Rex *v.* Harry Wynn.

This case was tried at Manchester Assizes on July 16, 1935, before Mr. Justice Greaves-Lord. The accused man, a joiner, æt. 22, was charged with the murder of his wife, æt. 20, on June 15, at their bungalow near Rhyl. After a courtship lasting four years, the couple were married on April 20, 1935. Wynn was alleged to have been madly in love with his wife, but there was also evidence to the effect that he had complained of her refusal to allow the marriage to be consummated, apparently because she was afraid of having children.

On the evening of June 15, Wynn was seen to bring his wife home on his bicycle about 6 p.m. About an hour later he was seen to leave the bungalow alone. He was apparently normal, and held a conversation with a neighbour on some trivial matter. At 8 p.m. he entered the police station at Rhyl, and said, " I have killed my wife ". He then collapsed on the floor, in a highly emotional condition. Later he said, " I tried to strangle her and I cut her throat with my knife ". He appears to have made a long statement, the details of which were not reported. The woman was found to have died from strangulation, and attempts had been made to cut her throat and to stab her.

The facts do not seem to have been in dispute, and the defence was that of insanity. Dr. W. H. Grace, Pathologist to Chester Royal Infirmary, stated that he had examined Wynn in prison. At the time of this examination he was sane. But he had suffered for some time from sex repression. This could produce a highly explosive state of the nervous system—a state in which the controlling part of the brain was dissociated from the automatic part. When Wynn committed the act he was in a state of automatic action. This condition of mental dissociation terminated when he collapsed on the floor of the police station.

Dr. W. Davies Higson, medical officer of Liverpool Prison, was called by the prosecution. He stated that Wynn had been overcome by emotion when talking of his married life. But with this exception he had been quite rational in his conversation, and had shown no signs of ever having suffered from disease of the mind.

The speech of Counsel for the Defence is not easy to understand from the newspaper report. He is stated to have claimed that Wynn suffered from dementia præcox—a condition often found in young men who had been the subjects of excessive sex tension. The result of this was the formation of anxiety neurosis, in which a slight provocation might induce an action for which the man was irresponsible. In such a condition the man became an automaton.

The judge, in his summing-up, would appear to have been against the plea of irresponsibility. But the jury, after a deliberation lasting ninety minutes,

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took what the judge is reported to have styled a " merciful view ", and returned a verdict of " Guilty but Insane ". The usual order for detention was made.

M. HAMBLIN SMITH.

REX *v.* PHILIP STEPHEN QUARRY.

This case was tried before the Lord Chief Justice, at the Central Criminal Court, on July 24 and 25, 1935.

The accused man, a joiner, æt. 22, was charged with the murder of his wife on June 9. The couple occupied a basement flat. Early on the day in question Mrs. Quarry ran into the flat above, carrying a stair banister. Quarry told Stanley Evans, the occupant of the flat, that his wife had hit him on the head with the banister. The couple then returned to their own flat. Soon after this, Evans heard screams. He went downstairs and found Mrs. Quarry lying in a pool of blood. Quarry was standing at the window, with a knife in his hand. When spoken to by Evans, Quarry " just grunted ", and had a " strange look on his face ". Later, Quarry went to the police station and said that he wished to give himself up.

Giving evidence, Quarry stated that he and his wife had been quite happy for some time after their marriage. Differences between them then arose, as she wanted to attend theatres and dances to a greater extent than he was able to afford. There was a quarrel on the night of June 8–9, and she struck him on the head with the banister, making him dizzy. He left the house. On his return she continued to " nag at him " and was waving a knife. He did not recollect stabbing her. The next thing which he remembered was that she was lying on the floor and that he was standing over her with a knife in his hand.

Evidence was given that Quarry was subject to fainting fits, and that he had suffered from convulsions during his infancy.

So far there is not much more than the assertion of amnesia which may be made by any person accused of any offence, combined with the rather vague statements about " fits " and " convulsions ", often brought up in cases such as this. But there was much stronger evidence to support the theory of an epileptic condition, upon which the defence relied.

Samuel Bennett, a police-court missionary, had seen Quarry on June 1, in connection with a suggestion of a separation from his wife. Quarry did not seem to notice what was said to him, his face was contorted, his eyes were staring, and he appeared likely to fall.

Dr. W. H. B. Stoddart stated that he had examined Quarry on July 6, and had formed the opinion that he suffered from *petit mal* and epileptic automatism. There was a history of " faints " without sufficient cause, such as on getting out of bed, having stitches taken out of a sutured wound in the finger, and a

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