



Child Abuse at Coulston

A Brute of a mother-in-law – Rosanna Bigwood appeared at the Steeple Ashton Petty Sessions to answer a charge of assaulting Mary Bigwood, 12 years of age, her step-daughter, at Coulston. It appeared that for some trifling offence defendant took the child to her bedroom, stripped her, tied her hands and feet, and then with a rod of three twigs, beat her as long as she thought proper. Upon the child being released she immediately ran to a neighbour's house, and told how she has been treated. She was then taken to the Rev. Mr Clapp's, and upon examination nearly 40 stripes, some five or six inches long were found on different parts of her person. Blood was flowing from most of them. The case was submitted to the Rev. R Crawley, who issued a summons for the defendant's appearance. It appeared, however, that considerable influence had been exercised over the child in the meantime, as she refused to be sworn, and said she had been naughty, and that her mother did not hurt her much. The whole facts of the case, however, were elicited from other witnesses, and at the conclusion of the case, the Bench said this was the third or fourth time that defendant had been brought there for the same sort of thing.

They should send her to the Prison at Devizes for 1 month.

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