



Crime and Punishment

Dilton Marsh

Manslaughter by Wife

On Monday evening, the 18th inst, the neighbourhood of Dilton's Marsh, Westbury, Wilts was the scene of much excitement, occasioned by the report that Robert Cuzner, a weaver, who resided there, by his wife. The house was soon crowded with people, and the man, who a few minutes before been seen apparently in perfect health, was found lying dead upon the floor. It appeared on evidence before the Coroner, and subsequently the Magistrates Messrs. Ludlow and Phipps that the deceased and his wife had latterly lived on very bad terms with each other. On the evening above mentioned a dispute had arisen between them, and he was shut out of the house by his wife. He afterwards pressed in, and on his entering the door was closed. Soon afterwards the neighbours heard a noise, as if they were struggling and pushing each other about the room. Presently the door was opened, and a cry of help was heard from the wife. On entering, the husband was found in the manner above described, and the medical attendant, in a very clear and satisfactory testimony, gave it as his opinion that the death was occasioned by a severe contusion found on the back part of his head, and which it is believed he received in a fall. The wife admits that she pushed him down; though she declares she had no intention of taking away his life. After a patient and lengthened investigation, the Magistrates came to the decision of committing the wife, Elizabeth Cuzner, to the New Prison, Devizes, to take her trial at the next assizes for manslaughter. It is remarkable that Edward Cuzner, brother of the deceased, died about two hours after the above unfortunate occurrence, his death having, it is believed, been accelerated by excitement, arising from the intelligence having been suddenly and incautiously communicated to him. Verdict returned at the Coroner's inquest on Edward Cuzner – "Natural Death"

Source - Reading Mercury, Thursday, September 23, 1843

OPC Note:-

Elizabeth Cuzner was tried at Wiltshire Assizes on 3 March 1844 and found "Not Guilty".