

## CHAP. IX.

UPON THE MANNER OF REPORTING A CASE  
OF SUSPECTED SIMULATION.

THE mode of procedure in inquiring into a medico-judicial case, such as that proposed, differs in some particulars from that followed in forming an ordinary diagnosis. It will be a fit conclusion to this Essay to hint at the course which a medical man should follow when he is called upon by legal or other authority to give his opinion upon a supposed feint.

Let us imagine that we are required to state in writing our belief in the genuineness of disease in a convict supposed to be insane.

On reaching the place of confinement it is advisable to overlook the prisoner, if there be the means of doing so before he is aware that he is submitted to examination: if there be no such means, he should be placed in a more

fitting situation for future observation. Inquiry is to be made of the governor and attendants as to his conduct on first arriving, his general behaviour, his habits, peculiarities, the time and mode of his first attack. The same inquiries should be made of his associates, each examined singly, and subsequent intercourse with one another interdicted. All the points of his previous history, occupation, accidents, diseases, hereditary predisposition—unless then and there ascertained—to be obtained, if the means appear, from his relations. He may then be visited. His conduct on our entry, or on his knowing the object of our visit, is to be particularly noted, and the general character of the individual, his physiognomical characteristics observed, on the principles laid down above. His general bodily health, if he be tranquil enough, may be now inquired into, especial attention being paid to the points suggested in the last chapter.

His mental state is to be considered of as if he were certainly insane; the various parts of his mind considered, and tested, illusions or hallucinations inquired into, questions of a simple nature being used, and having relation to simple facts.

This visit will take a considerable time. All facts connected with it should be committed to writing immediately; those derived from the patient, if our memory be trusty, not before him; those from others, before them. No opinion on the question at issue is to be given to any: it will be advisable to have a consultation with another physician, if that be allowable, who shall pursue precisely the same course.

The prisoner should not be debarred intercourse with others: judgment should be exercised in the choice of his associates. His conduct with them to be particularly noted. Subsequent visits will complete all the inquiry that can be had without recourse to the means suggested at pages 74, *et seq.* Observation has been extended for many months by Marc and others.

The report, when completed, specifies the authority under which we acted, is particular in its dates of time and place; and states the facts observed, first of all; and afterwards, a summary of our deductions from them. Whenever an inference is drawn, unless the course of argument it rests upon is obvious, it is stated;

all is done with brevity and perspicuity. Language peculiar to medical men is discarded. Pascal's rules and argumentation are remembered and followed; especially these:—

Leave no obscure or doubtful term without definition.

Employ, in defining, no words not well known or not already defined.

Lastly, we sum up our opinion under two or three heads, having taken care we have omitted to apply no test that could be useful in evidence. It may be convenient to conclude our opinion under the state of the prisoner before trial, since trial, and at the present time; thus obtaining naturally and consecutively predisposing and exciting causes, and his present state.

If special questions have been submitted to us by authority, they are answered. They are often difficult and beside the mark; often their division is not exhaustive, as we remarked of Lord Coke's division of *non compos*, &c. nay, persons unacquainted with medical questions so ask, that to answer is impossible; but this is rare with lawyers.

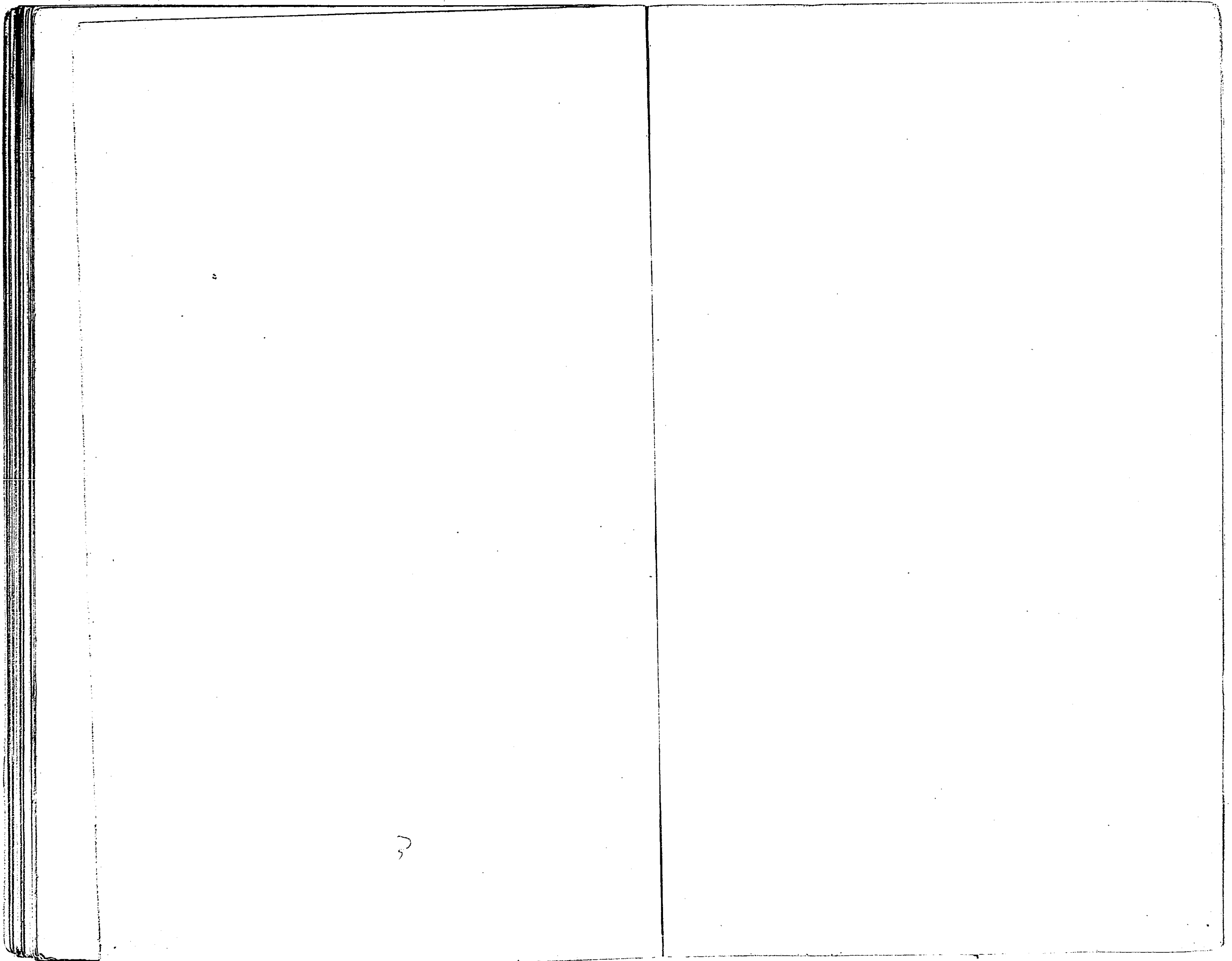
If we see real difficulty in the form of the

questions, let that be stated, and their deficiency supplied.

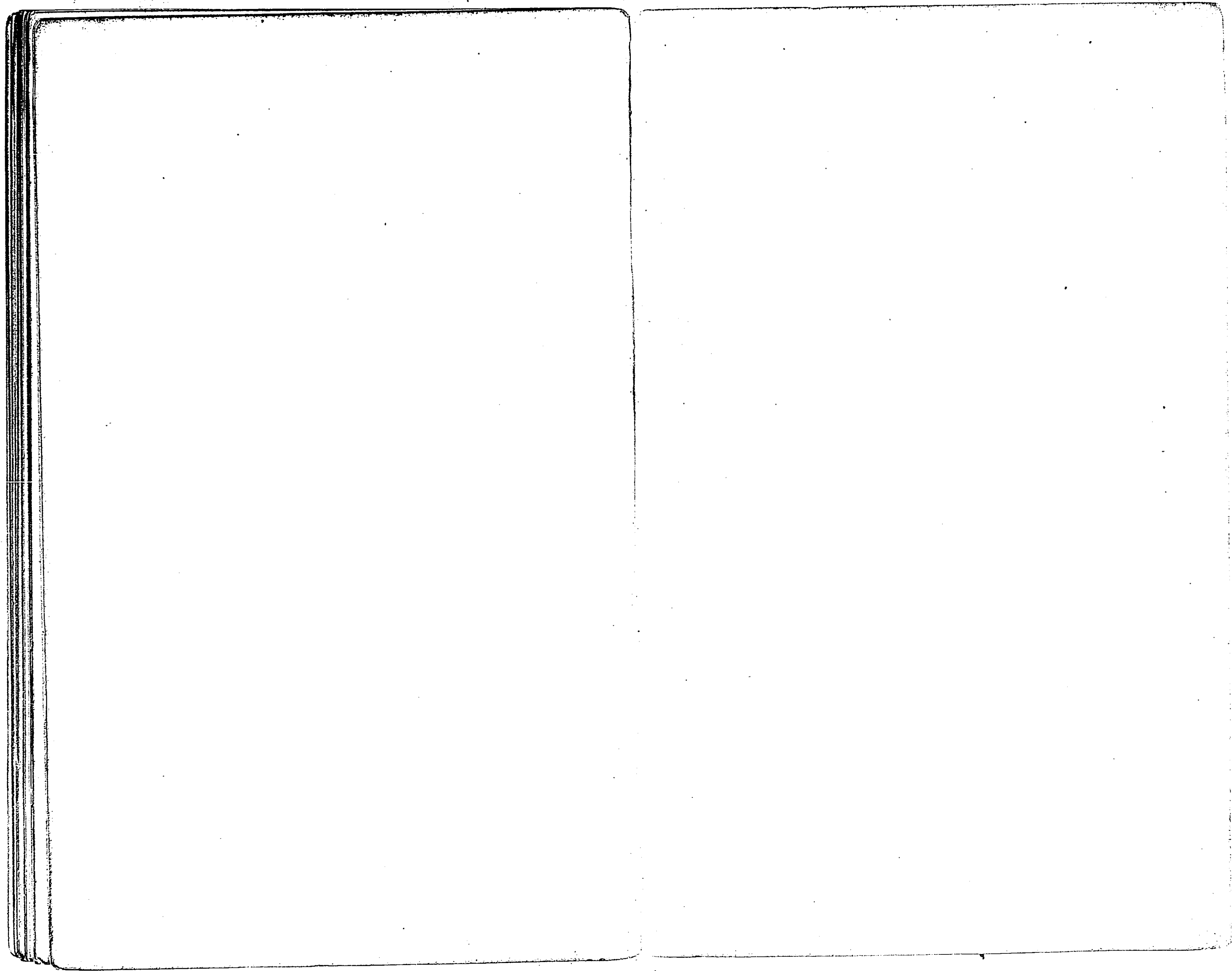
And here we may conclude. To condense into the limits of an Essay a subject of this nature is difficult. Practical writings are seldom undertaken with success in early life; and the Author sees good reason for offering with diffidence these pages to the reader.



THE END.



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FEIGNED INSANITY.