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978-1-108-06333-3 - The Treatment of the Insane without Mechanical Restraints

John Conolly

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The Treatment of the Insane without Mechanical Restraints

Trained as a physician and alienist (psychiatrist), John Conolly (1794–1866) first published this work in 1856. It describes the abolition of mechanical restraints in the treatment of mentally ill patients at the Hanwell County Asylum in Middlesex, where Conolly worked as resident physician. He argues for a system of non-restraint to be implemented as standard in all asylums, focusing on understanding patients as individuals and treating them with care and compassion. Conolly had introduced at Hanwell an innovative programme for patients that was based around positive activities, personal freedom, privacy, good-quality food, exercise, and, most importantly, the absence of any physical restraint. Though controversial at first, Conolly's enlightened methods and writings helped further the cause of humane treatment. This work remains a key text in the history of asylum reform and changing attitudes to mental illness.

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THE
TREATMENT OF THE INSANE

WITHOUT

MECHANICAL RESTRAINTS.

BY

JOHN CONOLLY, M.D., EDIN.,

HON. D.C.L., OXON.,

FELLOW OF THE ROYAL COLLEGE OF PHYSICIANS OF LONDON,
CONSULTING PHYSICIAN TO THE MIDDLESEX LUNATIC ASYLUM AT HANWELL.

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TO
SIR JAMES CLARK, BART., M.D., F.R.S.,
PHYSICIAN IN ORDINARY TO THE QUEEN,
AND TO
HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS PRINCE ALBERT.

MY DEAR SIR,

Chiefly by your kind encouragement, I was first induced, many years since, to compete for the office of Resident Physician in the Hanwell Asylum. In the course of the anxious labours which that appointment brought upon me, your animating approval was never wanting. My duties there being now concluded, I feel desirous, when presenting to the public a summary of the system which I endeavoured to promote, to record my deep sense of the honour of your friendship ; and, for yourself personally, my unfeigned esteem and grateful regard.

J. C.

THE LAWN HOUSE, HANWELL,
July 26th, 1856.

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