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DOES HABITUAL DRUNKENNESS COME UNDER THE HEADING OF MENTAL DISEASE?

By the above question we would wish to refer to those numerous cases of confirmed drunkenness which are to be met with in every community, and which are the bane of society, for the purpose of pushing the inquiry whether such persons can be in the full possession of their reasoning faculties.

An individual in full possession of reason will not surely act in an unreasonable manner, and to hold that a person does not act unreasonably who sacrifices home comforts and the actual bread of his children, or who breaks down all those moral restraints which bind society together, is absurd. The law has placed certain restrictions on the incarceration of persons afflicted with insanity. These restrictions have been wisely ordained, the object being to prevent the chance of incarceration of persons who are not insane, and whose incarceration becomes an object to interested parties. This observation has special reference to cases of undoubted mania; but in other forms of mental disease, cases where the moral faculties are implicated, the law is inapplicable. Why this should be, appears to us an anomaly. The question of moral maniacal derangement has yet to be elaborated, and we hold, as we firmly believe, that the condition of moral mania has yet to be carefully studied, and the opinions thereon of psychologists yet to be enunciated. Pinel held that moral mania was a disease of the reasoning faculties; he termed it "*manie sans délire*." Pritchard treats this subject with great ability, and states that "moral mania precedes intellectual insanity;" it is a condition in which there is "a morbid perversion of the natural feelings, affections, inclinations, temper, habits, and moral dispositions, without any notable lesion of the intellect, or knowing and reasoning faculties, and particularly without any maniacal hallucinations." Hoffbauer fully recognizes this state; he says "that mania may exist uncomplicated with mental delusion; it is, in fact, only a kind of mental exaltation, a state in