How Far Expert Medical Testimony Should Figure in Court Proceedings and What Is Needed to Remedy Present Conditions Discussed by Prominent Authorities.

Dr. Charles F. MacDonald

John Brooks Leavitt

SHALL THE PLEA OF INSANITY BE ABOLISHED?

The question of the advisability of abolishing the plea of insanity from our criminal codes is one that has long been under discussion. In this country, the plea of insanity has been employed as a defense in a number of cases, and its effectiveness has been challenged on several grounds. The plea of insanity is based on the premise that the defendant, at the time of the commission of the crime, was not capable of understanding the nature or wrongfulness of his act, or was unable, by reason of mental defect or disease, to conform his conduct to the requirements of the law. The effectiveness of the plea of insanity has been questioned on the grounds that it is often used as a means of avoiding penal responsibility, that it is not always supported by sufficient medical evidence, and that it can be used to shield defendants who are guilty of serious crimes.

In recent years, there has been a movement to abolish the plea of insanity and replace it with other methods of dealing with defendants who are mentally ill or incompetent. This movement is based on the belief that the plea of insanity is too easily abused and that it is not an effective means of ensuring public safety.

In this article, we will discuss the arguments for and against the abolition of the plea of insanity, and examine the alternatives that are available for dealing with mentally ill defendants.

The arguments for the abolition of the plea of insanity are based on the belief that it is too often used as a means of avoiding penal responsibility. Defendants who are mentally ill or incompetent are sometimes able to use the plea of insanity to avoid being held responsible for their actions. This can be particularly damaging in cases in which the defendant has committed a serious crime, such as murder or rape.

The arguments against the abolition of the plea of insanity are based on the belief that it is an effective means of dealing with mentally ill defendants. The plea of insanity allows courts to consider the defendant's mental state at the time of the crime, and to determine whether he or she was capable of understanding the nature or wrongfulness of their actions.

In conclusion, the question of whether to abolish the plea of insanity is a complex one, and there are valid arguments on both sides. While some argue that it is too often abused and not effective, others believe that it is an important tool for ensuring public safety. Ultimately, the decision of whether to abolish the plea of insanity will depend on the specific circumstances of each case, and on the values that are most important to the community.