

Assault charge against the Revd Thomas Boddington, 1842

THE ORACLE OF REASON; Or, Philosophy Vindicated.

"FAITH'S EMPIRE IS THE WORLD; ITS MONARCH, GOD; ITS MINISTERS, THE PRIESTS;
ITS SLAVES, THE PEOPLE."

EDITED BY THOMAS PATERSON.

No. 39.] Originally Edited by CHARLES SOUTHWELL, sentenced, on January 15, 1842,
to Twelve Months' Imprisonment in Bristol Gaol, and to pay a fine of £100, [PRICE 2D.
for Blasphemy contained in No. 4.
Second Editor, G. J. HOLYOAKE, sentenced, on August 13, 1842, to Six Months'
Imprisonment in Gloucester Gaol, for Blasphemy, at Cheltenham.

The first report is a salacious account from an anti-clerical journal, *The Oracle of Reason, or Philosophy Vindicated* (vol 39, page 327). As their masthead proudly declares, the first two editors of this journal had been imprisoned for blasphemy. (The previous story is of a clergyman who had been convicted of bigamy and was transported for seven years.)

DISGUSTING CHARGE AGAINST A PARSON

The Clerkenwell Court was occupied the greater portion Monday and Tuesday in hearing a case in which the Rev. Thomas Boddington, late chaplain of Giltspur-street Compter, No. 1, York-street, City-road, and Mrs. Matilda Tippet, were prisoners, and Mr. Frederick Penn Tippet, commercial traveller, complainant. The former were charged with having violently assaulted the latter. The female defendant is aged twenty-three, of very prepossessing appearance, but of much levity of manners, and seeming recklessness of disposition; the complainant is a mild, genteel looking young man. It appeared in evidence that the plaintiff met the reverend prisoner for the first time in a coffee house, and was invited by him to his house, where he saw Miss Miller, whom he afterwards made Mrs Tippet. This he did upon the recommendation of Boddington, who promised to obtain him a situation under government. Upon the evening of the marriage day, which they spent at Mr. Boddington's, and during the festivities, the latter slipped into the bed prepared for the bride and bridegroom from which he was forcibly ejected by the husband's friends.

The nature of the husband's employment only allowing him to come home once per week, Mr. Boddington was in the constant habit of holding private intercourse holding private and of walking out with Mrs. T. The landlady once saw Mr. B. and Mrs. T. come out of the latter's bedroom, the lady's hair and dress being much disordered. Mrs. Tippet subsequently left her lodgings, during her husband's absence in the country, and when at last he discovered her abode, and visited her, the assault in question was committed without any provocation. One of the witnesses said, "Mr. Boddington took the lodgings for the female prisoner, whom he represented to be a single young woman. She was visited constantly by him, sometimes four times a day. He took all his meals there. Heard Mr. B. fell in love with the lady whilst she was in Giltspur-street Compter for robbing furnished lodgings. The prisoner and Mr. B. lived sumptuously in Spencer-street, whilst he was informed Mr. B's wife and two children were starving at home on bread and water."

The rev. defendant was dressed in clerical costume, he had a black eye, and a patch on his forehead, he is about fifty, and of unpleasing aspect. A witness was about being produced, who could depose to some most disgusting conduct of the Rev. Mr. B's, but Mr. Combe, on learning its nature, said he thought said he thought the infamous system was now at an end, and there was no use in shocking persons with the recital. Committed for trial. The conduct of the female prisoner was marked by the most indecent levity throughout. The rev. gent., during the examination, handed in a printed circular of a public dinner in aid of the funds of the Hospital Accident Relief Society, at which the prisoner was vice-president. Mr Combe said the public ought to be very cautious how they subscribed to such things. *Condensed from London Paper.*

The second account, which records their acquittal, is from *The Argus* of 17 September 1842 (p4)

MIDDLESEX SESSIONS

On Monday, the trial of the Rev. Thomas Boddington and Matilda Tippetts took place, for an assault committed on Frederick P. Tippetts, the husband of the female defendant, residing in Charlotte-street, near Thornhill-bridge, Islington. The statement made at the police-office will be in the recollection of our readers that the male defendant formed an acquaintance with the female defendant in Giltspur-street Compter, and that he afterwards promised Tippetts a situation of £3 a week, but said he would be enabled to procure it for him more speedily if he entered the marriage state. He then introduced the complainant to one Miss Miller, whom he represented as having lived for years in his service as governess, and to that person the complainant was united. After residing at the reverend gentleman's house in York-place, City-road, for some time after marriage, the complainant went into the country to obtain a situation, and upon his return he found that his wife had left her lodgings and was residing in Spencer-place, Clerkenwell, in an apartment which Mr. Boddington had taken for her. On going thither he was assaulted by his wife, and the other defendant.

Mr. Payne, who appeared for the defendants, commented at considerable length on the improbability of the complainant's story, and dwelt with much force upon the circumstances of Tippetts's leaving his wife unprovided for when he went into the country. The learned gentleman also contended that there was a total absence of proof of any improper intimacy having existed between the defendants, and called upon the jury not to convict upon bare suspicion.

Mr. Walesby, their chairman, having summed up at great length, and decidedly in favour of the defendants, the jury, after above three hours' consultation, returned a verdict of Acquittal.