

# DOCTOR CHARGED WITH BLACKMAIL.

## Rev. Mr. Cooper's Startling Testimony in the Sifton Case.

### DID DR. McNEIL GET \$1,000?

Edgar Morden on the Witness Stand—What Mary McFarlane Said—Mrs Morden Tells About the Well—Friends Wanted an Inquest—The Case Continued Till Thursday Next When More Revelations May be Expected—Altogether a Remarkable Case.

#### Neighbors are Kind.

London, Aug. 2.—Edgar Morden went through a most severe cross-examination at the hands of the counsel for the defence in the Sifton murder case to-day. His evidence yesterday was attacked fiercely by Mr. Helmhuth, who first brought from the witness the admission that he had not made a statement to the Crown about what he knew of the case until Wednesday, July 18, although the tragedy occurred on June 30. The witness said that he had talked the matter over with the other Mordens several times previous to July 18th, but had given no information to any officer of the law until that date, when he went to High Constable McLeod's house with James Morden. Both he and James Morden told their stories to him and each heard the statement of the other. The next day he and James Morden drove into London with High Constable McLeod and saw Martin Morden. The witness was evidently reluctant to speak of what passed at the interview between him and Martin, but finally admitted that he had made Martin explain where he had spent the morning on which the tragedy occurred. Martin, he said, was altering a road deal which was being questioned, but told the witness that he had worked in the factory all that morning, and that the books would show it. Then the witness said that he had seen Edgar Morden on which the interview just described was on Monday, July 23rd, but between the Wednesday and the Monday he had two conversations with the other Mordens upon the subject.

#### A Morden Consultation.

One of these "conversations" was held on the Sunday afternoon, when the three Mordens met by the roadside, near St. John's. It lasted something like two hours, and the situation of the case was talked over. During the talk Martin said that he was going down to see Gerald Sifton that night, and the witness, after half an hour's questioning, admitted that he had asked Martin to see what offer Gerald Sifton would make for the property in the possession of the witness. He denied that in making this request he had any object in connection with the will. His object, he said, was to ascertain in what house the witness's father had lived, and when the latter came the two got into Edgar's rig and drove into the driving shed, where they sat for about three-quarters of an hour discussing the matter.

#### To Destroy the Will.

Another hour of the court's time was taken up in questions relating to what took place in the buggy, the witness being exceedingly reluctant in his answers. He said that the conversation was carried on in a natural tone and it could not have been overheard by anyone close enough to the buggy. Martin said he had just come from Gerald's, and a discussion on the case followed. Martin said that Gerald proposed coming to see the witness in the morning, and that he (Gerald) would willingly give £1,000 to destroy the will. Gerald asked Martin to see the witness about it, but to tell him Martin refused. Then Gerald said he would come up and see Edgar, and that he would take him a little easy this time, as they had not agreed the last time they had met. There had been trouble between them, and Gerald said that he could not beat Edgar, but he would hit him on the head to get the will. All this was told to the witness in the shed by Martin.

At this point the witness refused to go on, saying that he could not tell the remainder of the conversation, and the counsel for the defence, at the invitation of the Crown Attorney, withdrew for a consultation. This consultation was still in progress when court adjourned.

When the conference had concluded Mr. Helmhuth ignored the matter upon which the witness had refused to speak, the counsel tacitly refusing to cross-examine upon it.

Morden as a detective.

When the investigation was resumed Morden, on the stand, and to Mr. Helmhuth stated that he began to investigate the tragedy on the night it occurred, and for eighteen days neglected to inform the authorities of his suspicions. He began his investigations by interviewing Mary McFarlane and his cousin, James Morden, and he admitted starting with a theory of foul play. He told James Morden that night that he did not think the accident was "planned" right. As the two were talking over it Martin Morden came in and the witness commended his suspicion to him, and then asked him if Gerald Sifton had said to him on the matter. This he obtained the statements of the two other Mordens, and then turned his attention to Gerald Sifton. He admitted asking some questions of Ger-

his lawyer and he had advised Gerald to have the new will burned in the presence of the two. The method of doing so was to burn it up, and rubbing it in their hands. The witness said he could not understand what Gerald meant by this method of destruction. Gerald said that he had his lawyer's eyeing about the matter, but he had shown the will to his father out of the end of the barn, and all about the will. In explaining why he had talked so freely to the witness, the witness said that he had told his lawyer that the matter was becoming so serious that it was time to take a lawyer into his confidence. At this interview the witness told Gerald distinctly that it was no use for him to make any further efforts to get the will, as the witness was determined to do right and go on and have the will probated. After his visit to the Crown officers the witness told Gerald that he had no intention of accepting any money for the will, and that he didn't want to get into any trouble over the matter. Gerald said that there need be no trouble about it, and that he would be glad to accept any money for the will, but if the will was destroyed he would not be a witness against the present of money.

#### The Drawing of the Will.

The counsel for the defence then began questioning the witness about the actual drawing of the will. The witness said the will was drawn on the morning of June 30th, not four hours before Joseph Sifton was killed. Sifton sat in the kitchen with the witness and Mrs. Morden, and the will was drawn up on the kitchen table. The witness said he remained until midnight, waiting for Gerald Sifton to come home, but Gerald had not arrived by the time he left. He visited the scene of the tragedy shortly after it happened, and was told by Walter Herbert of the accident. Herbert's story was that the old man had struck a tremendous blow at the table and that he and the axe and board fell together. He said that he was about twenty feet away on the floor of the barn, and had seen it. The witness said he had seen the old man drawn to it, and the boy, and the witness said, "He's gone," or "He's fallen." The witness shortly afterwards picked up the axe and found blood on both sides of the blade, and asked Walter about the blood, and Herbert answered that as the father swung the axe the blade struck a beam overhead and had then dropped on the old man's head, and then Sifton fell out of the horse and into the barn. The witness thought that the stories varied a little, and told Herbert that he had better be careful he might be questioned about it. Gerald Sifton did not mention to the witness, apparently assuming that he had heard of it. He said a couple of times, "Wasn't it an accident?" and this was the only reference to the accident.

#### Commanders Differ.

There were persistent reports from Chinese sources that the allied commanders had disagreed on various points, and could not be induced to order an advance upon the capital. These differences of opinion were very likely exaggerated, but there was probably a substratum of truth for these Chinese notions. The American, British and Japanese commanders are described as eager for a decisive action, whereas the Russians and Germans do not think the united command strong enough for work, and assume that it will be forced to retire upon Tien Tsin if it starts prematurely, and is not adequately supplied with food and ammunition.

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alleged plans of Gerald to kill his father, Joseph Sifton, came in after putting his horse in the barn, and they all set down to have some supper. Mr. Morden told Sifton that the son was after him, and that if all other means failed they were going to try to catch him on the hay fork the next day. Mr. Morden said that he remembered asking the son to help him with the hay fork, but that they wouldn't catch him there, as he was going to take a holiday. Shortly afterwards, at Mr. Morden's suggestion, Miss McFarlane went to bed, and then the witness drew up Mrs. Morden heard Mr. Sifton talking about Mary and the child that was to be born. She signed the will and about 5 o'clock in the morning the couple left. Her husband had urged Mr. Sifton not to go home because he was afraid the old man would be attacked. Mr. Sifton replied that his new suit was there, the marriage license to get, the ring and two gold watches, and he planned to get these early and be away before Gerald could finish his own chores and come to the house.

Mr. Helmhuth the witness said that there was no possibility of Mary McFarlane having any actual knowledge of the making of the will. The witness said he never heard of the will until he was asked to sign it. He said he was not present at the drawing of the will, and that he had never seen the will. He said he had never seen the will, and that he had never seen the will. He said he had never seen the will, and that he had never seen the will.

#### A Startling Story.

Rev. W. H. Cooper, the Methodist minister living at Arva, told a most startling story. He said that Joseph Sifton had arranged with him to be at the coroner's inquest on Saturday, June 30th, at 10 o'clock, for the marriage of Mr. Sifton and Miss McFarlane. On Friday, June 29th, he visited Gerald Sifton's house, the hired man having told him that Gerald wanted to see him. He went there and remained until midnight, waiting for Gerald Sifton to come home, but Gerald had not arrived by the time he left. He visited the scene of the tragedy shortly after it happened, and was told by Walter Herbert of the accident. Herbert's story was that the old man had struck a tremendous blow at the table and that he and the axe and board fell together. He said that he was about twenty feet away on the floor of the barn, and had seen it. The witness said he had seen the old man drawn to it, and the boy, and the witness said, "He's gone," or "He's fallen." The witness shortly afterwards picked up the axe and found blood on both sides of the blade, and asked Walter about the blood, and Herbert answered that as the father swung the axe the blade struck a beam overhead and had then dropped on the old man's head, and then Sifton fell out of the horse and into the barn. The witness thought that the stories varied a little, and told Herbert that he had better be careful he might be questioned about it. Gerald Sifton did not mention to the witness, apparently assuming that he had heard of it. He said a couple of times, "Wasn't it an accident?" and this was the only reference to the accident.

#### Interviewing Mary McFarlane.

Upon his examination by Mr. Meredith, Morden was asked by Mr. Murray, the Government officer, had told him to offer inducements to Sifton to tell a story, and he denied it. Mr. Murray said he had seen the prisoner before witnesses, and to allow the prisoner to offer anything he liked for the will. "He told me," said Morden, "to find Mary McFarlane and to tell her that Gerald Sifton had made her statement before him." The witness continued that he saw Miss McFarlane on the Saturday, and the girl told him that she was going to leave the Siftons, and that she would never eat another bite in their house. She said she was trying to get that night, the next day (Sunday) Morden saw Mary McFarlane, and drove to his house for that she had been unable to get away, but she was going to make another effort to get in to her sister's house in London. If this failed, she would let her go to her mother's house. At the interview the witness told Mary about the property bequeathed to her by the will, but he denied telling her that anything depended on the arrest of the Siftons.

#### A Grave Charge.

Rev. Mr. Cooper next heard the unfounded rumor of Gerald Sifton's arrest, and drove to his house for the purpose of comforting his wife. He found the supposed prisoner at home, and Gerald said: "It is just as I told you. Edgar has been making trouble for me. Detective Murray was in to-day and examined us." Then Gerald told the witness of an alleged interview which he said he had had with Dr. McNeill. He said that he had asked the doctor for the death certificate, and the witness said it was a most scoundrelly thing, and was nothing but blackmail. Gerald said that if Dr. McNeill had held the inquest immediately after the death of his father he would have been satisfied, but to postpone the funeral after he had sent out the funeral notices and engaged the witness to preach the funeral sermon would cause a scandal, which he would not endure for \$1,000. Gerald said that he was still in a bad state over his father's death, and was ill, and that he had finally and reluctantly agreed to Dr. McNeill's demand for the \$1,000. He said that he drew up one note for \$500, and two others for \$250 each, and he had signed them. The notes were payable on sight. Gerald also said that Dr. McNeill had told him that the Rev. Mr. Cooper and Jack Sifton, a cousin of the prisoner, were asking for an inquest, and that he would have to keep out of their way until after the funeral. Speaking for Mr. Cooper said that he had not pressed Dr. McNeill for an inquest, but he said that Dr. McNeill evidently kept out of his way, for he did not see him again until after the funeral.

#### Mrs. Morden Talks.

Mrs. Morden, the wife of the last witness, said that on the night of June 29th Gerald Sifton came to her husband's house about 10 o'clock. Her husband was not home, but arrived shortly afterwards, just as Gerald, who was in a very excited state, was hurrying, was leaving. Her husband went out after Gerald, and was a long time in returning. Then he came back with Mary McFarlane and told his wife of the approaching wedding and of the

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There were persistent reports from Chinese sources that the allied commanders had disagreed on various points, and could not be induced to order an advance upon the capital. These differences of opinion were very likely exaggerated, but there was probably a substratum of truth for these Chinese notions. The American, British and Japanese commanders are described as eager for a decisive action, whereas the Russians and Germans do not think the united command strong enough for work, and assume that it will be forced to retire upon Tien Tsin if it starts prematurely, and is not adequately supplied with food and ammunition.

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