Reg. v. Dixon.

Prisoner, a labourer, æt. 53, was charged with the murder of Margaret Appleton, cook at Bedale Workhouse. The deceased went into the garden where prisoner was digging potatoes, pulled the fork out of his hand, and struck him. Prisoner retaliated, with the result that the woman died. He pleaded guilty of manslaughter, and the plea was accepted. In mitigation of sentence it was urged that, although the prisoner was not insane, his mind had become affected by extremely sad domestic troubles, so that on receiving great provocation from the deceased he was not able to exercise a reasonable faculty of discrimination. He lost his wife in 1891, and was left with a family of six young children. Having to attend to his family and nurse a sick child, he lost his situation. Subsequently a daughter eleven years old was criminally assaulted, and under the accumulation of troubles he attempted to commit suicide. He was then removed to the workhouse, and on improvement was discharged. Becoming worse again, he was readmitted to the workhouse, and then the incident took place for which he was now tried. He was sentenced to five years' penal servitude. The Judge said that he felt justified in treating the case as one in which there was some provocation, but he does not appear to have given any effect to the plea of unsoundness of mind, though it appears from the report to have been a case in which the plea was well substantiated.—Yorkshire Assizes, York, Dec. 1 (Mr. Justice Grantham).—"Leeds Mercury," Dec. 2, 1895.

Reg. v. Gamble.

Alfred Gamble, 17, labourer, was indicted for wounding a child named W. C. Cattle, with intent to murder, The case excited great interest on account of the fact that another young child had recently been murdered in the same neighbourhood, and although there was no legal proof of the fact, there can be little doubt that the prisoner was the culprit in that case also. The body of the first child had been found in a dustbin, enveloped in a sack. The second was found, badly wounded, concealed in a stable. The prisoner was found unfit to plead. The case belongs to the same group as the Plaistow murder—that of crimes by "instinctive" juvenile criminals.—Central Criminal Court, Jan. 15 (Mr. Justice Hawkins).—"Times," Jan. 16, 1896.

Barnard v. Garrard.

This was an action for breach of promise to marry, the defence being that at the time the promise was made defendant was of unsound mind, and if not then of unsound mind became so before the time for fulfilment arrived. The admitted promise was made in January, 1895. On the 6th of February following the defendant was in a state of intense maniacal excitement, and on the 8th was sent to Heigham Hall, but no evidence appears to have been given that he was insane in January, nor were the medical men who saw him in February asked as to his probable condition in the previous month. The jury found that defendant was of sound mind when he made the promise, but of unsound mind at the date fixed for the performance, and assessed the damages at £500. The judge thought it a perfectly right finding, but said that as a matter of law judgment would be for the defendant.—Q. B. D., Feb. 13 (Lord Justice A. L. Smith).—"Daily Chronicle," Feb. 14, 1896.

HOLLOWAY SANATORIUM.

Report of Result of Inquiry by the Commissioners in Lunacy.

In pursuance of a direction by the Board, we, the undersigned Commissioners in Lunacy, together with our late colleague, Mr. Charles Palmer Phillips, whose sudden death we all so greatly deplore, and our colleague, Dr. Southey, who was present on the first two days, but was prevented by illness from attending our adjourned meetings, on September 26th ultimo opened an inquiry at the Holloway Sanatorium, which was resumed on the following day, and then adjourned to the 24th instant.

https://doi.org/10.1192/bjp.42.177.457 Published online by Cambridge University Press