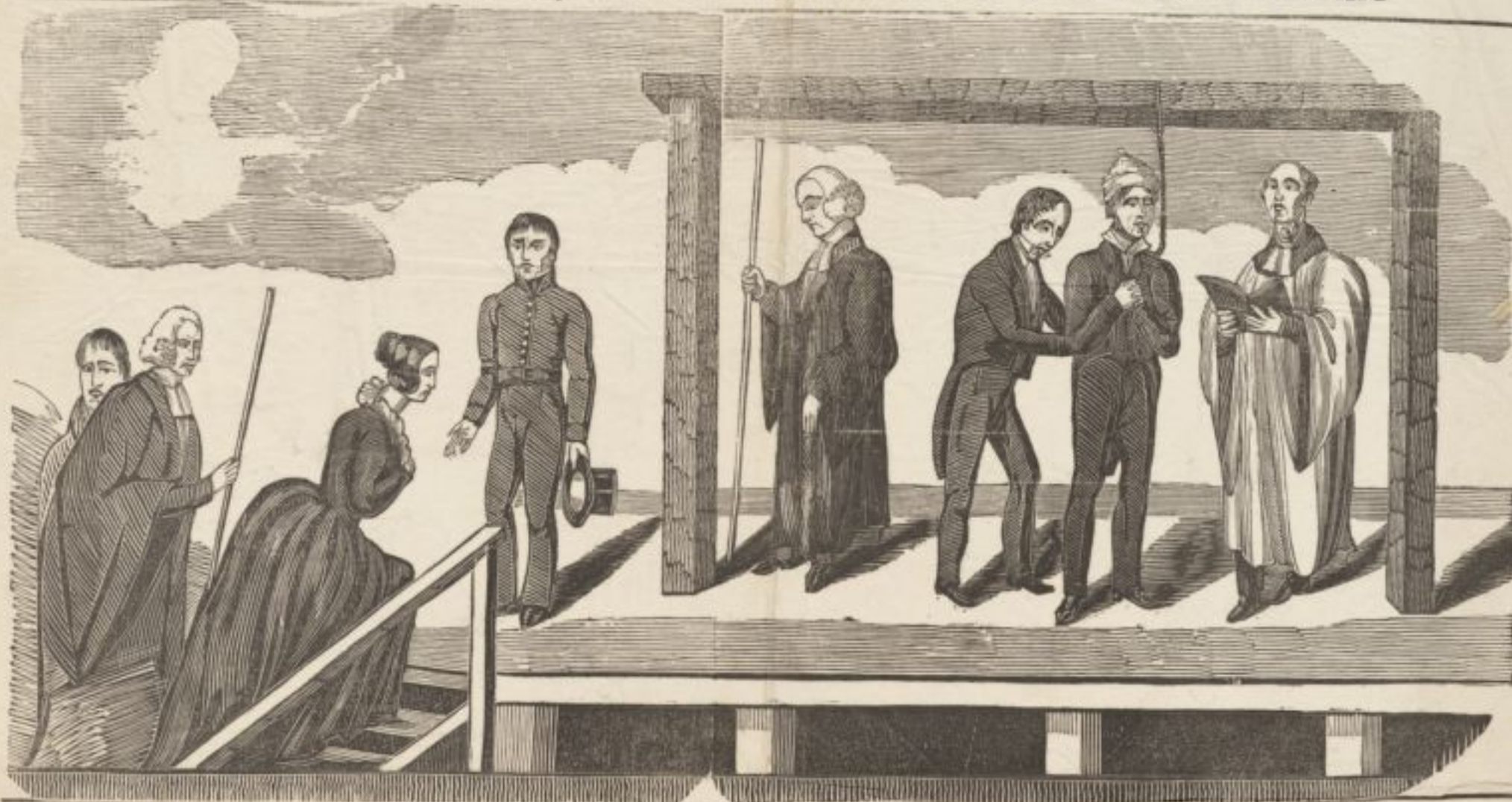


# LIFE CONFESSION & EXECUTION, OF MR. & MRS. MANNING, FOR THE MURDER OF MR. O'CONNER, WITH COPIES OF THE LETTERS.



At an early hour this morning the Sheriffs, with their usual attendants, arrived at the prison, and proceeded to the condemned cells, where they found the Rev. Ordinary engaged in prayer with the miserable criminals. After the usual formalities of demanding the Prisoners into their custody. The Executioner with his assistants then commenced pinioning their arms, which operation they skillfully and quickly dispatched. During these awful preparations he sighed deeply, but she uttered not a word. The Sheriff exhorted her to divulge the truth, but she solemnly declared she knew nothing of the Murder.

All the arrangements having been complete, the bell of the prison commenced tolling, and the melancholy procession was formed; the Rev. Ordinary, preceding the prisoners on their way to the fatal drop as the procession moved along to the top of the prison. On arriving at the steps leading to the scaffold, he turned round and thanked the Sheriffs and the governor.

Then firmly, he ascended the scaffold, on reaching which he was placed by the executioner under the beam. Mrs. Manning, came next, and on reaching the scaffold, glanced hastily round at the immense multitude, and was then placed in the necessary position. The executioner having drawn the caps over their faces, retired from the scaffold, & on the Rev. Mr. Rowe given the signal, the bolt was withdrawn, and the unhappy Mannings, was launched into eternity. A few convulsive struggles and they ceased to exist. After hanging the usual time, the bodies was cut down and conveyed into the prison.

The following is the confession made by Manning. He declared that a month before the crime, his wife spoke of murdering O'Connor. She bought the pistols of Blanch, a gunmaker, in Gracechurch-St. Manning declares also that the hole in which the body was found was dug by his wife with the shovel, and the earth was mixed with the ashes in the dust-bin.

He asseverates most solemnly, that O'Connor did go down stairs into the back kitchen, and his wife following closely after him. At this time Manning was up stairs, dressing. In a few minutes his wife came upstairs & exclaimed, "I have done it—he is dead enough. He says he was dreadfully frightened, and told her she would be hung if she was found out. "She got in a passion with him, & said he was a d—d coward; and pointing a pistol at him, he exclaimed if you don't help me, I will serve you the same. He asked her how she did it, and after she had drank a glass of brandy, she explained when I got him to the bottom of the stairs, I pressed the muzzle of the pistol to the back of his head, and I shot him dead.

The following are authentic copies of two letters sent by the condemned prisoners to each other.

## Manning's Letter to his Wife.

"I address you as a fellow sufferer, and not as my wife, since the contract must be considered as cancelled, extending as it does only unto death, and both of us standing as we do on the brink of the grave. I do beseech you to be truthful in all you utter, for the time, though not as I can learn, precisely fixed when we are to be launched into eternity, to appear before our God in judgment, but we may be certain that it is close at hand. I earnestly pray that you will look to God for the pardon you need. Believe me I upbraid you not, but trust you will be assured that I forgive every one, as I hope to be forgiven by God. This is the last letter you will receive from me. Now let me beg of you to grant me an interview this day if possible; I have a great wish to have one before I depart from this world.

"(Signed) F. G. MANNING."

## Mrs. Manning's Letter to her Husband.

"I address you as my husband; I am far away from my happy native land; but I am not going away from you. All I have to say is this: I never made any statement to injure you, that you will know. I was not in the house when O'Connor met with his death. But I was gone to see for him, and during that time he called, in my absence, and was shot by that young man from Guernsey, who was with you in the back parlour smoking, so that I did not know any thing about it until the Saturday, and that it was all settled in the kitchen. Believe me I upbraid you not, but if you will comply with this true statement, I shall be happy to see you till the last day. My life and hopes are in your hands. You can, if you will, save me. Remember, you cannot answer for our sins or transgressions when all our secrets shall be set in the light of His countenance on that day a cruel conscience shall produce a failing heart, and an angry judge shall point to the wicked. I cannot write any longer; God bless you, and have mercy on us both.

"M. MANNING."

At 10 o'clock Chief Justice Pollock, & Justice Cresswell, came in to court, and took their seats on the Bench. A number of noblemen and gentlemen were present.

The names of the Jury were then called over, and the indictment read.

Frederick George Manning & Maria his Wife, were then placed at the bar. Both prisoners pleaded "Not Guilty" in a firm tone of voice.

The Attorney-General then stated the case to the Jury, and said that the present was the most extraordinary case in all its circumstances that had been brought before a British Jury. If not one of the most Roman-tick. It was not, unfortunately, an extraordinary circumstance at the pre-

sent time that man should be found who would raise the hand of murder against their fellow-creatures for the sole purpose of gratifying their sordid feelings. He then went on to state the particulars of the case.

W. Flynn, an officer in the Customs, said the deceased was a relative of his, and that he had known him for nine years. He was a second cousin. He was shown a body at 3, Minver-place, on the 17th of August, upon which an inquisition was holding at the time, & it was that of Patrick O'Connor. He had not the slightest doubt about it being the body of that person, when he called at Minver-place to ask for O'Connor, the prisoner looked pale and was rather flurried. I knew that the deceased had false teeth, because I have seen him without them at his lodgings, at his office, and at my own house. I saw him last two months before his death. I observed by accident that he had false teeth. He did not tell me that he had them. I made no observation to him upon making the discovery."

Mr. Sergeant Wilkins then rose to address the jury on the part of the male prisoner. The first question was, had Patrick O'Connor been murdered at all? About that he feared there could be little doubt, and he was not there to insult their understandings by arguing upon topics which would not bear investigation. There can be no doubt that this wretched man—who excited our sympathy only because he was hurried from time into eternity without leave to repent was murdered by some one; and the all-important question was, by whom was he murdered?

Was he murdered by both? If so, where was the evidence of concert? As far as the male prisoner was concerned, what single fact was there in the case, from beginning to end, which justified his learned friend the Attorney-General in saying that he premeditated the destruction of the murdered man? It seemed to him that the shot must evidently have been fired behind the man's back; he would sit upon his face, and then a person would have no difficulty in the world in completing the deed with such an instrument as that mentioned by the witness, he granted the jury there was a principle of law—perhaps it was a wise rule—that the wife is always considered to be under subjection to the husband; but was it not quite clear that here, at least, the rule was reversed, and Mrs. Manning was the mistress of the house? Who wrote

the note to invite O'Connor to come to dinner? Mrs. Manning. Who had access to his secrets? Who had taken pains to possess herself of a knowledge of the amount of his possessions?

Why the woman. Cupidity showed what her motives were from the beginning to the end of this dreadful history. Taken, as to the evidence of Keating; on the 12th of August Mr. Keating said he went to Mannings' house; & at this time beyond all doubt, the man was dead. Well, whom did he see? He saw Mrs. Manning, and asked if she had seen O'Connor. She said she had not seen him since Wednesday night. She said, "It is a very strange thing—very strange indeed, for we invited him to dinner on Thursday, and Manning thought it a ungentlemanly thing he did not come to his appointed time."

She said further, "I went to his lodging to ascertain the reason why he did not come." At the very moment when she made that assertion her lip was noticed to quiver and her cheek to grow blanched. At the very time she used that expression even her self possession was not sufficient for the moment, and she said, "Poor O'Connor! the best friend I had in the world."

Why poor? Why should she say he was poor, when she knew his body was mouldering in the earth? There were moments when the self-possession of the hardiest beings gave way, and even the nerve of this woman gave way at that moment. You (addressing the female prisoner) know where he was at that moment—at that moment you were in possession of his property.

The judges and jury returned into court at quarter to 7, when the prisoners were placed in the dock.

The clerk of the arraigns then, amidst the most breathless silence, inquired if they found the prisoner, Frederick George Manning, guilty or not guilty.

The foreman: GUILTY  
Do you find the prisoner, Maria Manning, guilty or not guilty?

The foreman: GUILTY.  
The clerk of the arraigns then asked the prisoners if they had any thing to say why judgment should not be pronounced against them.

Manning himself, who heard the verdict delivered without betraying the least emotion, did not speak; but his wife, who seemed almost convulsed with passion addressed the court in a violent strain.

"I am not guilty of this murder, nor have I had a fair trial. The judges, the counsel, and the jury have been against me; and, instead of being tried as a

Christian, I have been treated worse than a brute or a wild beast of the wood. O'Connor was my best friend, my only friend in the world; and so much did he love me, that I might, if I liked, have been married to him any day.

But ever since I have been with my husband he has abused and ill-treated me, and he has made my life a complete hell upon earth, & his jealousy led him to murder my best friend. During the last nine years that I have been in this country, I have lived with the highest families in the land."

The Judge then passed sentence of Death on them, when she became very volitant, and snatched a hand full of rue from the front of the dock, and threw it among the barristers.

Attention give, both old and young  
Of high and low degree;  
Think, while this mournful tale is sung,  
Of our sad misery.  
We've slain O'Connor, both good and kind,  
Who oft to us has been a friend,  
For which we must our lives resign,  
Our time is near an end.

Oh! hark, what mean that dreadful sound?  
It sinks deep in our souls.  
It is the bell that sounds our knell,  
Have we seen in the toll,  
See, thousands are assembled  
Around the fatal place,  
To gaze on our approaching fate,  
And witness our disgrace.

Let pilfering passions not intrude,  
For to lead you astray,  
From step to step it will delude,  
And bring you to dismay.  
Think of the wretched guilty Mannings,  
Who thus dote on a tree,  
A death of shame, we're ought to blame,  
But our own base infamy.

Mercy on earth we'll not implore,  
To crave it would be vain.  
Our hands are dyed with human gore,  
None can wash off the stain.  
But the merits of a Saviour,  
Whose mercy alone we crave,  
Good Christians pray, as thus we die,  
We may his pardon have,

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