

# THE LAST MOMENTS OF JOHN A. SIMPSON, FOR MURDERING HIS SWEETHEART.

At eight o'clock, this Monday morning, the youth John Aspinall Simpson, was executed at Strangeways prison, Manchester, for murdering his sweetheart Ann Ratcliffe, at Preston, on the 3rd of August last.

The final interview with his heart-broken relatives was of a most painful description, and one that will not soon be forgotten by those that witnessed it.

Marwood the executioner, arrived at the gaol on Saturday afternoon, and after inspecting the scaffold, and testing the working of



the drop, he took up his quarters convenient to the gaol.

A large crowd of persons assembled near the gaol this morning, and sympathy was manifested for the unfortunate youth. At five minutes past eight the black flag was hoisted, and the crowd then gradually dispersed. There has not been so much interest taken in an execution at Manchester for some time.

By order of the High Sheriff, no reporters were permitted to witness the execution.

By John Aspinall Simpson's sad terrible death, Young men take a most solemn warning. On the gallows at Strangeways he yielded his breath.

On a most dreary November morning; For murder he died, and he never denied, The justice of his awful sentence. [grave] Ere he went to the grave he forgivance did And wept in the deepest repentance.

He murdered his sweetheart a girl good and true Who always had loved and adored him. He had blighted her life, and to make her his wife And to save her from shame she implored him. But for murder we find he had made up his mind Or the razor he ne'er would have carried, And like a base man he murdered poor Ann. On the morn that she thought to be married.

His repentance we hear for his crime was sincere He prayed night and day to be forgiven, His sentence from the first he acknowledged to be just. He hoped to be pardoned in heaven. His unmanly ways brought an end to his days, No one in his trouble to befriend him, In his miserable state he was left to his fate, When the law to the gallows did send him.

When they told him the time he must suffer for his crime,

'Twas no more than he hourly expected, Each fast fleeting day the time he passed away, Miserable, forlorn, and dejected. To pass from the world, to eternity hurried, To his comrades to be a solemn warning. To hang till he was dead, and no bitter tears be shed, Except by his relatives that morning.

At the tolling of the bell, he left the dismal cell, The dark scaffold stood there before him.

With the hangman by his side, Lord have mercy on his life and soul.

'Twas a sight that was almost deploring. Neath the fatal beam of wood on the platform he stood.

The chaplain the burial service reading. The bolt it was drawn, and poor Simpson was gone, His soul to its maker was speeding.



At the late Manchester Assizes, John Aspinall Simpson, was found guilty of murdering his sweetheart at Preston, and when asked if he had anything to say why sentence of death should not be passed upon him, he remarked that he was perfectly satisfied with the verdict of the jury.

After entering the condemned cell, the wretched convict was never left alone, being guarded night and day by two warders. He was supplied with writing materials and everything

was done to promote his comfort in body and mind. A photograph of the deceased girl occupied a prominent position on the table in his cell, and it was his dying request that the portrait should be buried with him, and whenever any conversation turned upon his victim, he never spoke of her except in terms of the greatest affection. It was inferred from this behaviour, and the disjointed observations that he occasionally let fall on the subject, that his motive for the crime was not jealousy, as has been reported, nor its commission the impulse of a moment, but a premeditated act. the result of a morbid feeling that he would be releasing his victim from a life of almost certain misery if the marriage had been consummated.

There is every reason to believe that he intended to commit suicide, and it is stated that at one time he contemplated drowning himself.

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