

Murder of a Boy, 13 years of age,

Committed by two Brothers of the Ages of 16 and 14; with the Confession of the Youngest Brother.



IT is our painful duty to record one of the most cruel Murders that has for some time been committed, and which for some time past the greatest interest has been excited. On Friday, the 4th of March last, Robert Taylor, who is a journeyman tallow-chandler, living at Strood, near Rochester, and who having been ill some time, received 9s. per week from the parish of Aylesford, toward the support of his family. On the day above-mentioned, he sent his son, who was 13 years of age, at nine in the morning to receive the money, when not returning that day, the father became uneasy, and the following morning Taylor went to Aylesford, to make enquiries after him, and found that his son had received the money. Notice was given of the loss of the child, bills were printed, and a reward offered for his discovery. The loss of the boy remained in mystery till the 11th of May, when a man named Izzard, in passing through a wood, a short distance from the road, and two miles from Rochester, found the body; it was lying on the back with the right hand across the breast. The body was taken to the poor-house at Rochester, and examined by the surgeon; it was in a very bad state of decay, and the surgeon stated the cause of his death was from a wound inflicted on the left side of the neck, with a cutting instrument. A Coroner's Inquest was held on the body, and the Jury returned a Verdict of "Wilful Murder, against some person or persons unknown." Several individuals have been examined touching the affair, but three persons are now in custody on suspicion. These are, melancholy to relate, a father and two sons! The father's name is Bell, and the eldest boy's, John Any Bird Bell, aged 16, and James Bell, aged 14.—They were examined before the Magistrates, and remanded for another hearing. On being confined in separate cells, the youngest of them confessed the horrid deed, and gave the particulars how the Murder was perpetrated.

CONFESSION.

Having a knowledge that young Taylor was going for his father's money, the eldest proposed on his return to take it from him; that seeing him come back by the wood, they stopped him, and endeavoured to take it from him, which he tried to prevent.—The youngest was then desired to watch outside the wood, while committed the Murder. That the boy was knocked down, and with a knife was stabbed in the neck; that they took the money from him, and left the body in the wood.

A knife has been found, with which the horrid deed is supposed to have been committed. It is one of the common clasp knives, with a round bone handle, the blade a little curved inwards.—The spot where the body was found has been partially cleared of bushes, and some stakes driven firmly into the earth, mark the position in which the body lay. Where the heels were placed, two hollows of several inches deep were visible, apparently caused by the struggles of the dying lad. A similar appearance marks the spot where the head lay. The place is not more than 200 yards distant from the road, and the spectator is forcibly struck with two remarkable circumstances—first, that at so short a distance from so great a thoroughfare, and in the middle of the day, no one heard the screams of the unhappy child; and next, that no passenger should for so many weeks have chanced to pass this pathway, which leads through the wood.

The elder boy has been committed to Maidstone gaol, to take his trial for the offence. On his way to prison, the wretched youth pointed out to the constable a pond by the road-side, in which he stated he washed the blood of his victim from his hands. Both the lads are of very small stature, and of very childish appearance. The eldest looks like a hard-working lad, exposed to the severities of the weather, as indeed in his occupation with his father as a wood-cutter, he must be.

The father is supposed to be implicated as an accessory after the crime.

HERE is a dreadful Tragedy, which I will now unfold,
A foul and horrid murder, will make your blood run cold;
The like of which for many years has not been heard or seen,
Committed by two Brothers, the eldest not Sixteen.

A youth named Robert Taylor, who lived down in Strood,
Returning home from Maidstone, he passed through a wood;
When these two brothers stopp'd him, and with a sharp clasp knife,
They robb'd him of nine shillings, and afterwards of life.

The eldest brother fell'd him, and gave the deadly wound,
Ten weeks the wounded body lay, before that it was found;
The brothers were apprehended, and sent to goal with speed,
When the youngest made Confession of this most horrid deed.

He said his brother kill'd the lad, while he did watch the wood,
Then to a pond his brother went, and wash'd off the blood;
But righteous Heaven has brought to light this most appalling crime,
And the Murderers meet their punishment all in a little time.

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