

I have already mentioned that many of our patients assist us to a very considerable extent in carrying on our work. Labour, well directed, may be regarded as a most valuable agent in treating the Insane. A large number of the old cases in every community where there is no Institution for their treatment, enjoy a large amount of health, and many of them a high degree of energy, and their insanity appears in their directing these in a wrong channel, and in wasting them upon improper objects. Some imagine themselves engaged in an extensive enterprise, and day and night exhaust themselves running from house to house, explaining the nature of their scheme, and its bearing on their own and others' interests. Others seem entirely bent on working mischief, and wander from place to place, most industriously engaged in their favourite pursuit. Others, again, almost invariably in good circumstances, become the unfortunate subjects of a delusion that they are becoming poor, and that absolute want will ere long overtake them, and that they and their family will ultimately come to ruin. This latter class is exceedingly troublesome: they give no sleep to their own eyes, nor slumber to their eyelids, but, night and day alike, driven on by this imaginary monster, want, they bustle at home, bargain with their neighbours, and wander abroad in pursuit of gain,—keeping their family in tyranny, their neighbourhood disturbed, and the whole community in an uproar. Now so long as such persons are permitted to go at large, so long will they continue the bent of their own wrong inclinations, till they absolutely exhaust the powers of nature, and then follows a period of torpidity, which continues till the system rallies, when again they appear in all their former activity, to go the same rounds, and in turn to be followed by the same results, till at length they become prematurely worn out, and may be seen lying wrecks on the surface of society. To meet the wants of these cases, the restraints of an Asylum are admirably adapted. There the causes of excitement no longer exist—they are confined to one scene and to one set of companions, and these companions generally not of a kind to keep up excitement, for each has his own hobby and peculiar troubles, and enough to do to attend to himself. But restraint is not the only thing necessary in such cases,—some vent must be given to exalted energy, and hence the value of labour, regu-