



Crime and Punishment

Seend

SEEND BIGAMY CASE 1890

On Wednesday George George 61, baker, surrendered to his bail on an indictment for feloniously marrying Ann Maria Bouchier, his wife Mary then being alive.

According to the case for the prosecution, the prisoner took lodgings at Mrs Bouchier's house at Seend, Wilts. After he had been living in the house for some time, he asked Mrs Bouchier to marry him, and she did so. She had an income of about £340 a year which was lost on re-marriage, being divided among her children by a previous marriage. The couple lived together for 3½ years after the marriage, but subsequently they separated, and then she found out that the prisoner had another wife in London. Hence the present proceedings were taken. Prosecutrix said that this marriage was celebrated at St Paul's, Portland Square, Bristol. After discovering that his other wife was alive, witness returned to live with her mother, and prisoner went to Cambridge, but she wrote to him from time to time.

Cross-examined: Made the discovery in July 1888, but only instituted these proceedings about a month ago.

Detective Sergeant Robertson proved that on the 17th ultimo he received the prisoner in custody in London. In reply to the charge prisoner said, "I know all about it." In the train on the way to Bristol prisoner observed, unsolicited, "If it had not been for my wife's family the thing would never have occurred. We lived together happily till her children interfered, and she knew all about what I had been doing. I had to allow my first wife £1 a week, and left her through her drunken habits."

In the prisoner's possession witness found a mourning card "in loving memory of Mary George," who died last December, and two verses of a hymn. A witness was called to prove that up to December last prisoner lived with a woman as his wife, at her house in Winchester. - Evidence was also given to show that the prisoner had had three wives - Ellen Joyner, who was in court, and whom he married in 1852 and deserted in 1868; Mary Philpot now dead, during whose lifetime he married Mrs Bouchier of Seend.

For the defence Mr Matthews said the second woman Mary Philpot was not prisoner's wife, and in law he had committed no crime in going through a form of marriage with Mrs Bouchier. Let it be a satisfaction to Mrs Bouchier to know that it was no marriage she made with prisoner, and therefore she did not forfeit her £340 a year. Ellen Joyner was in court but being the prisoner's wife could not be called.

The Commissioner said the prisoner was charged with a particular bigamy, and the indictment was not proved unless it could be shown that he was legally married to Mary Philpot, and she was living when he went through a form of marriage with Mrs Bouchier while Ellen Joyner was alive could not now be tried.

The jury returned a verdict of not guilty.

Prisoner then left the court, and was taken into custody by Detective Sergeant Robertson. He was subsequently admitted to bail.

Devizes and Wiltshire Gazette Thursday 3 April 1890