

INTERESTING PARTICULARS
WHICH TRANSPIRED IN EVIDENCE ON THE
TRIAL OF J. GRIFFITHS,
At Haverfordwest Assizes,
FOR THE MURDER OF HIS WIFE.

Examinations of Witnesses.

Dinah Estance.—Witness and her husband lived in the same house with the prisoner and his wife, and a little child; there was also an old man lodging with witness; recollects returning from Haverfordwest about six weeks before the death of prisoner's wife; prisoner overtook her; asked him how he came to be so late; prisoner said he had bought a waistcoat and a bucket, he must pay for them; asked him why he did not let Molly (his wife) go to market; prisoner said that he should lose the sixpence and the loaf too; prisoner said he had not tasted a grain of sows since Wednesday morning; witness asked him what he had to live upon; prisoner said he had paid 20l. for his wife's clothes, since he married her; asked him who could have trusted her to that amount; prisoner said he had paid it, also said that he had given her 15l. at Milford, which she spent in a fortnight or three weeks, and was three pounds in debt when he came from thence; he then took out a bundle of keys, and said, see what I am obliged to do; asked him why do you key every thing from her; prisoner said he must do it or he should have nothing; witness said, if my husband was to key every thing from me I would not stay with him long; prisoner said, if I had a wife so careful as you, I would not do it, that he would then let his wife go to market, said I courted a girl before I married my wife, and could have her now; witness said you are married to Molly now; prisoner said, that is the devil of it; witness said, why did you marry her if you had no love for her; I was forced to marry her, for she had a child by me; and Mr. Ferrier made me marry her; witness said, *you are bound to her till death!* prisoner said, *that shall not be long!* how do you know that; prisoner said, I do know it very well, I saw her laid out on the table this morning; witness said, did you dream this; prisoner replied, no; I knew her very well, I was not sleeping; witness, how can you know these things; prisoner, I do know it; *I have bought a thing to-day which I have long wished for, and I have got it, and I will take care of it; and she shall surely die before this day week!* witness said, dear Lord! you have made me shake to hear you say so; how can you know these things—the woman is well and hearty; prisoner replied, she shall surely go all of a sudden, in the middle of the night; witness asked him again how he knew these things; prisoner shewed her his hand and said, do you see my hand—*as sure as you see my hand she will die before this day week,* don't you be frightened if I should call you in to lay her out in the middle of the night; witness said she was so much frightened she was hardly able to walk home; prisoner said, never mind I fortel you of all, and continued this conversation; witness said, she did not like to talk of it any more; prisoner said he had seen his wife laid out, and a candle hopping over her, and the candle whisking about the house, and a woman's hand carrying it. Witness and prisoner went home to the door together; prisoner said he had as lieve see the devil as any of his wife's family; witness heard prisoner damning his wife that night several times; his wife said, John, honey, hold thy tongue; prisoner said damn thee, I will surely do it; this lasted a long time.

On the Sunday after saw the prisoner and his wife standing in the porch about eleven o'clock; asked prisoner if he saw a candle last night; prisoner said, oh, yes, whisking about the house; witness said, did you hear any spirits; prisoner, oh, yes, pushing against me like bags of wool; witness said, I don't believe any spirits; the prisoner's wife said, John tells me there is a woman and a child buried behind the door; witness said, if there are any spirits there it must be the evil spirit; *look to yourself John, what you are about, you made me very sick yesterday; if any thing happens in that house otherwise than well I shall surely appear against you—look to yourself.* Prisoner had often mentioned spirits to witness before, and said he had seen them.

Prisoner once said that his wife's foot was swelling, but witness never observed such an appearance.

Saw the deceased on the Sunday preceding her death; deceased came into her house three times on Sunday, last time near sun-set, appeared in perfect health.

On Monday prisoner came to witness while milking her cows; prisoner said his wife had a bad head-ach to-day; witness asked if she had taken cold, but prisoner did not know. Met prisoner two hours afterwards, asked how Molly is now; prisoner said she is puking and drinking cold water; witness said, don't give her water, I will give her some fresh whey; prisoner said, I will not give her that; witness offered a handful of peppermint, and said it was a healthy thing; prisoner said he would take some; witness offered sugar; prisoner did not take that; witness offered some oatmeal, &c. which prisoner accepted.

About eleven o'clock, prisoner came again to witness, and brought in his little boy, and said he was going in to Molly; left the child (eight months' old); prisoner came again in half an hour. Witness, Is Molly got worse? Prisoner, Much the same, puking and drinking water. Prisoner came in again afterwards, and asked a drop of cold milk; gave him the milk; prisoner came in again and took the child from me in a quick manner.

Witness asked where he was going in such a hurry; prisoner replied, he was going down to Cuckoo Hill, with the child to Ben Thomas's wife. Witness asked if he was going away with the child from its mother; prisoner said no, *it shall not suck her again, her milk is not healthy;* witness observed she had nothing but a cold; prisoner asked witness to go in to see his wife between eleven and twelve o'clock; did not go in immediately; heard the deceased puking; went in and found her leaning out of bed puking, and in great agony; what she was puking was the colour of the yellow of eggs; did not go in again till the evening; it was dark; the deceased was easy; asked how the deceased was; prisoner said she was gone to sleep; told prisoner to call if he wanted any thing, and went away.

On Tuesday morning, about nine o'clock, saw prisoner; asked him how his wife was, and he said she was still puking; offered him some milk, &c. offered to bring any thing for him from Haverfordwest; the deceased wished for a drop of beer; went to Haverfordwest; returned about an hour before dark; the deceased called for some beer. Saw by his best hat, that prisoner had been out; asked him where he had been; said he had been to Haverfordwest, to get something from the doctor; prisoner said that Mr. Freeman, the doctor, had been to see his wife, and said that his wife had a very wild fever; went to the bed and found prisoner's wife very wet in her hands and face, and as cold as clay; asked how she could be in this state; prisoner said he had given her a vomit in cold water, and that he had washed her in cold water. Witness, How came you to give it in cold water? Prisoner, *Mr. Freeman told me to do it.*

At nine o'clock at night, prisoner called witness in. Witness, How is Molly now? Prisoner, Just gone, poor maid; went in with her husband, deceased was in uncommon agony; staid there till half past eleven, when she died. Before I went to lay her out, prisoner tossed out some gruel out of a saucepan, and washed the saucepan; his wife had previously desired him to get

some gruel for her, when I returned from Haverfordwest. Laid her out; prisoner did not appear at all affected; witness said, How is this, her nails are gone as black as ink? Prisoner, My first wife went that way too.

Cross Examined by Mr. Taunton.

Prisoner had lived at this place since a short time after Michaelmas; was in the employment of Mr. Lloyd; prisoner's wife a good tempered woman; never heard an angry word from her; had every good quality to make a husband fond of her. Was much surprised at the conversation in coming home from Haverfordwest. Prisoner had often said, that he did not like his wife's family; witness knew before this, that prisoner had no value for his wife. Prisoner said he had bought something which he had long wished for; did not say where he had bought it. This sort of talk of spirits is not uncommon; did not see who dined with the prisoner on the Sunday; the deceased told her that her relations in law were come to see her; about twelve o'clock, time of dinner, they dined with the deceased; saw the deceased on Sunday evening going to the well for a jug of water.

On Monday morning, prisoner told witness and witness's husband, that his wife was very bad in bed; the milking place near the house; saw the deceased, for the first time, at eleven o'clock; prisoner mentioned his wife's illness as early as six; prisoner said, that Mr. Freeman had directed him to wash his wife in cold water. The saucepan was upon the table, I had seen it before, what was in it looked like gruel; witness brought the deceased some gin, about half a pint mixed with water and sugar, which seemed to give her some quiet. The deceased was buried in the common way.

Ben. Thomas, the deceased's brother.—Prisoner said, he might as well have had a wife with 200l. as one with nothing; prisoner has told me frequently, that he had seen a light in the house, and that it was his wife's light, for he saw her hand and arm carrying it about the house; prisoner at another time said, that Molly would die; this was some time before Christmas; my sister was at that time in very good health. Prisoner brought his child to me on the Monday before my sister died; said that Molly was very poorly; went to my sister's house on the Tuesday evening; prisoner said that his wife was hearty and well till she eat her supper on Sunday night; that he had made tea for her on Sunday night, and had some porridge himself. It might be nearly eight o'clock when I was there on Tuesday evening; prisoner did not wish me to stay; said that his head was sore, and that he wished to go to bed.

Cross Examined.

Lived within a mile of his sister's; prisoner had told him several times that his wife was swelling and sore, and he could have gone to see her. First heard of her illness on Monday, at noon, from the prisoner himself. It was gone dark on Tuesday evening when I went to the house; the deceased did not take any thing while I was there; I might have stopped, if I had chosen, but there was no fire.

Rachel Owen.—Lives at Little Cuckoo; has seen prisoner at her master's house; he was talking about the lights, and his wife's left arm carrying a candle; this was about Christmas. Was at the house on Tuesday about eleven o'clock; the deceased was very easy at that time; prisoner did not ask her to stay. Prisoner came to my master's house after the funeral; appeared very well on point of spirits. On Saturday went to Haverfordwest, and returned about three; my mistress came towards night, and said, *that prisoner's wife had been taken up from the grave.* Prisoner put his head against the wall; told me to take the ladder down that he might go to bed, for that he was very poorly. On Sunday morning, he desired me to tell my master to say that he was not there if any body should ask for him. That he had a good mind to get away, and never be heard of again.

Cross Examined.

Prisoner did not go away.

Martha Griffiths.—Prisoner's wife and child took coffee with her on the Sunday evening.

Moses Davies.—Prisoner came to me two months before his wife died, said his wife was in a decline, and that his first wife died of a decline.

W. Phillips and Lettice Thomas spoke to the conversation about the lights, and prisoner's expressions about his wife's approaching death; and the latter, that he said she had swellings in her legs.

Mr. J. Freeman. (the surgeon).—Lives about one mile and a half from Cuckoo; prisoner met him on Tuesday the 26th of February, and asked him to come and see his wife; he went, and found her in a state of high fever.

Dr. Howell and the former witness proved satisfactorily that the deceased was poisoned.

The carpenter identified the body.

The prisoner for some time after his apprehension, seemed insensible of the dreadful situation in which he stood; but, from his condemnation to the period of his execution, his appearance was that of deep conviction, employing his time in prayer and lamentation, and he at last confessed to a Reverend Gentleman who attended him, that he was guilty of destroying both his wives by arsenic; that he employed a fellow-servant of his to obtain the arsenic with which he poisoned the first, telling her that the rats and mice were so numerous about the house, that he thought it necessary to destroy them by poison; that he bought a shilling's worth of arsenic at a shop in Haverfordwest, with which he poisoned the last, and that he gave it to her in treacle and in budram (flummery), that of the remainder, he threw some of it into a meadow, and the rest he had concealed between two stones in the haggard at Cuckow, where it has since been found. Thus, from his own confession, it appears that in the space of two years he has twice been guilty of murder, his first wife after they had been married but eight weeks! He shortly after married Mary Thomas, by whom he had a fine boy; but no ties were sufficiently strong to induce him to perform the duties of father or husband, and, after much premeditation, he accomplished the deed for which he suffered.

The chief witness against him delivered her evidence with so much accuracy and firmness, that all who heard her were convinced of the truth of her deposition; and the Learned Judge himself said, she was a valuable member of society, and a credit to the county in which she lived.

MISCELLANEOUS.

The traffic in guineas continues to be carried on with an effrontery which only long impunity could induce. There are many persons, who in the capacity of agents to Jews and others at the out ports, enter respectable shops in the metropolis, under pretence of purchasing a trifling article, and offer the shopkeeper 24s. or 25s. for every guinea in his possession.

The half-crowns are rapidly withdrawing from circulation. Those who are hoarding them urge, that as the dollars have risen sixpence each, the half-crowns must shortly be current at 2s. 9d.

Lord Wellington, it is understood, intends to send home the transports in the Tagus, in order that Ministers may make such economical arrangements as they shall think fit, there being no apprehension of a second attack on Portugal.

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