



Execution!

A Particular Account of the Trial and Execution of MARGARET HENDERSON, aged 20, for the Murder of her Husband, JOHN SMITH, by poisoning him, and afterwards drowning her Infant Son, JAMES, who suffered at the Old Baily on Monday the 2d. of October, 1826, and whose Body was delivered to be publicly Dissected and Anatomised; together with her Behaviour on the Scaffold.

IT has seldom been our task to report a more aggravated case than the following, or to record a case more callous than this wretched woman displayed before and at her trial.....She was committed in August last, charged with the above two murders.

While in prison she appeared indifferent to her awful situation, and persuaded herself that she would not be convicted. A few days before her trial, she was visited by a worthy clergyman (who had taken great pains on similar occasions to bring sinners to repentance) who exhorted her seriously to prepare for another world, for, in case of conviction, she would not be long on earth. She answered with a laugh, I do not fear, and shall be somewhere else. It appeared in evidence that she had been married to the above unfortunate man several years, and was the mother of the child; and that the deceased met his death by white arsenic put into some soup which he partook of. It was also proved that the prisoner had endeavoured to cause abortion, by administering some powerful medicines, but which failed in producing the intended effect, which, with that green-eyed monster, jealousy, made her resolve on committing the horrid deed. On the day she administered the poison to her husband, she persuaded him to take the child with him and buy it a frock. This was done for the purpose of getting her plan put into execution, and on his return the deadly dose was given to the unsuspecting husband. A variety of other circumstances transpired corroborative of her guilt.

After a long and patient trial, the learned judge summoned up the evidence in a clear and impartial manner, and the jury immediately brought in a verdict of Guilty, which the prisoner heard without the least emotion, and appeared quite indifferent while the judge was passing the awful sentence upon her. On leaving the box she used some dreadful expressions, and behaved in a very unbecoming manner. On the morning of the execution, by zealous exertions, the above Reverend Gentlemen, and the Ordinary, had brought her to reflect on her wretched state, and to use her endeavour to make reparation to the laws she had offended.—After being brought to the Drop, she audibly addressed the multitude, beseeching them to abstain from all vicious practices, never to allow their passions to get the upper hand of them, and prayed that they might take warning from her dreadful fate. After spending a short time in prayer, she was launched into eternity, attempting to seize the rope in her fall, amidst a great concourse of people.

