

It is true, that in every instance that has come to my knowledge, the accused have come out triumphantly vindicated; yet, who but themselves could tell, if indeed human language could depict, the mental agony, the wear and tear of brain and nerve, the writhings of conscious innocence, the "spurns that patient merit of the unworthy takes," all too often endured under an augmenting bodily debilitation which invited the shaft of death, or rendered imperative the relinquishment of office? Of how many this has been the fate their bereaved and sorrowing families best could testify. Is there no remedy for this evil? Must its recurrence become a perpetuity in your country? To tell me that it will recede before the march of a higher popular culture and intelligence, would be but to ignore the fact that yours is the best, or at least the most largely educated nation in christendom, and to ignore also the yet more pertinent fact, that the pernicious accusations here complained of, rarely, if ever, have their origin among the uneducated portion of the population. They are trumped up by persons possessing more intelligence than moral honesty, and they are cherished into pestilent vigor by those who have had but too much education.

It occurs to me that your institutions for the insane stand in need of some protecting breakwater that might withstand the force or avert the fury of the wave of popular delusion. That your local boards of trustees have in many instances not proved adequate to this service, will be readily admitted by all who have suffered from the defect. It is my belief that a central governmental supervision by one or more well qualified, discreet officers, whose function should be that of vigilant and thorough, not merely perfunctory, inspection of the condition and treatment of the patients, and of