



Crime and Punishment

Minety

Court Case

Thomas Norrish

Thomas Norrish, formerly a porter on the Great Western Railway at Minety station, was taken before P A Lovell and T Luce, Esqrs., on Thursday, on a charge of bigamy. The prisoner has several times been remanded on the above charge, in consequence of the difficulty Mr Superintendent Staples has experienced in procuring the attendance of the necessary witnesses.

The evidence adduced in support of the charge on Thursday was, however, conclusive. Mr John Norrish, the prisoner's brother, a very respectable farmer, occupying a large farm at Trull, near Taunton, proved that the prisoner was married at the parish church of St Mary Magdalen, Taunton, on the 11th day of April 1839, to a Miss Mary Pearce, the daughter of Mr John Pearce, of Chipstable, farmer, and that he was present at the ceremony and was one of the attesting witnesses on the occasion.

The prisoner's first wife (who, with her family, still resides at Minety, and is now chargeable to the common fund of the Malmesbury Union) was present, and Mr Norrish identified her as being the woman to whom his brother was first married.

Mrs Cambridge, the wife of a turner, residing at Wednesbury, in Staffordshire, proved that she was present at the second marriage of the prisoner with a young woman named Martha Wilson, the daughter of a plumber and glazier of that town; that the marriage took place on the 8th September last, at Wednesbury, and that the prisoner married in the name of Thomas Brown. The witness also stated that the prisoner lived with his second wife till January last, when he was apprehended on a charge of deserting his first wife and family, and committed to Devizes for three months.

It appeared that the prisoner formerly occupied a very respectable position in life, and that he has squandered a good fortune in habits of dissipation. During the time the prisoner had been in custody on the present charge, he has repeatedly asserted his innocence, but the evidence on this occasion was too conclusive, and the prisoner, who was fully committed to take his trial at the next assizes, declined to make any statement, remarking that he should reserve his defence till the trial.

Sherbourne Mercury 26 May 1863

Thomas Norrish, a labourer, was found guilty of unlawfully marrying one Martha Wilson, his wife being then alive, on the 8th of September 1862. The prisoner was sentenced to six calendar months' imprisonment with hard labour.

Bath Chronicle and Weekly Gazette 23 July 1863