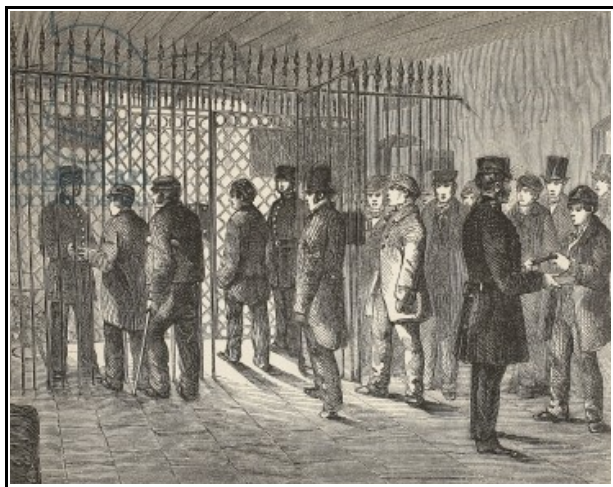


Crime and Punishment

Castle Eaton



Sheep Stealing

Thomas Bonehill was indicted for stealing four sheep, the property of Mr Thomas Lee at Castle Eaton; and also for stealing £2 10s in money the property of his master, to which he pleaded not guilty. Mr Money appeared for the prosecution.

Thomas Lee stated that he was a butcher and farmer living at Barford, Warwickshire. He attended the last Wilton fair in Sept last and saw the prisoner there. He bought a drove of 60 sheep, which he entrusted to the prisoner to drive to his residence in Warwickshire. He was to give him 15s for the job, 10s of which he paid before the prisoner started. He went home by train; and the prisoner reached his house about 5 days afterwards bringing with him 56 sheep. He counted the sheep and asked where the other four were. He replied that they were so knocked up that he had left them with a Mr Newman at Castle Eaton, near Fairford, and that he would bring them to him at Weyhill Fair, and he then instituted enquiries which resulted in his discovering that the animals had been sold. He went in pursuit of the prisoner, and had him apprehended at Banbury Fair. He took him to Warwick, where he was committed for trial. When before the magistrates the prisoner said. "It is no use denying it; I sold them, and spent the money." - One of the persons to whom the prisoner sold two sheep was here called as a witness. He said he sold them for 31s and something to eat.

At this point of the proceedings the prisoner admitted that he had sold the sheep, only pleading as an excuse that the sum he was to receive for the job was not sufficient.

Thomas Smith, a butcher residing at Castle Eaton, deposed that he bought two sheep off the prisoner in September last that they were very lame when he bought them.

The prisoner said they were affected with the foot rot, and that as no farmer would take them in he was obliged to leave them behind.

His lordship expressed a doubt as to whether the case could proceed, there being no proof that the prisoner was the prosecutor's servant, and there being no evidence to show that he took the animals with a felonious intention. After some discussion, his Lordship cited a case somewhat similar to the one before the court, in which the Judges had held that the indictment could not be sustained. The Jury therefore, under his Lordship's direction, returned a verdict of Not Guilty, and the prisoner was discharged.

Devizes and Wiltshire Gazette Thursday 9 March 1854