

A decorative border in black ink, featuring stylized floral and scrollwork motifs. The border is rectangular with rounded corners and a central floral design at the bottom. The top corners have large, heart-shaped floral motifs, and the sides are decorated with smaller, similar motifs. The bottom center features a large, detailed floral design with multiple petals and leaves.

A Hiatus at the Rectory

By JohnMcQuaid

1856 at Goadby Marwood Rectory in Leicestershire, when the family of the Revd. Edward Manners fell out and violence ensued, resulting in a disputed and very public court case.

A HIATUS AT THE RECTORY

A century and a half ago, the summer of 1856 was reportedly an extremely good one in Melton Mowbray with dry and extended spells of languorous days and nights, a situation which was I am sure very much appreciated by the hard-working people of that town. But the long warm days of that high summer were to be rudely interrupted by a series of dark events which would create grounds for grim anxiety amongst many of its inhabitants and perhaps even amusement for others. Whilst an alleged murderer awaited trial in Leicester for the vicious slaying of two people in Melton and a respected local businessman was shot in the chest by a mentally disturbed young solicitor's clerk for no apparent reason. Out in the country, members of the local high society were having domestic problems of their own in the form of an acrimonious family dispute in the nearby village of Goadby Marwood, all of which was to ensure that the town's Magistrates were adequately engaged. In its Saturday edition of August 30th 1856, the Leicester Chronicle published the following enticing snippet of news on an inside page:

‘... she emerged from gaol,¹ wearing a fashionable brown hat and feather, with a black lace veil over it, and habited in a flounced muslin dress and black velvet cape. Glancing her eye about for a few moments, as if expecting a friend to receive her. She at length espied a young man and woman at the end of Mr Musson's garden wall, near Carlton Terrace (who appeared to be waiting for her), in which direction she went. These two persons together were, it was understood, the servant man and the housemaid at Goadby Hall, who had a chaise and pair also in attendance to convey her to Melton, into which vehicle the three entered and were driven off for that place’

Like reading something from a Victorian mystery novel, it was coming across this interesting snippet of news in a local newspaper which drew my curiosity and persuaded me to discover more. Searching further, I learned of a contentious yet fascinating ‘storm’ in a very rural china teacup, a very ‘posh’ domestic affair which certainly had the effect of stirring the interests and passions of the local population who were ever willing to listen in on the secret comings and goings of their ‘masters’ private lives - especially their failings. The Goadby Marwood case did indeed revolve around members of the very top drawer of the area's aristocratic families, but I formed the impression that if the list of characters had involved any of the many

¹ Leicester County Gaol, Welford Road.

agricultural worker's families who lived and worked locally, the people from the newspapers might have remained at their desks.

The very small village of Goadby Marwood lies almost secretly disengaged from the main highways and byways, being some 2 or 3 miles to the northeast of the ancient market town of Melton Mowbray in Leicestershire. The older part of the village is to be found today pretty much as it was at the time of these happenings, but has probably by now more than doubled in total size. Still extant as an established family in the area and long entrenched as landowning residents, the Manners family remains headed by the Dukedom of Rutland and for centuries they have retained this part of the country as their property and part and parcel of the family seat of nearby Belvoir Castle. Through a number of interwoven marriages and unclaimed offspring over the years, much of the family real estate and wealth has been established and increased. As a numerous and convoluted landed family which has evolved over many decades, this might not be the best place to outline their detailed antecedent histories, suffice perhaps to paraphrase with the following brief notes:

THE MANNERS FAMILY.

Complicated and convoluted indeed, the whole of the 'who's-who' of the Manners family would take many column inches to explain, so it will hopefully suffice to say for my purposes here that the Earldom of Rutland produced Thomas Manners, (c. 1488–1543), the son of the 12th Baron de Ros of Hamlake, Truibut and Belvoir, who was created Earl of Rutland in the peerage of England in 1525. His mother, Anne St Leger, was Richard Plantagenet's granddaughter. The 9th Earl was later created Duke of Rutland and Marquess of Granby in 1703 by Queen Anne. Today, the incumbent at the family seat of Belvoir is David Manners, the 11th Duke, who has a son Charles (b. 1999), waiting for his incumbency in the wings. Over a period of more than three centuries, the various Manners males have produced a plethora of offspring - many of them illegitimate - the product in many cases of idle dalliance with divers ladies of the court and even a fair number of those from 'below stairs'. For many years, various generations of the Dukes of Rutland represented the Melton Mowbray parliamentary Conservative party at Westminster.

BELVOIR CASTLE - The Manners Family.

A Norman castle originally stood on the high ground in its present location during the English Civil War. It was one of the more notable strongholds of the King's supporters. It eventually passed into the hands of the Dukes of Rutland and following a great and destructive fire it was rebuilt by the wife of the 5th Duke, gaining its current castellated Gothic style. The architect James Wyatt was chiefly responsible for this restructuring and the result is a building which bears a superficial resemblance to a medieval castle, its central tower reminiscent of Windsor Castle, near London. The present castle is the fourth building to have stood on the site since Norman times and has been the home of the Manners family for five hundred years and the seat of the incumbent Dukes of Rutland for over three centuries. The property was often the residence of junior members of the Manners family over the decades.

Lady Elizabeth Manners, daughter of the 4th Duke married Richard Norman MP in 1798 and their son George Norman inherited the estate and grand hall from his cousin the 7th Duke.

Ignominy

So this was the background of some of the characters involved in the rather astonishing and unwholesome events which were to unfold unto to the public gaze and earshot during that hot summer of 1856, when the Normans and a young servant girl, Miss Mary Johnson, shared an indignant and embarrassing presence at the Melton Mowbray Magistrates Court. During the same week as this exposure, the small town was to suffer the ignominy and upheaval of two other life threatening events, the first involving the infamous murderer of two people, an ex-convict recently returned from Australia, William Brown, followed by the attempted murder of local architect and respected estate agent, Mr William Shouler, who had somehow survived a point-blank pistol shot to his chest by a young man of temporary unsound mind. If the actions of local man William Brown, known notoriously as 'Peppermint Billy' had created massive fear and ire in the good people of Melton Mowbray, then the shenanigans and violent squabbles of the upper-crust parties and their cavalier and unethical treatment of legal proceedings, aided with the assistance of their lesser peers who administered it was to cause great resentment amongst the 'proletariat', not to mention two of the local newspapers of the day which would diverge politically in their opposing opinions of the societal and political manipulations which were created.

Much ado about Nothing

To properly follow the twists and turns in this sad little episode of what was essentially a domestic dispute or family spat, it is better to have some knowledge as to whom fills the parts played and so heading the cast, I present the Reverend Edward Manners, M.A. of Goadby Rectory, one-time Rector of Kirby Bellars who was by now retired but chronically ill and bed-bound, living out his final days. A member of the local Belvoir Manners family and born in 1786, Edward was admitted to Christ's College, Cambridge in June 1822 and after brief residences at Chester and Lincoln he was to be ordained Rector of Goadby Marwood Parish in September 1825. In 1807 Edward had married Elizabeth Hill who was to pre-decease him in 1830 at the young age of 45yrs. She did produce three surviving daughters; these being Ann b. 1823 who never married and Louisa Julia b. 1814 who was married in 1834 to George Norman, landowner, politician J.P. and general overseer of the local society. A third daughter, Elizabeth Caroline, was born in 1815 initially marrying the Revd. William Hartopp in Nether Broughton in 1850. Following his death after just two years, she was to marry another man of the cloth in the Reverend Nathan Hubbersty of Derbyshire. Bizarrely, Elizabeth herself was to die in 1854 after just two years of that marriage.

The Manners family were usually resident at Goadby Marwood Hall, but towards the end of his life Edward was to relocate to the smaller Rectory, just next door having passed over the family seat to his eldest daughter Ann. Edward, following a period of intense and debilitating illness, was to die at the Manor House in Kirby Bellars which was his final parish on December 21st, 1857. His impressive tomb today stands in the grounds of the local parish church there.

In one corner of this seemingly irreparable and messy family dispute, were included Edward's domestic staff who were all local people who seemed to have become implicated in the festering family friction which was gathering force between the daughters Ann and Louisa and which related without doubt, less to the condition of their father's health and well-being, than to the apparent imminence of his demise and the production of his Last Will and Testament. It was further well known that bad blood was brewing up between his two daughters, the sisters Ann and Louisa. The blood was to reach boiling point and spill over dramatically during a visit by the sisters to their ailing and frail father at the Rectory on Tuesday 22nd July. On the 26th, the '*Leicester Chronicle*', well versed on proceedings of the day, were to report the first public column inches of the distressing event and its nasty consequences in their newspaper, with this promised to be followed a

week later with a more detailed account. Here follows an account of that report:

EXTRAORDINARY ASSAULT CASE.

The town of Melton Mowbray was on Thursday in a state of tense excitement, the cause of which was an assault which had been committed upon Mrs Norman, wife of George Norman Esq., of Goadby Marwood Hall, by three of the servants of the Rev. E. Manners, of Goadby Parsonage, the father of Mrs. Norman. the case came on at three o'clock, in the Magistrates Room at the Corn Exchange, when there was a large attendance of the public. The Magistrates on the Bench were C.H. Frewen, Esq., M.P., (chairman,) Rev. F. Norman, H.C. Bingham Esq., and J.C. Beasley Esq.

The defendants were Mary Johnson, David Ecob, and Thomas Landers, who were charged with unlawfully assaulting Louisa Julia Norman, at Goadby Marwood, on the 22nd July. Landers is a groom in the service of the Rev E. Manners, Ecob occupies a similar position, and Mary Johnson acts as a companion to Miss [Ann] Manners, the daughter of the Rev. E. Manners. Mary Johnson is the young woman who took out a game certificate about two years ago, and injured her hand whilst out shooting, a notice of which appeared in the *Chronicle* at the time. She appeared in court richly dressed with valuable rings on her fingers and carried a bouquet of gay flowers in her hand.

Mr Atter, of Stamford, appeared on behalf of the defendants, who had been apprehended on Thursday night, under a warrant issued by Mr. Bingham. The hearing of the case occupied three hours, and the circumstances are of so unusual a character that we intend giving next week, a full report of the case. We only have time and space this week to give a brief outline ...

And as promised, the following part of the story was published by the newspaper the following week under the following heading:

A SCENE AT A PARSONAGE HOUSE. EXTRAORDINARY SCENES AT GOADBY MARWOOD.

We gave last week a brief account of this remarkable case of assault, heard before the Melton magistrates, on Thursday, July 24th. We now fulfill the promise we then made, to give a full report of the proceedings. The assault complained of took place on Tuesday, July 22nd, while Mr Norman was attending his magisterial duties at Melton. The complaint is the wife of George Norman Esq. who reside at Goadby Marwood Hall, and the defendants were domestics in the establishment of the complainant's father, the Reverend Edward Manners, M.A. of Goadby Rectory. It appears that for some time past a feeling had existed between the parties concerned of not the most friendly nature, and annoyances of various kinds have been submitted to. As we stated last week, one of the defendants, Mary Johnson, who is a farmer's daughter, has for some time been a companion to Miss [Ann] Manners, and has had a great share in the management of the household at the Rectory. The other defendants were man-servants employed there.

Mary Johnson is a good looking young person, apparently about 22 years of age, lady-like in appearance, and was gaily-dressed when she appeared in Court. Her penchant for sporting has on one or two occasions been noticed in the Chronicle. We believe that it is now about two years since she took out a certificate to shoot, and shortly afterwards, whilst out shooting, she met with an accident, and lost part of one finger by the accidental discharge of her gun. The warrant for the assault was issued by Mr Bingham on Wednesday, and the same evening the defendants were apprehended by Superintendent Condon, at the Rectory. They were conveyed to the lock-up at Melton, where they were detained until three o' clock on Thursday afternoon, when the case came on in the Magistrates Room at the Corn Exchange. The Court was crowded during the hearing of the case. The following Magistrates were on the Bench:- C. H. Frewen, Esq., M.P. (chairman), T. C. Beasley, Esq., H. C. Bingham, esq., and the Rev. P. Norman. George Norman, Esq., occupied a seat immediately behind the magistrates, and offered suggestions to his brother magistrates during the hearing of the case.

Mr Atter of Stamford, appeared on behalf of the defendants; the cross-examination on behalf of the complaint, of the witnesses for the defence was conducted by Mr Frewen and Mr Bingham.

The case came before the Bench upon the complaint of Louisa Julia Norman, of Goadby Marwood, charging Mary Johnson, Thomas Landers, and David Ecob, with having, on the 22nd of July, assaulted her.

Mrs Norman deposed as follows:- 'I am living at Goadby Marwood, and reside at the hall. My father, the Rev. Edward Manners resides at the parsonage. He is a very old man. I have been in the habit of visiting him, and my father never denied me, but was glad to see me. I went there at a quarter past twelve o' clock on the 22nd July. I went into the house and found the door locked. Ecob came in, and I enquired for my sister. I asked him to go and tell her I wanted to see my father. He said she was ill, and had been having leeches, and that the doctor said I was not to see my father. I said I shall not ask any doctor whether I will be permitted to see my father, and I shall insist on seeing him. I then went to the staircase and called my sister two or three times. As I received no answer, I went upstairs to the door of the room where I thought she was. I knocked on the door and received no answer. I then went down into the kitchen, and said, "I shall remain in this house until I have seen my father." I asked all the servants in the room where she was, and they said they did not know. I then went and sat down in a chair, opposite my father's bedroom, on the ground floor. After a few minutes, Mary Johnson came up, with the key in her hand, to unlock my father's room door. She put the key to the door, but did not unlock it. I stepped up directly to the door, and said, "I wish to see Mr Manners." I put my hand upon the handle of the door. She instantly drew the key out, and gave my hand a sharp blow, saying, "You shall not go in." There is a mark now on my hand where she struck me. I then left my hold with the left hand, and took hold with my other. The violence of the blow she gave me broke the ring upon my little finger. She then said "You shall not go in, unless he wishes to see you." I said, "When he does not wish to see me, I will go away, but not until then." She then took hold of my right thumb and bent it violently back. She said several things to which I made no reply, and I still remained by the door. I took a chair which stood in the hall, and said "I shall stay here until I do see Mr Manners" I placed the chair against the room door. She then went outside the house, and called through the window of my father's room, "Here is Mrs Norman, she wants to come in - am I to obey her orders, or those of Mr Douglass?" I stood

close to the door and heard no answer made, Mary Johnson called to me and said "Mr Manners does not wish to see you, and if you like you can come here and hear him say so." She then came into the hall, and said, "If you do not go, you shall be turned out."

Mr Campion was not putting down the whole of Mrs Norman's statement; therefore Mr Atter appealed to the magistrates, and wished to have the whole taken down.

Mr Frewen said the witness was only making a statement, in order that they might see what was material. What was not material need not be taken down.

Mr Atter considered it very important that the precise words of the witness should be taken down. If (said he) this is an open court, and the public are to hear the proceedings, I only want it to be known what is said against the accused. I contend that the depositions ought to be taken at length, and not in this loose manner.

Mr Frewen thought it quite unnecessary to take down the immaterial parts.

Mr Atter submitted that the part he wished now to be taken down was most material.

Mr Frewen repeated that what was material only would be taken down.

Mr Atter: You say she said, "If you do not leave, I shall have to turn you out?"

Mrs Norman:- She said, "I will turn you out." Landers then came up to me, by her orders, and said "Come, go out, you have no business here: get out, you are not wanted here." I said to him, "I am not going to obey your orders." He said "come then, I'll make you get out." He took hold of a book I had in my hand, and tore it violently from me. Mary Johnson then called the other man, and said, "Turn her out, drag her out, do you not hear what I say to you? take her out instantly, obey your orders." Thomas Landers then took hold of me. I took hold of the handle of the door with one hand, and of the bar of the spring with the other. Landers put his hands round my waist, and Mary Johnson took hold of me. I said "Mind what you do." I received two or three severe bruises on my arm, which is still very much discoloured and swelled. I believe the blows were given by Thomas Landers, but in the struggle I cannot say positively who it was. One stood at the entrance door, and the other a little way off, when Mary Johnson spoke to them. They both took hold of me and pulled me in a very violent way, and they threw me out of the door with force. I fell upon the gravel, and I believe Landers threw me down. I turned round quickly, and opened two small lattices in the front, and jumped in at the window of my father's room. He was sitting at the end of the table not doing anything, and he looked wild and bewildered, with no expression of anger on his face. I said to him, "Are you aware of this outrage?" He said, "What my dear?" He was looking as if surprised at the noise. I took hold of his hand, and at the same time, the servants came in at the door. The three defendants came in in a violent manner. Mary Johnson rushed at and violently pushed me aside, so violently that I almost fell. I was leaning at the time at the end of the table, and she pulled me away. She then said in a very loud voice to Mr Manners, "Do you wish me to turn Mrs Norman out?" She said immediately, he says "Yes, yes." I never heard him speak. When she asked the question she stood opposite to him, as near as I did. Thomas Landers immediately repeated the words "Yes, yes", I said "No, he said nothing." Thomas Landers then put his arm round my waist and pulled me down on the floor. It made me feel very sick but did not knock me down. Landers then used most insulting language, and followed me. I felt I was in danger of severe bodily injury,

and I dare not stay any longer, so I went back to the gate, and went away from the premises. I never saw any persons whilst I was there, except a man going by on horseback before the affray began. After Landers gave me the blow on the breast, no further assault took place as I kept stepping backwards. I had various bruises on me and could not sleep at night, because of my arms and legs aching. I was obliged to put one arm in a sling. I cautioned Landers against touching me.

Cross-examined by Mr Atter: I think, Mrs Norman, that Mary Johnson has resided four years with Mr Manners?

Witness: I think she has.

Mr Atter: Your sister also resided there I think?

Witness: Yes.

Mr Atter: Did you not know that at this time he was ill, and having leeches applied?

Witness: I did not know until they told me.

Mr Atter: father, I think, is old?

Witness: Sixty-nine last March.

Mr Atter: Now for some time past I think that there has not been the most friendly relationships between your father and yourself?

Witness: Nothing had occurred at all.

Mr Atter: There have not been, I think, regular visits in the way you could have wished?

Witness: I have gone as often as I had time to go.

Mr Atter: Did you not apply to his surgeon to ascertain if it was advisable that you should visit him or not?

Witness: I do not think I am called upon to answer that question. I do not see that it has anything to do with the assault.

Mr Atter: I ask no questions except fair ones. One of your answers was, that you should not ask a doctor. Now I ask you if you have ever asked permission of a doctor? I ask you, is this the letter, addressed to Mr Douglass, surgeon, of Wymondham, in your handwriting?

Witness: Yes, it is my handwriting.

At the request of Mr Atter, the letter was read by Mr Champion. The letter was dated from Goadby Hall, and the writer, Mrs Norman, stated in it that she should be obliged to Mr Douglass if he could inform her whether he left an order that she should not be admitted to see her father. She did not wish to make any use of his name, but only asked for her own satisfaction.

Mr Atter: Had you previously to writing that letter had any intimation that your father had given orders that you were not to be admitted?

Witness: No, I had not. Mr Atter: Then how can you explain the writing of that letter. if you had received no such intimation?

Witness: I do not see that it has anything to do with the assault case.

Mr Atter: I only ask for an answer. Witness: That has nothing to do with it.

Mr Atter: I have put a plain question, and your worships will decide whether I am entitled to an answer. I ask, if she has always been received and never rejected, why she wrote such a letter to Mr Douglass?

Witness: I wrote to him, to ask him if he left an order that I was not to be admitted.

Mr Atter: Did you receive an intimation that such was the case?

Witness: I did not. It has nothing to do with the case.

Mr Hubberty, a churchman who married a Miss Manners, [Elizabeth, the deceased sister of Ann] and sat by the side of Mr Norman, here interposed a remark but was tartly interrupted by Mr Atter, who enquired

of him if he was a magistrate. [He too was likely interested in some benefit from a future family will!]

Mr Atter said Mrs Norman had received all of the assistance the Court could give her, and all he wanted was the same indulgence for the accused. a letter had been written to Mr Douglass, the medical attendant of Mr Manners, and he wanted to know if Mrs Norman had not received a previous intimation that her presence there was objectionable. There must be some reason for writing a letter of that description.

.....and much more.....

A Rejoinder to the aristocracy.

The bizarre and very pathetic circumstances of this short 'trial', which in reality was but a mere dribble in a china tea-cup, were to culminate in an overly zealous finding of guilt by the seemingly partisan magistrates, followed by a brutally severe and unfair punishment, one which was to immediately raise the ire and the sympathies of the people in the wider area - especially in their own small village of Goadby - and when the story was telegraphed more widely and copied to many of the newspapers of the region, its effect was to create a feeling of much shame and indignity amongst many thinking people. In particular, the left-leaning '*Leicestershire Mercury*' of August 9th that year which was quick to print the following stinging rejoinder, pointedly addressed to the Melton legal authorities and especially, the local aristocracy. It read;

AGRARIAN LAW.

Our readers have doubtless perused with some degree of interest the particulars of the remarkable assault case tried before the Melton Mowbray Bench of Magistrates at a special sessions convened on the 23rd July last and terminated by the sentence of Mary Johnson and Thomas Landers to imprisonment and hard labour, the first for a period of one, and the second for that of four calendar months. Upon the extraordinary nature of the proceedings instituted on that occasion, and upon the great severity of the punishment inflicted on at least one of the prisoners, we feel it our duty to make a few passing comments.

Mrs Julia Norman, the complainant, is the wife of Mr Norman, a county magistrate residing at Goadby Marwood Hall, and the daughter of the Rev. Edward Manners, a clergyman of the church of England, who lives in Goadby Rectory. The household of the latter gentleman is superintended by another daughter, Miss Ann Manners, assisted by Miss Mary Johnson, the daughter of a retired farmer. Between the former lady and her sister Mrs. Norman, as it may be inferred, there is some serious misunderstanding.

Mr Edward Manners is in such a state of health that his medical attendant, Mr Douglass, recommends perfect quiet to his patient, and in order to guard him from all mental excitement, directs that his attendants only shall be admitted to his room. On the 22nd July Mrs Norman calls at the Rectory, and requests an audience with her sister. This is declined on the plea that Miss Manners is indisposed. She next asks to be allowed to speak with her father with equal ill success, and after the refusal of her application, declares her determination not to quit the house without a personal communication with Mr Manners. At this moment Miss Johnson enters the apartment, and proceeds to unlock a door communicating with Mr. Manner's room. A physical contest is forthwith commenced between the two ladies, which, after being for some time sustained, is summarily cut short by the intervention of Thomas Landers, a servant of the establishment, by whose joint efforts and those of Miss Johnson, the process of ejecting Mrs. Norman is completed with considerable violence. Mrs. Norman then enters her father's apartment by a window, and after appealing to him on the subject of the outrage just perpetrated upon her, is again - with the full consent and express direction of Mr. Manners, according to his solemn declaration, taken before Mr Latham, but without it, according to the affirmation upon oath of his daughter - once more forcibly removed from the house. In the second struggle certain severe blows, accompanied with insulting language, are inflicted upon her by Landers, and for this injury she appeals in the ordinary manner, to the Melton magistrates for redress.

We have thus succinctly stated the case, according to the evidence given by the offended party, as it is reported in length in the Leicester Chronicle of last week. Mrs. Norman it will be observed, is not only prosecutrix, but the sole witness to the violence which she represents to have sustained without any provocation given on her part. We have no wish, however, to impugn or throw the slightest doubt upon the veracity of the complainant. Some allowance might be made for the natural excitement under which she was labouring. Some stress might be laid upon the fact that the only parties (three in number) capable of giving an opposite testimony to her own were every one defendants in the case. We will, however, take her statement without any such deductions, and assume that that it was made with perfect accuracy and impartiality in every respect. We will assume, too, that Miss Johnson and her attendants acted without orders from Mr Manners, although he himself has made a directly opposite declaration, and that the blows inflicted were such as described, although no medical testimony was induced in corroboration of this most important fact. We will admit, in short, all the alleged particulars of the assault. But to the perfect propriety of the proceedings before the Melton Bench in this instance, we can by no means so readily give our assent: nor to that of the sentence afterwards delivered by the Magistrates: nor to that of the conduct of the officials charged with the duty of conveying the convicted parties to their destined place of punishment.

In the first place, we find that a special session was convoked for the hearing of the case. The assault is committed on the 22nd of July. On the

23rd, proceedings are instituted and the matter is forthwith decided without the remotest possibility of appeal. Where was the necessity for this unwanted precipitation? Secondly, it appears that Miss Johnson was not cited to appear by summons, but arrested summarily by warrant at a moment's notice, and confined in the Melton lock-up until produced to answer the charges brought against her. What was the purpose of this unusual harshness?

In the course of the trial, Mr. Atter, of Stamford, the attorney for the defence, again and again entreated the magistrates to postpone their decision, in order that the personal evidence of Mr. Manners might be produced in confirmation of the facts alleged in his written declaration. Every lawyer must see that that was a point of vital importance to the accused. Why was Mr. Atter's request so sternly negatived? or in what possible way would the interests of justice have suffered by the desired postponement? Further, Mr. Norman, the husband of the complainant, and a witness to the marks of violence upon her person, takes his seat, according to the report of the Leicester Chronicle, immediately behind the judicial bench, and from time to time makes suggestions to his brother magistrates. Mr. Hubbersty, a brother-in-law of Mr. Manners, sits behind Mr. Norman and also offers remarks upon the evidence. Why was not the unseemly interference in both cases at once rebuked. Then again, the defendant Landers, wishing to make certain statements to the Court in his defence, is prohibited from doing so after the following curious dialogue:-

Landers: Am I allowed to ask Mrs. Norman a question or two?

Mr. Frewen: You should have asked them before.

Landers: I never had an opportunity. I want to ask Mrs. Norman what she said to me at the back of the stairs, before she went into the kitchen. I asked her if she did not know that I was the groom.

Mrs. Norman: I said, do you know which is Miss Manners room?

The magistrates said they would put the questions.

Landers: Ask Mrs. Norman what Mr. Manners said when she asked him if we should turn her out.

Mrs. Norman: I never heard my father say a single word.

Landers: He told me to take her out; and by his orders I did so. Ask her if Miss Johnson did not say, 'shall Mrs. Norman go out of the room', and if Mr. Manners did not say, 'yes, take her out'.

Mrs. Norman: No.

Landers: There are two witnesses in the room, and they can prove it.

Mr. Frewen: Mrs. Norman says, he did not say so.

Landers: But he did, and Mrs. Norman tore my shirt and trousers; she did not tell you that.

Mr. George Norman (to the police): Make him hold his tongue. Landers complained that he had never been allowed to speak before.

Mr. Campion (the Magistrates Court's Clerk): You have no right to speak.

Finally, arrives the feared decision of the Magistrates - four months imprisonment with hard labour to Thomas Landers with doubt expressed

whether this period of work at the '*crank*'² ought not to have been extended to the full term of six months under the new act - 1 month imprisonment and hard labour to Miss Johnson for one calendar month. Is such a sentence warranted we will not say by the letter, but by the obvious spirit and intention of the aggravated assaults Bill (17 and 18 Victoria), headed by the preamble, "Whereas the present law has been found insufficient for the protection of women and children from violent assaults". The answer to this question, we have to be supplied with by other jurists than ourselves. In the meantime, one thing is certain, that by the rigid interpretation of the above statute, both Mary Johnson and Thomas Landers are alike at this moment toiling through their effective terms of confinement upon hard fare, and with the accompaniment of severe or menial labour within the walls of the county prison of Leicester.

The defendant Landers wished to address a few more words to the Bench but was stopped by Mr. Frewen, who said; "We don't want to hear any more about it, you'll go to your four months at the house of correction."

One week later, the following story appeared in the same newspaper of Saturday, August 16th, 1856:

THE GOADBY MARWOOD ASSAULT CASE.

It appears that, in our succinct account last week of the proceedings, instituted against Miss Mary Johnson and Thomas Landers at the suit of Mrs George Norman of Goadby Marwood hall, we omitted one part of the remarkable and memorable sentence pronounced by the Melton Bench on that occasion. We have recently been informed that, in addition to the one month's imprisonment with hard labour, awarded to the former, and to the four months of similar toil and confinement assigned to the latter defendant, both were alike sentenced to find sureties for their good behaviour for the space of twelve calendar months. This we think, was the only addition required to make the judgement of the Melton Magistrates complete, as a rich specimen of something more than questionable law, but of the most unquestionable precipitation and severity. The case as it now stands we believe to be unique. That it will obtain a wide and lasting celebrity among the curiosities of rural justice, does not admit of a doubt. In the meantime, we think it most desirable, that it should attract the serious attention of her Majesty's present Secretary of State for the Home Department. According to the famous saying of Martin Luther, "the human intellect may be compared to a drunken clown trying to ride a restive horse. If he succeeds in mounting the animal on one side, he is certain, before long, to fall to the ground on the other." If this aphorism is correct in its application to questions of metaphysical Science, or to the mysteries of Divinity, it is certainly no less true, in relation to Legislation and Jurisprudence.

^{2*} The notorious and dreaded *crank* was, until 1865, utilised within prisons along with other brutish methods of *hard labour*. Comprising a wheel with a counting device affixed to a box of gravel, the wretched prisoner would be required to rotate the handle a given number of times before any nourishment would be made available to him. Not unique to Leicester Prison, this activity produced no useful or profitable conclusion and was later, along with the practice of solitary confinement and the limb-destroying treadmill, it was eventually considered to be a cruel and unnecessary punishment and discontinued. It is said that at Birmingham Prison that if the prisoner did not complete the required number of rotations he was kept in the crank cell until late into the night. This usually meant that he would miss supper and have no food until the following morning.

A short time since, the English public was horrified, and not unreasonably, by the number of brutal assaults committed upon defenceless women and children, by intoxicated husbands and unnatural parents. Wives half killed, or grievously mutilated - infants with bruised limbs and emaciated bodies, and brought to the very verge of the grave by systematic ill-treatment, were constantly recurring objects in our courts of petty session. Against the perpetration of such inhuman cruelties, a storm of indignation naturally arose. A revision of the existing law of assault was clamorously demanded and the consequence was a new Act permitting the punishment of hard labour, for a period not exceeding six calendar months to be inflicted on offenders in "aggravated" cases. But in what sense the word "aggravated" was to be received, the law unfortunately neglected to define. That was to be determined by the discretion of the Magistrate.

And now we see some of the results of this lax, hasty and indefinite legislation. Under the old law, the offence of Miss Johnson, supposing all alleged against her to be thoroughly proven, would have been visited with a moderate fine and in default of payment, with a not very serious imprisonment. But for reasons, to me wholly inexplicable, the judges have determined that her case comes within the category of "aggravation" - that it is, in fact, to be classed with those little less of homicidal acts of violence, which the framers of the new act no doubt had exclusively in their view, and for the punishment and repression of which alone, it is plain that the additional penalty of hard labour was meant to be imposed. To Miss Johnson, the consequences have been painful enough. But to the public in general, the future results of this power of arbitrary interpretation may possibly prove of a still more serious character. If the decision of the Melton Bench is to be taken as a rule, it would appear that any assault only has to be presumed aggravated to be punished accordingly. The chastisement of a child by its relative - the chance ugly encounter between two angry women in a market place, or between two educated ladies in a drawing room - (such scenes, it appears, are quite within the limits of possibility) - may consign the offending party not only to summary arrest and the prompt decision of a court of special petty sessions, but to the additional penalty of close confinement in the county or borough gaol, with accompaniment of such a period of hard labour as the criminal law assigns to the convicted thief and to the suspected burglar, to the midnight poacher and to the receiver of stolen goods, to the perpetrator of acts of the most unseemly indecency and to keepers of the worst places of vicious resort.

With these illustrations of the possible working of the new law of assault, it is to be hoped that an "Act to amend" the Act 16 and 17 Victoria, ch. 30, may be among the earliest measures submitted to the notice of the House of Commons after the commencement of the ensuing session.

We observe, with some surprise, that our local contemporary, the *Leicester Advertiser*, takes a rather different view of the late assault at Goadby Marwood from ourselves. Our contemporary "has always regarded the Melton Bench as very favourable specimens of the firmness and uprightness with which justice is administered in our petty sessions", and thinks that the late decision which consigned "two of the Goadby domestics to prison is one of which every husband and father, every lover of strict justice, must rejoice". In his opinion, the sentence of the Melton Bench errs only on the side of excessive clemency. The "woman" Johnson, instead of one months hard labour should have had at least four months. The securities for her future good behaviour "should have been proportionate to her own estimate of her importance - evidenced by her dress, jewellery and equipage." Finally, the *Advertiser* assures us that the prosecutrix in the late

trial, is just now the subject of universal sympathy, and the whole chivalry of the County of Leicester is "up" on behalf of Mrs. Norman.

Thus far the *Advertiser*: Very delicate indeed and in exquisite taste, is this allusion to the "woman" Johnson, and to her present punishment, as contrasted with her former "dress, jewellery and equipage." If, however, this "chivalry" of Leicestershire, wherever that element may be found, is indeed as our contemporary states "up" and ready to fly to the lists on behalf of the Lady of Goadby Marwood, we would merely suggest that according to the best authorities on the subject, it is of no chivalrous quality to take arms in support of one party before the other has been heard in her defence. If this is not chivalry, it is at any rate that by which "chivalry" has long been superseded - namely, common sense and common justice. At present we only have Mrs Norman's statement as to the particulars of the late assault. Miss Johnson has no means of appeal to public opinion. In the "chivalrous" English of Mr George Norman she has been very effectually "made to hold her tongue". But the time may come when the secrets of her prison visits will be fully made known, and when to these may be superadded her version of what we presume the *Advertiser* would call the late "gentle passage of arms" of Goadby Marwood. Pending this revelation it may perhaps be as well for the "chivalry" to repress its hasty tendencies to be "up" - and as well for our respected contemporary, the *Leicestershire Advertiser*, to keep its somewhat one-sided conclusions and remarks for a while in abeyance.

IT IS INTERESTING TO NOTE THAT EDWARD CHOSE TO SPEND HIS IMMORTAL YEARS IN A TOMB, FAR FROM HIS FAMILY ESTATE. THIS SNIPPET FROM THE LEICESTERSHIRE MERCURY IN 1857.

and instrumentalists performed a selection of sacred music. The interest of the meeting was sustained till 11 o'clock.

THE LATE REVEREND EDWARD MANNERS.—A correspondent says:—I was grieved to read in your excellent paper, the *Leicestershire Mercury*, a notice of the death of that highly respected and noble-minded gentleman, the Rev. Edward Manners, rector of Goadby Marwood. Long and deeply will his loss be felt by all classes of society. He was a faithful and affectionate friend, a kind and indulgent parent, honourable in all his dealings; he was charitable to the poor, a friend to the needy, a kind and considerate landlord, as a token of respect will show which was presented to him by his tenants, bearing the following inscription:—“Presented to the Reverend Edward Manners, in affectionate remembrance of his unvaried, kind, and honourable conduct, and as a token of affectionate respect to a beloved landlord, by his tenants on the Goadby Marwood Estate, September 24, 1851.”—He was interred, I am told, at Kirby Bellars, near Melton Mowbray, according to his own request; and persons of all classes flocked from far and near to offer their last token of respect to the memory of one so deeply and deservedly lamented.—[We shall be glad if our correspondent will furnish us with his address.]

JUDICIOUS LIBERALITY.—The Earl of Stamford has

'EN REPOSE'

THE IMPRESSIVE TOMB OF THE REV. EDWARD MANNERS M.A. IN THE CHURCHYARD AT KIRBY BELLARS, OF WHICH HE WAS FORMERLY RECTOR.



ONLY RECENTLY CLEANED FOLLOWING YEARS OF NEGLECT, THE INSCRIPTION NOW TELLS US THAT:

“THIS TOMB IS ERECTED BY HIS DAUGHTER,
ANN MANNERS
WHO, WITH MANY FRIENDS WILL LONG AND DEEPLY
MOURN THE LOSS OF AN AFFECTIONATE FATHER,
A NOBLE MINISTER AND GENEROUS FRIEND”

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