

that he had been drinking, and that the woman kept "throwing in his face" something about another man. It was urged, on his behalf, that a jury should have been empanelled to try the issue of his fitness to plead. The Court refused the application for leave to appeal. The presiding judge, Mr. Justice Avory, said that the course taken at the trial was the only one which could have been adopted under the circumstances. It was only when some doubt existed whether an accused person had appreciated the nature of his plea, or the consequences resulting therefrom, that a jury should be empanelled to try the issue of fitness to plead. In this instance no such doubt had existed. Mr. Justice Avory pointed out, however, that it still remained possible for the Home Secretary to take such steps, in the direction of further consideration of Vent's mental condition, as might appear to be indicated.

Eventually a medical inquiry was ordered to be held under Section 2 of the Criminal Lunatics Act, 1884. The medical practitioners who conducted this inquiry certified Vent to be insane, and he has been removed to Broadmoor Criminal Lunatic Asylum.

M. HAMBLIN SMITH.

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REX *v.* LEONARD ALBERT BRIGSTOCK.

THIS case was tried at Maidstone Assizes on February 19, 1935, before the Lord Chief Justice.

The accused, æt. 33, was a stoker petty officer in the Royal Navy. He was charged with the murder of Chief Petty Officer Deggan by cutting his throat with a razor on board a ship in Chatham Dockyard, on January 6. It was alleged that Brigstock had a grievance against Deggan, because the latter had brought some accusation of a breach of naval discipline against Brigstock. The accused man was stated to have said to another petty officer, "I have cut the C.P.O.'s throat". He had a razor in his hand at the time. Later, when charged with the crime, he said, "I did not know what I was doing. I did not do it maliciously, not so far as I know".

The facts of the case do not seem to have been disputed, and the defence was that of "insanity". The prisoner's wife related a dream of which her husband had told her, in which he had seen a huge black man, the "devil's mate", who was molesting her. Two of the prisoner's brothers gave evidence of singular conduct on his part; the details of this conduct were not reported. No medical evidence appears to have been called for the defence—a somewhat significant omission. On the other hand, Dr. H. A. Grierson, senior medical officer of Brixton Prison, stated that he had kept Brigstock under observation, and had found no signs of mental disorder. He could find no evidence that Brigstock was insane at the time of the crime.

The jury returned a verdict of "Guilty", and Brigstock was sentenced to death.

M. HAMBLIN SMITH.