

Psychiatry in pictures

EDITED BY ALLAN BEVERIDGE

Do you have an image, preferably accompanied by 100 to 200 words of explanatory text, that you think would be suitable for Psychiatry in Pictures? Submissions are very welcome and should be sent direct to Dr Allan Beveridge, Queen Margaret Hospital, Whitefield Road, Dunfermline, Fife KY12 0SU, UK.



The Bottle, Plate III. An execution sweeps off the greater part of their furniture: they comfort themselves with the bottle (1847). George Cruikshank (1792–1878)

George Cruikshank was one of the 19th century's most famous illustrators. In his early career he produced satirical political cartoons mocking the British government and the Prince Regent. Later he illustrated books, most notably *Oliver Twist* by Charles Dickens, with whom he was friendly. In 1847 Cruikshank, who had been a heavy drinker, turned to temperance and spent the last 30 years of his life advocating teetotalism as a means of social reform. His father had drunk himself to death when Cruikshank was 19 years old. In 1847 Cruikshank produced a series of eight prints entitled *The Bottle*, which depicted the progressive decline of a respectable family brought about by excessive drinking. It fulfilled Cruikshank's desire to produce a Hogarthian 'progress' in a contemporary setting. The prints caused a sensation and sold 100 000 copies in a few weeks. The series begins with a picture of domestic serenity, marred only by the appearance of a gin bottle. In the second print the husband has lost his job because of drunkenness and the family must pawn belongings to pay for more drink. The picture above is the third in the series. By this stage the family's debts have resulted in legal action in the form of an 'execution' against their remaining possessions. The gin-drinking husband continues to imbibe while his wife and children look about the room apprehensively. More of Cruikshank's work will be featured in this column in the coming months. Thanks to Dr Bruce Ritson.