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Horrid Murder.

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HORRID MURDER.

Capt. James Purinton, of Augusta, District of Maine, murdered his Wife and six Children and himself.

AUGUSTA, JULY 11, 1806.

AT an early hour on Wednesday morning last the inhabitants of this town, were alarmed with the dreadful information, that Capt. *James Purinton*, of this place, in cool blood, had murdered his wife, six children, and himself.—His oldest son, with a slight wound, escaped, and his second daughter was found desperately wounded, and probably supposed dead by the father.—Between the hours of 2 and 3, a near neighbor, Mr. Dean Wyman, was awakened by the lad who escaped, with an incoherent account of the horrid scene from which he had just fled; he, with a Mr. Ballard another neighbor, instantly repaired to the fatal spot, and here, after having lighted a candle, a scene was presented which beggars all description.—In the outer room lay prostrate on his face, and weltering in his gore, the perpetrator of the dreadful deed—his throat cut in the most shocking manner, and the bloody razor lying on the table by his side.—In an adjoining bed room lay Mrs. Purinton in her bed, her head almost severed from her body; and near her on the floor, a little daughter about ten years old, who probably hearing the cries of her mother ran to her relief from the apartment in which she slept, and was murdered by her side.—In another apartment was found the two oldest and the youngest daughters, the first aged 19, dreadfully butchered; the second desperately wounded, reclining her head on the body of the dead infant 18 months old, in a state of horror and almost totally insensible.—In the room with the father, lay in bed with their throats cut, the two youngest sons, the one 8, the other 6 years old—and in another room was found on the hearth, most dreadfully mangled, the second son aged 12; he had fallen with his trowsers under one arm, with which he had attempted to escape.—On the breast work over the fire place, was the distinct impression of a bloody hand, where the unhappy victim probably supported himself before he fell. The whole house seemed covered with blood, and near the body of the murderer lay the deadly axe. From the surviving daughter we have no account of this transaction; her dangerous situation prevents any communication, and her expectations are entertained of her recovery. From the son, aged 17, we learn the following. That he was awakened by the piercing cries of his mother, and involuntarily shrieking himself, he leaped from his bed and ran towards the door of his apartment; he was met by his father with an axe in his hand (the moon shone bright) who struck him, but being so near to each other the axe passed over his shoulder and one corner of it entered his back, making a slight wound; his father then struck at him once or twice and missed him; at this moment his younger brother, who slept in the same bed with him, jumped from it and attempted to get out at the door; to prevent this the father attacked him, which gave the eldest an opportunity to escape. During this dreadful conflict, not a word was uttered. From the appearance of the wounds generally, it seems to have been the design of Purinton to dis sever the heads from the bodies, except the two youngest, whose throats it is supposed were cut with a razor.—The oldest daughter and second son had several wounds, the propable consequence of their resistance. We have no evidence to lead us satisfactorily to the motives for this barbarous and unnatural deed. Capt. Purinton was 46 years of age, and had lately removed from Bowdoinham to this town—an independent farmer with a handsome estate, of steady, correct, and industrious habits, and of a good character, and fair reputation, and strongly attached to his family. He had been heard lately to say, that he felt much distressed at the unpromising appearance of his farm; that he should be destitute of bread for his family, and hay for his cattle, and dreaded the consequences. The Sunday before his death, it is said, he wrote to his brother, and informed him that on the reception of the letter he should be dead, and requested him to take charge of his family. In the letter was a death's head marked out, and it was sealed with black. It was found on Monday by his wife, and gave her the greatest alarm and uneasiness. This her husband perceived, and learning the cause, he attempted to console her by assurances that he had no intention of committing suicide, but that he had a presentiment of his approaching death.—His conduct the day preceding and during the last and bloody scene of his life, seems marked with the utmost cool-

ness and deliberation. Towards the close of the day he ground the fatal axe, and when the family retired to bed, he was left reading the bible. The jury of inquest have brought him in guilty of wilful murder of his wife and six children, and that as a felon he did kill and murder himself. We do not recollect that the annals of Massachusetts can furnish a transaction so distressing. The bodies of Mrs. Purinton and her children were interred in the common burying ground; Capt. Purinton in the high way adjoining the same, and the deadly axe and razor buried with him. Their funeral took place yesterday afternoon, attended by an immense concourse of people. The church service was performed at the grave over the bodies of Mrs. Purinton and children, by the Rev. Mr. Haskell, in a very solemn and impressive manner.

LINES ON THE HORRID MURDER.

OH! 'tis a painful task indeed,
Such horrid deeds to tell—
It makes our very hearts to bleed,
While on this theme we dwell.

Oh! the depravity of man!
What wickedness we find
Lurks in the breast when void of grace,
Of all the human kind.

And while you read this mournful tale,
Methinks I hear you sigh—
"Oh! how it wounds my throbbing heart!"
And tears burst from each eye.

'Twas on the eighth of July last,
Before the dawn of day,
Then this vile Purinton arose
And did his children slay.

In Massachusetts he did dwell,
Augusta was the town
In which this tragic scene befel:—
A monster there was found.

When all was still—calm was the night—
The babes in sweet repose—
The dear partner of his life,
This harden'd wretch arose:

Six children dear he then did kill,
And his fond wife likewise;
The laws of God and nature broke;
And all its tender ties.

And to complete his wicked plan
He coolly did pursue—
Alas! poor wretched, guilty man,
Himself he also slew.

O Purinton! now thou art gone,
All cover'd o'er with guilt,
To be rewarded for thy crimes;
For all the blood thou spilt!

Behold they lay like slaughter'd lambs,
In beds, and on the floor—
Their eyes were clos'd, their spirits fled—
Laid drench'd in purple gore.

O! what an awful sight to view
The bloody victims there!
All murder'd by a father's hand,
And she that did them bear.

Sweet children dear, we mourn thy fate—
It wounds the feeling heart—
It pains the mind most sensibly,
Like a keen piercing dart.

Mysterious are the ways of GOD
With us; poor sinful dust,
Yet all his ways are right and good,
For he's a GOD that's just.

Great GOD protect us from such crimes;
Guard us from ev'ry ill—
O let us all now learn in time
To do thy holy will.

—The house in which the murder was committed, has been burnt, with all the beds, bloody cloths, &c.