



GENERAL ADVERTISER FOR THE CITY AND COUNTY AND NEIGHBOURING SHIRES

WITH WHICH ARE INCORPORATED THE "GLOUCESTER MERCURY" AND "THE FORESTER."

VOL CLXXXVI.—No 9810 | Established by RAIKES, 1722. |

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 1, 1910.

(12 Pages)

Price ONE PENNY.
Postage Extra.

ALLEGED EXTENSIVE THEFTS AT LEDBURY.

Draper's Assistant Charged.

OVER £150 WORTH OF GOODS.

At the Ledbury Police Court on Wednesday Clara Annie Read (26), daughter of James Read, of Stroud-road, Gloucester (formerly of Newent), surrendered to her bail charged with stealing a quantity of goods and materials, to the value of £151 2s., the property of her employer, Mr. George William Suter, draper and milliner of High-street, Ledbury.—Mr. H. Garrood (of Ledbury) appeared for the prosecution, and Mr. H. W. Orme (Ledbury) defended.

Among the articles alleged to have been stolen were the following:—

Thirty-two lengths of net and chiffon, 12 pairs of suspenders, 83 collars, 19 motor scarves, 21 pairs of dress shields, 27 lengths of embroidery, 207 lengths of ribbon, 91 lengths of lace, 43 dozen buttons, 23 reels of cotton, 12 sets collar supports, 131 silk and linen handkerchiefs, 40 lengths frilling, 11 sprays of flowers, 14 lengths of braid, 106 pairs of stockings, 152 pairs of gloves, 65 haberdashery items, 75 blouses, 11 dress skirts, 32 underskirts, 47 camisoles, 15 corsets, 62 belts, 47 bodices, 134 ties, 66 vests, 26 knickers, 14 towels, 17 dress lengths, 44 silk lengths, 56 blouse pieces, and 10 nightdress cases.

The magistrates present were Messrs. J. Riley (in the chair), S. H. Bickham, and A. Carless.

Mr. Garrood having briefly stated the case for the prosecution,

Mr. G. W. Suter stated that the defendant had been in his employ 5½ years, and came to him from Newent, as a junior assistant, with a good character. Owing to receiving an anonymous letter he secreted himself in the shop on Saturday morning, September 17th, previous to defendant arriving at the shop, as was her custom, before 8 o'clock to open the business premises for the other assistants to commence their work. Defendant let herself in by the side door with a key which she obtained from witness' private house, witness having got someone to lock him in the shop and take the key back ready for defendant to call for it. He saw her take down a box and cut off two pieces of fall-net and lace, and place them in her pocket.

He stepped forward and asked her, "How long has this been going on?" She replied, "Not long." She threw up her hands and said, "Oh dear; what have I done?" He kept her there till the other assistants came. During the day defendant's lodgings were searched, and about a dozen boxes of articles were discovered—in boxes, underneath the bed, and between the bed and the mattress. He then decided to prosecute.—Cross-examined: He had never found any cause to complain of defendant's work in the shop. These thefts must have been going on for about three years. He did not wish particularly for the case to be sent to Quarter Sessions, and was willing for the case to be settled that day.

Sergt. Walker gave evidence of arrest, and stated that the defendant said to him: "I am very sorry; I don't know whatever made me do it. Will Mr. Suter ever forgive me. Do you think I shall have to go to gaol?"

Defendant's landlady said defendant had lodged with her for about three years. When she went there she took one trunk, and her boxes had increased in number.

Mr. Orme pleaded to the Bench to deal with the case that day, and asked that defendant should be bound over under the Probation Act. If a term of imprisonment were decided on, it would not be more than six months if the case were sent to Sessions, and this Court had power to pass that sentence.

The Bench decided to send the case to the Sessions.

Mr. Orme said he should reserve his defence, but suggested that it was kleptomania. He asked for assistance in the defence under the Poor Prisoners' Defence Act, but the Chairman said he must apply to the Chairman of Quarter Sessions for that.

Bail was allowed as before, the defendant in £20 and her father in a like amount.