



# *Crime & Punishment*

*Compton Chamberlayne*



## SELLING BEER WITHOUT A LICENSE

Frances Abrahams, of Compton Chamberlayne, was charged on the information of Mr George Purton, an excise officer, with having sold a pint of beer on the 12<sup>th</sup> of March last, without having a license for the same, whereby she had incurred a penalty of 20l. Mr Wigg, supervisor, said that the defendant had for nearly 20 years kept an illicit beer house. He had cautioned her about it several times, but had been unable to obtain sufficient evidence to establish a charge against her and he should now press for a full penalty. – David Fry, a labourer, living in the place, stated that he visited the house of the defendant on the 12<sup>th</sup> March last. He called for a pint of beer, which was supplied to him by a man named Ewence. Witness tendered a shilling for payment and received ninepence halfpenny as change from the defendant. There were two men in the house at the same time, both of whom had cups in front of them. Their names were George Moxham and James Toomer. – In cross-examination by Mr S. Hill, jun., who appeared for the defence, the witness said that he did not drink much. He was not “beery” at the present time, but he had had a little beer before he came into Court. He remembered perfectly well the day and time of his having the beer. He did not expect to be paid for giving his evidence. He paid the money to Ewence, but received the change from Mrs Abrahams. – Mr Hill, jun., said his defence would go to show that Mrs Abrahams was not in the house at the time that Fry came in for the beer. She and her daughter-in-law had been out in the garden and on returning she challenged Ewence as to what business he had to draw the beer for Fry. He thought that the prosecution must drop unless it could be shown that the defendant had given Ewence authority to sell beer. It was very well known that persons who were in the habit of keeping illicit beerhouse only sold beer to their particular friends and not to the general public. The Bench must be satisfied that Ewence had direct authority to sell the beer. He was not a servant in the employ of the defendant. Emma Abrahams stated that on the evening in question she and her mother-in-law had been to the garden and on their return into the house saw Fry sitting there, whereupon Mrs Abrahams said to Ewence, “Why did you draw that man a drink?” Witness then went upstairs and heard nothing more. The defendant blamed Ewence very strongly. – Mr Wigg said there could be no doubt about the case being clearly proved. The defendant had taken the money for the beer from her own son-in-law. Taking all things into consideration and the many complaints made against the defendant, he must press for the highest conviction. – The defendant was fined 10l., being one-half of the full penalty.

*(Salisbury and Winchester Journal, Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> June, 1870)*