

*Buonomo*, the President now left the chair, which was taken by the Vice-President.

He spoke as follows: It seems to me that this discussion on moral insanity is often conducted with ambiguities of meaning; we alienists, do not proceed according to the elementary principles which are unfolded in our science, in its serene, and I will say, altogether scientific field; rather indeed we proceed jumpingly. To undertake the examination of a case of moral insanity, when we are questioned on the subject before the Courts of Assize, after the moral fool has arrived at crime and at the tribunal, and then to take this type of criminal character and in it to display all our learning on the subject of moral insanity, all this, I say, constitutes an ambiguity. To me it appears that in so doing we are abstracting a special case from our whole bundle of so many cases, which represent our conception of the moral disorder of an individual; because if by moral insanity we understand a disorder which is manifested more or less in the moral field, it will not be the *degree* of the disorder that will indicate a different type, it will be, the *nature* of the disorder that will represent the type of the alteration with which we desire to occupy ourselves. One who rushes out, killing, ravishing and so forth, no one doubts is a moral madman; but another who commits such offences as do not bring him under public notice, or such as escape judicial investigation, do ye believe that he is less a moral fool than he who committed murder and rape, and has been arraigned at the assizes? Certainly not. The proper conception of moral insanity is simply that it is a perversion of the moral sense; magistrates do not interrogate us on the general subject, in extenso; they examine us as to the character of the case under their judgment, but we will view it thus only as a special case, as a single case of a whole series of moral disorders.

If then we would begin to confine ourselves within the domain of our own science, without also considering its