

and are frequently if not generally ready "to take an oath or two for the sake of a theory." This seems like an extreme statement, and yet we must recognize the fact that in a large proportion of cases both judge and jury pay little or no attention to the testimony of medical experts.

Dr. Hamilton blames the contending lawyers for much of the contempt that is expressed for experts, and objects to the "ridiculous idiotic hypothetical questions," to which alienists are bound to answer yes or no. The writer in the *Mail*, however, asks us to go back a step and inquire: who prompts the lawyer for the defence as to his hypothetical question? He answers this question by saying that the expert for the defence does this, while on the other hand the expert for the prosecution frames the question for the prosecution. The writer goes on to say that the medical experts are really assistant lawyers, paid like lawyers, and earn their money by fighting strongly for conviction or acquittal as the case may be.

In our last issue a member of our Editorial Staff advised the appointment of a number of alienists to be the sole examiner as to sanity or otherwise of all men of the Thaw type. Dr. Hamilton holds a similar opinion, and expresses the belief that a permanent lunacy commission would solve the problem in such cases.

NOTIFICATION OF BIRTHS.

It is proposed to simplify and render more speedy the registration of births in England. As the law stands at present six weeks may elapse before registration. Lord Robert Cecil has just introduced a Bill into the House of Commons to provide that births must be notified to the local medical officer of health within forty-eight hours. It is further provided that this notification may be given on a postcard, and that the duty of such notification rests first on the father of the child, and secondly on any one who has been in attendance on the mother. Another important requirement of the Bill is that the notification shall extend to all children still-born as well as to those born alive.