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## **THE MYSTERIOUS STRANGER**

*A Chapter in the history of Psychiatry in Canada*

BY C. K. CLARKE, M.D.

**T**HROUGH the kindness of Mr. Norman Burnette a rare volume of Canadiana has come into my possession. It is entitled "The Mysterious Stranger, or the Adventures of Henry More Smith". These adventures cover a period from Smith's first appearance in Windsor, N.S., in 1812, until his supposed confinement in the Toronto Gaol in 1836.

The little book contains about a hundred pages and is insignificant in appearance, but to a student in psychiatry is intensely interesting, both from the historical and medical standpoints, revealing as it does the credulity of the public, the heartlessness of the legal processes of the time, and painting a clinical picture that would be difficult to surpass.

The author, a delightful old gossip, was the gaoler of the Mysterious Stranger during the years 1814 and 1815, and presented the volume to the public, with the worthy object of warning it against the wiles of one who could, as he quaintly expressed it, "have in his arm the strength and power of a lion, and a mind filled with the subtlety, intention and depth of Satan". The book reveals only too clearly the attitude of the public towards the insane a hundred years ago, and incidentally illustrates the cruelty of laws which could not be styled otherwise than barbarous.

Henry More Smith, the subject of the sketch, apparently emigrated from England about 1812, and from what was eventually learned had shown signs of mental disease long before coming to Canada. He stated that he was a tailor by occupation but was in habit reticent, inoffensive, and deeply religious. At that time he was about twenty-two years of age, and our author finds all sorts of evidence of hypocrisy, deceit and