

Crime and Punishment

Sutton Mandeville



Wm. Harding was indicted for stealing from the person of James Larkham, three promissory notes of the value of £5 each, 3 sovereigns, and a key, at Swallowclift.

It appeared that the prosecutor, who lives at Sutton Mandeville, and until lately has been engaged "in the farming line," had been spending the evening with the landlord of the London Elms Inn, at Swallowclift, and as their carousal was kept up till rather a late hour, Mr Larkham accepted an invitation to sleep upon the premises. He accordingly retired to his bed-room somewhere about midnight, in company with 3 or 4 others, who, as it was club time, were to occupy the same apartment with him. Mr Larkham, however, either from dislike or from inability, did not take his clothes off, but laid upon the edge of the bed with 3 five-pound notes and 3 sovs., safely stowed away, as he supposed, in a purse in his side pocket. Upon returning to consciousness, he found his money was gone, purse and all; but who the thief was he knew not. Suspicion, however, seems to have fallen upon the prisoner, who had been one of Mr Larkham's bed-room companions, and he was accordingly taken into custody. Whilst in the lock-up he sent for his brother, and in confidence told him that he would find all the stolen money hidden between the wall and the roof in his father's house, and requested him to go home immediately and put it out of sight. – The brother went as directed, found the purse, and buried it in an orchard; but upon being afterwards threatened by the Superintendent of Police to be taken into custody unless he told what he knew about the transaction, he related all that had taken place; and taking a candle and spade went with the constable the same night and dug up the stolen treasure. Other evidence connecting the prisoner with the robbery was adduced, and the jury having found him guilty he was sentenced to *ten years' transportation*.

(*Salisbury and Winchester Journal* – 17 July, 1851)