

---

REPORTS.

---

I am happy to be able to say, in this place, that the comforts and care bestowed upon the insane in the Asylum provided for them, has not been without fruits. The condition of the insane is at length unquestionably much ameliorated in this country; notwithstanding the immense difference between what it now is, and what it might, and I hope, will ere long be, in a proper Asylum. The beneficial results produced during the past two years have, in some instances, fairly surprised me—much as I had reasonably expected; and I would fain that all those who feel any interest in the insane, could witness these things and judge for themselves. The amount and kind of care and watchfulness which the insane require when under treatment—if good results are expected—is both from Physicians and Attendants, however, by no means trivial.

As an example of the delicate task of treating the insane, I will mention what occurred to me a few days since:—

One of my patients, at one time a violent maniac, but latterly more tranquil, having been an inmate two years, to my very great delight, spoke to me in a rational manner; said he hoped soon to be well, that he felt a change in him, that he recollected and deplored his past state which it had pleased *God to visit upon him*, doubtless for wise purposes. That he begged to tell me that when he used to call himself God, and to say that God spoke in and thro' him, that it *was not so at all*,—only whatever had been the matter with him had caused him to say so, &c., &c. In short, this maniac was becoming a reasoning man, and as in so many instances recollected all that had happened to him so curiously, that he remarked—Doctor, you came into my room one day, (twelve months previous) and took one of the potatoes off my plate and ate it; now, Doctor, it is very strange, but the reason I wouldn't eat my dinner that day was because you touched it, and I could not bear, *and cannot yet*, that any one shall meddle with or touch the victuals that are brought to me. His insanity was not all gone, but a vast change was suddenly apparent. Just at the turn of the tide, as it were, was this man's mind, and a false step on my part might have replunged him into the darkness of insanity. The next day I found him repeating every word I said, as he did formerly in the height of his disease, in a mocking manner, answering nothing to questions; and I was much distressed lest the light of reason had been but a glimmer preceding imbecility or death, as is sometimes the case. In a few minutes, however, as I became silent, he turned towards me, and said—Doctor, I was repeating everything you said to me just now, as I used to do when I could not help it; something made me do it then, and just at this moment I felt it, but now it is gone. This mocking fit has not returned, and there is every hope of the young man's recovery. I have stated this circumstance of his case, to shew an example of a principle which is applicable in various degrees to all cases of insanity, viz.—the cure of the disease depends upon a watchful care and instructed observation, not to be obtained without the walls of an Asylum, private or public. What was apparently inevitable, if this mocking fit, the result of departing insanity, had caused irritation and erroneous management on the part of the person having control over this patient? The favorable moment might have been lost for ever.

An Asylum is a place of retreat for the afflicted, and is neither to many people a pleasant place to visit, nor is it fitting, at all times, that visitors should be encouraged; certainly never when prompted by idle curiosity. But on the other hand, besides the relatives of the insane, who are always welcome at fitting times, when the patients do not suffer from it, many per-