

# THE MIRFIELD MURDERS.

## CONFESSION OF PATRICK REID.

Immediately after the trial of Patrick Reid and Michael M'Cabe, and after sentence of death had been passed upon them, Mr. Robert Dale, the attorney of Reid, communicated to Mr. Matthews (M'Cabe's Counsel), a confession made to him by the prisoner Reid previous to his trial. Mr. Matthews thereupon communicated with Mr. Justice Patteson the purport of that confession, which, we understand, is to the following effect:—

That on the 12th day of May, Reid went to Mr. Wraith's house, about twenty-five minutes to one o'clock; that he conversed with the servant girl, Caroline Ellis, about five minutes, that he then took out the soldering iron he had that day borrowed of Kilty, and had concealed in his basket, and struck Caroline Ellis a severe blow on the back of the head. She shrieked out and staggered to the back door, when he struck her again and felled her to the ground, and Mr. Wraith coming at that moment from the cellar into the passage, which connects the kitchen with the two front parlours, with a silver pint containing beer, in his hand, he (Reid) struck him a violent blow on the head with the iron, in doing which the iron flew from the handle, and Mr. Wraith staggered into the parlour. Reid then returned and got the kitchen poker and ran to the parlour, and met Mrs. Wraith running out to the front door. He then struck her two or three blows on the head, and felled her to the ground. He went into the parlour, and Mr. Wraith was then laid bleeding on the floor, insensible. He rifled his pockets, took his keys out, and opened the drawers with them. He then heard a knock at the kitchen door, which he thought was Caroline Ellis getting up. He went to the kitchen, and found her perfectly still, and returned. He then got some money out of the drawers, took the watch from Mr. Wraith, and the ring from Mrs. Wraith's finger, and heard another knock at the door. He thereupon went to the kitchen door, and slightly opened it, when he saw the other prisoner, M'Cabe, who inquired if they wanted anything in his line, and he (Reid) replied "No, sir," and thinking M'Cabe was a stranger, and would not recognise him, he shut and bolted the door. He then returned and ransacked the drawers, and found in them a razor case containing two razors. He took one and cut the throats of all the three parties, then washed his hands and wiped them on the towel. He then quitted the house, locked the kitchen door, and threw the soldering iron and the key into the well near the back door, and then hurried towards his own home.

Mr. Seymour, the counsel of Reid, who was also aware of Reid's confession previous to his trial, has communicated the same to Mr. Justice Patteson. Proper representations will also be made by the parties to Sir George Grey, the Secretary of State.

Soon after the prisoners had entered the condemned cell, M'Cabe addressed the prisoner Reid and entreated him to say whether he (M'Cabe) knew anything of the murder or not. Reid in reply said—"No, you did not; if I had thought you had known anything about it I should have murdered you too." Reid then told M'Cabe that he had brought upon himself his own condemnation by the false statements which he had made about the affair. M'Cabe admitted this, but said he did it for the best. Whilst in conversation, the storm of thunder which occurred at the time of the murder, was referred to, when Reid said—"I thought when I heard it that it was God Almighty speaking to me; and I never have had that impression out of my mind." This conversation took place in the presence of the prison authorities. Reid had previously been visited by the Rev. Dr. Quigley, (the Roman Catholic priest), the prisoners being both of them members of that persuasion, and it is understood that Reid then corroborated the statement he made to Mr. Dale. It is not correct that the Chaplain of the Castle (the Rev. T. Sutton) was present at this interview, as stated by a contemporary.

Reid evinces great calmness and resignation to his fate. M'Cabe appears greatly affected by his position, and unable to bear up.

Of course nothing can yet be known as to the ultimate fate of M'Cabe. The case will doubtless undergo further investigation; it is not improbable that his life will be spared, and that he will be dealt with as an accessory after the fact, and subjected to a term of transportation. The verdict of the jury was clearly justified by the evidence; and it will remain for the Secretary of State to determine whether the confession by Reid can be relied upon. The evidence of Mary Hallas brings the two prisoners together, in close conversation, after the murder must have been committed; and there are other important portions of evidence irreconcilable with the entire innocence of M'Cabe, especially that given by Benjamin Morton, who swears to seeing both the prisoners within sixty yards of each other, proceeding in a direction towards Wraith's house.

Yesterday (Thursday), the prisoner Reid was visited by his father; and, as may be supposed, the interview was most affecting.