

John Sleigh, 184, *Mermaid*

Marcia Watson

Central Criminal Court, 26 November 1849

68. JOHN SLEIGH and CHARLES SLEIGH, breaking and entering the dwelling-house of Samuel Pallant, and stealing therein 161bs. weight of silk, 4lbs. of wool, and other articles, value 42l. 10s.; his goods.

MR. MEW conducted the Prosecution.

CHARLES TUCKER (policeman, B 202). I produce some skeins of silk, which I got from John Sleigh on 6th Nov.—I subsequently found an owner for them.

ANNA MARIA PALLANT. I am the wife of Samuel Pallant, I keep a fancy-needlework shop, in Halkin-terrace, Belgrave square, in the parish of, St. Luke, Chelsea—John Sleigh came to my shop on 2d Nov., between four and five o'clock—he asked what silk was a pound—I told him—he did not purchase any then—he went away and came about twenty minutes afterwards, brought a skein of silk, and bought another skein—after he was gone I left the shop to go to tea, about twenty minutes after five—I left Mary Bance in the shop—the shop-door leading to the passage was shut—a person coming into the shop must come through that door—there is only one entrance to the house from the street—persons go into the passage, and then go through the shop-door to get into the shop—I went to tea in a little room adjoining the shop—when I came into the shop again, about twenty minutes before six, from fourteen to sixteen pounds of purse-silk was gone, worth about 50s. a pound, and a bundle of wool—the value of all I lost was about 40l.—this silk is part of what I lost—I swear to it by this tie—I tied it myself and put it in the window, and it got discoloured—the maker's name is with the parcel—I have some more of the same at home which I tied it up with—there is a great variety of silk, and in this parcel there are samples of all I keep.

Cross-examined by Mr. M. PRENDERGAST. Q. There is plenty of other silk in other shops?

A. Yes; but I tied this in a particular manner—you would not find, in any shop in London, any tied as this is—it is tied with cotton.

Cross-examined by MR. COCKLE. Q. Everybody that comes in comes into the passage and opens the door into the shop?

A. Yes—the whole house belongs to me, it is my dwelling-house.

MARY BANCE. I am assistant to Mrs. Pallant. On Friday, 2d Nov., I saw John Sleigh come into the shop, between four and five o'clock—(I saw Charles in the shop in the course of the day of the robbery, or the day previous)—he asked the price of wool—I was told to take his address—we take the address of persons who give an order—he said, "Williams, Sloane-street"—I was proceeding to write it down, and said, "Sloane-street"—he said, "Yes, you had better not put it down, they are waiting"—he then left the shop, and returned in about a quarter of an hour or twenty minutes—he bought a skein of silk, and left the shop—when he left, the door that led into the passage was fastened with a latch—when it is so fastened, it is not possible to open it without ringing the bell—I left the shop at twenty minutes past five, to go into an adjoining room to tea—I heard the bell ring, as I was passing from the shop to the back-room—Sarah Cooper went out—there is a trigger attached to the frame of the door—it is possible for a person to open the door a small distance, and by passing their hand in, to move up the trigger, and prevent the bell ringing—it has been tried, in my presence—Cooper went out on an errand, and came back and found the door open—she came and spoke to me—I went into the shop about twenty minutes before six—I missed the silk and the wool, a work-box, and a box of chenille—I cannot say that I can swear to this silk that is produced, but we had a great quantity of silk like this in the shop—I had passed the two prisoners together with two females, about twenty yards from my mistress's house, at half-past eleven that day, standing talking—I noticed them, because there was some remark made—I did not hear the words, but I turned my head round, and they were all looking at me—I returned the same way at twelve, and saw the prisoners

and the women still standing in the same place, in Lowndes-street—I noticed them again—they looked at me particularly, and I thought they looked rudely—they had seen me in the shop as a shopwoman.

Cross-examined by MR. M. PRENDERGAST. Q. IS the shop-door a glass door?

A. Yes, half-way is glass—the bell is on the inside of the door.

CHARLES CHINN (policeman, A 255). I know the trigger which is attached to the door—I have passed in twice without ringing the bell, by putting my hand in and stopping the trigger—if the door is opened quickly the bell will ring.

SARAH COOPER. On the evening of the 2d Nov., just as Miss Bunce went to tea, I went out of the shop-door into the passage, and passed her in the passage—I am quite sure I shut the door—I returned in a quarter of an hour, and found the door open—I immediately went and told Mrs. Pallant.

GEORGE TUCKER (policeman, B 202). I took John Sleigh on 6th Nov. on another charge, and found this silk on him.

JOHN SLEIGH— GUILTY.

CHARLES SLEIGH— NOT GUILTY.

69. JOHN SLEIGH and CHARLES SLEIGH were again indicted, for breaking and entering the dwelling-house of David Furminger Kennett, and stealing therein 2 coats, 20 pieces of cloth, and other articles, value £7 4s.; Charles Sleigh having been twice before convicted.

MR. MEW conducted the Prosecution.

DAVID FURMINGER KENNETT. I live at 37, Chapel-street, in the parish of St. George, Hanover-square. On Tuesday evening, 6th Nov., I went down to my tea, between six and seven o'clock—my shop-door was fastened, the outer door into the street, and the door out of the shop into the passage—I left no one in the shop, it was not lighted—I had gone out between four and five o'clock to wait on a customer—I came back and locked the shop-door—no one can open it from the street, there is no key-hole—while I was at tea a knock came to the private door—my servant went to it and brought me down a message—in five or six minutes afterwards I heard a noise over my head in my shop—I sprang up-stairs as fast as I could, and saw John Sleigh leaving the passage—I pursued and caught him, fifteen or twenty yards off—when I got up-stairs, my shop-door, passage door, and private-door were all three open—the persons had entered the private-door, unlocked the door from the passage to the shop, and opened the shop-door—the private-door had one of Bramah's patent locks to it, which cost me two guineas—a key which John Sleigh threw away would open it—when I overtook John Sleigh I told him he had been in my shop—he said he had not, and endeavoured to get away—I told him if he got away I would forgive him—he said he would smash me—we struggled and fell—I got him up again, and dragged him towards my own door—the struggle continued perhaps three or four minutes—I gave him into custody and returned to the shop—I found a strange bag in the shop, and two coats, and the other things of mine were in it—they had all been in the shop before, and were removed into the bag—I had seen them safe when I went to tea; also twenty pieces of cloth, waistcoats, trowsers, linen, cloth, and the other things stated, worth £7 or £8

Cross-examined by MR. M. PRBNDEROAST. Q. You cannot say that John Sleigh threw away the key? A. He put his hand to his waistcoat-pocket, and put out his hand, and I heard the chink of something falling—this key was afterwards picked up about two yards off, or not so much—there was a gas-lamp opposite—I saw two keys picked up, a short distance from each other—I ran up—there was a second man in the shop—he struck the chair when I pursued John Sleigh.

HENRY SANTON. I live in Eaton-mews. On 6th Nov. I was going along Chapel-street, and saw John Sleigh running away, and Mr. Kennett after him—he took him by the back of the collar, and said, "Come back, you villain! you have been in my shop"—he said, "No, you are mistaken"—he went back with him a little while, and then tried to get away; but he did not—I saw him have his hand in his coat-pocket—I cannot say whether his other hand was in his waistcoat-pocket, or near it, he threw something away—I looked for it,

and found two small keys—I gave them to Mr. Kennett—I did not put them with any other keys, I kept them in my hand.

CHARLES TUCKER (policeman, B 202). I was on duty, and found Mr. Kennett and John Sleigh struggling—Mr. Santon had these two keys in his hand—one of them easily unlocked the Bramah lock on the private-door.

ELIZA CROFT. I am housemaid to Mr. Kennett. On the evening of 6th Nov., at a little before seven o'clock, I heard a knock at the door—I went up and saw Charles Sleigh—he asked for some furniture that was to go to the dyer's—I told him I thought he had made a mistake—he said, "Is this No. 27?"—I said, "No, this is 37"—he went away, and I went down stairs—shortly afterwards I heard a noise up stairs—Mr. Kennett went up first, I followed him, and saw John Sleigh in his custody—on the previous day Charles Sleigh came to the private door, between eight and nine in the evening, and asked if he could see Mr. Kennett—I said he was not at home, and if he had any message, to leave it with me—he said, "No," and asked what time Mr. Kennett would be at home—I said he would be rather late, and he said he would call next morning, but he did not.

Cross-examined by MR. M. PRENDERGAST. Q. You will not say there was no furniture going to be dyed from No. 27?

A, No.

Cross-examined by MR. COCKLE. Q. Where did you see Charles Sleigh afterwards?

A. At the police-court; I described him to the policeman.

JAMES YOUNG. On 6th Nov. I was in Chapel-street, and saw Charles Sleigh looking down the area of No. 36, next door to Mr. Kennett's—he saw me looking at him, and crossed the road and looked down the area of No. 12—there were two other men there—Charles Sleigh walked past me—I stood at No. 15, and watched him—he went and looked down the area of No. 23—it was then from half-past six to twenty minutes to seven o'clock—he then turned down the mews to Chapel-place, and stood in the corner of the mews about three minutes—he moved from there, and went in the direction of Mr. Kennett's—I left, and went to see for a constable.

CHARLES CHINN (policeman, A 255). I was in the police-station when John Sleigh was brought in in custody—I was present at Westminster police station when he was locked up in the cell—he said, "I believe you saw me last night?"—I said, "Yes—he said, "They make a mistake in me; I was with my brother and Jones"—he said his brother was a dyer, and lived in Castle-street—I inquired, and his brother did not live there—he was brought to the station—I went to look out, and saw Charles Sleigh outside talking to two women—I said, "Is your name Sleigh?"—he said, "No, it is not"—I said from his appearance I believed it was; I felt confident that it was—I said the charge against him was being concerned with his brother in a robbery at Mr. Kennett's—I asked him his address—he said he would talk to the Magistrate—he afterwards gave his address, 18, Cleveland-street—I went, and it was not there—I went to 18, Drummond-crescent, and found he lived there—he gave me a key which opened the door of a room there—one of the women afterwards applied to the Magistrate to have that key back again—I found four skeleton-keys and a latch-key in the room—Charles Sleigh made application for one of them.

MARGARET ALLEN. I live at 18, Drummond-crescent—Charles Sleigh occupies the first-floor back-room there.

CHARLES CHINN re-examined. That was the room I went into.

JOHN BOLD (policeman, G 374). I produce a certificate of Charles Sleigh's conviction—(read—George Jones, convicted Feb. 7, 1848, confined six month)—he is the man.

JEREMIAH LOCKERBY (policeman, G 180). I produce a certificate of Charles Sleigh's conviction—(read—Convicted March, 1847, confined three months)—he is the person.

JOHN SLEIGH— GUILTY. Aged 33.

CHARLES SLEIGH— GUILTY Aged 24.

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Old Bailey Proceedings Online (www.oldbaileyonline.org, version 8.0, 29 December 2020), November 1849, trial of JOHN SLEIGH CHARLES SLEIGH (t18491126-68).

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