



CORONERS INQUESTS



Winterbourne Stoke

Thomas Grant – Dreadful Effects of Drunkenness

Dreadful Effects of Drunkenness

Mr. Whitmarsh held an inquest on Thursday last, at Winterbourne Stoke, on the body of Thomas Grant, farmer in the above village, who was nearly 40 years of age, lived with his father; his brother Jacob and sister Mary also resided in the same house. On Tuesday night, deceased came home drunk from Salisbury fair, and it appeared in evidence from his man servant, that, just as his master was about to get off his horse, he struck the animal, when it immediately reared up, and fell back against the gate post - that deceased did not fall off, but dismounted, and staggered into his home. This witness deposed that when deceased had been in this state he had heard him say that he would kill his brother Jacob - and that Jacob had often-time slept out in the barn through fear of violence from deceased. A female servant deposed that for three years past deceased had been drunk, more or less, every week - that about five weeks ago deceased came home drunk one night, and on his entering Jacob's room, he pulled him out of bed, and cast him on the floor, kneeling on his body, and endeavouring to strangle him, which it is likely he would have done if she and Mary Grant had not gone to his assistance, when Jacob was released and ran out of doors in his night clothes - that deponent had never seen Jacob resist his brother when attacked, but, the contrary, had always acted toward him in mild, kind and forbearing manner - that on Tuesday night last, deceased came home in his ordinary state of drunkenness, and said that his horse had reared and fallen back with him against the post, whereby had injured his head - that he was abusive, striking deponent and his sister Mary in the face, and swearing that he would kill his brother Jacob; - that shortly after went into his room, where a scuffle ensued between the brothers, and that he died in the afternoon of the following day. Jacob Grant deposed that, whilst he was in bed, he heard the deceased say below, Where is old Jacob? I will go and kill him, that deceased entered deponent's room, swearing that he would kill him - that deponent was dragged out of bed, and deceased struck him in the face, which brought blood - that deponent at this moment, considering his life in the greatest danger, took up a stick close at hand, and struck deceased one blow, but on what part of the body, he did not know - that deceased then walked into his room, and he saw no more of him for the night.

Mr. Arnold, surgeon, of Maddington, deposed, that on his arrival he found deceased labouring under symptoms of compression of the brain - that there was a contused wound on the head - and that his death was occasioned either by a blow or a fall. Verdict, the Jury are of opinion that Thomas Grant came to his death from a blow on his head, occasioned accidentally by his horse rearing and falling back with deceased against post, or in consequence of a blow, received from his brother Jacob, which, if cause of death, they consider to have been justifiable, in self defence.

The investigation was conducted with great care, and occupied three hours. The coroner expressed his entire satisfaction with the verdict, and the jury and neighbours generally stated their expectation that the father and brother of the deceased would some time or other have been made victims of his fits of drunken fury.

Devizes Gazette, Thursday, 26 October 1837