

doing so. The answer to this allegation was that, though Mrs Nunn had an ample income for ordinary purposes, she had had various heavy expenses for the necessary purposes of setting her children out in the world, and, therefore, was under the necessity of pledging her husband's credit in various ways for the ordinary expenses of living. Mr. Nunn is a gentleman having landed property in Ireland to the value of something like £5,500 a year, the greater part of which was in the hands of his wife during his lunacy. Mr Nunn found means to escape from confinement, and cross to Ireland, where he has since been living. On his resuming the direction of his affairs he found that debts to the amount of about £2,700 had been incurred by his wife, which he objected to pay. At the trial it was shown that the manner in which the expenses of setting forward the children in life had been incurred was in obtaining for the eldest son the position of veterinary surgeon in a cavalry regiment (he had been accustomed to horses all his life, his father having kept a hunting and racing stud); for another son a situation in a coffee plantation in Ceylon, and for a daughter a situation as governess in Russia, and in sending another daughter to a convent in France. To these arrangements Mr. Nunn objected; and letters of a most disgraceful character written by him to his wife and the superior of the convent on the subject were put in at the trial. The jury found a verdict for the plaintiff, and the Common Pleas Division afterwards refused a rule for a new trial. On appeal, the Court of Appeal granted a rule returnable before themselves.

Mr. Murphy, Q.C., and Mr Turner now showed cause; Mr Day, Q.C., and Mr. Horne Payne supported the rule.

It was admitted that Lord Coleridge had left proper questions to the jury; but it was alleged that he had allowed the disgraceful letters of the defendant to have an undue weight with the jury, and that the verdict was against the weight of evidence.

Their LORDSHIPS discharged the rule,

Lord Justice BRAMWELL observing that he could not feel quite satisfied with the manner in which the case had been conducted, and that he feared the letters had been used for the purpose of prejudice. At the same time, he could see no such obvious and urgent reason for thinking there had been a failure of justice as to induce him to think that the discretion of Lord Coleridge, who was satisfied with the verdict, and of the Common Pleas Division should be set aside.

Lords Justices BRETT and COTTON concurred.—*Times*.

LORD JUSTICE BRAMWELL ON "UNCONTROLLABLE IMPULSE,"
AND ON ITS BEING "TOO SHOCKING AND CRUEL," AS
WELL AS "IMPOSSIBLE," FOR AN EPILEPTIC
MURDERER TO BE EXECUTED.

NOVEMBER 6.

(*Before Lord Justice BRAMWELL.*)

Thomas Humphreys was indicted for the wilful murder of his wife at Shrewsbury on the 30th of August last.

Mr. Boughy prosecuted; Mr C. J. Darling, at the request of the learned Judge, defended the prisoner.

The prisoner, a clothweaver by trade, had been married to his wife 20 years, and had always lived with her on affectionate terms. For 17 years he had been subject to epileptic fits, and 12 years since had attempted suicide. On the morning in question, groans having been heard in his house, the door was opened, and the bodies of the prisoner and his wife were found lying at the foot of the staircase, the wife dead, and the prisoner stabbed in a number of places. Upon being taken to the infirmary, he, later in the day, made a statement to

the effect that he stabbed his wife while she was asleep, and afterwards wounded himself.

Dr. Whitwell, of Shrewsbury, in cross-examination, said the prisoner, in his opinion, was suffering from epileptic mania, of which an irresistible homicidal impulse was one of the features.

By Lord Justice BRAMWELL—By homicidal mania I mean a disposition to commit homicide. It is a kind of delusion.

Lord Justice BRAMWELL—You mean a morbid appetite to do wrong.

Witness—I think the prisoner was acting under real or fancied provocation.

Lord Justice BRAMWELL, in summing up, said everybody was presumed to be sane until proved to be the contrary. Nor was it enough that a man was mad to entitle him to an acquittal. If an insane man knew he was committing murder that man was responsible. It was not enough to have an homicidal mania. The object of the law was to guard against mischievous propensities and homicidal impulses. A man might be suffering under a just sense of some grievous wrong or outrage which would impel him to violence, but that strong impulse, sane or insane, would not entitle him to an acquittal. He said this to the jury in order to disabuse their minds of a mischievous impression which existed, and which he believed had reached mad people themselves. He did not believe in uncontrollable impulse at all, and had never heard of such an impulse leading to action where the means of prevention were present. Having made these observations on what would not be sufficient grounds for an acquittal for insanity, his Lordship proceeded to tell the jury what, in his judgment, would be good grounds. A person would be not guilty on the ground of insanity if he did not know the nature of the act he was committing, or, if he did know it, if he did not know he was doing what was wrong. If a man stabbed another, and did not know he was inflicting hurt, that was insanity which the law recognised; and a person would not know that he was doing wrong unless he knew he was doing what the law forbade, or that his act was injurious to the person he attacked. His Lordship then referred to the evidence, pointing out the want of motive, and the absence of any indication of ill-will on the part of the prisoner against his wife, and observed that, undoubtedly, there were many circumstances in the case which would warrant the conclusion that he was insane in the sense he had pointed out.

The jury, without leaving their box, said they found the prisoner not guilty on the ground of insanity.

Lord Justice BRAMWELL—It would have been impossible, gentlemen, for such a man to be executed—too shocking and cruel. It is a very sad case, and the man is deeply to be pitied. His Lordship then directed the prisoner to be retained during Her Majesty's pleasure, and the prisoner, who had preserved a calm, self-possessed manner throughout, was removed.—*Times*.

THE NEW COUNTY BOARDS BILL AS IT AFFECTS ASYLUMS.

In asking for leave to introduce the County Boards Bill in the House of Commons on the 18th March, Mr. Sclater-Booth made the following remarks in regard to how it would affect the Government of County Asylums. They show that the action of the Medico-Psychological Association last year has not been without result. "In the third place, the County Boards would have the very important power of reviewing the workhouse accommodation of each county, and of providing for the accommodation in the workhouses of imbecile and idiot paupers, whether children or adults. He wished this power had been granted long ago. He did not provide in this Bill for any direct power over the lunatic asylums, but the Boards would be empowered to inquire into the lunatic asylums and enabled by their influence to check their future enlargement. It was proposed last year to give the County Boards a considerable share in the