

I shall follow what appear to be the substantial distinctions marked by external indications, and recognised by our law as manifested in idiocy, delirium, lunacy, and dotage.(e)

IDIOCY is that condition in which the human creature has never had, from birth, any the least glimmering of reason; and is utterly destitute of all those intellectual faculties by which man, in general, is so eminently and peculiarly distinguished. It is not the condition of a deranged mind; but that of a total absence of all mind. Hence this state of fatuity can rarely or ever be mistaken by any, the most superficial, observer. The medical profession seem to regard it as a natural defect, not as a disease in itself, or as the result of any disorder. In law, it is also considered as a defect, and as a permanent and hopeless incapacity.(f)

DELIRIUM is that state of the mind in which it acts without being directed by the power of volition, which is wholly or partially suspended. This happens most perfectly in dreams. But what is commonly called delirium, is always preceded or attended by a feverish and highly diseased state of the body. The patient in delirium is wholly unconscious of surrounding objects; or conceives them to be different from what they really are. His thoughts seem to drift about; wildering and tossing amidst distracted dreams. And his observations, when he makes any, as often happens, are wild and incoherent; or, from excess of pain, he sinks into a low muttering, or silent and death-like stupor.(g) The law contemplates this species of mental derangement as an intellectual eclipse; as a darkness occasioned by a cloud of disease passing over the mind; and which must soon terminate in health or in death.(h)

LUNACY is that condition or *habit* in which the mind is directed by the will, but is wholly or partially misguided, or erroneously governed by it; or it is the impairment of any one or more of the faculties of the mind, accompanied with, or inducing a defect in the comparing faculty. For, as has been observed by a great philosopher, those who either perceive but dully, or retain the ideas that come into their minds but ill, who cannot readily excite or compound them, will have little matter to think on. Those who cannot distinguish, compare, and abstract, would hardly be able to

---

(e) 1 Par. & Fonb. 307; Rush on the Mind, 234; Shelf. Lun. intro. s. 2.—(f) 1 Par. & Fonb. 289, 308; Rush on the Mind, 292; Co. Litt. 246; 1 Hawk. P. C. 2, note; Donegal's case, 2 Ves. 408.—(g) 2 Zoonomia, C. 2, 1, 7; Rees' Cyclo. ver. Delirium; Rush on the Mind, 9, 298; 1 Par. & Fonb. 300.—(h) 1 Coll. Idiots, 7, 405; 1 Fonb. 69; Shelf. Lun. 43; Brogden v. Brown, 2 Add. Eccl. Rep. 441.