



## **The Attempt to Murder a Child**

On Wednesday last, Elizabeth Ford was brought up on remand before W. H. Woodcock Esq., charged with cutting and wounding with intent to murder Sarah Hinton, her niece, a girl about 11 years of age, on January 23rd at Wilton.

The prosecutrix, who was able to attend, stated "I had been sleeping with my aunt for 3 nights. On the fourth night when I woke up she pinched me. It was dark. She then slapped me in the face. I tried to get out of bed, but she laid on me and tried to stop my breath. I then fell out of bed, and she on me. Then she knocked my head against the chimney piece. I cried out loud. She then said she was going downstairs to get a candle. She went and I followed her downstairs. I tried to get out and unlocked the door. She told me to go upstairs. I did so and got back into bed again. She said I should not hide there to dirty her clothes. She then flung me down in the room, and cut my throat with a knife. She knelt on me. The next thing I recollect was seeing Mr. North the policeman."

Inspector North of the County Police, who is stationed at Wilton, stated that on the morning of the 23rd January, he went to the house of the prisoner. There he saw Sarah Hinton, standing inside the door in her chemise, and her face, neck and breast were covered in blood. Witness examined the throat and sent for the doctor. In consequence of what he had heard, he went upstairs, where he found the prisoner partly undressed. Her arms were covered in blood and there was a pool of blood on the floor. There was no other person in the room. Witness asked her what she had been about, and she replied nothing. He then told her she was charged with attempting to murder the little girl. She said "It's all her lies, she wants to scandalise me". He asked her where the knife was. She stooped down and picked it up, and witness took it. He now produced the knife, which had some blood on it. He then took the prisoner into custody.

The little girl was then taken to another cottage. Mr. W. J. French, surgeon, deposed to being called to visit the girl. When he arrived at the cottage, she was supported in a chair. He examined her and found an incised wound on the left side of her neck, two inches long and nearly a quarter of an inch deep, another wound across the throat, just above the collar bone, about 3 inches long, superficial, dividing the skin only, a jagged wound on the lip and mouth, and there were external bruises over the whole face and head. There was an incised wound, superficial, on the left shoulder, one and half inches long, several bruises on the back, and an incised wound nearly an inch deep, dividing the second and third finger of the left hand, a jagged wound on the left breast, external bruises as if from a bite, the marks of the teeth being visible on the left arm and about the neck and several incised wounds on the left hand. The loss of blood was about a pint and a half. He had seen the knife produced by Inspector North and was of the opinion that the jagged wounds were done with such a weapon. Had the knife been a little sharper, the incised wound on the left side of the neck would have reached the carotid artery and caused instant death. The life of the child was in great danger for a week.

The prisoner having been duly cautioned said "If I did it, I don't know anything about it and I didn't know anything about it at the time".

The prisoner was fully committed on the charge to take her to trial at the next Wilts Assizes to be held at Devizes.

**Salisbury and Winchester Journal, Saturday, 8 February 1862**

After Elizabeth Ford was committed for trial, shortly after she became insane and violent and reported on by the surgeon, when immediate steps were taken for her removal to the County Pauper Lunatic Asylum.

**Salisbury and Winchester, 12 April 1862**