

## CHAPTER XVI--PROPERTY VERSUS PERSON

In a civilisation frankly materialistic and based upon property, not soul, it is inevitable that property shall be exalted over soul, that crimes against property shall be considered far more serious than crimes against the person. To pound one's wife to a jelly and break a few of her ribs is a trivial offence compared with sleeping out under the naked stars because one has not the price of a doss. The lad who steals a few pears from a wealthy railway corporation is a greater menace to society than the young brute who commits an unprovoked assault upon an old man over seventy years of age. While the young girl who takes a lodging under the pretence that she has work commits so dangerous an offence, that, were she not severely punished, she and her kind might bring the whole fabric of property clattering to the ground. Had she unholily tramped Piccadilly and the Strand after midnight, the police would not have interfered with her, and she would have been able to pay for her lodging.

The following illustrative cases are culled from the police-court reports for a single week:-

Widnes Police Court. Before Aldermen Gossage and Neil. Thomas Lynch, charged with being drunk and disorderly and with assaulting a constable. Defendant rescued a woman from custody, kicked the constable, and threw stones at him. Fined 3s. 6d. for the first

offence, and 10s. and costs for the assault.

Glasgow Queen's Park Police Court. Before Baillie Norman Thompson. John Kane pleaded guilty to assaulting his wife. There were five previous convictions. Fined 2 pounds, 2s.

Taunton County Petty Sessions. John Painter, a big, burly fellow, described as a labourer, charged with assaulting his wife. The woman received two severe black eyes, and her face was badly swollen. Fined 1 pound, 8s., including costs, and bound over to keep the peace.

Widnes Police Court. Richard Bestwick and George Hunt, charged with trespassing in search of game. Hunt fined 1 pound and costs, Bestwick 2 pounds and costs; in default, one month.

Shaftesbury Police Court. Before the Mayor (Mr. A. T. Carpenter). Thomas Baker, charged with sleeping out. Fourteen days.

Glasgow Central Police Court. Before Bailie Dunlop. Edward Morrison, a lad, convicted of stealing fifteen pears from a lorry at the railroad station. Seven days.

Doncaster Borough Police Court. Before Alderman Clark and other magistrates. James M'Gowan, charged under the Poaching Prevention Act with being found in possession of poaching implements and a number of rabbits. Fined 2 pounds and costs, or one month.

Dunfermline Sheriff Court. Before Sheriff Gillespie. John Young, a pit-head worker, pleaded guilty to assaulting Alexander Storrar by beating him about the head and body with his fists, throwing him on the ground, and also striking him with a pit prop. Fined 1 pound.

Kirkcaldy Police Court. Before Bailie Dishart. Simon Walker pleaded guilty to assaulting a man by striking and knocking him down. It was an unprovoked assault, and the magistrate described the accused as a perfect danger to the community. Fined 30s.

Mansfield Police Court. Before the Mayor, Messrs. F. J. Turner, J. Whitaker, F. Tidsbury, E. Holmes, and Dr. R. Nesbitt. Joseph Jackson, charged with assaulting Charles Nunn. Without any provocation, defendant struck the complainant a violent blow in the face, knocking him down, and then kicked him on the side of the head. He was rendered unconscious, and he remained under medical treatment for a fortnight. Fined 21s.

Perth Sheriff Court. Before Sheriff Sym. David Mitchell, charged with poaching. There were two previous convictions, the last being three years ago. The sheriff was asked to deal leniently with Mitchell, who was sixty-two years of age, and who offered no resistance to the gamekeeper. Four months.

Dundee Sheriff Court. Before Hon. Sheriff-Substitute R. C. Walker.

John Murray, Donald Craig, and James Parkes, charged with poaching. Craig and Parkes fined 1 pound each or fourteen days; Murray, 5 pounds or one month.

Reading Borough Police Court. Before Messrs. W. B. Monck, F. B. Parfitt, H. M. Wallis, and G. Gillagan. Alfred Masters, aged sixteen, charged with sleeping out on a waste piece of ground and having no visible means of subsistence. Seven days.

Salisbury City Petty Sessions. Before the Mayor, Messrs. C. Hoskins, G. Fullford, E. Alexander, and W. Marlow. James Moore, charged with stealing a pair of boots from outside a shop. Twenty-one days.

Horncastle Police Court. Before the Rev. W. F. Massingberd, the Rev. J. Graham, and Mr. N. Lucas Calcraft. George Brackenbury, a young labourer, convicted of what the magistrates characterised as an altogether unprovoked and brutal assault upon James Sargeant Foster, a man over seventy years of age. Fined 1 pound and 5s. 6d. costs.

Worksop Petty Sessions. Before Messrs. F. J. S. Foljambe, R. Eddison, and S. Smith. John Priestley, charged with assaulting the Rev. Leslie Graham. Defendant, who was drunk, was wheeling a perambulator and pushed it in front of a lorry, with the result that the perambulator was overturned and the baby in it thrown out. The lorry passed over the perambulator, but the baby was uninjured. Defendant then attacked the driver of the lorry, and afterwards assaulted the complainant, who

remonstrated with him upon his conduct. In consequence of the injuries defendant inflicted, complainant had to consult a doctor. Fined 40s. and costs.

Rotherham West Riding Police Court. Before Messrs. C. Wright and G. Pugh and Colonel Stoddart. Benjamin Storey, Thomas Brammer, and Samuel Wilcock, charged with poaching. One month each.

Southampton County Police Court. Before Admiral J. C. Rowley, Mr. H. H. Culme-Seymour, and other magistrates. Henry Thorrington, charged with sleeping out. Seven days.

Eckington Police Court. Before Major L. B. Bowden, Messrs. R. Eyre, and H. A. Fowler, and Dr. Court. Joseph Watts, charged with stealing nine ferns from a garden. One month.

Ripley Petty Sessions. Before Messrs. J. B. Wheeler, W. D. Bembridge, and M. Hooper. Vincent Allen and George Hall, charged under the Poaching Prevention Act with being found in possession of a number of rabbits, and John Sparham, charged with aiding and abetting them. Hall and Sparham fined 1 pound, 17s. 4d., and Allen 2 pounds, 17s. 4d., including costs; the former committed for fourteen days and the latter for one month in default of payment.

South-western Police Court, London. Before Mr. Rose. John Probyn, charged with doing grievous bodily harm to a constable. Prisoner had

been kicking his wife, and also assaulting another woman who protested against his brutality. The constable tried to persuade him to go inside his house, but prisoner suddenly turned upon him, knocking him down by a blow on the face, kicking him as he lay on the ground, and attempting to strangle him. Finally the prisoner deliberately kicked the officer in a dangerous part, inflicting an injury which will keep him off duty for a long time to come. Six weeks.

Lambeth Police Court, London. Before Mr. Hopkins. "Baby" Stuart, aged nineteen, described as a chorus girl, charged with obtaining food and lodging to the value of 5s. by false pretences, and with intent to defraud Emma Brasier. Emma Brasier, complainant, lodging-house keeper of Atwell Road. Prisoner took apartments at her house on the representation that she was employed at the Crown Theatre. After prisoner had been in her house two or three days, Mrs. Brasier made inquiries, and, finding the girl's story untrue, gave her into custody. Prisoner told the magistrate that she would have worked had she not had such bad health. Six weeks' hard labour.