

TOWN HALL, MARCH 11.

[Before the Rev. W. C. Risley, H. S. Risley, Esq.]

F. W. W. Meliar, Esq., was present but did not act magisterially.

Edward Lewis and Mark Lewis, both of Deddington, were charged with being unlawfully in search of game, and having in their possession eight rabbits and a quantity of nets, on the morning of the 9th inst.

Inspector Bowen sworn, said—On Wednesday morning last I was on duty in company with Police-constable Webb. Was on the turnpike road leading from Deddington to North Aston. About 2 o'clock, when near the toll gate, I heard some one coming along the road, apparently from the field on the left hand side. They were walking in the direction towards Deddington. They stood still for a short time, and then came on to where we were standing. I directed the constable to turn his light on. I then saw that it was two men. One I recognised to be the defendant Edward Lewis. The other I did not know in consequence of his having a hairy cap on, which disguised him. The cap he usually wears I found in his pocket. The defendant Mark Lewis had a bag across his shoulder. I asked him what he had in the bag. He said, "A net." I asked him if he had anything else, he said, "Yes, a few rabbits." I said, "I believe you have been poaching, and anything you have in the shape of game or nets I must have." Edward Lewis made use of bad language, and said "You shan't have anything of me." Mark Lewis gave up what he had in his possession, and the policeman took possession of them. There was a net and six rabbits. I then searched his pockets, but found nothing

more in the shape of game or nets. He said he had free toleration to catch rabbits on Mr. Hopkins's farm, at any time, by night or day. I then turned to Edward Lewis and said, "What have you got about you." He said, "A net." I asked him if he had anything else. He said "No," and afterwards said, "Yes, I have two little rabbits." He gave them to me. I then said to Mark Lewis, "I must know your name before you go," and he gave me it. The two defendants present are the same I met on the road on Wednesday morning.

Police-constable Webb said—On the morning of Wednesday last, about 2 o'clock in the morning, as I was walking along the road towards Deddington, and when a short distance from the toll-gate, I heard a dog in the field occupied by Mr. Mobbs, apparently hunting. I walked on towards the toll-gate, thinking I should meet the Deddington policeman there. I met the Inspector and reported to him what I had heard. We stood still a short time and the dog came up to us, and then ran back to the defendants. I assisted the inspector in making the search, and found the things as described by him.

Mark Lewis said, in defence, that he had permission given him by Mr. Hopkins to catch the rabbits on his land at any time. (Mr. Hopkins being present came forward and corroborated Lewis's statement.) And as to their being found in the place described by the policeman, the reason was the flood was so deep in the meadow as to prevent their taking the usual footpath.

The magistrates ordered the room to be cleared, and, after consulting together for some time,

The defendants were recalled, and the presiding magistrate said—"After considering the case we find it to be a complicated affair, and we have decided to adjourn it till the first of April. At the same time we shall make an order that the rabbits be sold and the money taken care of till the case is finally settled.