



A swarm of bees

Killing a Neighbour's Bees

Leah West, wife of John West of Wishford was summoned for unlawfully killing certain bees, the property of George Cannings, of South Newton on the 9th of June. Mr. E. F. Kelsey appeared for the defendant.

The complainant stated that on the day in question a swarm of bees belonging to him pitched on a currant bush belonging to the defendant. Witness was following the bees tinkling a fire shovel, and when Leah West saw where the bees had pitched she threw water into the currant bush and killed a quarter of the bees. Richard Cannings, father of the last witness, corroborated his statement, and proved most distinctly that the defendant threw two buckets of water on the bees and killed some of them.

Mr. Kelsey, for the defence, said that he should call a witness who would prove that no water was thrown over the bees, and that Mrs. West merely threw some water on to the bush, in order to frighten the insects and to prevent the destruction of the fruit.

Thirza West, daughter of the defendant, swore most positively that her mother never killed any of the bees, and that she threw some water on the side of the bush to frighten them. Cannings took all the bees, and there were none left on the ground. Mr. Hinxman, after consulting the Bench, suggested a compromise of the matter, which was agreed to. Mr. Hinxman remarked that the defendant had been guilty of a very un-neighbourly act; adding that if there was one thing more than another in which cottagers generally were kindly disposed towards each other, it was in the matter of bees. If a man wanted a swarm he rarely bought it; his neighbours gave it to him, and he (the chairman) should be sorry to see any interference with such a kindly feeling. The defendant was ordered to pay the costs, which amounted to fourteen shillings.

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