



Crime and Punishment

Bremhill

Daring Burglary

William Isaac, Joseph George and Robert Star have been committed to Fisherton Gaol charged with burglariously entering the dwelling house of Jane Greenwood of Bremhill Wilts, on the night of Saturday the 28th ult, and stealing 10s in silver, a penknife, a pocket handkerchief, and a variety of other articles. Mrs Greenwood is an elderly woman, and resides with her daughter in the lock house by the side of the canal in the parish of Bremhill. Between twelve and one o'clock on the above date she was awakened by a noise about the house, and on opening the chamber window she perceived three men endeavouring to effect an entrance. She immediately cried "Murder!" as loud as she could; upon which one of the fellows, who knew that her cries would be useless as there was no other house within half a mile, swore that he would totally silence her, at the same time making a violent blow at her head with a long hoe, but which she very fortunately avoided.

The prisoners then broke in the door of the house, and having lighted three candles, each of them took one and proceeded upstairs. With horrid imprecations they demanded money; and the old woman (though reluctantly) gave them her pockets which contained about 10s or 12s in silver. They then ransacked the bedroom, but not finding so much as they expected, they dragged both mother and daughter over the stair.

While the mother was on the ground Star knelt upon her, and waving a crowbar over her head, told her that her end was come, and asked her (with oaths) what death she would die, whether by the crowbar or by drowning. The old woman, collectedly and meekly replied, "Whatever death the Almighty will permit you to inflict upon me!". This, it is supposed, in some measure unnerved the wretch, as he did not commit any further violence upon her person.

Everything however which the prisoners conceived worth carrying away, they took with them; and it is supposed they were in the house the greater part of an hour. A description of them was soon given to some neighbouring farmers, who, with a promptitude that reflects upon them infinite credit, made an active pursuit, and traced them to Devizes, where they were all discovered in one house in the Nursery. George and Star surrendered quietly; but Isaac who is a remarkably stout man, made a desperate resistance; a blow or two from a poker, however, prevented his escape. Under the bed upon which he was lying, Hutchins (the mayor's officer) found the penknife and pocket handkerchief.

Both Mrs Greenwood and her daughter swore to the persons of the prisoners, and they are fully committed for trial at the ensuing Wilts assize.

Sherborne Mercury Monday 13 February 1832

From the Criminal Records: William Isaac, Joseph George and Robert Starr were convicted of House Breaking and all sentenced to death at the Lent Wiltshire Assize, 1832. The sentences were commuted to Transportation for Life.



a convict chain gang in Sydney, New South Wales