Horrid Murder.

Peter Edes
HORRID MURDER.

Capt. James Purinton, of Augusta, District of Maine, murdered his Wife and six Children and himself. AUGUSTA, JULY 11, 1806.

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, had murdered his wife, six children, and himself. — His oldest son, with a slight wound, escaped, and his second daughter was found dead, and probably suppurated dead by the father. — Between the hours of 2 and 3, a near neighbor, Mr. Dean Wyman, was awakened by the incoherent account of the horrid scene from which he had just fled; he, with Mr. Ballard another neighbor, instantly repaired to the scene, where, after having lighted a candle, a scene was presented which beggars all description. — In the outer room lay prostrate on his face, a man, apparently murdered; the perpetrator of the crime — In the room with the father, lay in bed with their heads from the bodies, except the two youngest, the one 8, the other 6 years old — and in another room was found on the hearth, most dreadfully mangled, the second son aged 18; he had fallen with his trousers under his body; and near her on the floor, a little daughter aged 12; he had fallen with his trowsers under 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, reeling 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 thighs 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 18; he had fallen with his trousers under his arm, with which he had attempted to escape. — On a cloth work over the fire place, was the distinct impression of a bloody hand, where the unhappy victim probably supported himself on the table. The whole house seemed covered with blood, and near the body of the murdered man, was the deadly axe. From the surviving daughter, 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 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, and fell 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 several times 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 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 discover the heads from the bodies, except the two youngest, whose throats is suppurated cut with a razor. The eldest daughter and second son had several wounds, the probable consequence of their resistance. We have no evidence to lead us satisfactorily to the motives for this horrid and unnatural deed. Capt. Purinton was 46 years of age, and had lately removed from Bowdoinham to this town — an industrious farmer with a handsome estate, of steady character, and industrious habits, and of a good reputation. — The laws of God and nature broke. — From the surviving daughter, 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 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, and fell 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 several times 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 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 discover the heads from the bodies, except the two youngest, whose throats is suppurated cut with a razor. The eldest daughter and second son had several wounds, the probable consequence of their resistance. We have no evidence to lead us satisfactorily to the motives for this horrid and unnatural deed. Capt. Purinton was 46 years of age, and had lately removed from Bowdoinham to this town — an industrious farmer with a handsome estate, of steady character, and industrious habits, and of a good reputation. — The laws of God and nature broke.

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