

THE ACCUSED BEFORE THE COURT.

"Combo George" was brought before Messrs Jolliffe and Privett, J's.P., at the Healesville court yesterday and charged with assault with intent to commit an offence.

Superintendent Graves appeared to prosecute.

The young girl who was the victim of the brutal assault, gave her evidence clearly and calmly under the circumstances. She said she lived about five miles from Healesville with her mother. She was in Healesville on Saturday, 7th inst., and left the township about 5.30 to return home along the main road. She had got about half way when the accused without any notice jumped out from behind some bushes. He grabbed her roughly and threw her in the bushes, at the same time placing his hand over her mouth. She struggled and fought with him and had nearly succeeded in getting up when he struck her and knocked her down again. She could not use her hands as he had hold of them, but she kicked violently. After struggling for some time she managed again to almost free herself, but he knocked her back into the bushes. He then suddenly relaxed his hold and made off towards Healesville. She scrambled to her feet and ran to Mr Potts' house. She saw Jabez, Oliver and Miss Violet Potts and told them the same as she had told the Bench. She was carrying a basket containing various goods at the time of the assault, but she had nothing when she arrived at Potts'. Her hat and umbrella were also left behind in the struggle. She stayed at the house

the struggle. She stayed at the house for about an hour and then went home accompanied by one of the Potts boys. She never saw the accused till he sprang out from behind the bushes; he never gave her a second's notice.

The blouse and skirt the girl was wearing at the time of the assault were produced and identified by the witness. They were much dirtied and torn as the result of the black's savage attack.

Jabez Potts, residing at Badger Creek, said he remembered the 7th September, when the previous witness came to his house at about 6 40 in the evening. She was greatly upset and crying. She rushed through the open door and fell up against the one opposite, which was closed. His brother Oly and sister Violet and others were there also. The evidence the girl gave that day was to the same effect as what she told them at the house. He went with his brother to the scene of the assault—about 400 yards from his place—to search for the girl's property. He found an open umbrella and basket, with its contents scattered about, some with wrappers off, lying on the side of the road. The bushes were broken down and the ferns trampled, showing, in his opinion, where a desperate struggle had taken place. He also found a hat and one glove at the spot. He recognised the accused from the description given by the girl.

Oliver Henry Potts corroborated his brother's evidence, as also did his sister, Miss Violet Potts, who added that the girl's coat was open and her hair down when she arrived at the house—she was in a terrible state.

Constable Hutchinson deposed to visiting a blacks' camp at Badger Creek when he heard of the attack.

visiting a black camp at ... Creek when he heard of the attack. He asked for Combo George, and accused said "I'm the man." He (witness) asked him how he was dressed on Saturday night and he said he was wearing the same clothes as he was then. He informed accused that a girl had been assaulted by a man answering his description. He never denied it, but said—"I left here about 11 o'clock Saturday morning and went to Gracedale and slept all day, returning to Healesville about 7.30." He (witness), accompanied by accused, then visited the Coranderrk Aborigi-

nal Station, and picked out two black-fellows resembling Combo George as nearly as possible. He conveyed the three to the police station and placed them in the office side by side. He then sent for the girl, who identified accused as the man who assaulted her. She said, pointing to George, "This is the man, I am positive." He then arrested him.

Constable McLeod (Yarra Glen) corroborated Constable Hutchinson's evidence, and said that accused denied to him that he was the offender.

This concluded the evidence for the prosecution.

The accused, after having his position clearly explained by the Clerk of Courts, pleaded guilty and signed the charge. He was remanded to stand his trial at the Supreme Court on Monday, September 16.

The Bench (to accused): You know the meaning of what you have said?

The black nodded his head, and Superintendent Graves exclaimed,

Superintendent Graves exclaimed, "Oh yes! He's been through the mill before."

The prisoner was then removed and conveyed to the City lock-up by the morning train.
