

Yes, "it was seen that all these people had been the dupes of a lunatic." *When* was it so seen? Not assuredly whilst jewellers and upholsterers sold their goods to her on credit; not whilst noblemen admitted her into their select circle; nor whilst pious ministers regarded her as "a stern religionist." Had this poor woman's insanity not culminated speedily, but progressed slowly and insidiously, as it does in thousands of cases, she would, beyond all question, have been consigned to a penal prison; and had Dr. Clouston, or any other physician, ventured to express the opinion that she was insane when she committed the offences charged against her, the judge would have frowned, the prosecuting counsel would have sneered, the jury would have been astounded, and the press would have applauded their verdict of *guilty*.

O! but we shall be told, this woman did not commit murder. Well, let us be thankful for the accident; for who knows not how capricious, uncertain, and utterly outside-the-range of all the moral probabilities, are the acts of the insane? *She* did not commit murder, because she was never tempted or provoked to do so; because she better attained her ends by milder means. Her ends, however, were insane ends, and she *might*, dominated by a quickly-killing brain disease, have essayed their attainment by violent insane means. Poor thing! the only refuge to her, in escape from the barbarism of law, and the blindness of justice, was the *madhouse!* How many a wretched victim of legal and judicial ignorance might, in a few years, or months, have found a similar refuge, had not the gallows anticipated the fiat of Nature?

[Dr. W. now briefly related a few interesting details of two other cases of the so-called moral insanity, which came under his treatment in later years, both of which he regarded as genuine, though, as he frankly admitted, he had always failed to detect in either, whether in language or demeanour,

anything so clearly indicative of intellectual defect, as might suffice to enable medical examiners to sign the certificate of lunacy requisite for their admission into an asylum. The statements, however, made by the friends of these patients, on which he had every reason implicitly to rely, were of such a character as to convince him of the presence of actual insanity in both. It is, fortunately for asylum officers, a fact to them well known, that many of their patients behave, while residents in asylums, very differently from their conduct and language at home, and all that is necessary to redevelop their mental obliquity, is to restore them to their former surroundings; many a family has had awful experience of this fact. In this country there is very little danger of persons, in a sane state of mind, being either committed to asylums, or detained in them. No superintendent of any public asylum can have any interest whatever in refusing to discharge a patient who has recovered, for the credit side of his account, in the public estimation, must consist mainly in the number of discharges of restored patients he is able to exhibit in his annual reports, so that whatever danger there may be in this relation, it must be rather on the side of liberating too many, than on that of detaining any wrongfully.]

Dr. W. then said:—"The subject to which I have to-night invited your attention is one that hardly falls within the usually recognized domain of practical medicine or surgery; yet, I have but too frequently become cognizant of the fact that members of the profession have, sometimes very reluctantly, though, in a few instances, rather exultingly, been called on to give testimony in cases involving the very important, and often very obscure, question of mental sanity or insanity; and I would be guilty of suppression of the truth, were I to withhold the expression of my constrained belief, that the assurance with which some of these witnesses have denounced their opinions has ever been