



Rape Greens

Severe Sentence Upon Young Children

County Petty Sessions

Three children, named Lydia Grove, (11 years of age), George Stay, (8 years), and Ann Stay (14 years), pleaded guilty to a charge of having stolen a quantity of rape greens, of the value of 1s., the property of Mr. George John Good, farmer of Ford, in the parish of Milford. Mr. Good said he didn't wish to press the charge against the prisoners, but only wished to put a stop to such practices, as a considerable quantity of the greens had been stolen in the same way. The girl Stay said that a man near the field gave them permission to pick the greens, and they were going to take them home and eat them. Her father said he knew nothing of the children going to pick the greens, and he had never seen anything of the sort in his house.

Lord Folkestone said if the children had stolen the greens to eat it would alter the case, but there was every reason to believe that such things were brought into Salisbury for sale. There used to be a good deal of that sort of thing, but of late there had not been much of it; and the only way of trying to put a stop to it at once was by being severe with the offenders. They must each pay a fine of 20s. and costs, or in default go to gaol for a month.

Some of the magistrates on the bench seemed to revolt against this decision, and after a consultation Lord Folkestone said some of his colleagues were for letting the little boy off, but he thought it would have done him good to have gone to gaol with the rest. The girls must pay 20s. each, or go to gaol for a month. Addressing the little boy his lordship said – “if you are caught at this sort of thing again, you will go to gaol, and perhaps get a flogging into the bargain. You recollect that, and don't go picking people's greens and stealing them.”

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