

a man to cover the whole ground, and the best he can do is to have a general idea of some subjects that are necessarily forced into the debatable field of specialism. Now the best I can do is to offer you a few general suggestions of a practical nature, and to lay stress on some important points.

If we take a hundred medical certificates of insanity and read them critically, the first thing to be noticed is that the physicians have dealt largely in generalities, and this is just what they should not do. Here is a typical certificate, one that stands as a pattern for hundreds of others. Under the heading, "Facts indicating insanity, observed by the physician"; "the presence of delusions, general expression, appearance of the eyes and conversation." Now this is the important part of the certificate, and we will suppose that it comes up in court, how long will it stand before the cross-fire of a lawyer? How many facts indicating insanity have we here? The first statement "the presence of delusions" is one dear to the heart of many a Doctor, in fact I know one who has it stereotyped in his mind to such an extent that he never uses anything else. The statement "the presence of delusions" is a general one and not a specific fact. It may or may not be an indication of insanity, for I think it would not be difficult to show that a person may be deluded without being insane. What the law asks for is not the general statement, but a description of the insane delusions and a statement of what they are, it must know the reason why a man arrives at a certain conclusion.

"The general expression" is another favorite. What general expression? The absurdity of the thing is so patent that it does not require comment, "the appearance of the eyes"; still another favorite, this "goes" with the public, for they have a legend to the effect that you can pick out the maniac by his eyes—in fact I have been picked out for one on several occasions, by my eyes, and of course it must have been by the appearance of them, whatever that means. "The conversation" is generally included as an evidence of insanity; it frequently is, especially at five o'clock teas. Perhaps you will wonder that such a certificate, a palpably absurd document when superficially analyzed, could be filled in and signed by any intelligent man, and yet, as a matter of fact, such certificates are signed by the dozen, not by the weaklings of our profession, but by some of the best of our flock. It is because they do not think of the importance of the act, and while they have plenty of evidence in the generality of cases, they forget that they are making out a record for their own