

INNOCENT AT LAST.

Convicted of a horrible Assault.

Another Victim to a Child's Evidence.

After Eight Years' Silence Conscience Asserts Itself and the Girl Declares the Man Innocent.

A little over eight years ago, a man named Wm. Henry Taylor was charged before Judge Fitzhardinge at Glen Innes with rape on a girl about 13 years of age. The jury, after hearing the evidence, brought in a verdict of guilty on the minor court of "an attempt to carnally know a girl under the age of 14 years." The Judge, in whose mind some doubt must have arisen, passed the remarkably light sentence of 18 months' hard labour in Armidale Gaol. Despite the verdict, Taylor's wife, to whom he had been married only four months, and his friends believed thoroughly in his innocence, which he at all times also protested. However, there was no help for him and to gaol he went. The rest of the story we will relate in his own words. "When I went to gaol, it was terrible knowing I was an innocent man; a lot of my fellow prisoners tried to cheer me up, but it was of no avail. My wife, who had stuck to me all through, used to visit me once a month, and I had to speak to her through a grating as if I was a wild beast. Every time I saw her was like a stab in the heart. At last my time was finished and I was discharged. I tried, as I thought successfully, to live down the terrible stain on my character, but a few weeks ago in a civil action it was dragged into light again. Hearing the girl was in Armidale I succeeded in seeing her, and when she saw me she turned pale, and asked me to forgive her the wrong she did me. I said I had forgiven her; all I wanted her to do was to set me right in the eyes of the world. She said her conscience had been tormenting her ever since, and her only thought was, how she would repair the terrible injury she had done me. I consulted my solicitor, who advised me to obtain a declaration from her declaring my innocence, which declaration she at once made, and is now in my possession, and I give you a copy for publication."

The following is the declaration:

I, ———, of Armidale, in the colony of New South Wales, spinster, do hereby solemnly and sincerely declare and affirm as follows:—

1. That William Henry Taylor, of Hillgrove, in the said colony, miner, but

1. That William Henry Taylor, of Hillgrove, in the said colony, miner, but formerly of Glen Innes, was, at the Quarter Sessions holden at Glen Innes, before Judge Fitzhardinge some eight years ago, convicted of an attempt to carnally know a girl under the age of 14 years, and sentenced to a term of 18 months' imprisonment.
2. I am the person that the offence was alleged to have been committed upon, being then of the age of 13 years, I am now of the age of 21 years.
3. At the trial I gave evidence against the said William Henry Taylor to the effect that he attempted to commit the said offence upon me, which evidence was incorrect.
4. The said William Henry Taylor was entirely innocent of the said offence, and I am making this declaration in order to clear him of the stain cast upon him by the said conviction.

And I make this solemn declaration as to the matters aforesaid according to the law in this behalf made and subject to the punishment by law provided in case of any wilfully false statement contained in such declaration.

Signed before D. P. Claverie, Commissioner for Affidavits.

How many more men are there in New South Wales who are suffering incarceration on these terrible charges, many being simply the outcome of a distorted mind and an excited imagination; others the victims of perjured women who seek notoriety. Let us hope Safford will have such a complete vindication as Mr. W. H. Taylor.

Mr. Reid is the best speaker we have in Australia at the present moment, and he has greater power to enchain the attention of a mixed assemblage (says the 'S.M. Herald'), than most men you will hear the world over.

In the Assembly on Thursday the Premier, in response to an interjection by Mr. Barnes, said, "Take that barn-door fowl away." There were immediately cries of "Chair" and considerable disorder, when the Premier withdrew the words and "apologised to the fowl." The disorder increased, and the Premier then quietly said, "I withdraw, with great regret, the expressions I used to the hon. member for Gundagai."

The 'Catholic Press' says:—"After a stroll about the lobbies and a chat here and there with members one is seized with the fact that only one man in the House knows what is going to happen and what he intends to do. And that man is George Reid—the only man, by the way, that doesn't display the consciousness of bearing the weight of momentous things. He only smiles."

Up to Saturday no person had volunteered to give evidence before the Royal Commission to inquire into the charges against the Hon. J. H. Young.

Mr. Newman, M.P., has recovered, and will take his seat on Tuesday.

Mr. Sawers, member for Tamworth, is possessed of a broader and more noble mind than many of his political brethren in the present Parliament, as is evidenced by the following statement made by him in reference to the Premier.—"I came into the House doubting the right hon. gentleman's sincerity, and stated publicly my reasons for doing so. I am glad to

gentleman's sincerity, and stated publicly my reasons for doing so. I am glad to believe now that he is entirely sincere, and I should be very glad if I were able consistently and conscientiously to support him in every clause of these resolutions."

At the religious-instruction hour in a Sydney suburban State school, a zealous parson asked his class the other day, 'Who was the man after God's own heart?' Promptly came the reply from knickered son of a lately-elected Free-trade M.L.A. "George Houston Reid." —'Bulletin.'

An exchange states that the Premier was never known to behave himself so well as during Mr. Barton's first speech in the House, which lasted 4½ hours. Mr. Reid never offered one interjection, but slept peacefully the whole time.