

But the requirement for plain speaking on this subject has now become a matter of imperative duty, and however great may be the reluctance with which the subject is introduced into this report, it would be very wrong, under any apprehension of offending the fastidious, or the erroneously delicate, to evade the discharge of the duty.

In obeying this conviction, I am indeed not unfortified by the suffrage of many intelligent and benevolent persons, with whom I have conversed, or corresponded, on the subject. The entire body of the medical profession are anxious that public attention should be aroused to a recognition of the evil; very many of the ministers of religion are no less desirous of this result; and very recently a most earnest request was made to me by a high dignitary of one of our churches, that I would proclaim the evil, and "deal with it unsparingly."

I have several times, in my Quarterly Reports to your Board, and very frequently in oral communication, drawn attention to the extent to which the pernicious habit now under consideration obtains in the incurable class of patients in this Asylum; and I have expressed the belief that this complication of insanity, so long as it continues unsuppressed, renders nugatory all hope of recovery; and also that once the habit has been persisted in until it culminates in insanity, we are then almost powerless to contend with it; for, deprived of that co-operation on the part of the patient, which cannot be secured unless by appeal to his own moral power of self-control, and which, of course, is not to be expected when insanity has obliterated this power, we have no means at command other than those of mechanical restraint, aided, to what extent I pretend not to decide, by some topical remedies which have (as what remedies have not had?) the honor of being recommended by respectable authorities.

It is not, however, my purpose or province here to discuss measures of treatment; nor do I think it would subserve the end in view to parade the catalogue of expedients with which the habit is to be combatted; rather is it the part of stern duty and of candor to proclaim the great fact, that it is, in the vast majority of cases falling under our observation in asylums, ineradicable; and the necessary collateral of this fact is that half our beds in one division of the house, and a certain number in the other, are

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