



Horrid Case Of Child Murder

Wilts Assizes, Salisbury, March 11

Charles Giles was then put to the bar, charged with the wilful murder of his bastard child, the offspring of himself and Harriet Stone, by administering poison to it, and of which poison it died on the 18th of Sept. The trial lasted upward of five hours. The prisoner (Charles Giles) and Harriet Stone, had formed an illicit connexion, which produced a child whose death was the subject of the present trail. He was a shoemaker at Whiteparish, and respectably connected. The girl also belonged to Whiteparish, and under the promise of marriage, had yielded to his desires. Hitherto she had borne an irreproachable character, and the consequences of their connexion becoming rather apparent, he removed her to Warminster, where he himself went about four or five months before she was delivered.

As the period of her delivery drew near, his attentions became less kind than formerly, and in order to prevent the fact reaching the ears of her friends, he advised her to stifle it as soon as it was born. She revolted at the idea. He went away for a short period, and on his return she had been delivered two weeks and three days. He introduced a story to her of two men of the names of Luffman and Stone having arrived, who, he said, stated it to be the wish of her friends that she should return, as her brother was dying. To this she had no objection, as she expected he would fulfil his promise to her. He hinted that if the child was put out of the way she may get a place and go to service. She took what he had said on this subject in jest, never supposing that he ever intended to destroy the child. She then told him that she owed her nurse 3s 6d and should wish to pay it. He then went out, and shortly afterwards returned, and told her to go and get change of a sovereign, leaving the child in the bed she went to several places, but could not get it; when she returned the child had been taken from the bed, and he had it in his arms; she took it from him, and on kissing it, its lips were burning hot, and, to such a degree, that it communicated the same effect to hers. She said, "Good God, you have poisoned my child." His reply was, "You must say nothing about this;" or words to that effect, enjoining silence.

She minutely described the dress which the child had on; he asked for a pillow case and then put the child, clothes and all, into his pocket. Her suspicions were first raised by hearing the child crying in a convulsive manner on coming to the window, (the prisoner having bolted the door) and by means of a wheelbarrow which stood by the window, she got in, and after he had put the child into the bag, and the clothes and all into his pocket, they got out by the same means. They went on as far as Codford, when they were overtaken by a cart, when she got up, and the prisoner went on; he appointed a place of

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meeting, and said that as the child was dead, he should take it to Homington, and have it buried beside his or her brother. Eventually, he went to Whiteparish, and she went to Southampton to tell her sister of what had happened, and to ask her advice how she should proceed. They went to the Mayor, but he refused to interfere. The sister of the unfortunate woman, who is a respectable married woman, confirmed her account as far as it related to Southampton, and the measures they pursued while there.

But while they were thus acting, Divine Providence (as the Learned Judge observed) was watching the secret movements of the murderer, and was bringing to light the hidden things of darkness.

A boy of the name of Charles Maggs, in going to his work, saw the prisoner going through a ground near to his house; he had nothing in his hand, but he had a spade upon his shoulder; he (witness) stopped to see where he was going, and he went up towards a hedge where there was a chalk-pit, into which he entered; the boy then went away and mentioned the circumstance; suspicions arose, and Charles Pizier, a constable, went and dug up the pillow-case, where there was the body of the child, and the clothes it had on when the inhuman monster poisoned it. Pizier took the bag and its melancholy contents to a Mr. Chalk's where Mr. Nunn, the respectable surgeon of Whiteparish, and his son, happened to be; they examined the body externally; the lips were burnt black, the left cheek excoriated, as was also the neck and shoulders, and a portion of the clothes was also burned. On opening the body they found the spleen and upper bowel destroyed, as was also the stomach. On examination the precipitate proved to be sulphuric acid. They accounted for the external excoriations from the overflow of poison from the mouth, and gave it as their fixed opinion that the child died by sulphuric acid having been administered to it.

The most heart-rending scene, was that when the poor mother was called to identify the pillow-case and the clothes of the child, which she did most satisfactorily. One old man, and one young man, with two old women, were brought forward to contradict the testimony, but all said when sifted by the Judge and Counsel, tended only to corroborate the testimony given against the prisoner. The Judge complimented the unhappy woman on her appearance, conduct and testimony, and also that of the witnesses for the prosecution. Indeed he embodied it in his charge to the Jury. The prisoner never moved a muscle during the time of the trial, not even when the Jury returned their verdict, or when the Judge, in his accustomed emphatic and impressive way, passed upon him the awful sentence of the law. He merely said he was innocent. His Lordship told him not to add one sin to another, but to lay open his heart to God, to implore his mercy, and trusted, that all within the walls, that heard him, and all to whom it would be conveyed, would profit by the sad example now, and shortly to be exhibited before them, and learn this great, obvious, and in this case, fatal lesson, that the commission of one vice gradually leads to the perpetration of another, while the just vengeance of an offended God, and the violated laws of man, would assuredly, in one way or another, overtake the transgressor. His Lordship was in tears the greater part of the time he was performing the last sad duty of his office.

Giles is to be executed on Monday, and his body given up for dissection.

Devizes and Wiltshire Gazette, Thursday 17 March 1831