



The Devonport Mail c1840

Manslaughter – Due to Intoxication

William Hare was indicted for the manslaughter of John Blake, at Park House Inn, near Amesbury.

Mr. Edwards was counsel for the prosecution; and Mr. Merewether defended the prisoner.

It appeared that a club had been held at Park House Inn, and that the deceased had been some time in the house. About twelve at night, the prisoner and two other men came and demanded admission; and, upon being refused, they forced their way in. The landlord, however, soon turned these men and the deceased out of the house. In a few minutes he was called out by persons, who said that Blake was dead. He went out, and found him lying in the road, quite dead. It further appeared, that the prisoner and the deceased, when they left the house, had some words, when the prisoner gave deceased a push. At that instant, the Devonport mail came up; deceased stumbled against the leaders, the coach went over him, and killed him.

The Judge said, there could be no doubt upon these facts, and the Jury found the prisoner guilty.

Mr. Justice Coleridge, in passing sentence, said, that the offence of manslaughter varied in every possible degree. Some cases were almost as bad as murder, while other, in point of moral guilt, were very slight. The prisoner's offence came within the latter description. There was no bad blood. He hoped this would be a lesson to him, to see what bad circumstances arose from drunkenness. This unfortunate man had been in a public-house all day – in the least possible state of preparation to meet his maker; and he (the prisoner) had sent him out of this world. All would have been avoided if they had both been sober, and he hoped it would have the effect of inducing him to restrain from intoxication. The sentence on him was that he should be imprisoned for three days.

Salisbury and Winchester Journal, 24 August 1840