



Crime and Punishment

Seend

SHOPLIFTING - 1828

Two women, named Jane Jeffries and Eleanor Drew – the former a mother of 11 children (living) and the latter of eight; and each with an infant child (apparently not many weeks old) in her arms – were on Saturday last fully committed for trial at our Borough Sessions, for stealing a number of articles, the property of various tradesmen in this town. It appears that the above women, who resides at Seend, had come into town, in company with two other women, early in the forenoon of Thursday last, with the determined purpose of shoplifting; and had they not been detected, they would have gone home well laden with their booty. Their plan was to go in a body into a shop, and while one engaged the shopman in bargaining for some trifling item, the others were purloining something more valuable. It is rather singular, that it was in the last shop (Mr Grime's) they intended to visit that they should have been detected. Here three of the party only were employed; while one of them, named Warrener, (who is committed for further examination) engaged the shopman in looking at some calico, the prisoner, Jefferies, excited the suspicions of Mr Grimes so much that he was determined to watch her; but she shortly afterward left the shop quite suddenly. Mr Grimes then retired into his warehouse, when one of his shopmen immediately came in and informed him that a woman had been detected stealing a piece of print. This woman proved to be the prisoner Drew.

While serving Warrener with the calico, the shopman, it appears, observed Drew take something off the counter, and put it under her cloak. On charging her with it, Drew produced a pair of stockings, which she said had been left with her by the woman (Jefferies) who had just gone out. On being questioned respecting a remnant of print, she, after some hesitation, produced that also. Mr Grimes allowed her, however, to leave the shop, detaining a brass bowl (stolen from Mr Cox) found in her possession. The shopman, in the meantime, got the constable and apprehended both Jefferies and Drew at the Barge Inn. A variety of articles were found in their possession. Beside those mentioned above, a brass candlestick, belonging to Mr Whitchurch, was identified; and a pair of stockings and piece of printed cotton, the property of Mr Watkins. Among articles not owned are – 3 cheeses, a lanthorn, and a brush, a simnel cake, and a ladle. It is supposed that the parties have been carrying on this line of business for some time past. Our active and excellent Chief Magistrate, who had spared no pains, was engaged upwards of five hours on Saturday last in eliciting the facts. **Devizes and Wiltshire Gazette Thursday 31 January 1828**

According to the Criminal Registers Eleanor Drew was convicted for Larceny at the Wilts October Sessions 1828 and sentenced to 4 months gaol. There is no record of what happened to Jane Jeffries.