

may be to poison him, or kill him in some other way, so, in self-preservation, he must slay his enemy. Many such acts are committed because he is urged to them by a direct command of the Lord, or of satan. He may hear his voice or the voice of one of his prophets ordering him to do these things, therefore, it is a paramount duty to obey a divine or a diabolical command. The moral is to carry out the imaginary behest and the ethical features from a sane point of view are never thought of. Granted the premises, the conclusion is logical.

Such insane with homicidal propensities kill from the promptings of such an inward monitor. They are put into the dock, indicted for murder; their mouths are shut; the evidence is against them; a jury looks merely at the act, and have no opportunity to study the actor, nor experience to know anything about insanity, nor capacity to analytically weigh evidence; so the verdict is "guilty," and the sentence, of necessity, must be hanging. The pages of history are bespattered with the blood of these innocents if "malice aforethought" is the fulcrum idea in homicidal responsibility, and want of it coextensive with want of accountability. Mothers and fathers kill their families, whom they fondly love when they are in their right senses, because of the orders of some inward prompter, or because of a blind and irresistible impulse incited by brain diseases; but irresistible and, it may be, without motive.

Insanity is a degenerative process, and, as might be expected, in chronic condition is a step backward towards childhood and childish ways. The same trinkets, trifles and fancies which amuse the child delight the insane in much the same way. In this respect also a majority of them never combine in concerted action with others. They have few, if any, confidences, hence conspiracies of lunatics are seldom heard of in asylums. The overt or cunning acts are usually done by individuals only and alone. Also, as is the case with children, they are selfish. Number one is the first consideration with those who have reached this low stage of mental enfeeblement. In children the appreciation of the rights of others has not reached the height of moral obligation in development; in the chronic insane, this capacity has been removed in the retrograde steps of disease. The order of building up has conversely taken place in the pulling down. The moral nature is the first that gives way in the lesion of the mind. The sense of right and wrong is the last faculty to be developed in the natural growth of the individual from childhood upwards, so it is the first to suffer in mental alienation. The order of destruction downwards is in order as follows: Morals, intellects, instincts and automatic animalism.

Another theory which is very popular, and has been prevalent for many years, is that insanity is purely a mental disease—simply