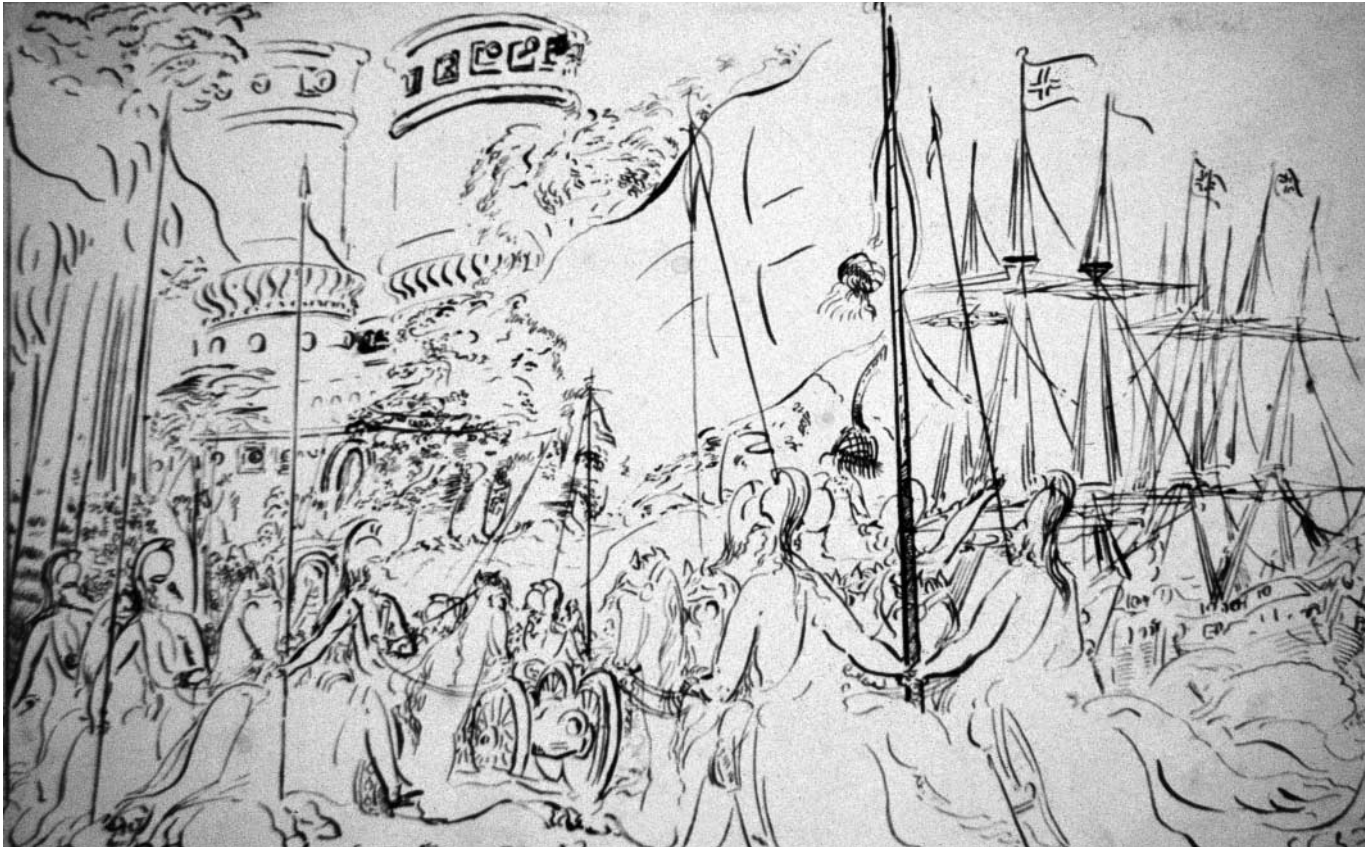


Psychiatry in pictures

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.



David Cathcart (1804–1867; untitled)

David Cathcart, a Writer to the Signet, was 45 years old when he was admitted to the Crichton Royal Asylum in 1849, having spent the previous 8 years in the Glasgow Asylum. He was given a diagnosis of 'Furious Mania with Delusions and Ambition'. The case notes recorded that he believed he had 'lived at various periods in world history . . . that he fought in terrific wars as Marshall Narbonne which he describes and in which it would appear that one half of the population of Europe perished; that he was equally distinguished in internecine combat in Edinburgh where thousands perished in defence of the Protestant cause; that his heroic opposition to Napoleon . . . is a matter of notoriety'. Cathcart depicted his imagined exploits in a series of pen and ink sketches with a running commentary (an example of which is shown). The asylum doctor judged that: 'These productions are not altogether destitute of merit; but the enormous number suggest the idea that the world must have been for ages nothing more than a bloody battlefield on which he was the chief destroyer'. After some years, it was observed that: 'His illustrated autobiography . . . is now of startling dimensions'. Cathcart continued to sketch battle scenes in which millions died. He attended drawing classes in the asylum but, it was noted, 'his instructions do not appear to have influenced his own particular sketching'. He died in the asylum in 1867.

Thanks to Morag Williams, Archivist to NHS Dumfries and Galloway, Solway House, Crichton Royal Hospital, Dumfries.