

CAMBRIDGE DAILY NEWS THURSDAY DECEMBER 3.12.1891

THE NEW SPINNING HOUSE COURT

HOW A UNIVERSITY COURT WORKS

EXTRAORDINARY REVELATIONS

A PAINFUL SCENE

This (Thursday) morning the first Spinning House case was heard in the New Court before the Vice-Chancellor when Daisy Hopkins (18) residing with her father and mother at 36 Gold Street¹ was charged with being in the company of a University man on the preceding night. The prisoner a most respectable-looking girl was fashionably attired in a blue costume trimmed with gold edging and a fawn-coloured felt hat.

Mr A J Lyon appeared for the prisoner and pleaded not guilty.

Frederick Wallis a proctor was duly sworn.

Mr Lyon said he would like to know under what Act of Parliament the oath had just administered. He was unable to find any Act of Parliament which enabled the oath to be administered in that court.

The Vice-Chancellor said that was left to the discretion of the Vice-Chancellor.

Mr Lyon : Under what Act ?

The Vice-Chancellor repeated that was left to the discretion of the Court.

Mr Lyon asked for a note of his question and the answer to be taken. He objected to the administration of the oath as illegal.

Frederick Wallis said: I was on duty yesterday evening and entered Tennis Court Road from the Downing Street end. I sent on one of my constables to walk in front of me. Soon after I passed the end of Fitzwilliam Street he met me again. A gentleman was with him, not wearing any cap or gown. I then asked him his name and college which he gave me. I then asked him why he had not his cap and gown on.

Mr Lyon: I object. I don't see how this affects the case at all. The girl was not present at the time and what he said to this man cannot be evidence against her.

Witness: I will make the story plainer.

Mr Lyon : We ought to begin where the lady was first seen.

Witness: After parting with this gentleman I went with my constables into Lensfield road where we found the prisoner. I told my men to take her to the Spinning

¹ <https://capturingcambridge.org/petersfield/the-kite/gold-street/>

House². They did so and I afterwards signed the charge sheet and entered the particulars in the book.

Mr Lyon : May I ask the name of the gentleman you referred to just now?

Vice-Chancellor: He has not been named yet.

Mr Lyon: I know that but he may be an important witness that I ought to subpoena in the interest of my client.

Witness: You ruled that out of court.

Mr Lyon : You spoke of a man whom you met and something transpired between you. In consequence of that you went towards Lensfield road and there saw the prisoner. It may be very important for my client to have the. Evidence of that gentleman. Therefore I ask for his name and address.

The Vice-Chancellor ruled that it was not necessary and Mr Lyon asked the Clerk to take a note of it.

Mr Lyon (resuming cross-examination): You say that you went into Lensfield road when you left this gentleman and you found the prisoner there? - Yes.

What was she doing there? - Standing talking to a lad.

The Prisoner : Oh!

Witness: I made no suggestion about it.

Do you know who the lad was? - No.

Was she then in custody or not? - No.

Did you see her commit any act of impropriety against the Charter in this case? - No.

She was taken to the Spinning House and there charged with what? - Walking with members of the University.

Notwithstanding that, you did not see her speak to one? - Quite so.

Did you receive any information to warrant you to coming to the conclusion that she had committed an offence? I received a communication from my constable.

Did the prisoner make any communication to you? - Yes. She said he was asking her the way and she also said that she did not know he was a member of the University.

Did she say anything else? - She said many things but not relevant. She asked that her mother should be sent for, and we sent at once.

² <https://capturingcambridge.org/centre/st-andrews-street/42-st-andrews-street-police-station-spinning-house/>

Did she give you her correct address? - 36 Gold Street.

Have you ascertained whether she lives there? - No.

Had you ever seen her before? - No.

Did you know that there was such a person? - Yes; I knew she was reputed to be a prostitute.

Prisoner: I beg your pardon. Can I speak.

The Vice Chancellor: No; you are represented.

[The following section is illegible on the BNA scan.]

you lad ? -No in not?— No her impropriety the ?— No She Spinning with '—Walking with members University Notwithstanding that to one ?— so you receive any warrant you in ng conclusion committed offence I received from oonstable the prisoner any you' Yes She be way did of University she ?— She relevant She should for Did give you —do Heve you ? you before ? — No V'kw Mr Do you She it 17 is on with Tennls-Court-road end constable last witness from imi I afield I neiu ahead When I Fit williem I objects Fitz female by recognised man's face I spoke to gentleman H® said eir voice I he offered to qui "No" Then five took back Mr Wallje When stopped if I ber Hopkins go" Mr Wallis Wallis gentleman college Lensfield-road of Tennis Court-road away in 1 fresh from Mr Wall I to said I know 'Varsity man He the Court the Spinning Bouse Spinning oy said Why did round : Oh dear Witness The other said I before to-night" We took w- ' Vice-Chancellor : the court young exit Mr to th being Tennis the is PrMtrtLyon I object Prisoner's

[The BNA scan is legible from here]

Mr Streane : Have you seen her walking with men on former occasions? - Yes.

And soliciting? - I believe so.

Was she walking with or importuning members of the University? - I have seen her walking with members of the University.

Cross-examined by Mr Lyon: Did you first see prisoner in Lensfield Road? - Yes, in the distance.

A Proctor: No

Mr Lyon: But he says yes.

Witness: Oh no. I Thought you said Tennis Court Road.

Mr Lyon: He said Lensfield Road. Asked the question advisedly, in consequence of instructions I have received.

Do you know the name of the man she was walking with? - I do

I ask you to give that name?

The Vice-Chancellor interposed.

Mr Lyon: Do I understand that the Court instructs you not to answer that question?

The Vice-Chancellor: I say it is not necessary.

Mr Lyon: I should like that to be noted in the depositions. You direct the witness not to answer the question?

The Vice-Chancellor: I don't direct him. I say it is not necessary.

Mr Lyon: Do you direct him not to answer the questions? In cross examination I am entitled to ask these things. He has already made a slip in his evidence with regard to Lensfield Road. You do not allow me to put that question?

The Vice-Chancellor: I think not.

Mr Lyon (to witness): You say that you saw the girl in Tennis Court Road, you went into Lensfield Road and there you saw the defendant 200 yards down. Are you in a position to swear that is the same girl you saw in Tennis Court Road? - Yes.

You are positive? - Yes.

I suppose it is usual for Cambridge girls to have friends? Yes.

Were they men or women? - Men and women as well.

You say that you have seen her walking with 'Varsity men? I have.

How do you know they were 'Varsity men? - By their caps and gowns, and some I have known who were not wearing them.

Can you give the names of any of them? - No.

Did you see anything improper take place between the girl and the man? - No.

You say that you have seen her walking with townsmen on former occasions. Is that so? - I Have.

Did you see anything improper in the manner in which she was walking with these men? - No, she was in the streets.

Were the townsmen of her own class? - I cannot say.

You don't know the names? - No.

The Vice-Chancellor: He saw them in caps and gowns.

Mr Lyon: Other people might wear caps and gowns. I have seen barristers in them. (To witness): You say that you have seen her importuning University men? - Well, I suppose that would be it.

You don't know at all for certain? - Certainly not.

It is presumption on your part? - Quite so.

You have said she was importuning them. Do you withdraw that? - I think she was; I cannot say for certain.

Have you seen her importune anyone? - I have never heard her.

How were they walking on this occasions? - Side by side, at a very slow pace.

Henry Mason³, a constable, said he corroborated the witness Kirby⁴.

Mr Streane: have you on former occasions seen the prisoner walking with men? - I have.

And soliciting or importuning them? - I would not go so far as that. She has spoken to gentlemen as she passed them.

Members of the University or town? - Members of the University. I cannot say as to townsmen. She “nudged” them with her elbow as she passed by.

Were any of these occasions at night? - Yes.

On any of these occasions was she walking with one man? I cannot say I saw her with one. Two or three would be walking together and she would have something to say to them.

Has she been walking about late at night? - Yes.

The Vice-Chancellor: For how long have you seen this? - A year and a half.

Cross-examined by Mr Lyon: You say you were with the other constable, and saw what took place. Is that so? - Yes with the exception that I did not see her with the gentleman.

Then you cannot corroborate his evidence as to that? - No.

You say that you have seen her “nudge” undergraduates? - Yes.

Was she in company with anyone when this took place? - Sometimes in company with other females and sometimes not.

Have you ever seen anything improper transpire between her and men? - Never.

Did she tell you when arrested, that the man had asked her the way to tennis Court Road? - Yes.

Mr Streane: Is the prisoner’s name in the list of prostitutes kept by the police?

³ In 1891 there was a Henry Mason, 51, College Gyp, living at 13 Christ’s Lane. <https://capturingcambridge.org/centre/christs-lane/christs-lane/>

⁴ In 1891 there is an Alfred W Kirby, 36, college servant, living at 6 Church Street. <https://capturingcambridge.org/centre/christchurch-street/6-christchurch-church-street/>

Mr Lyon: I object. I cannot accept that register as evidence. We have no evidence as to how those records are made. We must have direct evidence from individuals on that point.

Mr Streane: I hold the list in my hand. It is a return made to the Government.

Mr Lyon: I believe there are many false returns entered such books. I suppose an individual policeman comes to the conclusion that certain persons are prostitutes. It was not a conviction in any Court of Law, consequently I do not see how it can be evidence.

Supt. Innes was called, and produced the register of prostitutes for the borough of Cambridge. The prisoner's name, Daisy Hopkins, appeared in the list.

Mr Lyon objected to the evidence, and the objection was recorded, viz. that the person who entered up the record did so on the unsworn testimony of an individual - (applause)- and that the book itself was not a record of any court of law.

The Vice-Chancellor: is this book in your custody as chief constable? - Yes.

For what purpose? - As a record for information.

To guide you? We use our own discretion in the matter.

Is any use made of the book? - Undoubtedly. Returns for Government are made out from this register.

The Vice-Chancellor said he should allow the book as evidence.

Mr Lyon (to witness): Have you ever known the information in that register to be in error? - Personally I have not.

Have you ever heard of its being wrong? - I cannot say.

Do you know upon what evidence the records are entered upon the book? - On personal inquiry and observation by an officer specially placed on that beat. These reports are prepared once a year.

Were you in charge here when that record was made? - I was. That record was made in the first week of April.

Is this all fresh information obtained then? - Quite so.

None of it made up from other records? - No.

You say the prisoner's name is in the schedule? - I can't identify the prisoner. Her name is in the book.

You know the name, Daisy Hopkins, is down there, but you do not know whether the name represents that prisoner. - I do not. I don't know her.

Is that schedule received as evidence in the local police courts? - I should say not.

In proceedings before the magistrates here, have you ever known an attempt made to prove a prisoner was entered in that list? - No; I have not.

Are any certificates of the entries ever required for other courts? - No.

Are you able to state as a fact that it is not legal evidence in any court.

The Vice-Chancellor: No, no. You cannot ask that.

Mr Lyon: You have ever known it used as evidence? - I have not.

Mr Lyon: I take objection to that book. Do I understand that you rule it to be evidence?

The Vice-Chancellor: As far as it goes.

[From here the BNA scan is illegible]

Mr Lyon It either or evidence Vice-Chanoellor: I it Mr Streane We prepared on our side to produce of th University mentioned n evidence is in immediate vicinity of court Mr Lyon : It is for tide him or not I bow to the decision of Court Mr 8treane : I mast him please Mr Vioe-Chenoellor Chtrles Russell of Jesus College Cambridge called and sworn Mr Would you Mr account of last evening Mr I passed prisoner in looked me her CorpuR College I wont with un Pembroke to Tennis Court-road I if sbe could me her rooms Mr Streane I don't think examine the witness further Mr : You spoke to her first that so? — Yes Did solicit in any ?— No vou identity of prisoner ? Are you sure is the girl ? —Yes Did Court-road ? No might asked her where th was I do not know it Did you first in Lanfleld-rod ?— I don't know it is Vice-Chancellor : time this About 1080 This concluded case for prosecution Mr Lyon for defence Charter under which this case taken pot generally known So far knew it printed nor it to be purchased in shop in Cambridge understood that if person committed offence under this Charter must person suspected evil” submitted no whatever prisoner of evil The amounted this oonstables of th University had her townsmen men

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With regard to townsmen he supposed that she had friends and relatives in the town, and it would be very strange if she were not seen talking to them and walking with them. With regard to University men his experience was and he had no doubt the Vice-Chancellor's was the same, that University men frequently spoke to girls and not only spoke to them but insisted upon walking with them against their will. (Applause) He submitted that the evidence of the constables on that point amounted to nothing. He submitted that there was no evidence in any shape or form that this girl was “suspected of evil”; no statement that she had ever been before this Court ... before the magistrates; nothing had been said as to her occupation. There was very grave doubt as to whether the prisoner was the same person as the one who was seen in Tennis Court Road. He could bring evidence as to character of the defendant. He proposed to call the curate of St Matthew's in whose Sunday school the defendant was for some time. He would ask the Court to grant him a subpoena for him and to adjourn the case. He thought it was of the highest importance that the character of this person should be thoroughly ventilated. He hoped the Vice-Chancellor would give him every opportunity to produce witnesses to sow that she was a most respectable girl. He did not know whether the Vlce-Chancellor would like to grant an

adjournment now or hear his evidence as far as it went, but he considered it of the highest importance to his client that the curate of St Matthew's should be called.

The Vice-Chancellor: Can you not call him now.

Mr Lyon: I have had no time. I was only instructed at five minutes to 11 this morning and even now I have not been able to talk to the prisoner.

Vice-Chancellor : Notice was given at 8 50 this morning.

Mr Lyon: They went to another solicitor who was unable to be present. That was the cause of delay.

Vice-Chancellor: The evidence before me is of a very strong character and I do not see of what use evidence to the character would be unless you dispute the evidence. He asked her to take him to her rooms and she consented. That is not contradicted.

Mr Lyon: It will be contradicted by the prisoner herself.

Vice-Chancellor : If you can call evidence which will rebut which we have heard you can do so.

Mr Lyon: Very well; I propose to call the prisoner herself.

The Vice-Chancellor: She can make a statement.

Mr Lyon : I propose to call her as a witness and have her sworn. There is nothing in your Charter I presume which prevents her being sworn. I take it her evidence can have the same freedom as other witnesses.

Vice-Chancellor : You had better call your other witnesses first.

Mr Lyon: It is generally left to the solicitor to call his evidence in the form he wishes.

The Vice-Chancellor You must call your other evidence first and I will hear it.

Mr Lyon: If you rule it so I must submit. He then called John Charles Camps⁵ 17 Adam and Eve row, who said: yesterday evening I was in Lensfield road, at 10.30. I saw the prisoner there walking along towards Trumpington street. She was alone. A gentleman came from the direction of Tennis Court road. I saw the man speak to her and I then turned back. I did not hear what she said. The next time I saw her she was with the "bull dogs" at Hyde Park-corner, when she told me to tell her father and mother. I know the prisoner and she bears a very good character. I have never seen her soliciting anyone or behave in an improper manner. I do not know that she is a prostitute. From what I know of her she is a well-conducted orderly woman.

Frederick Charles Hopkins, the prisoner's brother, billiard marker, living at 36 Gold Street, said: I am not aware that my sister is a fast girl. I never heard of her being a prostitute. She has a father and a mother at home who maintain her. I have never heard of her doing anything immoral. It is not true that she walks the streets for the purpose of soliciting -

⁵ <https://capturingcambridge.org/centre/adam-and-eve-street/1-25-adam-and-eve-street-row/>

The Vice-Chancellor: As far as you know.

Witness : I defy any man to say that it is so.

Mr Lyon: Use she to attend St Matthew' Sunday School?— She did; and was under the notice of Rev Ford. She left about six month's ago — What is the age of your sister?— Eighteen next birthday— What reputation did she bear at the Sunday School?— A good one— You never heard anything against her character there ?— Not all— Can Mr Ford give important evidence as to her character.

The Clerk and the Vice Chancellor No, no, no.

Mr Lyon: I was going to ask whether Mr Ford had opportunities of forming an opinion as to her character; if so he is a very important witness.

The Clerk : You cannot ask that.

Mr Lyon : That is the whole of the evidence I am able to submit to you today. I now formally ask for an adjournment in order to call Mr Ford and I ask for a subpoena for him. If you decide not to grant it, that will be the end of my case, with the exception of calling the prisoner herself, whom I propose to put on oath. I submit there is no rule of law which debars that.

The Clerk: You must take this as definite. The prisoner may make a statement but she may not be sworn.

Mr Lyon: Will you make a note that the Court refuses to allow the prisoner to be sworn but allow her to make an unsworn statement? I call the prisoner.

Vice-Chancellor: She can make her own statement.

Mr Lyon : Do you to refuse to allow me to conduct her examination in the ordinary way of a witness? Is it so?

The Clerk : That is so.

Mr Lyon : Will you make a note that the Court refuses to allow Mr Lyon to examine the witness either sworn or unsworn?

The Vice-Chancellor : You cannot examine her unsworn.

Mr Lyon: I submit that I have the right to examine her in chief in the ordinary way. I understand you rule not.

The Clerk : Yes.

[The following section is unclear in the BMA scan]

The prisoner then the following unsworn statement — There were three women in the Lensfield Road at the time in question. I was passi direction of Hyde Park-corner and did not the man until

he was at the corner of Tennis Court road. He said to me 'Is this right for Tennis Court-road ?' I said "Yes" and he walked on. Just as he was walking on the Kirby came up and took the man down Tennis Court road. I walked straight on and when I got some distance off I saw Kirby come running after me. He pushed me up the said " The Proctor wants to speak ... I said " Good God, what for?" He said told me you were walking down Tennis Court- road I said " What Cook ?" he replied " Gold-street" I never the girl that night. I know her but I did not speak to her. There was a girl in Tennis Court-road last night with a light on similar mine She was howling and hooting about. I had no other conversation with the man except what I have said. I was not in Pembroke-street nor in Trumpington-street night.

Mr Lyon : Do I understand you refuse to grant a subpoena for Mr Ford or that the Court is unable to?

The Vice-Chancellor : I cannot say.

Mr Lyon: As a matter of practice I should like to know if we apply at the proper time shall we be able to get subpoenas for important witnesses in this Court ?

Vice-Chancellor : If you ask that question time I may be able to answer it. I see no reason for adjourning case

In passing sentence the Vice-Chancellor said he had heard the case and the evidence which had been placed before him had not been shaken. It was utterly inconceivable that Russell would come with any other intention than to speak truth

Prisoner (excitedly): It was not me at all.

[The BNA scan is clear from here]

The Vice-Chancellor: The charge against you is proved and I sentence you to 14 days.

The prisoner was about to be removed : " Keep your hand off me. I insist upon seeing my father. What am I to go to gaol for 14 days for? I am innocent" To the attendant who was going to take hold of her: "Leave me alone; get out of my road or I will knock you out . I insist upon seeing my father."

The prisoner's brother and father attempted to quiet her and the latter informed the Vice-Chancellor that his daughter was under medical treatment with a quinsy.

Prisoner (hysterically) : What have I done to deserve this. I knew nothing about it until that beastly man (pointing to Kirby) came to me last night and punched and knocked me about .

The Brother: She is under the doctor's hands I can get you a certificate.

The Vice-Chancellor : The case is over.

Prisoner: I am not in a fit state to lie in those damp cells. I lay there shivering all night and I won't go.

The Attendant: Come along with me.

Prisoner's Brother: Keep your hands off her. If you touch her you touch me.

The Prisoner: I won't go. I insist upon a doctor being sent for. If I am put in those nasty damp cells I will kill myself.

The prisoner was eventually removed in an hysterical condition.

Mr Francis acted as clerk to the Vice-Chancellor.

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[This letter appears on the same page as the report on Daisy Hopkins trial but seems otherwise unrelated]

CORRESPONDENCE

UNDERGRADUATES AND THE PROCTORS

TO THE EDITORS

Sir I wish to call your attention to the somewhat extraordinary behaviour of one of the proctors. Three "Varsity" men were walking arm-in-arm down St Andrew's Street the other evening; they met a proctor who passed without remark; they met a second and as they were in the act of walking off the pavement to avoid inconveniencing the passers-by, this notable representative of the University Authority stopped them thus insinuating that their conduct was ungentlemanly. Truly this honourable gentleman's notions of gentlemanly conduct are extremely primitive. Did this not bid fair to become a fresh encroachment upon the already curtailed liberty of the unfortunate "undergrad." I would not have troubled you with this letter. - Yours etc, AN UNDERGRADUATE