

Boy Accused of Killing a Horse 1860

Wilts Quarter Sessions Salisbury



Charles Collins, a boy, not quite 12 years of age, was indicted for wilfully and maliciously killing a gelding, the property of Mr William Carter, of Chute, his master.

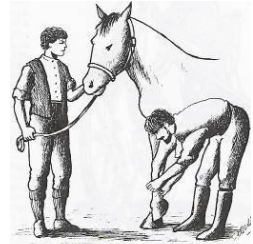
Mr Wyndham Slade prosecuted; the prisoner was undefended.

James Bushell deposed that he is a ploughman in the employ of the prosecutor, for whom the prisoner works also. On the afternoon of the 10th of last month, witness came home from working in his master's field, and went into the stable, when the prisoner told him "Drummer" had kicked "Captain". This was the names of the two horses in the stable. Witness went up to see "Captain" and saw some blood running from the horse from behind the near fore leg. He immediately went after the carter, and he came. There was no one but the prisoner and himself in the stable at the time.

George Choules deposed: I am carter to Mr Wm Carter, of Chute. I remember the 11th of last month. In the afternoon I went to dinner, and left the prisoner in the stable with two cart horses, named "Drummer" and "Captain". About half past three o'clock, James Bushell fetched me and I went to the stable where I saw that "Captain" was bleeding very bad. The blood came from behind the near fore leg. I tried to stop the blood. As much as a bucketful had flowed from the animal. The horse could not have been kicked by the other horse. The stable was not large enough. The horse died just a week afterwards. He was a quiet horse, and so was "Drummer" also.

William Carter deposed: I am a farmer living at Chute. The prisoner had been in my employ for nearly four years. On the 10th of March I was sent for to the stable, where I found the horse bleeding. The man had just stopped the wound. I sent for a veterinary surgeon. The horse died on the Saturday after. It was eight years old this spring. I questioned the prisoner about the horse and he said that one horse kicked the other. I told him that I was sure he or the other boy knew how the mischief was done and I told him that I would not have him any longer. I examined the wound after death. It appeared as if it was a stab wound, or had been inflicted with some sharp instrument.

William Buckeridge deposed: I am a member of the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons, and I reside at Hungerford. On the 11th of last month I was sent for to go to Chute, where I saw the horse, which I attended until its death. After death I examined the wound, which had been inflicted in the belly, just behind the near fore leg, at the end of the sternum, or long ribs. The horse died from inflammation caused by this wound. It was evidently caused by some sharp instrument, and was not caused by a kick.



James Lucas, a policeman stationed at Chute: On the 17th of last month, Mr Carter gave me some information respecting a horse that had been stabbed in one of his stables, and requested me to find out who had done it. After making some inquiries, I saw Collins. I asked him how it was that he came to stab the horse. The prisoner replied "the horse was going to kick me, and I gave him a good cut with a knife". I asked him where the knife was and he said his mother had it. I afterwards obtained a knife from his mother, which I now produce; she said that it belonged to her son.

The prisoner did not make any defence.

The Chairman, having summed up, the jury consulted for some time, when the foreman said he believed that the boy did not intend to kill the horse. Perhaps it might have been done in a passion.

The Chairman: Do you mean to say that the prisoner did not intend to kill the horse? The charge is for wilfully and maliciously killing the horse and there is another charge for wounding. You must say whether the prisoner is guilty of maliciously killing or wounding.

The Foreman: Our opinion is that he wounded the horse.

The Chairman: Do you think the death of the animal was caused by an accident?

The Foreman: I can't say, Sir.

The jury having consulted for a short time returned a verdict of guilty of wounding.

The Chairman, after pointing out to the prisoner the very serious nature of his conduct, and warning him against the result of passionate conduct, sentenced him to be imprisoned for six months, with hard labour.

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