

do not like to abandon what almost looks like their prerogative of life and death to the medical profession; but I feel sure that a time will come when the question of sanity or insanity will no longer be left to the misleading definitions of legal ingenuity, but will be decided by the unerring test of scientific experience."

We purposely abstain from further quotations, because we wish our readers to obtain for themselves this little book, which can be had for a trifle, and is worth a great deal more than many learned folios which have been written on the subject; the reason being that it is the outcome of unprejudiced common sense, and a determination to be guided by medical facts.

The Defence of Insanity in Criminal Cases; being an Essay
by LANCELOT FIELDING EVEREST, M.A., LL.D., Barrister-at-Law. London: Stevens and Sons, 119, Chancery Lane. 1887.

This is a sensibly-written essay, which like that reviewed above shows that there are lawyers who rise above the parrot-cry of the defence of the legal tests of criminal responsibility against the attacks of mental physicians. On the contrary, Mr. Everest avers that "no test at all is better than the imperfect and unsatisfactory test laid down in the answers in *McNaghten's case*," and he asks why should the law remain in such an unsatisfactory condition when a remedy might be afforded by legislation? With Pandulph he might say:—

Therefore, since law itself is perfect wrong,
How can the law forbid my tongue to curse?

He would have only a general principle laid down, namely, that no man can be held responsible for an act if at the time he does it he is labouring under insanity. Each case would then be determined by the jury according to the evidence given by medical men and others as to whether the alleged lunatic is insane and ought to be acquitted on that account. There is certainly much to be said in favour of this simplification of the plea of insanity in criminal cases. At one bold sweep it gets rid of the complex tests which the ingenuity of the puzzled judicial mind has evolved with such great elaboration and with such little success. The author does not pretend to provide any test whatever; and he practically leaves the jury to be guided by the opinion of the medical witness as to the re-

sponsibility of the prisoner, although the author does not exactly say so.

Mr. Everest will, we hope, take every opportunity of instilling his views, both destructive and (with some exceptions) constructive, into the minds of the judges. He proposes that—

The suggestion of insanity should come from some independent source—say, from some medical authority appointed by Government—and let the question of insanity be tried in some such way as follows:—Let a skilled physician, appointed by Government, go the rounds of the gaols periodically before Quarter Sessions and Assizes, and send those cases in which there is a suspicion of insanity before a special tribunal for the purpose of trying the question of insanity, and that only.

The judge ought, the author considers, to have studied lunacy. We fear, however, that this is not practicable. He is to judge of the admissibility of evidence without being bound by the ordinary rules of evidence of Courts of Law.

Anatomy of the Brain and Spinal Cord. By J. RYLAND WHITAKER. Edinburgh, 1887.

The author has no doubt used his experience as a demonstrator to arrive at such well-chosen words to convey his descriptions of the brain and spinal cord. Admirable in clearness, and including everything of real importance, this little book will be found to be a useful manual, not only to the student, but to those who keep up or revive their knowledge of the anatomy of the nervous centres. The verbal descriptions are concise and well expressed, and the illustrations show special skill. There are twenty plates which portray in a striking manner the most important structures in the brain and spinal cord, as well as the vessels and enveloping membranes. Some of the most instructive are of the diagrammatic kind, in which good use has been made of contrast in colours in bringing out the most essential characters. It is curious to observe how much Mr. Whitaker manages to describe in a short space; with the help of his diagrams, he gives a wonderfully clear description of the fissures and convolutions of the brain in ten pages.

It would be too much to say that Mr. Whitaker has made easy the anatomy of the brain and spinal cord, but it appears to us that he has made it easier than any other manual we have read.