

## LEGAL RELATIONS OF REASONING MANIA.

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Psycho-sensory insanity, furnishes good ground for invalidating civil acts, for notwithstanding the apparent integrity of the intellectual powers, it is probable that their operation is influenced to a greater or less extent by a derangement of the moral power. We certainly ought not to judge the civil acts by the standard of sanity and attribute to them the same legal consequences as to those of sane men, because their real tendency is not and cannot be perceived by the reasoning maniac. These cases, like Guiteau and others of that stamp, always think that the end justifies the means, and in my examination of the insane I never met a single case of this kind, where fear of punishment would restrain them from criminal acts.

When a case of reasoning mania, and particularly that class of reasoning maniacs who may properly be regarded as having a monomania for homicide, commits a crime and the violence of the paroxysm abates, the insane man generally delivers himself up and makes no effort to escape. Sometimes, undoubtedly, the person flies from the scene and tries to escape, but most authorities on insanity unite in thinking this exceptional.

In homicidal insanity, the criminal act for which its subject is called to account, is the result of a strong, and perhaps sudden, impulse, opposed to his natural habit, and is generally preceded or followed by some derangement of the healthy actions of the brain or other organ.

Taylor (643 *Med. Jour.*) relates the case of a young man who entered a shooting gallery, took up a pistol and deliberately shot and killed the proprietor. He said he had no knowledge of the person; he shot him simply to be hanged for it. He had been thinking of suicide for some years.

In most cases, we regret to say, perversion of the feelings, the result of brain disease, unaccompanied with delusions, has not been held as sufficient ground to invalidate and nullify the acts of one so affected. The case of Guiteau is the last celebrated case of reasoning mania executed for murder, and we wish it might be the last spectacle of the kind in this country.

In the trial of Abner Rogers for murder, Chief Justice Shaw, of