

his own recognisances.—Winchester Assizes, June 27th, Mr. Justice Wright.—*Times*, June 28th.

Probably the view of the jury was the correct one. The prisoner had his mind saturated with the ghost story, and seeing the relief approaching, he betook himself in panic to his weapon. The plea of insanity was not raised, but the case is important because the prisoner pretended that he lost all recollection of the circumstances a day or two after they took place. Such a forgetfulness is incredible, and was no doubt assumed in order to raise a presumption that he was irresponsible at the time. Such pretended forgetfulness is not at all uncommon, and may, when less clumsily assumed than in this case, mislead a medical man. It is well to bear in mind that the statements of a prisoner accused of crime, even if they support an hypothesis of insanity, are not necessarily true.

*Reg. v. Hough.*

Alice Hough, 39, married, was charged with the murder of her child. She was found standing with it in a sheet of water. Both were taken out, but the child was dead. Prisoner had been an habitual drunkard for years, and had had several attacks of delirium tremens. The judge expressed the opinion that the case had not been presented in a satisfactory manner. He had drawn attention to it in his charge to the grand jury, and had expressed the hope that steps would be taken to put proper evidence before the court as to the mental condition of the prisoner. This had not been done, and they were left to make the best of the imperfect material before them. He deprecated in the public interest such treatment of a serious charge. Guilty, but insane.—Manchester Assizes, July 12th.—*Manchester Guardian*, July 13th.

Interesting as showing that the practice of placing, by the prosecution, of evidence of the prisoner's mental condition before the court is so well established, that a judge severely comments upon the omission.

*Cathcart v. Cathcart.*

The husband of the well-known Mrs. Cathcart sought a divorce on the ground of desertion. The proceedings were protracted, and occupied the Court of Session for three days. The only matter of interest to our readers is that Lord Low expressed a strong opinion that Mrs. Cathcart, when she left her husband, was of unsound mind. Since that date, however, a jury had found that she was sane, and in spite of this she had resisted all the entreaties of her husband to rejoin him. Although, therefore, he intimated that he would not have granted a divorce for a desertion for which the defender was not responsible owing to her unsoundness of mind, yet, as this desertion had been endorsed and continued by her after her restoration to sanity, she lost the benefit of her irresponsibility at the time of the desertion, and lost also her case. Judgment for the pursuer.—Lord Low.—*Scotsman*, June 17th, 28th, and 29th.

*re Jackson.*

In an inquisition upon a lady named Miss Eleanor Jackson, it was proved that she alleged that people were hostile to her, and wanted to get hold of her property, and that under the influence of these delusions she was in the habit of writing letters to the Queen, the Lord Chancellor, the police, and various other persons. The jury found that the lady was incapable of managing her affairs, but was not dangerous to herself or others, the result of which verdict was that she was at once placed at liberty.

If juries persist in placing at liberty persons with delusions of persecution, it is certain that before long a tragedy will be placed to the charge of Section 98 (2) of the Lunacy Act, 1890.

*Reg. v. Allman.*

Prisoner, a nursemaid aged 15, was charged with causing the death of her employer's child, aged four. Some time before the death with which the prisoner was charged, her employer had lost another child, who was found drowned in a deep pool on the farm in which he lived. The prisoner was not suspected of having any part in the death of this child, but when the second child was found drowned in the same pool, she was questioned, and as she made several statements

quite inconsistent with each other, she was charged with murder, but at the instance of the judge the charge was reduced to one of manslaughter. The jury found the prisoner guilty.—Shrewsbury Assizes, July 16th, Mr. Justice Day.—*Manchester Guardian*, July 17th.

This case recalls vividly the Road murder which caused so much excitement in the country nearly thirty years ago. In that case the criminal, a sister of the victim, was 16 years of age. These apparently motiveless crimes committed by girls about the age of puberty form a very well characterised class. Sometimes, as in this case, the crime is that of homicide. Often it is incendiarism. Occasionally it takes the form of sexual tamperings with younger children. In this case the evidence against the prisoner was very indirect, and there is no doubt of the wisdom of the discretion exercised by the judge. Indeed, it is rather surprising that a conviction was secured even upon the lesser charge. The plea of insanity was not raised, counsel hoping, no doubt, for a general acquittal, but the case was certainly a legitimate one for urging mental unsoundness in mitigation of punishment, having regard to the age of the prisoner, and the circumstances of the crime. Unfortunately the report to hand does not record the sentence.

*Colclough v. Ollivant.*

A breach of promise case, the plaintiff being a widow over 40, the defendant a weak-minded man of 25. The formal defence was a denial of the promise, but practically the matter resolved itself into the question whether the plaintiff took advantage of the defendant's weakness of mind to entrap him into an offer.—Verdict for the defendant.—*Manchester Guardian*, July 25th.

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ASYLUM NEWS.

*Aberdeen Royal Asylum.*—Extensive damage was caused by fire breaking out in the roof of the succursal asylum at Glack, which is some twenty miles from Aberdeen. About 100 patients are accommodated there, mostly of the quiet class, who are employed on the estate, which was acquired some ten years ago. Fortunately the water supply was ample, and the safety of the patients having been secured, the lower storey was saved from destruction. The staff earned high commendation in having dealt so efficiently with the catastrophe. We trust that the chapter of accidents from fire in the Aberdeen Asylum is now closed. It has been most unfortunate of late years in this respect.

*Forfarshire Asylums.*—For years past there has been an agitation going on in Forfarshire in connection with the asylums of the county. The parochial authorities of Dundee have been urgent in claiming that they should have the management of the insane, because they represent the ratepayers. The town clerk of Dundee attributed their desire to a lust of administration, and made short work of their arguments. The agitation has been fostered and has spread to other parts of the county, and the local newspapers have printed long reports of meetings convened to reorganise the system of lunacy administration. It does not appear that the difficulties are insuperable, if the parties in the dispute are willing to modify their extreme demands. The directorate of the Dumfries Royal Asylum was lately reorganised by Act of Parliament, and popular representation was granted, without having impaired the efficiency of the institution. Similarly, the Forfarshire Asylums might be relieved from the uncertainties and irritation of this long-continued agitation, and might continue their beneficent work unmolested. It is unfortunate for the insane belonging to the extreme north of Scotland that they should still require to seek treatment in asylums so distant as Montrose and Edinburgh. The question of their retention in Montrose has been raised, and will no doubt have most serious attention in the near future, for it is evident that lunacy affairs in Forfarshire cannot be allowed to drift in the present entanglement much longer.

*Northampton County Asylum.*—The authorities of the Northampton County Asylum announce that arrangements have been made to afford free consultation with the doctors at the asylum to those whose symptoms suggest incipient mental