THE ATTACK ON FRENCHMEN IN DEAN FOREST.

PRISONERS BEFORE THE MAGISTRATES.

HEAVY PENALTIES IMPOSED.

The fourteen men who were apprehended early on Thursday in connection with the brutal and cowardly attack on four Frenchmen in the Forest of Dean were taken before the magistrates at the Littledean Petty Sessions on Friday. That the extraordinary affair had excited considerable interest in the district was shown by the large number of persons who flocked into the town early in the day. A great amount of sympathy has been shown towards the poor Frenchmen, who, in addition to the personal sufferings which they have had to endure, have lost their *only means of support*. The action taken by the *Western Mail* in starting a subscription for them has been commended throughout the district, and we understand that some local effort will be made in the same direction. Long before the hour at which the magistrates take their seats at Littledean the entrance to the court-house was besieged by several hundreds of persons who were anxious to obtain admission. The police, however, were careful to admit first of all only those who had business at the court, and it was then found that only very few of those who attended out of mere curiosity could be accommodated in the small court. The magistrates on the bench were Mr. R. J. Kerr (chairman), Mr. A. Thomas, and Mr. A. Bright. Mr. W. C. Wemyss was also present, but as he had written a letter to the papers in connection with the case he preferred not to adjudicate. When the prisoners were brought up from the cells it was found that the dock would not accommodate half of them, and they were arranged in line in front of the solicitors' table. With one exception they are young men whose average age would be about 22. The exception is George Wilkes, an innkeeper, who is 49 years of age, and who apparently was the ringleader in the assault on the Frenchmen and also in the destruction of their property. Three of the complainants are young, athletic-looking men, but the fourth, and the one who suffered most, has passed the meridian of life by many years. He probably rendered himself more liable to the blows of the infuriated mob by his inability to get away from them as quickly as his younger companions. After having been knocked down several times he evidently despaired of his life, and told the other three to leave him alone and save theirs. There is no doubt that the fury of the mob was due to a report that one of the bears had killed a woman or child, but for this there was not the slightest foundation. The Frenchmen, not understanding English, had not the faintest idea why they were assailed, and while they prayed for mercy on their knees, they were unable to make any impression upon the crowd that surrounded them. It was with the greatest difficulty, even with the aid of an interpreter, that an intelligent account of what occurred could be obtained from them, principally owing to their being unacquainted with the names of places. What evidence they did give was certainly not offered in any vindictive spirit, as it was more than borne out by the witnesses who followed. The skins of the bears and some of the heavy sticks with which they were belaboured were produced in court. The heads of both animals had been beaten into a pulp, and the iron muzzles had been flattened. The case lasted for nearly six hours, and the magistrates had a long consultation before they decided whether they would be justified in giving those prisoners who were found guilty the option of a fine.

The names of the prisoners—were Geo. Wilkes, innkeeper; Robert Wilkes, William Williams, William Baldwin, Ernest Cinderby, Henry Baldwin, George Rawlins, James Hopkins, Thomas Meek, Isaac Baldwin, James Hardwick, Sidney Rawlins, George Tippins, and Arthur Golding, colliers and labourers, from Nailbridge and neighbourhood. They were charged in the first place with assaulting Gabriel Babent Hugent, Gabriel Laganes Ajas, Thos. Biernes Sirgant, and Alfred Gerant. They were also charged with maliciously killing two bears, the property of the complainants.

Mr. Langley Smith, solicitor, Gloucester (instructed by Mr. Karn, the French Vice-consul at that port), was present to watch the case on behalf of the complainants. Mr. Goold, barrister (instructed by Mr. Bradstock), appeared for George and Robert Wilkes, Henry and William Baldwin, Meek, and Tippin; and Mr. Watley, Gloucester, appeared for the Rawlins, I. Baldwin, Golding, and Hopkins. Harding was undefended.

EVIDENCE FOR THE PROSECUTION.

Gabriel Babent Hugent said that at about 6.30 on Friday last, the 26th of April, he was followed by a lot of people and beaten. There were three other Frenchmen with him, with two bears under their control. They worked Cinderford, and when they left a lot of children followed them. Afterwards some men came up and threw stones at them. The men said something, but witness could not understand what it was. He identified George Wilkes as one of the men who assaulted him. Wilkes struck him with a stick on the side. There were more than 40 people there altogether, but as the majority were in their working clothes and had blackened faces he could not recognise them again. Witness was knocked down twice, and was left behind by his companions, who continued their route. He received a blow on the head from a stone, and was also kicked when on the ground. He became unconscious afterwards.

Cross-examined by Mr. Goold, witness stated that he saw Wilkes, accompanied by a number of men, come out of a house, but he could not say whether it was a public-house or not. He was struck with a stick by George Wilkes.

Gabriel Laganes Ajas gave similar evidence, but was not knocked down. He identified George Wilkes as one of the men who took part in the assault. The crowd beat the bears, and one of them was very nearly dead when he let it go.

Thomas Biernes Sirgant corroborated the statements made by the previous witnesses, and also identified Georges Wilkes as one of the leaders of those who assaulted himself and his companions.

Alfred Gerant saw the first witness struck down with a stone. Witness picked him up, but he was knocked down again. Witness and Sirgant escaped to a wood, where they remained all night. They then made their way to Cardiff. George Wilkes appeared to be the leader of the others. Hugent told witness to leave him there, and save his own life.

Mr. James Barnett, a shopkeeper at Nailbridge, which is between Cinderford and Ruardean, stated that on Friday he saw a crowd of boys and young men running towards the latter place. The only one witness recognised was George Wilkes, who said "Go on, lads," several times.

Milsom Simmons, labourer, said he was standing in Morse-lane on Friday evening. He saw four Frenchmen and two bears going towards Ruardean. The men were running, and were followed by a mob of people, who were throwing stones. Among them were the two Wilkes and William Baldwin. George Wilkes said, "Come on, my lads; don't be frightened." The Frenchmen and the bears were struck with stones. This continued for a distance of nearly a mile. William Williams had a clothes prop, with which he belaboured the bears. The Frenchmen defended the bears, and often got the blows intended for them.

Benjamin Kirkhouse stated that Robert Wilkes came up to him on Friday evening, and said that the bears had killed a woman and child, and asked him to stop them. He saw the Frenchmen go into Knight's Gardens, and just afterwards someone struck one of the bears against a door. The Frenchmen were in a bad state, and one of them was crying. They were struck with stones and sticks. There were quite 200 people following them.

Henry Vick, collier, stated that the whole of the defendants participated in the disturbance. Cinderby struck Hugent down, and George Tippins kicked him. One of the Frenchmen went into a pig's cot for safety, but was brought out. Thomas Meek also knocked Hugent down.

Arthur Vick, collier, Tom Brain, and Mark Westaway also gave evidence. Westaway stated that the old man (Hugent) was knocked down and beaten while on the ground. His face was covered with blood.

Henry Jones said he saw Hugent near Cedar Hill. He was walking with difficulty, and after going a short distance he fell down. He had his hands on his sides as if he were suffering pain. Later on Sidney Rawlins came up with a stick, and Wilkes put it between the old man's legs and tipped him over on one side. The old man cried out when he fell.

This concluded the case for the prosecution, and the Bench at once decided that there was no evidence against William Baldwin, Isaac Baldwin, James Hopkins, and Golding.

THE DEFENCE.

Mr. Goold addressed the bench on behalf of the prisoners whom he represented. Dealing first with the case against George Wilkes, he stated that it rested entirely upon the evidence of Hugent, who said that Wilkes struck him on the head with a stone. The Frenchman who picked Hugent up, and the other witnesses who were called did not see George Wilkes commit the assault. If he had struck Hugent as the latter stated, there must have been others present who saw it. Mr. Goold did not deny that Wilkes had acted very foolishly, but there was no evidence that he was guilty of the assault which was charged against him. The only evidence against Robert Wilkes was that he followed the Frenchmen with a crowd of others, and if all who did that were to be summoned, the bench would have to deal with 200 or 300 people. There was only one witness who had sworn that Meek and Tippins had assaulted the Frenchmen. He expressed regret at what had taken place. The whole thing had arisen in consequence of the statement that a woman had been killed by the bears, and the men were enraged at what they undoubtedly believed to be true.

Mr. Watley said that as far as the charges of assault were concerned he now only had George and Sidney Rawlins to defend, and he contended that the evidence against them was not sufficiently strong to justify a conviction.

ONE DEFENDANT DISMISSED.

The Bench dismissed the case against George Rawlins.

THE CHARGE OF KILLING THE BEARS.

There being no evidence for the defence, the charge against the defendants of wilfully and maliciously killing the two bears was taken.

Milsom Simmons was re-called, and stated that he saw several of the defendants strike the bears across the legs and ribs. He saw one of the bears killed. It was beaten to death with sticks and stones, and among those who were present were Henry Baldwin and William Williams.

Benjamin Kirkhouse said he overtook two Frenchmen and a bear at Knight's Gardens. There was a crowd present, and several persons struck the bear with sticks and stones. George Wilkes struck at it.

Henry Vick said he saw a Frenchman and a large bear being brought out of a pig's cot. The bear was beaten, and its throat was cut. Witness denied that he had in his statement to the police implicated several of the prisoners in the charge of killing one of the bears.

The statement was read, and proved to be at variance with witness's sworn evidence.

Arthur Vick said the large bear was tied to a gate, and somebody proposed to shoot it. Henry Baldwin cut its throat with a knife. Witness subsequently admitted that in his statement to the police he said that George Wilkes, Robert Wilkes, Arthur Golding, and James Hopkins beat the bear with sticks and Henry Baldwin cut its throat.

Wm. Bond saw the large bear on the road. A number of people were beating the animal with sticks, and it groaned. He fetched a gun and shot it in order to put it out of its misery.

Hugent was then re-called, and stated that the bears were between four and five months old when he and his companions bought them, and they had been in their possession six months. He gave 850 francs for the larger bear.

Sirgant said he gave 1,000 francs for the smaller bear, which was quite tame.

This was the whole of the evidence.

Mr. Goold stated that the section under which proceedings were taken referred to "animals ordinarily kept in a state of confinement," such as domestic animals, and submitted that the section did not apply to bears. It all depended upon the construction to be placed upon the word "ordinarily."

The Magistrates' Clerk ruled against Mr. Goold on the point of law.

Mr. Watley addressed the bench, remarking that all the prisoners had hitherto borne a good character.

MAGISTRATES' DECISION.

The Bench discharged Hardwick in both cases, and ruled that there was no evidence against Meek, Sidney Rawlins, and George Tippins on the second charge. They then retired, and on returning into court,

The Chairman said the bench had seriously considered whether the case was one in which they could allow the prisoners who had been found guilty the option of paying a fine. They had agreed to do so, but the fine would be a heavy one, and no time would be allowed for payment. There was no questioning the fact that the case was a most disgraceful one—it was one of the most disgraceful upon which he had adjudicated in that court. As far as he knew, there was no reason whatever for attacking four inoffensive foreigners, as there did not appear to be the slightest foundation for the statement that the bears had injured someone. George Wilkes was the worst offender, and he would be fined £5, or be imprisoned for a month for the assault. Robert Wilkes, Henry Baldwin, and Sidney Rawlins would be fined 10s., or seven days. George Wilkes also appeared to be the most active in killing the bears. It would be impossible, he knew, to give damages which would adequately compensate those poor Frenchmen for the loss they had sustained, but George Wilkes was in a position which was different from that occupied by the other defendants, and he would be fined £1 and have to pay £20 damages, or, in default, a month's imprisonment. George Rawlins, Robert Wilkes, E. Cinderby, Hy. Baldwin, J. Hopkins, Golding and Isaac Baldwin would be fined £1, and have to pay £5 damages each, or be imprisoned for fourteen days.

SUBSCRIPTION LIST FOR THE VICTIMS.

As intimated in previous issues, we have opened a subscription list for the benefit of the four poor Frenchmen who were brutally ill-treated, and whose two performing bears were killed, by a mob in Dean Forest on Friday last. We beg to acknowledge receipt of the following sums as the nucleus of a fund:—

				£	s.	d.
Amounts previously received				19	8	0
Collected by Mr F. Aubertin :—						
Mr. C. Moir	0	5	0			
Mr. H. Lewis	0	5	0			
Mr M. Krieger	0	5	0			
Mrs Eliza Huxtable	0	5	0			
H. M. M.	0	5	0			
N. N. Co. (Ltd.)	0	5	0			
Mr Ch. G. de Maguy	0	5	0			
L. M.	0	5	0			
Mr. A. Stacey	0	2	0			
Mr. H. M. Dyer	0	2	0			
Mr. F. J. Aubertin	0	2	0			
Dreadnought	0	1	0			
Mr. F. Braud	0	1	0			
Mr. H. E. Prickett	0	1	0			
Mr. D. Radcliffe	0	1	0			
Mr. Rumbelow	0	1	0			
Somebody	0	2	0			
Mr. F. J. Veall	0	1	0			
Mr. F. W. Smith	0	1	0			
Mr. Cholton James	0	1	0			
Mr. C. O. Jones	0	2	6			
Mr. D. W. E.	0	1	0			
Mr. F. J. A. Hawket	0	1	0			
Mr. S. Dyell	0	1	0			
Miss Collings	0	1	0			
A Friend	0	1	0			
W.	0	2	6			
Mr. David George	0	2	6			
Mr. T. S. J.	0	1	0			
Mr. B. R.	0	1	0			
Mr. A. I. L.	0	2	0			
Mr. C. T. Y.	0	2	0			
Mr. David Evans	0	1	0			
Mr. J. C. J.	0	1	6			
Sympathy	0	1	0			
Anonymous	0	1	0			
Another Bear	0	1	0			
Mr. F. C. Webber, jun.	0	2	0			
Mr. Jestyn Williams	0	2	0			
Mr. G. W. Moon	0	2	6			
Mr. T. Lewis	0	2	6			
Mr. A. Ware	0	2	6			
Mr. Alf. Marquand	0	1	0			
J. T. D.	0	2	6			
W. T. C. H.	0	2	6			
Mr. J. Samuel	0	2	6			
Mr. G. H. B.	0	1	0			
Mr. J. H. F.	0	1	0			
Mr. Stevens	0	2	0			
Mrs. E. Pence	0	2	0			
Mr. H. Norman Jones	0	2	6			
Mr. R. Heath	0	1	0			
Mr. Jno. Munday	0	2	6			
Mr. George Bowden	0	2	6			
Mr. W. F.	0	1	0			
				5	15	6
Per J. W. Porter, Coleford :—						
Mr. C. C. Hough, Bracelands	0	5	0			
John W. Watts, Coleford	0	1	0			
Alfred Webb, Coleford	0	1	0			
Mr. N. Male, Coleford	0	1	0			
Mr. F. Morgan, Cinderford	0	1	0			
W. Morris, S. and W. Rail Co.	0	1	0			
M. A. Williams, Owen Farm	0	1	0			
K. Williams, Owen Farm	0	1	0			
J. W. Porter, photographer, &c.	0	1	0			
				0	13	0
F. G.				0	2	0
Mons. Barbier				0	5	0
G. Charles				0	5	0
J. Gavey				0	5	0
Captain Lloyd				0	5	0
Mr. and Mrs. Ifryd Thomas				0	10	0
A Sympathiser				0	7	0
Mr. Nicholl, The Ham				0	5	0
Mrs. Nicholl, The Ham				0	5	0
Cardiff Fur Stores				0	2	6
"Ferro"				0	5	0
Mr. R. Bellwood				0	1	0
Mr. C. Jordan				0	1	0
Mr. T. Ewens				0	1	0
Mr. E. Ewens				0	1	0
Mr. Bert Waters				0	1	0
Mr. J. Young				0	1	0
Mr. H. J. Langlois				0	5	0
Rev. Canon Capel				0	5	0
Morgan and Biermann				0	5	0
H. North, jun.				0	2	6
William Cust Gwynne, M.D.				0	5	0
Henry, Charlotte, and Noel				0	5	0
C. H. H., Newport				0	3	0
Mr. Richardson				0	5	0
Mrs. Richardson				0	5	0
F. Manning				0	1	0
F. Evans, Newport				0	5	0
A. T. Taverner				0	2	6
Miss C. B. Jones				0	2	6
W. F. Gover				0	5	0
Mr. Jonas Watson				0	5	0
Miss F. C. Watson				0	2	6
The Clerks of Messrs. Lewis and Jones, Solicitors, Merthyr				0	6	6
Mrs. Brown, Court Arms, Merthyr				0	1	6
Miss Gwendolen Watkins				0	2	6
L. Maitland Watkins				0	2	6
Mr. O. H. Jennings, surgeon, Dan-y-bryn House, Newport (Mon.)				0	5	0
J. Pricket, Troedyrhiw				0	1	0
An Anonymous Subscriber				0	2	6
John Elston, Cardiff				0	2	6
Henry Elcock, Glyn-Neath				0	5	0
Lewis Jenkins, Vale of Glamorgan Brewery, Cowbridge				0	5	0
Sir Marteine Lloyd, Bronwydd				0	5	0
Lady Lloyd				0	5	0
Miss Lloyd				0	5	0
Miss Peverd Lloyd				0	5	0
Fraulein Maures				0	1	0
Miss Clark, Talygarn, Llantrisant				0	10	0
Miss Foulkes Jones, Abermyron				0	2	6
Primrose Girl, Neath				0	1	0
D. T. A.				0	1	0
M. A. A. P.				0	1	0
Mr. T. M. Franklen, St. Hilary, Cowbridge				0	5	0
T. E. D., Cardigan				0	1	0

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "WESTERN MAIL."

SIR,—It seems to me it would be expedient and wise to let it be known through the channel of consuls that bear showing is not permitted in England.—I am, &c., PAUL BARBIER.

University College, Cardiff.

A NEW CARDIFF COMPANY.

MESSRS. STEVENS AND SON'S WINE AND SPIRIT BUSINESS.

We intimated about a month ago that a company was about to be formed for the purpose of acquiring the extensive business carried on by Messrs. Stevens and Son, wine and spirit merchants, Cardiff, and to-day we publish the prospectus issued by the promoters of that company. The business was started over 33 years ago, and so well has it prospered that it is now the largest of the kind in the Principality. It has, in fact, increased to such an extent that Mr. J. W. Alfred Stevens has for some time felt the desirability of relinquishing some of the responsibility which its development has entailed, and he has conceived the idea that its future working by a limited company is the best means for further extending its operations. The magnitude of the business done by the firm may be imagined when we state that Mr. Stevens has for years paid more Customs duties on wines and spirits in the port of Cardiff than have been paid by all the other wine and spirit merchants put together. An audit of the vendor's books by a well-known Bristol firm of accountants, who are experts in businesses of this description, has disclosed the fact that the average annual profits for the past three years have been about £4,000. They also show that there has been a steady increase in the trade, and that, consequently, the profits last year amounted to £4,215. As these figures can be safely relied upon, it will be seen that those who are fortunate enough to obtain shares in the new company may congratulate themselves upon having done a good stroke of business. The share capital required is £45,000, the amount which it has been agreed shall be paid to the vendor. Of this sum no less than £19,959 is for book debts, which Mr. Stevens guaranteed on the 20th of last month were all good, and subject only to the allowances which are usually made in the trade. The book debts alone prove the extensive connection of the firm, and in order to show his confidence in the business Mr. Stevens has agreed to take £5,000 in ordinary and an equal amount in preference shares; indeed, he is quite prepared to take up one-third of the company's capital, if required. He will join the board of directors, and will receive no remuneration whatever for his services until the ordinary shareholders are paid a dividend of 10 per cent. per annum. Mr. John Weaver, who has managed the business for over a quarter of a century, will now become managing director, and the company, in securing his services in this capacity, may feel assured that their interests will not be neglected. Taking the net profits of 1888 as a guide, it is found that they will be more than sufficient to pay a dividend of £12 per cent. on the ordinary capital. The company, however, expect a large increase of business, one of their objects being the extension of the operations of the present firm. We may mention that the first directors are Mr. S. A. Brain, Mr. Robert Alner Bowring, Mr. Richard Wain, Mr. Alfred Stevens, and Mr. John Weaver, the two last-named joining the board after allotment. It will be seen that all the gentlemen named are well acquainted with the class of business which the company will transact, and as solicitor and secretary they have secured the able services of Mr. Harry Cousins and Mr. J. E. Gunn respectively. The inquiries which have been made for shares since we published a preliminary paragraph have been very numerous, and there will certainly be a rush from the 9th to the 16th of May, which is the time allowed for applications for shares to be made.

GLAMORGAN BUILDING SOCIETY, CARDIFF.

The annual general meeting of the members of the Glamorgan Building Society was held at the society's registered offices, 15, Queen-street, Cardiff, on Friday evening. Mr. J. H. Wilson, the president, occupied the chair. The annual report and statement of accounts for the year ended the 31st of March, 1889, stated that the directors had been enabled to declare a bonus of 2½ per cent. in addition to 5 per cent. interest on investing shares, and to increase the reserve fund by the sum of £150 and carry forward to next year's account £407 14s. 10d. The seven retiring directors, viz., Messrs. J. H. Wilson, R. Hooper, J. A. le Boulanger, J.P., Charles Bird, J. M. Jennings, T. Harry Riches, and James Hurman, were re-elected.

PRECAUTION AND WARNING.—Ask for Cadbury's Cocoa. See that you have not been induced to accept an imitation, and be careful to avoid FOREIGN Cocoas, sold as pure, which are adulterated with alkali. This may be detected by the dark colour and the scent when a tin is first opened. 21925

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THE LATEST NEWS.—A Lady, who was for more than three months unable to put on her boots because of most painful Corns, after trying, without any benefit, several of the well-advertised remedies, at last got a 1s. Bottle of Munday's "Viridine," which is the Corn Cure, and in six days the Corns were all gone, and she has had no trouble from that time.—Munday's Viridine is sold in 1s. Bottles, by post 1s 2d., by the sole proprietor, J. MUNDAY Chemist Cardiff.