

The Singleton Argus

Wife Kept Silent Alleged to Have Let Girl Fall Into Trap

The allegation that a wife stood by while her husband courted and "married" a nurse was made in a prosecution at Wantage, Berkshire (Eng.). The magistrates there committed for trial at Berkshire Assizes William Edward Twine, formerly of Stratton St. Margaret, Swindon. Twine was charged with bigamy and with committing perjury by describing himself as a bachelor for the purposes of record in the marriage register at Wantage Parish Church.

He was married, stated Mr. E. R. Davies, prosecuting, at Broadtown, Swindon, in 1941, and about a year afterwards kept company with Vera Dorothy Maud Higgins, a nurse at Swindon G.W.R. Hospital, whose home address is at Wantage. As a result his wife ceased to cohabit with him, although they stayed in the same house. Twine took home Miss Higgins and introduced his wife to the girl as his married sister. Mrs. Twine did nothing to enlighten the girl then or at any other date that she was Twine's wife. The girl showed Mrs. Twine an engagement ring that Twine had given her, and after the banns had been published at Wantage and the marriage fixed, she and Twine invited the real wife to be present at the wedding, which received a good deal of publicity, there being a photograph in the local paper and a guard of honour. It was only when Twine was returning from his honeymoon at Porthcawl that he told Miss Higgins that he was already married. They stayed the night in the house with the real Mrs. Twine, who, in the meantime, had informed the police. The next morning Mrs. Twine said to her husband. "You are a lucky fellow having two wives to look after," and he replied. "I don't know about being lucky."

The Magistrate, said Mr. Davies, might wonder why the real wife should not be charged with aiding and abetting, but it was no offence in law to stand by while somebody committed a crime. "It is barefaced bigamy," declared Mr. Davies, "and Mrs. Twine let the girl fall into the trap without doing anything about it." Mrs. Twine, of Broadtown, Swindon" gave evidence that, on being shown a newspaper by her father-in-law and mother-in-law, she took her marriage certificate to the police.

Replying to the charges, Twine told the magistrates: "I thought that I did the right thing. I never wrote the statement I was a bachelor. I just signed."

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