

of resistance. In the church, the state, and social order, the rights and duties of members are founded on absolute equality among themselves.

Absolute equality does not exist, therefore, the laws governing the rights and duties of members cannot be uniform and constant for all. In the case of idiotic and insane persons, the law at present recognizes their condition, and under the law they are regarded as irresponsible. But what of the class of alleged offenders, hovering between mental health and idiocy or insanity, those on the threshold of insanity though not insane? Is it possible to refer their so-called offenses to morbid conditions? The object of legitimate law is to secure to every individual his inalienable rights, not to grant him these rights, nor to take them away. The habitual criminal, mentally and physically abnormal, in physiognomy, in various stigmata of degeneration, in deficient reason, lack of forethought, vanity, egotism and emotional irritability, has the right to escape punishment for his so-called criminal acts, provided they be the result of his abnormal condition, whether insanity exists and can be proven or not. "No physical or moral misery, no suffering, however corrupt it may be, should frighten him who has devoted himself to a knowledge of man and the sacred ministry of medicine; in that he is permitted to see all things, let him be permitted to say all things." Thus medicine undertakes to save the honor of mankind before the Court of Morality, and individuals from the judgment of their fellow men.

In the course of almost every case of idiopathic insanity, *i.e.*, insanity due to over exertion of the brain, we have a fairly well marked prodromal period indicating the diseased balance between nutrition and function in the kinæsthetic area. This prodromal stage—this transitional stage between mental health and insanity—has not been fully investigated, and cases are described by the alienist only when fully developed. The essential feature of insanity is an abnormal response to stimuli from within or without, while neurasthenia appears to be the expression of a morbid unhealthy reaction on the nervous centres which preside over the functions of organic life. The changed condition in the cells of the cortex, probably combined with the toxin introduced in the blood through the deranged metabolism of the cells, must naturally lead to disturbance of the higher centres of the brain, which, unless corrected, must necessarily lead to definite mental disease. It is claimed, and very correctly I think, that cases of neurasthenia frequently terminate in insanity. But the law does not recognize neurasthenia as an excuse or palliation because, forsooth, neurasthenia is not insanity. In neurasthenia one or more of the faculties may be affected, the remainder remaining normal. The neurasthenic may know the difference between right and wrong, and yet not have sufficient self control to prevent him from doing wrong. He is as powerless to prevent the acts resulting from his diseased con-