some misapprehension as to the facts. In reality, 100 females and two males have been committed to, and received in, certified reformatories, and of these fifty-nine are Protestants. More accommodation is needed, and action is being taken by many local authorities with a view to providing it.

RECENT MEDICO-LEGAL CASES.

REPORTED BY DR. MERCIER.

[The editors request that members will oblige by sending full newspaper reports of all cases of interest as published by the local press at the time of the assizes.]

Reg. v. *Flower.*

James Flower, 37, greengrocer, was indicted for the murder of his wife. Prisoner appears to have been a sober man until a month before the murder. He then lost a horse, which he said drove him to drink. About midnight on November 2nd the prisoner was found in his shirt and drawers in the street by a policeman, to whom he said, "I've murdered the missus. She has poisoned my life. I have killed her." The woman was found dead from a wound in her throat. It was proved that since he became addicted to drink he had had suspicions of his wife's fidelity, had persisted that there was a man in the cellar, and had become very strange. Three doctors deposed that a few days before the murder he had visited them, and was then bordering on delirium tremens, and to one of them he had stated that his wife was poisoning him. Dr. Hunt, medical officer at the county gaol, said that on the day after the murder the prisoner said that someone was trying to murder him; that his head had been examined, and that the man who examined it was offering large sums of money for it. Subsequently he had said that his wife was concerned in a plot against him, and had been offered a large sum to poison him. Dr. Spence, of Burntwood, said that at the time Flower killed his wife he might have known that he was doing a wrong act, but he might have believed that there was some conspiracy against him, and that he had to defend himself against his wife. He would not know that he was doing a wrong act in the same way that a sane man would know. The judge (to prosecuting counsel): "On this evidence is it possible to submit to the jury that this is a case of wilful murder?" Guilty but insane.—Stafford Autumn Assizes, Dec. 4th—Mr. Justice Mathew.—*Times*, Dec. 7th, and *Manchester Guardian*, Dec. 5th.

The brief period for which this prisoner had been drinking complicated the case. If the murder had been committed after a single day's debauch he must have been found guilty of murder. If he had been drinking for months the jury would have had no difficulty in finding him innocent. But the fact that his drunken habits had lasted for only about a month made it difficult to decide whether the act was the outcome of ordinary drunkenness or of alcoholic insanity. No doubt the well-marked delusions saved him from the gallows.

Reg. v. *Beddoe.*

John Beddoe, 24, gunner in the militia, was indicted for the murder of a comrade named Hammett. Prisoner was a recruit, and was somewhat lacking in intelligence. He was made a butt of by the other men in the regiment, and orders had been given that if anyone molested him he was to be put in the guard-room, and he had been put in a tent next the company sergeant-major, so that the latter could keep an eye upon him and see that he was not bullied. He was in a tent with five other men, one of whom (the deceased) began to sweep the floor at a time when the prisoner was standing near the tent pole, upon which hung the belts and bayonets of the men. As deceased was sweeping he came near the prisoner, and told him roughly to get out of the way, at the same time giving him a blow on the shin with the broom. The prisoner immediately snatched one of the bayonets from its scabbard and, with a back-handed blow, plunged it into the right side of the deceased, who died shortly afterwards. The prisoner appeared stupefied when he saw what he had done, and upon being asked what had happened said "I have stabbed him." Subsequently he said, "I was cleaning my bayonet and he fell upon

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