The jury found a verdict of "Guilty, but Insane," and the usual order for detention was made, the judge remarking that he entirely agreed with the verdict.

Rex *v.* Edith May Dampier.

This case was tried at Hereford Assizes on February 12, 1932, before Mr. Justice Roche.

The accused is a widow, æt. 36. She lived with her two children in a small farmhouse, near Ross-on-Wye. She was accused of the murder of a man named George Parry, who had been employed by her for about nine years as a "handy-man."

On January 9, about 6.30 p.m., a lad was delivering bread at the house. The accused told him that Parry had shot himself. The lad having obtained assistance, Parry was found seated on a chair in the kitchen, with a gun between his knees. He was dead from a wound in the left side of his neck. Evidence was given by Sir Bernard Spilsbury to the effect that this wound could not have been self-inflicted. The accused, later, made a statement that she had shot Parry, but that this had occurred as the result of an accident. No motive was suggested for the accused having shot Parry. But the defence did not dispute the facts, as set out by the prosecution, and relied entirely on the plea of insanity.

Dr. J. L. Dunlop had attended the accused for about five years. In September, 1931, he had treated her for gonorrhœa. She was much upset about this, especially as her son, aged 9 years, had lost the sight of his right eye through gonorrhœal infection. The accused had stated that she intended to cut the boy's eye out with a pair of scissors. She also stated that she had remarried (a delusion), and that her second husband had left her and had been drowned. Dr. Dunlop had sent her to a nursing home, which she had attempted to leave in her nightdress. He had considered the question of her certification in September.

Dr. G. W. T. H. Fleming, medical superintendent of Hereford Mental Hospital, had examined the accused on February 4. He regarded her then as definitely insane, and he considered that she had been insane on January 9. She had told him that she had seen and conversed with her deceased husband. She was more worried over a recent loss of weight than over the charge now brought against her. He had taken a specimen of her blood, and the Wassermann reaction had proved to be positive. He believed that she was in the early stage of general paralysis.

Dr. H. Ward-Smith had seen the accused in October and November, 1931. He had also examined her with Dr. Fleming. He agreed with the opinion of that witness. She had several times threatened to commit suicide, and she was obsessed with the idea that her appearance was attracting public attention, stating that she was covered with patches (a delusion).

Dr. M. Hamblin Smith, medical officer of Birmingham Prison, had kept the accused under observation from January 28. He fully agreed with the views of the other medical witnesses.

The judge, in his summing-up, said that there was abundant evidence in favour of a verdict of "Guilty, but Insane." The jury, without retiring, returned that verdict, and the usual order for detention was made.

The main medico-legal interest in the case was the way in which certain questions were framed. The first three medical witnesses were called by the defence. They were asked whether they considered that, on January 9, the accused had known "the nature and quality" of her act. They replied in the negative. They were then asked whether, assuming that she had known the nature and quality of the act, she would have known that it was "wrong." The object of this further question probably was to give the defence a second line of argument. But the question seems open to objection; for it invites a witness to assume the existence of a condition which he has just declared to be, in his opinion, non-existent. The first part of the "McNaghten criterion" (absence of knowledge of the nature and quality of the act) would seem to imply the second part (absence of knowledge that the act was wrong). It is, of course, quite another matter if the witness expresses the view that the accused did know the nature and quality of the act. In that case the second part of the criterion may fairly be put to the witness. But "hypothetical questions" are always objectionable.

Post-Epileptic Automatism as a Defence in Murder Cases: A Comparison of Two Recent Cases.

Rex *v.* Rickard.

A case of considerable psychiatric interest was tried in the Supreme Court at Hamilton, New Zealand, on June 8 and 9, 1931, before the Hon. Sir Alexander Herdman, when Reginald Thomas Rickard was arraigned for the murder of Arthur Rossiter, an old man who lived with his daughter at Kaipaki.