



An Oxford Undergraduate Charged With Kissing A Young Lady

At the Warminster Petty Sessions on Thursday, before the Hon. Holmes A'Court and N. F. Barton, Esq., Mr. John Alcock, son of Dr. Alcock, Head Master of Lord Weymouth's Grammar School, and an undergraduate at Oxford, was summoned for assaulting Miss Adela Ethelina Ward, the daughter of a lady residing in Portway, Warminster, on the 4th July. As the parties are well known, the court was crowded throughout the hearing of the case. Mr. McCarthy, of Frome, appeared for the complainant, and Mr. P. W. Cruttwell, of Frome, was for the defendant. The complainant stated that on the evening of the day named she was sitting at the window of her mother's house, when defendant, without the slightest warning, rushed into the house, seized her in his arms, and kissed her, and was proceeding to take liberties with her, when he was interrupted by complainant's little sister, who entered the room.

In cross-examination, the complainant denied that she had had any previous acquaintance with defendant, or having been for walks with him, or having smiled at him from the window on the evening named, or beckoned him into the house. Her evidence was corroborated by her sister, Miss Lily Ward, aged 11 years, but her statements were considerably shaken by Mr. Cruttwell in cross-examination. Mrs. Ward and Mr. Abbott, late Supt. of Police, were also called as witnesses for the prosecution. For the defence, Mr. Cruttwell said he should put a very different complexion upon the case, and prove that the complainant, in addition to having a rather romantic name, had also a romantic nature, and had frequently gone out walking with defendant; and on the evening in question, as he was passing Portway, the complainant, who was at the window, beckoned him in; and that they made an arrangement for a walk.

Mr. Cruttwell said that the explanation of the case was that at that moment complainant's little sister entered the room, and having subsequently informed her mother that the defendant had been in the house in her absence, the complainant invented the present charge in order to screen herself. Mr. Cruttwell said that the defendant unfortunately could not be examined on his oath, but he had instructed him solemnly to deny that the defendant had taken the slightest liberty with the young lady, although he admitted having entered the house in her mother's absence, which was, perhaps, an unwise proceeding. Mr. Charles Alcock, a student at the Grammar School, and brother to the defendant, who was walking with him on the evening in question, said that the complainant was standing at the window, and that she smiled and nodded to his brother. This statement was confirmed by the evidence of Mr. Durnet, a clerk at the Westminster Bank. After a hearing which lasted several hours, the magistrates said the evidence was so conflicting that they had no alternative but to dismiss the case.

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