

a very momentous occasion, a certain other High Priest spoke very similarly, thus: "Ye know nothing at all, nor consider that it is expedient for us that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not."

*Expediency*, Mr. Editor, is a venerable and very potent authority in all cases in which "*the interest of the State*," is concerned. It ever has been so, and it would seem it is ever to be so; but has it always, or ever, been found in the long-run, the safest pillar of States? Did the expediency inculcated by *Caiaphas* fortify or re-integrate the Jewish nation? Is the editor of the *Times* ignorant of, or does he ignore, the fact, that thousands of men have, in our mother country, in times not long past, been hanged for stealing sheep, or indeed for offences far lighter? Learned Judges in pronouncing sentence on such offenders, were wont to tell the convicted that although the life of a man was more valuable than that of a sheep, yet, "the interest of the State" required that sheep-stealing should be prevented. It was prevented as far as the hanged man were concerned. Throughout many centuries the suppression of sorcery, witchcraft, and other diabolical crimes, was earnestly essayed by Legislators, Judges and prosecuting Counsellors. So late as the middle of the 17th century the great Sir Matthew Hale presided at the trials of witches, and not only applauded the verdicts of juries saturated with ubiquitous superstition and petrified ignorance, but expatiated largely and learnedly from the august seat of British Justice, on the reality and the enormity of the crime of witchcraft. A hundred years later, and the great juris-consult Blackstone was among its expiring believers.

Now, I would politely ask the editor of the *Times*, who, or what class of men first urged the plea of mercy on behalf of the sadly persecuted family of the witches? Was it the Judges and Lawyers? Was it the Clergy? Let him condescend to dip into history a little deeper than, it is to be feared, he has done, and he will learn that in this great reform, as in many others, Doctors, not of Law, nor of Divinity, but of *Medicine*, have been the leaders; and, thanks to their superior intelligence, their unswerving humanity, and their undaunted courage, the victory over legislative and judicial ignorance and barbarity was finally achieved.

But the erudite High Priest of the *Times* has been pleased to inform us that the Judges "have at least been in liberality in advance of the doctors, who, up to a few years ago, treated insanity more as a crime than as a disease."

The man who could deliberately pen the above misstatement must be either regardless of truth, or most defectively read in the annals of insanity and its treatment. Not until insanity began to be recognized as a physical disease, and not as a diabolical possession, were its unfortunate victims regarded as deserving objects of Christian philanthropy; and who, and what class of men initiated the rational and humane system of treatment? Proudly and triumphantly may the Medical Profession assert its claims to that honor. Who entertained, almost with tears, for permission to enter the festering cells of the *Bicetre*, and give bodily freedom to the long immured, chained, inmates? I can hardly imagine that even the editor of the *Times* has not heard of *Pinel*. He fearlessly unchained fifty-three, though he was admonished that he would in all probability fall a victim to his own temerity. At the present day a *Pinel* may be said to be at the head of every insane Asylum in Europe and America. But when did the system of chains, starvation and stripes, in the treatment of insanity, give place to that which now obtains? Is the *Times* ignorant of the fact, that only within the last fifty years has the direction of insane asylums and the efficient treatment of their inmates been committed to the medical profession? Even to-day I could name at least two asylums, so called, in British Dominion, which do not yet rejoice in emancipation from non-medical domestic control; and should the *Times* desire to visit them, with the view of brushing off his ignorance and moderating his sarcastic pace, I shall cheerfully give him travelling directions. The *Times* errs most egregiously in saying that medical men now "are disposed to go to another extreme, and treat not only insanity, but all crime, as the result of disease." I have yet to meet a respectable, moral, and intelligent member of the profession of medicine who entertains any such opinion. For my own part I have attended as expert witness in a number of murder cases, in which the plea of insanity has been urged by the defending counsel, and I have been deputed by the Minister of Justice to examine, and report upon the mental condition of several convicts under sentence of death. I can safely say that it has been my calm study, and unswerving purpose, to discriminate between actual crime and insanity. I believe as many have been hanged on my evidence and reports, as have been saved from execution by them. Not one of the latter, I am convinced, was wrongfully rescued, and, *as yet*, not one of the former has been unjustly punished.

Medical witnesses have nothing to do with the severity or lenity of the law. If it is consistent with British law, and the effectual administration