

THE LATE ATTEMPTED MURDER AT THE CALDER FARM REFORMATORY, MIRFIELD.

COMMITTAL OF THE ACCUSED.

On Saturday forenoon, Joseph Broadhead, of Barnsley, a youth under sentence of detention at the Calder Farm Reformatory, Mirfield, was brought before Messrs. J. B. Greenwood and E. B. W. Balme, in the office of that institution, charged with having attempted to murder, on the night of the 2nd instant, Miss Louisa Huggon Johnson. His examination took place at the Reformatory, as Miss Johnson was too ill to leave her bed. The following evidence was taken :—

Elizabeth, wife of James Johnson, assistant schoolmaster at the Reformatory, deposed that about a quarter to nine o'clock on the night of the 2nd of April inst. she was seated in her sitting-room along with her sister-in-law, Miss Johnson, when Broadhead entered from the room adjoining—the kitchen—where he had been working, and rushing at her, attempted to stab her with a large knife he had in his hand. The point of the knife cut through all her clothes at the waist, but did not wound her. She evaded a second blow, ran upstairs, and became insensible. As she was getting away, she saw him rushing towards Miss Johnson, but did not see him stab her. The prisoner had not had any quarrel with her nor with any of the boys in the institution that she knew of.

Miss Johnson's deposition was taken in her bedroom, and was as follows :—Between eight and nine o'clock on the night of the 2nd of this month I was in my brother's sitting room with Mrs. Johnson. The prisoner is a boy at the Reformatory School, and on that day he was engaged in the kitchen. When he came in the room I was standing near the fire. He did not speak. I am sure he had a knife in his hand. I did not see him do anything to my sister-in-law, but she rushed upstairs out of the room. The prisoner came to me and struck me ; he struck me twice. I ran out of the sitting room by the door he had entered. I ran across the kitchen, and found the door bolted. Mr. Hepple then came into the kitchen, and almost immediately I saw Mr. Hepple with the prisoner by the collar. I then felt pain from my back and side. I was taken into Mr. Ashton's room, and Mr. Marsden (surgeon) then saw me. The knife now produced by Mr. Hepple is the same. I don't remember screaming before I saw Mr. Hepple at the kitchen door, nor do I remember my sister-in-law screaming. I never had any quarrel with the prisoner.

Mr. Marsden, surgeon, of Mirfield, deposed that he was called in to attend to the wounded lady. On examining her he found two wounds—one in the front part of the chest on the right side. It was in a slanting direction, and passed between the ribs into the chest. Its depth he estimated at three inches. It might have been caused by the carving-knife produced. The other wound was behind the right shoulder joint, and went downwards and backwards between the shoulder blade and the chest. He ascertained seven inches of depth without meeting with any obstruction. Both wounds apparently were caused by one instrument. Miss Johnson's situation was not yet free from danger.

John Hepple, head-master of the Calder Farm Reformatory, deposed that he was attracted by hearing screams proceeding from the kitchen. He was in his office at the time—a room on the same floor—and he rushed into the place, where he found Miss Johnson apparently much terrified. He asked her what was the matter, and she replied, "Go into the sitting room, and you'll see." He ran into the room named, and found the prisoner Broadhead in a violent state of excitement, trying to wrench off the window bar, with the view, apparently, of getting through the window. Asked him what he was about, and prisoner said, "Two men came over the yard wall, entered the back kitchen, throttled me, and wanted to kill me. I'm trying to make my escape." He took the prisoner to the back kitchen and asked him to point out the place, and he showed witness the yard wall. (It is 14 ft. high.) At this moment Miss Johnson made a loud noise, and, on turning round, witness saw she was bleeding much from a wound in the side, and supporting herself by the dresser. Keeping his hold of the prisoner, he went to support her until assistance arrived, and while he did so she said, "Take care of Broadhead, he has stabbed me with a carving-knife in the side." He was afterwards given in charge, and witness assisted Miss Johnson to Mrs. Ashton's room. The prisoner subsequent to this was charged by Superintendent Martin that he had committed the outrage, and he owned that he had. His clothing was partially destroyed, apparently cut with a knife. Witness found the knife in the sitting room, under the window.

Philip Lee, clerk at the County Police Station, Dewsbury, said that he along with other officers went up to the Reformatory on the night after Miss Johnson was wounded. The prisoner was changing his clothes when witness arrived, and on asking him where the missing portions of his shirt and waistcoat were, he said he had burned them in a fire beneath the "set-pot" in the back kitchen. While being taken in custody to Dewsbury the prisoner asked how Miss Johnson was, and then having been told that the officers did not know, said, "I don't know what made it come into my head ; I first thought about it last Wednesday, and it has been in my head ever since." The prisoner also said that though he knew Mr. Hepple had ordered two boys to sharpen the carving knife on the day previous, he did it again that day, "and," added he, "I meant killing them both, running away, and taking their money to help me on the road." On the Thursday following he repeated his statement that he meant to have killed the ladies, and when asked what money he expected to have found, answered, "Twelve or fifteen shillings."

This closed the evidence, and the prisoner was cautioned in the usual way. He said, "I have nothing to say," but immediately afterwards added, "It is all true that has been said." He was then committed for trial to the assizes.