

sane. The fact of a lady talking lasciviously in public would be good evidence of insanity, not so in the case of a prostitute.

Cases of mental disorder where no delusions exist and where the patient's acts are not manifestly due to insanity are the most difficult of all to diagnose. One may be called in to see a man whose only symptoms are a change in character, habits and conduct. Everything then will depend upon the opportunities you may have had to recognize the change in the individual. If one can say, of his own knowledge, that a patient has completely altered in a comparatively short time, without obvious or adequate cause, it is perhaps the strongest assertion he can make in support of the opinion that he is insane.

A certificate is strengthened in proportion to the care shown in its construction. One should be careful, therefore, in giving the facts to avoid stating what is valueless, and equally careful to omit nothing of value, saying it in as precise but brief a manner as possible. Statements that go to prove sanity should be carefully excluded, yet frequently we see such phrases as, "He has no delusions," "He is not dangerous," or, "He talks quickly but sanely." All such statements tend to show that the patient is sane, not insane.

Let me here cite some samples of certificates that I have been obliged to refuse. "From his peculiar actions and conversation, being constantly talking on subjects that persons in a proper state of mind would not do." If some of the peculiar actions had been described, and some of the conversation recorded, this certificate might have passed muster. Another read simply, "Manner and appearance." The manner and appearance were not described, and no fact whatever pointing to insanity mentioned. Another equally valueless, and almost equally brief, read, "Violent fits of insanity. Has been insane before." This certificate having been refused, the physician filled out another as follows: "Very violent, talking very violently and saying he was not insane." Needless to say, this was also rejected, and a rather sharp letter sent to the doctor. It had the desired effect, and brought me the following excellent certificate, "When examined he talked boisterously, walking up and down the room, kicking over the chairs. Said because the Lord had appointed him to judge the world his people called him crazy, but he was straight as I was, and he would prove it to their sorrow by making an end of some of them." Had the doctor furnished this in the first place, as he should and evidently could have done, he would have avoided the appearance of ignorance, I would have been saved a great deal of trouble, the friends would have been saved expense, and the patient would have been admitted several days sooner.