The Role of Class and Gender in Victorian

Investigations and Trials: the 1815 Case of Eliza Fenning

HI318

Dr. Milne-Smith

Graham Burt

129011755

Monday, November 28, 2016

On July 26, 1815, Eliza Fenning, a twenty-one-year-old servant girl, was hung outside Newgate Prison for “feloniously and unlawfully” attempting to poison the family of Robert Turner, her master, with the intent to “kill and murder.”[[1]](#endnote-1) By the age of fourteen, Eliza’s father, a destitute London potato seller, had sent her out to make money for the family. Within a few years, she ended up in the house of Robert Turner, a law clerk.[[2]](#endnote-2) On March 21, 1815, the Turner family sat down for a dinner consisting of yeast dumplings, rump-steaks, and potatoes in their home on Chancery Lane. Within thirty minutes, the family was experiencing severe gastric pain. When it was believed the cause was arsenic poisoning, blame fell on the cook, Eliza. By analyzing the case of Eliza Fenning, this paper will discuss the place and status of domestic servants in the Victorian middle-class home, looking particularly at ideas of trust, as well as the ways in which class and gender influenced Victorian legal investigations and the presentation of evidence in trials.

The average middle-class home in Victorian Britain served as a “quite refuge” from the economic, social, and political hostility that existed in the public realm.[[3]](#endnote-3) Britain was becoming increasingly industrialized, urbanized, and commercialized in the nineteenth century. These factors, including the apparent ‘vices’ of the expanding working class as well as revolutionary violence that was fervently sweeping across European, led the middle-class home to act as an asylum from the outside world, making the Victorians “the most home-centred group in British history.”[[4]](#endnote-4) While the public sphere was primarily dominated by men, the domestic sphere was primarily controlled by women. Both spheres were intrinsically based on gender: middle-class men usually worked outside of the home to provide for their family, whereas the main responsibility for middle-class women was to keep the house. The condition and cleanliness of the home was essential to the status of middle-class Victorians. Their social status meant everything to them, and a family was primarily judged by the appearance of their home.[[5]](#endnote-5) As a result, floors, tables, furniture, window sills, parlour rooms, bedrooms, and the kitchen were closely maintained and cleaned. Cleanliness had “physical and moral repercussions” and was far more virtuous than quality or fanfare.[[6]](#endnote-6) Because a well-kept house was essential to a good reputation, and the status of being a respectable and prosperous family was crucial to the Victorian middle-class image, many families hired ‘live-in’ servants. In 1893, Lady Colin Campbell wrote that “neat and tidy servants are essential to the credit of a household; dirty and slovenly attendants stamp it with vulgarity.”[[7]](#endnote-7) Vulgarity in the home threatened the status of a family and was “a cardinal sin in the best of social circles.”[[8]](#endnote-8)

Society at the time believed that having good domestic servants was essential to having a good reputation. Servants took over many of the cooking, cleaning, and nursing duties from their mistress. More importantly, however, servants were to “protect the household from the external world.”[[9]](#endnote-9) Because the premise of the middle-class home was to be separate from the outside world, servants acted as mediators between their employers and anything that could potentially corrupt or lower their social status. For example, servants would be responsible for greeting any house guests, such as answering the door or taking messages. Within the home, more prominent servants, if applicable, also mediated between their employers and servants below them, as well as between the master/mistress and their children. Good servants acted with humility, lowliness, fearfulness, and loyalty; they meticulously kept good manners by, for example, being careful never to turn their back on or sit in the presence of their master, working in absolute silence, and never initiating a conversation with someone of a higher social standing.[[10]](#endnote-10) Servants also dealt with the ‘dirty’ parts of home life, including preparing and serving food, cleaning, disposing of waste, and dressing their mistress.[[11]](#endnote-11) It was believed that servants needed to keep busy, be worked hard, and act ‘middle-class’ in terms of dress, speech, and demeanor in order to keep the house respectable and running efficiently.

Despite the close physical connection between masters/mistresses and their servants, the class distinctions between the two remained very distinct. Since domestic servants were of a lower class, they were generally seen as immoral, corrupt, conceited, disorderly, disobedient, inherently flawed, and inferior in nature. Their social status alone, not their work ethic, personality, or behaviour, led upper and middle-class Victorians to see their servants as intrinsically sinful, filthy, and diseased. It was believed, often unjustly, that maids compulsively lied, cheated, stole, fornicated, and gossiped. If household items went missing, or something unordinary happened in the home, blame quickly and routinely fell on the servants.[[12]](#endnote-12) The presence of these subordinates, however, was very important to the social image and hierarchy of the middle-class.[[13]](#endnote-13) Because of their apparent inferiority, servants were controlled by their masters and mistresses and “kept firmly in their place” by means of “constant supervision, rigorous discipline…exhaustive rules of conduct and exhausting schedules of housework.”[[14]](#endnote-14) Hundreds of manuals and articles were published in the nineteenth century describing how to deal with servants, including “The Philosophy of Help” (1853) and Isabella Beeton’s *Book of Household Management* (1861). “No servants should, on any account, be allowed to remain up after the heads of the house have retired,” Beeton writes.[[15]](#endnote-15) Servants who were given too much independence were left to their own devices and threatened the peace, safety, morality, privacy, reputation, and social order of the home and of Victorian bourgeois culture as a whole.[[16]](#endnote-16)

Young female servants were allegedly seen as the most “culpable and dangerous” of domestic employees because of their constant flirting and fornicating.[[17]](#endnote-17) Because married middle-class women were believed to have no sexual desires, since their sole duty was to raise children and please their husbands,[[18]](#endnote-18) promiscuous female servants were seen by their mistresses as perverted beings who were “unable and often unwilling to restrain their erotic longings.”[[19]](#endnote-19) As a result, domestic maids were given little free time, were under constant supervision, had a strict timeline, were required to dress modestly, and were barred from socializing with men in the household.[[20]](#endnote-20) These facts are clearly seen in the key arguments of the prosecution in Eliza Fenning’s trial. To incriminate Eliza, the prosecution pointed out her previous sexual digressions, including when she was caught trying to enter the apprentices’ room one evening party undressed.[[21]](#endnote-21) This, along with a scandalous book found upon Eliza’s arrest which included instructions on how to commit an abortion, left little room in the minds of Britain’s social elite of Eliza’s innocence.[[22]](#endnote-22) Sexual immorality was viewed with equal, if not more, guilt and shame than murder during this period. It was believed that if Eliza was guilty of sexual immorality, it was not improbable that she could be guilty of attempted murder.

Female servants, who typically experienced “a lifetime of personal subordination in private homes” by moving from the patriarchal influence of their father to the superior influence of their master, and eventually on to the powerful influence of their husband, were often plagued with misery.[[23]](#endnote-23) In some circumstances, servants used sex as an opportunity to escape their “exceptionally confining” lives and rebel against their masters.[[24]](#endnote-24) One of the great ironies of the nineteenth century is how, in the process of diligently repressing all sexual relations involving their maids, mistresses actually helped to foster “the very sexuality [they] claimed to prohibit.”[[25]](#endnote-25) Not only did servants rebel by having sex, but the way in which sex with and between domestic servants became portrayed as dangerous and dissolute paradoxically led the middle-class, particularly middle-class men, to become fascinated with the subject. The sexual fantasies of middle-class characters portrayed in Victorian pornographic literature, like Walter in *My Secret Life*, were often set in servant quarters or involved middle-class men and servant girls.[[26]](#endnote-26) This captivation with being sexually dominant over servant girls illustrates the desire of the middle-class to assert their self-importance and elevate their own social standing within the home.[[27]](#endnote-27)

The alleged inferiority of servants on one hand, coupled with the fact that servants lived in the same homes as their employers and were in close contact them on the other, led to an important contradiction in the middle-class home. If servants were capable of being managed and acting ‘middle-class’, but were simultaneously inherently flawed beings who were called to “maintain their social differences” and keep a separate sphere within the home, tension was bound to arise.[[28]](#endnote-28) Because domestic servants blended the distinct line between the domestic and economic spheres of Victorian society, they were often placed in oppressive and uncomfortable environments. The tension often found in Victorian middle-class homes could led to acts of retaliation by the domestic servants. Types of resistance included working slowly, engaging in behaviour, illicit or otherwise, which was contrary to the household rules, or even, in severe circumstances, harming or murdering their employers.[[29]](#endnote-29) These acts of retaliation not only threatened the social norms within the Victorian middle-class home, but it also distorted the view of the house being a place of refuge.

Other than the role and status of the domestic servant in a middle-class Victorian home, the case of Eliza Fenning also raises important points on the influence of poison in Victorian Britain, as well as the defining role gender and class had in determining the outcome of a trial. By the nineteenth century, arsenic had become a major domestic, industrial, and agricultural product in Britain. It had a wide variety of uses: it was used in the production of fly-papers, wallpaper, meat wrapping paper, tobacco rolls, candles, and medicine; for poisoning rodents; and for colouring clothes, curtains, furniture, lampshades, flowers, carpets, linoleum, children’s toys, and books.[[30]](#endnote-30) Early in the century, due to its wide use and mass production, arsenic became cheap and easily attainable through any grocer, chemist, or doctor. The poison was sold to basically anyone, regardless of their age, gender, or social class. Not only did the Victorian’s constant exposure to the poison cause widespread chronic sickness throughout the century, it also led to a dramatic increase of deaths, both accidental and premeditated.[[31]](#endnote-31)

The rising availability and cheapness of arsenic, which could be found in virtually any home in Britain during the century, plus the fact that it was “colourless, odourless, tasteless, soluble in water, and fatal in small doses,” made it the perfect murder weapon.[[32]](#endnote-32) Coupled with the rise of the modern insurance industry and the desire to make ‘quick wealth’, this virtually undetectable poison made, as James Whorton describes, a “new race of poisoners.”[[33]](#endnote-33) Arsenic gave the opportunity to anyone of any gender, class, age, or physical strength to commit homicide in a premeditated and imperceptible nature, where the victim was unable to protect themselves. The idea that women, even lower-class domestic servants who typically had control over cooking and serving the food, were now so easily capable of poisoning their victims within the privacy and safety of the home terrified many people in Britain at the time.[[34]](#endnote-34)

These logistic problems regarding arsenic are clearly seen in the trial of Eliza Fenning. When asked about the whereabouts of the arsenic at the trial, Haldebart Turner claimed that it was kept in his office clearly labelled, where “any person might have access to it.”[[35]](#endnote-35) Arsenic was like any other household item - it could be easily bought and was accessible to anyone in the house, making it very difficult to prove the perpetrator. It was not until 1851 with the passing of the “Sale of Arsenic Act” that the sale and purchase of poison began to be regulated. Restrictions were placed on the quantity of arsenic bought, and a record of name, address, occupation, and intended use was made at the time of purchase. This act, as well as policies regarding the proper labelling and storage of poison, did result in less deaths.[[36]](#endnote-36) Nonetheless, arsenic was still widely used to murder. As a result, with the creation of a “new race of poisoners” in the nineteenth century, a “new bread of detective,” the forensic toxicologist, was also formed.[[37]](#endnote-37) The rise of poisonings caused there to be a push in the scientific community to establish effective chemical tests, which would help identify poison and would prove to be vital evidence in trial. These advancements, however, would only begin appearing in 1836 with the Marsh Test – over twenty years too late for Eliza Fenning.[[38]](#endnote-38)

Despite the drawbacks of science in collecting evidence for trial, gender and class had an even more important role in determining the quality of the investigation and evidence collecting processes, the acceptance of circumstantial evidence, the rigged witness selection, and the demeanor of the judge and jury. Eliza’s case, which was brought before Sir John Silvester at the Old Bailey Session-House in April 1813, was clearly biased against her because of the social class differences that existed between working-class domestics and middle-class masters, which ultimately resulted in her receiving an unfair trial and sentence. Financial constraints on Victorian judicial institutions meant that many crimes, particularly when the defendants were working-class and could not afford legal counsel, were poorly investigated or not investigated at all.[[39]](#endnote-39) According to George Robb, in order to convict someone of arsenic poisoning in the nineteenth century, the prosecution had to prove that the suspect acquired and administered the poison to their victim(s), that the victim(s) actually died from the poison, and that the suspect had motive.[[40]](#endnote-40) The quality of the evidence needed to prove these points, however, depended heavily on the social status of those involved. In the case of Eliza Fenning, the fact that a working-class servant allegedly poisoned a well-to-do middle-class family had a substantial effect on quality of the investigation. The investigation conducted by Dr. John Marshall, the surgeon who was called in by the family after they had been poisoned to inspect, and the way in which evidence was presented in the court trial itself, was meagre and based on circumstantial evidence rather than scientific validity.

Two of the key pieces of evidence used against Eliza, one being the half teaspoon of white powder that was found in the bottom of the dish where the dumplings were made, and the other being the fact that the utensils used to cut the dumplings turned black, were not scientifically validated.[[41]](#endnote-41) An example of the incompetency of Dr. Marshall’s investigation is shown in a letter to the editor in *The Examiner,* which was written in August 1815 by “A Friend to the Poor and a Lover of Justice.” The author argues that the half a teaspoon of ‘arsenic’ that was found in the dish by Dr. Marshall would have killed everyone who ate the dumplings, and that “any medical man, any Chemist, will satisfy you of the truth of these assertions.”[[42]](#endnote-42) During the trial, other chemists wrote to newspapers and even approached the judge bringing evidence against Dr. Marshall’s claims, such as the fact that arsenic did not blacken knives. In response to this chemist, the judge replied: “I’ll ask my cook.”[[43]](#endnote-43) Even though the judge knew this evidence would cast a serious doubt on Eliza’s guilt, he concluded the trial by saying to the jury, “Gentlemen, I have now stated all the facts as they have arisen.”[[44]](#endnote-44) The evidence was never brought before the jury.

Rather then using scientifically proven evidence to convict Eliza, the prosecution used circumstantial evidence. Most of the evidence was hearsay; it was Eliza’s word against the word of those who were poisoned. In the trial, for example, Charlotte Turner claimed that after she reprimanded Eliza for trying to seduce the apprentices, Eliza “fail[ed] in the respect that she before paid me, and appeared extremely sullen.”[[45]](#endnote-45) Sarah Peer claimed that she heard Eliza say “she should not like Mr. and Mrs. Robert Turner.”[[46]](#endnote-46) In the brief time Eliza was given to speak at her trial, she responded, “I liked my place [in the home], I was very comfortable.” [[47]](#endnote-47) The judge and jury chose to believe Charlotte and Sarah over Eliza. Likewise, in his testimony, Haldebart Turner stated that Eliza gave no assistance to the family when they were sick. “As to my master saying I did not assist him,” Eliza responded, “I was too ill.”[[48]](#endnote-48) The judge and jury believed Haldebart. “Gentlemen,” the judge deliberated, “if poison had been given even to a dog, one would suppose that common humanity would have prompted us to assist it in its agonies… here, [in this case], no assistance was offered.”[[49]](#endnote-49) The problem with using circumstantial evidence in trial is that it can be manipulated and skewed by how the accused is portrayed. Eliza’s portrayal as unvirtuous and sexually immoral demonstrated to the jury “the depravity of her morals.”[[50]](#endnote-50) For accused poisoners like Jane Bell and Margaret Lennox, a noble and pure reputation was the best defense against murder, but when the prosecution can persuade a jury that the accused is morally deviant, testimony in favour of the accused’s character are often futile.[[51]](#endnote-51)

It is clear that Eliza’s social status and questionable past was more influential in her conviction then the evidence from the crime scene. Eliza’s case also brings to light an important contradiction in Victorian society. While men and women were treated differently in every other facet of Victorian society, they were equal under the law. “Social stereotypes and cultural expectations regarding normal feminine behaviour,” Randa Helfield argues, “influenced the implementation of [Victorian] law.”[[52]](#endnote-52) Despite the fact that society generally held men and women at different standards regarding moral behaviour, and refused to believe that women were capable of committing heinous crimes because it was against their nature, men and women were treated as equals under the law.[[53]](#endnote-53)

This impact of social status on the outcome of the trial is also clear in other poisoning cases during the early to mid nineteenth century. Only a few weeks after Eliza Fenning was executed, Elizabeth Miller, a nineteen-year-old servant girl, was acquitted from poisoning charges. Unlike Eliza Fenning, who lacked the means to hire a good lawyer, a “respectable solicitor” came forward and offered his legal services to Miller free of charge.[[54]](#endnote-54) There is little doubt that this solicitor’s standing and expertise is what saved her life. In the nineteenth century, fewer upper to middle-class women who were accused of poisoning were convicted and executed then the previous century.[[55]](#endnote-55) Many upper to middle-class women, like Madeline Smith, who was given a verdict of “not proven” in 1857, were able to escape conviction and have their cases acquitted.[[56]](#endnote-56) The same was true of middle-class men. In April 1817, Robert Donnall, a surgeon, was able to get his charges dropped after he hired expert witnesses to shed doubt on the fact that the symptoms the victim was experiencing were a result of poison.[[57]](#endnote-57) Being able to afford professional defense lawyers was often essential to bringing important witnesses and evidence into the trial and having a case thrown out, or at least the sentence lessened. Other than four brief statements about Eliza Fenning’s character, all the trial witnesses were partial towards the prosecution.[[58]](#endnote-58)

In conclusion, the investigation and trial of Eliza Fenning in 1815 is significant because it reveals a lot about the place and status of domestic servants in Victorian middle-class homes, as well as the role that class and gender had in shaping the outcome of legal investigations and trials. The trial of Eliza Fenning was a national sensation because an attempted murder of a well-to-do family by their poor servant girl shocked Victorians; it revealed the secretive, premeditated, and simplistic nature of poisoning and made “the private world of the Victorian home… shockingly public.”[[59]](#endnote-59) Thousands of people believed Eliza was wrongly convicted. Her trial became a media sensation and proved to be a catalyst for change, eventually leading to advancements in chemical testing during investigations and a review of the 1803 attempted murder act, which many saw as a “miscarriage of justice.”[[60]](#endnote-60) An article published in the August 1st edition of *The Times* reports that approximately 10,000 people attended Eliza’s funeral. When a young livery servant in the crowd spoke “somewhat disrespectfully of the deceased,” he was “roughly handled by the populace.”[[61]](#endnote-61) Even after her execution, a large portion of the population sympathized with her. Presuming she was actually guilty of the crime, the exact circumstances that led Eliza Fenning to poison her master and his family as they ate dinner on March 21, 1815 will never be known; but perhaps the repressive, isolated, contradictory, and stringent lifestyle domestic servants were forced to live in, coupled with the easy and unlimited access to arsenic, led Eliza to take action.

1. “Eliza Fenning,” The Proceedings of the Old Bailey: London’s Central Criminal Court, 1674 to 1913, 5 April 1815, n.p. <https://www.oldbaileyonline.org/browse.jsp?id=t18150405-18-defend235&div=t18150405-18#highlight>. [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. James C. Whorton, *The Arsenic Century: How Victorian Britain was Poisoned at Home, Work, and Play* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 76. [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. Brian W. McCuskey, ““No Followers”: The Victorian Servant Problem,” *Nineteenth-Century Prose* 24(1) (Spring 1997): 105. [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
4. Pamela Horn, *Life In A Victorian Household* (Gloucestershire: Sutton Publishing, 2007), 10. [↑](#endnote-ref-4)
5. Horn, 26. [↑](#endnote-ref-5)
6. Victoria Kelley, “Housekeeping: Shine, Polish, Gloss and Glaze as Surface Strategies in the Domestic Interior,” in *Objects and Textures of Everyday Life in Imperial Britain*, ed. Deirdre H. McMahon and Janet C. Myers (Farnham: Ashgate, 2016), 95-96. [↑](#endnote-ref-6)
7. Horn, 26. [↑](#endnote-ref-7)
8. Horn, 26. [↑](#endnote-ref-8)
9. Leonore Davidoff, “Mastered for Life: Servant and Wife in Victorian and Edwardian England,” in *Journal of Social History* 7(4) (1974): 412-413. [↑](#endnote-ref-9)
10. Davidoff: 415. [↑](#endnote-ref-10)
11. Davidoff: 412-413. [↑](#endnote-ref-11)
12. Katherine Watson, *Poisoned Lives: English Poisoners and the Victims* (London: Hambledon Continum, 2004), 130. [↑](#endnote-ref-12)
13. Horn, 18. [↑](#endnote-ref-13)
14. McCuskey: 105-106. [↑](#endnote-ref-14)
15. Isabella Beeton, *The Book of Household Management: Volume 1* *(1861)* (Ex-Classics Project, 2009), 95. [↑](#endnote-ref-15)
16. Davidoff: 414. [↑](#endnote-ref-16)
17. McCuskey: 105-107. [↑](#endnote-ref-17)
18. Randa Helfieild, “Female Poisoners of the Nineteenth Century: A Study of Gender Bias in the Application of the Law,” *Osgoode Hall Law Journal* 28(1) (1990): 62. [↑](#endnote-ref-18)
19. McCuskey: 107-108. [↑](#endnote-ref-19)
20. McCuskey: 107-108. [↑](#endnote-ref-20)
21. *The Case of Eliza Fenning who was Convicted of Attempting to Poison the Family of Mr. Turner by Mixing Arsenic in Yeast Dumplings* (London: J. Fairburn, 1815), 7. [↑](#endnote-ref-21)
22. “Observations in the Case of Eliza Fenning,” *The Examiner*, August 13, 1815, 5. [↑](#endnote-ref-22)
23. Horn, 52-54. [↑](#endnote-ref-23)
24. Davidoff: 408-409. [↑](#endnote-ref-24)
25. McCuskey: 109. [↑](#endnote-ref-25)
26. *My Secret Life (c. 1888)* (New York: Grove Press, 1966), 910. [↑](#endnote-ref-26)
27. McCuskey: 109. [↑](#endnote-ref-27)
28. McCuskey: 105-107. [↑](#endnote-ref-28)
29. Davidoff: 416. [↑](#endnote-ref-29)
30. Peter Bartrip, “A “Pennurth of Arsenic For Rat Poison”: The Arsenic Act, 1851 and the Prevention of Secret Poisoning,” *Medical History* 36 (1992): 54-55. [↑](#endnote-ref-30)
31. Bartrip: 55. [↑](#endnote-ref-31)
32. Bartrip: 55. [↑](#endnote-ref-32)
33. Whorton, *The Arsenic Century*, 31. [↑](#endnote-ref-33)
34. Helfield, “Female Poisoners of the Nineteenth Century:” 57-58. [↑](#endnote-ref-34)
35. *The Case of Eliza Fenning,* 10. [↑](#endnote-ref-35)
36. Whorton, 133-134. [↑](#endnote-ref-36)
37. Whorton, 51. [↑](#endnote-ref-37)
38. Whorton, 82-83. [↑](#endnote-ref-38)
39. Whorton, 41. [↑](#endnote-ref-39)
40. George Robb, “Circe in Crinoline: Domestic Poisonings in Victorian England,” *Journal of Family History* 22(2) (1997): 180. [↑](#endnote-ref-40)
41. *The Case of Eliza Fenning*, 14. [↑](#endnote-ref-41)
42. “Observations in the Case of Eliza Fenning,” *The Examiner*, August 13, 1815, 5. [↑](#endnote-ref-42)
43. Whorton, 81. [↑](#endnote-ref-43)
44. *Circumstantial Evidence: The Extraordinary Case of Eliza Fenning* (London: Cowie and Strange, 1829), 1. [↑](#endnote-ref-44)
45. *The Case of Eliza Fenning*, 7. [↑](#endnote-ref-45)
46. *The Case of Eliza Fenning*, 13. [↑](#endnote-ref-46)
47. *The Case of Eliza Fenning*, 14-15. [↑](#endnote-ref-47)
48. *The Case of Eliza Fenning* 15. [↑](#endnote-ref-48)
49. *Circumstantial Evidence*, 1. [↑](#endnote-ref-49)
50. Whorton, 77-78. [↑](#endnote-ref-50)
51. Robb: 184. [↑](#endnote-ref-51)
52. Helfield: 61. [↑](#endnote-ref-52)
53. Helfield, “Female Poisoners of the Nineteenth Century:” 55. [↑](#endnote-ref-53)
54. Watson, *Poisoned Lives,* 133-134. [↑](#endnote-ref-54)
55. Helfield: 60. [↑](#endnote-ref-55)
56. Helfield: 78. [↑](#endnote-ref-56)
57. Whorton, 85. [↑](#endnote-ref-57)
58. Witness list included: Robert Gregson Turner, Charlotte Turner, Haldebart Turner, and Roger Gadsden, all victims; Margaret Turner, wife of Haldebart; Sarah Peer, a Turner employee who did not get on well with Eliza; William Thisselton, arrester; and Dr. John Marshall, investigator. [↑](#endnote-ref-58)
59. Robb, “Circe in Crinoline:” 176-177. [↑](#endnote-ref-59)
60. Whorton, 77-78. [↑](#endnote-ref-60)
61. “Eliza Fenning,” *The Times*, August 1, 1815, 3.

    Bibliography

    Bartrip, Peter. “A “Pennurth of Arsenic For Rat Poison”: The Arsenic Act, 1851 and the Prevention of Secret Poisoning.” *Medical History* 36 (1992): 53-69.

    Beeton, Isabella. *The Book of Household Management: Volume 1* *(1861)*. Ex-Classics Project, 2009.

    *Circumstantial Evidence: The Extraordinary Case of Eliza Fenning*. London: Cowie and Strange, 1829.

    Davidoff, Leonore. “Mastered for Life: Servant and Wife in Victorian and Edwardian England.” *Journal of Social History* 7(4) (1974): 406-428.

    “Eliza Fenning.” The Proceedings of the Old Bailey: London’s Central Criminal Court, 1674 to 1913, 5 April 1815, n.p. <https://www.oldbaileyonline.org/browse.jsp?id=t18150405-18-defend235&div=t18150405-18#highlight>.

    Helfield, Randa. “Female Poisoners of the Nineteenth Century: A Study of Gender Bias in the Application of the Law.” *Osgoode Hall Law Journal* 28(1) (1990): 53-101.

    Horn, Pamela. *Life In A Victorian Household*. Gloucestershire: Sutton Publishing, 2007.

    Kelley, Victoria. “Housekeeping: Shine, Polish, Gloss and Glaze as Surface Strategies in the Domestic Interior.” In *Objects and Textures of Everyday Life in Imperial Britain*, edited by Deirdre H. McMahon and Janet C. Myers. Farnham: Ashgate, 2016.

    *My Secret Life (c. 1888)*. New York: Grove Press, 1966.

    Robb, George. “Circe in Crinoline: Domestic Poisonings in Victorian England.” *Journal of Family History* 22(2) (1997): 176-190.

    *The Case of Eliza Fenning who was Convicted of Attempting to Poison the Family of Mr. Turner by Mixing Arsenic in Yeast Dumplings*. London: J. Fairburn, 1815.

    *The Examiner*, August 13, 1815.

    *The Times*, August 1, 1815.

    Watson, Katherine. *Poisoned Lives: English Poisoners and the Victims*. London: Hambledon Continum, 2004.

    Whorton, James C. *The Arsenic Century: How Victorian Britain was Poisoned at Home, Work, and Play*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010. [↑](#endnote-ref-61)