

## **Online archive 11**

### **Henry Maudsley (1835–1918)**

*Maudsley had joined the Association in 1858 and was appointed as Medical Superintendent of Cheadle Lunatic Hospital at the early age of 24. He moved to London in 1862 and became joint editor of the Journal of Mental Science the following year. He was a protégée of John Conolly who thought very highly of his ability and he later married one of Conolly's daughters. He was one of the most intelligent and thoughtful of psychiatrists during the latter half of the 19th century. But even he, for a time, was affected by the ideas in the masturbatory theory of insanity which were prevalent in that century. He also disapproved strongly of the idea of women doctors.*

Maudsley was one of the first to advocate the aftercare of discharged patients, worked to persuade the General Medical Council to introduce clinical instruction in mental illness into the medical curriculum and championed the introduction of a qualification for mental nurses. He was also keen to promote scientific research into the causes and pathology of insanity to improve prospects for prevention and treatment. With Daniel Hack Tuke he wrote the major British textbook of the 1800s. His obituary described him as a 'handsome man' with a 'healthy amount of conceit. In younger days he was carefully dressed, and scrupulously careful of his hands. As he grew older, he allowed his hair and beard to grow long, and he had rather the aspect of an ancient prophet.' The act by which Henry Maudsley is today best remembered was the hospital founded with his money.

Mott (online archive 12) had recommended to the London County Council that they should have a hospital where patients in the early stages of mental illness or with some of the psychoneuroses could be treated voluntarily and without certification. Maudsley was aware of Mott's views, which coincided with his own, and decided to seek his cooperation. He had retired from practice in 1903 with a sizeable income and he was

childless. Mott had visited Kraepelin's clinic at Munich and was able to formulate detailed and practical proposals to put to the LCC on the need for early treatment, research and teaching in a suitable hospital environment. (Kraepelin did not think he would be successful.) Maudsley left all the negotiations to his colleague. He was prepared to supply the finance and his identity was not disclosed until the Council had agreed to accept his offer of £30 000 for the project. In 1907, the LCC agreed there should be 75 to 100 in-patients in the projected hospital, an outpatient department and suitable provision for research. Mott's laboratory would be transferred from Claybury to the new hospital and recognition would be sought for the Maudsley as a School of the University of London.

In February 1908, Maudsley wrote a formal letter to the Chairman of the Council ratifying his offer. In it he emphasised the part the hospital would play in educating doctors so that they would be 'furnished with the necessary instruction, and imbued, one may hope, with the earnest spirit of scientific enquiry and observation.' He reiterated his belief that the proposed hospital would do much to break down the isolation of psychiatry from general medical knowledge and research. Conscious of the Council's concern about the financial commitment he added that 'in the end it might save some of the prolonged expenses of chronic and incurable insanity.' In a codicil to his will he left the LCC a further £10 000, expressly for research at the hospital and laboratory. A suitable site was found at Denmark Hill and an area of 4½ acres purchased for £10 000. The total cost, including building and equipping the building, was around £50 000, £20 000 more than Maudsley's gift. Building began: in the summer of 1913 and was completed at the end of 1914. In 1916 Mott's laboratory

moved from Claybury to Denmark Hill. From May 1915 to October 1920 the hospital was in use, with Maudsley's consent, for the care of 'neurological' soldiers and pensioners, latterly under the control of the Ministry of Pensions. Maudsley died in January 1918, having just finished correcting the proofs of a book of essays. The following year the LCC began to consider the administrative questions of principle and detail, in terms of employment of staff and type of patient to be admitted, which had to comply with Maudsley's intentions.

The act by which Henry Maudsley is today best remembered was the Hospital and Institute. Aubrey Lewis thought that the genesis of the project lay in Maudsley's concern, in the 1860's, with early treatment and in his discussions with Baron Mundy and Crichton-Browne. Dr Alexander Walk thought that nothing was further from Maudsley's mind at that time than the creation or the retention of a hospital for mental disorders in London, and what he actually advocated for many years was the treatment of early or mild cases in private houses, or in villas in the grounds or neighbourhood of asylums. The credit for first proposing what would now be called a Maudsley-type hospital might go to Dr J.G. Davey, who had been one of the superintendents at Colney Hatch; in 1867 he was the proprietor of a licensed house near Bristol, but he had not lost his interest in the mental health problems of London, and at a meeting of the M.P.A. he read a paper entitled 'On the insane poor of Middlesex'. He contended that asylums should be regarded as places for protection and care, and what was needed for London was 'a hospital for the insane poor, of the most approved construction and embracing all the means essential to the relief and cure of the disordered mind'. It must not contain more than 250 beds, otherwise it would be no

hospital. He had proposed this to the Committee of Colney Hatch as far back as 1851 but this had been met with laughter and impatience.

Maudsley's obituary in the *Journal* was written by G.H. Savage and an account of the changes in his views about masturbation by E.H. Hare.

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