

# THE DYING WORDS and CONFESSION OF



## Elias Lucas AND Mary Reader,

Who were Executed this morning (April 13) in front of the County Goal at Cambridge, for the wilful MURDER of SUSAN LUCAS.

### LIFE, CHARACTER, &c.

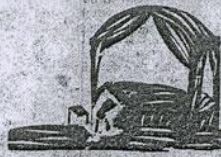
The unhappy beings who this day forfeited their lives to the offended laws of their country were brought up in industrious habits and humble circumstances at Castle Camps, about three miles from Haverhill. Lucas was an agricultural labourer, and lived with his wife at the above named village; his partner in crime was his wife's sister, and his victim the wife herself. Lucas was a strong muscular-looking man, about 25 years of age, and up to the time of his committing this foul and unnatural crime, bore an excellent character, and was noted for his easy and cheerful disposition. The female was short and plump, and her features were even & good; the expression of her face bore the marks of innocence; her hands were remarkably white and small; and although stated in the calendar to be 20, she seemed not more than 16. Lucas and his wife had been married between 4 and 5 years, and appeared to have lived on excellent terms. The wife's sister lived as servant in Cambridge, to Mr. Miller, a carpenter, residing in Castle End, not far distant from the scene of the trial and melancholy exit; she continued in her service for a period of 15 months, and left on her own accord towards the end of last year, stating that her chest was bad, her mother and mistress found no fault with her, and those who attended to her complaints and had opportunity of judging her conduct and character, state that she appeared a well-conducted modest girl, and could hardly credit the fact that Ann Reader, the quiet, good looking, and willing girl they know so well, could have rushed into a crime so horrible in its nature, so frightful in its effects; she shortly afterwards became servant to Mr. Cross, a farmer in Camps, in whose employ was Lucas. Mr. Cross, it seems, entertained some suspicion there was something wrong between Lucas and his sister-in-law; but no suspicion was entertained by Lucas's wife, for hearing that Mary Reader again complained of illness, Mrs. Lucas invited her sister to live with her, by paying her attention she thought she could benefit her. Well was that kindness repaid! Well was the unsuspecting victim required for her sisterly love! Lucas and Mary Reader not many days after she became an inmate there, planned the poor creature's death. The former had unfortunately and thoughtlessly by his employer, some poison entrusted to him, destroy or make away with; instead of which he took it home, kept it several months, and at length tutored Mary Reader to place a portion of it in a mess of bread and water, which the unsuspecting wife ate for supper. For an account of the agony the poor creature suffered the reader is referred to the report of the trial which follows, and their blood will curdle with horror as they read from those who witnessed the poor wife's death, and the cold-blooded atrocity with which the crime was perpetrated: It will scarcely be believed that hardened man, as he saw his innocent and unsuspecting victim eating the deadly poison, and expressing a disgust at the taste, if being thoroughly seasoned with arsenic, brutally exclaimed to her complaint, "O dull wretch, I'll eat mine if it kills me." The brutal joke was understood by his companion in crime, and on his trial there surely never was greater levity displayed by the most hardened criminal than by this man. He frequently turned to laugh at his companions in court; and even when a tin box was brought into court, which held some part of his wife's stomach and intestines, he laughed right out. A few weeks before her death the prisoner's wife was confined; at the time he made an anxious enquiry whether the child was likely to live, and on the nurse remarking it was a fine healthy child, he seemed displeased, and muttered "he hoped it would die." On other occasions he was heard to express a hope that it might not live. That the child did die shortly after its birth is a matter of fact. Mrs. Lucas had 4 children, but only one survives. Lucas accompanied his wife when she went to be church for her last confinement; on returning to their cottage he seemed absent in thought, at last he said, "wife I have had bad dreams of

late; I have dreamed twice I shall be either hanged or transported; she bade him banish such thoughts from his mind as only tending to make him miserable. It is but just to the memory of the poor woman to state, that she was a good and affectionate wife. The prisoner had never breathed one word against her, but acknowledged she had been a kind, good-hearted, and unsuspecting woman; and he acknowledged more—he has admitted that an improper intimacy had existed between himself and Mary Reader, and which commenced last Christmas, and shortly after her leaving Cambridge and taking up her residence at Cambridge; and that being the case the cause of the murder soon suggests itself. Those who knew Lucas by residing in the same village, and looked upon him as a well-disposed light-hearted young man, can hardly believe him to be guilty of a crime so wicked and monstrous. He would sing and whistle about his employment, and was as blithe and gay as any of the village rascals with whom he companioned. Vice, however, triumphed over the ill-fated young man and young woman.— They have this day met a disgraceful death, convicted of the most atrocious crime, by the hands of the common hangman.

### TRIAL AND CONVICTION.

Elias Lucas, and Mary Reader, were indicted for the wilful murder of Susan Lucas, by administering to her two drachms of arsenic. Mr. Sanders stated that the prisoners were indicted for the murder of his wife, the male prisoner and the sister of the female prisoner. Lucas had been married about four years to the sister of the other prisoner, who, having left her service at the house of Mr. Cross, near Castle Camps, where Lucas was also employed as an out-door servant, took up her residence at the house of Lucas about the end of January last. About that time it appeared that the deceased had given birth to three or four children, had been confined, and had lost her child. In the course of a month, however, she had quite recovered, and was in excellent health on the 21st Feb. On the next day she and Thomas Reader, live under the same roof with the prisoners in a double tenement, an uncle to the female. I saw the deceased at four o'clock on the 21st. Mrs. Reader came to my house next day, and asked me to fetch her a quantity of bread, for her sister was sick. She gave me the address, and I took it to her. Before I had finished dinner, Mary Reader called to my wife to come and see her sister, who had fallen out of bed. I went and found the deceased on the floor in the bedroom. She was unressed. I helped to put her into bed. The prisoner Lucas and the deceased seemed to live happily together. Sunday morn. I was fetched by Thomas Reader to go to deceased the day she died. She was in bed, and rose up and began to talk violently. She held up her hand, and said, "Elias, go on a doctur." I said so to, "He said, 'I do, don't I.' He left the room immediately; he did not speak to his wife. She crossed herself. He did not stop a minute; she told him to fetch a doctur.—Frederick A. Cramer, I am assistant to Mr. Martin, the surgeon, of Haverhill. On the 22d Feb. Lucas came to me as his wife was dangerously ill. I went, but before I got there was told she was dead. I went to the house, saw Mrs. Reader. She said, "Starts! had been purger from almost all the chest, had been subject to it some years. They had given her castor oil morning before." She also said they had a glass of water and bread the evening before. Lucas came in and went out again, he said, "She has been very sick—she had complained very much of pain in her chest." I went up to see body it was warm. I observed she had died in a state of collapse. The fingers were clenched as in a bird's claw. Examined the body, found marks of recent confinement. It was unpermanently blue. The symptoms made me think the woman had died from cholera or poison; I suspected the latter. Something was said about a burial. I could not account for the death of deceased, and should not give a certificate to the registrar. Mrs. Reader said, "To tell you the truth, she has been a dead weight since the water mess last night, and we all think there was something in it which caused her death. Suspect she complained that it tasted like lime, and offered me some in a spoon. I tasted it, but finding it like what another described I spit it out. We gave some to the cat, who had also been ill." She also said that her sister 20 minutes after the mess, went to the garden, saying, "I am against the soil, vomited into the garden, saying, 'I am a dead woman.' She never spoke after. She said she had crumpled the mess, and her sister had poured the water upon it. I asked, both prisoners whether they had any poisonous substance in the house; both said, "Not they knew of it." Went next day and opened the body. The chest was healthy, except some inflammation in a bladder. Went the next day and completed his examination. Asked Lucas if he had any arsenic in the

house—he said he had found 1/3 brook (the constable), he had it—it was on the shelf in the back place—that his mistress had given it him to destroy the silver it pur- I produce it now & I found it. The parcel was led 15 ounces. Reader said arsenic could not have got into the basin by accident, for it was on the opposite end of the shelf." I said it was unfortunate for them that arsenic should have been found in the house. Reader said, "I could not witness I am innocent of poisoning my sister, though I am against the world as to that effect." Alfred Taylor: I found in the stomach water, mucous fluid, and arsenic. There were two grains of metallic arsenic in the stomach, and from the result of my experiments I am prepared to say that death was produced by arsenic given in the deceased in large quantities. Professor Taylor proved that the substance produced in the parcel was arsenic. Mr. Cross, proved at the first witness, showing he gave Lucas nearly a pound of arsenic to destroy. Mr. Justice Williams (to the witness): For the future I would advise you to take care how you deal with so dangerous an article as that before you. You should have seen the possession of so large a quantity of arsenic against the prisoner, and I would caution you against the possibility of a similar case. Mr. Couch then addressed the jury on behalf of the prisoners; after which the Learned Judge in a clear and able manner summed up the evidence. The Jury after consulting a short period, returned a verdict—GUILTY. Taylor then testified for the prisoner, Mr. Cross, being again put on the black list, as in a solemn and feeling address passed sentence of DEATH on the culprit, urging upon them the necessity of using the short period of time they had to exist in the prison in penitence, and commanding they be broken, and who pardon their transgression.



However marked by levity and unwoman conduct, a Lucas during his trial, his deportment after his condemnation, and a solitary struggle. Both of these young and unhappy people shortly after leaving the Court, became fully sensible of the awful condition their crimes had placed them in, and appeared anxious to make up their minds to meet the irremissible punishment that awaited them, with patience and confidence. On finding their fate was inevitable, they became attentive to their religious duties, and appeared frequently to engage earnestly in prayer—Lucas expressing his sanguine hope and confidence that the Almighty would forgive the crimes he had committed through earnest supplication and repentant prayer. Mary Reader, the wife, at her conviction fully confessed the part she took in the horrid transaction through which herself and her companion in guilt were now about to suffer. She stated, that persuaded by Lucas, he had procured the arsenic, and advised by her choice and repentant prayer. Mary Reader, the wife, at her conviction fully confessed the part she took in the horrid transaction through which herself and her companion in guilt were now about to suffer. She stated, that persuaded by Lucas, he had procured the arsenic, and advised by her choice and repentant prayer. Mary Reader, the wife, at her conviction fully confessed the part she took in the horrid transaction through which herself and her companion in guilt were now about to suffer. She stated, that persuaded by Lucas, he had procured the arsenic, and advised by her choice and repentant prayer.

the same prisoner, was taken from the 11th chap. St. Luke, 21st and 22d verse. After attending divine service and participating in the Sacrament this morning, the prisoners appeared much comforted, and after shaking hands, expressed themselves quite happy, and perfectly resigned and ready to meet their fate.

Shortly before 12 o'clock the culprits were removed from their cells, when the Executioner commenced the ceremony of pinning their arms and preparing them for the awful trial they were about to undergo. The mournful solemnity that slowly proceeded (the chapel bell tolling a valedictory salute towards the platform erected in front of the principal entrance towards the goal, which, by the means of a ladder, the culprits ascended, accompanied by the Rev. Mr. Roberts, Mr. Owsidge governor of the goal, and Colcraft, the well known "finisher of the law.") Shortly after the wretched beings were placed under the fatal beam, and after a few moments spent in prayer, the chaplain reading the usual portion of the burial service—the ropes being adjusted, on a signal given the fatal plank fell, and the wretched beings were launched into eternity, in sight of the countless multitude of spectators, who filled the avenues and surrounding the County Hill, and assembled to witness the melancholy exit of two youthful criminals, who had outlived the ties of nature, the laws of their country, and the sacred ordinances of God.

### EXECUTION.

The bodies, after being taken to the gallows, on being cut down will be buried within the precincts of the prison.

Saturday, 12 o'clock. From nearly a hour in the morning the populous continued to flock to the scene of execution—persons of every condition, men, women, girls and boys, and even infants in arms. The whole line of spectators was very numerous, and the multitude assembled to witness the sad scene could not be computed at less than four to 40,000.

On reaching the foot of the scaffold, Lucas ran to the steps, and took the foot of the steps, and then descended without looking to the scene of execution—persons of every condition, men, women, girls and boys, and even infants in arms. The whole line of spectators was very numerous, and the multitude assembled to witness the sad scene could not be computed at less than four to 40,000.

### The Dying Moments of Elias Lucas and Mary Reader.

At Cambridge on the final platform  
 "What a dreadful sight to see;  
 On that sad and awful morning,  
 Doomed to die upon a tree.  
 Elias Lucas and Sarah Reader,  
 In youth and vigor health and bloom,  
 Man and maiden take a warning,  
 By these two young creatures doom.

Oh what thoughts are approaching,  
 Our unhappy fate to see!  
 Elias Lucas and Mary Reader,  
 On the Cambridge gallows.

My name is Elias Lucas,  
 And this is the day of my death,  
 I married Mary Reader's sister,  
 Whom I loved and loved well,  
 In Cambridge I met her service,  
 And came for to remain with her,  
 Then by the serpent I was tempted  
 To commit adultery.

And my name is Mary Reader,  
 To kill my sister's wife;  
 O how my soul is troubled,  
 Nearly twenty years of age,  
 And was my sister's wife;  
 So from virtue's path I stray,  
 And then I met her service,  
 To take my sister's life away.

We had private acquaintance,  
 And the occasion was given,  
 We daily our crimes were planning,  
 Whom we did love; the power,  
 But the Almighty God he knows,  
 Did our wickedness come to light,  
 And sent two cunning serpents,  
 To the end and final day.

Recall our parents, friends, and our spouse,  
 Death is called a last farewell;  
 The anguish of our troubled senses,  
 No pain can ever be longer;  
 We saw a tender and virtuous wife,  
 We viewed her friends and relatives here,  
 We saw a virtuous and good wife,  
 To lose all these things.

Oh! how we were troubled,  
 When this fatal day was near,  
 We must die in a dreadful way,  
 Oh! how we were troubled,  
 When this fatal day was near,  
 We must die in a dreadful way,

Oh! how we were troubled,  
 When this fatal day was near,  
 We must die in a dreadful way,  
 Oh! how we were troubled,  
 When this fatal day was near,  
 We must die in a dreadful way,

Good people all pray take a warning,  
 And always think before we die;  
 Don't forget that fatal morning,  
 Two young creatures met their fate.  
 Pray, young men, be led to virtue's way,  
 And in the serpent's path be wary,  
 And you shall see how virtuous you  
 To depart from Virtue's way.

At the County Camps their friends are waiting  
 For the loss they have sustained,  
 And they within the tomb are sleeping—  
 May they in heaven never again.