Mr. E. V. Richards conducted the prosecution; Mr. Powell defended Lacey and Thomas; Vick was not defended by counsel.

The case for the prosecution was that M'Kenna, who was afflicted with melancholia, had been brought into the asylum after making an attempt to cut his throat. The next morning he refused to put on his neckcloth, though repeatedly advised by Vick to do so, and in consequence a struggle ensued between him and Vick, in the course of which M'Kenna, the patient, was thrown on the ground. Lacey and Thomas, who were in an adjoining room, hearing the noise, went into the gallery where Vick and M'Kenna and about twenty-three other patients were, and it was alleged that all three prisoners kicked the unfortunate man and otherwise ill-treated him.

Dr. Sherlock, the medical superintendent of the asylum, stated that, being told by Vick that M'Kenna had had a bad fit, he went to the gallery, and found that he had suffered great injuries. There was a large wound in his armpit, his breastbone was broken, and also two or three of his ribs. In his opinion those injuries could only have been inflicted by kicks. At first the patient was in very great danger, but he had since rallied, and the doctor now thought he would recover. Before inquiry into the cause of those injuries, and stating that the man had been grossly treated, and it might be murder or manslaughter, Vick said it was no use denying it, that they had used the man very badly, and he was very sorry for it. Lacey denied that he had thrown the man down, but said, as the doctor understood, that he must acknowledge to having kicked him once. Thomas made no statement. The next day the three prisoners were examined before the Committee of Visitors, when Vick again admitted that he had treated the man brutally, and hoped the committee would deal with the matter at once; but Lacey and Thomas denied that they had been parties to any ill-treatment, and alleged that they were not present until the scuffle was over. Joseph Newman and George Gillett, two lunatic patients, who were in the gallery at the time the disturbance took place, deposed with great coherence and precision that Vick had assaulted M'Kenna, and thrown him down and kicked him before the other prisoners came in; but they added that, after Lacey and Thomas came in, they both joined in kicking M'Kenna. It appeared, however, that the former of these witnesses suffered from impaired memory, and made statements which were not correct, and that the other was subject to delusions as to things having happened which had not. They also slightly differed from each other, and from the statements which they had previously made on the subject. The medical officers of the asylum deposed that all three of the prisoners had previously borne good characters.

Mr. POWELL addressed the jury for the prisoners Lacey and Thomas, and contended that there was no evidence against them, except that of the two lunatics, which could not be relied on.

The prisoner Vick also addressed the jury, and endeavoured to show that M'Kenna had inflicted the injuries upon himself in his struggle with the attendants.

The jury *Acquitted* Lacey and Thomas, but *Convicted* Vick.

Mr. Justice BLACKBURN sentenced him to twelve months' imprisonment, with hard labour.

The Tragedy of Life: being Records of Remarkable Phases of Lunacy kept by a Physician. By JOHN H. BRENTEN. In 2 vols. London: Smith, Elder, & Co. 65 Cornhill.

The picturesque aspect of insanity is one which has long been

diligently studied, and elaborately copied in drama, and romance. The inapproachable perfection of Shakespeare's insane characters make it, indeed, an arduous task to follow in his steps in the one department of literature; but in the field of the novelist there is nothing to intimidate imitation, for even Goëthe's representation of mental disease, in 'Wilhelm Meister,' admirable so far as it goes, is but sketchy and vague. Of modern works, the mad tales in the 'Diary of a late Physician,' written by the distinguished author who is now one of the Masters in Lunacy, are remarkable for the power with which insanity is described, and remind us that an able man of letters may write under the assumed character of a physician with eminent success. The work before us at once calls to mind the early production of Mr. Warren, for, like him, the author professes to reproduce his professional annotations; but in Mr. Brenten's work the subject is dealt with in a more strictly professional style than that which was assumed by his able predecessor. Many authors have introduced madness into their works of fiction in moderated proportions, as the greatest musical composers make use of discord; but Mr. Brenten's work is altogether on this subject —it is a whole opera in a minor key, or a whole gallery of Fuselli's paintings. There is great literary power in these volumes, or rather in one and a half of them; for the latter half of the second volume is by no means of equal merit to that which precedes. They exhibit a pure and lucid style, a vigorous faculty of mental analysis, and a command of incident and of dramatic effect of highest promise whenever the author thinks fit to write fiction on more attractive subject matter than the professional aspects of mental disease. Few subjects, indeed, afford more scope for the skill of the accomplished word-painter than the lights and shades of mental infirmity, as we may see in the 'Balthazar Claës' of Balzac, and 'La Tulip Noire' of Dumas, both exquisite delineations of monomania, with which we know of little in our own language to compare. But the ravings of acute mania, as they come under the notice of the physician, can scarcely, by any amount of skill, be toned down into a picture which is wholesome to look upon. Stern duty takes us into the mad-house, and into the dissecting-room; but it was a vitiated taste which induced the dandys of a former age to pay their twopences to see the poor lunatics in Bedlam, or which recently led lady visitors to Dr. Kahn's museum of anatomical obscenities.

Having said this much, we must add that the moral tone of Mr. Brenten's work is pure and good. The lessons he inculcates are those of honour and virtue; he affiliates shame and misery upon sin, and lovingly depicts the beauty of self-sacrifice. Now that he has completed the task he has set himself, we very heartily wish that he would undertake to supplement it, by producing its counterpart in a work aiming to demonstrate the psychology of goodness and of

virtue. We trust he would be able to give the dish flavour enough for healthy palates. It is a moral dyspepsia which ever craves for high-spiced food in literature, a craving which the modern modes of life ever render more and more difficult to satisfy. The great tendency of that which we call advancing civilization is to equalise the appearances of life, although it at the same time increases the struggle to maintain those appearances. The social army, no longer resplendent in barbaric purple and gold, no longer a crowd of men each one ornamented and armed according to his own fancy, has at last been drilled into an uniformity of appearance which is destructive of picturesque effect. Compare the difference in the outward belongings and modes of life of a noble, a scholar, and a tradesman, as they existed in the old feudal times, with the modes of life at the present day, when all outward distinction has been well nigh effaced. The nobleman may live in Belgravia, and the merchant at Bayswater, and skilful observers may indeed be able to indicate certain *nuances*, in everything they do, and by which their social class, order, and genus may be guessed; but, shades of difference apart, they practically dwell, dress, eat, and live in the same manner; so that, for the purpose of word-painting, all picturesque effect is lost. A French author has said, "N'y a-t-il plus de mœurs tranchées or de comique possible que chez les voleurs, chez les filles, et chez les forçats? Il n'y a plus d'energie que dans les êtres separées de la société?" (he might have added *chez les aliénés*), and it would seem that it is the uniformity in the appearance of life which drives authors to such subjects of interest as this which has been chosen by Mr. Brenten.

There is, however, something very much beyond all this in the volumes before us. No professional novels, not the naval romances of Marryatt, nor any others we know of, display so profound a knowledge of their subject; and the most accomplished specialist may read not for amusement only, but for instruction also. The story which occupies the first volume, which is the history of a life-long hereditary insanity, characterised by excess of moral perversion over intellectual disturbance, culminates in an admirably described account of an inquisition *de lunatico inquirendo*. The medical witnesses, being the supposed author and a conscientious but wavering physician, who has had charge of the supposed lunatic, are rehearsing the approaching inquisition, under the tutelage of an Irish barrister, who brings into relief what we may call the humours of the position.

All this is very clever and very true, and the description of the inquisition itself is equally good. It, however, contains one slip, which, with others of the same kind, puzzles us greatly as to the real authorship of these volumes. The opposing counsel is made to maintain that the supposed lunatic "must not only be of unsound

mind, but he must be incompetent and dangerous—dangerous to himself and others—before his liberty, the most precious boon of an Englishman, could be wrested from him." This of course is quite wrong, for although this condition was insisted upon by Chief Justice Pollock, in a celebrated case, as the necessary justification of confinement in an asylum, his dictum even in that point was very properly resisted by the Commissioners in Lunacy; and such a condition has never been, and never could be maintained as needful to place a person of unsound mind under the care of the Court of Chancery.

Hints on Insanity. By JOHN MILLAR, L.R.C.P. Edin., &c. Crown 8vo. London: Renshaw.

In these hints Dr. Millar has undertaken to write a little work much needed, addressed "to those medical men who have had no opportunity during their professional education to become practically acquainted with insanity, and whose time is too much occupied to permit them to make a special study of a disease which they are seldom called upon to treat." Dr. Millar very properly lays the greatest stress upon the diagnosis of the disease; for no amount of hints will ever enable a medical man practically unacquainted with the study of insanity to undertake its treatment with any prospect of safety or benefit to his patient, or of satisfaction to himself. The best treatise on domestic medicine could be written in four words, "Send for the doctor," and so the best hint to a medical man ignorant of insanity is a sentence pregnant with wisdom, "Send for the specially instructed physician." Dr. Millar discriminates with judgment the cases which may properly be placed under treatment at their own homes, and those for whom the asylum is undoubtedly the best place. Professional men suffering under acute attacks of insanity, the successful treatment of which, without resort to the resources of an asylum, will be likely to feel the benefit of the former course in the prosperity of the future career. An attack of acute insanity, for which the patieut is only treated in his own house and in some seaside residence, may pass with the world for anything which the medical man chooses to call it—the conventional six weeks of acute rheumatism for instance; but about a disease treated in a lunatic asylum there can be no doubt. For all incurable forms of insanity, Dr. Millar recommends the asylum without reserve. But it must be observed, that although acute cases may be thus treated as single cases, it is even more imperative that such a mode of treatment should be conducted by medical men practically conversant with the disease than if the treatment be