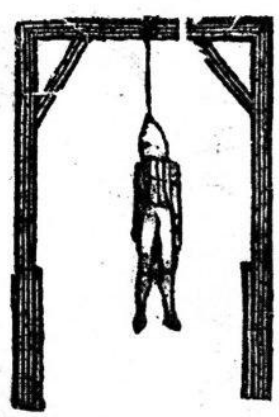


1829



PARTICULARS OF THE TRIAL & EXECUTION

OF

JOHN STACEY,

FOR THE WILFUL MURDER OF

Mr. Langtrey and his Housekeeper,

At Portsmouth, who was Executed on Monday Morning before the House where the Murders were committed.

JOHN STACEY aged 20; was found guilty at Winchester, on Thursday, of the Wilful Murder of Mr. Samuel Langtrey, and his housekeeper, at Portsmouth, on the 1st of last March. A number of witnesses were examined, from whose testimony the following particulars transpired:—The unfortunate deceased, who was nearly 80 years of age, had for some time retired from business, and resided in a house in Prospect-row, Portsmouth, with an elderly female, named Charity Jolliffe, aged about 60, who acted in the capacity of housekeeper. So feeble was the old man, that he had not been down stairs for some months, and only enabled to walk about the room with the assistance of a stick. A neighbouring female used to go to assist the housekeeper to get her master to bed, and on the evening of the murder she went several times for that purpose, but could not make them hear; imagining them to be asleep, she went on the following morning, and receiving no answer, she got a neighbour to force an entrance through the back door, when the most dreadful sight met their view, the woman had received several severe stabs in the face and hands from a knife, and in the room was found the handle of a long brush broken to pieces, from which it appears she must have made great resistance. The blood covered the room in two places for several feet, and the woman's arm and hands had received several blows from a stick.—On going up stairs, the old man was discovered lying on his back, dressed, with his walking-stick in his hand; he had received two wounds, one of which had penetrated the skull, and the brains had spattered across the room, and the blood was seen all over the wainscot; he had also his throat cut in a most dreadful manner. The old man must have been an easy prey to the villain, as he was deaf, nearly speechless, and could hardly hobble about. His pockets had been rifled, his keys taken out, and a chest opened, from which it is supposed the money was taken, and as a watch, several articles of plate, and some money were found upon the floor, the murderer must have been disturbed while committing the act of plunder.

Not the slightest suspicion was attached to Stacey, who was an apprentice to Mr. Weeks, the hair-dresser, who, as constable, was the first person who entered the house after the murder, who continued to shave in his master's shop for several days after, although the murder was the chief conversation during that time. When the funeral of the unfortunate victims took place, Stacey was observed among the crowd, in company with two common girls, and with them went to a public-house, where he ordered a chaise, and with the girls went into the country. This came to his master's ears, who, with Mr. Hunt, followed them, and arresting Stacey, he immediately exclaimed "I am done." Many parts of his apparel were

found to be bloody, and the inside of his shoes had marks of blood. He was examined before the Magistrates, and the knife with which the murder was supposed to have been committed, having been found under the Lion-gate foot bridge by a convict, was proved to have belonged to the prisoner; it was a large clasp-knife, very bloody, and had some hair attached to it. John Coneymore, who was a fellow apprentice of Stacey's stated, that on the evening of the murder, when Stacey returned to his father's, at eight o'clock, he hurried up stairs, and soon after came down again nearly naked, having a great coat thrown around him and sat by the fire. Soon after Coneymore heard a great sloshing of water, as if a great body of clothes was being tumbled about, and he afterwards saw the mother washing his shirt. The circumstances induced the Magistrates to apprehend Stacey's father, and they were both committed to Winchester gaol for trial—the father as an accessory after the fact. Young Stacey was in the habit of shaving the deceased twice every week.

After a few days confinement, old Stacey informed Hill, the turnkey, that in his dreams a gentleman had appeared to him, and said "Stacey, tell the truth!"—He could hold out no longer, and stated, "that his son came home on the Sunday night, and threw a bag of money on the bed; that for some time after he refused to state how he became possessed of it; that at last he confessed his crime, and that the money amounted to £630, which was at first hid in a dung-heap at the back of his premises, and afterwards removed to a field at some distance, to which place young Stacey conducted the officer, where it was found.—Young Stacey had endeavoured to escape since his commitment, but his plans were discovered.

This was the substance of the evidence given before the Jury, and which the prisoner heard in a becoming manner; his mind did not seem to shew that hardihood which often marks the countenance of depraved characters, but the calmness of his manner led us to hope that, during his confinement, his time was employed in seeking forgiveness for the enormity of his crime.

Wm. Stacey, father to the prisoner was then tried on the charge of harbouring the son, knowing the murder to have been committed by him. Evidence proved to the satisfaction of the Jury to find him also guilty.

Mr. Justice Burrough then passed sentence on the younger Stacey to be hanged on Saturday, but intimated that the Execution should be respited till Monday; and sentenced the father to be transported for life.

The inhabitants of Portsmouth having expressed a wish that the younger Stacey should be executed opposite the house in which he committed the Murders, a temporary gallows was erected on the Sunday night, and the unhappy youth conveyed in a coach from Winchester to Portsmouth, and on Monday morning was put into a cart and taken to the fatal spot, when the necessary preparations being complete, he was launched into eternity, in the view of an immense number of spectators, who were drawn together to witness the just punishment for so enormous a crime.

A BARBAROUS, foul, & horrid-deed
I shortly will recite,
Which did occur in Portsmouth town
Upon a Sunday night;
An aged man of eighty years,
His housekeeper likewise,
Were there most basely murdered,
By a monster in disguise.

All in the night, so dark and drear,
He entrance did obtain,
And with a deadly hammer he

Beat out the old man's brains,
His throat he cut from ear to ear,
Most horrible to view,
And streams of crimson blood did flow
The bed-room through and through.

The aged housekeeper likewise,
Lay butcher'd on the floor,
Her face and hands most cruelly
Were cut, and stabb'd full sore.
Her head it was nearly severed
From off her body quite.

Those who beheld it shivered,
So dreadful was the sight.

When at the bar the murderer stood,
He could not deny his guilt,
'Twas clearly proved that he
The aged couples blood had spilt;
The Jury found him guilty,
And the Judge to him did say,
You must prepare to end your days,
Upon the gallows high.