The Domesticated Madman:
Changing Concepts of Insanity at the
Pennsylvania Hospital, 1780-1830.

The character of madness in late eighteenth and early nineteenth century Philadelphia is nowhere better captured than in a little memorandum book entitled "Cases of Several Lunatics, and the Causes There Of in Many Cases," compiled by Samuel Coates, a lay manager of the Pennsylvania Hospital, and preserved in its medical library.1 This charming collection of anecdotes about patients Coates had come to know during his long service at the hospital provides a fascinating perspective on the institutional treatment of the insane and popular conceptions of madness. Other descriptions of the hospital's inmates written by physicians and visitors during the same time period do exist, but none can match Coates' account for the insight into the lives of the patients, as well as the motivations of their "keepers," which it provides.2

1 My thanks are due to Caroline Morris, Librarian and Archivist of the Pennsylvania Hospital, for her assistance in preparing this article. Samuel Coates' memorandum book is part of the hospital's historic archives, which are located in the Pine Building at 8th and Spruce Sts., Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Work on this article has been supported by the National Institute of Mental Health, under the aegis of the Rutgers-Princeton Program in Mental Health Research.

The Pennsylvania Hospital, where Samuel Coates made the acquaintance of his "several lunatics," was the first hospital established in the colonies, and the first explicitly medical institution to treat the insane. The city's almshouse, which opened in the 1730s, offered limited shelter for homeless or troublesome lunatics, but made no pretense of providing them medical care. When petitioning the colonial assembly for a charter in 1751, the hospital's founders, among them Benjamin Franklin, expressed particular concern about the increasing number of "Persons distempered in mind and deprived of their rational Faculties," some of whom "going at large are a Terror to their Neighbours, who are daily apprehensive of the Violence they may commit." By confining the insane in a specially built hospital and providing them "the benefit of regular advice, attendance, lodging, diet and medicines," the founders hoped to cure many of them and at the same time make the community safer. From its opening in 1752, the institution received many insane patients; while the almshouse continued to house lunatics, the hospital was locally regarded as having far superior accommodations. Through the work of Benjamin Rush, certainly the most prominent American physician of his generation, the Pennsylvania Hospital gained an even broader reputation for its treatment of insanity. Rush's clinical experience as an Attending Physician, a post he held at the hospital from 1783 to 1813, formed the basis of his 1812 treatise, Medical Inquiries and Observations Upon the Diseases of the Mind, the first major American medical work on mental disorders.

Samuel Coates' association with the Pennsylvania Hospital reflected its philanthropic, as distinct from its medical, objectives. Service on the institution's twelve man Board of Managers, like other eighteenth-century charitable and civic activities, achieved several purposes for the city's merchant elite, of which Coates was a part. By providing free hospital care for the "worthy," as opposed to dissolute, poor, and making admission dependent upon a Manager's recommendation, the institution's founders attempted to preserve a properly deferential set of

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3 The two most useful histories of the Pennsylvania Hospital are Morton, History of the Pennsylvania Hospital, cited in note 2, and William B. Williams, America's First Hospital (Wayne, Pa., 1976). I develop many of the points made in the following essay in more detail in Chapter 1 of my doctoral dissertation, "The Persuasive Institution: Thomas Story Kirkbride and the Art of Asylum-Keeping, 1840-1883," (University of Pennsylvania, 1978).

4 The founders' petition is reprinted in Morton, History of the Pennsylvania Hospital, 8-9.

5 For the full citation to Rush's work, see note 3.
social relationships in a rapidly growing and changing community. More specifically, the Society of Friends, whose members dominated the hospital's governance, hoped to counter the increasing prominence of non-Quakers in the city's political and social life by expanding the range of Quaker philanthropy.\(^6\)

Samuel Coates was typical of the wealthy Quaker merchants who pursued all manner of charitable enterprises. Born in 1748, he was orphaned at an early age and raised by his uncle John Reynell, a founder of the Pennsylvania Hospital. At the age of nineteen, Coates entered his uncle's mercantile business, in which he rapidly proved very successful. In 1785, the prosperous young merchant was elected to the hospital's Board of Managers, a position he retained for the next forty years. During the yellow fever epidemics of 1793 and 1798, Coates was the only manager to remain in his post throughout the crisis; at one point, he actually moved into the hospital building to take over the Steward Francis Higgins' work, so that Higgins might help prevent a mass escape of convicts from the prison. Having by the age of forty-five made a large enough fortune to retire, Coates' experience with the yellow fever epidemics prompted his decision to give up his mercantile activities and devote the remainder of his life to charitable work.

In his second "career" as a philanthropist, the Pennsylvania Hospital remained Coates' chief preoccupation. He served as Secretary of the Board of Managers from 1786 to 1812, and President from 1812 to 1825, when blindness finally forced his retirement. In addition to his hospital commitments, Coates served on the governing boards of the Philadelphia Library Company, the first Bank of the United States, and the city's public school system. He remained an active member of the Society of Friends throughout his lifetime. Upon his death in 1830, the Managers observed of Samuel Coates, "No individual ever connected with the administration of the Hospital bestowed so much personal attention upon its affairs." His had been a life, they concluded, devoted to "works of mercy and kindness." Coates' full-length portrait, painted and presented to the Pennsylvania Hospital by Thomas Sully, hangs on the first floor center hall of the Pine Building.\(^7\)

\(^6\) Williams, America's First Hospital, 8-14, discusses the social control functions of the hospital. Sydney James, A People Among Peoples (Cambridge, Mass., 1963), 205-14, discusses the Friends' growing commitment to philanthropy.

\(^7\) Morton, History of the Pennsylvania Hospital, 421-3 supplies biographical information on Coates.
Toward the end of his lengthy volunteer "career" at the hospital, Coates began to carry a memorandum book, 5 x 7½ inches in size, in which he recorded anecdotes about various insane patients he had known. Some forty individuals are described in the 132 pages of manuscript, including a comic sketch of one character. The vignettes are not dated, but dates mentioned in passing reveal events as early as the 1790s, and as late as 1817. From the format and phrasing of the stories, it seems likely that these were tales Coates had been telling for years, and finally wrote down at the urging of his hospital associates sometime in the late 1810s. He obviously meant for the book to circulate among the staff, for it was entered on the library accessions list, and the inside front cover bears this inscription, in Coates' hand: "The Borrower of this book, whoever it may be, is earnestly requested to return it in a reasonable time."

In the manuscript, Coates offers no explanation for the interest he took in the insane patients; so the personal predilections that led to his record of their sayings and doings can only be inferred. Certainly his religious affiliation predisposed him to a special sympathy for the insane. During his lifetime, the Society of Friends in both England and Pennsylvania led efforts to improve the treatment of the mentally ill. Perhaps of more immediate consequence, as a Manager Coates could not help but be aware of the tremendous demands the insane patients placed upon the Pennsylvania Hospital's resources. While lunatics made up at most fifteen percent of the total admissions, they constituted one half the hospital's inhabitants at any given time, due to their tendency to stay longer than the physically ill. The accumulation of chronic cases coupled with the ever pressing demand of new admissions forced repeated expansion of the hospital's accommodations for the insane during Coates' tenure on the Board. The fifteen "cells" on the ground floor of the original three story brick building completed in 1756 had become severely overcrowded by the 1780s. The Managers, Coates among them, raised the funds needed to build an extension, slightly larger in size than the old hospital, solely for the lunatics' use. The "west wing" or "new house," as it was called, completed in 1796 had the capacity to house one hundred patients. By the end of Coates' term as a Manager, the Board had once again to confront the problem of overcrowding and lack of privacy in the west wing. After years of debate, they finally voted in 1835 to build a whole new separate asylum in West
Philadelphia, then about four miles beyond the city. The new mental
department, formally known as the Pennsylvania Hospital for the
Insane, opened in 1841.8

The institutional demands posed by the insane patients shaped not
only the physical expansion of the general hospital, but also its internal
milieu. The recurrent problems involved in controlling and caring for
a large and diverse lunatic population predisposed the hospital’s Man-
agers and physicians to try various innovations in the years between
1780 and 1830. The predominance of pay patients among the insane,
almost half of whom paid board, as compared to only fifteen percent of
the physically ill, also spurred improvements. To please their affluent
patrons, as well as cut costs by curing more lunatics in a shorter period
of time, the hospital’s officers experimented with “active” medical and
psychological treatment; a varied daily regimen, including employ-
ment and amusements; thorough classification of patients by mental
condition and social rank; and responsible and qualified attendants.
Apparently unaware until the 1800s of similar measures being advi-
cated by Phillipe Pinel at the Bicetre in Paris, and William Tuke at the
York Retreat in England, the physicians and officers of the Pennsyl-
vania Hospital had in fact begun to implement the rudiments of what
came to be termed “moral treatment.”9

8 The 1756 building is now the east wing of the Pine Building; the “new house” is its west
wing. The Pennsylvania Hospital for the Insane is now known as the Institute of the Pennsyl-
vania Hospital. The original asylum building completed in 1840 and torn down in the 1950s
was located at 44th and Haverford. The Institute is presently situated at 49th and Market Sts.

9 For general discussions of moral treatment, see Norman Dain, Concepts of Insanity in the
United States, 1789-1865 (New Brunswick, N.J. 1964) and Gerald Grob, Mental Institutions in
America (New York, 1973). I base my conclusions concerning the independent development of
reform at the Pennsylvania Hospital on the following evidence. By the mid-1790s, the hospital
Managers had already shown a definite interest in innovation, by allowing Benjamin Rush to
pursue his researches and raising the funds to build a separate insane department. The new West
Wing was completed in 1796, the same year William Tuke founded the York Retreat.
Throughout the years from 1790 to 1815, the hospital archives contain no reference (at least that
I have been able to find) to the work of either Philippe Pinel or William Tuke. Judging by their
accession numbers, the Pennsylvania Hospital library’s copies of Pinel’s Treatise on Insanity
(Sheffield, England, 1806) and Traite Medico-Philosophique Sur L’Alienation 2nd ed. (Paris
1809) both arrived around 1810. Samuel Tuke, Description of the Retreat (York, England,
1813) apparently came around 1815. Benjamin Rush mentions Pinel’s work in his 1812 Medical
Inquiries. Since by 1811, Philadelphia Friends had begun to plan for the construction of the
Friends Asylum, which opened in 1813, the Pennsylvania Hospital officers must surely have
heard of the Tukes’ work by the early 1810s. Thomas Scattergood, an American Friend, visited
the York Retreat in 1797. Scattergood undoubtedly spoke of the Retreat upon his return, but
there is no evidence the Pennsylvania Hospital officers heard of his visit.
Moral treatment implicitly rejected the notion that those who had lost their reason "partook of the nature of animals," to use Rush's phrase. Inspired by a more optimistic view of human nature, which had roots in both the secular humanism of the Enlightenment and the pietistic doctrine of eighteenth-century evangelical religion, the new therapy supposedly worked by appealing to the lunatics' innate capacity to live a moral, ordered existence. If treated like rational beings, reformers argued the insane would act more like rational beings. To further the patients' reawakening, moral treatment prescribed a careful round of occupations and amusements designed to stimulate their latent reason and capacity for self-control. William Tuke, for example, staged tea parties for the inmates at the York Retreat; dressed in their best clothing, given regular utensils and decent food, the patients became willing, indeed eager, to behave in a civilized fashion.  

In their interpretation of moral treatment, the Americans and Europeans differed only on one major point: the efficacy of active medical treatment. Pinel and Tuke took a very skeptical view of medical therapeutics, and gave almost exclusive emphasis to the curative power of the psychological or "moral" aspects of treatment. In contrast, the Americans by and large remained quite devoted to "heroic treatment," i.e. copious bleeding and purging, of which Rush was one of the most vigorous proponents and practitioners, well into the 1820s. In this respect, Daniel T.'s treatment, as recorded in the following selection, was typical of the medical regimen used with violent mental patients in the general hospital.

Irregardless of this difference in emphasis, moral treatment became the rationale for expanding institutional medical treatment on both sides of the Atlantic. In England, private madhouses, which had begun to flourish in the eighteenth century, continued to proliferate; in the 1810s

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10 Samuel Tuke, Description of the Retreat (York, England, 1813), 178, describes the tea parties Tuke expounds the general theory of moral treatment in 131-87

11 An exception to this generalization about American medical practice was the Friends' Asylum founded in 1813. For the first few decades of its operation, the Managers and physicians there shared Tuke's skepticism about medical treatment. In the early 1830s, however, they began to practice more "active" medical measures, although never reverting to the venesection and violent purging popular in Rush's day. By the 1820s, "heroic" treatment had been abandoned in favor of less extreme therapeutics. See Norman Dain and Eric Carlson, "Milieu Therapy in the Nineteenth-Century Patient Care at the Friends' Asylum," Journal of Nervous and Mental Diseases 131 (1960), 277-90
the first public asylums were established. In the United States, growth in the private sector was confined largely to corporate or non-profit private hospitals and asylums; small, profit-oriented madhouses remained quite rare until the late nineteenth century. The first American state hospitals were established in the 1820s. The phenomenal growth of all types of mental hospitals in the nineteenth century fostered the precocious development of psychiatry as a medical specialty. The foundation of the Association of Superintendents of American Asylums for the Insane, now known as the American Psychiatric Association, in 1844 predated the establishment of the American Medical Association by four years, and for the next several decades remained the much stronger organization.12

Thus Samuel Coates' notebook dates from a critical period in the evolution of institutional care for the insane, the era just prior to the rapid proliferation of separate asylums. In his account can be discerned the nascent elements of moral treatment that would prompt this growth, intermixed with older traditions of brutality and neglect. Not only does Coates' manuscript convey the distinctive ambience of life in the general hospital; his work also points to some of the new popular conceptions of insanity underlying the nineteenth century "discovery of the asylum."13 While the medical setting of Coates' encounters with the lunatics undoubtedly colored his perceptions, as when he styled his anecdotes "cases," still his viewpoint was that of a layman rather than a physician. By examining closely his characterizations of the patients, we can speculate on the broader social and cultural forces informing the development of new medical ideas and practice.

Coates' stories about the lunatic patients vividly convey the mixture of brutality and romanticism characteristic of late eighteenth-century attitudes toward the insane. While "enlightened" men for their time, the Pennsylvania Hospital officers accepted practices that strike the modern observer as quite callous. The traditional view of the mad as sub-human, even bestial creatures continued to shape hospital policy in both subtle and not too subtle ways well into the early nineteenth


13 This phrase comes from the influential but flawed study, David J Rothman, The Discovery of the Asylum (Boston, 1971).
Coates' account is riddled with prison terminology; he off-handedly refers to the patients as "prisoners" and their rooms as "cells." The use of chains and strait jackets was so commonplace as to merit no comment from the otherwise kindly Manager. His medical associate Benjamin Rush, that epitome of an Enlightenment scientist, advocated techniques for subduing the insane that effectively cast the physician in the guise of an animal tamer; for example, in his 1812 treatise, Rush stated confidently that lunatics, like wild animals, could be "easily terrified, or composed, by the eye of a man who possesses his reason." Edward Cutbush, another hospital physician, advised throwing troublesome lunatics into a large tub of water, as "it always tends to make them more tractable." In sum, hospital "treatment" for insanity appears to have been little more than a form of imprisonment tempered by humanitarian and medical concerns.

To some extent the brutal aspects of the Pennsylvania Hospital's regimen were justified by the nature of its clientele. Due to the scarcity of institutional resources in this period, only the most dangerous and disruptive lunatics ever found their way into the institution. Mere eccentricity, as Hannah L.'s account makes clear, did not merit commitment. While not all the inmates had violent tendencies, the hospital's provisions for them tended to take their character from the most "furious, fierce" inhabitants. Incidents such as James F.'s attack on his cell keeper were an everyday fact of life in the early hospital. Therefore, Coates and his associates had some reason to regard their charges as violent, treacherous individuals in need of strong restraint.

At the same time, Coates' anecdotes hint at another, contradictory set of attitudes toward the insane patients. The brutality so casually accepted by the hospital staff was tempered by a gentler, more paternalistic mode of influence. In the first place, the officers habitually referred to the institution as the "house," and its inhabitants as the "family." Similarly, they believed that the lunatics should be disciplined "with leniency, as a parent would correct a child," to use Cutbush's phrasing. Indeed, for a serious crime, James F., the "outrageous madman," received a very childish form of reprimand: an old-fashioned spanking. As Coates' cases also make clear, the staff

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14 Rush, Medical Inquiries, 175.
15 Cutbush, Inaugural Dissertation, 44.
16 Ibid., 42.
countenanced parental indulgence along with the discipline. Hannah L. had her chair at the "family" table, Daniel T. presided over a religious service called specially for him, and Charles P. got a fine coffin and grave for his beloved dog Romeo. For all its occasional callousness, the hospital "family" evinced a remarkable tolerance, even appreciation of the lunatic patients as individual characters.

In fact, much of Coates' account was devoted to a celebration of the lunatics' many talents and insights. While they might at times be treacherous and violent, on balance Coates found the insane to be charming and instructive companions. Like a proud father, he recorded their irrational but amusing speeches, their clever deeds, their likes and dislikes. Coates seemed particularly fascinated by the unusual talents some patients retained, even while quite mad. He copied down poems written by one inmate, and noted that another had produced lengthy, convincing narratives of travels he had never taken. In anecdotes such as the one concerning Daniel T., Coates took pains to demonstrate the "brilliancy of wit" possible during the "paroxysms" of madness.

Coates' sympathy with the insane was also manifest in his efforts to account for their disorder's origins. As he presented the patients' case histories, they seemed little culpable for their mental condition. Although a few had become deranged as the result of vice, most had suffered at the hands of others. A beautiful girl disappointed in love, a poor woman "outraged" by a vicious sea captain, a young man crushed by his father's suicide—these were the kind of tragic stories Coates found to explain a patient's residence at the Pennsylvania Hospital. Significantly enough, Coates invoked neither mysterious disease processes nor supernatural forces to explain the onset of insanity, but rather found sufficient cause for its ravages in the problems of living that afflicted every human being.

Coates' commentary on the patients' lives reveals as much about his own attitudes as their actual experiences or accomplishments. The "cases" are perhaps best read not as statements of fact, but rather as exemplary tales. In this respect, Coates' writings are of particular interest for what they suggest about the Friends' special mission with the insane. The lunatic patients intrigued Coates not solely because they were poor, tormented souls in need of an assistance that the Friends were bound, by God's direction, to provide; their behavior itself re-
inforced the Society's testimony in very important ways. Thus the "Cases" provide valuable insight into the reasons Coates and his religious associates found work with the insane particularly rewarding.

In the first place, Coates' narratives emphasized that the "inner light" of God's presence could be detected in even the most depraved and deranged lunatics. Because their minds were so disordered, the patients' child-like faith in God was all the more persuasive proof of this important tenet of Christian belief. In one instance, after a young man had "eloped" from the hospital, clad in nothing but an old sheet and his chains, Coates found a prayer pencilled on the wall of the youth's cell; it implored Jesus' help in preserving his intellect against the "carnal appetites and propensities, which through the weakness of the flesh, must weigh down sadly and ruin forever the only valuable part of man, the precious, the immortal soul." Coates, needless to say, copied the entire prayer into his memorandum book, as eloquent testimony to the divine potential of his charges.

Coates' lunatics manifested an innate disrespect for civil authority and political hypocrisy that the Quaker Manager also found rather appealing. He recounted Hannah L.'s conversation with Governor Mifflin and Dolly B's remarks concerning the Managers in such a way that left the readers with no doubt as to the patients' madness, yet inclined them to laugh at the powerful figures' expense. The lunatics' ability to see through false pretenses extended to their Quaker protectors as well, as Coates showed in an anecdote concerning one William K. William persistently asked Coates and the Steward Jacob Henzey to doff their hats to him, although he knew that both men, being Friends, were forbidden to perform this ritual act of social deference. Finally one day to make William happy, Coates saluted him with his hat; whereupon William exclaimed to the Steward, "Henzey, I love thee. I always thought thee was a true Quaker, but now I know it. As to Coates, he will bow to Baal at any time." The patients "shook in their beds with laughter at the Expense of poor Coates," the story concluded.

Finally, Coates found in the lunatics' fate a lesson concerning the fleetingness of human accomplishments. Many of his stories concerned once useful, respected, powerful individuals who had been humbled by an unknowable and uncontrollable fate. One of the Manager's favorite subjects was Richard N., a well-born, accomplished young man who had pursued consecutive careers as a merchant, a lawyer, and a farmer
before the “accumulation of trouble” robbed him of his sanity. Richard’s high birth, varied talents, and loving wife, Coates pointed out, had all proven insufficient to ward off madness. Richard’s example, along with a host of other prominent citizens who made their homes in the Pennsylvania Hospital (among them Benjamin Rush’s son John and millionaire Stephen Girard’s wife Mary) daily reminded Coates of the “uncertainty and volatility of all human exaltation.”

Samuel Coates found not only abundant reinforcement for his religious beliefs in the lunatics’ behavior, but also a powerful argument for improving their care. The human talents, affections, and insights the insane were capable of, even at the height of their derangement, became in and of themselves a rationale for reform. When given the opportunity by indulgent Managers and physicians, the lunatics created a remarkably vigorous society within the Pennsylvania Hospital, as Coates’ stories of his poetry-writing, sermon-giving, dog-loving friends demonstrated. To maintain such an institution, where even incurable lunatics could make the most of their human qualities, provided justification enough for the Hospital officers’ labors.

In time, the casual brutality countenanced by Coates’ generation passed away, and the gentler aspects of the hospital regimen became paramount. A general revulsion against physical discipline and restraint, whether used in family, school, or hospital, was evident by the 1820s. William Malin, the youthful librarian and clerk of the Pennsylvania Hospital, criticized his elders like Samuel Coates for being more concerned with securing rather than curing the lunatics. To break with the old brutal traditions, he argued in an 1828 pamphlet, it was necessary to establish an entirely different kind of institution. Certainly the Pennsylvania Hospital for the Insane, which opened in 1841, represented a much more genteel, domesticated environment for the insane. The metal chains, tranquilizing chairs, and shower baths of Coates’ era were replaced by drug therapy, “camisoles”, and an elaborate round of amusements and occupations. While in physical and


18 William Malin, “Remarks on the Present State of the Pennsylvania Hospital, and A Plea for the Necessity of Providing a Separate Asylum for the Insane,” reprinted in Morton, History of the Pennsylvania Hospital, 154-7.
organizational design quite distinct from the old general hospital, the new asylum still reflected the learned wisdom of Samuel Coates' generation. The nineteenth-century asylum had developed, we might say, from the same impulse that led Coates to compile his "cases". In considering the rise of moral treatment, then, we would do well to remember the laymen, and even more importantly, the "several lunatics," who contributed to its development.

State University of New York,  
Stony Brook  
Nancy Tomes
"Cases of Several Lunatics in The Pennsylvania Hospital, and the Causes There Of in Many Cases."

Hannah L., formerly Hannah G.

was born over schuylkiln, eight miles from Philadelphia; her Parents came from Wales, and were among the first settlers of Pennsylvania; their children lived to a great age; one of Hannah's brothers attained to 97 years, one of her sisters 95, and Hannah herself, 88 years.

Her lunacy became apparent soon after the death of her husband, when she began to preach at the old Courthouse steps, in the Streets, and other Public Places.

Her Ministry was not acceptable to her friends; and being asked, why it was not; she replied, they objected because she preached through a Trumpet so powerfully that they cou'd not comprehend her. After bearing with her for some time on account of it, the monthly meeting to which she belonged appointed Owen Jones to visit Hannah & persuade her to desist from preaching; it is said he performed this duty, that she received him politely, invited him to set down, and take a glass of wine & bisquit with her which he did; this ceremony being over, he went to prayer, after which she reproved him, as an improper person to treat with her as he had just taken the Sacrament, contrary to the very principles, which he himself professed as a Quaker.

Her own Father and Mother she wou'd not acknowledge, but said She was the eldest daughter of George the Second King of England, and Heir to his Throne. [Here Coates goes on to describe a visit Hannah made to England to visit her "father" the King, during which she made an arrangement to have "Tribute Money" paid her.] "All this mony she applied to support the Pennsylvania Hospital, which she called her Palace.

Here she allowed her Domestics to live in Splendor, equal to the high Rank, which she their Royal Sovereign held in the World.

Yet with all this Grandeur, she cherished Ideas of Oeconomy; seated on her Throne, which was an old Arm Chair, she wou'd superintend the family at dinner, and if the Steward or any other Person was over eating as she thought, she wou'd check them at once.

"Is it any reason You should be Gluttons because I find you plenty of victuals?"

If a Stranger seated himself without her permission, she wou'd reprove him,

"Before you sit down, you might have the manners to ask me if you are wellcome."

It made no difference, who the Stranger was, he must ask her pardon, for taking undue Liberties in the presence of the Princess. . . .

At an interview I had with Hannah and the late Governor Mifflin, the following Dialogue took place:

Gov. How do you do Mrs. L.?
Hannah. You make free; Who are You?
Gov. My name is Thos. Mifflin.
Hannah. I don't know You.
Gov. I am the Governor of Pennsylv[a].
Hannah. And I am King George the Second's daughter, and do you say you are the Governor?

*These excerpts from Samuel Coates' memorandum book retain his original spelling, but the punctuation has been altered in some places, for example dashes rendered as periods and apostrophes added, to make reading easier. Letters and words that I have inserted are bracketed. The anecdotes concerning Hannah L., Daniel T., and Charles P. have been shortened. The patients' surnames have been deleted to preserve the confidentiality of the hospital records.
Gov. I do.
Hannah. The Devil you do; you have a great Stock of Independence. Who signed your
Commission? I never did.
Gov. The People.
Hannah. The People did they? They were hard put to when they made you a Governor; I
wonder what they cou'd see in your face to make You a Governor for let me tell you, that you are a
very ill looking fellow. . . .

Soon after Hannah return'd from England she took possession of a small tenement in Willing
Alley, a stone building, one story high, about 12 feet square, which appeared to be raised for a
summer house only, in this she lived alone calling it her castle, and defending it valiantly with
her broad sword, a Silver Cane, which she wou'd brandish against the rude boys, who often
attacked her. . . . From this castle she was removed to the Pennsylvania Hospital, where she
became very industrious, & made her own cloaths, always selecting scarlet, or some bright color
for borders to her Gowns & petticoats, which were cut in Scallups half up to her knees to appear
more grand & be distinguished from her subjects. . . .

Hannah was not particular about eating, she wou'd make a good dinner on many things that
were not common, if they were but well cooked. One day, I found her eating broiled Mice; and
one day at her little Castle, before she came to the Hospital, she invited two of her women friends
to dine upon a rabbit, but having no mony to pay for it, she killed a fine fat Cat, upon which her
friends made a comfortable dinner, without knowing what she had given them. . . .

The Estates which She received from her father she expended by rambling about, until it was
reduced to fifteen Pounds per annum, for this small sum she was then comfortably provided
for in the Hospital to the End of her days, which happened in the 89th year of her Age after a few
day's illness. . . . On examining her chest, nothing was found, but her cloaths carefully put up, a
few pieces of Glass and pebbles, which she valu'd as Jewels and bottle full of the heads and Wings
of Musquitoes & flies, which she at sundry times had beheaded, for their presumption, in daring
to bite the King's Daughter. Finis.

Daniel T.
Was a member of the Legislature of the State of New York, or New Jersey; and a Judge of one of
the courts. He became crazy in consequence of some disappointment in his political pursuits, and
was so raving mad in June, 1810 (the time of his admission), that scarcely any thing but chains
wou'd hold him; in a few Weeks he destroyed the furniture of his room, the Glass of his
windows, his apparel & beds, & all his bed clothes including forty Blankets. By means of 47
bleedings, by which he lost between four and five hundred ounces of Blood, and use of Doctor
Rush's Tranquillizer, applications of Ice to his head, & other remedies, he was perfectly restored
to his reason, and discharged Cured in March 1811. [Here follows a copy of a grateful letter
Daniel wrote to his physician, Benjamin Rush, thanking him for the "tender solicitude" he
received as a patient.] The above named Daniel T. continued well about 5 mos. after he wrote the
preceding Letter, until his Wife died. On being informed of her death, he went immediately
into the Garrett, and hung himself before she was buried.
An Anecdote of Them

One day when Daniel was a patient in the Pennsylvania Hospital he came to me in the crazy yard, and requested Liberty to hold a meeting for the benefit of twenty maniacs.

I agreed to it, and ordered the benches. At the hour appointed Daniel appeared with his Bible in his hand, and expatiated largely on the Excellencies of the holy Scriptures, and the blessing they conferred upon man. He spoke extempore and correctly three Quarters of an hour, and indeed it was wonderful to observe the order and Decorum, that prevail'd in this Assembly of confirmed Lunatics. Even Sally J and Catharine W who talked incessantly, morning, noon and night (except on that day, when the sun was totally eclipsed, which sober'd every Lunatic in the house) were silent, as the Grave, at this Meeting.

Thomas S, Michael V, Elizabeth B, and two or three other Maniacs stood under the Willow Trees. When T ended his Sermon, he told S who had a fine Voice, and been a Clerk to a Presbyterian Congregation, to give out a Psalm, which was said to be well sung, from under the Trees. The Psalm being over, the Meeting was broke up. Sally J & I shook hands and Eliza B accosted me in these Words, her face water'd all over with tears, "O! Mr Coates O! what a thousand Pities it is, that such an excellent Preacher as Mr T is, shou'd be out of his right Mind."

On a retrospective View of the Transactions of this morning, which are still fresh in my memory, tho several years have since elapsed, I feel not a little affected in recollecting the End of the Orator, and two other Maniacs who attended the Meeting.

Victor H and Dolly B

Victor, a Child, became an idiot before he was Ten years old, by epileptic fits. He was much inclined to mischief, and a very dirty boy. During the last six months Dolly B, a crazy black woman, who never before wou'd do any work, took a great Fancy to little Victor, and claimed him as her own Son. Finding her fond of the boy, he was put under her care, & however extraordinary it appeared, so it was, she nursed him with maternal tenderness, washed his cloaths, and kept him and his bed clean, and procured for him apple Cakes and every dainty she cou'd get for him, as any Parent wou'd for her child—by this kind treatment, she obtained more ascendency over him than his own Parents ever could. She at length thought he was well, tho' he was far from it, and demanded his Liberty, asserting with confidence that the Child had more understanding than the twelve Managers all put together. They did not however think proper to grant Dolly's request at that time, but kept him 'till the Doctors pronounced him an incurable Patient. On parting with her Son Dolly shed many tears, and appeared as sorrowful as any mother wou'd on the loss of a favorite Child.

After some time Dolly got over her grief, and took to hard labor, since which she has become a useful domestic servant in the house, tho' she is far from being of a sound Mind.

Charles P and his dog Romeo, and one of his Speeches

Romeo died, and Charles was in great Trouble for he loved Romeo, and Romeo loved him. For three days Charles wou'd not believe that Romeo was dead, but as he handled him in his arms all day, so he hugged in his Arms all night, he wou'd pull Romeo's Eyes open with his fingers, and draw out his tongue, to shew he was alive. Romeo however became offensive in the house, so that the servants and Patients demanded his funeral, to which with great Reluctance, Charles consented.

Romeo was laid out in Stile in a neat pine Coffin, but it was a flat one, and Charles wou'd have a ridge Coffin, nothing else wou'd do, so a ridge Coffin was got, and the hour for the funeral appointed, the doctors of the house, Steward, Matron, Cell Keepers and Nurses were invited, but it rained, and few attended. Charles walked first in the procession, with black crape, or some
other black Cloth round his hat or arm, and was followed by the other Mourners, to the Western Lot, where Romeo's remains were deposited; all were silent, but no ceremony was expected—Until after the Pause, Charles took off his hat, and bestowed a short benediction on all who were at the burial, and a C____e on all who staid away. It was a wonder that he connected two Sentences together, for in all his Speeches, like R., [another patient] he was incoherent, of which I will introduce the Following Example.

**A Speech of Charles P.**

Can thee make me a Thousand Pounds or two thousand to build me a house? I see a burial to day—or Coffin—I had pretty good bones for dinner to day. I gave four thousand pounds for them, and paid Samuel Hughes two hundred fifty pounds for telling me Sammy Coates wanted to see me. That Clock don't go, does it? Joseph Lownes, I saw him some where about. He put a letter in his Mouth. I remember Joseph Henzey, when he was alive, he asked me what Meeting I belonged to. I thought it was his Wife. A Snake's a Snake. Romeo is my dog. Thee must never whip him. . .[The speech continues in this manner for another page.]

**The Exclamation of James F. an Outrageous Madman in 1796**

“I am superior to God & his Creation, to Adam and Eve and their Paradise, to Moses and the profligate Armies of the Earth, to Noah and the floods, to Joshua and the Judges, to Samuel and the King, to Solomon and the Prophets, to Job [&] his patience, to Jonah and his Whale, to Jesus Christ & his Apostles.”

Here I will close this pocket Volume & will remark respecting F., that a more furious fierce and dangerous madman than he was I never saw, & he continued to be so, for a number of Years, tho' he had been copiously bled many times, & was often put in the Shower, and sometimes in the plunging bath, in the doctors' presence yet nothing availed, until one day, he stabbed his keeper suddenly with his fork, the moment he left him, after taking in his dinner. The poor man could not stand straight for near two weeks, and was frightened almost to death. For this outrage Francis Higgins, Steward of the house, brought him down stairs, from his chains, & being tho small, a very strong Man, he fixed him between his legs, (and he might almost as well be in a Smith's Vize.) & turning him over his knee, he took down his breeches & smacked him with his broad hand, until he raised the black & blue on his Skin, F. roaring & promising upon his honor, good behavior in future. The discipline was applied in the View of numerous Servants & patients of the house. The Consequence was this high spirited, & Classical Scholar (for he was so), became so humble, that all his ferocity was subdued, & he grew so inoffensive & mild, that he was allowed the last year of his life to dine in the Steward's room (but by himself) not being permitted to sit at the table with the family. [F]inally, he fell into a Consumption, & died abt. one year or 15 months after this Whipping.

F. was of a good family, & well versed in the Latin language & had been I believe a Man of fortune, out of which he thought he had been defrauded by his Step mother. This may not be true, but he often dwelt upon the Subject.