

will not be so easy. It may be necessary to consider whether a man shall be placed under restraint for his own or the public safety, or to prevent him from squandering his fortune and impoverishing his family. In a number of cases we cannot wait and let time come to aid us in our decision. We have to decide then and there, and, if it is a question of placing the individual under restraint it is a matter of the utmost importance to him and his family, and of considerable importance to us. If we shirk the responsibility and leave him at large, homicide or suicide may follow, or he may be reduced to beggary while no advantage accrues. We, as general practitioners, acting in good faith, are saved the possibility in this province of being sued for damages for signing certificates of insanity to commit a patient, by a very wise provision in connection with the last Lunacy Act passed in 1897, so that there is no reason why we should hesitate to act promptly.

The cases which will present the chief difficulty in diagnosis will be those where the symptoms have come on most insidiously, and where they are really only an exaggeration of the chief characteristics of the disposition of the individual in question during that portion of his life when he was accredited with sanity and a right mind.

The higher faculties of the mind are the latest developed and the first to give way under disease. The power of restraint exercised at first over the lower impulses gradually weakens and then is lost, while with it sink all the altruistic sentiments and the higher attributes. The egoistic feelings rise in proportion to the loss of control. The patient becomes more and more selfish and indifferent to the wishes and wants of others, loses interest in the society and pursuits of his friends, soon he neglects business, and in all outward relations is an altered man.

When we turn to the origin and causation of mental disorder we see at once how much more prone are some to such rise of subject consciousness. There are many who by reason of a faulty inheritance are egoistic throughout life. Selfish at school, they are selfish when adolescent; they are selfish in their love-making and selfish in religion. The whole life and powers of some are devoted to the gaining of wealth and a trifling loss is sufficient to turn their brain. Others are suspicious and listen to every gossip's tale, embittering their lives by suspicious fancies. Others are jealous and yet others are fearful. Women, and even men, afraid of all kinds of things, and if one of these is depressed by some bodily ailment, as influenza, he straightway imagines that everyone is plotting against him. Another form of fear is