	Domestic affliction
12	40		M.	C.	Furious	22.	Remains the same	Intemperance
13	34		S.	C.	Mania	Aug. 15.	Remains improved	Hereditary predisposition
14		40	S.	C.	Dementia	24.	Remains the same	Cause unknown
15		35	S.	C.	Mania	28.	Remains improved	Erroneous views of religion
16	50		S.	C.	Mania	Sept. 4.	Dismissed improved; by desire of friends	Intemperance
17	25		S.	C.	Mania	13.	Dismissed cured, June 7th	Cause unknown
18	22	26	S.	C.	Mania	Oct. 21.	Remains the same	Hereditary predisposition
19			S.	C.	Dementia	27.	Remains the same	Hereditary predisposition
20		14	S.	C.	Idiocy	Nov. 1.	Remains the same	Hereditary predisposition
21		33	M.	C.	Mania	13.	Dismissed cured, February 13th	Hereditary predisposition
22		30	S.	C.	Mania	30.	Remains much improved	Cause unknown
23		40	M.	C.	Mania	Dec. 5.	Remains the same	Hereditary predisposition
24	50		S.	C.	Mania	16.	Remains improved	Supposed from severe fracture of the cra-
25		26	S.	C.	Mania	25.	Remains the same	nium and constitutional predisposition
26		40	S.	C.	Dementia	27.	Remains the same	Hereditary predisposition
27	43		M.	C.	Mania	1821, Jan. 6.	Died June 13th, 1821	Cause unknown
28		30	S.	C.	Mania	22.	Remains the same	Habitual intemperance
29		44	S.	C.	Mania	Feb. 2.	Died March 2d, previously much improved	Hereditary predisposition
30	50		M.	C.	Mania	8.	Dismissed cured, June 1st	Domestic afflictions
31		30	S.	C.	Furious	8.	Remains improved	Intemperance
32		46	S.	C.	Mania	March 2.	Dismissed June 14th, greatly relieved	Cause unknown
33		17	S.	C.	Mania	1.	Dismissed cured, June 1st	Strong hereditary predisposition
34		54	S.	C.	Mania	5.	Remains the same	Cause unknown
35	35	30	M.	C.	Mania	April 4.	Remains improved	Cause unknown
36		36	M.	C.	Dementia	4.	Remains improved	Supposed family misfortune
37		40	M.	C.	Mania	11.	Cured	Domestic afflictions
38	38		M.	C.	Mania	30.	Remains the same	
39		40	S.	C.	Mania	May 5.	Cured	
40	30	24	M.	C.	Melancholy	19.	Remains the same	Vexation of mind and hereditary predispo-
41	40		S.	C.	Mania	19.	Convalescent	sition
42	30		M.	C.	Mania	21.	Remains the same	Disappointment in love
43	40		M.	C.	Mania	24.	Remains the same	Intemperance
44	39		M.	C.	Mania	25.	Remains improved	Intemperance and domestic broils
45	40		M.	C.	Melancholy	27.	Remains the same	Chronic affections of the stomach, and deep
46		48	M.	C.	Mania	June 7.	Remains much improved, and now conva-	[Hypocondriasis
47		70	M.	C.	Mania	2.	Remains the same	Unknown
48		34	M.	C.	Mania	13.	Remains the same	Hereditary predisposition and intemperance
49		33.	S.	C.	Mania	14.	Remains the same	Hereditary predisposition



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This table shews that the recovery, convalescence, and improvement of the patients, are generally to be found in the column of recent cases ; and that the number of cases are, therefore, nearly in the direct ratio of the duration of the malady : hence, in the above table, the cures in recent cases are as ten to twenty-two, or nearly one-half ; and in old cases, as one to fourteen.

It is in recent cases chiefly we have to look for a decided and permanent cure : hence the importance of an early application. A long and unavailing attempt in private life, which never can afford the means of effectual control over the disease, and holds out little prospect of success in the arduous and painful conflict, confirms the complaint and accelerates its progress—adding thus to the present sufferings and future misery of the unhappy patient.

This table shows also that, even in the most inveterate cases, there is an amendment. In some it has been striking, and likely to prove permanent ; in others, apparently unsusceptible of further improvement, as must be expected there is no change ; but none are beyond the reach of that superior comfort which a wise and conscientious administration of a well-regulated Establishment is calculated to afford.

In reviewing the number of cases, which are highly flattering to the success of the Institution, it is to be observed, that in its infancy, a crowd of old and confirmed cases swell the list of incurables—cases which have already become inveterate by improper treatment, or by those changes on the organ of thought, which time seldom fails ultimately to produce, and render this unhappy ailment utterly and irretrievably hopeless.

The means of cure, though resting mainly on the moral regimen, and general management of the House, have a constant reference to the medical art—as the functions of mind are immediately dependent on bodily organization; and insanity is thus often found intimately connected with, or the obvious result of, disease in the general system, which at all times sympathises deeply with mental distress. Hence, in the experience of this Institution, the application of medicine has been of decided and effectual service in many instances.

Besides some mechanical apparatus, strongly recommended by the experience of other Institutions, and now in readiness here, when circumstances call for its use, the erection of hot and cold baths is indispensibly necessary for the comfort and recovery of the insane in certain forms of the malady, and which are capable of very extensive and salutary application.

The Visiting department, filled by men of honour, judgment, and discretion, is found to be of inestimable value, by affording an early and salutary check to abuses that might spring up under the best and strictest regulations—by prompting to a faithful discharge of duty—affording comfort and security to the patients—and giving confidence to the public.

A proper classification of the patients, hitherto imperfect, is now in immediate prospect, from the facilities which the new erections will afford to this most desirable object. In making these erections, the Directors have strictly adhered to the plan of our late celebrated architect, whose wise and judicious arrangements become daily more conspicuous. This proper classification will augment the comfort, and forward the recovery of the patients in a very material degree. But there

are still other accommodations, of great importance to their comfort and recovery, which the Directors trust the liberality of the public will very soon enable them to provide. The enclosure of the adjacent ground belonging to the Asylum, is, in many points of view, of much consequence, both in respect to economy, and to the enlarged field of amusement which this would open up to many of the patients. Manual labour and innocent amusements form an agreeable recreation to those in a certain state of convalescence; and, by abstracting the mind from the subject of erroneous thought, and improving the general health, have been always found a powerful means of remedy, while they add so much to the comfort and enjoyment necessarily abridged by this sad calamity, and which, on this account deserves every consideration. Many of the patients fill up a tedious hour by reading on various subjects; and the Directors return their best thanks to those who have sent books, newspapers, &c. to the Asylum for the use of the patients; while they beg leave to add, that the enjoyment arising from this source may be much extended by similar donations from benevolent persons, who have it in their power to contribute to so humane an object.

No accident has yet happened since the commencement of the Establishment: such is provided against by every practicable means. No instrument of annoyance is allowed to lie within their reach; and a constant vigilance is exercised by the Superintendent, Matron, and Keepers—whose duties on this, as on many other points, are of such importance to the prosperity of the House.

In cases of violence, restraint is necessarily had recourse to; but this is done as seldom, and with as little severity as pos-

sible ; and when the paroxysm that has rendered restraint necessary subsides, it is immediately withdrawn. Indeed, restraint, even in cases of violent paroxysm, is often superseded by those personal attentions on the part of the Keepers—who, with a quick discernment, the fruit of experience, can often anticipate outrage, and counteract its force before it is thoroughly evolved. Certain discipline, indeed, without harshness, is in general sufficient to overawe the more violent ; and habit confirms the fortunate association which produces tranquillity : and this, aided by the powers of nature, and other subsidiary means, often leads to a happy issue.

The most scrupulous attention has been uniformly paid to cleanliness in every respect, so as to challenge the most minute inspection ; to the proper selection of food, and the regularity of meals ; with that variety in the diet called for by particular exigencies, or by the rules of the House : while, excepting in cases of sickness, happily very rare, all the patients have regularly enjoyed the benefit of fresh air and exercise in the several airing grounds.

The Directors would press on their constituents the high importance of adhering strictly and pertinaciously to that excellent rule, which forbids impertinent curiosity, and limits the inspection of the patients to the Visitors and the Physician, who have alone this sacred duty to perform.

From the foregoing statement of the funds there appears sufficient reason for exertion on the part of the friends of the Institution, in order that the means of reducing the present debt may be procured; but no good reason for doubting of the prosperity and success of the Establishment. The commencement of such an Institution must be always attended with the greatest expence, in proportion to the good done by it—as the same house, servants, &c. are to be kept up and paid for twenty, or even for ten, as for fifty patients; and very little addition to the present Establishment would be necessary in order to accommodate one hundred patients—the number which the house is calculated to contain, when the erections at present in the course of being built are completed. Even then, however, Mr Stark's plan will not be finished; and it will remain for future Directors to provide the means of more extended accommodation, as the number of applications for the admission of patients shall increase: And the gradual and regular increase of these applications, since the opening of the House, while it affords a gratifying view of the rising reputation and success of the Dundee Asylum, shews also, that the additional buildings laid down in the original plan will probably be called for at no very distant period.