

THE MIRFIELD MURDERS.

MORE DETAILED CONFESSION BY THE CONVICT REID.

On Thursday morning last, a respite of the sentence of death passed upon Michael M'Cabe at the late Yorkshire Gaol Delivery, on his conviction, along with Patrick Reid, of the murders at Mirfield, was received from the Secretary of State, by Mr. Noble, the governor of York Castle. It will be remembered that Reid made a confession of his own guilt, and in general terms exculpated M'Cabe of any participation in the murders. On the afternoon of Thursday, however, Mr. Jackson, the solicitor for M'Cabe, waited upon Patrick Reid, who then made a more detailed confession, which was reduced to writing, and signed by him in the presence of witnesses, and in which he denies the correctness of the testimony of some of the most material witnesses called on the part of the prosecution as more immediately affecting the prisoner M'Cabe.

We have been favoured with an inspection of this document, which has been forwarded to the Secretary of State, who doubtless has recommended to her Majesty the respite of M'Cabe's sentence in order to allow time for further investigation. The following is a copy of the confession:—

*“The Condemned Cell, York Castle,
30th December, 1847.*

“I, Patrick Reid, now lying under sentence of death for the wilful murder of Caroline Ellis, at Mirfield, near Dewsbury, in the county of York, on the 12th day of May last, hereby acknowledge the justice of the sentence which has been passed upon me; and I do hereby solemnly and sincerely, and as I expect shortly to appear before God, declare that I alone am guilty of the murder of Caroline Ellis, James Wraith, and Ann Wraith, and that Michael M'Cabe now also lying under sentence of death, for the murder of the said Caroline Ellis, had nothing whatever to do with her murder, or the murders of James Wraith and Ann Wraith, any, or either of them.

“About a month previous to the murder the thought suggested itself to my mind that I would rob his house, having frequently conversed with the servant girl about the money he was possessed of.

“I got up about nine o'clock on the morning of the 12th May, and thinking it was Dewsbury fair, I would not go a-hawking that day. I afterwards changed my mind, and went out about ten o'clock to Kilty's house, which is distant from my father's house about forty yards. I saw Mrs. Kilty, and I then got the soldering iron from her. I never saw Kilty that morning. I then went home, and got my basket ready to go a-hawking, and put the soldering iron under the papers at the bottom of the basket. I had then resolved to rob and murder the family of Mr. Wraith. I then went over to Mirfield, and called at several places on my way. I called at Lockwood's house about half-past twelve, and proceeded from there down the footpath to Mr. Wraith's house. I went into the kitchen, and sat on the table talking to the servant girl (Caroline Ellis) who was cleaning the fender. After I had been in the house five or ten minutes, I took out the soldering iron and struck her on the head. She shrieked out and staggered to the door, which she tried to open. I prevented her and struck her again, and she then fell. I then went into the passage, and met Mr. Wraith coming out of the cellar with some beer in the silver tankard, and struck him a blow with the soldering iron. The iron flew out of the handle. Mr. Wraith staggered into the parlour. I met Mrs. Wraith coming into the passage to see what was the noise, and I struck her with the iron part of the soldering iron. I then went into the kitchen and got the poker, and struck them each two or three blows. I then rifled the pockets of Mr. Wraith, and took his watch, and took the ring off Mrs. Wraith's finger. I then heard a knock at the door, which I thought was Caroline Ellis getting up, and I went to the kitchen, but she was quite still, and I returned to the parlour. I then went to the kitchen door and opened it ajar, when I saw a person whom I did not then know, but who is the prisoner M'Cabe. M'Cabe inquired if I wanted anything in his way? I answered—“No, sir.” I thought the man would not know me; if he had, I should have murdered him too. I then shut and bolted the door and ransacked the drawers, and found in one of them a razor case, out of which I took one, and cut the throats of the three parties. I then washed my hands, and wiped them upon the towel. I then quitted the house, locked the kitchen door, and threw the soldering iron and key into the well, near the back door, and then went home by the footpath.

“The amount of money which I found in Mr. Wraith's house was between £8 and £9, which was all I got besides the watch and the wedding ring. When I got home I put the watch between the rafter and slates, but I do not know where it is now.

“I never was in the garden at all as sworn to by the little girl, nor in the oat field, nor did I stand at the laith end as sworn to by Benjamin Morton, but went the direct road home shortly after M'Cabe had been at the house.

“I had no hat on when I left the house, but the same cap which I had when I went, nor did I bring a hat out of the house with me.

“Witness— **PATRICK REID.**

“J. NOBLE, keeper of York Castle.

“ROBT. DD. JACKSON, clerk to Mr. Jackson,
solicitor, York.”

Previous to the last trial M'Cabe had suffered much from anxiety of mind and depression of spirits, but since Reid made his confession, M'Cabe has been much relieved. Reid, being a member of the Roman Catholic Church, has been regularly visited by two ministers of that persuasion, to whose spiritual instruction he has paid great attention. He has also been visited by his father and other members of the family, and, as may naturally be expected, the interviews were very affecting. The execution of this young man is fixed for Saturday next, the 8th inst., and he appears to be perfectly resigned to his fate. M'Cabe has not been visited, we believe, by any of his relations, a fact most probably attributable to their poverty, being dependent upon parochial aid for subsistence.

[Extracts from London contemporaries on the above trial will be found in our seventh page.]