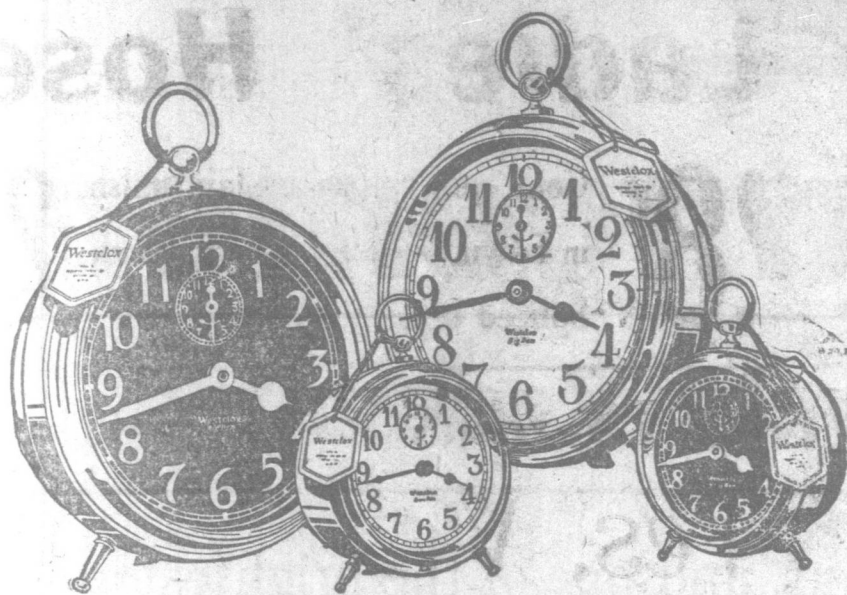


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The old reliable British Navy Serge; guaranteed all Wool and fast dyes. Bought direct from the mills. Made to your measure. Prices per Suit:

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Scrutator

WHAT IS A LUNATIC?

One of the points in the Harnett case which no newspaper failed to report, however much else was thrown out, was an allusion by Dr. Riesen Russell to a distinguished expert who said that no person is absolutely sane in his mental faculties any more than he is perfectly healthy in his body. As this, taken by itself, may cause some alarm, Dr. Riesen Russell wrote to the Times to explain what the distinguished man in question (the late Sir George Savage) really did say. It was that there is no "standard of sanity" fixed by Nature; but that "sanity and insanity" as recognized by the doctor, and, in fact, by the general public, must be but terms of convenience. After quoting the whole passage from Savage, Dr. Russell added the important remark that it is "necessary to know a man's normal standard of sanity before judging as to his insanity." This brought up Sir Clifford Allbutt, who described health, whether of body or mind, as "an oscillation about an ideal axis," in which stability is marvelously maintained. But he went on to give his opinion that there is no difficulty in perceiving when this stability is upset, though he admitted the difficulty of deciding "whether or not the degree or kind of mental disorder is such as to require formal restriction of civil rights." Sir Clifford's difficulty, unfortunately, arises just at the point where the question becomes of serious importance. He was followed in the times by Sir Bryan Donkin, who removed the problem into the field of criminal jurisprudence, in which the doctors and the lawyers are notoriously at variance. His point was that the "mere doctrine that insanity per se connotes irresponsibility is dangerous," and that it would not be safe to incorporate "the notion of uncontrollable impulses" in the legal definition of insanity for criminal purposes.

We see here three eminent authorities definitely at variance either with one another or with other authorities respecting the diagnosis of insanity and its legal consequences. The one who is most confident that insanity can be diagnosed by an expert with certainty admits the possibility of a difficulty in deciding whether the disease is sufficiently acute to justify deprivation of civil rights. The one who fears the danger of admitting a medical diagnosis of insanity as a defence to a criminal charge, does not stop to inquire why what is not good enough to save a convicted prisoner from the gallows should be good enough to condemn an innocent citizen to deprivation of civil rights and imprisonment for an indefinite period—possibly for life. I would like to say that not long ago I had the opportunity of eliciting the opinion of one of the foremost alienists of the day as to what constitutes insanity. He was firmly of opinion that delusion is the crucial test. But even here there is the danger that ideas may be taken by a doctor for delusions which are not delusions at all. Sir Clifford Allbutt alludes to this danger in his letter to the Times. The danger arises particularly in regard to the "idea of persecution," which figures in so many certificates of insanity. I recall a case in which a young doctor attributed to an alleged lunatic various "delusions" which were really delusions of his own, prompted probably by those who called him in, and confirmed by the patient's answers to his questions, though these answers were all founded on fact. Even where there is a definite insane delusion, Sir Clifford Allbutt's difficulty remains: are these symptoms really of a nature to justify deprivation of civil rights? Most delusions may conceivably lead to dangerous results, but some may be really harmless. I have heard of an old lady in an asylum who from time to time supposed that she was a teapot and begged to take her by the arm and pour out the tea. Except when this idea occurred to her, she was a perfectly reasonable and intelligent being. Undoubtedly a woman who supposes herself to be a teapot must be mad as long as she supposes it. It might be desirable for her friends to see that she did not pour boiling water down her throat and then sit in the fender to "draw," but why they should shut her up in an asylum for the rest of her life—probably at the public expense—I fail to see.

It is, of course, no new story that precise definition of insanity is difficult, and that professional opinions differ both as to the tests and the inferences from them in different cases. The reason why I call special attention to this state of things now is that on this uncertain and shifting ground is founded the whole fabric of lunacy law and practice, and if this "dangerous building" is to be repaired you must attend to the foundations. If it is a public danger—as undoubtedly it is—that a man should be liable to lose his liberty and his civil rights (except the right to be hanged, which Sir Bryan Donkin is so anxious to protect) without any opportunity of being heard in his own defence, the danger is magnified many times when the very offence of which he is convicted is one which cannot be defined.

It is the business of the law to deliver medical men from the difficulty

which Sir Clifford Allbutt recognises of deciding whether any particular case of insanity is of such a nature and gravity as to justify deprivation

of civil rights. That will be best done by not allowing them to decide it at all. The law should, in the first place, lay down in unmistakable terms its own tests by which the question is to be determined. What they should be is a debatable matter, too extensive to go into here. It is a matter of public policy. In the second place, having laid this foundation, the law should assign the question whether the prescribed degree of insanity is or is not proved to the judgment of "the judicial authority" after all available evidence has been offered on both sides. The question will become one of law, not of medicine. The place for the medical observations and opinions will be the witness-box. The medical profession has been greatly perturbed by the verdict in the Harnett case. The British Medical Association is calling a conference to consider this alarming incident. The best thing the B.M.A. can do for the protection of its members is to join in demanding the amendment of the Lunacy Act on the lines suggested above and in last week's Truth. When the functions of medical men are limited to giving technical evidence, all danger to them will be at an end—and the fees will continue as before.—Truth.

"Samson's" Might

Ironmongers in the neighbourhood of Leicester Square, London, were amazed when a young man walked out into establishments, snapped the links of thick steel chains supplied to him, and twisted them from his hands until they were reduced to a mass of scrap.

The perpetrator of these amazing feats is known as "Samson," his real name being Alexander Zass. He was born in Russia thirty-five years ago. He trains on a diet of port, of which he drinks large quantities daily, and his principal recreation seems to be bending thick slabs of iron into horseshoes with his bare hands.

"Samson" gave an interesting exhibition to workmen engaged in road excavation when he placed an inch and a half board on the ground, and with one blow with his fist drove a five-inch nail clean through it. But the most astonishing of all was

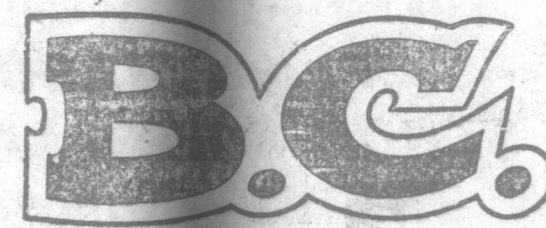


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The Lighter Side.

DRIVEN TO IT.

"He was driven to his grave."
"Of course he was. Did you expect him to walk?"

Children think themselves wiser than their parents; but parents did the same thing when they were children.

The Beast—You used to say there was something about me you liked. Beauty—Yes, but you've spent it all now.

when he picked up a taxi by the back wheels and almost threatened to push it along like a two-wheeled barrow. He is on a tour of the music halls.

Serve cubes of tomato jelly on crisp lettuce leaves with canned shrimps and diced cucumbers.

If glass baking dishes become discolored, fill them with water and washing soda before washing.

Diced cucumbers that are to be used in salads should be soaked for a little while in weak salt water.

Clean the gears of the egg beater with a little alcohol and wipe dry, but don't use oil or water on them.

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NEW FLORIDA CABBAGE.
FRESH TOMATOES.
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Extra Fancy Large Navel Oranges.
Spanish Valencia Oranges—30c. Dozen.
Large Messina Lemons—30c. Dozen.
Washed American Parsnips—10c. lb.
Fancy American Carrots—9c. lb.
Nice Small and Medium Sugar Beets—10c. lb.
Extra Fancy New Zealand Butter—55c. lb.
Finest Canadian Table Butter—55c. lb.
Fresh Sausages, Montreal make—30c. lb.
Potato Flour, 1 lb. Packets—20c.
Potato Flour, ½ lb. Packets—10c.
Fine Gunpowder China Green Tea—½'s and 1's.
Medium Gunpowder China Green Tea—½'s and 1's.
Fine China Black Tea—½'s and 1's.
Worcestershire Sauce—12c. and 20c. Bottle.
Chollet's Uncompressed Julienne—1 lb. Packets.

C. P. EAGAN

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