

THE
CONFESSION
OF
MARY COLE,

Who was Executed no Friday, 26th June, 1813:

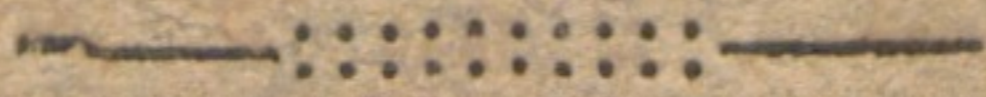
AT
NEWTON, SUSSEX COUNTY . . . J.
FOR THE
MURDER OF AGNES TEAURS,
HER MOTHER.



NEW-YORK:
PRINTED FOR THE PURCHASERS.

11640 - Law 07

SAVAGE BRUTALITY.



Sussex County, New-Jersey.

“THE most shocking, inhuman and unnatural murder has lately been discovered near this place, that I think I have ever heard of. A man by the name of *Cornelius A. Cole*, a Low Dutchman, from the county of Bergen, had moved into this county, and lived about five miles from this town. His wife’s mother, whose name was *Agnes Teaur*, lived with him. She was possessed of some property, and in consequence of some arrangement between them, she having conveyed some property to him, he had undertaken to pay to her fifty dollars a year during her life. She had also in the course of the last summer or fall, lent to him, or paid for him, six or eight hundred dollars, on accouns of lands which he had bought in this county. It seems that neither Cole nor his wife lived happily with the mother, nor either of them used her well.— In the month of December last, the old lady suddenly disappeared ; and it was said by Cole and his wife, that she had got offended, and had gone to her brother’s in Bergen ; although she had some relations living in the neighborhood, they

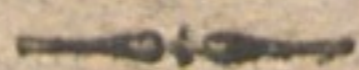
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supposing the case was so, took no trouble to make further inquiry concerning the matter.— About two months after this, Cole rented out his farm here, and moved back with his family into the county of Bergen, where he remained until last week, when the above discovery was made, in the following manner: The family who were living in the house which Cole had left, imagined that they perceived an unusual and unpleasant smell about the house, and supposing it to proceed from under the floor, pulled up some of the boards, and to their great astonishment, discovered the dead body of a female, partly covered up in a shallow hole, with ashes and some swingle tow. An alarm was immediately given, and the neighbors collected, when it was soon sufficiently ascertained that it was the body of the old lady, Cole's mother-in-law. A coroner's jury was immediately collected, and three or four men were dispatched to Judge Pennington, for a warrant to apprehend Cole and his wife. Before the coroner's jury, the person of the old lady was fully identified, although her face was much disfigured, and her features destroyed, yet she was well identified by a scar on one of her feet, which was proved by a woman who was examined before the jury. In the course of the examination, it appeared that her skull had been fractured by a severe blow of an axe or hammer, and her throat cut from one ear to the other. The jury found a verdict, from a variety of strong circumstances before them,

of “ wilful murder, committed by Cole and his wife.

“ The persons who were dispatched in pursuit of Cole and his wife, found them in a retired place, living in a very indifferent dwelling ; they were apprehended and taken before Judge Pennington, at Newark, on Wednesday or Thursday last, and by him committed to the jail of this place. What the nature of the examination before him was, and what, or whether any confessions were made before him, I have not heard. They were both delivered into the hands of the Sheriff of this county, on Friday morning last, and are now safely in the custody of the jailor. There are a number of reports in circulation, (as is usual on such occasions) with respect to the confessions of the facts and circumstances, made by the prisoners.—As far as I am able to collect, what I suppose is the truth on the occasion, (not having heard any confession made by the prisoners themselves) it appears to be this : The wife of Cole had voluntarily confessed, that she had, on the night of the 15th of December last, a quarrel and dispute with her mother ; that Cole, her husband, had gone to bed, and was asleep—had been in bed about ten minutes ; that her mother struck or kicked her ; that she, Mrs. Cole, took up an axe and struck her on the head, and knocked her down and then took a jack-knife and cut her throat ; that she then awakened Cole, and told him what she had done ; that he then

got up, but, after some little time, they concluded to let her lie till morning; that they went to bed, and left the old lady lying on the floor—in the morning, about sun-rise, they got up and put the body of the deceased into a small hole under the floor, and covered it over with ashes and tow. It is said, and no doubt it is true, that a short time after this, Cole went off to Bergen, or New-York, on business, and left his wife alone, where she remained a week without any living person about the house with her. The next morning after the murder was committed, Cole and his wife gave it out that the old lady had got affronted, and had gone off to Bergen—and so it was believed until the above discovery was made. The Oyer and Terminer sits here this week, when, no doubt, they will both be indicted and tried.”



AT at Court of Oyer and Terminer, held in Sussex County last week, at which Judge Pennington presided, *Cornelius A. Cole* and *Mary Cole*, his wife, were tried for the murder of *Agnes Teaur*. *Mary Cole* was convicted, but her husband, *Cornelius A. Cole*, was acquitted of the murder.

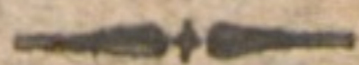
Cornelius A. Cole was also indicted for concealing the murder; to this indictment he pleaded guilty. The facts which appeared on the trial

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of Mary Cole, in part, made out from her own confessions, after she was apprehended, were in substance as follow: Agnes Teaur, the deceased, was the mother of Mary Cole; she was her only child:—Mary Cole and her husband, with two small children and the deceased lived together in one house, and made one family. Some time in December last, after some of the neighbors had left the house, where they had spent the evening; it was late; not far from twelve o'clock, the husband had gone to bed, in the same room. Mary Cole and her mother, the deceased, quarrelled; in this quarrel Mary knocked her mother down with an axe, and immediately cut her throat. It did not appear that her husband any way aided his wife. In one of the relations of the facts made by Mary Cole, she in some measure endeavored to exculpate herself by saying that her mother, in the quarrel, approached her (Mary) in a threatening manner with a knife; at othertimes she acknowledged the facts of knocking her mother down with an axe, and cutting her throat, without detailing any of the accompanying circumstances. After this was done, the husband acknowledges that he, at the request of his wife, assisted in placing the corpse under the floor of the kitchen, and doing a variety of acts to conceal the murder and screen his wife. In March, Cole and his wife moved out of the county, and rented the house they then lived in, leaving the corpse under the floor, where it was discovered about a fortnight ago.

and Cole and his wife were apprehended in Bergen county, to which they had removed in March. The prosecution was contended with ability, decorum and humanity by Mr. Southard, district attorney, and the prisoners defended by Mr. Halsey and Freylinghuysen, with great eloquence and strength of argument. The object aimed at by the counsel of Mary Cole, was to lessen her crime to that of manslaughter. Her conviction was perfectly satisfactory to all who heard the trial, and she was sentenced to be hung on Friday the 26th inst.

Cornelius A. Cole was sentenced to two years imprisonment in the State Prison, and pay a fine of 250 dollars for concealing the murder.



The following Journal and Confession was taken by a person who attended Mary Cole while in Prison, and to the place of execution, and may be relied on as correct.

When I first visited Mary Cole, I found her bound in chains in the prison, and seemed in great exercise of mind, and great agony; yea, her soul was exceeding sorrowful, even un-

to death ; the exercise of her mind was such that threw her into chills and sweats. I asked her what she thought of the world to come, telling her she had not eternal life in her when she committed the horrible deed for which she was shortly about to suffer, yet that mercy which was shewn to David and the thief on the cross, and others, was still held out to her, and that God would not cast out any penitent sinner who sought his mercy ; that though her sins, as mountains, rose and reached to heaven, yet mercy was above the seas, and she still might be forgiven. I told her what a great sin it was for her to kill her mother. She said she did not like to hear any thing on that subject. I told her not to deceive herself, but to behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world ; pointed out his greatness and powers to save ; that he was full of compassion and love ; that his mercy endureth forever ; that it was for just such as her that Christ died, and that they that were whole need no physician, but they that were sick. She made answer, that she knew and felt that all her sins was past away, and with great firmness and composure professed great confidence in God as a sin pardoning God. I was greatly amazed at the great change professed. I shortly after left her, desiring her to watch and pray, and look to God every moment, for she had but a short time to live.

In the afternoon I visited her again; she still professed to be happy, but some of those who were present on this occasion could not believe her testimony, on account of her hard expressions concerning her mother. She frequently wept much, and wished she had died when young, saying that her mother was always very hard with her;—that when her father was dead, she had no one to take her part, and that for a whole year together, her mother would sleep with herself and husband in the same bed, though another was provided for her. She requested me to inform her relations at Bergen, that she wished them to be kind to her child, a boy about three years old.

At night I visited her again at her request, and found there a young minister, who sung a hymn with her; and it appeared to me as though her poor disconsolate soul fed upon it. But, oh! her appearance was awful; her eyes were so wild and distorted, as to appear (comparatively speaking,) like two balls of fire, and every other mark of distress and horror. This being the last night she had to live, I staid with her till after 12 o'clock at night; all this time her coffin lay by her side. I asked her if she was afraid to remain there that night alone, but she answered no; so I prayed with her, committed her to the care of Jehovah, and left her.

Next morning being the last she ever was to see in this world, I visited her early. The keep-

er had taken her chains off, and she requested me to read for her. She told me more than once, that on the awful night the murder took place, her mother made her fast in the house, and came on her with a knife to kill her: and she herself was so filled with fear, and in such a passion, that she knew not what she did. It appears that she and her mother could not agree; therefore, I asked her why she did not leave her mother; to which she answered, that she did, but that her mother would follow her and her husband wherever they went, and seemed to say that they could not get clear of her. I told her to expect nothing but death, for I had seen her grave and gallows, and the rope ready for her neck; all this she seemed to bear with the greatest fortitude. I now left her, at her request, and had some conversation with the sheriff. All things being in readiness, the prisoner came out dressed in a white robe, and being seated in a chair, a sermon was preached; which being over, they proceeded to the place of execution, about half a mile. She walked the whole way with much cheerfulness. Coming to the gallows, I told her if she had any thing to say, there would be time given her, and having mounted the cart, and the time having nearly expired which was to launch her soul into eternity, she stood trembling and said, it is a hard thing for me to die, but I must. I do not deserve to die; my mother came on me with a knife to kill me, and I was so fraid and mad, that I did not know what I did: I hope all will take warning by me, and not let

their passion get the better of their judgment. She suffered much, and was a long time a dying, owing to the rope being placed nearly under her chin. Thus ended the life of this woman, in the 23d year of her age.

She said her husband was in bed and did not know of the murder till it was committed, and that he was very sorry for what had happened by her, in the heat of passion.

* * * It is but justice due, and it is with pleasure we state, that the utmost attention and humanity was paid to the prisoner during her confinement, by Mr. King, the keeper, whose kindness on the occasion will long be remembered.