



Crime and Punishment

Minety

Court Case

Robert Emerson

Robert Emerson, a small farmer, of Minety, was summoned by Mr Wellington Sealy, a farmer residing on Mrs Kemble's farm, near Minety, but in the parish of Charlton, charged with wilfully shooting his dog, value £5.

Mr A W Boodle, solicitor, Swindon, appeared for the defence.

It appeared that prosecutor kept a large white collie dog, which seemed to have been in the habit of strolling about nights worrying sheep, the prosecutor himself admitting that the police had brought him back on one occasion. A long list of cases of sheep killing and worrying had been carried on for nearly nine months all round the prosecutor's place, which he swore he knew nothing of.

George Read, farmer, of Minety, had two sheep killed and four crippled in the same week. On Sunday night, as Read was coming from chapel, he heard dogs barking, and found that they were in a field where there were some cattle, and had got the cows in a corner. He drove them off, and went for the police to come and watch with him, but the policeman was ill, so he asked the defendant Emerson to come and watch with him. They watched the field where Read's lambs were, and a man named John Brown stayed with them.

A large white dog jumped over the gate and went straight at the lambs. He knew it to be plaintiff's. It caught a lamb that was lying down, but the lamb jumped up and threw the dog over. The dog caught the lamb again, but they ran towards it and it ran away. Read and Brown then went to Sealy's house and asked him where his dog was. He said it was somewhere about the premises. They told him it was worrying sheep, and he had better get up. While they were talking they heard a gun go off and a dog howl. Read said he expected that was plaintiff's dog shot. Plaintiff said if his dog worried the sheep it deserved to be shot. They left and found Emerson and asked if he had shot the dog, and he told them it had run away, it was a big brown one and not Sealy's.

The party then waited for a considerable time and heard the dogs coming back, but before they could get up to them they saw Sealy's big white dog at the sheep, and Emerson levelled the gun and shot it. The dog ran across two fields and into a pit where it was found by Read, who dragged it back with a rope round its neck, dead.

The Bench, at this stage of the case, said they did not wish for any further evidence. They were surprised that the plaintiff should have brought such a case, and that these cases of sheep killing and worrying should have been carried on all round him without his knowledge. They dismissed the case.

Western Daily Press 7 November 1884