Bond thought he was not fit to be at large. The importance to the plaintiff, if he had ascertained the facts, was obvious. His lordship referred to the findings of the jury against Dr. Bond, and said if Dr. Adam had ascertained the true facts from Dr. Bond, he might never even have had to see the plaintiff at all. If he had gone up he could have cleared the matter up, and would, no doubt, have allowed the plaintiff to remain out of the asylum. Also, the jury were entitled to consider the strange indifference which Dr. Adam showed afterwards in never ascertaining from Dr. Bond what condition the plaintiff was in when Dr. Bond sent his telephone message. It evidenced his want of care throughout, and his lordship was of opinion that there was ample evidence to support the findings of the jury.

Finally, his lordship referred to the question of the onus of proof in cases where Section 330 of the Lunacy Act, 1890, applied, though he thought it immaterial in the view he took of the facts in that case. Section 330 protected the medical superintendent and others if they acted *bonâ fide* and with reasonable care, but the onus was upon them to prove that they were entitled to that protection. It was never intended that the burden of proving a negative should be upon the person who brought his action on the ground that the official had exceeded his jurisdiction, though, as a matter of fact, Dr. Adam had not exceeded his jurisdiction, but had failed to exercise the reasonable care he ought to have exercised to entitle himself to the protection given by Section 330.

[Dr. Adam's defence was conducted by the London and Counties Medical Protection Society, Ltd.].—*British Medical Journal*, March 8, 1924.

An appeal has been lodged. On March 5 the Attorney-General for Dr. Bond, and Mr. Carthew for Dr. Adam, applied that the hearing might be expedited. Lord Justice Bankes said that he thought it could be arranged for the case to be taken early in April.

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### Rex *v.* Dora Martha Sparling Sadler.

This case was tried at the Central Criminal Court, on January 16, before Mr. Justice Greer. The prisoner was 37 years of age, and had been employed for four years, as a childrens' nurse, in a family living at Kensington. Two children were under her care, Sonia aged 4 years, and Jean aged 9 months. Until the birth of the second child the mother had been in the habit of going daily to business. As a consequence, the care of the elder child had, to an unusual degree, devolved upon the prisoner, who became exceedingly fond of the child. After the birth of the second child the mother was more at home. The prisoner appears to have resented this, and there

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were frequent disputes, culminating in a blow being given by the prisoner to her mistress. As a natural result, the prisoner was given notice to leave her situation. That same evening the prisoner's employers went out. On their return they found the nursery window closed and the door locked. Next morning the room was entered by the window. The child Sonia was lying dead upon the bed. The baby was lying unconscious, and died later. The prisoner was also in an unconscious state, and a gas-ring in the room was turned fully on. In the room was found a letter written by the prisoner, which said, " I am taking them both. I could not leave my Sonia to the creature she calls mother." The prisoner had also written to a friend in these words, " I am taking my darling Sonia with me. I know she would not be happy here without me. I did not want to take Jean, but I could not put her outside." The prisoner was removed to the Fulham Infirmary. After having been unconscious for six days, she recovered, and made a statement, in which she said that the children did not want her to go, so she said she would take them with her. She also stated that she remembered turning on the gas, and said that she wished she had been allowed to " finish " it.

Evidence was given to show that the prisoner was a good nurse, was passionately fond of the children, and thought she was the only person who could look after them. On one occasion the child Sonia had said that she liked the prisoner better than her mother. There was also evidence that the prisoner had attempted suicide at 17 years of age.

Dr. Parsons, medical superintendent of Fulham Infirmary, said that the prisoner, on recovering consciousness, appeared to be quite indifferent to her surroundings, and showed no remorse. He regarded her as below the average in intelligence, and was of opinion that she was incapable of realizing that her act was wrong. He would have certified her as insane. Dr. Morton, Governor and Medical Officer of Holloway Prison, agreed that she was below the average in intelligence, but had observed no indications of insanity.

The prosecution suggested that the motive for the crime was, in part, revenge for having been dismissed. None of the published evidence appears to support this suggestion, and the motive of jealousy would seem quite sufficient. Jealousy on the part of a nurse for the child's mother is quite common, and obviously arises from the maternal instinct. This jealousy would be accentuated in a case such as this, in which the nurse had practically sole charge of the child. The nurse may, indeed, build up the fantasy that she actually is the child's mother. The mentality of a murderer is always worthy of the closest investigation. And the necessity for such investigation

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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.

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### 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,

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