



“John The Baptist” Charged With Setting Fire To Rick At Wishford

Arson and Attempted suicide

An eccentric man well known in Salisbury by the peculiarity of his garments, named John Bull, but who calls himself “John the Baptist,” was taken into custody on Thursday morning, charged with setting fire to a hay rick, the property of Mr. Saunders, of Wishford. When apprehended he admitted his guilt, and said that as the rick belonged to a poor man a subscription would be got up in his behalf, and he would probably receive more money than the rick was worth. The prisoner subsequently attempted suicide by opening a vein in his arms and inflicting a wound upon his throat, from which he lost much blood. He was immediately taken to the Infirmary, where the wounds were dressed, and he was then conveyed back to the police station. He was brought before Mr. James Hussey on Saturday morning, and charged with arson. He pleaded guilty.

On being asked if he had anything to say he replied: - “It was not I that did it, but sin that dwelleth in me, being grievously tempted by the devil. I had been without food 24 days and nights within the last month. I was an outcast, and my soul was exceedingly sorrowful, even unto death. I had prayed earnestly for death day and night for weeks and instead of death the devil came. He put it that I had done my work and had failed because grace, mercy, and truth had fled from the earth. This so grievously vexed me that I despaired even of life. Then frenzy seized me, and I set fire to the rick, hoping to perish in the flames. I then attempted to take my life by cutting my throat.” He was committed for trial at the assizes.

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