



Crime and Punishment

Minety

Court Case

William Dodge

William Dodge, late of Minety, was summoned by Mrs Charlotte Georgiana Fitzgerald, of Braydon Hall, Minety, charged with receiving the sums of 10s and £1 and unlawfully converting £1 2s 4d of the money to his own use. There was also a second charge, which the bench decided to hear separately, of stealing a horse rug and a two-foot rule. Mr Carter (Clifton and Carter) appeared for the prosecutrix, and Mr Jackson defended.

Mrs Fitzgerald stated in evidence that the defendant entered her employ on the 20th February as groom. On the 25th February she gave him a half-sovereign to go by the 1.45 train to Cirencester. He was to pay his fare and bring back the change, to order some meat at Coles' but not to pay for it, and to bring back a newspaper. Defendant did not return until late at night. On the following morning he was asked for the change, when he said he had none, as he paid 8s 6d for the meat, besides his railway fare. He was remonstrated with for paying as there was an account kept at the butchers. She told him he had forfeited his wages by neglecting the horses, and she should not keep him on.

On Friday, the 27th Feb, he asked leave to go to Stroud. She gave him a sovereign and he was to bring back the change. Defendant did not come back that night, but sent a telegram to say he missed the train. He came back some time Saturday night. She asked him for the change on Sunday, when he said he had no change to give. He was disorderly and said he would smash the doors. She told him it was Sunday.

Mrs Fitzgerald was cross-examined by Mr Jackson for nearly an hour, and occasionally contradicted herself.

For the defence, it was alleged that the defendant, who had an excellent character previous to this, was sent by his mistress to Cirencester, previous to which he had asked her to let him have a few shillings. He paid 6s 1d meat (which was proved by Mr Tranter and Mr White) from Messrs Cole and Co. He could not catch the train, but came back by the next train. Mrs Fitzgerald told him to leave, which he intended to do, and on the Friday he told her he was going to leave, as he had got a place. She induced him to stay on, and he told her he was bound to go to Stroud and get the gentleman to let him off.

He could not see the gentleman, and was obliged to stay all night, but telegraphed accordingly. The sovereign he took as his week's wages and railway fare, which was due to him when he came to his place. When he came back he was told by Taylor, the bailiff, he was not wanted.

The other charge was then gone into, of having a horse rug and 3-foot rule in defendant's box.

Mr Jackson made a lengthy speech for the defence, in which he severely criticised the prosecutrix's manner of giving her evidence. He asked their worships if it was probable that a young man who had robbed his employer, or embezzled her money, would go and repeatedly demand his box, and wish to settle up with her, and actually call a policeman to come and see the box opened. Defendant pleaded not guilty, and elected to be tried by a jury. He was then formally charged and cautioned in the usual manner, when he made a lengthy statement, which was taken down in evidence. He protested his innocence.

Mr Jackson applied for bail. He said defendant's father, a farmer, whom he had known well for the last 14 years, was present and would be bound for his son. Defendant was then bound over, himself in £100 bond and his father in £50, to appear at the next assize at Warminster.

The case lasted 3½ hours.

Western Daily Press 12 June 1885

OPC Note: No subsequent trial report has been found.