



Gold Sovereigns c1829

## Convicted of Theft at School

### Wilts Lent Assizes

Elizabeth Simpson was then placed at the bar. Her youthful appearance, (being only 17 years of age,) her modest demeanour, and the apparent contrition of her mind, coupled with an impressive sense of the degraded situation in which she was placed, excited a feeling of sympathy in all who beheld her. The facts of the case were briefly these: A young lady, of the name of Watts, had been sent to a boarding school, kept by Mrs. Cochrane at Melksham, to whom the prisoner was an assistant. Miss Watts carried with her a sum of money to pay for her half year's board and schooling. It consisted of 14 sovereigns, half a sovereign, and some silver. She placed them in a box in her bedroom, left the room for about five minutes, and on returning she found that the money was gone. She communicated this circumstance to one of the servants, who told it to Mrs. Cochrane. No suspicion, however, fell on Simpson; the money was lost in July, and it was not till the month of December that she was charged direct with the robbery, by Mr. Cochrane.

He said to her, "You stole Miss Watt's money, and I'll send for a constable." She said, that all that remained of the money was in her box. Mr. Cochrane sent for a constable, to whom she gave the key of her box. They went upstairs; the prisoner pointed out her box, took out 4 sovereigns, and delivered them to Mr. Cochrane. The constable deposed that as he was taking the girl before a magistrate, she said to him, "O my dear Mr. Hopkins don't take me there, I will give my master all my clothes that I have bought with the money, but don't take me there." She was ultimately convicted, but most strongly recommended by the Jury to mercy on account of her youth. The Judge reserved the sentence.

**Devizes and Wiltshire Gazette, 12 March 1829**