tions. But the gradual experience of the "open-door" system will probably show us that we may proceed further in this direction, even for private patients, and still continue to secure their safety while we render their necessary seclusion much more tolerable.

FREDERICK NEEDHAM.

The Case of Lefroy, alias Mapleton.

Concurring, as we do entirely, in the propriety and justice of the decision arrived at by the Home Secretary in the case of Lefroy, and believing that no sufficient ground was shown for interfering with the ordinary course of law, the remarks that we have to offer upon this case are necessarily few.

It will be remembered that the murder of Mr. Gold, whilst travelling by train from London to Brighton, occurred on the 27th of June, and that Lefroy's trial did not take place until November. The prisoner had the assistance of an active and energetic solicitor, as well as of an able and experienced counsel; but, notwithstanding the abundant opportunities thus given for the careful preparation of the defence, no attempt was made at the trial to adduce evidence of the prisoner's insanity. His counsel, indeed, expressly repudiated the idea of doing so; and yet he must have been well aware of the weakness of the defence upon any other ground, in spite of the protestations of his client. Having regard to this repudiation, by the prisoner's counsel, of the plea of insanity, after so long an interval in which to carefully consider and decide upon the point, we feel, holding the view that we have already expressed, that there is hardly anything more for us to say upon the matter. Not only may we rest assured that no material facts calculated to weigh in the prisoner's favour were lost sight of by his legal advisers, but we must also remember that the persistent attempts on the part of the prisoner to conceal his crime and to escape from its consequences were evidences of a condition of mind widely different from that in which the physician can fearlessly interpose, and ask the law to stay its avenging arm, not only on the ground of pity towards the accused, but also on the ground of the uselessness of punishment, by reason of the insusceptibility to its terrors of the culprit. The very cunning and ingenuity and solicitude on the part of the prisoner in the present case, to escape from the consequences which the law of his country

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decrees for the crime that he had committed, may be fairly regarded as forming, in this case, almost sufficient proof in themselves of the existence of a state of criminal responsibility.

"Criminal responsibility," says Casper, "is the psychological possibility of the efficaciousness of the Penal Code."

It is not a question of disputing whether the existing penal code has or has not, with respect to the community at large, any efficacy in restraining from crime. We trust that it has, or, as good citizens, it would be our duty to endeavour to induce our legislators to introduce such modifications into it as would imbue it with such efficacy; but, putting to ourselves the question whether there existed in the case of Lefroy such mental defect as to destroy the possibility of any restraining influence being exercised by the penal code of England as it at present stands, we can come to no other conclusion than that his conduct gave a very decided negative to such a question.

It is needless to add any observations with respect to the wild theory that the prisoner was the subject of homicidal mania. The rumoured confessions upon which this theory was started were manifestly untrue on the face of them, and they were quickly acknowledged to be so; but whether this acknowledgment had been made or not was of no consequence, inasmuch as it was simply impossible that the published statements with respect to the alleged commission of other murders could have been true. Moreover, murder, with a view to robbery, is incompatible with what was meant by Esquirol and other medical writers by the term homicidal mania. Pure and uncomplicated homicidal mania, if the term be taken to imply an insane and uncontrollable desire to take human life, with no idea of gain or revenge or spite, and unassociated with any insane delusion, or with any other mental derangement, such as melancholia or delirium, or the so-called furor epilepticus, is, happily, an exceedingly rare form of mental disease, and most assuredly the name of Lefroy cannot be added to the list of authentic cases under this heading.

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