TRIAL. ONHIS READ HE PLEADS "NOT GUILTY" TO THE

CHARGE OF MURDER.

THE

VERDICT AND SENTENCE.

DEFENCE.

NO WITNESSES FOR

The trial of James Canham Read for the murder of

Florence Dennis, at Prittlewell, near Southend, last Midsummer Day, was opened on Monday at Chelmsford Assizes. READ WAS BROUGHT INTO COURT in the custody of two worders, and walked with a

characteristically quick and clastic step to the front of the dock to have his plea taken. He was dressed in the light tweed suit which he was wearing when arrested, and in his hand he carried several large sheets of blue paper. Since he has been in gaol the accused has grown a short beard, and those who saw him during the Magisterial examination at Southend at first failed to recognise him. On being called on by Mr. Arthur Denman, the Clerk of Assize, he pleaded "Not guilty" in a quiet, confident tone; but, in reply to an indictment charging him with embezzling a sum of £150 odd, the money of the London and West India Docks Joint Committee, his employers, he admitted



his guilt with a slight inclination of his head. Then,

placing his hands behind his back, in an unconcerned way, he watched the jury being sworn, carefully scrutinizing each one of them as they took the book. A chair was next provided for him, and he took his sent between two warders. Crossing his arms and legs, his attitude was one of apparent ease and unconcorn while MR. LOCKWOOD OPENED THE CASE by setting forth the circumstances relied on by the

prosecution for attributing the crime to the prisonerhis secret correspondence and immoral connection with the murdered girl: the difficulties pressing upon him in consequence of her approaching confinement; his telegraphic message to her arranging a meeting for June 23, which was a day before the murder; his absence from his own home and his other known places of resort on that day; his flight on the Monday after receiving a telegram from the girl's sister asking what had become of her; the fact that he had taken possession of a revolver belonging to his brother which had not been found, but which was of a gauge corresponding to that of the bullet found in the brain of the murdered girl; and other facts. EVIDENCE FOR THE PROSECUTION. The first witness called was Mr. Caton, a surveyor,

who produced plans of the scene of the murder and the surrounding neighbourhood. Rev. John Chandler, a Baptist minister, of Prittlewell, stated that on Monday, June 25, about 9.30,

while walking along a footpath, and within a few feet

of the spot where the murder was committed, he found a glove. The grass had been beaten down. Frederick Rush, of Royal-terrace, Southend, gave evidence as to the finding of the body. Cross-examined by Mr. Cock, Q.C.: There was a

good deal of blood round the woman's head. The body was lying on its back. PRISONER'S ARREST. Police-sergeant Alfred Marden, stationed at Southend, said he remembered the morning of June 25. About

half-past eleven o'clock on that morning he saw Mrs. Ayriss at the police station. She made a communication to him, of which a note was made. About a quarter to seven the same evening the last witness came to the station, and afterwards pointed out to him the body in the brook. The body was lying on its left side. The hat was on the woman's breast. Her head was towards the farm and her feet towards Prittlewell. He failed to find any trace of footmarks. The grass between the footpath and hedge was flattened down. There was an opening in the hedge, through which the body could be moved. He saw a clot of blood on the footpath. He made a thorough search, but found no revolver. He was on duty with Detectiveinspector Baker at Upper Mitcham, where they saw the prisoner. As they approached Read walked into Rose Cottage. Inspector Baker went to the door and knocked. He saw the inspector speak to a female, and the prisoner came to the door. The inspector beckoned him, and they then arrested Read. At the police station, Read said, "Mrs. Ayriss knows more about this than I do; you may believe me or not, but this is all rot about Southend. I was thinking I ought to have gone to the inquest to make a statement." To Harry Read the prisoner said, "What do you



Read." THE DOCTOR'S EXAMINATION. Dr. Waters then told the story of how he was called to see the body as it lay on the path. Florrie had been dead by that time for, he should say, sixteen to twenty

hours. From the black marks round the wound he should say the shot was fired quite close at hand. The resistance of the bone accounted for the condition of the bullet. The girl was eight months in pregnancy_ A SISTER OF THE DECEASED. A married sister of the deceased, named Emma Dee. residing at Sheerness, spoke to the occasion when Read with Mrs. Ayriss met her and Florrie. She took in two letters for Florence, but her husband objected to the

practice, and she refused to take in any more. THE CORRESPONDENCE. Widow Schmidt stated that she attended Mrs. Ayriss at St. John's-hill during the confinement. She gave evidence as to the letters sent to and from there. The defence here seemed to be that the letters sent by Florence were sent on behalf of Mrs. Ayriss. Mr. Lockwood re-examined on the point, and asked,

"Were those letters sent on behalf of Mrs. Ayriss?"

I had to promise her---' But the witness was not

"It could not be," replied Mrs. Schmidt, "because

allowed to finish her sentence. Evelina Dennis, aged fourteen years, sister of the deceased, residing at Marine Parade, Sheerness, stated that when her sister was staying at Sheerness during the last summer she had letters and telegrams addressed to her in the name of "Talbott" at shops in

the district. Frederick Dennis, a seaman, of Marine-parade, Sheerness, brother of the deceased, stated that his sister in May last came to stay at Sheerness. One Sunday he remarked to his sister about a man who was walking about in front of the house, and whom he now recognised as the prisoner. His sister, however, did not

make any answer to his question. Mr. Gill: She asked you for advice and you gave it?-I did; and she then wrote the reply, which . posted for her. It was addressed to the prisoner. A few days later she received another letter, and went out the same evening. Next day, as we were in the parlour, she called my attention to a man who had

Miss Alice Hughes, milliner, Sheerness, stated that while Miss Dennis was staying at Sheerness she had letters addressed to her shop in the name of Talbott and Johnson. Tuesday's work began with further examination of post-office and telegraph officials on the subject of the

passed the window.

anonymous telegrams sent to the murdered girl at Sheerness and Southend. THE MOTHER OF FLORENCE. After them Mrs. Dennis was called. She is apparently about fifty-five years of age, and was dressed in deep black, with a heavy black lace veil. She de-

scribed herself as the wife of a working harness maker, living at 44, Marine-parade, Shoorness, with some of her children. Her husband lived elsewhere, and only came there occasionally. Her daughter Florric had usually lived with her, but had from time to time paid long visits to her sister, Mrs. Ayriss. She was twentythree years of age. She last returned home from a visit at Christmas last, and remained at home till June 19, when she communicated to witness the fact that she was pregnant, naming the father of the child, and the time and place when the intimacy took place. Witness had only seen Read once, on an occasion when she visited him at the docks in company with Mrs. Ayriss. On learning Florrie's condition, witness took her to Mrs. Ayriss's house at Southend. A few days before the murder she went, at Florrie's request, to

the post-office, Marine Town, Sheerness, and obtained a telegram addressed to Talbott. She opened and read it, and then sent it on by post to Florrie at Southend. EVIDENCE OF MRS. AYRISS. Mrs. Ayriss's name was called next-and she entered the court amid a palpable stir of curiosity. Read glanced at her, and then resumed his study of

the blue foolscap folios on which he was taking notes.

From time to time he glanced at her as she gave her

answers; but the two were so situated in the court |

that except by instinct she could scarcely have been conscious of his scrutiny. She is a plain, thin woman, with high cheekbones and imperceptible eyebrows, and a voice which is like her mothers, except that it is slightly less difficult to hear. She recited the story of her acquaintanceship and her illicit intimacy with the prisoner without betraying any confusion, and nothing more than a slight irresoluteness in remembering dates. The clandestine correspondence which she had had with Read was addressed to her in the name of Mrs. Neville: he had never written to her as Latimer. Perhaps the most curious feature in her evidence on these points was her striving after exactness. The intimacy with him ceased, she said, in March, 1892, three years after it had begun. He continued to write to her on odd occasions, never under the name of Latimer, always under that of Neville. Her sister Plorence was staying with her in May, 1892. Did you know at that time that your sister Florence was in communication with Read?—No.

Later in this year you removed to Kingston-on-Thames—(Yes)—and there did you find an envelope in your sister's skirt pocket addressed to Miss Latimer?

The Witness answered yes, and as she gave her answer, suddenly, without warning, began to cry. The prisoner leaned forward and looked eagerly at her. But Mrs. Ayriss wiped her eyes, and presently went on with her evidence as composedly as before. She said that the envelope bore the postmark of the Royal | office clerk named Warren, who spoke as to the receipt Albert Docks. The evidence then passed on to the alternation of

Florence Dennis's residences at Hanwell and Sheerness. Florence went to Hanwell in October, and returned to Sheerness on December 24, 1893. Mrs. Ayriss did not see her from that date until June 19, when Florric was brought by her mother to Southend, in consequence of what she had said about her condition. When Florence came to Southend she made to her sister the same statement that she had made to her mother regarding the father of the child. Did your sister then write a letter to someone?-

To whom was the letter addressed?—To Mr. Read, Royal Albert Docks.

You saw your sister post it?—Yes. Can you tell us from memory what was in the letter?—The witness responded in a voice so low that

it was heard with great difficulty, that, as far as she could remember, it ran :-Dear Sir,-I have left Sheerness, and am staying at Southend. I should like to hear from you what arrangements you have made. Write to Miss Dennis, Post Office, Southend.

Mrs. Ayriss said that they expected an answer to this letter, and that one was received, and that, following upon the receipt of this communication, Florence made certain proposals and arrangements. Her evidence then went on to deal with the day of the murder. THE DAY OF THE MURDER. Florence, in consequence of the crowded condition of the house of Mrs. Ayriss, was to have slept at the

house of a deighbour, Mrs. Eggers, on the Sunday night. She went out to go to Mrs. Eggers' at about half-past eight. Next morning-Monday-Mrs. Ayriss found that her sister had not come home after going for a walk on Sunday night, and there was no letter from her to say where sho might be. Mrs. Ayriss then went on to the police station to give information that her sister was missing, and she gave a description to the police of her sister and of another person. Afterwards, when her husband came home, Mrs. Ayriss made a communication to him, in consequence of which a telogram was despatched. The telegram was addressed to "Read, Royal Albert Docks," and it said, "Where is Florrie? Wire

Later in the same day Mrs. Ayriss said that she had received a letter from Read, which ran:-Dear Mrs. Ayriss,-What is the meaning of your extraordinary wire? Please write fully. Have not seen the young person for quite eighteen months, when you were living at

J. C. READ. You did not see the prisoner at Southend either on the Saturday or Sunday?—No. When you were before the Coroner and before the police Magistrates you swore you did?—Yes.

St. John's-hill.—Faithfully yours,



And you described the circumstances under which you saw him?—Yes. It was not true that you had seen him?—No.

MRS. AYRISS'S CROSS-EXAMINATION. Cross-examined by Mr. Cock, Q.U.: She had made untrue statements as to seeing Read, and as to his dress and actions on the Sunday night, knowing well

that he was on trial for his life. Her husband knew nothing about her meetings with Read. She did not, when at St. John's-hill, ask her sister to let Read know of the birth of her (Mrs. Ayriss's) child. Letters from Read were addressed to her as "Mrs. Neville" and "Miss Dennis." She did not receive communications from him addressed "Talbott" or "Latimer." She received telegrams from him addressed "Harris," but in no other name. Her husband opened all letters. In further cross-examination, Witness said she kept the letter found in Florrie's skirt out of curiosity. She asked Florrie if it had been written to her, and Florrie denied that it had. Witness still kept it, how-

Witness denied that the letter was intended for She made an appointment to meet Read at Victoria Station in March, 1894. She wanted to tell him that she was about to take a house and let apartments at Southend. She thought it would be the last opportunity of seeing him at that time. She did not know her sister was enceinte. She did not then tell him her sister had got into trouble with a soldier, and ask him if he could help her. She knew that Read was a married man. WHAT MR. DOWTHWAITE SAW. Robert Dowthwaite, an umbrella manufacturer, living at North-street, Prittlewell, deposed that on the night of June 24 last he was in Solentyne's-lane. It was ten o'clock. He was walking towards Prittlewell. When he got on the road adjacent to Potta-

way's sheds he met a man and woman walking arm-inarm. He (witness) passed on the side on which the man was walking. Witness had an opportunity of seeing both. He saw the woman's face. He could not see the whole of the man's face. He believed that the body of the deceased was that of the woman he saw on the Sunday night, and he afterwards identified the prisoner as the man he saw with the woman. AT BENFLEET. Police-constable Daniell, stationed at Benfleet, said that on Monday, June 25, he was on duty at Benfleet about a quarter-past one o'clock, when he saw the prisoner coming from the direction of Southend. He said to the prisoner, "Hullo, guv'nor? You're up and dressed early this morning?" Prisoner said, "Yes.

Can you direct me to Benfleet?" Witness said, "You're in Benfleet now. Who do you want?" Prisoner said, "I want no one here. I want the road to Witness directed him, and the prisoner thanked him and said, "Good morning." AT THE DOCKS. Mrs. Teresa Scammel, the wife of one of Read's brother clerks at the Albert Docks, saw Read on the morning of June 25—the morning after the murder. He looked, she thought, less neat and spruce than usual. Mrs. Scammel was followed by other witnesses more immediately connected with the Royal Albert Docks. They testified that Read had left his office rather

earlier than usual on the Saturday; and one of them--Mr. Burgess-noticed the unusual circumstance of a fire in Read's room on Monday. Read's excuse for a fire on the hot June day had been that he wanted to clear the air of the room. READ'S DAUGHTER IN THE BOX. Emma Read said the prisoner was her father. On Friday night, June 22, he was at home, and left the next morning. From the time he left she did not see him again till he was at Southend. As her father did not come home on Monday, June 25, she wrote to him. She did not remember whether he was ever at home on Sundays since January. She saw a revolver case under the couch at her home. After her father went

away she did not see the revolver again. By Mr. Cock: She saw the revolver case. She never saw the revolver. MISS KEMPTON EXAMINED.

Beatrice Diva Kempton, living with her parents at Cambridge, said that in October, 1892, she was engaged as a confectioner's assistant at Gloucester-road, London, at the Gloucester-road Railway Station. The same month she met the prisoner, and afterwards she met him by appointment. He gave his name as Edgar Benson, said he lived at 16, North-street, Poplar, and was employed at Peck Brothers, tea merchants, as a traveller. He wrote to her from 16, North-street, and she answered him there. He said he had a sister named Bessie, who was married to a Mr. Parker, and

was living at Canterbury. He told her that in 1892 he was going to remove from North-street to Mile-endroad, where he was going to live with a friend, named Harry Edwards. (Harry Read, brother of the accused, was here brought into court, and identified by the witness as the man who had been introduced as Harry Edwards.) Prisoner soduced her. MR. AND MRS. BENSON. At this point letters from the prisoner to the witness were read by counsel. In one of these missives he described her letters as being "as cheering as winter sunbeams, only warmer." Another related to a projected visit to "the Edwards's" at Sheerness. Proceeding, Witness said she did not go to the Edwards's. She stayed at Hallingbury with the prisoner, where

they passed as Mr. and Mrs. Benson. In October, 1893, she was at Cambridge, and told him of her condition. She asked him to marry her, and he said he could not very well marry her just then. She had no idea he was a married man. He afterwards said he would marry her when her baby was born, and suggested that she should go to Little Hallingbury to be confined, and she went there, he instructing her to tell her parents that she was going to Ryde to act as a companion to a lady named Mrs. Prince. She remained at Little Hallingbury from December to January, when he negotiated with Mrs. Young for apartments at Rose Cottage, Mitcham. He wrote that he should give Mr. Prince, of Ryde, and Mr. Johnson, of Clapham, as references. He had, he wrote, told Mrs. Young these

people had known them some years. Before leaving. Hallingbury prisoner showed her a revolver. He said he carried it because it was such a lonely road, and people were stopped. A DRAMA OF REAL LIFE.

In a subsequent letter he wrote, "We have acted a

drama of real life, but the slightest mistake in our

whole policy would spoil the whole thing.

has been a thousand to one against things working as smoothly as they have. It has almost been miraculous.' Prisoner had also given her what purported to be a marriage certificate, but she did not believe it to be a genuine document. The certificate was dated March 19, 1893, and purported to be a marriage between James Edgar Benson and Beatrice Diva Kempton, and signed by the Rev. J. Pwaldow, M.A., Vicar of South Kensington Church. In a subsequent letter prisoner said "Gibbs has smashed for £3,000, and let me in for £186 and £70 in cash." On June 22, prisoner wrote saying that he would be unable to spend Saturday and Sunday with her as usual owing to having an engagement at Canterbury. On June 25 prisoner arrived at Rose Cottage, and he then looked somewhat dejected. She remarked upon his appearance, and said that he wanted a shave. He said that he was too tired to shave. Witness then related the journey to Croydon and the purchase of the clothes for Read. On Thursday and Friday following he despatched numerous telegrams from various railway stations to Rose Cottage inquiring "if all were well." Not knowing what he meant she replied in the affirmative. On Saturday he again came back, and stayed there until he was arrested. Witnesses from Mile-end-road and Clapham-park-

road gave evidence as to receiving letters for Read. READ'S HANDWRITING. The first witness called on Wednesday was a post-

of a particular telegram at Southend.

HARRY READ EXAMINED. Harry Victor Read, brother of the prisoner, said he

was an insurance agent. In 1892 witness was employed at 16. North-street, Poplar. In December, 1892, he censed to be in employment. He had at the time in his possession a revolver and a box of cartridges. The revolver was in a leather case. He had it in his



pocket on one occasion at the prisoner's house. His sister, Mrs. Kelly, was there. On that occasion he

left the revolver and cartridges with his brother. The box produced was similar to the box he had. It was a pin-fire revolver, and took a No. 7 cartridge. He thought he had received one or two letters for his brother at North-street, Poplar. He did not remember the letters coming for the prisoner in the name of Edgar Benson. He (witness) had one or two letters addressed to him in Mile-end-road in the name of Edwards. He supposed he was introduced in the name of Edwards to some friends of Miss Kempton. He never went to Richmond Park with Miss Kempton and his brother. He was on very intimate terms with his brother, and visited at his house. He had no sister named Parker living at Canterbury. Witness, proceeding, said he never stayed at Sheerness, and never invited Miss Kempton there. He had no idea on June 22 where his brother was going. His brother did not tell him he was going to Canterbury. They went to Charing Cross by 'bus. Do you know where the West Strand Telegraph

When you got off the 'bus at Charing Cross did you meet someone?—Yes, while walking along I met a gentleman I had met before. Do you know where he lives?-No; we made our

Office is?—No, I do not.

way round the Horse Guards, the Green Park, and then Hyde Park. We mot Mr. Kendall at the Marble Arch. It was about twenty minutes past ten. The envelope produced was not in his handwriting. The words, "Mr. Superintendent Hawtrey," were in his handwriting, but nothing else. In June last he had a violet pencil. He never left his brother during the whole of the evening of June 22. He first heard of the murder on Wednesday, June 27, in the evening. He went to Jamaica-street on the Thursday, and there saw his brother's desk, and forced it open. He first heard from his brother the week after the girl had been murdered. Mr. Gill: Do you say you forced open this desk without having received any letter from your brother? At his wife's wish—yes.

When did you know of Rose Cettage, Mitcham?-In the first letter from my brother. How many times did you write to him before his arrest?—I think about three. I am not sure.

When did you first, if ever, hear him speak of Mrs. Ayriss? How long before June of this year?—A couple of years. He called her the dairymaid. Did he ever tell you of his relations with her sister? He said something about a girl named Flo. How long before July 7 did your brother mention

Mrs. Ayriss or her sister Flo?-I should think about a couple of years. Did you hear him mention on the way to the station, "What do you think of the little dairymaid now?"-And the last time he mentioned her before was two

years?—Yes.

By Mr. Cock, Q.C.: He had not seen the letter-card (produced) from his brother. Mr. Irvine, manager of Messrs. Eley's, having stated that the bullet found in the woman's head was from a

No. 7 Eley cartridge, Detective-inspector Baker gave an account of Read's arrest and the statements be made; these, however, have already been published This closed the case for the prosecution, and the Clerk of Arraigns read the statement made by Read to



No witnesses were called for the defence. Mr. Cock, before addressing the jury, urged that he had the last word in the trial, and only the Attorney-General had

the right to reply, although no evidence was called on the part of the prisoner. After some discussion the Judge overruled the objection to the Solicitor-General replying on the question. Mr. Cock then commenced his address to the jury. This was, he said, a case in which no single fact had

been produced in the course of the investigation which

would in any sense justify them in bringing a verdict

of "Guilty" against the prisoner. They had to consider

a most extraordinary story, as the prisoner had said there was one person who played a large part in this case whose conduct required the severest examination, whose word had by herself been branded as the word of a perjurer, the person who played probably the most prominent part in this drama-Mrs. Ayriss. It would be for the jury to consider fully what were the relations between the prisoner and Mrs. Ayriss. and what part they played in the charge eventually brought against the prisoner. He should submit that Florence Dennis was a shield between Mrs. Ayriss and her husband. Florence Dennis became the mistress of the prisoner; indeed, that was the only thing that suggested a motive for the crime so far as the prisoner was concerned. No living soul had, however, pretended to have seen the prisoner and Florrie together until the day on which she met her death. No living being ever saw those two people in each other's society, nobody suggested that they saw them from the day that they were introduced at Clapham Common till the day the unfortunate woman lost her life. If the relations suggested existed, there would have been some evidence forthcoming for the jury's consideration to show that at any rate the prisoner and the girl were from time to time in each other's company. Such evidence was absolutely wanting. The flight of the prisoner, he argued, was due to the robbery only. Read's history showed that he was a kindly man and not a bloodthirsty ruffian who would murder a woman for the utterly inadequate motive of avoiding an affiliation REPLY OF THE SOLICITOR-GENERAL.

summons, which was the worst that could have happened to him. The Solicitor-General rose to reply at twenty minutes to four. He said that, with regard to the motive. affiliation proceedings against Read would mean exposure in the eyes of the dock company, exposure of his wicked double life, and his neglect of his wife. Moreover, there would be exposure in the eyes of the woman he was so passionately fond of-Miss Kempton. He was surprised to hear Mr. Cock dismiss the question of motive so lightly. All the hours in Read's life between the Saturday afternoon before the murder and the Monday morning after it had been left a sealed book. and all Mr. Cock could do was to suggest that Read was betraying Miss Kempton, and was indulging in a fresh intrigue with yet another woman, rather than disclose whose name Read, in some chivalrous humour, preferred to allow it to remain in gloomy mystery. There was not one single moment accounted for in the whole of Read's time between Saturday and Monday. He agreed with counsel for the prisoner that no single fact

proved the guilt of the prisoner, but the cumulative effect of the evidence for the Crown proved Read's guilt as clearly as if his hand had been seen pulling the trigger of the pistol which kulled Florence Dennis. On Thursday, the Solicitor-General began to deal with the evidence of the witnesses who said they saw Read at Southend on the day of the tragedy, and main-

tained that on what was unquestionably honest evidence Read had undoubtedly been seen with the girl a short time before the murder." THE JUDGE SUMS UP. The Judge, after a short absence from court, began his summing up punctually at half-past eleven. At the outset he impressed upon the jury the importance of not allowing questions of morality to have weight in deciding upon a charge of murder, except in so far as they went towards proving or disproving that charge.

at the time of the crime, and near it as would lead them to believe the prisoner caused the death of this woman, their duty was to give a verdict of guilty. It was his duty in such cases to show the jury law, but in this particular case no question of law arose. His remarks would be brief. A theory of suicide was of

course out of the question. His Lordship spent some time in scanning the evidence as to the latter letters and telegrams. Referring to the Charing Cross telegram he pointed out that Harry Read denied having sent it. Such a telegram, however, was received, because it had been produced by the Post Office people, and it had been acted upon. Mrs. Ayriss confessed that SHE HAD REEN UNTRUTHFUL

when she first appeared before the Magistrate. This

woman must be dealt with by the jury entirely. She had undoubtedly reason for a strong, intense feeling against the prisoner, and whether she was carried away by that feeling without having sufficient regard for absolute accuracy that should be demanded of her, the jury would be able to form an opinion. On the main question, however, they would probably accept the evidence, which was supported by facts proved independently, and to which her testimony added force. There could be no doubt as to the fact that Read was in possession of a revolver for some time. In conclusion, he asked them to carefully consider all these matters, and to return a verdict in accordance with their oath. It was ten minutes to one o'clock when the Judge concluded his remarks, and the jury at once intimated their desire to retire. THE JURYMEN RETIRE. As the jury left the court, Rend turned on his heel

and darted rapidly down the steps to the cells below. He trembled somewhat and did not attempt to gaze around the court, as was his wont early in the week. The Judge, after brief consultation with the clerk of assize, rose and left the court. Harry Read paced restlessly up and down the outer hall. Here several other witnesses had gathered awaiting the result. THE JURY RETURN. After being away for forty minutes, the usher's cry

of "Silonce" announced the return of the jury, and the buzzing conversation which pervaded the court while they were absont changed to a silence awful in

its intensity. When the twelve men on whose very lips the fate of the accused man now in truth rested had filed into their

seats, and answered to their names, Read was again placed at the bar, where he stood firmly for a moment, and then sat down. The Clerk of the Arraigns to the jury: Have you

agreed on your verdict? The Foreman: We have. Clerk of Arraigns: Do you find the prisoner guilty or not guilty of wilful murder.

VERDICT. "Guilty," came the solemn answer. Not a sound could be heard. The spectators seemed held by some strange spell as the Clerk asked in a short jerky way, "Jumes Canham Read, have you anything to say why sentence of death should not be passed upon you?" "I have," was the firm reply.

Read paused slightly, then deposited the familiar

READ'S SPEECH.

bundle of papers on the ledge in front of him, he placed one foot upon the ledge, and looked up calmly at the Judge. Scarcely a muscle on his face moved. He spoke as strongly, as fearlessly, and as dramatically as he did at Southend. In fact, his remarks and his whole attitude reminded one more of a man addressing an ordinary gathering of spectators than a man upon whom the dread sentence of the law was about to be passed. As at Southend, his statement was a tissue of denials. He said: "I would wish to repeat that I am perfectly innocent of the charge, that it is now two years since I have even seen Florence Dennis, that I have never written to her, and that I have never received one letter from her.

"Not until October 22 this year did I know where the murder was committed, when a plan of the place was shown me by my solicitor. "I have never fired a revolver in my life. The revolver spoken to in evidence has not been in my pos-

session since the end of February last.

"I have never been to Hanwell in my life. "It was in March last, while Mrs. Ayriss said it was in the March preceding, that I received from her a letter making an appointment at Victoria Station. "I met her. It was there she told me that her sister Florence Dennis had got into trouble with a

soldier at Hounslow, and she begged my pecuniary assistance. "She wanted to borrow a sum of £50. I told her I had not fifty pence, and that if I had £50 I wanted it for my family. Early at that meeting Mrs. Ayriss told me that the object of her call there was with regard to business difficulties, which, she said, oppressed her, but before she left that night she explained to me

the real object for which the money was required. "In her evidence she told us that the meeting lasted ten minutes; it lasted three hours. "Lastly, I have to say that at the time that the murder was committed according to the evidence, I was as nearly as possible fifty miles from the spot."

Having finished, Read turned round and quietly sat down, flushed a little and striving to conceal his inward excitement. SENTENCED TO DEATH. Then, amid profound silence, the Judge put on the

black cap, and in these words passed sentence:— James Canham Read, you have been found guilty of murder, upon evidence which I think can leave no doubt in the mind of any person who has been in this court and heard it.

No benefit, I think, can arise from my making any observation with regard to your offence. What has been your temptation, and what your guilt, God alone can know. But I do ask you most solemnly before I pass that sentence—which is the only sentence that can be

passed in such a care—that you give such time as you

have here left you to look unto Him Whose law you have so grievously offended for that pardon which He alone can give. The sentence of the Court is that you be taken from hence to the place from whence you came, and from thence to a place of execution, and that you be there hanged by the neck until you shall be dead, and that

your body be afterwards buried in the precincts of the prison in which you shall have been last confined after your conviction, and may God have mercy on your The Rev. E. R. Jervis, chaplain: Amen. Read was then removed. Before leaving the court and the faces which had become so familiar to him, he cast a contemptuous glance around, and then lifting his

foolscap notes from the table in front of him, passed

down the stairs with a jaunty step, holding his head erect as if in protest against an injustice. There was some formal business, such as relieving the jury of certain attendances at court in future, and refunding of money found on prisoner to his employers, and thus terminated the great drama. In memories of those whose painful duty it was to watch it in its various stages of development, to examine the web as it was slowly woven by the Treasury, the picture of the endthe little neat figure, and its inevitable bundle of blue papers, and its many individualistic characteristics, darting down to the cells beneath the old Courthouse, and disappearing for ever, as it were, from the stage

of life, will never cease to be one of the most startling and impressive dramas in the annals of crime. When Mrs. Ayries left the court escorted by Sergeant Marden she was loudly hissed. To avoid the crowd, the officers took the witnesses through some private premises into another street, and ultimately got them away by train without further unpleasant incidents. READ AS A LETTER WRITER. The Evening News publishes some letters, which it describes as extraordinary, written by Read in gaol.

The letters, if we cannot quite find in them "the keen and bright intellect" which our contemporary ascribes to the criminal, are unquestionably at the present moment good newspaper "copy." The following are a few extracts:-'I am 5ft. 3½in. in my socks, and my fighting weight is 9st. 10lb., but I am one of that sort of worms 'what turns,' and don't let some of 'em forget it. "Eat the leek! Why, I'll make them eat granite,

and beg for hell as a relief. 'They shall digest the

venom of their spleen, though it do 'split them,' as my friend Marcus Brutus says. But friends I have, and their adoption tried, I'll grapple to my soul with hoops of steel." "I say, what a fraud everything is; and with what

little wisdom the world is governed! You only need ever so slight a peep behind the scenes to know 'how it's done.' With respectable stationery, a brass plate, a brass face, and no conscience worth speaking of, you may set up as you choose—as either a solicitor, a harrister, a doctor, an architect, a notary public, an auc-

tioneer, or even an insurance broker—for if you know absolutely nothing you may hire a ghost for twenty-five bob a week and mouth his technicalities—thus 'tis done! I'm out of this into the professions; no more hard work for me; high-class sweating is the card!" "" How are your nerves after the 'Rosberry' thunderbolt? Mine are all to pieces! What is it to beevolution or revolution? Is this to be the order of developments for our times—1870, Education Bill; 1884, Reform Bill; New Democratic vote; Home Rule Bill; House of Lords Bill; One Man One Vote Bill; General Chaos and Disintegration Bill—the devil? "Let us by all means have a representative House of Commons, and the suffrage is wide enough for the next ten years; seeing one-third never vote and onethird don't know how to; but One Man One Vote would ruin us. Fancy trusting 'the Mob' with the

government of such an 'intricate' Empire as thiswho know as much of the ethics of politics as my boot! As usual, I am with the cold logician Joseph, who told us to stick to the Second Chamber we have 'until we get one better." DATE OF EXECUTION. The execution will take place at Springfield Gaol on Tuesday, December 4. SMALL-FOX AND VACCINATION.

Mr. E. C. Greenwood, public vaccinator of Marylebone, has made a report on the effects of vaccination in connection with the recent outbreak of small-pox. He draws the following conclusions:

1. That the protective influence of primary vaccination up to five years of age is perfect.

2. That the modifying effect of vaccination upon small-pox is greatly influenced by the number of vaccination marks.

3. That everyone should be revaccinated at the age of ten years. 4. That vaccination in less than four places should not be allowed. 5. That in time of epidemics temporary stations

should be opened and house-to-house visitations made, so that everyone may be vaccinated immediately a case occurs in their house. 6. That in time of epidemics there would be no occasion to close the schools if the children were examined, and the unvaccinated or the imperfectly

"TIT BITS" PROPRIETORS FINED.-At Bowstreet on Thursday, George Newnes (Limited), proprietors of Tit-Bits and other papers, were summoned at the instance of the Strand Board of Works for using a furnace that did not consume its own smoke. Mr. Vaughan said the matter was of great importance to the public, and fined defendants 40s. and costs,

vaccinated excluded,

FLEET-STREET FORGER SENTENCED.—At Liverpool Assizes on Friday, John Cameron, who had been employed in a newspaper office in Fleet-street, London, pleaded "Guilty" to having uttered three forged cheques for £10 10s. each, and was sentenced to twelve months' hard labour. The cheque-book belonged to another employé, and prisoner having found it, and being discharged from his situation, forged the names

It had been suggested by the defence that no direct evidence had been led against the prisoner, but only what was commonly called circumstantial evidence. That was undoubtedly true, but if the jury received as true a suffiof imaginary persons and uttered the cheques. It I cient number of facts relating to the person's conduct I