

## Francis M. Doyle

(29 Sep 1833 – 29 Dec 1871)

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**Doyle.** In the discharge of his duty, on Friday, December 29th, Francis M. Doyle, aged 38 years. His funeral will take place from his late residence, No. 349 K street southwest, on tomorrow (Sunday) afternoon, at 2 o'clock, to which the friends of the family are invited.

*The Evening Star, Dec. 29, 1871, p. 4*

### **Mrs. Shea, With Her Little Knife and Pistol Keeps Two Officers at Bay**

After the proceedings in the Criminal Court today, in which it appeared that the watch of which Mr. A. Metzler had been robbed by Gassaway Butler and others, on the 5th instant, had been sold to a Mrs. Shea, Mr. M. procured a search warrant for the watch. Lieut. Johnson served the warrant on Shea, whom he found at his house, on Maryland avenue, near 4 1/2 street, and he accompanied Lieut. J. to police headquarters, but Officers Pfaff and Duvall, who had been deputized to serve the search warrant, had trouble. Going into the house they were ordered out by Mrs. Shea, who armed with a long knife and pistol, threatened to make mince meat of them and blow them to atoms, and to show that she was in earnest cut at Pfaff, but fortunately missed him, and struck the counter, cutting off a large piece. The officers being unarmed at the time retired, and Pfaff returned to headquarters for instructions while Duvall remained on guard at the house until he received orders, and in this condition affairs remained at 2 1/2 o'clock.

### **Murder of Officer Doyle!**

The shocking intelligence reached our office just before going to press that on a renewal of the attempt to arrest Mrs. Shea, she fired a shot which killed Officer Doyle instantly.

*The Evening Star, December 30, 1871*

### **A Police Officer Killed by a Woman**

#### **Shot Dead While in the Discharge of Duty**

#### **Full Particulars of the Fatal Shooting of Officer Doyle by Mrs. Shea**

#### **The Coroner's Inquest Today**

Brief mention of the homicide of officer Francis M. Doyle was made in a portion of our edition of yesterday. The facts in this case appear to be, that about a quarter before one o'clock p.m. yesterday, police officers Pfaff and Duvall, doing special detective duty, went to the groggery kept by John Shea, No. 339 Maryland avenue, corner of Louse alley, armed with a warrant to search the house for a silver watch, which it was charged had been disposed of to Shea by the colored robbers, who took it from Mr. A. Metzler, in broad daylight, in 11th street on the 5th instant. John Shea had previously been arrested by Lieut. Johnson on a warrant charging him with receiving stolen goods, and he was lodged at police headquarters.

The officers charged with the execution of the search warrant found Mrs. Maria Shea, wife of John Shea, in charge of the house, and they were driven out by her, as stated in yesterday's STAR. Pfaff then returned to headquarters and reported the situation, and being advised that it was their duty to break open the door he returned. They found the door barred and Shea's wife in high dudgeon. One of the officers blew his whistle, and a response was made by Officer Lewis, doing patrol duty on that beat. When he arrived he found Pfaff and Duvall at the door trying to effect an entrance. Mrs. Shea was in

the house, and refused to let them enter, but afterwards agreed to let Lewis and Pfaff in if they would keep Duvall out. At this juncture Officer Lewis was relieved by private Doyle. About a quarter before 3 o'clock the officers determined to force an entrance, at which time, Mrs. Shea, from within, was threatening that she would shoot the first man that entered. The officers made a break for the door, which was forced in, and all entered together. Mrs. Shea was behind the counter, and leveled the pistol--a Remminger navy six shooter, of the largest size, and Mr. Gates caught at her hand just as she fired the ball taking effect in the right breast of Doyle, who exclaimed as he fell, "O! my God," and expired almost instantly. The enraged woman was immediately taken in custody by Officer Thomas Aldridge, who had arrived on the ground, and she was marched to the station house, on the way cursing and resisting the officers in a most violent manner.

#### *The Murdered Man*

The body of Doyle was taken to the first precinct station to await the action of Coroner Potter. Doyle was 38 years of age and leaves a wife and three small children, who are living at 340 K street southwest. He was a native of Ireland, and during the war served three years as fireman on board the man-of-war Wabash, from which service he received an honorable discharge. He has been on the police force about five years, and has always been regarded as one of the most faithful officers, never shirking any duty assigned him, however disagreeable or hazardous it might be.

#### *A Vile Den*

John Shea, the keeper of the vile den where the homicide occurred, has been located at this place about five years, and it is said to have made money fast. Certain it is that no ranche in this city has given the police more trouble than this one, it being a resort for all the thieves and prostitutes in the section of the town where it is located, and well known as a "fence" for stolen goods. The pistol with which the deed was committed, and a large butcher knife some ten inches in length, which Mrs. Shea was armed with, were both secured and are at the station.

Last night our reporter visited the ranche of Shea, and found officer Leach and another officer, and was shown through it. A viler and more wretched looking place could scarcely be imagined. It appears to be fully stocked with cheap goods, and the shelves plentifully dotted with whisky bottles and demijohns, the contents of which, as the officers remarked, "will kill at forty rods." Shea's four children were asleep upstairs, and a female was in charge of them whose face is familiar at the police court. She gave her name as Lizzie Nugent, and says she has just returned from a sojourn of some weeks at the social evil reform institution, on the corner of 6th and G streets, and is now in Mrs. Shea's service. The blood seems to have spouted out of Doyle's mouth the instant he was shot, the top of the counter and floor of the shop being covered with it. He was taken out by the other policemen and laid down on the ground in front of the shop, but never uttered a word after the exclamation above noted.

#### *This Morning*

A large and excited crowd gathered about the station house, corner 4 1/2 and M streets southwest, but few were admitted other than the personal friends of the deceased. The body was lying on a board in the rear room of the station-house, clad in the police uniform in which the unfortunate man met his death. The clothing had been opened, revealing the fatal opening in the right breast, just above the nipple, through which the pistol ball passed on the errand of death. At an early hour this morning, Mr. Jas. Doyle, a brother of the deceased, came to the station house to take charge of the body when it should be turned over to him.

Dr. W.W. Potter, the Coroner, with Drs. J.P. Hartigan arrived, and with Drs. McWilliams, R.C. Croggon, -- Brookheimer, Leach, Hickman and Williamson, proceeded to make

### *A Post Mortem Examination*

Shortly afterwards the wife of deceased, with his mother and her sister, appeared, and demanded admittance to see the body, pleading that it should not be opened by the doctors; that it was unnecessary. The sobbing of the females was distressing, and it was only by the persuasion of some personal friends that they were induced to be quiet. The officers placed at their disposal one of the rooms in the upper part of the station house, where they remained until after the rendition of the verdict.

### *The Fatal Weapon*

A large size six-shooter, Remington's make, as an object of interest to those admitted to the station as also the knife--a common cheese knife, with a blade ten inches long--with which Mrs. Shea was armed when she attacked Officer Pfaff, a short time before the homicide.

A few minutes before 11 o'clock Lieut. Johnson, by whom John Shea was arrested yesterday and Lieut. Noon had

### *An Interview With The Accused*

Mrs. Shea, in the cells attached to the station to ascertain where the watch was. She declared that she did not know where the particular watch wanted was, but that there were three in the house--two behind the counter and one in a box upstairs. She complained to Johnson that had the officers (Duvall and Pfaff) "acted more like gentlemen" and showed the warrant there would have been no trouble, but they showed no authority whatsoever.

### *The Inquest*

The following jurors were summoned: Geo. Holmes, Parker Murphy, Lloyd F. Oliphant, E.B. Caton, Francis Reeside, ? Skinner, Pat'k Clarke, Ed. S. Atkinson, Robinson Rutter, John Walsh, H. Busey and James Croggon.

At 11 o'clock, the autopsy having been completed, the jury was sworn over the body, and examined the opening in the right breast, in which the coroner stated the missile appeared to have entered. It had been taken out from under the left shoulder. The jury was taken to one of the upper rooms, and the prisoner, Mrs. Shea, a rather tall, heavy-built woman, with a masculine countenance, was brought up and given a seat beside her counsel, Mr. A.K. Browne, with whom she had a short conversation, and then sat with her head bowed down.

Officer Silas B. Lewis was first sworn, and testified that he was on duty in the neighborhood of 4 1/2 street and Maryland avenue; heard the whistle; ran down; saw Officers Duvall and Pfaff at the house of the prisoner, on Maryland avenue, between 3d and 4-1/2 street, No. 339. Asked what was the trouble, and Duvall said he wanted the woman. Witness went down, knocked at the door and after he knocked several times--the door being locked--Mrs. Shea answered from the window. Witness asked Duvall if he had a warrant and received for a reply that he had a search warrant, which was then in Lieut. Johnson's possession. Witness asked her to let the officers in, and she refused, calling Duvall a -- of a --, and threatening if she got hold of him she would break his d--n brains out with her fist. Witness told Duvall to get the warrant, and Officer Pfaff went after it and got it. Gates returned with Pfaff, and they had the warrant. Duvall tried to read the warrant, but she would not hear him. She told witness that if he got the warrant she would let him and the others (Gates and Pfaff) in, but that man (Duvall) shall not come in. Witness told her that they could not keep Duvall and advised her to open the door. Duvall said that he would try her again, and she answered, "There's the door, and if you come in, you have got to come in there, and if you do, I will meet you there, and I will shoot the first d--d policeman who comes in." About 1-1/2 o'clock officer Doyle came up; he left him there; was not present at the shooting. Thanks the search warrant called for a silver watch. He was certain.

*P.W. Pfaff*, sworn, -- Lieut. Johnson, with witness and Officer Duvall, went to serve the search warrant. Johnson took Shea into custody and deputized witness and Duvall to make the search; witness started to make the search, when Mrs. Shea seized Duvall, as he was going behind the counter, tearing his shirt and necktie, and witness attempted to grab her across the counter, when she seized a big butcher knife, (Witness identified the knife). She said to witness, "You --- of a ---, you searched my house before, and you can't search it today." Witness told her that she must submit to the law. She then uttered fearful oaths and curses, flourishing the knife, and Duvall went outside to get some help. She locked the door on witness and he tried to pacify her. She said, "You -- of a --, you have got to get out, and by the back way." witness said he would not, and after flourishing the knife she condescended to open the door, and as he was going out she flourished the knife again and he drew his billy. Officer Lewis then came, and witness got Duvall to go to Johnson for the warrant, and they tried to persuade her to open the door; she said that they could all come in except the man who had the warrant, Duvall. Witness then went to headquarters and on his return Officer Doyle had been shot.

*Dr. J.F. Hartigan* testified to making a post mortem examination. He described the wound, and said that he believed death was occasioned by internal hemorrhage.

*Dr. Alex McWilliams* corroborated the testimony of Dr. Hartigan.

*Edmund J. Duvall (policeman)* sworn--Witness stated that when he started to go behind the counter Mrs. Shea rushed between him and the window and as he put his hand on the counter she said, "You little --- of a ---, if you lay your hands on anything here, I will cut your heart out! I want to see your warrant for proceeding in here." Witness told her that the warrant had been served on the proprietor, that she had heard it read, and knew what he came after, she then seized the butcher knife and grabbed him by the collar. Witness grabbed her and held her back, while she continued to call him a --- of a ---, etc. She had the knife at his breast several times. Officer Pfaff came to his assistance. While they were talking a crowd came in, and he (witness) backed out from behind the counter and then tried to get the crowd out, and when he got to the edge of the door it was slammed to and he was backed on the outside. Heard her threaten officer Pfaff to cut his heart out if he did not get out; then heard the scuffling; demanded that the door be opened two or three times and was answered that she would not open it; thought Pfaff was in a dangerous place, and witness kicked the panel in, when the door was opened and Pfaff backed out, she menacing him with the knife; witness told Pfaff to knock her down, but he did not heed him and when he got on the outside the door was slammed to and bolted. Shea then went upstairs, opened the window and showing the revolver told witness if he put his head in that door she would blow his brains out. She said the other officers could come in, but he should not. Witness went to the Police Court and got the search warrant, returned and demanded admittance. Officers Gates, Doyle and Pfaff were present, and they begged her to open the door. She refused to let him in, but said the others could enter; that if he (witness) attempted to enter she would blow the little -- of a --'s brains out. Held a consultation, and Gates and Pfaff decided to go in, witness having previously attempted to get something to open the door. She was then sitting at the window, behind the counter, with the revolver cocked. Witness demanded admittance, and in reply to the request to open the door, she said she would to others, but not to him. After demanding admittance several times, witness went to the door and knocked at it three times, the third time nearly falling in. Gates took hold of him and said "Ned, for God's sake don't go in first," and he wedged in, getting inside. She had then got from behind the counter, and, with pistol in her hand cocked, advanced toward witness within five or six feet of the door. Gates said, "Madam, for God's sake don't do anything like that." She replied she would, or words to that effect. Gates jumped at her and tried to catch hold of the pistol, but does not know if he did. At this time witness, with Doyle and Aldridge, entered. Doyle got on witness' right, and while they had hold of her the pistol went off; don't know whether Doyle had hold of her at the time. Witness thought at first that Doyle had been struck in the face. Witness is certain that Gates had hold of her when the shot was fired, and thinks that he (witness) had; don't know that she took any aim; did not

know that she intended it for anyone else than himself; she made no remarks at the time the shot was fired; did not say anything after the shot was fired.

*Officer James L. Gates, sworn* -- The witness mainly corroborated the testimony of the other officers. His account of the death struggle was as follows: Duvall kicked the door open and she presented the pistol, when he seized her, and Officer Aldridge took hold of the hand in which she had the pistol, and she was stooping when the pistol went off, witness holding the weapon as near as possible around the cylinder at the time, and his finger was burnt by the powder. Just as witness grabbed the pistol she said that she would shoot Duvall if he entered. Witness was shocked by the report of the pistol and fell backward, and on recovering he took hold of Doyle and asked if he was shot, and someone took the other side, and they walked out with him, and in about eight steps he gave way entirely. Witness had wrenched the pistol from her before this. When he entered he held her arm to keep the pistol up, but the others getting hold of her pulled her down as well as himself, and while she was down the pistol exploded.

*Officer Thos. Aldridge*--Witness was called by Duvall to assist him in serving the warrant and went to the house, where after some parleying Duvall kicked the door open, and Gates and witness rushed in. Witness went to her left side and grabbed for the pistol. Don't think that Gates had got hold the pistol when the shot was fired. Doyle was the third one, and at the time was perhaps five or six feet distant. Witness made but two grabs at the pistol before it was fired. Gates dropped just before it was fired, thought he dropped to save himself. The prisoner gave him some trouble after her arrest, cursing, etc., and he was obliged to call on a colored man to help him. Witness told her that she had killed Doyle, and she at first said that she didn't care, but had killed the wrong one; but the last time he spoke to her of it she said she was sorry she had killed the poor man. Witness is certain that Duvall was not inside when the shot was fired.

James Simons, Sarah Green, W.M. Boyd, Anna Morrison and Jack Williams gave their testimony, corroborating the above, and the jury proceeded to make their verdict as follows:

#### *The Verdict*

The jury returned a verdict, "That the said F.M. Doyle came to his death about 3 o'clock p.m. on the 29th day of December, 1871, near the premises of John Shea, on Maryland avenue between 3d and 4 1/2 streets. They further find that the cause of the death of the said Doyle was a wound by a pistol fired by the hands of Mary Shea, and the said Doyle was in the discharge of his duty as an officer of the Metropolitan Police at the time.

The coroner immediately filled out a commitment to jail for the prisoner.

*The Evening Star, January 1, 1872*

#### **Funeral of the Late Policeman Doyle**

On Saturday evening, at the conclusion of the coroner's inquest on the body of the late Francis M. Doyle, the policeman killed by Mrs. Shea, the remains were placed in a coffin and removed to his late residence, where a large crowd of friends called to condole with his family. The funeral took place yesterday afternoon at 2 o'clock, Rev. Father Call, of St. Dominic's church, preached the funeral sermon, referring favorably to the character of the deceased and to the fact of his having met his death while in the discharge of his duty. The funeral cortege was formed with fifty-two policemen at the head under the command of Lieut. Gessford, and the remains were interred in the Congressional Cemetery.

*The Evening Star, January 5, 1872*

#### **The Doyle Homicide**

### **Mrs. Shea in Court--One Thousand Dollars Bail Offered and Refused**

Mrs. Mary Shea, who was committed to jail last week by the Coroner, Dr. Potter, on the charge of killing Policeman Doyle, was brought into the Criminal Court this morning for the purpose of having the amount of bail fixed. The prisoner was attired in a neat brown striped poplin, a shawl, and brown bonnet, and had with her one of her children, an infant girl about a year old. Mr. A.K. Browne appeared for the prisoner, and Mr. Harrington for the government. The testimony of Officers Gates, Aldridge, and Duvall, to the same effect as given before the coroner's jury was taken.

Mr. Browne claimed that the pistol was not cocked when the officers entered, but that the weapon was discharged in the scuffle.

Judge Carter said that it was apparent that she had previously threatened to kill Duvall if he attempted to enter, and he questioned that officer as to his position when the pistol was fired, when he was there, and if she knew that he was in the room at the time. Officer Duvall was certain that he had hold of her at the time. She was stooping when the pistol was discharged.

Officer Aldridge was recalled, and testified that immediately after the shot he noticed Duvall about five or six feet distant.

Officer Gates was recalled and testified that she had stooped about two feet when the pistol was fired, and he was attempting to get the pistol from her. She was when stooping attempting to wrest herself loose from his grip.

Judge Carter said that it was seldom that bail was accepted in capital cases, but there were exceptions, and he would make an exception in this case. Here we have a pregnant woman waiting trial in a prison furnishing no accommodations for her sickness. While he would not allow the evidence to prejudice the case, he would accept bail in the case, but would not fix the amount.

Mr. Browne said that she would give \$1,000.

Judge Carter -- "We will accept no such bail; we want as much as she can give, and the amount will be fixed when bail is offered."

The prisoner was then remanded to jail.

*The Evening Star, January 6, 1872*

### **The Homicide of Officer Doyle**

#### **Mrs. Shea Released on Bail**

This morning, Mr. Harrington representing the government, and Mr. A.K. Browne, counsel for the woman Mrs. Shea, who was committed to jail on Saturday last on the charge of killing Officer Doyle, appeared in the Criminal Court, Judge Carter, and arranged that bail should be taken for her appearance--\$10,000 real estate and \$4,000 collateral. Mrs. Shea was therefore sent for, and soon appeared with Bailiff O'Neal. She was attired as she was yesterday, and had her infant daughter with her. She was joined in the court-room by her husband. The money was drawn from the bank on the surrender of the certificate of deposit. About 12 o'clock the recognizance was taken, John Shea going on the bond with the accused in the sum of \$10,000 to appear and answer, with the understanding that the amount deposited with the Marshal (\$4,000) should be forfeited if she failed to appear. She was therefore released.

*The Evening Star, January 30, 1872*

### **The Doyle Shea Homicide**

This morning the grand jury found a true bill against Mrs. Mary Shea, charging her with murder, in having killed Francis M. Doyle, a member of the Metropolitan Police, on the 29th of December last. They also found a true bill against her husband, John Shea, for buying stolen property, knowing it to be

stolen, (the watch of which Mr. Metzger was robbed in broad daylight, and for which the officers were attempting to search Shea's house when the fatal shot was fired.) They also found true bills against Chas. Johnson and Richard Burnett, charging them with highway robbery, in attacking and robbing Mr. Metzger of the watch above referred to. The others concerned in the robbery--Dick Gassaway and Philip Butler--have already been convicted and sentenced to the Albany penitentiary.

*The Evening Star, April 4, 1872*

### **Trial of a Woman for Murder**

#### **The Shooting of Officer Doyle by Mrs. Shea**

The trial of Mrs. Mary Shea, indicted for the murder of F.M. Doyle on the 29th of December last, was commenced in the Criminal Court, Judge Carter, this morning--Mr. Harrington prosecuting, and Messrs. A.G. Riddle and A.K. Browne for the defense.

The mother, wife and other relatives of the deceased came into the court-room about 10 1/2 o'clock, and the accused arrived about the same time. Mrs. Shea was directed to stand up and the indictment being read she entered a plea of "not guilty," She exhibited considerable emotion, and her eyes filled with tears as she further answered the court that she would be tried by her country.

#### *The Selection of a Jury*

was commenced and the names of the jurors were drawn from the hat in the following order, each one being sworn on his voile dire.

W.H. Rohrer was excused on account of ill health; James Grinnell, challenged by defense; Samuel Lewis had formed an opinion; Donald McCathran, ditto; Joseph Fletcher, accepted and sworn; Robert A. Griffin, ditto; G.W. Cassell, ditto; John Watts, ditto; George W. Utermuhle had formed an opinion; John H. Wise, ditto; Michael R. Combs, accepted and sworn; Perry W. Lowe, ditto; John E. Latham had conscientious scruples; Horace S. Johnson, ditto; W.H. Garges, accepted and sworn; George T. Howard, ditto; William H. Barnes, ditto; Joseph Smallwood, ditto; Peter Hepburn had formed an opinion; James Davenport, accepted and sworn; Barney B. Curran, ditto. This completed the jury.

Mr. Harrington opened the case for the government, and was followed by Mr. A.K. Browne, who claimed that this was an accidental shooting.

Dr. W.W. Potter and Dr. J.F. Hartigan testified as to the fatal character of the wound and the appearance of the body. Officer S.D. Lewis and other witnesses then testified as to the shooting, detailing the circumstances as reported in The Star at the time, when the same witnesses were examined before the coroner's inquest.

The facts were, briefly, that Officers Pfaff, Duvall, Gates, and others were sent to the shop of the prisoner to search the house for a stolen watch, which it was supposed had been pawned or sold there. The prisoner resisted arrest and threatened the officers, and reinforcements were sent for and arrived, including the deceased, (Officer Doyle) who told Officer Duvall to do his duty. Mrs. Shea, who had her door fastened, threatened that she would shoot the first who entered it. Duvall kicked the door, and Officer Gates saw Mrs. Shea take up the pistol and walk from behind the counter to the middle of the room. Gates took hold of Duvall to keep him from going in, as Mrs. Shea had threatened him especially, and Gates then entered the door, which had to be forced. Mrs. Shea pointed the pistol towards the door, and Gates took hold of her on one side and Officer Aldridge on the other. She pulled from under Gates' arm, he having hold of the pistol by the barrel at the time to prevent her firing it, and it was discharged, and the ball entering Officer Doyle's body, killed him. The evidence was being taken as our report closed.

*The Evening Star, April 5, 1872*

### **Trial of Mrs. Shea for the Murder of Police Officer Doyle**

The trial of Mrs. Mary Shea, charged with the murder of Officer Doyle, was resumed this morning in the Criminal Court, Judge Carter and Mr. Colclazer, for defense, testified that he was looking in the door when the pistol was fired; that there were several persons holding Mrs. Shea at the time, and he could not say who fired the weapon; that Officer Duvall at this time was outside the door. Several other witnesses corroborated this testimony, Dr. C.C. Cox, testified that women in the condition Mrs. Shea was in are very irritable.

Mr. Harrington addressed the jury, claiming that the prisoner was accountable for the death of Doyle and guilty of manslaughter, because the shot was fired when she was resisting the officers of the law.

Mr. Browne followed for the defense, arguing that the death of the unfortunate officer was the result of an accident.

Mr. Riddle followed on the same side, claiming that the accused was innocent of any crime; that it was the officer's indiscretion which led him to his death; that there was no idea of shooting in the mind of the accused, and she did not intend to shoot Duvall; that the firing of the pistol was accidental.

Mr. Riddle was quite pathetic, and the prisoner most of the time was in tears.

Mr. Harrington proceeded with the closing argument and argued that as this killing was in consequence of an unlawful act -- the resistance of an officer -- she was guilty of manslaughter. He proceeded to recite the circumstances, arguing that she was accountable. He, in conclusion, asked the court to instruct the jury that if they find the accused was engaged in an unlawful act at the time, that she was guilty of manslaughter.

Judge Carter charged the jury that if they find from the testimony that the officers had the search warrant, and they entered the house, and if she resisted, she was doing an unlawful act. If defendant discharged the pistol intentionally or accidentally, she is chargeable with the results. If they find that she did not discharge the weapon, or had reasonable doubts that she did discharge it, she was not guilty. The central point of the case is whether she had possession and control of the weapon at the time it was fired, and if they find she had, she is guilty.

### *Verdict of Not Guilty*

The jury retired at 2:05 in charge of bailiffs, and returned at 2:55, and Mr. Coombs announced the verdict of not guilty.

There was some movement on the part of the crowd, but it was checked by the marshal and bailiffs. Mrs. Shea was congratulated by some of her friends and walked out of court exhibiting some feeling. While at the entrance of the witness' room, the widow of the deceased came out, weeping under considerable excitement, and Mrs. Shea also broke into tears, and retired to the witness room.