

ignorant may believe, is accustomed to strive for peace rather than to delight in war, the nation is looking anxiously for a peaceful settlement of the Ulster problem, and upon them all will rest a very heavy responsibility if, because of any inadequate regard for that spirit of compromise which so often secures the triumph of justice in the Courts, they fail to agree upon some reasonable plan by which the threatened dangers, on one side or the other, may be avoided.—*Law Journal*.

JUDICIAL CARE OF PRISONERS AT CRIMINAL TRIALS.

An appeal which came before the Court of Criminal Appeal this week illustrated the extreme jealousy with which our courts are accustomed to guard the interests of prisoners put on their trial for criminal offences. After the summing up in a criminal trial at the assizes, the jury retired for the purpose of considering their verdict. Their prolonged absence led the clerk of assize to consider the possibility of a disagreement, and he made his way to the room to which the jury had retired in order to find out whether there was any likelihood of an agreement as to their verdict. Certain questions were put to him and answered by him, and the jury eventually returned into court with a verdict of guilty. On appeal the conviction was quashed on the ground, amongst others, that the whole of the proceedings in a criminal trial must be held in a public court. No principle of our law appears to be better established than this, although until the decision of the House of Lords in *Scott v. Scott* (109 L. T. Rep. 1) there was a singular dearth of judicial authority to this effect. In that case Lords Halsbury, Loreburn, and Atkinson unhesitatingly laid down that it was an inveterate rule that justice should be administered in open court, subject to certain limitations in the cases of courts exercising peculiar jurisdiction, who might hear cases *in camera* where to do otherwise would defeat the ends of justice. It is always a welcome occasion when this cardinal principle of the administration of justice is affirmed.

The case also reminds practitioners of the care exercised by