

may be so blessed with a healthy locality that you may never have to treat asiatic cholera or ague. And other ailments due to locality or to special occupations you may never attend. But fortunate indeed you will be, if you spend many years in practice without being called upon to treat or to pronounce an opinion upon some case of unsoundness of mind. Your female patients after parturition will be attacked with insanity; their boys and girls as they come to the age of puberty will show symptoms of it; at the critical phase of life, men and women will break down; and in an old age, insanity will merge into fatuity and dotage in the general decay of mind and body. From the cradle to the grave the mental no less than the bodily health of your patients must be taken care of. And not only will you have to treat them, you will have to send them away from home under legal restraint, to plead their irresponsibility in courts of law, if in their frenzy or folly they commit crime; and when they are dead, you will be called on to testify to their competency or incompetency to make the will they have left behind.

"Now, if your attention has been drawn to insanity chiefly by notices of the grave disputes that arise in courts of law both upon the subject in general and also upon the sanity or insanity of individuals, you may shrink from the prospect. I have set forth, and may determine to have nothing to do with such cases. You may resolve, like others I have known, never to sign a certificate.

"You may possibly carry out your resolution in London, but in the country you can no more escape from this duty than from other branches of our profession, which here we may hand over to specialists; and an opinion you may have