

INSANITY FROM RELIGIOUS ENTHUSIASM EXTREMELY
DIFFICULT TO CURE.

29. To say that the attempts, which have been made in England and France, to cure the insanity of devotees, have been generally ineffectual, is not precisely to assert its incurability. It certainly is not impossible, that, by a judicious combination of moral and physical means, a cure might, in many instances, be effected. My plan would have been, could the liberties of the Bicetre have admitted of it, to separate this class of maniacs from the others; to apportion for their use a large piece of ground to till or work upon, in the way that mine or their own inclination might dispose them; to encourage employments of this description, by the prospect of a moderate recompense, want or more exalted motives; to remove from their sight every object appertaining to religion, every painting or book calculated to rouse its recollections; to order certain hours of the day to be devoted to philosophical reading, and to seize every opportunity of drawing apt comparisons between the distinguished acts of humanity and patriotism of the ancients, and the pious nullity and delirious extravagances of saints and anchorites; to divert their minds from the pe-

cular object of their hallucination, and to fix their interest upon pursuits of contrary influence and tendency.

THE CONDUCT OF THE GOVERNOR OF BICÊTRE, UPON THE
REVOLUTIONARY ORDERS HE RECEIVED TO DESTROY
THE SYMBOLIC REPRESENTATIONS OF RELIGION.

30. IN the third year of the republic, the directors of the civil hospitals, in the excess of their revolutionary zeal, determined to remove from those places the external objects of worship, the only remaining consolation of the indigent and the unhappy. A visit for this purpose was paid to the hospital de Bicêtre. The plunder, impious as it was and detestable, was begun in the dormitories of the old and the infirm, who were naturally struck at an instance of robbery so new and unexpected, some with astonishment, some with indignation, and others with terror. The first day of visitation being already far spent, it was determined to reserve the lunatic department of the establishment for another opportunity. I was present at the time, and seized the occasion to observe, that the unhappy residents of that part of the hospital required to be treated