MRS. SARAH ANN HEARN'S FIGHT FOR LIFE

CORNISH POISON DRAMA

Double Murder Charge and "Not Guilty" Plea

MR. THOMAS'S DRAMATIC DENIAL

Dead Woman's Diary Ruled as Not Admissible

Ten men and two women were empanelled as a jury at Bodmin Assize Court on Monday to try Mrs. Sarah Ann Hearn, a widow, who is accused of having murdered by arsenical poisoning at Lewannick, near Launceston, her sister, Miss Lydia Maria Everard, aged 63 years, who on July 21st, died in the home she shared with her sister in the village of Lewannick.

Accused is also charged with the murder of Mrs. Alice Maude Thomas, 47, wife of a neighbouring farmer at Lewannick, who died in Plymouth Hospital on November 4th, 1930.

On the opening day counsel for two hours debated two points in the evidence which is being tendered by the Crown against the accused. Mr. H. Du Parcq., K.C., leading for the Crown, submitted that after he had opened the indictment charging Mrs Hearn with the murder of Mrs. Thomas he should be allowed to introduce a diary alleged to have been left by Miss Lydia Everard. He also submitted he should be allowed to tender evidence that Miss Everard died of arsenical poisoning, so as to show that the likelihood of Mrs. Thomas having been poisoned accidentally was more remote than if there were no other history of arsenical poisoning in this case.

Mr. Justice Roche ruled that the diary was not admissible, but that evidence concerning Miss Everard's death was relevant.

On Tuesday Mr. Thomas was in the witness box for over three hours, during which time he stated that he had suggested to the doctor that a second opinion should be consulted regarding his wife, and that no expense was to be spared.

Replying to questions by the Judge, Mr. Thomas emphatically declared he had never from first to last given his wife arsenic. "Are you sure?" came from the Judge, to which Mr. Thomas replied "I have never had arsenic in my possession, except sheep dip and tablets, which are things any farmer might have.

Counsel are: For the prosecution, Mr. H. Du Parcq, K.C., and Mr. Patrick Devlin; for the defence, Mr. Norman Birkett, K.C., M.P., and Mr. D. M. Foss.

Mrs. Hearn was driven over from Exeter Gaol on Sunday night. She was accompanied by several wardresses. She has quarters in the County Gaol at Bodmin at present, but will remain there during the trial, which is expected to finish to-morrow or Monday.

It is understood that £1,000 has been raised for the defence of Mrs. Hearn. This includes £500, the reward paid to the employer of Mrs. Hearn when she was found and handed over by him for her offence.

Women and girls, among them a hatless young woman who wore no stockings, queued up for a long time, hoping to gain admission.

In the seats reserved for the public was Miss Violet Loraine, the actress.

Half-an-hour before the trial opened, the police placed a card on the gates of the Court bearing the words "Court full."

"I AM NOT GUILTY."

Mrs. Hearn wore a long brown coat, with a felt hat of a deeper shade. Rimless pince nez rested on her nose. She seemed perfectly composed as before the jury, on which were two women, were sworn, Mr. Walter West, the defending solicitor, had a whispered conversation with Mrs. Hearn.

The indictments were read slowly and solemnly by the Clerk of Assize.

To the charge of the murder of Miss Everard, Mrs. Hearn replied in a toneless but clear voice: "I am not guilty, sir."

When the second indictment, relating to the alleged murder of Mrs. Thomas, was read, she again answered: "I am not guilty."

Mr. Du Parcq said he would proceed on the indictment for the alleged murder of Mrs Thomas.

WITNESSES OUT OF COURT.

Mr. Norman Birkett asked that all witnesses, other than expert witnesses, should be out of Court.

Mr Du Parcq said his learned friend and himself had agreed as to who should be out of Court until they were called.

Mr. Du Parcq, opening for the Crown said:

"Mrs. Thomas, with whose murder Mrs. Hearn is charged, died on November 4th, 1930. The submission of the prosecution is that she died on that day as the result of poisoning by arsenic, and that that arsenic had been administered to her without her knowledge, criminally and feloniously, on October 18th, seventeen days before she died.

Proceeding to describe the life of Mrs. Hearn and her sister, Lydia Everard, at Trenhern House, counsel said Mrs. Thomas frequently called on the sisters while Lydia was living, and on Mrs. Hearn after Lydia died. It was apparent that they were not in good financial circumstances, because in December, 1928, Mrs. Thomas lent Mrs. Hearn the sum of £38.

At mid-day on October 18th last Mr. Thomas went over to Mrs. Hearn's house, and asked her to accompany a party to Bude and she agreed. The party left in the car at three o'clock.

PREPARATION OF SANDWICHES.

Meanwhile something had happened which is of great importance in this case. There is no doubt—Mrs. Hearn has herself stated it—that she prepared some sandwiches which were made of tinned salmon. She has said, also, that she took with her some chocolate cake. There is nothing remarkable in her having taken some sort of food with her, as she was going on a kind of picnic. She prepared the sandwiches. She was living alone, and those sandwiches were made, and in every sense prepared, by her. The salmon she used apparently came from a tin which she bought in the ordinary course on September 3rd.

At five o'clock Mr. Thomas, his wife and Mrs. Hearn went to have tea together at Littlejohn's Cafe. Tea and cakes were ordered, and it was then that Mrs. Hearn produced the packet of sandwiches which were handed round. Mrs. Thomas ate one, or possibly two, of the sandwiches, Mr. Thomas had one, and Mrs. Hearn had one. What happened to the rest I cannot tell, but nothing was left behind on the table.

AFTER TEA.

After tea Mr. Thomas went away for a little while. This may or may not be important in this case. He says that he felt funny in his inside, nothing very serious. He went to take what suggested itself to him as a proper remedy, and had two whiskies.

That may or not be a coincidence, but what is of much more importance, is what happened to Mrs. Thomas as the result of the meal. When her husband returned, Mrs. Thomas mentioned to him that she had a "sweety" taste in her mouth, and Mr. Thomas bought her some bananas.

At a quarter to seven they started to return. Somewhere between seven and a quarter past, Mrs. Thomas began to be sick.

"I want you," the Judge said, "to try to help the jury to envisage what is meant by four grains of white arsenic."

Mr. Freak said that four grains represented 1/1,800 of a pound.

The Judge: What does it look like. Would it cover a sixpence or the point of a penknife?

Dr. Roche Lynch produced a small test tube, about an inch and a half long, and Mr. Du Parcq, handing it to the Judge, said that it contained five and three-quarter grains of weed-killer, which included four grains of white arsenic.

The Judge closely examined the tube, and then handed it to the jury who passed it from hand to hand.

Mr. Birkett asked Mr. Freak questions concerning the solubility of weed-killer.

How much water would be required, he said, to make completely soluble ten grains of white arsenic, or fourteen or fifteen grains of weed-killer!

Mr. Freak: Weed-killer is extremely soluble, and it would be completely soluble in its own weight of water.

Elizabeth Uglow, a sister of Mrs. Thomas, said that in November, 1923, she bought a quarter of a pound of white arsenic. Her husband used it all. Neither Mr. Thomas nor Mrs. Thomas would have had any opportunity of getting it.

Thomas Pearce said that since 1914 he had been employed on Mr. Thomas's farm. They had some sheep dip which they used about three years ago. It was all used by them.

MR. THOMAS GIVES EVIDENCE.

William Henry Thomas, the husband of Mrs. Thomas, then entered the box. He is a well-built man, with grey hair and brown moustache. He said he had been farming for twelve years at Trenhorne Farm, and when his wife died they had been married just over twenty years. Trenhorne House, where lived Mrs. Hearn and Miss Everard, was about 200 yards from his farm. He and his wife were on friendly terms with both of them.

In 1930, Mr. Thomas said, he used to go to Trenhorne House nearly every day, taking newspapers, things from Launceston, and junkets and cream which his wife had made for Miss Everard. He used to take Mrs. Hearn and Miss Everard out together, and separately, in his car.

Mr. Du Parcq: Did you ever have any conversation with Mrs. Hearn about the weeds in her garden?—I may have. There were a lot of weeds there.

Did Mrs. Hearn ever say anything to you about using weed-killer?—Never.

In 1928, witness said, he advanced the sum of £38 to Mrs. Hearn. The health of his wife, during her lifetime, had been very good.

THE VISIT TO BUDE.

Mr. Thomas then dealt with the events of October 18th, when he drove his mother to her home, and invited Mrs. Hearn to join the party in a drive to Bude. Mrs. Hearn said that she would be very glad to come.

Mr. Thomas, referring to the visit to the cafe at Bude, said he did not see the fish sandwiches put on the table. They were placed there between the two women.

Mr. Du Parcq: Who asked you to have some?—Mrs. Hearn. She asked us if we would like a sandwich. I cannot say who took the first. I cannot say whether I took the first one. I did take one, and my wife and Mrs. Hearn took one each.

Mr. Justice Roche: Was it paste, or bits of fish?—I cannot say.

Mr. Du Parcq: Were they cut to shape?—Yes, they were, and they were all small.

Were all the sandwiches eaten?—No.

What became of those that were left?—I cannot say.

Did you see any food produced by Mrs. Hearn?—I do not remember seeing any other.

Do you remember anything about a chocolate cake?—I don't remember seeing one then.

HE FELT SICK.

Mr. Thomas said that at about ten minute to or a quarter of an hour after tea he felt sick. He went and had two drops of whisky and it passed off. He did not hear Mrs. Hearn make any complaint about feeling anything wrong with herself during the day. His wife was sick in the car on the way back.

They got home about 9.30, and with Mrs. Hearn's assistance, he put his wife to bed. His wife and himself both asked Mrs. Hearn to stay, and she agreed. From that time until October 29th he and Mrs. Hearn between them nursed his wife. Mrs. Hearn did all the cooking, and during that period his wife was dieted on invalid food.

Mr. Du Parcq: Did Mrs. Hearn say anything to you about her own condition?

Witness: A day or two after we had been to Bude I asked Mrs. Hearn what sort of fish was in the sandwiches. She said it was tinned salmon, and that she herself felt funny.

WHY HE FETCHED WIFE'S MOTHER.

On October 29th he drove over to fetch his wife's mother, Mrs. Parsons.

Mr. Justice Roche: Whose idea was that?—Mine.

The Judge: Why! Did you think your wife was dying?—I had not the least idea my wife was going to die.

The Judge: Then why did you fetch her mother?—I thought her mother ought to come.

Mr. Justice Roche: Because your wife was so ill, or because she wanted more attention?

Mr. Thomas: I thought she might help my wife, and it might be better for her to be there.

Mr. Justice Roche: Was it to comfort your wife and cheer her up?

Mr. Thomas: Yes, to cheer her up, and nurse her.

After October 29th, Mr. Thomas said, Mrs. Parsons and Mrs. Hearn shared the cooking, and Mrs. Parsons did all the nursing, and slept with his wife.

Mr. Thomas said that on the morning of November 3rd he was awakened by his wife calling out to him.

"She held out her arms to me like this—(here Mr. Thomas held out his arms in front of him and moved them up an down)—and said, 'Take me into your room. My bed is extremely wet, and the bedclothes are all torn to pieces.' I noticed nothing unusual about the bed clothes, but I carried her into my bed."

Mr. Thomas described how, after his wife's nose had bled for several hours, he called in a doctor, and when Dr. Lister was consulted, his wife was removed to a hospital in Plymouth, where she died.

Mr. Thomas said that he remembered saying to Mrs. Hearn: "Whatever is the matter they will find out."

Mr. Du Parcq: Did Mrs. Hearn say anything!—She may have, I don't remember.

Mr. Thomas said that on the same evening he told Mrs. Hearn he would like an acknowledgment of the £38 he had lent her. That was after he had spoken to her about "organs being sent away to be analysed." Mrs. Hearn said that she would give an acknowledgment and did so. The acknowledgement read: "I received the sum of £38 on loan from William Henry Thomas, December 17th, 1928. (Signed), Annie Hearn (Sarah Ann.")

NO JUGGLING OF SANDWICHES.

Mr. Birkett then cross-examined, and Mr. Thomas said that he, his wife and Mrs. Hearn had been on picnics together, and it was quite ordinary for sandwiches to be taken to Bude. Mrs. Hearn and her sister were quite kind to each other.

Mr. Birkett: As to the taking of the sandwiches, there was no pushing of the plate or juggling with them!—No, there was no juggling at all.

Do you remember seeing that one was left!—I don't remember that.

I suggest the reminder of the chocolate cake, and one sandwich, were wrapped up and put into a bag by Mrs. Hearn and taken away!—I could not say.

A NEIGHBOURLY ACT.

When Mrs. Hearn came into your house, she was simply doing a neighbourly thing for a neighbour!—Yes.

From beginning to end, there was no suggestion of payment!—No.

It is quite clear that Mrs. Hearn was asked to go to Bude quite unexpectedly!—Yes.

Did she appear to you to do her very best for your wife?—She appeared to.

So far as any human eye can judge these things, she did everything a kindly neighbour could do!—Yes.

Is it true to say that, apart from one set-back, your wife's condition improved until the 29th!—Yes, but very little.

Questioned with regard to the conversation he had with Mrs. Hearn when he returned from Plymouth, Mr. Thomas said he might have said people were talking about the sandwiches, and that his wife had died from poisoned sandwiches.

Mr. Birkett: Might you have said: "The blame will come heavier on you than me!"—I may have. I do not remember. It was Mrs. Hearn's sandwiches my wife took.

You had nothing to do with the sandwiches. The blame could not fall on you!—No, and I didn't know there was any blame on Mrs. Hearn.

Did Mrs Hearn say: "If people think like that I had better go to my own house!"—Yes.

It is true then, that she said people were blaming her!—I might have said people were talking about the poison in the sandwiches.

DRAMATIC INCIDENT.

"Poison, sir," said Mr. Birkett dramatically, striking the palm of one hand with the clenched fist of the other. "Did you use the word 'poison' to her!"—No.

Mr. Birkett (reading from Mrs. Hearn's letter): "I am innocent—innocent!" Were those two words undefined?

"Yes," replied Mr. Thomas.

Mr. Birkett: You knew people were talking about the sandwiches!—Yes.

Do you think that, if you had been a distraught woman, of a woman very upset and very grieved!—I took it that she was upset.

THE LOAN.

On the resumption after lunch Mr. Birkett questioned Mr. Thomas about Mrs. Hearn's debt of £38 to him, and asked: "How came it that it was at this moment, after your wife's funeral, you suggested she should give you an acknowledgment of the money when she had offered it before, and you had not bothered about it?"

Mr. Thomas: No particular reason, except that the loss of my wife has made a lot of difference to me. I did not know if I could keep on the farm. It is only reasonable, if a man lends money, for him to have an acknowledgment.

Between the 18th and the 20th of October you were really your wife's nurse!—I did everything I could for my wife.

You gave up your duties on the farm to devote yourself to your wife!—I did not give up all my duties, but I gave up a lot of them to nurse my wife, as a man should.

The Judge: It is said that your wife died from arsenical poisoning. It was not for you to express an opinion on that at all. You have been asked questions about food given to your wife on November 2nd, and you have said that you gave her tea and brandy, and possibly medicine. Did you, from first to last, ever yourself give your wife any arsenic.

Mr. Thomas (dramatically): No, sir, never in all my life.

The Judge: Are you sure!—I have never had arsenic in my possession, except sheep dip, and tablets, which are things any farmer might have.

Mr. Thomas then left the witness box, where he had been for over three hours.

Mrs. Tryphena Parsons, mother of Mrs. Thomas, gave evidence, and said she never saw any weed-killer, worm tablets or sheep dip about when she was cooking the food.

The Judge: Did you put any of those things in the food you prepared!—No.

VERY HAPPY AND FRIENDLY.

Mrs. Elizabeth Hick Thomas, mother of Mr. W. H. Thomas, said on the day they went to Bude they were all very happy and friendly.

WEDNESDAY: DOCTORS AND ARSENIC

Mrs. Hearn stepped briskly into the dock, and smiled a greeting to Mr. Norman Birkett, her leading counsel. She was dressed in the brown coat and close fitting hat which she has worn since the beginning of the trial, but her hands were ungloved. On her wedding finger was a plain gold ring.

Dr. Eric Saunders who, when he diagnosed arsenical poisoning on November 3rd, ordered Mrs. Thomas to be removed to Plymouth Hospital, said, in answer to Mr. Birkett, that, so far as he knew, the cause of Mrs. Thomas's mental agitation had nothing to do with the state of her health. Her physical progress from October 15th to November 3rd was not accompanied by an improvement in her mental condition. She cheered up at times, but was apprehensive at others.

The Judge: You first became suspicious that it might be arsenical poisoning on October 27th or 28th!—Was a very fleeting suspicion, so fleeting as to be fantastic.

You had never seen a case of acute arsenical poisoning before!—That is so.

On November 3rd neuritis suggested arsenical poisoning!—Yes.

About her mental condition. What sort of things did she say to you! What made that condition manifest! She did not say very much, and I could never get very much from her. She was not sleeping well; she told me that at the beginning.

Was it a question of the pain she was suffering!—She appeared to be agitated.

A POPULAR ERROR.

Dr. William Alexander Lister, consultant to Plymouth City Hospital, said that he was called to see Mrs. Thomas and diagnosed arsenical poisoning.

Mr. Birkett: It is surely a popular error that food that has no bad taste is not poisoned!—Yes.

Food poisoning does affect the nervous system!—Botulism affects some part of the nervous system.

But food poisoning generally does affect the nervous system!—I have never heard of neuritis following every form of food poisoning.

One of the most common forms of peripheral neuritis is caused by alcoholism!—Yes.

Doctors are not agreed, with surety, what are the causes of peripheral neuritis! Medical opinion is in a fluid condition!—There are certain well-defined causes.

You can get peripheral neuritis from a condition of reduced vitality through a prolonged illness!—Yes.

WHEN WAS ARSENIC TAKEN?

In this case, was it your opinion that arsenic had been taken before death!—Yes.

Have you any idea when!—Certainly at the onset of the illness.

The question is whether she had any subsequently. What do you say to that!—At first I thought she must have had or she would not have got worse after improving for a time.

You had the view that it needed some explanation to account for the relapse when you were called in, as compared with the history of the case! I thought she must have had some more

PROGRESS OF THE ILLNESS.

The Judge: If there were no original dose, you must take it that something else must have caused the relapse. Your evidence is based on the fact that there must have been an original dose!

Dr. Lister: Yes, my lord.

Mr. Birkett: Dr. Saunders had been treating the patient for food poisoning. That is certainly a possibility, is it not, that there had been an original illness of food poisoning which was progressing, and that there was arsenic there to account for the relapse!

Dr. Lister: No, I would put it this way. There had been at the onset vomiting and diarrhœa, which are both commonly caused by food poisoning. But that common diagnosis had to be revised as the illness progressed.

Are you not influenced by the finding of the analysis that there was arsenic in the body!—No.

HIS VIEW VARIED.

Mr. Justice Roche asked Dr. Lister if he still held the view that there was a second dose of arsenic.

Dr. Lister replied that his first view was that there was a second dose, but after hearing evidence by Mr. Tickle, and scraps of evidence before the Magistrates, his view had varied. From a clinical point of view, he thought there must have been a second dose.

The Judge: What it comes to is this: I gather you to say that you are not sure about the matter now, having regard to other circumstances which could account for everything without a second dose!—My present view is that it is more likely she had a second dose.

Dr. Millicent Fox, a doctor at the hospital at Plymouth where Mrs. Thomas died, said that when Mrs. Thomas was admitted she was very delirious, and was waving her arms and head about.

CASES TO BE HEARD SEPARATELY.

Dr. Eric Wordley said that he had made a number of tests to find if there was any evidence of poisoning by food. The results were all negative.

Mr. Du Parcq said that the remainder of Dr. Wordley's evidence referred to Minnie Everard.

The Judge: Is this a convenient time to have it?

Mr. Birkett said that, in his view, it would be better if the evidence in the two cases could be kept separate.

The Judge indicated that Dr. Wordley would have to be recalled for the second case.

WHEN ARSENIC WAS GIVEN.

Mr. Birkett: You would not exclude the possibility that you might have food poisoning though the tests employed were negative!—Yes, by one test, but when one bears in mind the combination of tests—there were 13 in all, and they were all negative—it is another matter.

Assuming food poisoning on the 18th October, and a post-mortem examination on November 4th, the process of time is material, is it not!—Yes, it is important.

You have given your view that death was due to arsenical poisoning. At this stage is it your view that the arsenic was taken into the body at a late date before the post-mortem examination!—Whatever arsenic was given, some arsenic was given, in my opinion, within a relatively brief period of death.

The Judge: What do you mean by over a short time!—I should say about four or five days, or perhaps three to five days before death.

Mr. Birkett: Did you not say at the inquest that symptoms of food poisoning would be exactly the same as that of paralysis of the limbs set in, and that just a possibility that, apart from ordinary food poisoning, arsenical poisoning occurred on November previous to death!—Yes. I said that before any full analysis was made. I knew only the contents of the body.

Whatever qualifications may be introduced, the possibilities of food poisoning running its course, and death from arsenical poisoning supervening, is of course always a possibility!—In general cases the verdict must be "Yes."

Was your view, when you knew the contents of the liver down to a definite figure, that arsenic was taken on the Sunday!—Yes, at that time.

WHAT HE TRIED TO SAY.

Dr. Wordley, in answer to counsel's questions, said that he was trying to say to the inquest jury that in the early stages of the illness there could have been no evidence of arsenic. When they found, at the post-mortem examination, the amount of arsenic they could say that it must previously have been there for some time. There was a possibility of arsenic being taken on the Sunday, whatever might have been given before.

Mr. Birkett: I am not seeking to make you say there was arsenic taken on October 18th. What I suggest is this: that when you made the answer you made it on this fact—that arsenical poisoning up to a week is the same!—Yes.

In re-examination, Dr. Wordley said that he did not think death could have been due to a dose taken on October 18th. There was too much arsenic in the liver for a fatal dose to have been taken seventeen days before.

Mr. Du Parcq: Have you ever thought in consistent with the facts of this case, that no arsenic was administered at all until the Sunday, shortened death!—No, that would not be consistent with the facts.

How long after arsenic had been administered would peripheral neuritis show itself!—The time was very variable, but the earliest authentic record that I know was nine days.

PUBLIC ANALYST'S DISCOVERY.

Mr. Thomas Tickle, public analyst for Devonshire, said that he found a total amount of .158 of a grain of arsenic in the organs of Mrs. Thomas's body he analysed.

The stomach, added Mr. Tickle, was empty except for natural juices.

Mr. Birkett: You formed the view that the arsenic you discovered had been taken into the body long before death!—It could not have been taken very long before death.

The arsenic is the same as in Cooper's worm tablets!—Yes.

Is not a normal constituent of human body arsenic!—No.

Dr. Wordley, recalled, said that he did not mean to convey the impression that Mrs. Thomas's stomach was absolutely empty.

Mr. Birkett pointed out that he had instructed that the contents of the stomach was one of the things for ascertaining if poison entered the system.

(Continued on Page 7.)

TUESDAY'S PROCEEDINGS

Mr. Thomas's Reply to Dramatic Question

When the hearing began on Tuesday the Judge recalled Mr. Gilbert Arthur Freak, chief chemist of the firm which manufactured the weed-killer stated to have been bought by Mrs. Hearn.

"I want you," the Judge said, "to try to help the jury to envisage what is meant by four grains of white arsenic."

Mr. Freak said that four grains represented 1/1,800 of a pound.

The Judge: What does it look like. Would it cover a sixpence or the point of a penknife!

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How much water would be required, he said, to make completely soluble ten grains of white arsenic, or fourteen or fifteen grains of weed-killer!

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MR. THOMAS GIVES EVIDENCE.

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Mr. Du Parcq: Did you ever have any conversation with Mrs. Hearn about the weeds in her garden!—I may have. There were a lot of weeds there.

Did Mrs. Hearn ever say anything to you about using weed-killer!—Never.

In 1928, witness said, he advanced the sum of £38 to Mrs. Hearn. The health of his wife, during her lifetime, had been very good.

THE VISIT TO BUDE.

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Mr. Du Parcq: Were they cut to shape!—Yes, they were, and they were all small.

Were all the sandwiches eaten!—No.

What became of those that were left!—I cannot say.

Did you see any food produced by Mrs. Hearn!—I do not remember seeing any other.

Do you remember anything about a chocolate cake!—I don't remember seeing one then.

HE FELT SICK.

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Mr. Du Parcq: Did Mrs. Hearn say anything to you about her own condition!

Witness: A day or two after we had been to Bude I asked Mrs. Hearn what sort of fish was in the sandwiches. She said it was tinned salmon, and that she herself felt funny.

WHY HE FETCHED WIFE'S MOTHER.

On October 29th he drove over to fetch his wife's mother, Mrs. Parsons.

Mr. Justice Roche: Whose idea was that!—Mine.

The Judge: Why! Did you think your wife was dying!—I had not the least idea my wife was going to die.

The Judge: Then why did you fetch her mother!—I thought her mother ought to come.

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Mr. Thomas said that he remembered saying to Mrs. Hearn: "Whatever is the matter they will find out."

Mr. Du Parcq: Did Mrs. Hearn say anything!—She may have, I don't remember.

Mr. Thomas said that on the same evening he told Mrs. Hearn he would like an acknowledgment of the £38 he had lent her. That was after he had spoken to her about "organs being sent away to be analysed." Mrs. Hearn said that she would give an acknowledgment and did so. The acknowledgement read: "I received the sum of £38 on loan from William Henry Thomas, December 17th, 1928. (Signed), Annie Hearn (Sarah Ann.")

NO JUGGLING OF SANDWICHES.

Mr. Birkett then cross-examined, and Mr. Thomas said that he, his wife and Mrs. Hearn had been on picnics together, and it was quite ordinary for sandwiches to be taken to Bude. Mrs. Hearn and her sister were quite kind to each other.

Mr. Birkett: As to the taking of the sandwiches, there was no pushing of the plate or juggling with them!—No, there was no juggling at all.

Do you remember seeing that one was left!—I don't remember that.

I suggest the reminder of the chocolate cake, and one sandwich, were wrapped up and put into a bag by Mrs. Hearn and taken away!—I could not say.

A NEIGHBOURLY ACT.

When Mrs. Hearn came into your house, she was simply doing a neighbourly thing for a neighbour!—Yes.

From beginning to end, there was no suggestion of payment!—No.

It is quite clear that Mrs. Hearn was asked to go to Bude quite unexpectedly!—Yes.

Did she appear to you to do her very best for your wife!—She appeared to.

So far as any human eye can judge these things, she did everything a kindly neighbour could do!—Yes.

Is it true to say that, apart from one set-back, your wife's condition improved until the 29th!—Yes, but very little.

Questioned with regard to the conversation he had with Mrs. Hearn when he returned from Plymouth, Mr. Thomas said he might have said people were talking about the sandwiches, and that his wife had died from poisoned sandwiches.

Mr. Birkett: Might you have said: "The blame will come heavier on you than me!"—I may have. I do not remember. It was Mrs. Hearn's sandwiches my wife took.

You had nothing to do with the sandwiches. The blame could not fall on you!—No, and I didn't know there was any blame on Mrs. Hearn.

Did Mrs Hearn say: "If people think like that I had better go to my own house!"—Yes.

It is true then, that she said people were blaming her!—I might have said people were talking about the poison in the sandwiches.

DRAMATIC INCIDENT.

"Poison, sir," said Mr. Birkett dramatically, striking the palm of one hand with the clenched fist of the other. "Did you use the word 'poison' to her!"—No.

Mr. Birkett (reading from Mrs. Hearn's letter): "I am innocent—innocent!" Were those two words undefined?

"Yes," replied Mr. Thomas.

Mr. Birkett: You knew people were talking about the sandwiches!—Yes.

Do you think that, if you had been a distraught woman, of a woman very upset and very grieved!—I took it that she was upset.

THE LOAN.

On the resumption after lunch Mr. Birkett questioned Mr. Thomas about Mrs. Hearn's debt of £38 to him, and asked: "How came it that it was at this moment, after your wife's funeral, you suggested she should give you an acknowledgment of the money when she had offered it before, and you had not bothered about it?"

Mr. Thomas: No particular reason, except that the loss of my wife has made a lot of difference to me. I did not know if I could keep on the farm. It is only reasonable, if a man lends money, for him to have an acknowledgment.

Between the 18th and the 20th of October you were really your wife's nurse!—I did everything I could for my wife.

You gave up your duties on the farm to devote yourself to your wife!—I did not give up all my duties, but I gave up a lot of them to nurse my wife, as a man should.

The Judge: It is said that your wife died from arsenical poisoning. It was not for you to express an opinion on that at all. You have been asked questions about food given to your wife on November 2nd, and you have said that you gave her tea and brandy, and possibly medicine. Did you, from first to last, ever yourself give your wife any arsenic.

Mr. Thomas (dramatically): No, sir, never in all my life.

The Judge: Are you sure!—I have never had arsenic in my possession, except sheep dip, and tablets, which are things any farmer might have.

Mr. Thomas then left the witness box, where he had been for over three hours.

Mrs. Tryphena Parsons, mother of Mrs. Thomas, gave evidence, and said she never saw any weed-killer, worm tablets or sheep dip about when she was cooking the food.

The Judge: Did you put any of those things in the food you prepared!—No.

VERY HAPPY AND FRIENDLY.

Mrs. Elizabeth Hick Thomas, mother of Mr. W. H. Thomas, said on the day they went to Bude they were all very happy and friendly.

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