

There it was held that A., although he is not justified in making an arrest on a charge of stealing a gun, where he has merely been informed by B., a trusted servant, that B. has heard from C. that D., the party arrested, had the gun in his possession, but has reasonable cause for making such arrest without further inquiry, where B. declared that he went with C. and D. to the place where C. asserted he had seen the gun, and that C. there repeated and adhered to his accusation in the presence of D., and declared that the gun which was then shown was not the one which he had seen on the previous occasion: The House of Lords expressed its disapproval of a direction of the trial judge, which required the jury to render a verdict for the plaintiff if they believed from the evidence that A. had arrested D. without seeing and questioning C. as to the truth of the statements made by B., and adopted the view of Bramwell, B., in the Court of Exchequer, that, while such a course would have been a reasonable and proper one, it did not follow that the omission to make the investigation suggested was not reasonable. Lord Hatherley laid it down that such an omission was an element proper for consideration, but "not an element of such importance that it should deprive the defendant of the justification of saying that, after the inquiries he had made into the case, and the unusual opportunities he had had of satisfying himself of the trustworthiness of his original informant, he was, in the eye of the law, a person having reasonable and probable cause to order the arrest." Lord Chelmsford said: "The question was not whether the defendant might not have obtained more satisfactory and surer grounds of belief by applying to C. for further information, but whether the facts brought to his knowledge furnished reasonable and probable cause for his believing that the plaintiff had dishonestly possessed himself of his rifle, and justified him in acting on that belief without further inquiry." "The question really comes to this: Whether in an action for malicious prosecution, where a person is proved to have acted upon the information of a trustworthy informant, he can be said to have proceeded without reasonable and probable cause because he has not made inquiry of someone else who could have repeated and confirmed what was told him. It was an incorrect mode of putting the case by the Chief Baron to say that the defendant charged the plaintiff with felony 'on the mere hearsay statement of his coachman.' If the defendant had acted immediately upon the communication of what Hinton had heard from Robertson without any inquiry, I should have agreed with him that it was not the course which a reasonable and discreet man would have adopted, and that he would have deprived himself of all ground of defence to the action. But I cannot think, with the Chief Baron, that what passed between Hinton and Robinson carried the case no further, and that it was still a matter of hearsay, and a repetition of what Robinson was supposed to have said, as to the identity of the gun.' The introduction of the plaintiff makes all the difference in the case. The communication