

at some of the divisional meetings, and at the next annual meeting it will occupy an important place on the agenda paper. It is much to be hoped that a thoroughly representative expression of the present opinion of the Association in regard to this matter may then be obtained, and a definite system formulated for impressing this opinion on the public and the Legislature.

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*The Matricide Case.*

The verdict of insanity, in the case of the boy Coombs, is probably a just and right finding, although, as we point out in our record of the case, "The Times" and other papers evidently do not admit that the evidence of insanity was conclusive. In the case of an adult, similar evidence to that advanced in this case would have been severely criticised, and would very possibly have been rejected as not being conclusive proof of mental disorder. We fear that the unsatisfactory impression is left on the public mind, that the plea of insanity was thus readily accepted, to escape from the unpleasant dilemma of condemning so youthful a minor. This plea is always received with so much distrust by the public that even a suspicion of this kind must be a subject for regret.

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*Mechanical Restraint.*

The evils of wrong-doing are great and far-reaching, and not the least of these evils are the effects of the regulations which wrong-doing calls forth, and which are intended to prevent similar wrong-doing in future. In any case it is difficult to forecast the effect of legislation. It is never certain that legislation will prevent the evil that it is designed to prevent; but we may be confident that, whether it do so or not, it will produce other evils which were neither intended nor anticipated by its authors. The law which forbade the combination of workmen, for example, did not prevent their combination, and was indirectly responsible for many trade outrages. The law which forbids the sale of intoxicating liquors in the state of Maine similarly does not prevent their sale, but indirectly produces much lying and dishonesty.