

**INSANITY IN ITS  
RELATIONS TO  
CRIME. A TEXT  
AND A COMMENTARY**

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Insanity in Its Relations to Crime. A Text and a Commentary by William A. Hammond

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**WILLIAM A. HAMMOND**

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# INSANITY

IN ITS RELATIONS TO CRIME.

*A TEXT AND A COMMENTARY.*

BY

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"SALUS POPULI SUPREMA LEX EST."

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1878.

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IN  
THE HOPE  
THAT WHAT I HAVE WRITTEN  
WILL COMMEND ITSELF TO HIS APPROVAL,  
I Dedicate this Essay  
TO MY FRIEND  
THE HON. MICHAEL C. KERR,  
OF THE STATE OF INDIANA,  
WHOSE BROAD AND ENLIGHTENED VIEWS,  
ON ALL SUBJECTS CONNECTED WITH POLITICAL AND SOCIAL ECONOMY,  
HAVE ALWAYS COMMANDED  
MY EARNEST ADMIRATION.

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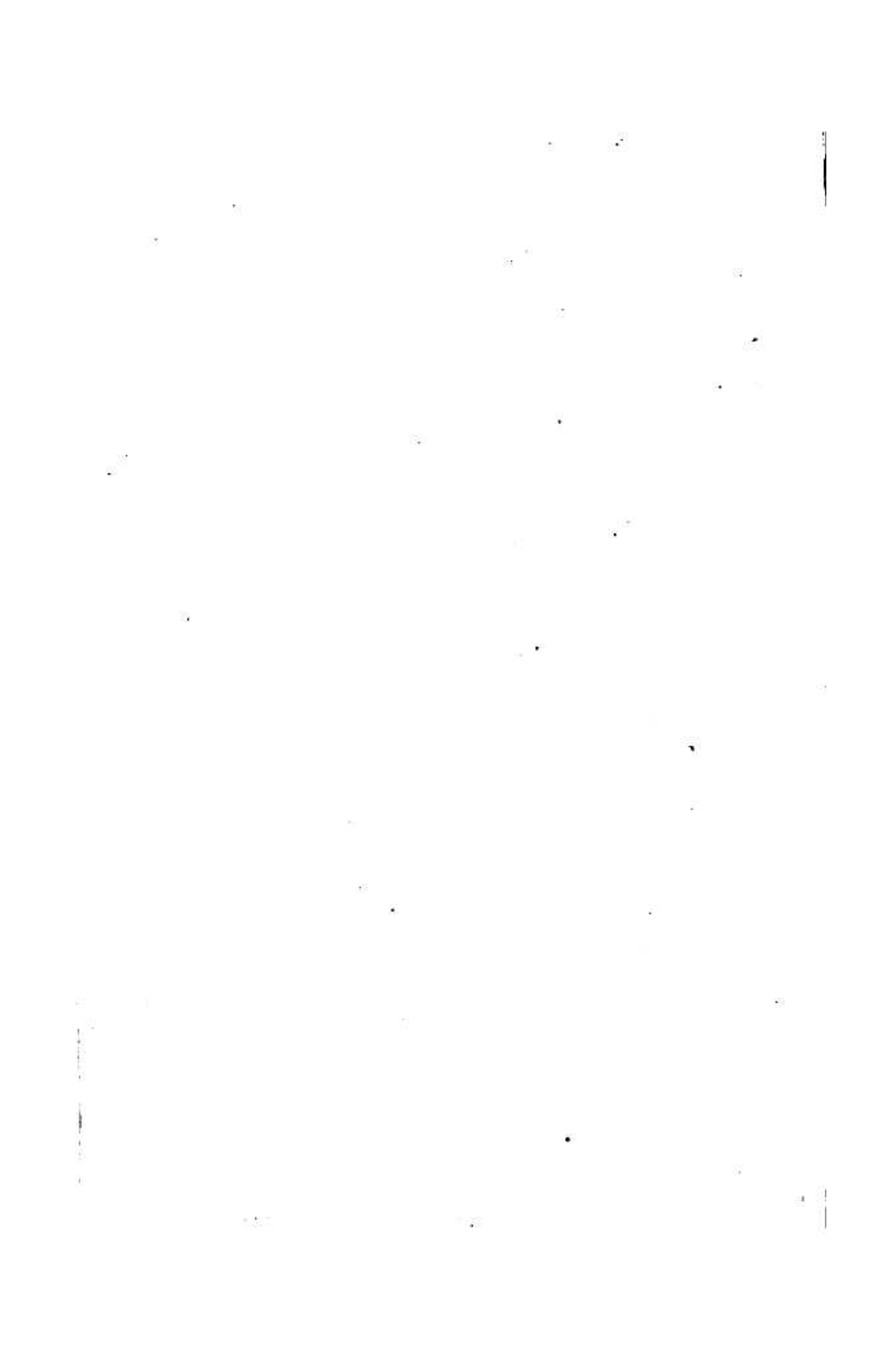
## P R E F A C E .

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A PART of this essay, under the title "Society versus Insanity," was contributed to *Putnam's Magazine*, for September, 1870. The greater portion is now first published. The importance of the subject considered can scarcely be over-estimated, whether we regard it from the stand-point of science or social economy; and, if I have aided in its elucidation, my object will have been attained.

NEW YORK, April 20, 1878.





## INSANITY IN ITS RELATIONS TO CRIME.

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### I.

### THE TEXT.

#### **LEGER.<sup>1</sup>**

On the 10th of August, 1824, a young girl of the canton of Ferté Aleps, Aimée Constance Debully, aged about twelve years, left her home at four o'clock in the afternoon, to go to a vineyard situated about a quarter of a league distant. Toward night her parents, as she did not return, became anxious, for a wolf had recently been committing ravages in the vicinity, and they feared that their daughter might have fallen into his clutches. They went to the vineyard, searched it and the whole neighborhood, but they found only her hat, shoes, and pruning-knife, arranged in order near a large vine.

Other attempts were made by the friends and neighbors, and by the local authorities, but for five

<sup>1</sup> The particulars of this case are taken almost literally from the "Causes Célèbres," tome vii., liv. 117, Paris.

days nothing giving the slightest clew to the object of their search was discovered. A handkerchief was found at a little distance from the vineyard, but it did not belong to the lost child. At last, on the 16th of August, a party of villagers from Cerny, who were engaged in searching for some trace of the girl, perceived a fissure in a large rock, which was partially closed by withered branches, apparently quite recently disturbed. Tearing them away, they found a quantity of hay, straw, and leaves, so arranged as to conceal the opening of a cave, into which they at once entered. The remains of various articles of food, and a bed of hay and moss, revealed the fact that the cave had recently served as a place of habitation. An offensive odor, which filled the cave, led to additional researches, and, in a few moments, they discovered, buried in the sand in a remote corner of the cavern, a dead body, already in a state of putrefaction. A chemise, a petticoat, and a handkerchief, were bound around it with withes of oak. The father and the mother of the young girl recognized the body as that of their lost daughter.

Notified of this discovery, and of the probability that a crime had been committed, the authorities assumed the charge of all further proceedings. A surgeon who examined the corpse ascertained that the body had been opened throughout its whole ex-