

REX v. ERNEST ALBERT WALKER.

To the Editors of the JOURNAL OF MENTAL SCIENCE.

SIRS,—I have seen Dr. East's letter. I need hardly say that nothing was further from my desires than to misrepresent Dr. East's evidence, or to cause him vexation or annoyance in any other way. My only object in writing an account of this trial was to summarize the main published facts in a case which appeared to be of considerable medico-legal interest. In writing my account the evidence available was a report in *The Times* of June 22, extending to nearly a column in length. I venture to think that anyone who will compare this report with what I wrote will not consider my account to be an unfair summary of the published evidence. That Dr. East was likely to have fuller evidence before him I, of course, knew well.

As to the evidence of previous epilepsy, the prisoner was stated by his father to have "had fits since he was five." There was no contradiction of this evidence so far as the published report went. I took this to be evidence of former epilepsy and said so.

That murderers may give themselves up to the police without being insane or epileptic is, of course, within my experience. But beyond stating the fact that the prisoner had done this, I did not refer to the point and did not draw conclusions from it.

The precise nature of the "flight" in this case and the question as to whether it was characteristic of epilepsy is, and must always remain, a matter of opinion. So also with the question of the amnesia. I had not the slightest doubt that, as Dr. East says, both medical witnesses referred to this in their reports, and that the jury were informed that the matter was controvertible. I had tried to indicate that this was one of the difficult points which had to be considered.

Yours faithfully,
M. HAMBLIN SMITH.

Birmingham;
November 27, 1922.

DEATH OF LT.-COL. D. G. THOMSON, C.B.E., M.D.

As we go to press we hear the sad intelligence of the death, on January 4, 1923, of Lt.-Col. D. G. Thomson. We had included in this number a note on his retirement from the post of Medical Superintendent of Norfolk County Mental Hospital early in 1922. We were able to withdraw this in view of an extended obituary notice in our next number.

OBITUARY.

JOHN MAYNE COLLES, LL.D., K.C., J.P.

WE regret to record the death of Dr. J. M. Colles at the age of 64, which occurred in London on December 19. He was elected an honorary member of our Association in 1917. Up to 1921 he was Registrar in Lunacy, Ireland, an office which he had held for over thirty years. He was educated at St. Columba's College and at Trinity College, Dublin, and afterwards called to the Irish Bar. It was his duty as Chancery Visitor to visit the Irish asylums, and he gained a wide knowledge of mental diseases, for which he was much respected.

He was as popular with the medical *personnel* of the asylums as he was revered by the many patients to whom he was a sympathetic friend. Nobody knew his own countrymen better than he did and with no side of Irish life was he unacquainted, and wherever he went he was assured of a welcome which speaks well for his lovable character in these troublesome times. His grandfather discovered that fracture at the wrist known ever since as Colles' fracture.

His maternal grandfather was John, the third son of Mr. Justice Mayne, of the Court of Queen's Bench in Ireland. This gentleman was also a member of the Bar, but died at the early age of 38. He left a *Journal during a Tour on the Continent upon its Re-opening on the fall of Napoleon (1814)*, which the late Dr. Colles edited and published in 1909 (John Lane: The Bodley Head).

The following appreciation was written by Dr. M. J. Nolan, of the Down District Asylum, Downpatrick, in his Annual Report for 1922 on Dr. Colles' retirement:

"The retirement of J. M. Colles, Esq., LL.D., K.C., after so many years from the position of Registrar in Lunacy is the cause of very great regret to all those with whom he had official relations. His loss will be particularly felt by those patients to whose circumstances he always gave the kindest and most sympathetic consideration. In no department of legal matters can 'red tape' cause such stagnation as in that connected with official lunacy matters, but with Dr. Colles it was unknown—he gave each case his attention promptly, and so did the best speedily for each patient in safeguarding his affairs and placing him in circumstances most suitable to his particular needs. In the larger issues of much-needed amendment of the existing lunacy laws Dr. Colles has been long a powerful influence in medico-legal circles, and he has never failed to use that influence in promoting the betterment of the insane in general, and in assisting the individual cases under his charge to get the fullest benefits from their properties, so far as it could be usefully applied."

ARTHUR NATHANIEL DAVIS, L.R.C.P.&S. Edin.

THE death, on June 29, 1922, of Dr. A. N. Davis, who was for twenty-four years Medical Superintendent of Devon County Mental Hospital, occurred unexpectedly the day before he was to have said farewell to the hospital on his resignation owing to ill-health, and was a great shock to his staff and many friends.

This experienced psychiatrist and asylum administrator, previously to his appointment at Devon County Mental Hospital in 1898, had seen service at Bethnal House, London, and Plymouth Borough Asylum, where he was for seven years Medical Superintendent. Dr. Davis was born on June 14, 1857, and received his medical education in Edinburgh, qualifying in 1880 as L.R.C.P.&S. and L.M.

He was an indefatigable organiser with an immense capacity for work, qualities which stood him in good stead during the war when both his senior and junior medical officers were mobilised. In addition to this he did valuable recruiting work, and was commissioned as a Major R.A.M.C. (T.). It was no wonder that, like many others, he overtaxed himself and broke down in health in the winter of 1915. He apparently made a good recovery and returned to his duties. He sustained an injury to his hip about twelve months ago, from the effects of which he never seemed to properly rally, and about Christmas, 1921, he intimated his desire to resign. He was persuaded to remain on for a while, and he did, though with great reluctance.

In addition he was a good all-round sportsman, being a good shot, and well known in the county of Devon as a first-class cricketer.

In 1883 he married a daughter of the late General George Warren and took up an appointment in Antigua, but only stood the climate for a year. His name will ever be recalled with gratitude in his neighbouring village, where he devoted his energies to the establishment of the "Exminster Victory Hall."

Dr. Richard Eager, who succeeded him at the Devon County Mental Hospital, aptly says: "He extended his sporting instincts into the field of his work, and as an administrator was always anxious to overlook offenders and forgive rather than punish."

He was buried in the presence of his committee and staff and many others who loved and respected him at Littleham Cemetery, near Exmouth, on July 4, 1922.

NOTICES BY THE REGISTRAR.

FINAL EXAMINATION FOR THE NURSING CERTIFICATE, MAY, 1922.

List of Successful Candidates.

* Passed with distinction.

Berkshire.—Simeon James Scard, Harriett Kirk, Grace Mary Kirk.

Cambridge.—*Edward Baker, Henry D. Lewis, Henry T. Webb, Florence Canham, Pretoria Rose Deacon.

Carmarthen.—Richard Samuel Edwards, Elizabeth Davies.