

COMMISSION OF LUNACY ON THE
REV. W. BASSET.*

AN inquiry into the state of mind of the Rev. Walter St. Aubyn Basset, of Treharrock, St. Kew, instituted by Mr. G. L. Basset, of Tehidy Park, near Camborne, brother of the alleged lunatic, was opened on Tuesday, February 3, before Mr. W. Norris Nicholson, Master in Chancery, at Brislington, near Bristol. The petitioner, Mr. G. L. Basset, was represented by Mr. Arthur Charles, Q.C., and Mr. Pitt Lewis, of the Western Circuit, who were specially retained by Messrs. Domville, Lawrence, and Long, of London. The respondent was represented by Mr. Bucknill and Mr. Kingdon, of the Western Circuit, who were specially retained by Mr. George Browne Collins, solicitor, of St. Colomb. The Rev. St. Aubyn Basset, the respondent, occupied a seat in court, and was accompanied by Mrs. Basset. The witnesses in attendance filled a large room, and among those who were subpoenaed were Lord Falmouth, the Hon. and Rev. J. T. Boscawen, Dr. Barham, and many other well-known persons.

The Master opened the case by briefly informing the jury that they were empanelled to decide whether Mr. St. Aubyn Basset was of unsound mind and incapable of managing his affairs; and they must decide "yes" or "no" upon the whole question. Their verdict must be that of at least twelve (among twenty-one), and they would have the advantage of a personal interview with the alleged lunatic.

At Mr. Bucknill's application all witnesses, including the professional men subpoenaed, were ordered out of court. Mrs. Basset, by consent of counsel, retained her seat.

Mr. Collins, in stating the petitioner's case, said the defendant, the Rev. Walter Basset, was born in December 1835, the fourth son of Mr. John Basset of Tehidy. In July 1843 Mr. John Basset died by his own hand, and his eldest son, Mr. John Francis Basset, entered into possession of the estates, and remained in possession until February 1869. He was succeeded by the second son, Arthur, who had been in the army; but for thirteen years before the time when he succeeded to the estates had been under restraint at the asylum of Dr. Newington, in Sussex. He died in May 1870, and Mr. Gustavus Basset came into the property, and was still in pos-

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session. At the time of Mr. Arthur Basset's death Mr. Walter Basset was rector of West Buckland, Devon. He resigned his living, was married in December 1872 to Miss Ellen Pyne, and in January 1873 bought the estate of Treharrock, in North Cornwall, where he resided in October 1879. Mr. Gustavus Basset married, in 1873, Miss Ellenhurst, and an heir to the estates was born. In March 1879 the respondent began writing a series of letters, chiefly to the family solicitor, Mr. Lawrence, which contained very remarkable disclosures. He was under the belief that he was being followed about by enemies of his family, and that his mother's family and other relatives were inimical to him; that a large number of persons in the kingdom were emasculated and sought to reduce others to the same condition; that a person named Arch, well known in connection with agricultural disputes, and other persons, of both sexes, were employed by persons who were in a conspiracy, the object of which was to lead people to reduce themselves to idiocy by excesses, and that they were hanging about his place with designs on him. He said Dr. Newington, of Ticehurst, Sussex, employed these people with the object of getting people reduced to idiocy, and that Lord Falmouth was in league with them with the object of ruining the Basset family. The defendant wished Mr. David Bain and Mr. Hendy, county magistrates, the Hon. and Rev. J. Townsend Boscawen, Lord Falmouth, and others, to be put under restraint. He said he believed his second brother was alive. On the 8th of April he asked the family solicitor to send some one to Tehidy to inquire into the state of mind of his brother, saying that his brother was being reduced to idiocy, but that nothing would be said until his son came of age, and then he would be declared an imbecile. He wrote to Dr. Newington saying he had been annoyed by a person he called the "Kitten," saying she had threatened his wife's life. He also wrote to the family lawyers saying he wanted the conspirators "respectively" killed. He sought to obtain the insertion of an advertisement in the *Times* cautioning householders against persons he called Hazler, the Kitten, and others, who, he said, gained access to houses with the object of making disclosures respecting members of the household. He wrote a letter to be sent to the Bishop of London, warning his lordship of a social evil. Other letters contained warnings to his brother that relatives were engaged in the same object as that of the conspiracy, and in one he said his brother, if he would not take his advice, ought to be made mad as fast as possible. Arch, he thought, "should be killed," at a cost of about £20. In a letter to the Chief Constable of Cornwall, he asked that, as he had made a communication to the Home Secretary respecting a

family of high position in the county, a policeman might be placed at his house. This state of things continued till October, and defendant then applied for summonses against Lord Falmouth and others for the alleged conspiracy. He next called on another clergyman, and warned him of Lord Falmouth as having been concerned in the death of two of his daughters who had died abroad. Subsequently he went to a dangerous cliff on the coast, near his house, and searched it for the "runners," armed with a pistol and knife, and also sent to a huntsman asking him to bring over the hounds to find out where they lay. He eventually went to Tehidy, and there used expressions which justified the belief that he was dangerous to his nephew. Medical men were then consulted, who certified him to be insane.

The defendant was here questioned by the Master, and he in effect reiterated the curious statements made in the letters. He talked connectedly, and explained that the only expression he had used with respect to his nephew was: "This property will come to me when that brat is dead." The "runners," he informed the Master, went about in towns with hoods over their heads. He had not been persecuted since he had been at Dr. Fox's, but he believed the people were still about.

William Fleet, inspector of the Cornwall police, stated that in July 1879 Mr. Walter Basset came to his station and said he wished his premises at Treharrock watched, as there were a lot of people about who wanted to do him an injury. He said they were always about, inside and outside of the premises, at night, particularly moonlight nights, and that he could not understand how they got there. He said he knew one who came there, and it was a previous owner of Treharrock, Mr. Hambly. Witness replied, "I understood that he was dead," and defendant said, "It's nothing of the sort; he is about my premises every night. It was reported he was dead, and there was a funeral ceremony, but the coffin did not contain Mr. Hambly." On the 26th of July witness, in consequence of a telegram he received from respondent, went to Treharrock. The respondent repeated his former complaint, and said one of the surveyors of the Ordnance Survey was at the head of it. He said he had a brother who was under restraint, and that the keeper ill-used him.

Cross-examined by Mr. Bucknill: Treharrock is in a lone part of the country. There was nothing unusual about his complaining that there were persons about the house. Others have made similar complaints. Mrs. Basset confirmed Mr. Basset's statement as to that.

Whether right or wrong, then, she confirmed her husband's statement?—She did.

Cross-examination continued: I did not communicate these things to the petitioner's solicitors until they came to me. There were persons surveying in the neighbourhood who would be about the house; it was their duty to be there. Had these not been Government men it would have been curious. I never heard that they took the keys of their own accord and went about the place. Mrs. Basset did not tell me they took the key of the garden and walked about where they liked. She did say they went just where they liked. Had known Mr. Walter Basset three or four years, and never heard him use a threatening expression to anyone. I knew before July that Mr. Basset was eccentric, and of late he had become more so.

Re-examined by Mr. Charles: I saw Mr. Walter Basset frequently, and I think he has been getting worse lately. He did say that the chief surveyor was a man named Elford, one of his late father's former keepers.

Defendant, contrary to the advice of his counsel, persisted in making a statement. He quite denied ever having said anything about Mr. Hambly, or, as far as he could remember, mentioning his name to the policeman. There was a joke in the house which he did not believe in, which was that Mr. Hambly's ghost was in the house. The chief constable of Cornwall was a friend of the Boscawen family, and this man had been got to cook up a story.

Mr. J. R. Collins, solicitor, of Bodmin, and clerk to the Treague Divisional Bench, in the county of Cornwall, stated that on the 2nd of October Mr. Walter Basset came to his office and said he wanted some people summoned. He sat down at intervals, and at intervals walked about the room, at the same time making a disconnected statement to the effect that Dr. Newington, of Ticehurst, Sussex, was employed to get him put into a lunatic asylum; that he was followed about by a woman whom he called the "Kitten," and a man named Hazler, who were trying to find out his mode of life, and using means to get him put under restraint. He said Lord Falmouth lived at Mercyworth, near Ticehurst, and used to drive over with his friends and have the lunatics exhibited for their amusement, and that his brother Arthur was subjected to that. He wanted summonses against Lord Falmouth and the Hon. and Rev. J. T. Boscawen, as they were conspiring to get him under restraint. He made other statements respecting the Hon. and Rev. J. T. Boscawen and Lord Falmouth, and said the Marquis of Camden and Ching got up charges of treason felony against rising young men to get rid of them; also that various other persons had been got rid of. He then stole away into Mr. Collins's private room, and when witness followed him he was looking under the bed,

and gave as his reason for going there that he was looking for Arch. He named various persons who had died very mysteriously, said he would spend a lot of money to get Dr. Newington killed, and that people of his had been about Treharrock all the summer. Dr. Newington, he said, cruised on the coast in a yacht during the daytime, and landed at night. He wished to prosecute for conspiracy to get him and his brother under restraint, and included his brother's servants. He also stated that Mr. E. C. Marriott, the agent of the Basset family, was put into a position of trust in connection with the estates to do them harm, and that he introduced his eldest brother to loose people for that purpose. Witness humoured Mr. Basset as he had a very solid horsewhip with him. He suggested to him to state all the facts in a letter and received a letter naming the following persons whom he wished to be examined:—Dr. Newington and party, the “Hare,” “Bogus” Noakes, Mr. Hazler, the “Kitten,” and others; the Elmhursts, Mr. Moreton, two Misses Price, Lord Falmouth, the Hon. and Rev. J. Townsend Boscawen, Mr. Marriott, and Mr. George Williams.

The defendant again sought to make a statement, but was restrained.

Mr. Bucknill: These facts are come upon us entirely by surprise, and you can well understand my client, the only person who can put the other side of the matter, wishes to make a statement. It is an extremely painful and unfair position for my client to be in.

Mr. Charles: I cannot allow you to make that remark.

Mr. Bucknill: You cannot stop me.

Cross-examined: I am a nephew of Mr. Collins, who is solicitor for Mr. Walter Basset. I did think defendant might do me harm if I annoyed him.

Did you look on him as a dangerous lunatic?—I thought if I had treated him brusquely he would not be able to control himself.

Can you give me any reason for not disclosing to your uncle, Mr. Collins, who you knew was Mr. Walter Basset's solicitor, these facts which you knew would be important?—I mentioned this matter to him, offering to go into the whole matter, but he said he had heard enough about it. I also spoke to Mr. George Collins's managing clerk.

Do you think it fair to Mr. Basset to come here and make this statement?—I don't offer any opinion. I understood from Mr. Walter Basset that he was under fear of being under restraint, and also of personal injury. He said he would spend a lot of money to get Dr. Newington killed.

Did you then think it necessary to communicate to any of his

friends after he had made such a statement as that?—I consulted with my father on the subject, the communication being made to some one at Camborne.

Did you not, after this extraordinary communication to you, write to Mr. Walter Basset expressing your willingness to take his case up?—I don't think I did. I never intended to do any such thing.

Did you write to Mr. Basset offering to take his case up?—I think not.

Would such a letter appear in you press letter-book?—I don't know that there is such a letter; if you had given me notice I would have produced the book. I am quite sure I never seriously intended to do any such thing. There was a letter from Mrs. Basset saying I had better not move in the matter at present.

The Rev. G. H. Somerset, Rector of St. Mabyn, said he knew nothing of Mr. Walter Basset until October 1. It was about eight o'clock in the evening when Mr. Basset called. He said there were a great many people going about after him, talked very incoherently about Mr. Boscawen, and charged Lord Falmouth with being concerned in the death of eight persons, including his own eldest son. He also said if he caught any of the people who were about him he should murder them. He had received no letter from Mr. Basset since he had been at Brislington.

Mr. Charles: It was not sent.

Mr. Bucknill: Does not the Act say that all letters of a private patient addressed to any other person than the Commissioners should be forwarded, unless it was prohibited and endorsed to that effect by the proprietor of the licensed house?

The Master: That has nothing to do with this inquiry, I think.

Mr. Bucknill: With my client's case it has. If the Act has not been complied with, who knows what letters have been sent or what letters suppressed?

The witness went on to state that in consequence of the defendant's threat he warned the relieving officer of the parish, whose duty it was to bring before the magistrates persons suspected of being wandering lunatics. Knew the defendant had a home and that he lived with his wife at Treharrock. Thought he was dangerous, and told his servant to see him safe out of the plantation. Did not communicate with anyone but the relieving officer. The relieving officer brought the defendant before the magistrates, but he was not sent to an asylum.

Robert Hudson, M.D., of Redruth, stated that, in compliance with a telegram he received from Tehidy on October 21, he

went there. He saw the defendant outside the house, and defendant told him there was a conspiracy against him, between Mr. George Williams, Mr. Boscawen, and others. An interview followed between Mr. Gustavus Basset and the defendant, and the latter insisted on his staying. Defendant said he thought it his duty to warn his brother that Lord Falmouth, Mr. Boscawen, Lady Molesworth, and others, were in a conspiracy against them, and had bribed all his servants with the object of making them idiots, and then locking them up in asylums. He also said Arch, the agricultural labourers' delegate, was in the same conspiracy, and that such wretches ought not to be allowed to live, as they were draining the life-blood of the best families of the country. Afterwards defendant requested him to take notes of what had taken place, as he intended shortly to take steps against his brother, and it would be very important.

In your professional opinion, is it safe for defendant to be at large?—I don't think I had sufficient opportunity of saying that. There were dangerous tendencies when I saw him.

Cross-examined: The defendant was outside the door when I saw him, and the door was locked in his face. The brothers met affectionately, and there were no dangerous tendencies about him. I have heard that a few days after this interview two keepers and two policemen went to the defendant's house, and took him to an asylum. I was asked to communicate what passed to Dr. Barham. Before I saw Dr. Barham I was asked to certify defendant a lunatic, and I did not. Both Mr. Gustavus Basset and Mrs. Basset asked me. I do not know that Mrs. Basset first suggested it. The certificate as to the defendant's condition was partly filled in by me, partly by Dr. Barham, and partly by Dr. West.

Have you heard that Mr. Basset was extremely anxious to prevent the defendant from going to live near Tehidy?—Witness, after the question had been repeatedly put, said there was a rumour of the kind.

Re-examined: I did not certify the defendant, because I thought it desirable that those who knew him best—one an old family friend and the other his medical attendant—were the best persons to do that kind of thing.

Dr. Barham, a doctor of medicine of the University of Cambridge, said he knew the defendant as a mere boy, but for some years saw nothing of him, as he was away from the West. On October 21 he had an interview with the defendant at the Royal Hotel, Truro. After a few minutes' ordinary conversation he said there were emissaries of the mad doctors all over

the country, seeking to inveigle persons into asylums, and that there were parties of them around Tehidy and Treharrock. He was of the opinion then, which he still retained, that the defendant was of unsound mind. He seemed to have very few ideas but these groundless and insane ideas, of the truth of which he was perfectly and honestly convinced.

Mr. Pitt-Lewis: Having these ideas, do you think he would be likely to act on them?

I think persons actuated by the belief that others are intending to do them bodily injury would seek to protect themselves. A man seeing another man behind a hedge might take a shot at him on the supposition that he was one of his enemies.

Cross-examined: The defendant asked me to come and see him again. He wrote to me afterwards, offering to give me a window as a gift to a scientific society I am connected with. He sent a poem on the death of the Prince Imperial at the same time. He has always been more or less of a poet. Ever since I knew him as a grown man he has been eccentric. I don't know that it was not until he came to live near Tehidy that those who advise his brother sought to put him under restraint. I have had experience of cases of madness. Hallucinations or delusions may exist at the same time with sanity.

Charles Augustus West, M.D., of Bodmin, said he had been the defendant's medical attendant for the last seven years. On October 23 he visited him at Treharrock. Defendant came in with his dress covered with mud, and said he had been searching for men who were constantly about his premises, who hid in clefts of the walls, were ubiquitous, and followed him about. Hearing that defendant had a pistol and knife in his possession, he said that made him dangerous, and that if it came to the knowledge of the parish officers it would be their duty to interfere. On Sunday, the 5th, he was summoned to Treharrock, and the defendant told him he had been searching for Arch and the other men under the cliffs.

By Mr. Bucknill: When I saw him on the 23rd, I had been asked to go and see him with a view to certifying him insane, and had arranged, but I went there on Mrs. Basset's invitation. I thought he was dangerous, because he had been searching on the cliffs for some one he thought dangerous to him, with a knife in his possession. Mr. Bolden, the Tehidy agent, asked him to sign the certificate, and he had received the fee. I did go to the house on the 23rd, when I went to certify, under the pretence of seeing Mrs. Basset. I saw her as a medical man, and she introduced Mr. Basset, being at the time quite in ignorance of the object of my visit.

As a matter of gentlemanly feeling, do you think that was quite the thing for a family doctor to do?—I knew Mrs. Basset would resist. I may have accepted their hospitality on that occasion. The delusions I have mentioned are not those on which I certified that he was incapable of taking care of property. There were other evidences. He told me on October 1 that he had bought an estate and had no money to pay for it.

That is not an evidence of lunacy, I hope?—He had no money.

Do you know that when he went to Treharrock he farmed and managed an estate of 300 acres?—He did.

Have you any reason to say he farmed like a lunatic?—I don't know how he farmed.

Do you know he conducted the transfer of the estate himself?—I don't know who did it. The reason he could not pay for the estate was that he had two estates on his hands at the same time. I don't know whether he managed the household affairs himself. Knew he formed a drive and improved the estate of Treharrock. He was a hunting man, but witness could not say whether he carried a gun until two years ago. Attended defendant in 1874, 11 times; in 1875, 14 times; in 1876, 5 times; in 1877, 16 times; in 1878, 4 times; and 1879, 6 times. I should say any person having a persistent delusion or hallucination would be insane. A person who fancied he heard voices would, in my opinion, be insane.

The foreman of the jury here communicated with the Master, and then stated that the jury were of opinion that enough evidence had been offered on the petitioner's side. They would be glad to hear Mr. Bucknill, and to know whether he could bring forward any medical evidence.

Mr. Bucknill declined to make any statement of his case till the counsel on the other side had concluded theirs.

Mr. Charles, after the expression of opinion by the jury, consented to call only one more witness.

Dr. George Henry Savage, medical superintendent and resident physician of Bethlehem Hospital, London, and lecturer on mental diseases at Guy's Hospital, stated that on the 16th of January he saw defendant alone for an hour and a quarter at Dr. Fox's. During that time he told him Lord Falmouth never changed and would go on living for ever, and on that based another assertion. He thought it an extraordinary thing that the friends of Lord Falmouth died, and referred that to the same origin as the juvenescence. He said his brother Arthur was sent to Ticehurst and made insane while there. He also said he was annoyed by the "runners" from Dr. Newton's. He argued that it would be to Lord Falmouth's interest that the Basset

family should be ruined, and said means were by one family ruining another by gambling; and said there was a conspiracy between Lord Falmouth and Dr. Newington. The opinion witness formed was that the defendant was suffering from a chronic incurable form of insanity, and that he would be dangerous to anyone he fancied was injuring him.

Cross-examined: Supposing Mr. Basset to be subject to these delusion for several years, but had ridden on the cliffs and carried a gun there, that would not shake my opinion that he would be a dangerous lunatic. If a man had been subject to these delusions for years, and had done no harm, my general opinion would be shaken. If he had conducted the affairs of his estate of 300 acres for years satisfactorily, I should say he was not insane. Notwithstanding this may be shown, I should consider Mr. Walter Basset to be a dangerous lunatic. In this case I do prefer my own opinion to any facts that may be proved. Delusions are not proof positive of insanity.

Re-examined: It would quite agree with my own opinion if I were told defendant had been getting much worse of late.

Mr. Bucknill said it would enable him to condense his case if the inquiry were now adjourned. He assured the jury that he would be able to satisfy them that, whether he had these delusions or not, the defendant had been managing his own affairs in a reasonable manner, and was still capable of doing so.

The Master adjourned until Wednesday morning.

SECOND DAY.—*Wednesday.*

Mr. Bucknill opened his client's case with an earnest and impressive appeal to the jury to consider the matter before them, with special reference to the doom with which his client was threatened. No man out of an asylum could imagine the agony of mind of one believing himself to be sane, who was placed in a madhouse. Ten thousand times worse than a gaol, the unhappy patient herded, slept, sat, and ate, side by side with raving maniacs, idiots, and imbeciles. To suggest that the fancies which had taken hold of his client were anything but fancies would be an insult to common sense. But the under-current of the whole of the letters which had been so much relied on was this, "I am afraid my brother and I are to be deprived of our liberty." There was always the warmest affection between the brothers, and there could be no doubt that in much of what had taken place the defendant had been actuated by a strong nervous sensibility lest the helpless invalid his brother was should be removed to an asylum. Throughout the

letters, however, there was apparent not the intention to do injury to these persons he suspected, but the fact that he invoked the assistance of the law. What stronger negative evidence could they have that he had never intended to attack any person? The statute never suggested that a harmless lunatic should be confined in an asylum unless he became a wandering lunatic, dangerous to himself or others. Lord Campbell said the Act was rather against than favourable to persons, physicians or not, who simply, because a person was of unsound mind, caused him to be confined in a lunatic asylum. A person to be placed in that position must be dangerously mad, and unfit to manage his own affairs. An inmate of the Agapemone was put into an asylum as of unsound mind, but was not dangerous; and she recovered damages for incarceration. Now, if he showed them further that since 1872 the defendant had managed his business affairs sensibly and straightforwardly, he apprehended they would willingly come to the conclusion that he must be set at large. Mr. Bucknill then proceeded to comment on the evidence, and in conclusion he appealed to the jury not—upon the evidence of opinion which had been described as the wildest and most worthless of all evidence—to consign his client again to the asylum. He sincerely hoped it would be in their power, and he was sure it would be a pleasure, to relieve him from that terrible position. He had done no harm to anybody; let him go back, as was his wife's wish, to reside with her.

Hannah Netherton, a charwoman, who had worked at Treharrock ever since the defendant had lived there, said that, as far as she had seen, he had always conducted himself to everyone courteously and kindly, and had always been able to manage his own affairs.

By Mr. Charles: In September I went to live at Treharrock as a servant. Before that I worked there occasionally. Some time before Mr. Basset was taken away he was under the impression that there was somebody about who was going to do him injury. A day or two before he was taken away he went on his hands and knees in the kitchen with an open knife in his hand. He did not say he would murder anyone. He remained in the kitchen, and sent some one to the mistress. Mrs. Basset said Mr. Basset got the knife in Truro to prune trees with. Had never told Policeman Thomas that Mrs. Basset said her master had been going all over the house with a knife in his hand. Had never heard such a thing said.

Re-examined: It is a lonely house. I have seen nobody about; but somebody threw a stone through a glass door into the study on Christmas Day.

Mrs. Emily Roberts, who resides at Trevinnick, St. Kew,

said she frequently visited at Treharrook, and had frequent opportunities of seeing Mr. Basset. She had never seen anything in his demeanour or behaviour to alarm her, and thought he was quite capable of managing his own affairs. She had never been afraid of him, and she often took her grandson there. Mr. Basset was very kindly disposed, and the child was very fond of him. The children went there of their own choice. Had many times seen defendant take part in the service. Had heard him say there were men lurking about the place.

By Mr. Charles: There was one of Mr. Basset's sermons that gave some offence to one or two parishioners. That was more than a year ago, and he had not preached since.

Mrs. Edith Basset, wife of the defendant, described Treharrook as a lonely place, surrounded by shrubs and woods. In all matters of business connected with the estate, and all money matters, Mr. Basset acted on his own behalf. The statements in counsel's opening address as to details of work she corroborated. She produced his farm book, kept by himself, and a number of letters written by him. Remembered going to Cambourne, when her husband went to Tehidy on the 21st of October. She remained there, because she was not on visiting terms there. The only objection there was when the estate at Crelloe was bought was that it was only six miles from Tehidy. Up to the time Mr. Basset bought a pistol he had no weapon but a large stick in the house. She thought something of the kind necessary. She had known of persons being about the house, and their house dog, her own dog, had been poisoned. Her husband was very distressed, when he returned from Tehidy, with regard to his brother's state. He used no threat whatever either against his brother or nephew; he was too grieved, and did not speak. When her husband was taken away they were on the point of going to Torquay. The chaise was at the door. Three men came up and asked to see Mr. Basset. She said, "He is writing letters," and showed them into the study. Mr. Basset showed them the means by which he thought persons got into the house. The servant said, "There are two or three other carriages there." She went outside and saw Dr. Fox and Mr. Bolden, the agent of the Tehidy estate, and another man. She had never seen him before except on the previous Sunday. The six persons went into the drawing-room and said, "We have come for Mr. Basset." She had had no previous warning. Mr. Basset was present. She sought to prevent his being removed. He was sitting in his chair, and the whole six appeared to take hold of him at once. They dragged him out of the house, threw him into a carriage, and drove off. She followed, and at Bristol asked Dr. Fox where he was going to take her husband. He

then gave his card. When they took him certificates were asked for, but they did not produce them. She and her husband both asked for them. She denied telling Dr. West that her husband had a pistol and knife in his possession. He had no pistol, and she knew him perfectly well. She denied *in toto* Dr. West's statements on this subject. It was not the fact that her husband's clothes were covered with mud, or that she said her husband had been on the cliffs, with a pistol and a knife, looking for men he thought were there. From the time she first knew her husband until he was removed she never knew him threaten any person whatever; quite the reverse. She was never away from her husband but one day from the time of their marriage to the time of his removal.

Cross-examined: On the Sunday before her husband was taken she did send two persons to search for her husband, who she was told had not been to church; but she did it because she was alarmed at Mr. Bolden, the agent of the Tehidy property, and a gentleman and lady in a carriage having been to the house. She sent for Dr. West, and did tell him that her husband had left the house to go to church, but had not gone. She denied telling Dr. West her husband had been wandering over the most dangerous part of the cliffs. Denied having gone to call up the groom to come to Mr. Basset a night or two before he was taken away.

Re-examined: I was not on good terms at Tehidy. It appeared to me Mr. Bolden came for some evil purpose. First he wanted to prejudice me against my husband, and then to get me to pity Mr. Gustavus.

John Beddoe, M.D., F.R.C.P., physician to the visiting magistrates of the Gloucester Asylum, said he visited Mr. Basset as to his mental state on Monday last. He found him expressing some views which he would call delusions. From what he saw the defendant was not a dangerous lunatic. It was possible for a gentleman to be possessed of the ideas Mr. Basset had for some years. If it were proved to his satisfaction that Mr. Basset had been in the same state since 1872, and had not grown worse, then he was capable of managing his own affairs. In his opinion it was possible and probable that Mr. Basset would hurt no one.

By Mr. Charles: It is pretty common for disease of this kind to be stationary. The disease itself is not uncommon. Did not know the fact of defendant having tried to institute proceedings would affect his belief. If defendant said, "I want to get these people respectively killed," he must know his meaning before he altered the opinion he had formed. If he had written that in July of last year, and had never written anything of the kind before, he would suppose the disease was progressive.

Re-examined: If I were told he said in all these letters which had been quoted that the defendant expressed a desire to take legal proceedings, I would be of opinion that he was the less likely to do harm. I carry a knife.

Dr. Brittan, M.R.C.S. and M.D. of Dublin, said he had considerable experience in matters of mental alienation. He saw the defendant with Dr. Beddoe at Brislington House. He made statements respecting the conspiracy and delusion. Witness questioned him about it, and cross-questioned him, almost leading him up to it, to see if he could evoke any expression of malevolence or intention against the persons named. All he elicited was rather a feeling of extreme fear than the desire of revenge or the intention to injure. The general conclusion he came to on the case was that Mr. Basset was a man who from an early period had not unnaturally had a dread of falling into the same condition as had been the case with certain of his family. Probably the morbid impression had got hold of his mind that there was a design to reduce him to the same state. He thought one must discount everything he said by the peculiar characteristic which marked the whole of the delusions. The expressions wishing certain persons to be killed or poisoned he thought were merely another form of saying he thought they ought to be put out of the way. If he thought them guilty of these crimes, he would say they ought to be put out of the way. Might have said certain persons ought to be hanged.

By Mr. Charles: I have experience of alienation. I am the inspector under the Irish Court of Chancery for patients in the Brislington Asylum.

Are you of opinion he is of sound mind?—No; certainly not.

Would you take the responsibility of saying he ought to be without control?—I should like first to know a great deal more than I have seen at present. Nothing I have seen or heard would cause me to say he ought to be under control.

The Master remarked that he should tell the jury the question was, whether Mr. Basset was of unsound mind. If the jury found him insane he might be placed under the care of a committee, who would have full discretion.

Mr. Henry Rogers, solicitor, of Helston, said he knew Mr. Walter Basset. He held a sale at Crellew in July 1879. Mr. Basset attended, acted on his own behalf, and carried on the business of a bidder the same as any other gentleman, without advice. Saw nothing to induce him to believe that Mr. Basset was of unsound mind. Mr. Basset bought the property for £2,255, which was not more than half its cost, and was a reasonable price. Had seen nothing of Mr. Basset before, and did

not imagine there was anything wrong. On the 7th of October he received a letter from Mr. Basset saying his brother, Captain Basset, or rather his brother's wife, Mrs. Captain Basset, objected to his being so near them, and proposed to withdraw £300 if he persisted in the purchase of Crellew.

Mr. Charles Pollard, of St. Kew, master of the North Cornwall hounds, said the defendant had been in the habit of hunting occasionally with his hounds. He behaved in the same way as other people. At the Wadebridge Farmers' Club dinner in 1878 Mr. Basset returned thanks for the clergy.

By Mr. Charles: He was not out last season or this. In 1877 and 1878 he was only out two or three times.

Re-examined: When he was out he appeared perfectly sane.

Mr. Wesley Grose, churchwarden of St. Kew, said Mr. Basset had been a subscriber to the North Cornwall Hunt up to this year. His behaviour when he was out was that of a sane gentleman.

Mr. John Vivian, St. Kew, said that at the sale of farm stock at Treharrook, on Lady-Day 1877, Mr. Basset was present and behaved as other people did. At church witness sat next him, and his behaviour was that of other people.

Cross-examined: Mr. Basset spoke in church one Sunday, and a Miss Woolcombe left the church.

Re-examined: She was hysterically inclined, and being amused by some one speaking, she could not suppress her laughter, and went out.

Mr. John Seldon, jun., collector of taxes for St. Kew parish, said he was collector 1877, 1878, and 1879. He called on Mr. Basset, who paid him by cheque. He once objected to the amount, but, when it was explained, paid. He also subscribed to the ploughing match.

Cross-examined: I saw him once a year.

Mr. Wesley Stephens, of St. Kew, had known Mr. Basset for about twenty years. In March 1878 he held a sale of furniture and farm stock for him, and received his instructions from him. He settled afterwards, and appeared to be well up to his business. There was nothing peculiar about him. Had seen him repeatedly since, and knew about his purchasing a horse.

Mr. Thomas Olver, J.P., a member of Olver and Sons, land surveyors and auctioneers, of Falmouth, was called, but the jury intimated that they had heard enough general evidence. Mr. Olver was withdrawn, and

Mr. Coleman, the tenant of Treharrook Farm referred to, was called. He said Mr. Basset conducted his own side of the bargain, and did it in a thoroughly business-like way. Did not get the best of it in that case.

When did you best him?—Not at all, sir. (Laughter.) He looked sharp after his own interests. I am always very pleased to see him.

By Mr. Charles: He has not been exactly the same this last year or so; but there has been very little change. For four or five years he has gone about just in the same way.

Mr. Bucknill asked if the jury would hear Mr. Collins's managing clerk, who had conducted business affairs with him for years. The jury consented, and

Mr. James Nicholls, who had been thirty years in Mr. Collins's employ, said he had seen a great deal of the defendant up to the last two or three years. In 1878 Mr. Basset brought his bank account, and said he thought there was an error, as it did not agree with his own account. He went to the bank and found by examining many hundreds of cheques that there had been an error. On another occasion he brought a complaint that Mr. Coleman had broken the covenants of his lease by over-cropping. He held several letters of instructions, which were perfectly lucid. In autumn of 1878 Mr. Basset instructed him about selling Treharrock. He sold it because the money would produce £400 a year, whereas the farm was only rented at £300. Witness produced the letters Mr. Basset had written since he had been at Brislington, which were handed to the foreman; and stated that in raising loans on his property, and also in every other business matter, he was very capable of managing his own affairs. He was a very good accountant.

Cross-examined: I saw him often, and he never alluded to the beliefs of which I have heard here.

Mr. Bucknill, in summing up his client's case, read letters written by Mr. Basset since he had been at Brislington, in one of which he said he should be prepared to go to any reasonable expense in this trial, as he was being tried for his reason.

Mr. Charles, on rising to sum up, said that but for an allusion by Mr. Bucknill to the action of Mr. Gustavus Basset in the case he would not have felt called on to make a statement which he now must make; but the reason why the defendant had been able to present his case with the advantage of such ability as that Mr. Bucknill had employed in his behalf was the generosity of Mr. Gustavus Basset himself.

The Defendant: He advanced £300 on my bond because I could not sell property. Certainly I should have been otherwise in a very awkward position, and it would have been very unfair.

Mr. Charles rejoined that it would have been very unfair. Proceeding to comment on the defendant's case, he upheld the action of Mr. Collins, of Bodmin, against the attack made on

him, and said Mr. Collins offered his uncle (defendant's solicitor) the information, and it was not accepted. It had been urged that defendant had done no one any harm, but he asked if every lunatic was to be left at large until he had done harm, and what the position of the family at Tehidy would have been when that happened. The impression on Mr. Somerset, from one interview, was such that if Mr. Basset's relatives had not taken care of him, he must have been placed in the county asylum. Why was it, he asked, that no person of Mr. Basset's own rank was called on his behalf? In the interests of his brother, Mr. Gustavus Basset had felt it his imperative duty to take the steps he had taken, and whatever the decision of the jury, he would accept it freely.

The Master asked if the jury would care to re-examine Mr. Basset?

The jury thought it unnecessary.

In a very brief summing up, the Master said that if the defendant was found of unsound mind there was no necessity for his being placed in the asylum. The Court would appoint a committee, and they might decide what measure of liberty he should exercise.

The jury, after a not very lengthy consultation, gave, as their unanimous verdict, That Mr. Basset is of unsound mind, and, as the opinion of sixteen, that he is also incapable of managing his own affairs.