



Stolen Slabs of Wood

Thomas Bennett, labourer, was indicted for feloniously stealing a quantity of slabs of wood, value 8s., the property of John Frederick Everett, of Codford St. Peter, on the 21st of May, 1868. Mr Ravenhill prosecuted and Mr Read defended. It appears that the prisoner is drowner of the Codford meadows. Colonel Everett, of Greenhill, had been having a new hatch put into the stream at Upton Lovell. The prisoner was engaged by Colonel Everett on the work. After the hatch was completed, the various planks not required were supposed to have been taken back to Colonel Everett's. On the evening of the 21st of May, however, Mr Elling, bailiff to Colonel Everett, was riding by prisoner's garden, which is about 200 yards from the stream, the bank of which had been repaired, when he saw the prisoner in his garden hauling a lot of planks. He at once identified them as his master's and told the prisoner so. The latter denied that such was the case. Subsequently he was given into custody, when he admitted that he thought they belonged to Colonel Everett and he wished he had nothing to do with them. It was argued for the defence that the prisoner found the slabs floating in the river and took them to his garden for safe custody, not knowing at the time to whom they belonged. The jury, after a few minutes' consideration, returned a verdict of guilty, but recommended the prisoner to mercy on the ground of his previous good character. The Bench thought the case was a very aggravated one and their sentence was that the prisoner be imprisoned and kept to hard labour for six months.

(*Salisbury and Winchester Journal*, Saturday 4th July, 1868)