

MERIONETHSHIRE. QUARTER SESSIONS.

(Want of space prevented our giving the report of the 11 following case in full in our last impression.)

MALICIOUS DESTRUCTION OF QUARRY MACHINERY.

Elias Roberts (33) joiner, from the neighbourhood of Llanrwst, pleaded "not guilty" to having on or after the 2nd inst, at a quarry called the North Wales Slate Quarry, or more generally known as the Park or Lliidiart yr Arian Quarry, in Llanfrothen, destroyed certain machinery and other quarry plant, the property of Mr Joseph Kellow and others.

Mr J. H. Jones, Portmadoc, prosecuted; the prisoner was undefended.

Mr Kellow was the first witness examined. He said, "I reside at Portmadoc, and am a partner in the company called the North Wales Slate Company. I am also manager of the quarry. About three months since, the accused was in our employ I dismissed him for a misdemeanour. I work that quarry by sinking a large pit, and the slate and rubbish are carried out of it by a tramway. About 200 yards from this pit there is an incline, at the top of which there is a drum to regulate the descent of the trucks along it. At the back of the drum there are points to take the waggons to the top of the incline. The length of this incline is about 180 feet, and the whole gradient is sixty feet, or as one to three. At the foot of that incline, at the distance of about fifty feet, there is the machine-house for making slabs, &c. On Friday, the 30th ult, when I left the quarry, I observed that everything was right. On the morning of the 3rd inst, between six and seven o'clock, I went up to the quarry which is about half an hour's ride from Portmadoc and found in the machine-house a large quantity of machinery broken in pieces, including a large sawing machine worth over £60, a number of spur wheels, one of which had cost upwards of £6, a traffic truck, worth £16. Slabs valued £5, a grinding stone, worth £1. crab winches, worth £30. The brake lever and other parts of the drum and other damages done to it, worth about £5. Four trucks, valued at £30. A large new truck laden with machinery was also smashed the value of the whole property destroyed is about £180. The four trucks mentioned and the traffic truck had been let down the incline without any rope being fastened to prevent their running into the machine-house at the foot of the machine the truck ran into it and smashed its contents. The grinding stone and certain part of the crab winches at the head of the quarry pit had been broken and thrown down into the quarry. The brake lever and other parts of the incline drum had been removed, and we have not since found them. The nature of the damage is such that it could not have been done accidentally".

The prisoner showed some dexterity in cross-examining witness, but no fresh evidence was elicited.

David Williams said "I am a quarryman, and am in the employ of the North Wales Slate Company. I was there on Saturday, the 1st inst. I received orders from the foreman to secure the waggons on the top of the incline, of which there were four besides the traffic truck, and I did so. Two of the waggons were laden, one with machinery, and the other with slabs. I turned the points off, so as to make the waggons safe on the top of the incline. They were in such a position that it would have been impossible for them to get to the incline and run off, unless somebody interfered with them". (He then corroborated Mr Kellow's evidence as to the extent of the damage done.)

Thomas Morris said he was at the quarry until eight p.m. on Saturday evening and when he left the waggons were safe in their positions.

John Morris, pumpman at the quarry, said "I live at Prenteg, Tremadoc. I work at the Park Quarry. I was there on the 1st inst., at noon. The trucks were then at the top of the incline, and there was nothing broken about the place-the incline drum was then undamaged, and the brake lever in its place. I returned to the quarry on Sunday morning, the 2nd inst., about 3 30 a.m. I worked a little at

the pump. In a short time I heard footsteps going up the side of a heap of quarry rubbish opposite me, and distant about sixty feet. It was dark at the time, but the night was very quiet and still. I looked at my watch then, and found it was twenty minutes to four a.m. I saw the damage spoken to first about eight in the morning. The broken crab winches were the first that I noticed. It was impossible that the damage could have been done after I arrived at the quarry. I was present when Mr Kellow came up on Monday morning, and everything was then the same as I found it on Sunday morning. About half-past six on Monday morning I met prisoner on the road near Ty'n llwyn, at the Croesor Railway Crossing. He said, There has been great damage done at your quarry on the Sunday morning. I said, There has, indeed. He then said, They say there must have been more than one man to do it. It was prisoner that spoke about the damage first. Prisoner walked along the railway towards Port Madoc. This was before Mr Kellow came up".

Cross-examined by prisoner "You did not say that you had heard of the damage from the people. I cannot say whether the footsteps I heard at the quarry on Sunday morning were those of a man, a woman, or a child but certainly they were not those of a pony or cow, for the latter could not get up the side of the heap of rubbish at the pace I heard".

Catherine Williams said "I am a widow and live at Croesor, Llanfrothen. Whilst he worked at the Park Quarry, prisoner lodged with me. He left the neighbourhood when he was dismissed and did not return until Saturday evening, the 1st inst., when he called at my house about half-past eleven at night. He had left at my house some clothes and tools. He stayed on this occasion about an hour, and when he left he told me he was going to Festiniog. There was nobody with him. He left my house a little before one o'clock on Sunday morning. My house is about a quarter of a mile from the Park Quarry. Prisoner did not take his clothes or his tools with him. He called at my house again on Monday morning, the 3rd inst., between three and four in the morning, when he took away his clothes and his tools".

Griffith Griffiths said "I am a labourer on the Croesor Railway, close by the Park Quarry and live within 135 yards of the machine house, and opposite the incline in question. I was at home on the 1st inst.; went to bed at ten o'clock at night, but did not sleep until about eleven. The waggons could not have gone down the incline up to that time without my hearing them. About half-past two on Sunday morning it was more by our clock, which was very forward I was awakened by a great noise, and fancied I heard waggons running down the incline. I called out to my mother asking her if it was thundering. She said she did not think it was. On Sunday morning went to the quarry, the first thing after getting up to satisfy myself as to the strange noise I had heard, when I saw the machinery in the machine house smashed".

By the Chairman "I did not see the prisoner anywhere that morning".

R. M. Wright said "I am clerk at the Park Quarry. On the Saturday after he was dismissed, prisoner came to me at the quarry for his wages. I called on Mr. Kellow, who was at the machine house, and he gave me a cheque to fill up for the account. I went to the office, made out his account, and in company with prisoner went to the machine house to get Mr Kellow's signature. On the way there, prisoner said, It is not over yet, Mr Wright, Mr Kellow has served me bad in dismissing me, it is not over yet, I do not mind six months in prison." I said, Nonsense, Elias, the company cannot be intimidated by you." He again repeated, with emphasis, what he had previously said".

Trevor Williams said "I am a joiner and live at Tremadoc. I work occasionally at the Park Quarry. I worked there three months ago. I know the accused he worked there then, but was dismissed. The Saturday after his dismissal I met him at the Refreshment Rooms, Port Madoc, when he said he was angry with Mr Kellow for dismissing him and that he had friends who would revenge him upon Mr Kellow for the injury he had suffered by being dismissed and that they would do so by damaging the quarry when he (prisoner) would be on the Atlantic Ocean as he intended going to America. Prisoner was sober at the time".

William Griffith said "I am a quarryman, and work at the Park Quarry. I met prisoner on Monday morning, the 3rd inst., on the Croesor Railway, just before Mr Kellow came up in a truck with a policeman and others. The spot where I met him was about 150 yards from the railway bridge. I

spoke to him and asked if he preferred Park Quarry to Carnarvon, and he replied by saying that he preferred Carnarvon to that hell of a place, meaning Park Quarry. A truck from Port Madoc then came in sight with Mr Kellow, P.S. Price, and others. John Griffith who was with me said we had better go on as Mr Kellow was coming. Prisoner asked "who is coming?" and I replied "Mr. Kellow." Prisoner then immediately left us, walking towards Port Madoc. I looked round, and saw prisoner walk along the railway about three roods and then go off the railway. There was a culvert there, and prisoner went under it, where he remained until Mr Kellow had passed. I did not see him come out- there was no water under the culvert there.

Sergeant G. Lewis, Penrhyndeudraeth, said "I apprehended prisoner at Port Madoc, and charged him with having done certain damages at the Park Quarry. He made no remarks, but walked quietly with me to the police station. When apprehended, prisoner was confused and so frightened that I had to put my hand upon him to keep him on his legs and to prevent him falling down. On arriving at the Police Station, prisoner was placed in a cell. Superintendent Davies happened to be there. Prisoner then volunteered a statement that he was not at Llanfrothen, but at Fe stiniog that Saturday night. Superintendent Davies said, Well if that be the case, let me have the names of the parties with whom you lodged on Saturday night, and I shall get them to come here to clear you of this charge." In a couple of seconds afterwards, prisoner remarked, Oh I was forgetting myself, it was at a cowshed at Croesor that I spent Saturday evening, the whole of Sunday, and Sunday night." Superintendent Davies said, You could not stop in a cowshed all that time without food." Oh yes," said he, I did, for I had provided enough food to last me over the Sunday before I. went there. I had with me also a bottle of grog, with which I made myself drunk." This concluded the evidence for the prosecution. The prisoner gave in letters as to character, which did not seem to have much weight with the bench. The solicitor for the prosecution, having ably addressed the jury, and the chairman having summed up, they retired to the jury room, and were absent a considerable time The verdict was "not guilty."