

**SOME ACCOUNT OF THE
PENNSYLVANIA HOSPITAL,
ITS ORIGIN, OBJECTS, AND
PRESENT STATE**

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Some Account of the Pennsylvania Hospital, Its Origin, Objects, and Present state by W. G. Malin

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OF THE
PENNSYLVANIA HOSPITAL.

ITS ORIGIN,

Objects and Present State.

BY W. G. MALIN,
LIBRARIAN OF THE INSTITUTION.

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1831.

SOME ACCOUNT
OF THE
PENNSYLVANIA HOSPITAL.

THE PENNSYLVANIA HOSPITAL was founded by a number of the benevolent citizens of Philadelphia, incorporated in the year 1751, by an act of the provincial legislature, as "The Contributors to the Pennsylvania Hospital." Every contributor of *ten pounds*, (twenty-six dollars sixty-seven cents) or upwards, being a member of the corporation, with a vote in its elections, and eligible to be appointed to the management of its concerns.

The design of the Hospital is general, its charter providing for the reception of insane persons, and those afflicted with all other maladies *not infectious*. A Lying-in department, authorized by a subsequent act of Assembly, for the accommodation of poor married women, of respectable character, has been founded on a donation from the First Troop of Philadelphia City Cavalry, of money received by them for military services in the war of the revolution. The number

Original in the possession of the Pennsylvania Hospital

of women annually received into this department, is now upwards of seventy.

The charter of this institution provides, that no part of its income shall be appropriated to any other purpose, than to the support of the sick and diseased poor, and providing the necessary buildings for their accommodation; and that those whose diseases render them proper objects of the charity, shall be received from any part of *Pennsylvania*, without partiality or preference.

The contributors meet annually on the first Monday in the month of May, to elect from their body, twelve Managers and a Treasurer, to serve during the ensuing year.* The law regulating their duty and trust, provides, that they shall receive no emolument whatever for the performance of their official duties. The appointment of the physicians and other officers and servants of the institution; the regulation of its internal economy; and the general charge of its income, are intrusted to the Board of Managers; of whose number the

* The following are the names of the gentlemen who were first elected to discharge the duties of this important trust:—

MANAGERS.

Joshua Crosby,	Samuel Rhodes,
Benjamin Franklin,	Hugh Roberts,
Thomas Bond,	Joseph Morris,
Samuel Hazard,	John Smith,
Richard Peters,	Evan Morgan,
Israel Pemberton, Jr.	Charles Norris.

TREASURER—John Reynell.

presence of at least eight, and the concurrence of seven, are necessary for the transaction of business. The stated meetings of this board, are held on the last Monday of each month.

The Managers elect annually three physicians to have charge of the medical department; three surgeons to the charge of the surgical department; and two physicians for the lying-in department: all of whom must be Doctors in Medicine, and members of this corporation.

Two young gentlemen, *graduates* of medicine, reside in the Hospital, and take charge, alternately, of the surgical, and the medical and obstetrical departments, under the direction of the visiting physicians and surgeons. One of the residents is elected annually to serve two years.

An apothecary is engaged at a salary, to prepare and dispense the medicines prescribed by the physicians.

The physicians and surgeons of this Hospital have uniformly rendered their important aid gratuitously.* The students of medicine who attend the practice of the Hospital physicians, pay a fee of ten dollars each for the privilege: these fees, which in European hospitals are a perquisite of their medical staff, the professional gentlemen, attached to the Pennsylvania Hospital, have generously devoted to the foundation and endowment of a Medical Library, which now con-

* The gentlemen who had the honour of originating this practice by a voluntary offer of their services in the infancy of the institution, were Dr. Lloyd Zachary, and Drs. Thomas and Phineas Bond. To these were afterwards added Drs. Thomas Græme, Thomas Cadwalader, Samuel Preston Moore, and John Rodman, as physicians and surgeons for the first year.

sists of about six thousand volumes, comprising a large proportion of the most valuable ancient and modern works on the science of medicine; with many rare treatises on Botany, and other branches of natural history. Students have the privilege of using this splendid collection, while attending the Hospital practice; and a right to its use during life is granted for the sum of twenty-five dollars.

The six physicians and surgeons having charge of the medical and surgical departments, divide the year into three equal periods, one physician and one surgeon attending at the same time, and continuing in charge of their respective wards four months. The two physicians having charge of the lying-in department, continue in office six months each. In extraordinary cases, and before the performance of surgical operations, it is usual for the gentleman in attendance, to hold consultation with his colleagues.

The Board of Managers appoints monthly, a committee of two of its members to admit and discharge patients, and to exercise a particular superintendance over the internal concerns of the institution. This committee, and the attending physicians, meet at the Hospital twice a week (on Wednesday and Saturday) for the transaction of business. To facilitate applications for admission, the names of the attending managers and physicians are regularly advertised in several of the daily papers.

The usual mode of obtaining admission into the Hospital is, by first applying to one of the physicians in attendance; who, after examining the patient, gives a certificate of the nature of the disease, and the propriety of its admission into the Hospital; this is addressed to the attending managers, who settle the terms of admission, and grant their order di-

recting the steward of the Hospital to receive the patient. This course is only departed from in *two* cases—that of seamen, who, (by a special agreement) after receiving a certificate from the physician, have only to obtain the order of the Collector of the Port ;—and in cases of accident,—it being a rule to receive by day or night, every person who meets with an accident requiring surgical aid, without requiring any security of the parties who bring the patient to the Hospital ;—provided the accident occurs in Pennsylvania, and the sufferer is brought *immediately*, or within twenty-four hours.

After the accommodation of as many *poor* patients as the state of their funds will justify, the Managers have authority to receive *pay* patients ; any profit derived from this source being devoted to increase the fund for the maintenance of the poor. The rates usually charged are from three to six dollars per week, according to the circumstances of the patients. Pay patients are not admitted on a deposit of money, or on the responsibility of strangers ; the only security accepted, is that of some respectable resident in Philadelphia. At their own desire, patients may be attended, exclusively, by either of the Hospital physicians they may prefer, but in such cases it is expected that the affluent will pay the physician as though attended elsewhere.

As this institution is intended to be a hospital for the cure of disease, not a permanent asylum for poverty and decrepitude, the Managers can admit none on the charity list, whose diseases are chronic and incurable, except those afflicted with insanity : and it is imperative upon them to discharge all patients, who, after a reasonable time of trial, may be deemed incurable.

The number of the patients to be received on the charity of the institution, is fixed from time to time by the Board of Managers; it is now nominally one hundred, but as no serious cases of accidental injury are ever turned away from the Hospital-gate, the number of its poor patients is frequently one hundred and twenty, and for some time past has rarely been less than one hundred and ten.

About one-third of the patients on the poor list are insane: it has been found necessary thus to limit their number, on account of the great length of time such patients have remained, to prevent their occupation of the house to the exclusion of the necessary sick and wounded.

A new arrangement has, however, been introduced, which, already productive of much good, promises to render this interesting department of the institution of far greater public utility than heretofore.

Experience has demonstrated, that mental maladies are almost insusceptible of cure, except in their earlier stages; every thing appears to depend on the prompt removal of the patient from scenes and persons associated with the mental hallucination, and an early subjection to a proper course of medical and moral treatment. It being, therefore, of great importance to open the door of admission as widely as possible to recent cases, the Managers of the Hospital have agreed, that in future, except under particular circumstances, insane persons shall be received on the charity, but for limited periods; sufficient security being taken that they shall be removed by their friends when the disease becomes fixed, and the restoration of reason is no longer to be expected. This regulation has already afforded relief in a number