

OUR INSTITUTIONS:

A RECORD OF THEIR OBJECTS AND WORK.

TUE BROOK VILLA, NEAR LIVERPOOL.

TUE Brook Villa, near Liverpool, was established in the year 1839 as a private asylum for the treatment and care of insane cases occurring in the middle and upper classes. The house is about three and a-half miles distant from the town of Liverpool, being within half an hour's ride by train from Lime Street to Tue Brook Station, or by the Green Lane trams, which pass the outer gates.

The surrounding neighbourhood is occupied mostly by suburban residences, West Derby being one of the favourite suburbs of Liverpool. In this direction the country is very pretty, being gently undulating and finely wooded. The estates of Lords Sefton and Derby are within an easy walk of the Asylum, as is also Newsham Park, and in fine weather, patients who are able, frequently take their walks in these parks; those who are unable to walk so far being driven. In the summer-time patients are often taken to the river-side at New Brighton, or to Southport, for an afternoon, and to many other places in the country. Though so near to town on one side, on the others the house is on the verge of the pure country, and there is ample scope in all directions for those who have walking propensities and for those who require the carriage to get change of scene. The Asylum grounds in themselves are extensive, the main drive from Green Lane being over a quarter of a mile long. There are thirty acres of land, fields being under cultivation for the maintenance of the farm, &c. The gardens are prettily laid out in lawns, shrubberies and thickets. The grounds generally are well wooded. There are several tennis lawns and a bowling-green, and at the present time part of a field is being laid down for the purposes of cricket. Within the last two years many improvements have been made in the grounds, all the work having been done by the attendants and gentlemen. In this Asylum particular trouble is taken to induce the male patients to employ themselves in light garden work, and generally after the first difficulty of getting them to make a beginning, there is no further persuasion required. After the stiffness of muscles caused by the unwonted exercise has passed off, they are eager for work, and soon begin to take an interest in it. The benefit of outdoor exercise of this kind need hardly be expatiated upon, but the result is seen in the rapid improvement of recent acute cases who are recoverable, and the general change for the better in the health and habits of those

whose minds have become demented. The attendants also benefit; they are more lively and cheerful, take more interest in their charges, and are relieved from the unhealthy monotony of being constantly confined to the same daily routine. They take a more intelligent interest in the patients, and are active in their endeavours to comfort and amuse them.

The ladies, of course, cannot be put to outdoor work, but when the weather renders it at all possible, they are encouraged to take vigorous exercise in walking. Indoors, needlework, mat-making and embroidery occupy the patients during the time not taken up in other ways. Evenings are devoted to recreation and amusements, such as music and dancing. Those who cannot, from age or weakness, join in these amusements actively, take a pleasure in seeing others. Every week, during the months from October to May, associated entertainments are given in the large recreation room. The programme is varied from time to time, changes being rung upon dancing, music, readings, conjuring and private theatricals, &c. These evenings are always looked forward to with great pleasure both by the patients and the staff. Friends of patients are also invited to assist in giving amusement to the troubled mind.

The gentlemen have a full-sized billiard table for their use, and a smoke-room where they can associate together in the long winter evenings. The rooms throughout the house have been re-decorated, and in many cases refurnished, and made as comfortable and bright-looking as possible. They are light and airy, and have pleasant outlooks over the gardens, and wear a comfortable cosy aspect and home-like appearance. All those patients who have sufficient control over their actions to be able to conduct themselves quietly and correctly, take their meals together in the large dining room with the doctor and the family. In every way the daily life of the invalid is made as much like that of a comfortable home as is possible. Those patients who are considered safe, take walks abroad with their attendants, and sometimes go to theatres, concerts, &c.; others are allowed to go by themselves on parole about the neighbourhood and occasionally into the town. Boarders of both sexes are resident in the house, and have full liberty in their movements, a light and judicial supervision over them being exercised. In the summer a party of both ladies and gentlemen is made up for a visit to the sea-side. Last summer they went for a month to Llandudno, and had a very pleasant and enjoyable holiday. This change proved the turning point towards recovery in two or three of the patients who accompanied the party, and for all of them was a great benefit in mind and general health.

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