



Crime and Punishment

Minety

Court Case

George Bone

On Monday last, a disreputable man, giving the name of George Bone, was brought up before Major Perry Keene and Thos. Luce, Esq., at the Magistrate's Clerk's Office, Malmesbury, charged with unlawfully and wilfully infringing the bye laws of the Great Western Railway, firstly, by riding in a second class carriage of the said company having only a third class ticket, secondly, with being in a state of intoxication and using filthy and obscene language to the great annoyance of the passengers, and lastly with assaulting Mr Nathaniel Freeman, a station master of the said company, whilst in the execution of his duty.

The case was proved as follows:-

Frederick Slade deposed, "I am a policeman on the Great Western Railway, and stationed at Minety. On Saturday last, when the 1.37 train from Swindon arrived, my attention was drawn to the offensive conduct of the prisoner, who was sitting in a second class compartment of the train in a state of intoxication. I told him if he did not desist, I should remove him. He then got out of the carriage and on producing his ticket, I found he had a third class ticket to Stroud, although riding in a second class carriage. He then insisted with an oath that he would go on to Stroud and offered great resistance and was very violent to Mr Freeman, who held him back. I heard a lady and gentleman who were riding in the same compartment as the prisoner, complain to the guard of the filthy language used by the prisoner, and their request to have him removed."

Mr Nathaniel Freeman deposed, "I am station master at the Minety Station. On Saturday last, my attention was called by the guard of the 1.37 train from Swindon, to the prisoner who was misbehaving himself in a second class carriage of the train. The other passengers (a lady and gentleman) also complained of his filthy language and conduct, and the lady especially begged of me to have him removed, which I did.

After the train departed, I took the prisoner to the office, and there discovered that he had been travelling in a second class carriage with a third class ticket. I then told him he should not leave till I had made some enquiries about him, for he was intoxicated and unfit to go on. The prisoner then made use of filthy language and expressed his determination with an oath to go on by the next train. I placed myself in the doorway to prevent his leaving and he thereupon tried to remove me, but finding he could not do so, he struck me, and then grappled with me, swearing with an oath to do me serious injury. I struggled with him and we fell to the ground where I managed to hold him until my men (who were then attending to a goods

train at another party of the station) came up and assisted me. I then sent for a policeman and gave the prisoner into custody.

During the struggle, prisoner tore my necktie, collar, and shirt very badly, and wrenched every button off my waistcoat.”

The bye laws now produced, were posted at the time at Minety station.

This being all the evidence, the magistrates retired to a private room for consideration and on their return Mr Luce said they had given the evidence their fullest consideration, and were of opinion that the assault on the station master was of a most aggravated nature and that it admitted of no defence whatever. They should therefore, for that offence, inflict two months' imprisonment, with hard labour, without the option of paying a fine, and for the other offences, they should inflict the fine of £1 for each offence, together with the costs £2 14s 6d, in default of payment of which, one month's hard labour.

On hearing his sentence, the prisoner who had maintained a hardened expression throughout, abruptly and unpolitely thanked the magistrates, and expressed his determination to suffer imprisonment for twelve months rather than pay one penny.

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