

MURDER OF MISS HAMILTON.

New-York, March 29.

We have been obligingly favored with the following extract of a letter from the Rev. Dr. Blatchford, of Lansingburg, to his sons in this city, giving a circumstantial disclosure of the facts in relation to this unhappy and awful event. This extract will be read with deep interest, and the community will rejoice that the inhuman monsters are at last detected:—

Lansingburg, March 26.

"I presume you have heard that Thomas Lent, of the borough about six miles from Waterford, has been committed to jail as one of the murderers of Miss Hamilton. He was engaged in this guilty business with another, of the name of Sickler, a native of the same town. Lent has confessed all the particulars, to which he has subjoined his signature. They are briefly as follows:—Lent and Sickler had enlisted in the army, from which they deserted and returned home; but being pursued, they, to prevent being taken, determined to go to New-York. Sickler resolved to violate the chastity of the first female he should conveniently meet. They met Miss Hamilton in Athens, near her father's house. Sickler seized her with one hand round the waist, and with the other pressed upon her mouth. Lent took her by the legs.—They carried her about a quarter of a mile up to the fatal bridge. There Sickler committed the rape; and (as Lent says) on account of her strugglings and agonized resistance, Sickler asked Lent for his club, with which Sickler broke in her skull, and having robbed her of her gold earrings, threw the body into the creek. They both ran and reached a barn about two miles below Catskill, where they slept that night. In the morning they got on board a Troy sloop, arrived soon after in New-York, tarried there a day or two, and then returned on the west side of the river; stopped near Catskill, hired themselves out for a month, stole two horses, were overtaken, and committed to Catskill jail for the theft; broke jail and returned to the borough. After some time Sickler went to the westward, where he has resided nearly ever since, in the country of Cayuga. But the eye of God is upon the wanderings of the murderer, and he often takes from him the common prudence of the human mind. It was so in this case. Sickler had given frequent hints (obscurely indeed) that he and Lent had perpetrated the crime in question, but these hints were not regarded as any thing more than the vain boating of abandoned villainy. At last however, the thing was brought to light. Lent's wife was found reading by her husband; he asked her what; she said the Bible; he snatched it from her, swearing bitterly, and threw it into the fire;—she got it out again, and a quarrel ensued, in which he threatened her life, and told her he had killed one woman already, and would kill her. Her sister's husband, Isaac Armstrong, came in at this time, and heard the words. He mentioned them at Mr. Trip's, at whose house Sickler had been brought up, and where he had boasted of the crime. This brought to their recollection what they had heard Sickler say in Lent's presence, and mentioned it to Isaac Armstrong. He came down to Waterford, and told it to Mr. Franklin Livingston, the Deputy Sheriff, who went up and took Lent at his own risk; summoned the witness; and after several examinations, Lent confessed the whole. Mr. Livingston, empowered by the Recorder of Albany and the Lieut. Governor, set off in pursuit of Sickler last week, and I hope by this time has got in safe custody the other monster."

LONDON.

HOUSE OF COMMONS, FEB. 19.

Report of the Committee of Secrecy.

Mr. Bathurst brought up the Report of the Committee of Secrecy, which was read by the Clerk, and of which the following is the substance:

That it appears to your Committee, after a most attentive consideration of the documents submitted to them from various parts of the country, that attempts had recently been made to take advantage of distresses of the labouring and manufacturing classes of the nation, with a view not only to effect a Parliamentary reform on the principle of annual Parliaments and universal suffrage, but

to cause the total overthrow of all our institutions, and of every description of landed and funded property.

That this system of general spoliation chiefly proceed from the doctrines maintained by a number of societies distinguished by the title of "Spencean," whose tenets were principally drawn from the works of a visionary writer, published above twenty years ago. That at meetings of some of these societies it was urged, that Parliamentary Reform must be held out as the ostensible object of their efforts, and with a view to mislead their enemies; but that it was in fact only a half measure; and that the people ought to look to the possession of the land, and nothing short of that; and that, as to the constitution, of which so much had been said, this country had no constitution, for it was not to be found in any book, nor could any man tell what it was. In other societies founded on the Spencean principles, it had been maintained, that the only remedy for the grievances of the people was to hunt down the land-owners, and to deprive those still greater wretches the fundholders of their pretended rights.

It appeared also, that these, and other societies of a similar character, had been guilty of the most blasphemous and impious proceedings; and that, as they assumed to be of a convivial nature, their political discussions were followed by songs of the most inflammatory and seditious description, and by the recitation of profane parodies of the liturgy, and of various parts of the Holy Scriptures.

That in order to extend the principles of these societies over the whole Kingdom, the most active efforts were made by their various members; and in consequence, those principles were disseminated in speeches at public meetings to the discharged soldiers and sailors, and to the distressed labourers and manufacturers of the country; and that, in aid of this object, incredible activity had been used to disseminate cheap, and in many instances gratuitous publications, unfolding the doctrines of the societies.

That it had been proved to the entire satisfaction of your Committee, that a number of these various societies, acting in a body as delegates, conceived and declared that in their opinion the objects which they had in view might be and ought to be insured by an effort of the physical strength of the people to overpower the constitutional authorities. That they considered the first step which should be taken by them for this purpose, was by their individual exertions to discover and foment the discontents of the metropolis and its vicinity; and that returns of their proceedings were made by the individual delegates to the general body.

That it appears to your Committee that a plan was formed, by a sudden rising in the dead of night, to surprise the soldiers, and in the terror which would be thereby occasioned, to set fire to the town in various places, and to take possession of the Barracks, the Tower and the Bank. That to assist in the execution of this project, a formidable machine was invented with which the streets could be cleared of all opposing force. This plan was, however, relinquished as premature; and it was resolved that it would be more proper to ascertain the strength of the popular party, by convening meetings under the pretext of taking into consideration the legal mode of redressing the grievances; and a map of London having been examined, Spaffields was selected as the place whence an attack on the Bank and the Tower could with the greatest facility be made. That the first meeting at Spaffields was accordingly advertised for the 15th of November, and that printed and written placards were exhibited in all parts of the town, of one of which the following is a copy:—

"Britons to arms! The whole country only waits the signal from London. Break open the gunsmiths'. Arm yourselves with all sorts of instruments. No rise in the price of bread. No Regent. No Castle-rough. Off with their heads! No Taxes. No Bishops; they are only useless lumber.

N. B.—5000 of these bills are posted up in the town, and in the principle parts of the neighbourhood."

That the intended insurrection assumed all the symbols of the French Revolution. That a Committee of Public Safety was formed, consisting of twenty-four members,

That flags and cockades were prepared for the occasion. But that on the 15th of November, when the first meeting took place, there was no violence (although there was some plunder in the evening of the day), and that the meeting adjourned to the 2d of December, by which time it was hoped means might be found to accelerate the accomplishment of the projected undertaking.

That your Committee find that not a moment was lost in the interval between the first and second meeting, to take advantage of every circumstance which could further the attainment of the objects in view. Additional publications of an inflammatory nature were circulated every where. Endeavours were made to raise a general subscription for the support of those who had relinquished their ordinary occupations, to enable them to devote themselves to these purposes, which persons had hitherto chiefly been paid by a principal member of one of the Societies. A plan was formed for the seduction of the soldiers, by raising hopes of promotion in the event of their joining in the approaching attempt, and exciting discontent among them by a story of the landing of a large foreign force in the country. It was again recommended that the barracks should be the object of particular observation. Those quarters of the town where distress was most prevalent were visited by individuals appointed to inflame the people. Those warehouses along the river, and those shops in various parts of the town where arms were deposited, were carefully noted. A plan was also formed for the seduction of the sailors, by offering them additional pay under the new Government which was about to be established.

That immediately before the Meeting of the 2d December, many persons connected with these proceedings procured arms of various descriptions. It was thought that sufficient means had thus been obtained to carry on the intended operations for at least two hours, by which time it was supposed enough would be got from the gunsmiths, and other depots, to arm a considerable number of individuals. That your Committee have received undoubted information that about 250 pike-heads were forged, paid for, and delivered, as auxiliary to this purpose.

That an Address was introduced into several of the prisons of the Metropolis, exhorting the persons therein confined to rally round the standard that would be unfurled on the 2d of December. Cockades were conveyed to those persons, and they were promised that their liberation should be effected by force.

That on the 2d of December a waggon was hired, in which a flag that had been previously prepared, a quantity of ammunition, were secretly deposited. From this waggon several most inflammatory speeches were delivered to the assembled multitude, tending to excite a spirit of insurrection and violence. Particular cockades were exhibited in the hats of the speakers, who then displayed the flag, and left Spaffields, followed by great numbers of the people. They directly took the way into the city, broke open and plundered several gunsmiths' shops, and proceeded to the Tower, where they addressed the soldiers, exhorting them to open the gates and join them. Failing in this effort, they made no attempt on the Tower, but returned and attacked the Magistrates of the City, assembled in the Royal Exchange, into which a shot was fired.

In reviewing the whole of the transactions of the 2d of December, your Committee are firmly persuaded, that there was a deliberate plan of insurrection framed by a number of persons, who calculated on obtaining the active support of the multitude to carry it into effect; and that the outrages which were committed on that day were not the consequence of an ebullition of the moment, unauthorised and unsupported by previous concert. Notwithstanding the failure of this design at the time, the determination to execute it at a future period seemed then, and seems still, to be very generally entertained.

This is the general result of the evidence laid before your Committee with respect to the proceedings in the metropolis. They had no less painful a task to discharge in examining the information of a similar nature received from different parts of the country. The first object on which their attention was

fixed was the wide diffusion of associations, under the name of "Hampton Clubs," professing to have for their object Parliamentary Reform, by means of Universal Suffrage and Annual Parliaments. These country societies had frequent communications, by various methods, with the societies in London; and so extensively were their doctrines spread that almost every village in the country was comprehended in the general plan. The leading members of these societies exhibited the utmost activity. Petitions to Parliament, ready prepared, were sent down from London for the purpose of signature. Delegates were dispatched from the different parts of the country. These Delegates assembled about three weeks ago, and they are to assemble again in March.

Your Committee have no hesitation in stating what appears to them, from the information received from the great manufacturing districts of Lancashire, Nottinghamshire, Leicestershire, and Derbyshire, to be the object in view. At the greater number of the meetings in those districts, sentiments nothing short of revolutionary, were openly avowed.

The Spencean doctrines appear to your Committee to be widely diffused in the country by Delegates, who propagate them with the utmost industry. It is a general practice throughout the country to raise a small weekly subscription from the professors of those doctrines for the purpose of creating a fund to defray the expense of purchasing and distributing tracts, explanatory of their tenets. Many of these tracts are most artfully drawn up, to inculcate a hatred of what are in them called "the privileged classes." The people, it is stated in them, will be justified in destroying those classes. All religion is disavowed in them, as well as all loyalty. In a series of questions and answers in one of these tracts, to the enquiry "whether the member of the society would live without God or King," the reply is that "he abjures tyranny of every kind."

The most leading speakers in most of the meetings which had taken place, avowed opinions of the most seditious nature, and urged measures of insurrection. It was debated whether a Jacobin or a Loyalist was to be considered the best friend of his country.

A general idea was prevalent, that at some day, at no great distance, a general rising would take place; and the signal was anxiously expected for that event. At Manchester, and other places of a similar description, great exultation was manifested immediately previous to the meeting at Spaffields on the 2d of December, and the seizure of the Tower and of the Bank by the populace was confidently anticipated. The result of that meeting was most anxiously expected. Crowds went out on the London road to meet the mail coach, and the utmost disappointment was manifested, when it was ascertained that the riots which took place had been so speedily and so effectually quelled. The reformers in the districts mentioned by your Committee amounted it appeared, to several hundred thousand men. They kept a list of those of their number who were able-bodied and fit for action; and they had also a black book containing the names of those who refused to join them, and on whom they threatened vengeance. In some parts the Members of the Associations did not scruple to read openly the private communications which they received of the progress of the cause. In various places they assumed as a motto "Be ready; be steady."

The character and manners of the people engaged in these proceedings seemed easily to have changed. They calculated confidently on sharing the whole land of the country among them; and they pointed out the destruction of the churches as indispensably necessary to the perfection of their undertaking. The demand for guns just before the expected insurrection in London, was great beyond all precedent. The intention evidently was to obtain as many as possible by purchase; and if that should be insufficient, to resort to force. It was suggested that the implements of husbandry might easily be converted into powerful weapons of offence.

Your Committee have found that these secret associations, and these principles extended as far as Glasgow, and to other places in that neighbourhood; and they are