REX *v.* DORIS HUNT.

THIS case came before the Court of Criminal Appeal on March 5, 1934.

The accused was about 25 years of age. She had been convicted of shop-lifting at London County Sessions in January. The facts of the case were that she had been seen to secrete a handbag beneath her coat in a London shop. There was no question of her inability to pay for the bag. She was sentenced to six months' imprisonment in the second division. She had not been represented at the original trial, and the sentence was appealed against, on the ground that the Court had not been in possession of important facts.

Counsel for the appellant stated that the accused had suffered a severe shock at the age of ten. Her father had been an officer in the Irish "Black and Tans". She had been at supper in a Dublin hotel, with her father and mother, when six masked men rushed into the room and started firing at the father, some of the bullets grazing the accused. It was urged that this experience had arrested her mental development.

Dr. Watson, for many years a medical officer in H.M. Prison Service, gave evidence that he had examined the appellant three times, and had found definite evidence of mental instability. She was excited and voluble, and she decorated her story with fantasy. Her mental age did not exceed 12 years, and in some respects it did not exceed 9 years.

Counsel for the Crown did not address the Court. The appellant was bound over for one year, on an undertaking to reside with and to obey her mother, who was also bound over.

The case illustrates the supreme importance of a court having the fullest information before dealing with an accused person. The report in *The Times*, from which the facts of this case are taken, does not make it clear whether the appellant had been in custody prior to the original trial. Probably she had been allowed bail; for had she been in custody a medical report would no doubt have been furnished to the Court. The granting of bail has definite disadvantages.

M. HAMBLIN SMITH.

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