

REX *v.* ERNEST ALBERT WALKER.*To the Editors of the JOURNAL OF MENTAL SCIENCE.*

SIRS,—I have seen Dr. East's letter. I need hardly say that nothing was further from my desires than to misrepresent Dr. East's evidence, or to cause him vexation or annoyance in any other way. My only object in writing an account of this trial was to summarize the main published facts in a case which appeared to be of considerable medico-legal interest. In writing my account the evidence available was a report in *The Times* of June 22, extending to nearly a column in length. I venture to think that anyone who will compare this report with what I wrote will not consider my account to be an unfair summary of the published evidence. That Dr. East was likely to have fuller evidence before him I, of course, knew well.

As to the evidence of previous epilepsy, the prisoner was stated by his father to have "had fits since he was five." There was no contradiction of this evidence so far as the published report went. I took this to be evidence of former epilepsy and said so.

That murderers may give themselves up to the police without being insane or epileptic is, of course, within my experience. But beyond stating the fact that the prisoner had done this, I did not refer to the point and did not draw conclusions from it.

The precise nature of the "flight" in this case and the question as to whether it was characteristic of epilepsy is, and must always remain, a matter of opinion. So also with the question of the amnesia. I had not the slightest doubt that, as Dr. East says, both medical witnesses referred to this in their reports, and that the jury were informed that the matter was controvertible. I had tried to indicate that this was one of the difficult points which had to be considered.

Yours faithfully,  
M. HAMBLIN SMITH.

Birmingham;  
November 27, 1922.

## DEATH OF LT.-COL. D. G. THOMSON, C.B.E., M.D.

As we go to press we hear the sad intelligence of the death, on January 4, 1923, of Lt.-Col. D. G. Thomson. We had included in this number a note on his retirement from the post of Medical Superintendent of Norfolk County Mental Hospital early in 1922. We were able to withdraw this in view of an extended obituary notice in our next number.

## OBITUARY.

## JOHN MAYNE COLLES, LL.D., K.C., J.P.

WE regret to record the death of Dr. J. M. Colles at the age of 64, which occurred in London on December 19. He was elected an honorary member of our Association in 1917. Up to 1921 he was Registrar in Lunacy, Ireland, an office which he had held for over thirty years. He was educated at St. Columba's College and at Trinity College, Dublin, and afterwards called to the Irish Bar. It was his duty as Chancery Visitor to visit the Irish asylums, and he gained a wide knowledge of mental diseases, for which he was much respected.

He was as popular with the medical *personnel* of the asylums as he was revered by the many patients to whom he was a sympathetic friend. Nobody knew his own countrymen better than he did and with no side of Irish life was he unacquainted, and wherever he went he was assured of a welcome which speaks well for his lovable character in these troublesome times. His grandfather discovered that fracture at the wrist known ever since as Colles' fracture.

His maternal grandfather was John, the third son of Mr. Justice Mayne, of the Court of Queen's Bench in Ireland. This gentleman was also a member of the Bar, but died at the early age of 38. He left a *Journal during a Tour on the Continent upon its Re-opening on the fall of Napoleon (1814)*, which the late Dr. Colles edited and published in 1909 (John Lane: The Bodley Head).