



Dinton

SINGULAR CASE OF ALLEGED ARSON

At the Council-house, Salisbury, on Saturday, Robert Gillett, of no occupation, was charged with setting fire to a house and furniture at Dinton. In March the defendant assigned to George Alfred Coombes the whole of his property, on condition that Coombes should keep him the remainder of his life. The property consisted of £299 15s. 9d. and household furniture. Since the time referred to Gillett has been living with Coombes. Early on the morning of the 6th inst. Coombes heard a noise downstairs, and on going down found the place on fire. A candlestick which the defendant had the night before was found, as was also a pair of slippers, which the defendant wore when he went up to his bedroom. Having found the place of fire, Coombes called Gillett, who instantly came out, and he was dressed with the exception of his coat, and had his boots on, whereas when he went to bed he left his boots downstairs. A woman named Yates, who was ironing at Coombes's on the 5th, said the defendant examined one by one the articles, and remarked that that was part of his property, also that he would serve the ----- out within three months. Having been apprehended on the charge of arson the defendant replied, "I shan't get any more than a fortnight or three months at most for this job, and when I come out I shall have a go at the Coombes's." The bench committed the defendant (who, it was alleged, was drunk the day before the fire) for trial at the assizes.

(Devizes and Wiltshire Gazette – Thursday 13 June, 1889)