is, if possible, increased in a case such as this, in which a most desirable instinct results in so extreme a form of expression, and a woman kills the child to whom she is devotedly attached.

The judge, in his summing-up, is reported as saying that the present legal definition of insanity was "clear and understandable," and beyond that we got into "a region where tests were very difficult to apply in a court of justice." This latter statement is, no doubt, true. Our views on these most obscure cases are, at present, tentative and uncertain. And they will continue to be so, until we have intensively examined many more of these cases. We should then possess a mass of information which we could place at the disposal of society. It would be for society to decide what use it would make of this knowledge. The aversion which is naturally felt at a crime such as this should not be allowed to inhibit the desire to obtain information as to the mental factors which led up to it, but should, indeed, rather enhance that desire.

The woman was found guilty, and was sentenced to death. The Court of Criminal Appeal declined to interfere with the verdict. Ultimately the Secretary of State, in the exercise of his discretion, commuted the death sentence to one of penal servitude. So that opportunity for the study of this most interesting case will not be lacking. And we may hope to possess, at some future time, more detailed information as to the mentality of this woman.

Rex *v.* George William Iggulden.

This case was tried at the Central Criminal Court on December 6 and 7, before Mr. Justice Avory. It was of interest, inasmuch as the question of the accused's mentality was raised both on arraignment and during the trial.

The accused man was an artist, and 23 years of age. He was charged with the murder of Ethel Eliza Ireland (or Howard) on November 15. The woman had been divorced from her husband, and lived with her two children. The prisoner and the woman had intended to marry, and she had given notice of the marriage to the registrar. On November 15 the prisoner and she took a taxi-cab in the Strand, and he told the driver to go to the Brompton Road. On arrival there the prisoner told the driver to go to the nearest police-station. There the prisoner jumped out, and informed the police that there was a dead woman in the cab, whose throat he had cut with a razor. In a statement to the police, he said that he had met the woman through an advertisement. They were very fond of each other, and had intended to marry. In the cab she said she would be willing to die. He was kissing her, when he seemed to lose control,

https://doi.org/10.1192/bjp.70.289.282 Published online by Cambridge University Press

took his razor from his pocket, and cut her throat. He at once realized the seriousness of what he had done, and told the driver to go to the police-station. A fortnight previously, when at her flat, she had suggested turning on the gas, so that they might both die.

On December 6 the preliminary objection that the prisoner was unfit to plead was raised, on his behalf, by counsel instructed for him. The usual questions when this point is raised are whether the prisoner is able (1) to understand the course of the proceedings at the trial, and the details of the evidence, (2) to give proper instructions for his defence, or, if undefended by counsel, to cross-examine the witnesses, and (3) to "challenge" a juror to whom he might object. The last of these questions does not appear to have been raised in this case. Dr. Norwood East, Senior Medical Officer of Brixton Prison, had the prisoner under observation since November 16, and regarded him as insane and unfit to plead. In Dr. East's view, the prisoner was able to follow the proceedings at the trial, but not to instruct counsel. The prisoner was suffering from delusions, but would not give any information about these, because he thought he might be found insane. The prisoner had also refused to discuss his delusions with his solicitor. The judge took the view that if it was admitted that the prisoner was able to follow the proceedings, and to understand what the witnesses said against him, it was for the jury to decide whether he was not also able to instruct counsel for his defence. The jury decided that the prisoner was fit to take his trial.

The trial of the issue proper took place on December 7. The facts of the case, as briefly stated above, were not disputed. The defence set up was that the prisoner was insane at the time of committing the act charged against him. Evidence as to the occurrence of insanity in other members of the prisoner's family was given. There was also evidence that prisoner had some "phobias," and had delusions that detectives were after him when such was not, in fact, the case. But the chief evidence of insanity was that given by Dr. East and Dr. Hyslop.

Dr. East was of opinion that the prisoner was insane. He considered that the prisoner knew that he was cutting the woman's throat (*i.e.*, in legal language, he knew the "nature and quality" of the act), but that he did not know that the act was wrong. The prisoner had asserted that he had thought it a proper thing to cut the woman's throat, that he was doing her a service in so doing, and that she was always asking him to do it.

Dr. Hyslop had examined the prisoner on two occasions, and had no hesitation in regarding him as insane. He agreed with Dr. East as to the prisoner's view of the rightness of his act. He considered the prisoner to have acted under the influence of an imperative idea.

https://doi.org/10.1192/bjp.70.289.282 Published online by Cambridge University Press

He further held that the prisoner having given himself up to the police was evidence of insanity.

The judge's summing-up appears to have been entirely against the defence of insanity. He stated that the medical witnesses had formed their opinion entirely upon what the prisoner had said to them. He also pointed out that the prisoner had protested against being regarded as insane, and knew that he was being examined in order to discover whether he was insane or not, knowing that, if held to be insane, he would escape the full penalty of the law. He therefore described it as "childish" to suppose that the prisoner's statements could be relied upon. The newspaper report of the summing-up is very condensed, but it is not easy to follow the reasoning here.

The jury accepted the judge's view of the matter, and found the prisoner guilty. He was sentenced to death. After this had been done, the jury added a recommendation to mercy.

The judge is reported as saying that justice has to be administered according to law, and not according to the views of medical men. The jury, in a criminal trial, is sworn to give a true verdict "according to the evidence." It is no doubt true that during the progress of a trial, evidence, even non-medical evidence, might be forthcoming which would upset even the most eminent medical evidence which had, as in this case, been brought forward. But it is hard to see that any such rebutting evidence was forthcoming here. It is also, of course, true that a prisoner, whether sane or insane, may practise deception. But is the jury, even when directed by a judge, better able to decide upon that point than are medical witnesses, especially a witness who has had the prisoner under close observation for some weeks previous to the trial?

The ultimate result was that the Secretary of State, acting we may presume upon the result of an inquiry held under Sec. 2 (4) of the Criminal Lunatics Act, 1884, respited the sentence, with the view of sending the prisoner to Broadmoor Criminal Lunatic Asylum. This procedure is similar to that adopted in the case of Ronald True. And the entire absence of any popular clamour in the present instance indicates how large a difference the "sensational" nature of a case may make.

The Atkins Report.

[The following letter written by Dr. J. Warnock was rejected by the *Daily Mail*. An article of similar pungency found a place in the February number of the *Fortnightly Review*.]

Sir,—The article on "The Impulse to Kill" in your issue of to-day's date, attributed to an ex-asylum medical officer, should not be allowed to pass unnoticed. It would indeed be interesting

https://doi.org/10.1192/bjp.70.289.282 Published online by Cambridge University Press