

“This is a form of mental alienation which has so much the look of vice or crime that many persons regard it as an unfounded medical invention. Much indignation therefore has been stirred up where it has been pleaded to shelter a supposed criminal from the penal consequences of his offences; and judges have repeatedly denounced it from the bench as ‘a most dangerous medical doctrine’ ‘a dangerous innovation’ which in the interest of society should be reprobated. The doctrine has no doubt been sometimes used improperly to shelter an atrocious criminal, but of the actual existence of such a form of disease no one who has made a practical study of insanity entertains a doubt.”

“Notwithstanding prejudices to the contrary, there is a disorder of mind in which, without illusion, delusion, or hallucination, the symptoms are mainly exhibited in a perversion of those mental faculties, which are usually called the active and moral powers, the feelings, affections, propensities, temper, habits, and conduct. The affective life of the individual is profoundly deranged, and his derangement shows itself in what he feels, desires, and does. He has no capacity of true moral feeling, all his impulses and desires, to which he yields without check, are egoistic; his conduct appears to be governed by immoral motives, which are obeyed without any evident desire to resist them. There is an amazing moral insensibility. The intelligence is often acute enough, being not affected otherwise than in being tainted by the morbid feelings under the influence of which the persons think and act. Indeed they often display an extraordinary ingenuity in explaining, excusing, or justifying their behaviour, exaggerating this, and ignoring that, and so colouring the whole as to make themselves appear the victims of misrepresentation and persecution. Their mental resources seem to be greater sometimes than when they were well, and they reason most acutely, apparently because all their intellectual faculties are applied to the justification, and gratification of their selfish desires.”

Every medical superintendent of Lunatic asylums sees