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James Clark

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A Memoir of John Conolly

John Conolly (1794–1866) was a physician and alienist (psychiatrist) who worked with the mentally ill at the Hanwell County Asylum in Middlesex, where he introduced the principle of non-restraint. This action was at first controversial and met with strong opposition, but it served to further the cause of humane treatment, securing Conolly's reputation. Published in 1869, this biography was the last major work of Sir James Clark (1788–1870), a supporter of Conolly's enlightened methods. Clark himself had enjoyed a distinguished medical career, becoming a trusted physician and friend to Queen Victoria. Also reissued in this series are his *Medical Notes on Climate, Diseases, Hospitals, and Medical Schools in France, Italy, and Switzerland* (1820), *The Influence of Climate in the Prevention and Cure of Chronic Diseases* (1829) and *A Treatise on Pulmonary Consumption* (1835).

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OF
JOHN CONOLLY, M.D., D.C.L.,
COMPRISING A SKETCH
OF THE
TREATMENT OF THE INSANE
IN
EUROPE AND AMERICA.

BY
SIR JAMES CLARK, BART., K.C.B., M.D., F.R.S.,
PHYSICIAN IN ORDINARY TO THE QUEEN.

LONDON:
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TO THE

EARL OF SHAFTESBURY, K.G.,

CHAIRMAN OF THE COMMISSIONERS IN LUNACY.

MY LORD,

IN asking your Lordship to accept the dedication of the following Memoir, I have been actuated by several motives. You are pre-eminently the friend of the Insane; you were the friend of Dr. Conolly, and supported him in his arduous efforts to abolish mechanical restraints in the treatment of Lunacy; and, while I believe that the influence of your Lordship's name will have great effect in promoting the extension of the non-restraint system in those countries where it is not yet understood or appreciated, I am also afforded the opportunity of expressing my admiration of your Lordship's character, and the sincere esteem with which I have the honour to subscribe myself

Your Lordship's

Faithful Servant,

JAMES CLARK.

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P R E F A C E.



WHEN the grave has closed over a man, the greater part of whose life has been devoted to works of benevolence, which have conferred a lasting benefit upon mankind, it is due to his memory that the public should be reminded of what he did, and of how he achieved his high objects.

Such a man was Dr. John Conolly, and it is the purpose of the following Memoir to give an account of his works—especially of that great work, which has ranked him among the benefactors of his race.

Dr. Conolly lived during a remarkable period in the medical history of insanity,—namely between the end of the last century, when Pinel first struck the shackles from the limbs of the lunatic, and the middle of the present century, when he himself put an end to the use of all forms of mechanical restraint in our asylums.

Dr. Conolly's work was one of years, and

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was beset with difficulties, such as, but for the possession of a rare combination of intellectual and moral qualities, he never could have overcome.

In his endeavours to establish the system of non-restraint in the treatment of the insane, he no doubt received important assistance from fellow-labourers in the same field,—and this he always readily and cordially acknowledged. But it was by his own energetic and persevering labours in Hanwell Asylum, aided by his eloquent, powerful, and unremitting advocacy of the cause, that he succeeded in placing non-restraint on the firm and enduring basis which it now occupies.

Although his chief object, perhaps, was the care of the pauper lunatic, he lost sight of nothing which could contribute to the well-being and proper treatment of all classes of the insane. His attention, for instance, was long directed to the neglected condition of the idiotic and imbecile; and the success of his efforts in their behalf is disclosed in the following pages. Nor were his interest and sympathy confined to the unsound of mind, they extended to every measure calculated to pro-

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mote social progress, and to improve the position of the helpless classes generally.

In collecting materials for this Memoir, I have had the valuable assistance of Dr. Conolly's family, and of his sons-in-law Dr. Harrington Tuke and Dr. Maudsley. I am especially indebted for important information to an obituary notice written by Dr. Maudsley. My thanks are also due, in a particular manner, to Dr. Conolly's esteemed friend Monsieur Battel, for the use of many interesting letters; and I have to acknowledge a like obligation to Dr. Arlidge, and Dr. Langdon Down,—to the latter for his interesting account of the origin and present state of the Asylum for Idiots at Earlswood, and to the former for a valuable notice of the present state of establishments for the treatment of the insane throughout Europe and in the Colonies, and for his assistance on various occasions. To Dr. Arthur Mitchell, I am still more largely indebted for an able notice of Dr. Conolly's writings, as well as for his valuable assistance and advice in reference to many parts of the Memoir.

My best thanks are likewise due to Dr.

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Conolly's valued friend and colleague at Hanwell, Dr. Hitchman, for enabling me to fill up an interesting period of Dr. Conolly's asylum-life, and for useful information on many points. To Dr. Conolly's personal friends, Dr. W. A. F. Browne, Sir Charles Hood, Dr. Bucknill, and Dr. C. A. Lockhart Robertson, my thanks are due, for the friendly manner with which they supplied me with information, which I should have found a difficulty in obtaining elsewhere. Indeed, from Dr. Conolly's numerous friends I always found the greatest readiness to give me any information which they possessed; and in giving it, they generally expressed their pleasure that his merits and labours were to be again brought before the public.

I must not omit to acknowledge my obligation to Sir James Coxe and Mr. Wilkes for their important notes showing the extent to which non-restraint is actually carried out in the existing asylums of England and Scotland; nor those I owe to my friend Sir Joseph Oliffe for the trouble he took in procuring for me information regarding the new asylums established in the vicinity of Paris; and I have still the pleasant duty of expressing my thanks to Dr. Edward

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Jarvis for an account of the state of lunacy and of lunatic establishments in the United States. It is gratifying to read Dr. Jarvis's philanthropic and enlightened views as to the treatment of the insane, and to hear of the influence which Dr. Conolly's writings have exercised in promoting the humane treatment of the insane in America.

My own part in the preparation of the Memoir has been a very agreeable one. I can honestly say it has been a labour of love. My long and pleasant friendship with Dr. Conolly, and my natural desire to do justice to his memory, were sufficient incentives to make me undertake the task. As I proceeded with it, the hope arose that by recalling attention to Dr. Conolly's labours in establishing non-restraint, and to the happy results which, in this country, have crowned those labours, the Memoir might have some influence in promoting the extension of the system to other countries. This hope induced me to go more fully into the subject of non-restraint than I had originally intended, and led me to make large extracts from Dr. Conolly's works. I cherish the belief, however, that the history and benefits of that humane

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and enlightened treatment of lunacy which he introduced—told chiefly in his own eloquent words—will interest every reader who sympathises in efforts to ameliorate the condition of the insane, whose deplorable lot may be that of any of us,—for to this greatest of human calamities all are liable.

If what is said in this Memoir should happily lead to a fuller adoption of Dr. Conolly's views by foreign physicians, it will be the realisation of a hope, which has stimulated me to extend and complete, what friendship and admiration led me to think of beginning.

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