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BIRCHALL FOUND GUILTY.

After a trial lasting a week and a day, and interesting more people in Canada than probably any similar investigation has interested, John Reginald Birchall has been found guilty of the murder of Charles Beawell. Everyone who has followed the evidence must acknowledge that the verdict is a just one.

The facts, as brought out in the testimony, are briefly these: Birchall arrived with Beawell and Polly to come to Canada and be partners with him in his alleged farm and horse-dealing transactions. They were unknown to each other when they met on shipboard at Liverpool early in February last. Birchall did what he could to keep them unacquainted. He had lied to them both, and he had therefore good reasons for trying to prevent them from comparing experiences. Birchall had obtained £170 from Polly by admitting him into a bogus partnership, and Charles Beawell, father of the other young man, had promised to pay Birchall £500 for a partnership for his son. If the latter was satisfied with the bargain from personal inspection. Birchall had to do something to avoid detection. Polly he found to be suspicious, and little wonder, for it was pretty evident to him that there was crookedness somewhere. So, when the three, with Mrs. Birchall, arrived at Buffalo, the prisoner lured Beawell away to see his wonderful farm at Niagara Falls, with stables lighted by electricity, he said. Instead of going there, however, Birchall bought two tickets for Eastwood, and induced his companion to walk to the swamp, and to his death. When he returned to Eastwood, he was alone and for nearly two weeks after that eventful Feb. 17 no one seems to have suspected the reason why. True, Birchall and his victim were seen on the road leading to the swamp, and a number of persons saw and spoke to the prisoner on his way back to Niagara Falls. But the same witnesses who observed the two men did not see Birchall when he came back alone, and it was only after the discovery of the victim's body, and the subsequent accidental finding of his cigar case, that the clue was afforded which led to the identification of Birchall as the companion of the man found murdered in the swamp. Birchall had taken what he believed to be good care to hide his victim's crime. In an unsuspecting moment, he lured him into the swampy woods, shot him down in his tracks and then on his name from every portion of his clothing, and emptied his pockets of their contents. By some means or other, as if a Providential dispensation—the cigar case was dropped on the ground, and was picked up several days after the discovery of the body, and after almost every hope of identifying it had been given up.

Meanwhile Birchall had resolved to carry on his scheme for deceiving and robbing his victim's father. He sent Polly on a wild goose chase to New York city to look for Beawell's baggage, having first told him that Beawell had not taken kindly to his farm, and had gone on to London to look for one for himself. Then, two days after the murder he wrote the infamous letter to Col. Beawell, announcing that his son had been admitted into partnership, that he was fully satisfied with the outlook, that the business was so large the correspondence would in future be written by typewriter, and that his son would write explaining all in a few days. The scheme undoubtedly was to send a typewritten letter to Col. Beawell with the forged signature of his son attached, and thus induce that gentleman to send the £500, to obtain possession of which the murder was undoubtedly committed.

When it was reported that the cigar-case had been found, Birchall at once went to Princeton and identified the body, maintaining that innocent-looking demeanor which has characterized him ever since. He was interviewed by the officers of the law, however, and his concocted story of Beawell's disappearance was doubted. Link after link of the chain of circumstantial evidence connecting him with the dreadful crime was speedily forged. Of the subsequent proceedings and Birchall's remarkable conduct before and during the trial, our readers have been fully apprised.

Mr. Osler conducted the prosecution with ability and moderation. He strengthened the case for the Crown by judiciously handling the witnesses. Mr. Blackstock, the leading counsel for the prisoner, whether through ill health or an overpowering consciousness that he had a poor case, was too potent in his treatment of the witnesses, and his cruel badgering of one girl was rebuked by the Judge. His address to the jury was his best effort. He put the case for the prisoner as strongly as possible, but it was at best weak, and contrary results could scarcely have been expected.

Canadians generally are to be congratulated on the promptitude with which justice has been done in this case, which has excited interest throughout the world. It must be satisfying to them to know that while nothing has been left undone to bring the guilty to book, and to vindicate the good name of the Province and of the county of Oxford, not one of the actors in the dread tragedy was a Canadian. The Oxford swamp was only the accidental theater of the terrible occurrence.

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With the other eye, they will wink to the guileless among the consumers, and with hand on heart protest that they are for reciprocity every time, only the wicked Yankees persist in refusing it. It will be a repetition of the anti-election performance of 1878, when Sir John Macdonald telegraphed to his lieutenant in New Brunswick that it was not the intention of the Conservatives to raise the duties—that all they intended to do, if returned to power, was to readjust the taxes without increasing them. He belied that promise, as we all know to our cost; he will belie the promise made now if he gets a chance.

A Government cannot be the humble servant of the combines and of the people at one and the same time.

Never was Canada in greater need of independent rulers than now.

PERSONAL AND GENERAL.

—Mr. Justice Patterson has been appointed to inquire into the alleged eccentricities of Judge Upper, of Haldimand.

—Hon. John Carling arrived in the city at noon to-day. His visit, so soon after he declined to come to the Western Fair, because official business pressed him hard, is exciting some comment. It need surprise no one to learn that the present pilgrimage has something further to do with pipe-laying for the next general election.

—It is a relief to most of us to find the Birchall trial ended. Thanks to the discovery of shorthand and its admirable adaptability to the taking of evidence, the length of the trial has been reduced to a mere iota of the time that would have been necessary in the old days, when the record of the evidence was taken in longhand, with a slowness that must have often led to irritation. It is safe to say that but for shorthand, the trial, instead of occupying a week and a day, would have taken a month and a day. And yet once in a while objection is raised to the moderate fees of the shorthand.

—If Birchall pays the penalty of his atrocious crime with his life—and there is no reason for believing that his sentence will be commuted—he will be the second person hanged by legal process in Oxford. This is certainly not a bad record for so large a county. On Dec. 10, 1862, a hanged man named Thomas Cook was hanged for the murder of his wife. The execution was bungled, the victim being literally decapitated. No one has been hanged since then, though several persons have been tried for murder, and in 1874 Timothy Topping was sentenced to be hanged for the murder of his wife and four children. The sentence was commuted to imprisonment for life. He died insane. The last great trial for murder was in 1879, when George McCabe and Thomas Bowers were charged with poisoning Annie McCabe, wife of the former. The jury disagreed, and when the case again came up in 1880, Judge Galt dismissed it.

—The Chicago speculator who offers to manage a company to manufacture aluminum from clay, by a process "unknown to books," and at a cost of only a few cents a pound, may not have a great deal of foundation for his assurances, but it is certain that this most useful metal is getting cheaper. The Cowles Electric Smelting and Aluminum Company, of Cleveland,

gratulated on the promptitude with which justice has been done in this case, which has excited interest throughout the world. It must be satisfying to them to know that while nothing has been left undone to bring the guilty to book, and to vindicate the good name of the Province and of the county of Oxford, not one of the actors in the dread tragedy was a Canadian. The Oxford swamp was only the accidental theater of the terrible occurrence.

This class of crime does not prevail to any extent in the Dominion, and we are glad of it. Yet the career and fate of the young man now lying under sentence of death in Woodstock jail convey a moral which all, but especially young men starting out in life, may lay to heart and profit by. Here was a well-educated man, a graduate of Oxford University, a son of reputable parents, who had every opportunity to make a fair start in life, and to earn a good living for himself and family. He possessed undoubted talents, and was clever in many ways. But he early conceived the idea that it was undignified to work for a living, and that true enjoyment of life consisted in exaggerating one's own importance, and in masquerading under false colors—as "Lord Somerset." It is natural that a man who allows his ideas of the aims of life to become so perverted should begin to believe that the world owes him a living without working for it. He resolved to leave honest labor to others and to live by his wits, and his downward career to the gallows has been swift and sure. The lesson cannot be too strongly impressed upon the rising generation that the moment a man attempts, by crooked means, to get something for nothing, to get wealth without earning it, he has entered on a perilous path.

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