



Theft of a Bicycle Chain

Railway Porter's Lapse From Honesty

The story of how a young railway porter yielded to temptation and committed theft was told to Messrs. J. Moulton and F. Applegate at the Bradford Police Court on Monday, when Reginald Arthur Brain, aged 20, working at Holt station, was charged, at the instance of the Great Western Railway Company, with stealing from the station, on September 30th, a bicycle chain, valued at 2s. 6d.

The Reverend A. Isherwood, vicar of Staverton, told the Bench that on Thursday, September 30th, he cycled from Staverton to Holt Station. Arriving at 1 p.m., he took the 1.5 motor to Devizes. He was late, and had no time to put his cycle in the cloakroom and take a ticket for it, so he handed it to a porter, who promised to take care of it. He returned to Holt at 11 p.m., and was given his cycle by a porter. It was very dark so he lit his lamp and wheeled his cycle into the road, but when he mounted he found he could not pedal. He removed his lamp, and found that the chain was missing, so he returned to the station, and told the porter the condition of affairs. They both made a complete search for the missing chain, but were unable to find it, and he had to walk home. On the following day he saw the Stationmaster at Holt and told him of his loss. He identified the chain produced in Court as his property, and valued it at 2s 6d.

Frank Mitchell, porter at Holt Station, spoke to receiving the cycle from the Rev. Isherwood, and said as there was not time to take a ticket he put it on the platform, where it remained the greater part of the afternoon.

By the Bench: The proper place, of course, would have been the cloakroom.

Continuing, witness said the bicycle was in good condition when he received it. He was off duty at 5.30 p.m., and the bicycle was then on the platform.

George Dennis Kirby, detective inspector of the G.W.R., living at Trowbridge, said in consequence of a complaint about the loss of the chain he went to Holt on Saturday, October 2nd. At 10.30 am he saw the prisoner, told him who he was, and that he was making enquiries respecting the loss of a bicycle chain. Prisoner replied: "I know nothing about it. I have not seen it, and I have not had it. If you think I have had it you had better prove it. I have got a bike at my home, but no chain. Mine is broken and I am going in to Trowbridge tonight to buy one." Witness told him he had made certain enquiries and had reason to believe he knew something about it and prisoner replied: "If I tell you I hope it won't make any difference to my job". Witness then cautioned and charged him and he replied: "I am sorry to say I did take the chain. I have not taken it home; it is now at Semington. I hid it behind an automatic machine on the

platform at Holt on Thursday night and yesterday, when I went up to Semington to trim the lamps, I took it up and hid it in the bridge near the halt." Witness accompanied him to Semington Halt about two miles away, and the chain was pointed out to him hidden away behind a large iron girder at the top of the bridge.

P.C. David John Smith, stationed at Holt, deposed to receiving the prisoner in custody, and stated that he made no reply to the charge.

Prisoner pleaded guilty and said he was very sorry he had committed the theft, and he would see that it did not occur again.

The Chairman, addressing the prisoner, said it seemed he had given way to temptation. His position on the railway was one of trust, and a great deal of property was put in his charge from day to day. It was very necessary that the property of the public should be protected, and he had by his act rendered himself liable to a term of imprisonment. The Bench, however, taking into consideration that nothing was known against him, and that this was his first offence, had decided to deal leniently with him. He (the Chairman) presumed that prisoner would lose his job, as he could not be trusted, and the Company might think that if he stole once he would steal again. They were taking a lenient view of the case, and would fine him £1.

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