THE NEWENT CASE.

TRIAL OF MR. EDMONDS.

Mr. Edmund Edmonds, solicitor at Newent, surrendered on Wednesday before Baron Bramwell at the Central Criminal Court to take his trial for the manslaughter of his wife, Jane Edmonds. The case, as will be remembered, was a very extraordinary one, and it was removed to be tried in this court owing to the excitement which prevailed in the county of Gloucester. The trial was postponed from the last session. Mr. Digby Seymour, Q.C., Mr. Kenealey, Q.C., and Mr. G. Griffiths conducted the prosecution, specially retained. Mr. Huddleston, Q.C., Serjeant Parry, Mr. H. James, Q.C., Mr. G. Brown, and Mr. J. O. Griffits, also specially retained, appeared for the prisoner.

Before the case commenced, Mr. Huddleston made an application that the prisoner might be allowed to sit near his counsel and not go into the dock, but the application was not acceded to. The prisoner then entered the dock, and he pleaded not guilty.

Mr. Digby Seymour then proceeded to open the case for the prosecution. He said that the prisoner, who was a solicitor in considerable practice at Newent, in Gloucestershire, was charged with the manslaughter of his wife, and the circumstances under which the charge was preferred were of a very extraordinary and unusual character. Some of the circumstances were of a very painful character, and the whole inquiry would demand their most serious attention. The death of the deceased took place so far back as the year 1867. The case would mainly depend upon the evidence of a niece of the deceased, Miss Jeanette Edmonds, who was entirely dependent on the prisoner, and he was afraid that some moral taint would rest upon the character of this young lady. The learnel counsel then proceeded to narrate the facts, and the following evidence was adduced:—

Anne Bradd said—I was servant to the prisoner and his wife in 1864 and 1865 at Newent, and remained with them until 1867. I remember Sunday, the 24th of February, 1867. On the morning of that day I saw my mistress, and she appeared well and cheerful, and remained so all day until the evening. The prisoner and the deceased went to church on the evening of the 24th, and some friends visited them in the evening, and singing was going on all the evening. It was sacred music. Supper was served about nine o'clock. Miss Matthews, the sister of the deceased, who lived in the house, was one of the party. As I was going to my bedroom later at night, I saw the deceased in the hall, and she then appeared to be quite well and cheerful. After I had gone to my bedroom I heard Mr. Edmonds's office door shut to violently. No one but he and his wife were about at this time, and I then heard my master and mistress in high words in the breakfast-room, and I heard the prisoner say, "Go to bed." He appeared in a great passion at this time. She replied, "I won't; you brute, you wretch! you went to see a woman in Gloucester last night." My mistress mentioned the name of the woman she referred to. The prisoner then said, "——your eyes, go to bed," and I heard something thrown at her after he had said this. It sounded like something heavy, and it appeared to have struck something, and then fallen to the ground. Mrs. Edmonds screamed violently after this, and ran to the hall door. They appeared to be in the breakfast-room when this thing was thrown. After this I heard the deceased say three times, "Oh, there's a dear man, don't." I then heard Mrs. Edmonds open the door, and I looked into the garden but could not see her. She was screaming at the time. The prisoner then rushed upstairs, and in about three or four minutes Mrs. Edmonds followed him. I went to her bedroom, and I heard her say, "I am dying; water, Jeannette." I returned to my bedroom, and Miss Jeannette, the prisoner's niece, came to me, and in consequence of what she said I took some hot water to Miss Matthews's room and found my mistress lying on the bed, and Dr. Smith was leaning over her. At this time she appeared to me to be dying. This was about twenty minutes after I had heard something thrown at her. I went to Miss Matthews's room a second time shortly afterwards, and I then found my mistress was dead. A clothes brush was kept in the hall, and I noticed on the following morning that this brush was broken. I first mentioned what had taken place some months afterwards, but I did not mention it again until February last, when I was examined before the magistrate.

At this stage of the case the prisoner, upon the application of Mr. Huddleston, was permitted to leave the dock and sit by his counsel.

Cross-examined—I told the magistrate that I had had a quarrel with the prisoner about some milk. It was a quarrel and yet it was not a quarrel (a laugh). I certainly told the magistrate that I had had a quarrel with the prisoner, if it could be called a quarrel.

Mr. Huddleston—Did you tell the prisoner that you would not be imposed upon?—Yes.

Did you tell him that he was a bad man, and that bad would be his end?—I did. He wanted to discharge me at a moment's notice for not fetching the milk.

Was it in consequence of that you left?—I don't know it was the reason, but I gave him warning to leave.

Cross-examination continued—When he threatened to discharge me at a moment's notice, I told him that my character was my bread, and I would not be imposed upon. I first made a communication to Sergeant Reach, at Newent. After I left his service I stayed with a friend at Bridlington Quay until I was hunted to death by the prisoner's detectives. I knew Mrs. Matthews, the prisoner's mother-in-law. I told her that my mistress had died of apoplexy, at least it was reported so. I did not say anything to her about violence, or that the deceased had said, "Oh, that's a dear man, don't."

Did you tell her a deliberate lie?—I did, sir.

Did you ever say anything about hearing the death-rattle when you were making the gruel in the kitchen?—I did.

Is not Miss Matthews's bedroom, where the deceased died, two stories high?—Yes. I say now that I heard the death-rattle.

Why, is it not 60 or 70 feet from the kitchen to the room where the deceased died?—It may be.

A model of the house was here produced by Mr. Huddleston for the purpose of showing the distances.

Cross-examination continued—A person named Cassidy was in the house at the time, and I told her that I had heard the death-rattle. I also told her husband. I do not know whether those persons are here or not. Mr. and Mrs. Edmonds and Miss Jeannette had not been to church on the Sunday evening, but the visitors did go. When I was examined before the coroner I said that the prisoner rushed up after his wife when she went upstairs. I have not been supplied with a copy of my deposition, but I read it in a newspaper, and I cut it out afterwards.

Have you got it now?—Yes.

Have you read it over since?—Yes, several times. I read it over yesterday.

What did you read it over for?—I read it over merely to see what I had said (a laugh).

That you might be in the same tale and say the same thing over again?—No; not for that.

Did you have the paper the last time you came here, a month ago?—Yes, but I don't think that I read it at that time.

Did you show it to any one else?—Yes; I showed my deposition to several of my friends.

Re-examined—I have substantially told the same story to-day that I did to the magistrates. I have left several situations because the prisoner "hunted" me and made me uncomfortable. Mrs. Matthews, the prisoner's mother-in-law, sent for me to her bedroom, and she said she had heard that Mrs. Edmonds had died from violence, and that frequent rows took place, and she wished me to tell her if it was the truth, and I replied I did not know. She pressed me, and said it would be hundreds of pounds in my pocket if I told the truth. I said I would not be bribed, and she pressed me again, and I then said, "They say it was apoplexy." I had promised Miss Matthews that I would not tell, and this was the reason I did not. Miss Matthews is still living in the same house with the prisoner. She is his sister-in-law.

Miss Jeannette Edmonds, a young lady of rather prepossessing appearance, and seemingly about 25 years old, was then called as a witness. She said—I am the niece of the prisoner. I first went to reside with him in 1869. I am now 22 years old. I was entirely dependent upon him. At the time of my aunt's death there were living in the house Miss Matthews and Oscar Edmonds, the prisoner and his wife, myself, and the servants. On the night previous to my aunt's death I remember the party being there to supper. I did not partake of supper myself. About seven o'clock in the evening the prisoner and the deceased appeared to be having high words in the breakfast-room, but they afterwards appeared to be reconciled, and nothing of an unpleasant nature occurred until after supper. They had frequently quarrelled previously on account of a letter that had come to the house in a lady's handwriting, and my aunt always appeared to be jealous of her husband about other ladies.

Was there anything in reference to Miss Matthews?—No.

Examination continued—I had gone to bed, and Miss Matthews came to my room, and shortly afterwards I heard my aunt and uncle quarrelling on the stairs, and I heard my aunt scream. I went down-stairs, and at first could not see anything of them, but shortly afterwards I saw my aunt come up-stairs. She appeared very much agitated, but I did not hear her go into the garden. I heard screams, but did not know where they came from. My aunt went into Miss Matthews's room, and I followed her. She appeared at this time to be very agitated. She had a candlestick in her hand, which might have been taken by her from the hall table. After she had been in the room a few minutes the prisoner came in. He appeared in a great flurry, and he was swearing, and threatened to shut up his house and go away. My aunt was crouching down upon a chair at this time, and she said two or three times, "Jeannette, I am dying." The prisoner then rushed across the room and struck her on the side of the head, by the ear. He struck her with his clenched fist, and she immediately asked me for some water, and then sank down by the side of the bed. I tried to undo her dress, but could not, as she was swelling so much. I had never noticed such a thing in her condition before. She raised her hand to the place where the blow had been given several times. The prisoner went up to her, and I thought he was going to strike her at first, but he did not do so. He then disappeared from the room, and shortly afterwards Dr. Smith arrived, and I heard him inquire what my aunt had had for supper. He attended to her, but was unable to do anything to recover her, and she died shortly afterwards. I did not say anything to Dr. Smith about a blow having been given.

Why not?

The witness hesitated, and then merely said that she did not do so, and gave no explanation of her conduct.

Examination continued—I remained in my uncle's house until 1871, and during the interval I told Dr. Bass Smith about the blow, and he talked with Miss Matthews about it.

There had been intimate relations at this time between you and Dr. Bass Smith?—There had.

Cross-examined by Mr. Huddleston—I had never seen the prisoner strike the deceased before this night. My aunt had complained before this of pains in her head, and I had heard Dr. Smith say it was probable that she would die suddenly. I never said before to-day that there had been quarrels on account of a letter that had been received. My father died in 1859, and left seven children, and the prisoner took charge of me, and I was sent to school, and remained there for four years. I don't know that he educated and provided for my brothers and sisters, but I was entirely dependent upon him.

Did Dr. Smith attempt to seduce you before Mrs. Edmonds's death?—Yes.

And did he succeed afterwards?—Yes.

How old were you when he made the first attempt to seduce you?—Seventeen.

How long did you carry on an illicit intercourse with Dr. Smith after your aunt's death?—Witness hesitated, and at length said, "Four years."

Cross-examination continued—He was staying in the house at my uncle's request, and he used to come into my bedroom. He gave me a writing-desk, and I told my uncle that it had been given to me by a friend of his named Docker. On another occasion I stopped for three days and nights with Dr. Smith at an inn at Kenilworth. I knew that he was a married man with five children. My uncle thought I was visiting Mr. and Mrs. Docker, at Brewood, in Staffordshire, and I wrote him a letter at the time congratulating him upon his birthday (a laugh). My uncle at length discovered that I was carrying on an illicit connexion with Dr. Bass Smith, but it was not in consequence of this that I left his house. I used to call Dr. Smith Anthony, and he used to call me Cleopatra (a laugh). My uncle discovered a letter I had written addressed to Dr. Smith, as "dearest Anthony." I swear that the prisoner did not turn me out of the house because he had made this discovery. The reason he turned me out was that I was writing for him, and I made a mistake, and he struck me on the head and said that I was of no use to him, and ordered me to leave his house. I went away on the next day. I swear he did not order me to leave on account of his discovering my connexion with Smith. I swear that I was never at the Boot inn, at Gloucester, or at any inn in Gloucester after I left my uncle's house. I did send a telegram to Smith, and saw him at Newport on the following Saturday, and I asked him to go to Newent to my uncle's, and get my boxes. Dr. Smith came to see me at my mother's, at Newport. He took me to his own house, and I saw his wife. I dined at his house on the Sunday, and the next day I and Dr. Smith went to Gloucester, and then to Ross. We afterwards went to London together.

How long did you stay in London? Till the following day.

Where did you go there?—To Dr. Smith's house. He and his wife at this time were living in London.

The learned Judge—Did your uncle get possession of the letter you have referred to, addressed "My own dearest Anthony?"

Witness—It was an unfinished letter. I put it in my box, and when I went to look for it it was gone.

Mr. Baron Bramwell—Was this the first time he discovered the nature of the intimacy between you and Dr. Smith?—Yes.

Cross-examination continued—I subsequently went to a home for fallen women, and I wrote a letter to the prisoner expressing my sorrow for my conduct, and asking for his forgiveness.

By Mr. Baron Bramwell—Dr. Keene, the vicar of Newent, came up to London and found me at the house of Dr. Smith, and he took me from thence to the home.

Cross-examination continued—The 24th of February was on a Sunday, and several friends were visiting the prisoner. It was the custom of my aunt to go into the bedroom of Miss Matthews to see her child before she went to bed. I helped to arrange my aunt's hair after death, and I did not notice any mark of a blow, or any blood except what had come from the place that had been lanced by Dr. Smith. I wrote a letter to my mother in March after my aunt's death, in which I said that she was going to bed as usual and was suddenly seized with apoplexy, and died in less than an hour, and stated that she looked so happy after death. I also instructed Mrs. Simmons, one of the party who was visiting on the 24th of February at the house, to write a letter to the same effect to my mother.

The two letters were put in and read. They were merely to the effect above stated.

Cross-examination continued—I was aware that my uncle had instituted some proceedings against Dr. Smith to get him struck off the list of surgeons. When I was taken to the home by Dr. Keene I told him that Mr. Edmonds had killed his wife.

Did you say killed, or murdered?—Well, murdered, if you like.

This was after your uncle had endeavoured to get Dr. Smith removed from the list of surgeons, and he had refused to give up your boxes?—Yes.

Why was he to be taken off the list of surgeons? For seducing you?—I suppose so.

Cross-examination continued—Dr. Smith did not tell me that when he went for my boxes my uncle said that he would ruin him, and that he would not leave him a feather to fly with; but he did say that he was very angry at his conduct to me, and he refused to give up my boxes. Dr. Smith had sold his practice at Newent in 1870; and after that he used to come to the house of my uncle, and we were generally up after all the others in the house had gone to bed. Miss Matthews used to let him in.

Then she knew all about it?—I suppose she did (a laugh).

Cross-examination continued—Mr. Smith used to go away before my uncle went to bed, and after he had gone to bed he used to return to the house and stop with me.

Re-examined—I never went to Weston-super-Mare with Dr. Smith and my uncle and Miss Matthews. My uncle and Miss Matthews went away to Marlborough, and left me with Dr. Smith.

Mr. Huddleston submitted that this evidence was not material. He intended to call Miss Matthews, and his learned friend could put any questions to her that he pleased.

Mr. Digby Seymour said his object was to show that there were nearer relations between the prisoner and Miss Matthews than mere friendship.

Mr. Huddleston submitted that this was an entirely collateral issue. He should call Miss Matthews, who would state the suggestion was entirely false.

Mr. Baron Bramwell said that if he understood the object of the question, it was to show that the prisoner was aware of the connexion that existed between Dr. Smith and the witness, and connived at it; and that it was not true that he turned her out of his house when he discovered it. It appeared to him that this was really too collateral a matter for him to allow the question to be put.

Re-examination continued—In the letters that have been put in I only stated what Miss Matthews told me to state about my aunt's death. It was always the way in which she told me to say how she died, and the cause of her death. I swear that Dr. Bass Smith did not in any way suggest what I was to state upon the subject of this charge. My aunt had complained of pains in her head for several months, and she said that she had always felt those pains ever since my uncle had struck her on a previous occasion. The occasion referred to was about nine months before her death. She said that he had struck her at that time, and she had felt pains in her head constantly afterwards.

By the learned Judge—It was I who sent to Dr. Keene, the vicar, to take me away from Dr. Smith's house. I was ill. I thought he might take me back to my uncle's, and I did not want to run the chance of being killed as my aunt had been, and this was the reason why I told him that my uncle had killed my aunt.

Miss Edmonds was re-called, and she stated that it was customary to have a clothes-brush that had a handle to it in the hall, and on the morning after her aunt died she found the handle of this brush had been broken off. She had observed that it was whole on the previous night. She said she did not know what had become of the brush, but a similar one was produced before the coroner.

Dr. Bass Smith said—I am a surgeon by profession, but am not now in practice. I formerly did practice at Newent, and was on friendly terms with the prisoner and his wife, and attended them professionally. Mr. Edmonds came to fetch me on the night his wife died, and said that she was in a fit, and pressed me to come to his house immediately. I accompanied him back, and found the deceased in Miss Matthews's bedroom, supported by Miss Matthews and the prisoner. She was in a sinking and insensible state, and had her clothes on. I assisted to place her on the bed, and did what I could for her, but she never rallied in the least, and died about twenty minutes to one next morning. The moment I saw the deceased I told the prisoner that I considered it was a hopeless case. I inquired of Miss Matthews if there had been any row or violence in the house, and she told me there had not been any, and at the time I formed the opinion that the deceased died of apoplexy, and gave a certificate to that effect. A blow over the ear was calculated to produce apoplexy, particularly if struck while a person was in a state of agitation or excitement. If the blow had been preceded by any act of violence, or a state of terror, it would also be calculated to accelerate apoplexy. The deceased was a person of a constitution more likely to give way under such a state of circumstances than an ordinary person. I saw the prisoner some time after his wife's death, and he said to me, "Oh, Dr. Smith, I am so miserable—so unhappy to think that I have killed my wife through my unkindness. I have murdered her through my unkindness. Oh, Dr. Smith, I wish I could see my time over again, I would behave very differently to my poor wife, for she was indeed a good woman." I replied, "She was indeed a good woman, and your loss is her gain." The prisoner then said, "I know I have been a brute and a villain to her." In the year 1868 Miss Edmonds made a communication to me respecting her aunt, and the way in which she came by her death.

Cross-examined—I remember being sent to ask for Miss Jeannette's boxes, and the prisoner shook his fist at me, and refused to give them to me. He did not call me a scoundrel.

Mr. Huddleston—Oh! He did not call you a scoundrel (a laugh).

Cross-examination continued—I did not say that if he did not give them to me there should be such a stir as Newent had never seen, and the dead should be dug out of their graves. I insisted upon having the things, and Mr. Edmonds called me names. I don't know that he called me a villain. He might have called me a scoundrel. He called me a good many names (laughter). I went a second time for the boxes, and they were refused "conditionally."

By the learned Judge—I think the prisoner at this time was aware of the connexion that existed between me and Jeannette. After this I took Miss Edmonds to my wife at Cheltenham, and I took her to Ross. She wanted to see some friends at that place. I was never with her at the Boot at Gloucester. I was aware at this time that the prisoner was trying to get my name struck off the list of surgeons, and I had been served with a writ at the suit of the prisoner. I became bankrupt, and on the 12th of January the prisoner appeared to oppose me, and the inquiry was adjourned. During the interval between the two examinations I preferred this charge against the prisoner. I am a surgeon, and in 1867 I was living with my wife and four children, and visited the prisoner's family.

Mr. Huddleston—Attended the family professionally, partook of his hospitality, and endeavoured to seduce his niece?

Witness—Yes.

How old was she at the time you first attempted to seduce her?—I cannot say.

Was she more than 17 at the time you first attempted to seduce her?—I don't know.

Did you attempt to seduce her before her aunt's death?—I cannot say.

Did you sleep three nights with Jeannette Edmonds at Kenilworth?—Yes.

And then brought her back to her uncle?—I did.

The witness here went into a long rambling statement apparently for the purpose of exculpating himself, the chief point upon which he appeared to rely in his favour being that he had been left alone with the young lady very late at night, and that he could not resist the temptation that had been afforded him in the position in which he was placed.

In re-examination the witness declared that he never in any way endeavoured to influence Miss Edmonds, or dictate to her the evidence that she was to give. She communicated with the coroner, and then left him to pursue any course of proceeding he might think proper.

Mr. Huddleston asked the witness whether he did not attend at Judges' Chambers in order to oppose the prisoner's bail.

Witness denied that he had done so.

But you did go to the Judges' Chambers on every occasion?—Yes.

What did you go for?—To see the attorney for the prosecution (a laugh).

Dr. Willmott, a surgeon practising at Pylmeston, expressed an opinion that, supposing the blow referred to to have been given, it might have accelerated the apoplexy. The body was very much decomposed at the time it was exhumed, and no trace of violence could be discovered. There had been a rumour that the arm of the deceased had been broken, and the bones were, therefore, carefully examined, but the rumour turned out to be entirely false, as no limb was broken.

In answer to a question put by the learned Judge,

The witness stated that if he had not heard anything about a blow having been inflicted, all the appearances exhibited on the death-bed were entirely consistent with the death having arisen from natural causes. If he had been called in to attend the deceased at the time she was attacked, he should not have suspected anything wrong to have happened.

Dr. Charlton, the surgeon to the Gloucester Infirmary, gave evidence of a similar character to that of the last witness.

In cross-examination, Dr. Charlton said that apoplexy was more likely to arise after eating a hearty meal, and if the deceased had eaten anything on that evening tdat disagreed with her, it was calculated to have produced the symptoms of swelling that had been spoken to by the witness Jeannette Edmonds.

This closed the case for the prosecution.

Mr. Huddleston made an eloquent address to the jury, and he contended that the charge had been trumped up by the witness, Dr. Bass Smith, out of revenge, and that the charge was perfectly absurd and incredible.

Miss Matthews was called, and she stated that the deceased was suddenly attacked in the night she died, and that no violence whatever was exercised towards her. She also indignantly denied that any improper intimacy had ever existed between the prisoner and herself.

The trial was here adjourned, the defendant being liberated upon bail.

At the resumption of the case on Thursday,

Oscar Edmonds, a lad fifteen years of age, the son of the prisoner, was called. He said—I remember my mamma's death. I was in Miss Matthews' bed. I was awake and saw all that happened. I am quite sure my father did not strike my mother, or use any bad language to her. I remember my mother coming into the room. She walked in as she generally did, and a few minutes after she was in the room my father came in. I believe that he was going to London on the following day, and he wished my mamma to go with him to London and see a physician and then go on to see my brother, who was at college at Cambridge. He is now in Australia. I am certain that no violence was used by my father.

Cross-examined—I went to bed on this night by myself. It was not long before my aunt, Miss Matthews, came to bed, and I was awake. My father took me out of bed, and put me in his own bedroom. This was after my papa had been for the doctor. I was examined before the coroner, but I did not then say anything about my mamma going to Cambridge. I have never talked with my father since upon the subject.

Do you swear that?—Yes.

He has never mentioned the subject to you?—No, not upon any occasion.

Re-examined—I have been at Marlborough College for the last five months, and before that I was at school, and was only at home occasionally. I knew that I was to come to London to be examined as a witness. My aunt told me so; and it was understood by all the family. I was sent for to the college to give evidence by a telegram, and my father told me I was to tell all that I know upon the subject. This is all the communication I have had with him upon the subject, and no one has ever prompted me as to what I was to say.

Mrs. Anne Arch said—My name was formerly Cassidy—before I was married. I was in the service of the prisoner at the time of Mrs. Edmonds's death, and my husband was coachman. Anne Bradd was under me in the establishment. During all the time I was in the service the prisoner and his wife lived on kindly and affectionate terms. My mistress was never well during the time I was in the house. On the night of the 24th of February, 1867, I went to bed between ten and eleven o'clock. Anne Bradd slept in a room below me. I did not go to sleep till I heard of my mistress's death, and I am sure there were no screams after I went to bed. If there had been any screams of violence I must have heard them. My bedroom window looked on the garden, and if there had been any screams in the garden I must have heard them. I did not see my mistress until after she was dead. I heard movements in the house and I got up, and I then found out that my mistress had been dead for two hours. She looked very nice indeed. She had a pleasing look, and I saw no appearance of bruises of any kind. I never heard anything said about a blow being inflicted at this time. I saw Miss Jeannette on this night. She came to tell me her aunt was dead, but she did not say a word about a quarrel having taken place between her uncle and aunt.

In cross-examination the witness said there was no candlestick missing on the morning following her mistress's death. She had the charge of the candlesticks, and they were all right in the pantry, but she noticed that one was a little bent. She did not know how it became bent.

John Arch, husband of the last witness, said—I was formerly coachman to the prisoner, and left nine weeks after my mistress died. I used to drive her out. She was always very ailing, and she frequently ordered me to drive slowly, as she could not bear the motion of the carriage. My master and mistress always appeared to live very happily together, and I never heard of their quarrelling. Until the superintendent of police came to me, I never heard the slightest suggestion that my mistress had died of violence. I remember the brush that was in the hall. I was in the habit of using it, and I am quite sure that it was not broken on the morning after my mistress died. It was not broken until several months afterwards.

The witness was cross-examined at length, without material result.

Mrs. Simmonds was the next witness. She was a governess in the prisoner's family, having entered his service in 1865. She gave evidence similar to that of previous witnesses as to the kindly terms on which the prisoner and his wife lived. She and her husband were at the house on the 24th of February, 1867, and there was no quarrelling.

Mr. H. Simmonds, the husband of the last witness, said—I was in the habit of visiting the prisoner and his wife from 1866, and I never noticed any unkindness or ill-feeling between them, and they always appeared to live on affectionate terms. I never heard the slightest suggestion that Mrs. Edmonds's death was caused by violence until this charge was preferred by Dr. Bass Smith. I was present at the funeral, and very great respect was manifested for the deceased on the occasion by all the inhabitants.

Mr. Palmer said—I was formerly clerk to the prisoner, and lived at Newent at the time of Mrs. Edmonds's death, and I considered that they always lived on very friendly and affectionate terms. On the day of her death I did not hear any quarrel take place. I knew Miss Jeannette Edmonds. She never said anything to me about the prisoner having struck his wife a blow on the night she died. I never heard of such a thing until these proceedings were instituted.

Cross-examined—I will swear that I have never written a letter to a person named Clements, stating that I could give important evidence for the prosecution. The name of the young lady referred to was mentioned upon some other occasion, but not at the dinner on the 24th of February.

Dr. Kenealey—She was a very pretty young lady, I believe?

Witness—That is a matter of opinion (a laugh).

Mary Messenger, cook at the prisoner's at the time of the death, said—I used to occupy the same bedroom as Mrs. Arch. I remember the night that Mrs. Edmonds died, and I am quite sure there was no noise or screaming in the house on that night. Miss Jeannette first informed me that her aunt was dead, but she did not say anything about violence having been used to her. I never heard such a thing from anyone until this charge was made against Mr. Edmonds.

Mr. Ralph Edmonds said—I am the second son of the prisoner. Previous to her death it was my mother's habit to come to see the children before she went to bed. I was in the office at the time some angry words took place between my father and my cousin Jeannette. She and I were writing at the same desk, and I had pushed my writing before her, and I was about to read what I had written to her, when my father came in and said, "I have found you out, you hussey," and gave her a slight slap in the face. He had a letter in his hand at the time. It was the letter addressed "My Own Dearest Antony," and intended for Dr. Bass Smith. Jeannette went out of the office, and on the next day she borrowed some money of me to go away with. I was at home when Dr. Smith came for Jeannette's boxes. My father was very angry, and he reproached him for his conduct to Jeannette, and called him a scoundrel. Dr. Smith said that so long as he had a feather to fly with he would have Jeannette, and my father said he should not have her long. Dr. Smith then said that if my father did not give up the boxes there should be such a stir in Newent as Newent had never seen, and the dead should be had up out of their graves. My father and mother always lived happily together, and I never saw a quarrel between them.

Cross-examined—I remembered all those things when I was examined before the coroner, and I answered all the questions that were put to me. I did not say anything about the scene in the office because I was not asked anything about it. I told Mr. Cheshire, the solicitor, all that I knew, but I cannot say that I mentioned every circumstance that took place. I told him generally all that I knew.

Baron Bramwell remarked that it appeared to him that the explanation given by the witness was really a very reasonable one.

Cross-examination continued—Dr. Bass Smith was not asked to have some refreshment upon the occasion when he came to demand Jeannette's boxes.

Miss M. C. Edmonds said—I am the sister of Jeannette Edmonds. The prisoner has always provided for me, and he has brought me up since the death of my father. I was staying at the prisoner's house in 1867, and I can remember the clothes-brush being broken in September, 1867. I was romping with my cousin Edmund, and that was how the brush was broken. Edmund Edmonds is now in Australia. My uncle and aunt lived very happily together all the time I was with them, and I never heard any mention of violence until this charge was preferred.

Cross-examined—I first heard about the violence at the home where Jeannette had been placed. She told me about it. She was very anxious to leave the home, and said she was very miserable, and that she was nearly starved. I had thoughts of going into business, and proposed to take Jeannette to assist me, on condition that she would give up all connexion with Dr. Smith, but I afterwards changed my mind.

Cross-examined—The lady superior at the home told me that Jeannette was a very artful, deceitful girl, but afterwards she said that she believed she was penitent.

Re-examined—Before Jeannette went to the home she had always told me that my aunt had gone up to her bedroom quietly and that she had fallen down in a fit of apoplexy, and she never said a word about any violence having been used by the prisoner towards her. The first I heard of violence was from the lady superior of the home, who informed me what Jeannette had stated.

Dr. Temple said—I am a physician, and it is my opinion that apoplexy may take place without any excitement or violence, and sudden death may ensue in such a case. It is impossible upon a post mortem examination to discover any difference when the death arises from apoplexy and from disease of the heart.

In cross-examination Dr. Temple said that any fright, or terror, or any excitement calculated to increase the action of the heart was very likely to produce the result he had mentioned.

In answer to the question put by the learned Judge, Dr. Temple expressed an opinion that a blow being struck on the head, under the circumstances that had been stated, was not necessarily likely to have produced apoplexy. He subsequently, however, somewhat modified this opinion, and said that if it were proved that a blow had been struck on the head, and that the party complained immediately, and put her hand to the place, and died almost immediately afterwards, he should then certainly be inclined to think that the blow had something to do with causing the death. He added, however, that in such a case he should certainly expect to find the mark caused by the blow after the death.

Mr. Groves, a surgeon, practising at Gloucester, proved that he was present at the post-mortem examination of the deceased, but could not discover any mark of violence or cause of death. He said that he entirely concurred in the evidence of Dr. Temple upon the other matters.

Mr. Huddleston, in summing up the evidence he had produced on behalf of the prisoner, argued that he had established a satisfactory answer to the charge, and that the prisoner was entitled to an acquittal.

The learned Judge then summed up, and the jury, after about a quarter of an hour's deliberation, returned a verdict of NOT GUILTY.

The verdict was received with some applause.