

SINGULAR MURDER TRIAL.

Conducted on Sunday by a Minister of the Gospel—A Witness Who Doesn't Believe in God, but Believes in Spirits—He Makes Oath that He Has Put a Curse upon a Town, and Can Make \$1,000 in a Minute.

Dispatch to Cincinnati Enquirer.

OWINGSVILLE, Ky., March 22.—The preliminary trial of Matt F. Lightfoot for the murder of Joe W. McDermott at Cross Roads, in Rowan County, which has been in progress at Morehead for several days, closed Sunday morning. This is the first case that was ever tried in whole or in part on Sunday in that county; but James E. Clarke, the County Attorney, representing the Commonwealth, being a minister, took a text Sunday morning and closed his argument with a sermon. Bail was allowed in the sum of \$3,000, which was given by Lightfoot's father and mother. This is the largest bail bond ever required of any man in Rowan County, and, while it may seem low bail in a murder case to those living in the richer counties, yet it almost amounts to a refusal to allow bail at all in the mountain counties.

The parties had had several difficulties, and shot at each other, and the most deadly hatred and enmity existed between them. The most deadly and horrible threats were proved to have been made by Lightfoot against McDermott repeatedly, and to have been communicated to him, which would have warranted him with immunity from the law if he had had long since shot Lightfoot down on sight. But it was also proved that McDermott, who was a sober, discreet young man, had repeatedly said he wanted no difficulty with Lightfoot, and, unless Lightfoot attacked him, there would be none. On the day of the killing, just before it occurred, Lightfoot was standing in Capt. J. S. Pitman's saloon, next door to the Post-Office, in Cross Roads, when he saw McDermott coming toward the Post-Office from the other side of the street, and remarked, as was proved by three witnesses, "There comes the G—d d—d son of a b— now; let me go out and kill him." He went out, raised a difficulty with McDermott, invited him out and killed him. The two first shots were fired at or so near the same time that the witnesses differ as to who fired first, and both took effect, McDermott's ball piercing Lightfoot's hip, making an ugly and serious wound, while Lightfoot's ball went directly through McDermott's heart, killing him instantly. They both fell, but Lightfoot, with the aid of a litchur-post, near which he fell, raised himself and fired three more shots at McDermott's body (none of which took effect), saying as he did so: "G—d d—n him, I've got him down and I'll keep him down." Immediately friends gathered around, when Lightfoot again said: "G—d d—n him, I've done what I intended to do for a long time"; and as they were bearing off the dead body of young McDermott, he said: "There he goes. G—d d—n him, I have got him. Now, if I can kill 'Old Pussy' (McDermott's father), I will be satisfied." The prosecution was represented by the entire bar of Rowan County,—something never before seen here.

There were many amusing scenes during the trial, owing to the witnesses getting badly tangled in their testimony, etc., but the sensational witness of the occasion was John Francis Marion Biggs, who had traveled over the whole country. He did not know whether he believed in God or not; did believe in spirits; was a medium, and could call up spirits; had been telegraph operator at Morehead, but, having a difficulty with his employers, had left; but, before leaving, cursed the place, and called upon it spirits and ghosts which would haunt it forever; had discovered a process by which, with a very little silver, he could manufacture a thousand silver dollars in a minute, and had tried to get some of the citizens of Rowan with means to enter into a partnership with him, but failed to do so.