

*FEARFUL TRAGEDY AT FEN DITTON, NEAR CAMBRIDGE. MURDER OF A MOTHER AND ATTEMPTED MURDER OF TWO OTHER PERSONS, AND SUICIDE OF THE MURDERER.*

*Everybody is convinced that 1861 is a year unprecedented for the number of murders that have disgraced it. What it is that has affected human nature, and turned all the best feelings of men's hearts into hatred and malice, no one can tell; but the dread fact is more and more evident every day, and one never takes up a newspaper without being horrified with the details of half-a-dozen revolting tragedies. Unfortunately, such is our nature, that the more we read of these horrors the less effect they have upon us; we get so used to them, that our repugnance gradually decreases, and in time we become callous and indifferent to details the most repulsive to our better feelings. But the case is altered when the crime is committed close our own homes, when our very threshold, as it were, is splashed with the blood of a murdered victim. Our callousness then departs, and curiosity and excitement regain their sway, then our blood curdles at atrocities committed so near to us, and our commiseration for the victim is mingled with just indignation and wrath against the murderer.*

*On Saturday night and Sunday morning the whole neighbourhood was aroused to a terrible pitch of horror and excitement by the intelligence that a tragedy, almost unheard of for atrocity even in this age of atrocities, had been perpetrated at Fen Ditton, village scarcely more than two miles from Cambridge, and almost as well-known to every body in Cambridge as Saint Mary's Church or King's College Chapel. A mother, it was said, had been cruelly murdered by her son, who, not content with wreaking the long-pent fury of his malice upon her, had turned upon and attacked another aged woman, and an aged man, the brother of his parent, and that the woman was scarcely alive, and her death was expected from hour to hour. We were told also, that the murderer had immediately made his escape, and that it was believed in a fit of frenzy or remorse he had committed self-destruction, but of that there was no proof. Rumour had only too truly represented the real state of the case, and without further prelude we will at once detail the facts as they have come to light.*

*The murder was committed on Saturday night by Thomas Harvey, bricklayer, about 44 years of age, son of the late Mr. Thomas Harvey, who for many years kept the Ditton "Plough;" the woman who at once died a victim to his wrath was his own mother, aged 69; the wounded woman is Mrs. Witt, who lived with Mrs. Harvey, in the capacity of lodger and friend; the old man also wounded is Shadrach Jacobs, brother of deceased. For reasons that will hereafter be given, it is presumed that the instrument with which the injuries were inflicted is a bricklayer's hammer, an implement blunt at one end and sharpened at the other. This, however, has not yet been found.*

*Everybody knows the "Plough" Inn at Ditton, and every one who has been in the habit of rowing upon the Cam has known the family of the Harveys who kept it for many years. The late Mr. Thomas Harvey was an industrious, frugal man, who saved enough from his earnings to leave his widow in comfort, and their numerous family something his death, which happened about three years ago. There are several sons, of whom Thomas, the murderer, is the eldest, and he has had a large family, eight of whom are still alive. Besides a few cottages, a piece of freehold garden ground was among the property left by the late Mr. Harvey, of which his widow was to reap the benefit during her life time and on her decease it was to be sold and divided among the children (not including Thomas who received his portion of the patrimony in another way.) This disposition of the property rankled in the heart of Thomas; being the eldest and perhaps the most needy of the family, on account of the number of his children, he thought if his father had died without a will, he should have been executor, and might have managed the affairs more advantageously for himself. The piece of land was, in particular, the object of his desire, and being thwarted in his wish to obtain it, those who were instrumental in getting the father to make a will were the especial objects of his wrath. His mother and two of his brothers hence became, instead of beloved relatives, objects of personal*

hatred, which feeling only increased on the part of the murderer in proportion as the hopes of their making a settlement such as he desired became diminished. To so high a pitch of animosity did he work himself that he has frequently threatened to murder his mother and brothers, and even the whole family. For the last two years he has made his family grievances the sole subject of conversation, and his threats of murder and vengeance have been not muttered, but openly declared; in fact half the people in Ditton knew that Thomas Harvey talked of murdering his mother. Thus the awful tragedy we have to record is not the result of an outbreak of passion, but of long nurtured and long-threatened revenge. A year ago, persons working with the murderer heard him utter these threats against his mother and brothers; and at length he seems to have begun seriously and deliberately to plan for the purpose of executing his design. On one occasion he attempted to enter his mother's house as the inmates were retiring to rest, and he then asserted that if he had got in he would have murdered the whole of them. He has often told a man named Hancock, with whom he went for Sunday walks, that he would knock his mother's brains out, and only last week he told this man, that he and his boy had had an afternoon grinding his tools to murder his mother with. There wasn't a knife in Ditton, he declared, sharper than he'd ground his brick-hammer, and he had taken care that it should not be used, for he was keeping it at home on purpose to kill his mother. These must have been regarded idle threats, which the man did not seriously mean to execute, for no warning appears to have been given by those who heard them to the murderer's victim; the only answer the man made to the expostulations of those who were with him was a fearful oath, and "I'll have her" (meaning his mother). He also said, that he would burn her body after he'd murdered her before she got to H—. He expressed similar intentions towards his brother Richard, and added on that occasion pointing to his feet "these are the shoes I mean to go to H\_l with." Other persons heard him say the same thing, and he also used the words, "Old Calcraft shall never hang me." This expression, and also frequent assertions that he would destroy himself, subsequently led to the inference that he had committed suicide. On the afternoon preceding the murder, Thomas Harvey was in Cambridge and did business with several people. We are informed that at one office he said, several times, that he should never come there again, that he was going to do what he should be hung for like that fellow (Hilton) last Saturday. A number of rumours are firing about as to other conduct of the murderer, but we have since ascertained that most of them are unfounded. He returned to Ditton in the evening, and shortly past eight man named Peachey saw him walking backwards and forwards, and then suddenly running to the house as if he had all at once made up his mind to something.

*THE SCENE OF THE MURDER.* We ought to have stated that since the death of her husband Mrs. Harvey has occupied a small house opposite the Church, a comfortable place, with a large orchard at the back, separated from the Horningsea road by a field in the occupation of Mr. Stephen Smith. The house lately occupied by Mrs. Harvey is a door or two from the King's Head public-house that is visible to every one entering Ditton from the fields. Mrs. Harvey's house is very convenient for a small family, but was too large for one person, and therefore to afford her company, and to share the expense of rent and living, Mrs. Witt, a person from London, with whom one of the sons, Richard Harvey, formerly lodged and Mr. Shadrach Jacobs, brother of deceased, jointly occupied the house with her. It is not necessary to give minute description of the whole of the premises; it is sufficient for our purpose to give our readers an idea of the spot which was the immediate scene of the tragedy. At the back of the house there is small yard, which again communicates with the orchard before-mentioned, where the murderer was seen walking about by Peachey. Communicating with the back-yard are two doors situated at right angles; one of them leads into the back kitchen, which was often the sitting-room of the family, and the other to a brick stair case descending into the cellar, where the murder was committed. The murderer resided at a cottage nearer the Plough and close to the Horningsea road; by crossing the road, and Mr Smith's field, he could get into his mother's orchard, and thence through the yard into the house. This is how he effected his entrance on Saturday, after he was seen by Peachey.

*THE MURDER.* Between eight and nine o'clock on Saturday night the family, consisting of Mrs. Harvey, sen., Mrs Witt, Mr Jacobs and Mrs. Richard Harvey, daughter-in-law of the deceased, who was on visit from London, were sitting in the back kitchen of the house, talking, when Mrs Harvey got up to remove a ham to the cellar. Mrs. Witt offered to show a light and the two proceeded to the cellar through the doors already described. The door opened revealed the person of the murderer lurking in the yard, and young Mrs. Harvey immediately exclaimed "Oh there's Thomas," recalling instantly perhaps the threats she had heard of, and feeling a sentiment of nameless dread at his unlooked for presence. The man followed Mrs Harvey down the cellar, and the next minute, a cry of "Now I've got you" from the murderer and followed by terrific screams from his victim were heard. Mrs. Harvey, jun., ran out and cried murder," and proceeded to the adjoining public-house for aid. In the meantime this unnatural son was splitting his mother's skull open, regardless of her cries for mercy, and the intervention of Jacobs and Mrs. Witt; the mother's hand, strong and robust as she was, was too weak to resist his violence, and deep gashes on the hand and wrist attest to the force of the attack; there was one blow upon the neck, but that upon the skull was sufficient to send her to eternity. Poor old Jacobs was twice knocked down by the wretched murderer and had to crawl into the coal cellar to get out of the way. Having killed his mother, the murderer next attacked Mrs Witt, and a few blows from his weapon, no doubt the one he had sharpened so carefully, soon reduced her to a state of insensibility; and she fell dangerously wounded in the head.

Before aid arrived the murderer escaped. The people called in from the "King's Head" by Mrs Harvey jun., must have been frightened and have hesitated to venture in, or there could scarcely have been time for him set clear off after the commission of one murder and the attempt upon the lives of two other persons. When they did come in, nothing was to be seen of Thomas Harvey, and the place was in utter darkness. On some of the least timid of the party procuring light and proceeding to the cellar they found Mrs. Harvey, in a pool of blood, just on the point of yielding her last breath; Mrs. Witt was still insensible and nearly dead; and Jacobs, was then, between fright and the wounds he had received, in a wretched condition.

Messengers were at once despatched for medical aid, whilst others went in pursuit of the murderer. The latter were unsuccessful, and remembering, his threats of self destruction, and his statement that Calcraft should not hang him they concluded that he had plunged into the river. Drags were once put into requisition, and till a late hour people continued to search the river, but without success.

Mr Fletcher, surgeon, of Horningsea, arrived shortly after the murder, and found Mrs. Harvey quite dead; indeed she could not have lived ten minutes after the attack. Mr. Carter, from Cambridge, also attended and gave his services to the injured persons. All Saturday night the villages of Ditton and Horningsea were the scene of continued excitement. On Sunday thousands of persons from Cambridge visited the scene of the murder; and many of them gratified morbid curiosity with the sight of the dead body and the blood upon the floor.

On Monday morning, there were various rumours that the murderer had been seen, and one report asserted that had been taken at Bottisham Fen. This rumour, on inquiry, turned out to be untrue; but the fact that the prisoner only had a few shillings in his pocket led to the inference that he could not travel far without being apprehended if alive. The county police have made active exertions, and on Monday morning the following placard was issued by order of Captain Davies:

*BRUTAL MURDER.* About 8.30 p.m. the evening of Saturday, the 17th of August, Ann Harvey, of Fen Ditton, was brutally murdered by her son striking her several times on the head with a plasterer's hammer. He also inflicted serious wounds upon two other persons (one of whom is not expected to survive), and immediately escaped.

*THOMAS HARVEY, who committed the offence, is by trade a bricklayer, between 40 and 45 years of age, stands about 5 feet 5 inches high, stoutly made, dark complexion, dark whiskers meeting under the chin (probably will be shaven off), dressed in check cap, flannel jacket, black cloth waistcoat, check trousers, green silk or satin scarf, and Blucher boots. His clothes, if not changed, will doubtless have stains of blood upon them. Information to be given to Captain Davies. R.N.. County Chief Constable; or Superintendent Stretten, Chesterton, Cambridge; or to any police officer in the town or county of Cambridge.”*

*THE INQUEST. The inquest was held at the National School-room, on Monday, at eleven o'clock, before Frederic Barlow, Esq., Coroner for the county, and the following jury:—Mr. Thomas Kent, foreman; Messrs. William Woollard, jun., William Kent, Thomas Banyard, Stephen Smith, William Fison, Henry Muggleton, Thomas Tuddenham, Robert Grange, Robert Burling, William Barton, Fison Spalding, John Adson, John Negus, and John Morley. Captain Davies, Chief Constable, was present during part of the inquiry; and the case was conducted by Mr. Superintendent Stretten, deputy chief constable. Several people belonging to Ditton and the neighbouring villages were present during the inquiry, which of course excited much interest.*

*The jury having been sworn, The Coroner proceeded to open the inquiry, He said, before entering upon this inquiry, he thought it might be facilitating their duties were he to explain them to them with regard to this particular case, together with the law, as the case might possibly be affected by it. Though they would of course be guided solely by the evidence which would be there produced before them upon oath; sufficient was doubtless already known to them to set aside all question of natural death. Their duty, then, would be to consider, from the evidence given, by what means the deceased came to her death, whether by accident or by violence. If by accident, then the cause of that accident, and whether any other person is criminally answerable for it from any unlawful or wilful act, or from such gross negligence or improper conduct as would render such person criminally answerable for the death. If by violence—then who was the person committing the violence, and whether such violence amounted in contemplation of law to wilful murder, manslaughter, or justifiable homicide. As to the law, he would consider the matter of justifiable homicide first. The law of this country did not permit man to take the life of man except for the preservation of his own life. If a man attacked another with a deadly weapon, and the latter had no means of preserving his own life but by taking the other's, the law justified him in doing so. But if a man, having attacked another man, and having severely wounded him, ran away from him, the law would not justify the latter in shooting him, unless, from some good cause, he had strong reason to believe he would return to the attack. With regard to murder—the law defined murder to be, when a person of sound mind, memory, and discretion, unlawfully killed another by any means with malice aforethought, either expressed or implied; whilst manslaughter was the unlawfully killing another without malice aforethought, either expressed or implied. They would observe, therefore, the difference between murder and manslaughter; in the first—murder—there must exist malice either expressed or implied; whilst the second—manslaughter—was devoid of that malice. The Coroner then went on to define malice. Malice, in its legal sense, denoted any unlawful act done intentionally without just cause or excuse—any wicked intention or mind constituted malice. Therefore all homicide was presumed to be malicious and amounting to murder, until the contrary appeared from circumstances of alleviation, excuse, or justification. To constitute, therefore, a case of justifiable homicide, it must be made to appear before them that the party committing the homicide did so compulsorily in preservation of own life. To constitute a case of homicide into manslaughter only there must have been something between the parties, immediately preceding the homicide, extenuating the act, such as, for instance, great provocation at the time. In investigating this case, therefore, should they find that the death had been caused by any person other than the deceased herself, they would have to see whether there were anything in the evidence produced before them which would justify the homicide or reduce it to manslaughter. He had before told them that one of the requisites in a case of murder was that the party committing the homicide should be*

*of sound mind, memory, and discretion. But they must understand that they had nothing to do with the state of mind of any person committing homicide, unless that person were the deceased; but they would find their verdict of wilful murder or manslaughter according to the evidence, and the law as he had explained it to them, bore out the case, without any reference to the state of mind of the party whom they should find had committed the homicide. The question of the state of mind of such party would be inquired into by another tribunal, should such question arise.*

*Some little time was then taken up in viewing the body, after which the following witnesses were examined:— Louisa Esther Harvey, wife of Richard Sturges Harvey, son of deceased, Ann Harvey, said:—Deceased was the widow of Thomas Harvey, who was a publican. I reside at 7 Queen's Terrace, Queen's Road, Dalston, London. I came on Saturday week on a visit to deceased. My husband did not come with me, but he is here now. He came last Tuesday. Between 8 and 9 last Saturday evening, I was in the house with deceased; Mrs. Witt, and Mr. Shadrach Jacobs were also there. I was sitting on a chair in the backkitchen: we were all there. Whilst we were in this backkitchen, deceased took a ham from the table and said, "I'll take this ham down the cellar now." She was accustomed to speak very loud, and she did so on that occasion. The back kitchen door opens into a sort of yard, which is at right angles with the back door leading into the sitting-room. Opposite is a garden door about 15 yards from the back kitchen-door. In the door in the garden there is a hole in which a person's finger has to be inserted raise the latch, and any one looking through that hole could see into the back-kitchen. The back-kitchen door was open. We had one candle. On the right-hand side is the cellar door. At the end of the garden is an orchard, and a door communicates with the garden and orchard. Mrs. Harvey was the tenant of the orchard of which Mr. Joshua Woollard is landlord. Any person could pass through the orchard and court-yard to the back-kitchen door. I said that Mrs. Harvey was a very loud speaking woman, and on this occasion any person standing outside the garden door, if it were open, could have heard what she said; but not if the door was shut; and any person could see through the hole in the kitchen door. There is an open iron-grating lighting the cellar from the outside. You go down steps from the back kitchen into the cellar. I was nursing my baby. When Mrs. Harvey said she would take the ham down the cellar, she got up, and Mrs. Witt said "Shall I show you a light Mrs. Harvey." Mrs. Harvey said, "Well, you may if you will Mrs. Witt:" and Mrs. Witt did so. There is a water tub near the wash-house door, and I saw a man rush from behind it, as soon as Mrs. Harvey and Mrs. Witt had gone down the cellar. He rushed down the stairs immediately. When I saw the man at the kitchen door it struck me directly it was Thomas Harvey, son of the deceased. I saw him distinctly. He was dressed in a light jacket and something light on his head. I thought it was a straw hat. I have frequently seen him before, but not during my present stay. I heard voice exclaim " Oh, I've got you now;" and there was a fearful cry of "Oh." I said "Oh, that's Thomas," and rushed from the back-kitchen, into the street, and called "Murder." I had heard of the dispute, and of his having threatened and abused deceased. A few weeks since I heard of his having done so late at night just as they were going to bed, and I knew that the doors were kept locked in consequence. Have heard my mother in-law mention the dispute, but not frequently. She never expressed to me any fear of him. When I heard the noise I rushed into the street, and called murder," and said to several people whom I saw there, "For God's sake help, poor Mrs. Harvey is being murdered." When I came back there were several persons in the house. Thomas Harvey was gone, and I never saw any more of him after that. I heard dreadful screams, but no blows. The screams were a woman's, but I could not tell whether they were Mrs. Harvey's or Mrs. Witt's. I went down one or two of the cellar steps. Mrs. Witt was sitting on chair at the entrance of the back door, supported by several persons. She was fearfully wounded on the and face, but she was sensible. I did not speak to her. Jacobs was walking in the room. He was wounded on the head. I understood that Mrs. Harvey was dead when I got down. I last visited Ditton a year ago: there were quarrels going on then, between Thomas Harvey and his mother. There was a family dispute respecting some land, on Thomas's premises, which belonged to Mrs. Harvey, and Thomas wished to obtain possession of it.*

*By a Juryman: Thomas has taken possession of the land, and has occupied it for the last two or three years.*

*By the Coroner : He is a married man, with family. Last year I saw him once, but we did not talk about this dispute. He was always friendly towards me. He has made use of threats towards my husband. I have heard from him that Thomas has threatened to-shoot him. I did not notice anything in Thomas's hand. Mrs. Harvey was sixty-nine years of age.*

*Mr. James Carter, surgeon, of Cambridge, said: I was called in on Saturday night, between nine and ten o'clock. When I arrived Mrs. Harvey was dead. She had probably been dead a very short time: she was lying upon the floor of the cellar in pool of blood. There was large wound upon the back of the head, about five inches long; the skull was very much fractured, and a large portion of brain had escaped from the wound; the wound was indeed filled by numerous fragments of the skull and brain. There were also several smaller wounds of the scalp, caused apparently some sharp instrument. There were also two other wounds, one upon the wrist about two inches long, and a similar one the back of the hand. The wound could not possibly have been caused by the deceased falling down stairs by herself: nor could they have been self-inflicted. I have seen an instrument used bricklayers, hammer on one side and sharp point the other: such an instrument would cause injuries like those inflicted upon Mrs. Harvey; and it must have been used some person other than herself. I made a post-mortem examination of the body this morning, and found the heart and lungs healthy; as were the organs of the abdomen; the stomach was quite healthy, containing some undigested food. I could detect no disease of any kind. The wounds were sufficient to cause almost instant death; and there is no doubt whatever that Mrs. Harvey's death was the result of them.*

*Shadrach Jacobs, an aged man, was the next witness. He had a handkerchief over his bond, and appeared to be still suffering from his wounds. He said: I am a brother of the deceased. We were all in the back kitchen, between eight and nine on Saturday evening. There were myself, Mrs. Harvey, Mrs. Witt, and Mrs. Richard Harvey. Whilst we were sitting there Mrs. Harvey took a ham from the table to take down the cellar. The door leading to the cellar is on the right hand side of the room immediately on entering. Mrs. Witt followed Mrs Harvey with a light, and as they went down the cellar, Mrs. Richard exclaimed "Oh, there's Thomas." At that time I was lighting another candle, and it did not occur to me whom she meant by Thomas, so I said, "'Thomas'—what do you mean? what Thomas?" And she said, Thomas Harvey." I did not see him, for he had got down the cellar. Immediately after, heard a man say, "Now I've got you;" and there was a scream. The man's voice was that of Thomas Harvey. I only heard one scream, and did not hear any blows, or anyone fall. Mrs. Witt was then at the top of the stairs. I went down the cellar and saw Thomas beating his mother, who was lying flat on the floor. There was a candle and I recognised Thomas perfectly. I did not see what he had in his hand, but I could see he was beating his mother's head. He had hold of her head with one hand, and was beating it with the other. I went to him, and said "Oh dear, what are you about," and I caught hold of his arm, and tried to stay the blow. Thomas turned round and gave me a heavy blow with some instrument on the head. It took all my sense away, and I became immediately insensible. The instrument seemed to me like a large club; I could not tell what it was. I fell directly. I afterwards tried to rise again, and he struck me again; the second blow rendered me perfectly insensible: after bit I managed to crawl into the coal cellar. On recovering consciousness I crawled upstairs, and saw Mrs. Witt sitting in a chair in the yard, apparently almost dead. Saw no more of Thomas Harvey. I am positive that the man I saw was he. Thomas Harvey was deceased's son: he was a married man living in Fen Ditton, about half mile from deceased. Mrs. Harvey had an orchard adjoining the garden, which (the garden) is walled in. In the garden there is doorway leading from the orchard into the garden, and another from the garden into the yard at the back of the house. In the doorway leading into the yard there is a hole through which you put your finger to open the door, and that hole permits anyone's seeing into the back kitchen. The orchard and yard doors were seldom locked. A person by crossing a field on the Horningsea road could easily get into*

*that orchard: it is only across one field and not a quarter of a mile. There have been disputes between Thomas Harvey and deceased about the late Mr. Harvey's will. Mr. Harvey left some property to his wife, after which it was to be divided among the brothers, except Thomas, who had his part during his mother's lifetime, on account of his large family. These quarrels have been going on for fifteen years. Thomas wanted to have the piece of ground which he occupied near his house, and his father (who has been dead three years) thought it would too much. His mother would have given up her life-interest in the land, but the brothers would not consent. He has often threatened to murder his mother, and not only her but two of his brothers, Richard and John. I have heard him use threats, but not for the last month or two. Heard him say on one occasion that he wished he was in hell; and he said "he wished she (his mother) was in hell deep as heaven's high." One night some weeks ago, when Mrs. Witt was gone to London, he came to the house and knocked. Mrs Harvey would not open the door, but said "Who's there?" He did not answer for some time, but they recognised his voice when at last in answer to her repeated query, he said "Don't you know?" He then began to use very bad language and said he came on purpose to murder her, and he should have murdered all who were in the house if he could have got in. He had never before attempted to do his mother an injury, though he had repeatedly said he would. He never showed any of this violence before his father's death to my knowledge. I think I have heard that he did so once.*

*John Peachey said: I have known Thomas Harvey ever since I was a little boy. I am 29. I live in front of Mrs. Harvey's orchard. On Saturday night, a little past eight, I saw Thomas Harvey in that orchard. The orchard adjoins Mrs. Harvey's garden. When I first saw him he was walking across towards his mother's house; and then he stopped against the wall a little while. I did not see anything in his hand. Afterwards saw him walk back again, the same way as he came: the next time he ran across in the same direction. Yesterday morning I went and looked at the place where he was standing and there was a good big place where the grass was shuffled away, as though a man had been standing there for some time. There are some boards up, which prevented my seeing where he went afterwards. The place where he stood was about 20 yards from the garden gate. Between a quarter of an hour and twenty minutes after, I saw him, I heard the cry of "murder." I went to the house. The cry proceeded from Mrs. Richard Harvey. I saw nothing of Thomas Harvey then. I was then informed that Mrs. Harvey had been murdered. I did not see her. I worked with Thomas Harvey two years ago last March, and his brother came and talked to him about the land. I heard him say then he'd murder his mother and them too, and I saw him hold a rod hook (an implement for cutting osiers) up at his brother's head. He said he would murder him and his brother John too. He said, "I'll cut both your b— heads off," and I thought he would have done. I have not worked with him, nor had any conversation with him about the dispute since. He had on light jacket and a light pepper and salt cap.*

*William Collier: I heard the cry of "murder" on Saturday night, and saw Mrs. Harvey, jun., run out of the house. Jacobs also came and called "murder" and said "Come in Collier for God's sake, here's murder committed." He was bleeding from the head then, and I asked him who did it and he said "Tom Harvey;" I went into the house, Mrs. Witt was lying half way out of the back door and half in, and I went and picked her up. Mr. Jacobs then said, "For God's sake Collier go down the cellar;" but being alone I was afraid, I thought perhaps I might be murdered. To the best of my recollection Turner and George Muggleton came in, and we got a light and went down the cellar. Before that it was all in darkness. We then went down stairs close together. Mrs. Harvey was lying on the bricks in the cellar covered with blood; the floor was also covered with blood. Noticed cuts on the head, hands, &c. She was not quite dead, but died in about ten minutes. She never spoke. Had not seen Thomas Harvey for week. Have frequently heard him, during the last two years, threaten to "do for some of them" and then to make away with himself. Half the people in the town have heard him make use of similar language. He said it openly.*

*Thomas Hancock said: I know Thomas Harvey. Have known him for about three and twenty years. Lived within ten yards of him until this last three months. We often used to go out for walks together on a Sunday morning, and he has talked about his mother. He has told me often that he would knock her b- old brains out. He has said so often during the last two years. He has said that he would for his brother Dick. Last week he and I were working for Mr. Banyard, at sheaf carting. I heard him say that he and his boy had had an afternoon grinding up his tools, to murder his mother with. He said he thought there was not a knife in Ditton sharper than he'd got his brick-hammer. He was a bricklayer. He said he had been using one of the tools up at Mr. Woollard's place, and the other one he'd kept at home. It had not been used since he ground it up for the purpose. William Collier has talked to him and said he ought to consider his family as well as his property, and he has said "B- the property. I'll have her." He said "He'd burn her up after he had murdered her. He'd burn her up before she got to hell." He also said if he happened of his brother Dick, daylight or dark, he'd do for him. He also said " These are the shoes I mean to go to hell with," and he cocked his feet up.*

*Mr. Richard Sturges Harvey, a respectable-looking man, said : I am a tailor. I am executor of my late father. My father left a piece of land to my mother for life; and Thomas has occupied it. It is a piece of garden ground. After my mother's death, it was to be sold and the proceeds divided among the remainder of the family, not including Thomas. There are seven of us remaining. Thomas was excepted because he had his portion left to him by the will; and he has been wanting to take a piece from the portion left by my father to my mother; and has taken forcible possession of it, and dared any one to turn him out. He supposed he had not got his share, or that he had not got the portion that his father promised. He always said that his father promised him the whole piece; but it occurs to me that he never did, but only promised him the portion which was given to him. I can scarcely tell what was the cause of the quarrel, but I presume this to be a portion of the cause. I am not aware that there was any quarrel before. I believe the jealousy arose from my father making will in favour of my mother. I believe he entertained an idea that father would die without a will, and leave him in entire possession of what little property there was. My mother sent for me, and a will was made. He was angry with her and all of us for that. I can come to no other conclusion, for a better mother no man ever had. He has threatened me personally. A few years ago I went to his house and asked me what I meant to do. I said, I would do nothing; he said, "Why not ?" I said, "Because you won't reason with me." I promised, if he would send, to depute some one to come to an arrangement, but we never could. He said, " If I had a gun here I'd shoot you now." I said, "You are quite at liberty to do so; I've nothing to defend myself with ; if you like to leave my family and your family you can kill me, if you are so disposed." He made no attempt to do anything. He had said he would do for the lot (meaning the whole family). I have not had any conversation with him since.*

*It was not thought necessary on this occasion to call any more evidence though there were plenty of witnesses ready to depose to the violent language made use of by the murderer, both recently and for long period, and also as to the condition of the murdered woman.*

*The Coroner then addressed the jury. They would recollect that had explained to them the law regarding murder, manslaughter, and justifiable homicide, and their duty to inquire into the cause of the death of the person upon whose body they sat. A death was either natural, or it ensued either by accident or violence. As to natural death, that was quite out of the question in this case, and then came the point was the death the result of accident or violence? If it was not the result of accident, it must have been that of violence; and if of violence, then that violence was attributable to either of the three causes before-mentioned, murder, manslaughter, or justifiable homicide. He again entered into an explanation of these points, and dwelt upon the subject of provocation. He particularly enforced upon them the fact that it must be no slight provocation that would justify the crime of homicide, or reduce it to that of manslaughter. In order to constitute manslaughter there must no premeditated malice; and the provocation, if such were pleaded, must be given immediately before the homicide, that time could be given for the person committing the attack to get cool collected. He*

then turned to the bearings of the case under consideration, and remarked that this had, according to the evidence, been a pre-meditated affair for two years and upwards. Harvey was continually talking about it; for two years the man had been threatening to murder his mother and brothers. The evidence gave cause enough why they should believe he had cherished malice against the whole family. In other cases it was difficult to trace an assignable cause for offence of this kind, for frequently no malice could be proved; the law, however, adjudged that the fact of killing implied malice. In this case, the police had very properly produced evidence to show there was malice, and the result was that long-cherished animosity on the part of Thomas Harvey had been proved, so that no plea of provocation could be made in the present instance. The Coroner then went carefully through the evidence, commenting on the conduct of the murderer, his walking and subsequent running in the orchard, evidently showing that he had just made up his mind to the commission of the crime that he had long premeditated: then as to the threats made use of; and lastly as to the circumstances of the murder. The Jury after a brief consultation returned verdict of Wilful Murder against Thomas Harvey.

*THE FUNERAL MRS. HARVEY.* On Wednesday afternoon, at two o'clock, the body of the late Mrs. Harvey was interred in Ditton church-yard, in the same grave that contains the remains of her late husband. The mourners consisted of the four sons of the deceased, with members of their families, and Mr. Shadrach Jacobs, who appeared with his head bound up, and who was evidently still suffering from his wounds: there were also a succession of mourners in the train, making the number in all about thirty.

*SUICIDE OF THE MURDERER, AND SUBSEQUENT DISCOVERY OF THE BODY.* Although the police had been unremitting in their exertions to find the murderer, dead or alive, until Thursday afternoon no clue as to his whereabouts was discovered. Rumour, has, as usual, been busy, and we were informed of Harvey's being taken at fifty different places at once; people on Thursday were actually waiting to see him brought from the station, under the impression that he had been taken alive at Dullingham. It had been freely stated that the accused has been seen in nearly twenty different places since the murder. It was stated, too, that on Saturday he drew some money in Cambridge, and singularly enough it turned out that one Thomas Harvey did draw some money by cheque at Messrs. Foster's, but the cheque had been endorsed to him, and Mr. Harvey, in addition, was a highly respectable builder, and no connection of the accused. Another Harvey also drew money from the savings-bank on Saturday, but this, though a Harvey of Ditton, proved to be William, a brother of the accused. The accused's wife averred that to the best of her belief he had very little money when he left, and adds that she was with him in Cambridge on Saturday afternoon, that she accompanied him home, and they reached Ditton about seven o'clock. They passed the house of the deceased and went home to tea. Afterwards, about eight, her husband left, saying, "My dear, I am going up into the field, and will bring home those stumps old Isaac has left there." As he passed out he kissed his youngest child (two years old), which was in an elder sister's arms, but there was nothing unusual in that, and she has never seen him since. She described him as the best of fathers and husbands, but adds that he has lately been excited about the property.

On Tuesday night copies of the depositions taken at the inquest were forwarded to the Home Secretary, with a request that a Government reward should be offered; but no answer was received before the necessity of no such step became apparent. It was certain that the murderer, with no means of paying his travelling expenses by rail, could hardly have proceeded far; and knowing the neighbourhood so well as he did, many people were of opinion that he was still lurking in the fields within a few miles, maintaining himself with wheat, or as best he could. Others were only strengthened in the conviction that he had destroyed himself, and this ultimately proved to the case; for on Thursday afternoon all surmise and much anxiety were set at rest by the discovery of his body; and there can now be no doubt that his suicide followed closely upon the murder.

About four o'clock on Thursday afternoon Mr. Stephen Smith, a gentleman well known in the village and neighbourhood, was superintending a thrashing machine in corn field in his occupation, situate within the village, when he happened to cast his eye cursorily upwards into an elm tree growing in the hedge between his and the next field, and in at a considerable height he saw a human figure. This, at first, he supposed to be one of his own men in the tree; but perceiving it more closely he was at once struck with the thought that it might be the body of Harvey. He called the attention of his men, who were twelve in number, to the fact, and soon afterwards some Borough and County policemen, having been apprised of the discovery, arrived at the spot, and one of them, p-c. Kirbyshire, of the Borough force, ascended a ladder leaning against the tree, and after a rope had been procured, he let the body down thereby into a cart, and it was immediately conveyed to an outhouse attached to the "Ditton Plough," where it awaited the Coroner's inquisition on the following morning. Beneath the tree, on the other side of the hedge, the men discovered the fatal hammer, and a shut-knife, the blade of which was open. The body when found betrayed nauseous marks of decomposition, and parts of the face and neck were flyblown. There were two stabs in the neck, which led to the inference that the deceased had attempted (o kill himself by that means before hanging himself, or that after his suspension he inflicted the wounds to shorten the duration of what we shall hereafter show must, in all probability, have been an agonising state. The knife blade distinctly indicated the depth of the incision, having marks of blood on each side parallel with each other. The hammer, too, confirmed all the conjectures as to the horrible use to which it had been put. The sharp side has an edge of about three inches in length ; and the other side was round and blunt - the instrument resembles a small axe. The blood marks were more visible on the blunt side, strengthening the inference that that was the means of beating in the skull of the deceased's victim.

As to the tree, it is at a distance of about 300 yards from the back part of the scene of the murder. The direction is easily distinguished, and now that the body is found, indications of the murderer's course may be traced. At the back of the late Mrs. Harvey's house is a small yard, and again behind that is the orchard. Beyond the orchard, and parallel with it is a garden, and then a pasture, in the occupation of Mr. Palmer, beyond which is a corn field occupied by Mr. Stephen Smith. Between the two fields there is a hedge, in which grow two or three fine elm trees, and one of these is in close contiguity to some stacks of corn in Mr. Smith's field. It is very evident that when the son had accomplished his foul intent on his widowed mother, he passed through the orchard, over the garden, at one side of which there is a gap, and at the other he appears to have made one. The tree, supposing this to be the case, would now be directly opposite him, over Mr. Palmer's field, at a distance of about 150, or rather more, yards. It is astonishing that the body has so long escaped the notice of passers by. It is a fact that during the whole of Wednesday, and Thursday till the body was found, no less than twelve of Mr. Smith's men were employed almost within arm's reach of the tree making a stack, and that not one of them had for a moment thought of looking up the tree; other persons too, have been close to the spot; and a thrashing machine has been work there all the week. The men now say that they could have reached the body from the stack with a pitchfork. We heard that the Chief Constable himself had passed under the tree; but it appears that nobody thought of looking there. The height of the tree is about 60 feet, and the body of Harvey was found suspended on a branch at a height of about 30 feet. He had himself with the scarf he had round his neck, which was so exceedingly short that he had but a very slight drop, and the conclusion is that he died in protracted agonies, and this inference is supported by the fact that he had hold of a branch near him by his left hand, by which, it is possible, he was endeavouring to save himself. The face looked, as might be expected, very black; the hands were dirty, no doubt from his actions in his mother's cellar and from climbing the tree. The body smelt very strongly, and we have no doubt, as the verdict at the inquest went to show, that the unhappy wretch had been hanging since Saturday, and that he crossed from his mother's house to the tree, in the direction we have indicated, immediately after he had imbued his hands in her blood.

*THE INQUEST* An inquest was held on the body of the wretched murderer at the Plough inn—the place which was so long the residence of his deceased parents—on Friday morning; before Mr. Barlow coroner, and the following jury:—Messrs. Thomas Kent, (foreman), Stephen Smith, Thomas Tuddenham, Henry Muggleton, Fison Spalding, Richard Gibson, Robert Grange, William Burton, Robert Burling, William Pamplin, George Edwards, Asa Hollingsworth, and John Morley.

*The was a number of other persons outside the room, from Cambridge and elsewhere.*

*The Coroner explained at length the points of difference in an act of self-destruction committed through temporary insanity and through malice aforethought, cautioning the Jury against being guided in arriving at a verdict by anything they knew or had heard; but by the evidence solely. He also explained that the offence of *felo de se* was regarded by the law as one of the greatest gravity.*

*Mr. Stephen Smith one of the Jury, said: I am farmer at Fen Ditton. That is my grass meadow which a field of Mr. Palmer's and a garden separates from the late Mrs. Harvey's orchard. Mr Palmer's field joins my field on the other side. The distance from the tree at the corner of my field across Mr. Palmer's field to the orchard is between two hundred and three hundred yards. Lately, for two days, I have had twelve men working near the tree. They worked there yesterday (Thursday) and the day before. Yesterday afternoon, I was there myself. I went up into the old field, as we call it, where the men were working. At about a quarter to four I saw man up the tree in the division fence, about 46 yards from where I stood. He appeared to be in standing position, supporting himself by holding with his left hand on a projecting bough. His arm was quite straight out. On going nearer, I went within about ten paces of the tree, and I then saw it was Thomas Harvey. I could then see the body more distinctly. I called one of men. I supposed, from the position in which he was, that he was alive. I told the man I called to look up the tree, and afterwards said "Do you see who it ?" He said "No: who is it?" I said "It's Tom Harvey.\* I am quite aware there was warrant issued by the Coroner to commit him for the wilful murder of his mother, Ann Harvey. I was on the jury the time the warrant was issued. When I told the man it was Tom Harvey, he turned quite pale. I said "Don't be alarmed : we'll have him make no noise." On going nearer I saw his feet hanging down, and discovered was not standing as I had thought. I said to the man "He's hung - he's dead." The men that were working all came and looked at him. I ordered one of them, Wm. Hart, to get a ladder, and when he had got it, I told him to go up and see what kind of a state was he was in. My man called from the tree and said he must have been hanging a long time as the body smelled very much. When I found the body in that state I ordered it to be left till the policeman came. Soon afterwards several policemen came and I lent them a rope. They lowered his body with the rope, placed it in a cart, and took it down to the plough. That was the body of Thomas Harvey. One of my men went to the other side of the hedge, and picked up at the foot of the tree a bricklayer's hammer, a shut knife open; they both had blood on but most was on the knife. They also found on the other side of the hedge a portion of the scarf by which he was hanging. I gave them to Marsh the policeman. I have known Thomas Harvey for 30 years. I knew his parents, his family, his brothers and so on. Since I have known him I have never known him to show the slightest symptoms of insanity, but he has had a very bad temper. I never heard that any of his relatives have been insane. I have never known him have fits of epilepsy or anything of that kind. I should say he was a man of very revengeful and violent temper, not from insanity, but when any one displeased him. He is a bricklayer: I should say about 45 years of age. I saw him in Cambridge Cattle Market on Saturday, about one o'clock, talking with a person named Jacobs, from Stretham. I saw nothing strange in his manner: he was laughing and talking, and so on. About nine o'clock that night, some persons came to my house, and requested to come down to Mrs. Harvey's, Tom Harvey was knocking his mother about, and they were afraid he would kill her. I went as fast I could to the house, and when I arrived I found Mrs. Witt near the back door, sitting in a chair, with a very severe wound on her face, and she was bleeding very much on the head and face. She was so much disfigured that I did not know her. I inquired who she was, and the persons in the house said, " Mrs. Witt." I asked where Mrs. Harvey*

was, and they said, "Down in the cellar." I went down into the cellar, and there I saw her. She moved her hand once, and she was dead directly afterwards. Her head was dreadfully battered, and her brams seemed knocked out. I know the orchard and back of the premises. Persons could easily get thence to the tree of which have spoken. Altogether, from the kitchen door to the tree, the distance would not exceed 400 yards. After that, I saw Mrs. Richard Harvey sitting nursing her baby, and I inquired of her if any man had been in the house. She told me she had seen the glimpse of a man pass the water-tub into the house. She heard some one call out, "Oh!" She thought at first it was her husband just returned, having a joke with his mother. She said that she could not swear it was Thomas Harvey, but she believed it was. I said, "Now, we'll find him somewhere." I found that there was policeman anywhere near; so I sent for the parish-constable, and searched for him in his house, but we did not find him.

*Edward Kirbyshire : I am one of the borough police force. I was at Ditton yesterday afternoon with several other borough officers and two of the county. We heard report that Harvey had been seen to run across a field near to, and we all went in chase, expecting to find him alive. We ran till we came to this tree, where the body was hanging. I ascended the ladder (having seen before went that he was hanging) and waited for a rope. He was hanging about 30 feet from the ground. About 25 feet from the bottom of the tree was a branch projecting out from the trunk of the tree, about a yard higher is another one of the same description, and on this latter he was hanging. The scarf I produce is part of that which was on his neck; the other part is still on deceased's neck. There was about a foot drop. The man was very much decomposed, and smelled very much. There appeared, too, some cuts in the neck, as though made by a knife, and they were all fly-blown. A rope was procured. He was let down into a cart and brought here. That is the body which the jury have viewed this morning. I knew nothing whatever of him before.*

*Shadrach Jacobs, deceased's uncle, in addition to the evidence given at his sister's inquest, said that he had never known the deceased, Thomas Harvey, to betray any symptom of insanity, nor did insanity exist in any members of the family. He was not subject to fits. He always appeared to him be a perfectly sane man, but he was very violent and passionate, quarrels had been going on between him and his mother for two years or more about property; and he had threatened to murder her and his two brothers, John and Richard.*

*Mrs. Witts' son, very respectable young man, said he should decidedly say that there was nothing about deceased like insanity.*

*The Coroner here said that the finding of the body and the deceased's animus in doing the deed he did had been proved, and, as there appeared to be no evidence which in the slightest degree questioned the man's sanity, he would not burden the evidence with all the statements that had been gone through at the former inquest. He proceeded to sum up the evidence, which he said was contained in a nutshell, and left it to the jury to find a verdict of *felo de se*, if they thought there was no evidence on the depositions to show insanity, or of temporary insanity if they thought the evidence showed it. As to the depositions, he saw nothing showing the latter.*

*The jury, after five minutes' consideration, during which the room had been cleared, returned a verdict of *felo de se*, or as the foreman expressed it, they found that at the time deceased committed self-destruction on the 17th, he was of sound mind, and that nothing further possessed him than angry feeling.*

*Captain Davies said he ought to thank the people at Ditton, more especially Mr. S. Smith and Mr. Banyard. jun., for the co-operation they had given the police force in finding out the facts of the case. Mr. Smith especially had been unremitting in making the matter known, and it was through his*

*instrumentality and co-operation that almost every policeman in the county and some in the adjoining counties were made acquainted with the facts of the crime.*

*The Coroner before leaving the room issued his warrant for the burial of the body between the hours of 9 and the same evening: the burial took place in the Church-yard, though the funeral rites, as is usual in cases of self-murder were denied by the Church, and in addition to this, the deceased forfeits to the Crown all his earthly property.*

*MRS WITTS' STATE OF HEALTH: When our report left Mrs Witts had taken a decided turn for the better, and she expressed much satisfaction at having nothing more to fear from Harvey.*

*The burial of the murderer is the closing scene of that dread tragedy which during the week has filled everybody's mind with awe, and created an unprecedented amount of excitement in the neighbourhood. Everyday the universal inquiry has been as to whether the murderer was found, or some other question relating to the all pervading topic. From the time the news of the murder was first promulgated to the finding of the body of the wretched malefactor, the excitement has continued unabated; let us hop that a salutary effect will be produced and that it will be long ere such dire incitements arise to agitate the public mind again.*

*The whole drama is of the most revolting character. A murder under any circumstances is horrible enough; but the murder of a mother by her eldest son, deliberately and in cold blood, after two years' contemplation and planning and to gratify a paltry revenge arising from unsatisfied avarice, outrages every feeling of humanity. No wonder that the monster who could deliberately perpetrate such a crime, should have been his own executioner. During that suspension in the tree what horrible torment he must have suffered in body and mind. How fearful must have been his struggles; how dreadful his thoughts. We shudder at the reflections which the picture suggests and gladly quit the contemplation of such atrocity punished by such an awful self-inflicted death.*