

Proposed by James Moody, A. N. Boycott, and W. Ireland Donaldson. William Harris, M.D. St. And., F.R.C.S.Ed., M.R.C.P.Ed., Medical Superintendent, City Asylum, Helleston, Norwich. Proposed by Henry Rayner, H. J. Macevoy, and R. Percy Smith. William Henry Kesteven, M.R.C.S.Eng., L.S.A.Lond., Hillwood, Waverley Grove, Hendon. Proposed by G. Fielding Blandford, Henry Hicks, and Frank Schofield.

The PRESIDENT stated that it had been resolved by the Council to present an illuminated address to their late Honorary General Secretary, Dr. Beach, who for seven years had most faithfully served the Association, and whose energy and industry in promoting the success of the Association had conduced to the welfare of the organisation as a whole, and the meetings of the members in particular.

A discussion was opened by Dr. Rayner upon "The Housing of the Insane, and the Size of Asylums."

Cases of interest in the wards of the Nottingham Borough Asylum were shown by Drs. Vincent and Montgomery.

These papers, with relative discussions, will be printed in the next number of the Journal.

The Members of the Association present lunched at the Asylum, by kind invitation of Dr. Powell.

The members dined together after the meeting at the George Hotel, Nottingham.

MEDICO-LEGAL CASES.

REPORTED BY DR. MERCIER.

[The Editors request that members will oblige by sending full newspaper reports of all cases of interest as published by the local press at the time of the assizes.]

Reg. v. Leggatt.

Prisoner, a seaman, was indicted for the murder of his wife. They had been married for three years, and had been on bad terms, the prisoner often beating the deceased, of whom he was jealous. Whether there was good foundation for his jealousy was not proved, but prisoner had asserted that on one occasion he found a man's stud in his wife's bed. He returned on September 2nd from a seven months' voyage, and on December 7th he shot his wife with a revolver, threw himself into the river, and subsequently went to the Police Station and gave himself up for the murder. He there gave a perfectly rational and connected account of the murder, and the police surgeon who examined him at the time could find no appearance of insanity about him. It was proved that during his last voyage he had fancied that the other sailors were whispering about him and were talking about his wife. The prisoner's brother deposed that since the prisoner had been home from his last voyage he had not appeared quite right in his mind.

Dr. Rorie, Medical Superintendent of Westgreen Asylum, who had examined the prisoner at the instance of the Crown, was called for the defence. He had examined the prisoner four times. On the first occasion he found the prisoner practically sane. From the account given him by the prisoner he concluded that the prisoner was subject to delusions with regard to the sailors whispering about him, but that the crime was committed under stress of provocation (the wife having struck him) and in a moment of fury, and was not the consequence of the delusion, but was due to the morbidly irritable condition in which the prisoner was at the time.

Dr. Raw, Superintendent of the Dundee Infirmary, gave general evidence that the facts as proved in Court were compatible with the suggestion that the act was the result of homicidal impulse prompted by delusion.

The judge summed up that the jury need not dispute that the prisoner was probably under a delusion in regard to his wife. There was no reason to suppose that she had been unfaithful. He might have been under a delusion on that point, but that would not help him unless it was an insane delusion—that the delusion did not arise from his own jealous, suspicious temperament, but from an actually diseased mind. If the prisoner was a man whose brain was diseased, and if the outcome of that disease was an insane delusion that had no foundation whatever, they must acquit him on the ground of insanity; but if he was a man of suspicious disposition, who allowed a few not very important incidents to prey upon his mind, and these had overcome his self-control so that in a fit of passion he had used his revolver with fatal effect, then they must bring in a verdict against him.

The jury found the prisoner guilty of culpable homicide.—Dundee Circuit Court, January 15th, 1897 (Lord Low).—*Dundee Advertiser*, January 16th.

The evidence of insanity was very slender, and the prisoner's own chief witness did not consider that the crime was due to his delusion. The summing up was very fair, and the verdict appears to meet the merits of the case.

Reg. v. Allcock.

Prisoner, a collier, aged 26, was indicted for the murder of his wife on September 17th. During virtually the whole of their married life prisoner had been jealous of his wife, and had suspected her and accused her of unfaithfulness. It did not appear that there were any grounds for his suspicions. On the evening of the murder the prisoner and his wife were together in the house of a neighbour, and the prisoner sat in a crouching position on his haunches, and appeared dazed. He was found to be crying, "sobbing bitterly," and water was offered to him "because they thought he was fainting." He followed his wife home, and shortly afterwards cut her throat. After the crime he walked to the police station, two miles distant, and said "I have come to give myself up. I have murdered my wife. I have cut her throat with a razor. She has wronged me. She has been going with another young man. I have stood it till I can't stand it any longer. I wanted her to go to bed and she would not." On being cautioned, he said "It's no use, you will have to do your duty. I loved her and she has wronged me." He was very calm.

Dr. Evan Powell, of Nottingham Borough Asylum, had examined the prisoner on the 16th November, at the request of the Treasury. Prisoner appeared dazed and absent-minded. His demeanour was extremely morose and sullen, and it was very difficult to engage him in conversation. He appeared to lapse into a condition of absent-mindedness and reverie. Witness had to put the same question to him several times before he could get an answer. He considered the prisoner to be an insane person. Witness had very grave doubts whether the prisoner knew that he was doing something wrong, something criminal, when he killed his wife.

Dr. O'Neil, medical officer to the prison, said that prisoner had been very quiet and sullen, speaking very little, but otherwise had not done anything to indicate insanity.

The judge said that the only question was whether it was established on behalf of the prisoner that at the time he committed the act he was insane and did not know the nature and the quality of the act. If they found that he knew he was killing his wife, and knew also that it was wrong, then they would say he was a sane man, and liable to be punished for his crime. A great deal had been said about medical evidence. He was sorry to say that he did not attach that regular value to purely medical evidence which perhaps some people did. He always thought that madness was a thing easily detected by those who had opportunities of associating with the person affected, and he always thought, too, that the best evidence of madness was the testimony of those among whom the person had lived—those persons who had the best opportunities for observation . . . and he should take the statement of a warder, say, who had had him in charge, as being