

Somerset Inquests and Murders 1825-1830

January 5th 1825

Inquests recently holden by Mr Caines of Langport.

At Wivliscombe, on **Sarah Carpenter**, aged about 20. It appeared in evidence at the inquest, before a jury composed of 15 respectable inhabitants, that the deceased, on the 1st instant, called in a medical gentleman of the town, to whom she complained of violent pains in the stomach and back. She acknowledged being in the family way, and an opiate was given, which afforded temporary relief. Some time afterwards, deceased was seized with vomiting and other strong indicative symptoms of her having taken something poisonous. On the 2nd, (Sunday) she became convulsed and speechless, and in the evening expired. Mr Sully, surgeon, had seen the deceased on Sunday, and he gave directions, that as soon as she was dead, he should be informed of it, that he might endeavour to save the infant, which was accordingly attempted by the Caesarean operation; but the child also was dead. Mr Sully gave it as his opinion that the deceased had taken some poisonous substance. Deceased was an unhappy prostitute. The jury returned a verdict, "That the deceased died from the effects of some poisonous vegetable; but how, when, or by whom administered, they had no evidence." It is an extraordinary circumstance, that during the time Mr Sully was delivering his evidence, he was called out to visit the child of the deceased, who was visited with precisely similar symptoms to those of her mother, and who declared that she had been unwell in her stomach ever since the deceased gave her liquorice, two days before. She had an emetic administered, which, for the present, has alleviated her sufferings.

At Knowle St Giles, near Chard, on **Jeremiah Farthing**, a pauper, late of Donyatt, near Ilminster. Deceased was well known in the neighbourhood, as a common beggar, and was missing from the 15th to the 30th ult. when he was discovered, drowned, in one of the carriage gutters of a water meadow near Iley Water. Verdict, "Found Drowned."

At Brompton Regis, near Dulverton, on **John Davey**, aged 65, whose death was most awfully sudden. Verdict, "Died by the visitation of God."

January 19th 1825

On Wednesday night, as **Mr Collier**, chandler of Keynsham, was on his return home from attending the Wells sessions, he was drowned in the river near his house; he was highly respected. It is supposed the horse got out of his depth in attempting to drink.

January 26th 1825

Inquests recently holden by Mr Caines

At Dulverton, on **Thomas Hutchings**, aged 38. The deceased, who was a carpenter, had been working for a gentleman, who promised him and two others that, if they were expeditious, when they had finished their work, he would give them some liquor; and on the completion he gave them three quarts of cyder, into which was thrown about half a pint of rum. Hutchings, who was very fond of liquor, having drunk more than his share, became much intoxicated, and the following morning was found dead. Verdict, Died from excessive Drinking.

At Bishop's Hull, on **Emma Long**, aged two years, whose death was occasioned by upsetting over her a cup of tea, which had just been poured out. Verdict, Accidental Death.

At Cannington, on **James Mason**, aged 48. The deceased was discharged from the Marine Service about eight years since, and has subsequently lost his faculties. He went to bed in apparent good health, and the next morning was found dead, lying on his back by the bed-side. Notwithstanding the Inquest was holden on the day following, the body was quite black and offensive. Verdict, Died from suffocation, but not from any violent means.

On Wednesday week, and inquest was holden before Mr Uphill, Coroner, and a very respectable jury, on the body of Dorcas, daughter of Mr **Holman**, schoolmaster, of Crewkerne. It appeared in evidence that the deceased, aged twelve years had been in the habit of going every day to the house of a relation to assist in domestic affairs; that a few days previous to her being absent a bank note was lost by the above-mentioned relative, and as he suspected the girl had some knowledge of it, he took an opportunity to declare in her hearing that he had seen the conjuror, who said a young person had it, and if not returned in a given time she would be subject to a transmigration! or some other horrible misfortune. Whether these assertions carried conviction to the heart of the child it is utterly out of our power to say; but shortly afterwards she was missing, and after nine days' fruitless search, her body was found in a well in her father's garden. Verdict, Found Drowned. The circumstance has excited a more than ordinary degree of astonishment among the inhabitants of Crewkerne, and we trust it will be a caution to many how they exhibit the scarecrow of conjuration and witchery for the purpose of extorting confessions, which, under the influence of fear, may cause their victims to "see appall'd the unreal scene," and hurry them away to acts of madness and desperation.

February 9th 1825

Inquests by Mr Caines of Langport.

An inquest was holden at Porlock on Saturday last, on the body of **Andrew Moffat**, aged 23, a native of Dumfries, and a hawker of teas. The deceased was addicted to drinking of spirits, and having met with a farmer's boy on Wednesday, the third instant, they both drank brandy to such an excess, (of which liquor the deceased had a supply in his pocket) that the boy fell asleep and on his return home related what had occurred. The next day a person who had been sent in search of a mule which the boy had been riding, discovered the deceased lying in the road quite dead, at a place called Home-bush Lane. Some parcels of tea were found near the deceased, and about £7 was found in his pocket. Verdict, "Died by the combined effects of intoxication and inclemency of the weather.

At Over Stowey, on a child named **John Coles**, aged two years, who unfortunately drank some boiling water out of a tea kettle. The mother was present, and the accident happened in the few moments in which her back was towards the child. Verdict, "Accidental death".

At Pitminster, on Monday last, upon a child aged two years, named **Frederick Luttley**, who was burnt to death by his clothes taking fire, in the absence of his mother. Verdict, "Accidental death".

At Ruishton, on **Mrs Elizabeth Brown**, aged 74. It appeared, that in the absence of a servant, whom the deceased had sent on an errand, her clothes caught fire, and she was discovered upon her hands and knees, crawling out of the doorway, but burnt in so dreadful a manner, that she expired on the following morning. Verdict, "Accidental death."

At Bridgwater, on **Mary Goodrich**, who, on alighting from a timber carriage, during its progress through the town, unfortunately fell, and the wheels passing over her body, she was killed on the spot. Verdict, "Accidental death."

February 23rd 1825

An inquest was holden yesterday, by Mr Caines at Luckham nr Minehead, on the body of **Wm Vaulter**, aged 4 years. It appears that on Thursday last, in the absence of its mother, the child's clothes caught fire, and he was so dreadfully burnt, that his death took place on the following day. Verdict, Accidental Death.

March 2nd 1825

Sudden Death

An inquest was holden on the 16th ult by Mr Caines of Langport, at Luxborough (a parish belonging to Sir T B Lethbridge, Bart, near Dunster, on the body of **Wm Edwards**, aged 71. The deceased had recently returned to the village, from the employ of Sir Hugh Smith, in whose park he had long resided, and on the day of his death he went to church. In the church-yard he met his brother, whom he had not seen for twelve years. After a few questions, the deceased asked his brother if he could tell him in what part of the church-yard his uncle and aunt lay. The brother replied affirmatively, and pointed out the spot; immediately on which, the deceased fell to the ground, and instantly died without a groan! Died by the visitation of God.

April 6th 1825

Inquests held by Mr Caines

Tuesday se'nnight, on **Mary White**, aged 11 years, daughter of Mr **Joseph White** builder, in Upper High Street, who, on the preceding Friday received a severe blow by the falling of a piece of timber from a cart which was carelessly unloading, of which injury the child died on the Monday following. The Coroner and Jury reprobated the conduct of the men employed in unloading the cart, and a deodand accordingly, was adjudged upon the cartload, to the value of £3.

At Wellington, on **Thomas Alway**, an elderly man, who, while employed in lopping an elm tree, and standing on a ladder for that purpose, one of the branches fell against the ladder with such force as to throw him on the ground, and he received so violent a contusion on the back of his head, that his death ensued on the following day.

At Bishop's Lydeard, on **Jas. Pearce**, aged three years, who, on Tuesday se'nnight, having strayed away from his parents, fell into a pond and was drowned. Verdict in each case, Accidental Death.

At Wiveliscombe, on **Betty Wring**, aged 60, who, in a fit of insanity, drowned herself at a place called Hartwell, near that town. It appeared in evidence, that the deceased had been getting into a diseased state of mind for some time – that on Tuesday se'nnight, her husband, very unfeelingly, tied her with cords to the bed, and left her alone, while he went to an ale house; on his return, the neighbours were in search of her, and found her in the well above mentioned. Verdict, Lunacy.

Saturday evening, as Mr **Jas Golledge**, saddler of Midsomer Norton was returning home from Bath, his horse suddenly took fright and he was thrown with such violence that his skull was fractured and he died on the spot.

April 20th 1825

On Wednesday afternoon, as a young man was driving a cart load of coals into Wells, the horses took fright on the steep part of the hill, at the entrance of the city, by the new piece of road. The boy caught hold of the wheel horse, and endeavoured to stop him, but was overpowered, knocked down, and crushed to death on the spot by the wheel of the cart passing over him. The load was 30 hundred weight. He was a very worthy young man, and laboured hard to support a blind, aged parent.

Bridgwater.

A shocking crime has been committed in the parish of Durlleigh near this town; the circumstances are as follow: about a week since, Mr **Parker**, surgeon of this town, was sent to attend a woman at Durlleigh; on his arrival he found her exceedingly ill, having been very lately confined; on being interrogated who attended her, she said no one, and on enquiring for the child, she stated that it was safely buried in the church yard. This of course led to a further investigation by the parish officers and the woman who came for the surgeon was taken into custody, but nothing could be elicited from her. The neighbours of the unfortunate woman stated that they observed the day previous to this circumstance being known, a large fire which was kept up for many hours in her house. On Sunday morning last, she sent for the surgeon, and stated to him that she had actually burnt her child, which she said was dead born. No vestige of the infant has been discovered, and it is supposed that it was reduced to ashes by its unnatural mother, who affirms that no other person was present at the transaction.

April 27th 1825

Inquests

At Blagdon, on **Geo Kingman**, who died in consequence of falling from a cart while in a state of intoxication.

At Wells, on **Wm Higgins**, who was killed by his cart going over him, on his return from a coal pit.

At Mells, on **Joseph Denning** who incautiously proceeded to work in Vebster Marsh Coal pit without safety lamps and the foul air exploding, he was dreadfully burnt as to cause his death.

At Widcombe, on a man unknown found drowned in one of the locks.

At Burnham, on a child named **Purnell**, found drowned in a ditch.

At Walcot, on **Mary Ann Philput**, whose death was suspected to have been occasioned by her taking poison, but it proved to have arisen from a disease in the stomach.

At Bedminster, on **Geo Yates**, aged ten years, who was killed by the accidental discharge of a gun in his own hands. Verdict, Accidental Death.

On Thursday last, a fine child, three years of age, named **Parker**, in the absence of its parents, fell into the River Tone, which flows behind their house, at Tangiers, and, before assistance arrived, was carried down the stream as far as the Town Mills, where, in half an hour, it was taken up a corpse.

May 4th 1825

Inquests recently held by Mr Caines of Langport.

At Whitestaunton, on **James Goldworthy** of Yarcombe, aged 40, who on the morning of Monday se'nnight, about five o'clock, was found dead in the turnpike road, near the bridge which divides the counties of Somerset and Devon. This case excited much interest in the neighbourhood, and the investigation lasted a considerable time, in

consequence of suspicion attaching to a man named **Spiller**, from his having had a quarrel with the deceased on the preceding evening. The parties, with several other disorderly persons, had been tipping at a public house at Westhay, in the parish of Combe St Nicholas; the deceased left that house at about half past eight o'clock in company with a woman of loose character, and about half a mile on the turnpike road towards Honiton the quarrel and a sort of scuffle took place. Previous to half past ten, the woman and the deceased were seen by three different persons, at different times, near the spot where he was found. From the evidence of the woman it appeared that although they were going within a very short distance of each other's homes, she left the deceased about eleven o'clock by the side of the road, complaining of headache, but that he desired her to go home saying he should be better, and would soon follow her. Messrs **Gillett** and **Rich**, surgeons, attended the inquest, and; on examining the head found a considerable quantity of extravacated blood, there appeared also a slight contusion on the back of the head; they, however, gave it as their opinion, that the contusion had not in any way caused the rupture of the vessel on the brain, and that the man died of apoplexy. Verdict, Died of apoplexy, or other visitation of God, and not from violence.

At Dulverton, on **John Lewis**, aged 60, a native of Southmolton. The deceased on his way from Southmolton to Dulverton, was overtaken by the hostler of the White Hart Inn, in the latter town with a gig. They proceeded together until they arrived at the top of the hill leading into the town, at which place, from the splash-board bearing against the back of the horse he became unmanageable and set off at full speed down the hill. When about midway, the hostler leaped out, and in so doing received two violent bruises; the deceased was carried towards the direction post, when the gig coming in contact with a post, the shafts broke, and the deceased was thrown on the ground whereby he received a concussion of the brain, which terminated his existence the following day. Verdict, Accident, and a deodand of 20s on the horse.

At Wells, on **James Pickford**, of Glastonbury, aged 70. The deceased had had a dispute with a person named **Emery**, respecting a donkey, and had been before the Mayor, when the business was settled by Emery paying him 10s. After this, Pickford followed Emery down the street, and placed himself against a wall opposite the house of the latter, where he swore horribly and in moving from thence, still uttering dreadful imprecations, he fell to the ground and died instantly – Verdict, Died by the visitation of God.

The woman at Durlough, near Bridgwater, whose name we understand to be **Burnell**, who was said to have burnt her newly born babe, has been committed to Wilton House of Correction, charged only with concealing its birth, no evidence being adduced, in her examination before the Magistrates, to support the charge of burning.

May 11th 1825

Execution.

On Wednesday, the 27th ult, the following prisoners were executed at the new drop at Ilchester, pursuant to their sentences at the late Assizes for the county of Somerset; - **Samuel Blanning** and **Henry York** for highway robbery; **Phineas Radford**, for sheep stealing; and **John Gill** and **John Willmott** for horse stealing; the eldest of whom was only 28 years of age. It is said that one of these young men had property to the amount of £700, left him between the period of his condemnation and that of his execution.

Inquests recently held by Mr Caines of Langport.

On Monday last at Wiveliscombe, on the body of **Elizabeth Baker Staddon**, aged 10 years, who being employed, on Wednesday last, in lighting a fire at her mother's house, her clothes became in a blaze, and she was seen in the street completely enveloped in flames. The neighbours assisted in extinguishing the fire; but she was so shockingly burnt, that after lingering in the Infirmary until Friday last, the unfortunate sufferer expired. Verdict, Accidental Death. The deceased was one of the pupils of the Sunday School, and her interment was very affectingly attended by all the children of the Institution, mostly in mourning, together with several of the ladies and patrons of the school.

On the same day, at Skilgate, on the body of **Frances Marsh**, an elderly woman, who, after taking some tea and cake, of which she ate heartily, and while in the act of rising to retire to bed, fell down and instantly expired. Verdict. Died by the Visitation of God.

And on Saturday se'nnight, on **John Ellis**, aged 42, who was accidentally killed by a tree falling on him in Colborne Wood, about five miles from Porlock. It appeared in evidence that the deceased, with many other persons, had been employed in ripping bark, and was returning home through the wood where some labourers were felling timber; and that he was cautioned by more than one of them, but still continuing in the way, a tree fell on him, and crushed him so dreadfully, that he expired instantly. Verdict "Accidental Death."

May 18th 1825

Short Honey Moon

On Friday last, Mr **Henry Taunton**, of Walcot, the youth, aged 95! Whose marriage we noticed in our Journal of the 25th of April last, was brought before the magistrates by a constable, who prevented him cutting his throat on the evening preceding. It appeared that his bride had expressed a determination to separate from him, which so affected the youthful husband that he formed the rash resolution of putting a period to his life and love at one stroke. It was truly ludicrous to see how earnestly he begged his inexorable bride to return to his embraces, while she as firmly persisted never more to admit him to her bed – Bath Journal.

Lamentable Occurrence.

On Tuesday week, the York House Coach from Bath to Oxford was upset. The coachman had drawn up at the summit of a sharp hill going out of Swindon, for the purpose of having the wheel dragged, when unfortunately the pole of the carriage touched the flank of one of the leaders, which began kicking, and afterwards set off at a furious rate down the hill. In descending, the coach was overturned, and we regret to announce that Lieut **Thos Mayris** RN (a gentleman well known and highly esteemed in Bath,) was thrown from his seat, had his thigh broken in a dreadful manner, and was otherwise so much injured that he only survived till three o'clock next morning: another of the passengers was seriously bruised, and one of the horses killed on the spot.

A boy, 14 years of age, fell from the shafts of a cart which he was driving on the Wellington road, near the White Ball Inn, on Monday, and the wheel of another cart (with which he was contending in a race) passing over his head, he was killed on the spot.

May 25th 1825

Inquests recently holden by Mr Caines of Langport.

At Bradford, near this town, on **Henry Harding**, aged 37; on Thursday last, deceased who was subject to fits, was employed in agricultural labour, and on his wife going to him with his dinner, she discovered him lying in a ditch, his head sunk in mud and the body nearly covered with water. The distressed woman procured assistance and deceased was taken out a corpse. Verdict, Subject to fits, found drowned and suffocated.

At Hatch Beauchamp, on Mr **Samuel Hurley**, a farmer, who had been to Chard market, and on his return from thence, with his grandson, fell from his pony, on the Forest of Neroche, and instantly died. The deceased was a very old and feeble man, and for a long time had been subject to giddiness. Verdict, died by the visitation of God.

At Hinton Saint George, on a newly born infant found floating on the surface of a mill pond at the factory of Messrs **Hayward** and Son. The child was wrapt up in a piece of linen cloth and part of an old red cloak, both of which had the appearance of having belonged to some of the lower orders of society, but no well grounded suspicion existed as to who was the mother, nor was there any proof that the child had been born alive and the jury returned a verdict accordingly.

At Wells, on **Frederick Ferrish**, aged six years, who had been employed with another child in giving hay to two horses, which were standing in the street with a loaded cart, they suddenly moved forward, and the near wheel passing over his body, he was instantly killed. Verdict, Accidental Death – Deodand on the wheel, ten shillings. The Coroner strongly recommended the father of the child to punish the driver, who had suffered the cart to remain in the street upwards of an hour, without any person in care of the horses except the two infants alluded to.

Fatal Nuptials.

Thursday, an inquest was taken by Peter Layng esq on the body of **Henry Taunton**, who died the Wednesday morning preceding, from the injury he received from being pushed down the steps at the bottom of Walcot parade, Bath, by his wife. Thus have we within the space of one short month, had to record the marriage of this couple, at the youthful age of 95 and 57 – the husband being taken before the magistrate for attempting to kill himself, through despair at his unfortunate marriage – and now his actual death, inflicted by the violence of his wife. The verdict was manslaughter, and the Coroner accordingly committed the virago widow to Shepton Mallet Gaol, to take her trial at the next Assizes, the overseer of the parish being bound over to prosecute her.

A young man engaged as a gardener at Sandhill Park, the seat of Sir T Lethbridge bart, on Monday night last fell down the cellar stairs, by which accident his neck was dislocated, and he expired in a few minutes.

June 1st 1825

Murder – Considerable consternation has been excited in this city this morning by the discovery of a murder which has been perpetrated by some person or persons unknown. Early this morning a young man's attention was arrested by something against the bank by the river side near Dolmead, which on examining it, proved to be a sack containing the body of a man in a state of nudity. On the left breast was a cut extending some inched downwards, and below it a stab which had perforated the heart. Several other marks of violence appear in various parts of the body, which is

now undergoing examination. In the bottom of the sack, which was securely fastened was found a stone; the body has not yet been identified – Bath and Cheltenham Gazette.

An inquest was held by Mr Caines, on Wednesday last at Sandhill Park, the seat of Sir **T B Lethbridge**, bart on **Thomas Doran**, the gardener, aged 28, a native of Ireland who was found dead the preceding morning, in a passage leading to the cellar – of which some particulars were given in our last. It appeared in evidence that the deceased had been passing the evening with some friends, and did not reach home till about midnight, when the doors were all fastened; the deceased, however, got into a room, of which he kept the key, by lifting up the sash of the window. Having got to the bottom of the stairs, he pulled off his shoes, probably to avoid disturbing his fellow servants, and afterwards, having proceeded towards the cellars, where he himself had one allotted for keeping liquor, he accidentally fell down the steps and by that means came to his untimely end. Verdict, Accidental Death.

June 15th 1825

Inquests recently holden by Mr Caines of Langport.

On Monday last, at Bathpool Inn, near this town, on **William Major**, shoemaker, aged 48. It appeared in evidence, that on the 3d instant, the deceased was riding on horseback on the turnpike road, at a short distance from his own house, and, being overcome with liquor, he fell off the horse, and became insensible. At first it was supposed he was suffering from the influence of liquor, but, medical aid being called in, it was discovered that the brain was seriously injured. From the moment the accident happened to his death, he appeared to have lost all sense of feeling, and the power of articulation, except answering merely yes or no, and he died on the eighth day. Verdict, Accidental Death.

Bridgwater.

On Sunday last, as some little boys were bathing in a pond near this town, one of them not being a swimmer, unfortunately ventured beyond his depth and was drowned.

June 22nd 1825

W Taylor, a mason's labourer, fell from a scaffold, in North Town, on Monday afternoon last, and was so dreadfully injured, that although he was taken to the Taunton and Somerset Hospital in the town, where he had the very best attention, he survived but a few minutes. He has left two children and a widow unhappily near her confinement and in distressing circumstances. The deceased bore an excellent character, and was well known throughout the Minehead and Dunster road, having , until lately, carried the bags of the mail in that district.

July 13th 1825

On Thursday last, as **John Baker** was returning home from this town to Hemiock with a load of coal, the waggon upset at Blagdon Hill and the contents falling on him, killed him on the spot. An inquest having been held on the body before the coroner. (Mr Caines) the jury brought in a verdict of Accidental Death. We understand that the deceased bore an excellent character and was greatly esteemed by his master, Mr **R Farrant**, of Hemiock. He was only 20 years of age, and although the fatal accident unquestionably happened from his having drunk too much at North town Fair, and

being asleep in the cart when it upset, he was never previously known to have been intoxicated.

July 20th 1825

An inquest was held yesterday, in East Street, in this town, by Mr Caines of Langport, on the body of **Maria Incledon**, a child three years of age, who was severely burnt on the 24th June last, by her clothes taking fire. The poor little sufferer lingered until Sunday last, when she expired. The father of the child is an industrious man but is singularly unfortunate in his domestic life – having only one child now surviving out of seven, and she disabled from work by an infirmity in her hand and the mother being obliged for many years past to keep her bed.

Inquests – On **John James**, servant to Mr **Keel** of Rickford whose back was broken in consequence of falling from a load of hay on a barton wall.

At Poulton on **Jas Phillips** who was also killed by falling from a load of hay.

At Stanton Drew, on **John Himan** who expired suddenly in a field.

At Beckington, on **John Debman**, whose death was occasioned by falling down the stairs of a malt house.

At Frome Selwood, on **Wm Greatwood**, aged 90, who fell off a ladder.

At Burton, on **Martin Frampton**, found drowned.

At Evercreech, on **John Ridout**, discovered in a lime kiln, completely roasted, it is supposed he went on the kiln to sleep, in order to be in readiness to proceed to the coal pit early in the morning and must have rolled in. It was rumoured that deceased was afraid of returning to his father's house, for fear of ill treatment; but after a minute investigation, no such thing could be proved. Verdict, Accidental Death.

July 27th 1825

On Wednesday last, a fine youth, about 13 years of age, nephew of **Mr Westover**, of this town, was found drowned in the stream that runs through Pole's field, opposite the Crescent. It is supposed that in bathing his feet, which were the only parts of his body uncovered, whilst sitting in a forward position he lost his balance and fell into the water, from which, though not deep, he could not extricate himself, and that he had been in that situation nearly two hours when the discovery took place. Immediate recourse was had to the proper remedies, but without effect. An inquest was held by Mr Caines of Langport, and a verdict returned of Accidental Death.

Inquests recently holden by Mr Caines of Langport.

On Saturday se'nnight a boy, named **Wm Jenkins**, 12 years of age, and another aged 8, named **Wm Symes**, of Stanton Drew, with two other boys, went into the River Chew, near Pensford, to bathe, and having got out of their depth, Jenkins and Symes were unfortunately drowned. Verdicts, Accidentally Drowned.

At Ilminster on **Charles Wills**, aged 40. The deceased had for some time been suffering from an abscess, which had recently caused an aberration of mind; on Wednesday morning, about four o'clock, it was discovered that he had risen from his bed, and gone towards Mr **Hanning's** pond, in Dillington Park, where the body was found in ten feet depth of water. Verdict, Drowned himself while suffering temporary derangement.

An inquest was held by Mr Caines, on Monday last, at Fiddington, near Stowey, on **T Morris**, aged 77. Deceased had drunk freely of some cyder a few days before his death and some of his neighbours foolishly imputed his decease to the liquor having

been poisoned. He had before been in an ill state of health, and was attended by a medical gentleman. The body was opened by Messrs White and King, and not the slightest reason for the alleged suspicion appearing, the Jury returned a verdict, "Died by the Visitation of God.

August 10th 1825

Shocking Accident.

On Tuesday se'nnight, a man named **Daniel Nethercott**, aged 24, being employed about a rick at Webb's Mill, at Roadwater, in the parish of Old Cleeve, was sent by his master, Mr Binden, for a rail or post, to place against the rick; and when in the act of lifting up the rail, he fell head foremost into the water wheel of the mill, which was then in motion; at the same time the rail fell in the same direction, and both together stopped the wheel, one arm of which was found resting upon the poor man's thighs, which were jammed between the wheel and the side-wall of the cistern. He was taken out in a dying state, and almost instantly expired. An inquest has been held on the body by Mr Caines of Langport. Verdict, Accidental Death.

August 17th 1825

Hannah Taunton was indicted for killing and slaying **Henry Taunton**, at Bath, on the 18th May last. Mr Gunning opened the case and called **Eliz Smith** – I know the prisoner; I saw her about 9 o'clock on the 15th of May, on Walcot Parade, with the deceased; they were walking side by side; he was an old man, he appeared to be very weak; I heard the prisoner call the deceased, a d—d son of a b—h; deceased made no reply; they were going down the steps, towards the London road; there were two flights of steps; I was about two yards from them when they were at the steps; I heard Mr Taunton say to the prisoner "you go first", the prisoner said "you go first"; deceased went to step down, and the prisoner pushed him on the back; deceased fell on his head, and then turned over on his back; I asked her what she did it for; the prisoner made no answer; I saw some blood; deceased appeared sensible; I asked him if he was hurt, and he said, "Oh, my head" Deceased fell all down the first flight of steps; I saw a little bruise on his head; deceased lay about a quarter of an hour, and then other persons came to him. **Wm Hawkins** – I am a tythingman of Walcot; I went to the deceased at the request of the prisoner about 9 o'clock on the 17th; she came twice to ask me to go down, for her husband was very ill; I saw deceased and prisoner together; deceased shook his head, and said, "I am very bad; that woman, my wife, is the cause of it; I am dying." I moved the clothes back from the bed, and at his request I moved his head; deceased said, "That woman, my wife, is the cause of this; she pushed me down Walcot steps, Saturday night, and I shall never forgive her." Deceased asked me to raise his head, for he was dying; the prisoner did not appear deaf; deceased asked me to get him something to moisten his lips; I said it was a great pity two old people like then could not live comfortably without making a disturbance; I told the prisoner to get something to moisten his lips; the prisoner said it was no use, for if she gave him one thing he wanted another; deceased said he was dying for want of something to moisten his lips, and asked me for something to raise his head. I went home; I was at my shop next morning, and the prisoner came and said, "well Mr Hawkins, he's gone," I said, "what do you mean?" She replied, "he is dead." She said she must go to the overseers to get a coffin to bury him; the prisoner said that it was half past five o'clock that he died; this was on the 18th; deceased told me on the Friday before he was about ninety years old, and his wife fifty nine; there are about fourteen or fifteen steps altogether, and a landing between, about four or

five feet square. Cross examined. I knew the prisoner three weeks before this happened; I have known the deceased about the same time. There had been disturbances with them before. **Henry Stallard** corroborated the foregoing evidence. **George Bowden**, in the prisoner's defence, deposed that he had known her many years. She bore a good character ever since he knew her. **Mr Mansford**, examined. O am a surgeon at Bath – I saw deceased on the 15th of May; deceased was sitting on a step; he was carried home; he had a bruise on his forehead and a little blood; I examined him, and found many bruises on his chest and other parts of the body; I did not consider him dangerous then; the deceased said very little about it, he was not then perfectly sensible; I was called to open the body on the 18th, about nine o'clock; there was no internal injury corresponding with the external marks; there was a small quantity of serum within the ventricles of the brain; that was the only unhealthy appearance; I did not think either of the bruises the cause of his death separately; but considering his age and infirmity, collectively, the general shock of the system was sufficient to shorten his life. Cross examined. I believe the cut on his forehead did not shorten his life. It is my opinion that the accident was the cause of his death; I can't swear that the fright alone would not have killed him. Re-examined. He would not have lived long; but I do not think he would have died at that time, if the accident had not happened. Mr Justice Littledale summed up, and the Jury returned a verdict of Guilty. the prisoner was sentenced to six months imprisonment.

August 24th 1825

On Monday last, an inquest was held at Wiveliscombe, by Mr Caines of Langport on **Thomas Pearce** aged 50, who died suddenly on the Saturday preceding. Deceased was by trade a weaver, and on Friday he worked at the loom, and he ate his meals as usual. He went to bed with his son at about nine o'clock without making any complaint whatever; about two in the morning the son heard his father groan and he died instantly. Verdict, Died by the visitation of God.

August 31st 1825

As **Wm Carter** of Pitminster, nearly 80 years of age, was returning home through Blagdon, on Friday night last, he was ridden over by some person on horseback, and expired in a few minutes after.

September 21st 1825

Bridgwater

On Tuesday last, as a poor fruit woman of the name of **Jane Rowe**, was walking down St Mary Street, she suddenly fell, and on being taken to her home, immediately expired. It was of the opinion of the medical gentleman, who was called in, that the shock occasioned by the fall, was the cause of her death.

September 28th 1825

Inquests recently holden by Mr Caines of Langport.

At Bathealton, near Wiveliscombe, on **Robert Cording**, aged 37, late of Huish Champflower, farmer, and Ann, his wife, aged 29. At the inquest the following evidence was given – That Mrs Cording, until the last twelve months had been very attentive to all her respective duties, and conducted herself in every respect as she ought to do; at the same time she was rather of a religious turn of mind, and since that period she had become a follower of a sect (by some called Ranters, and by others Bryanites) and that, in consequence of their preaching and doctrines, the poor,

deluded woman had become deranged. It was also proved that she had been in such a state as to render it necessary to send her to an asylum, about three weeks since, from which, however, she escaped in a few days, and returned to her mother's house at Bathealton; that, on Tuesday se'nnight, her husband went there to see her, when, after some conversation, she fled from him, and threw herself into the newly made fish pond of **Thos Wentworth Gould** esq. The husband was close in his pursuit, and plunged in almost immediately after, but was unable to rescue her, and, melancholy to relate, they were both drowned in about eight feet of water! Verdicts – That the wife drowned herself when in a state of mental derangement, and that the husband was accidentally drowned in his endeavours to rescue her.

At Porlock, on **Wm Perkins**, and old man-of-wars' man, who fell dead in the road where he was employed in breaking stones. He was cheerful, a minute before, and apparently quite well.

At Tatworth, near Chard, on Saturday last, upon **John Perham**, aged 40. This poor man was employed, the preceding Thursday, in a quarry, drawing stones for a lime kiln, when, having undermined to too great an extent, the head of the pit fell upon him, and killed him on the spot. Verdict – Accidental Death.

October 12th 1825

Yesterday, an inquest was held by Mr Caines of Langport, at Wiveliscombe, on **James Sellick**, aged 42, a labourer in the employ of Mr **Hancock**, brewer, of that place. The deceased had been engaged in lowering a cask into a cellar, the weight of which having preponderated, he was precipitated beneath, and received a concussion of the brain which occasioned his death. Verdict, Accidental Death.

October 19th 1825

Inquests by Mr Caines of Langport.

On Saturday last, on the body of Mr **James Gibbs**, of Bishop's Lydeard, aged 56, who was found drowned in a pool opposite the garden of the King's Arms Inn, at North town, Taunton. Deceased left a party, with which he had been spending a social evening in this town, at a little after twelve, and the horse, in his impatience to drink, it is supposed, rushed into the water, and, unseating his rider, occasioned him to fall into the water, where he was suffocated. Verdict, Accidentally drowned.

On Thursday, at Ellington Heath, on a child named **Jane Trott**, aged two years, who having strayed from her parents, was found drowned in a ditch. Verdict, Accidental Death.

On Friday, at High Ham, on **Thomas Farrow**, aged 42, who, while in a cider house (being subject to fits) fell into a vat of apple juice, and was found drowned. Verdict, Accidental Death.

On the same day, on the body of **Susan Pavey**, a child about three years of age, the daughter of a widow at Coombe St Nicholas, near Chard, who, on the preceding Monday, having been left alone by her mother for a short time, it is supposed, while in the act of roasting apples, approached so near the fire as to ignite her apparel. Her screams brought in the neighbours, who extinguished the flames, and quickly procured medical assistance; but the little creature was so much burnt, that she expired in the course of the evening. Verdict, Accidental Death.

It is a singular coincidence, that, on the same day and about the same hour the above accident took place, a child, also the daughter of a widow, should have been burnt to death, almost under similar circumstances, at Stockland, a village not more than six miles from Coombe St Nicholas.

November 9th 1825

Inquests.

An inquest was held by Mr Caines, of Langport on Saturday last, upon the body of **John Brown**, about two years of age, son of **George Brown**, painter, Burton Square, in this town, who was so dreadfully scalded on the preceding Wednesday, by upsetting a washing pan of clothes and water upon himself, in the absence of the washer woman, that the poor little creature lingered in great agony till Friday morning, when he expired.

At Banwell, on **Enoch Hemmers**, aged two years, who died in consequence of drinking boiling water out of a tea kettle.

At Long Ashton, on **Elizabeth Tucker**, whose death was occasioned by her clothes taking fire.

At Bath on two infants, whose death was occasioned by the error of a druggist, in making up a prescription, who, instead of one twelfth of a grain of opium, put in three grains. Verdict, in each case, Accidental Death.

November 16th 1825

Inquests.

At Tatworth, near Chard, on **John Nodder**, aged 30, who was discovered in a lime kiln, in a state singularly shocking, his lower extremities, and body to the first rib, being consumed by the fire. In this horrid condition he was found by the kilnman on Wednesday morning, whose attention was attracted to the spot by observing a dog belonging to a fellow labourer, which occasionally remained at the kiln during the night, looking steadfastly on the mutilated remains. The deceased was a poacher, and in the habit of drinking to excess, and, the preceding night having been very wet, it is conjectured he went to the kiln (which had a covering) for warmth and shelter. His coat and hat were found at a little distance. It appeared that he left his lodgings at Tatworth, on the preceding Monday, under pretence of going to Axminster, and was not afterwards seen in that neighbourhood.

At the Poor house of Chaffcombe, near Ilminster, on **Mary Ann Long**, aged six years. The deceased had been imprudently left by her mother with three younger children, when, in attempting to place some straw on the fire, her clothes ignited, and she survived the accident but two hours. Verdict, in each case, Accidental Death.

On Friday se'nnight, a lad at Wells, having filled his pocket with squibs &c was amusing himself with them, when some persons set fire to a projecting rocket, which communicating with the rest the boy was so dreadfully burnt that he died on the Monday following.

November 23rd 1825

Yesterday afternoon, **Thomas Quick**, labourer of Blagdon, whilst employed at Mr **Hutchings'** lime-kiln, on Pickeridge Hill, near this town, descended a ladder, with the view of roasting some meat at the kiln-fire, but it is supposed the heated air suffocated him, and he was found at the foot of the ladder quite dead, with both his legs and one of his arms entirely burnt off.

Inquests by Mr Caines.

At Wells, on **J Atwood**, aged 10 years. The little boy, on the 5th instant, was in the market place, where he was a spectator of the numerous fireworks letting off there,

and for some cause which could not be ascertained, a squib got into the pocket of his trowsers where it exploded, and scorched him so much that all medical aid was unavailing. He expired on the 12th inst. Verdict, Accidentally burnt.

At the Alms house, at Wiveliscombe, on **William Atwood**, aged 74. It appeared that the wife of the deceased left him at seven o'clock in the morning of the 16th instant to go to her daily labour – that he appeared cheerful and in his usual health, and that at noon on the same day his son called and found him dead in the window seat. Verdict, Died by the visitation of God.

November 30th 1825

Inquest on the body of Thomas Dobney.

An inquest was held in St James's Workhouse, on Thursday, on the body of **Thomas Dobney**, a coach painter, whose death, by taking poison, was noticed in our last. It appears that not the slightest blame is attributable to **Mr Overton**, the druggist, who sold the ingredients, as the word "Poison" was distinctly written on the outside of the paper, and it will be seen by the evidence that the deceased was particularly cautioned about it. He was about 30 years of age – Mr Dyer, surgeon, was first examined. When I got into the house I was informed that the deceased had taken poison in milk. I then took the paper which had poison written on it up stairs; I there found Dobney in bed. I asked him if he had taken the contents of that paper? He said he had. I immediately sent for Dr Kinglake, and went myself to Mr Overton's, the druggist to enquire if what he had sold Dobney was arsenic. Mr O said yes. I then said deceased had taken it. When I returned, **Dr Kinglake** had arrived, and every means which could be resorted to in such a case was immediately administered. I asked him what motive he had for taking it? He said he had a reason, but would not assign it. Dr K said that what Dobney had taken was sufficient to kill 50 men, and also stated that 10 grains were more than sufficient to kill a man, and there could not be the slightest doubt but that the deceased died in consequence of taking the arsenic while in a state of intoxication. Mr Overton, sworn. The deceased came into my shop on the 22d Noember, between five and six o'clock in the evening, and asked for on ounce of oxalic acid, and said he was going to make a preparation for boot tops, and asked me if oxalic acid was poisonous. I replied that it was, if taken in large quantities, otherwise it was not considered a direct poison. He then asked if an ounce would poison. I replied in the affirmative. While I was putting up the oxalic acid, he asked if I had any green arsenic. I answered that I had never heard of green arsenic, but that I had white arsenic. He said that would do, and desired me to give him half an ounce. I enquired if he used that for boot tops also. He said that he did, and that it was the best preparation that could be used. I asked if he wanted anything else; and he said that he used other things for the purpose sometimes, but that he did not want anything more then. No other remark passed, but used the common precaution of affixing a label on the oxalic acid, and writing "Poison" distinctly on the arsenic; he then paid for it and left the shop. In about a quarter of an hour after, he returned and asked me if that was poison I sold him. I expressed my astonishment at his asking the question, and observed that he knew perfectly well that it was so, as I had written the word "Poison" on the parcel. He then told me he had taken every bit of it. I could scarcely believe him, but said that if he really had taken it he was certainly a dead man, and advised him to obtain medical assistance immediately. He then left the shop. During the above conversation with the deceased there did not appear anything like incoherence or hesitation in his manner, as he appeared perfectly collected, and spoke deliberately, neither did he appear to me to be intoxicated. **Mr Mogridge**, landlord of the Devonshire Inn, was

next examined. The deceased came into my house on Tuesday morning, the 22d, he drank five half pints of gin and ale before one o'clock. Dobney asked me if I would take a ride with him in a gig – he appeared then quite sensible, and seemed very anxious for me to accompany him, which I at last consented to, and it was decided to go as far as Bishop's Lydeard. Deceased hired a horse and gig of **Mr Higgins**, in Paul Street – Dobney paid for it. When we had got as far as the turnpike gate, I said I would not proceed any further unless he gave me the reins, as he drove very carelessly. I then drove to Bishop's Lydeard, and when we came to the Lethbridge Arms, we drank a glass of gin and water each. He did not appear to be very sober on the road going over. We were about two hours gone, and we returned between three and four o'clock in the afternoon. Dobney appeared more sober on his return home, than he did going. I don't believe Dobney had any dinner on that day. When we returned home, deceased said he was determined to get drunk that evening, and called for a glass of gin and water. He had taken but little of it, when his wife came in, and perceiving the state in which he was, drank a portion of the gin and water, and my wife the remainder. They then walked home together. I knew him when he was in the army, he was always very partial to liquor, and I have seen him almost mad before now from the effects of it, it has required five or six men to hold him occasionally. When he left my house he did not appear to have taken too much. Witness said he had always behaved very violently towards his mother, and that his wife behaved very kindly towards him. **Mr Pavey** was then called. The day on which Dobney returned from Bishop's Lydeard, I saw him for the first time, to speak to him, for two years. He worked for me once. He noticed that the collar had galled the horse a great deal. I have known him from a child. I was afraid of him, being always a very vicious character when intoxicated. **Mr Thorne** was then called. I heard the deceased's mother tell Mr Higgins not to let him have the gig, as he would not pay for it – but Higgins said he had got the money, and saw no objection to his having it. Dobney talked to me very incoherently. He was very civil out of liquor. He tried one day to cut his brother's throat, but was prevented doing so, and cut a hole in his coat. **Mr Chillcott**, the next witness examined. I saw deceased at Mogridge's. He talked very much like a madman – but related a story about his being flogged once while he was in the army, and said he wished to be revenged on those who had flogged him. After the evidence had been given, the Jury were unanimously of opinion that The Deceased died in a Fit of Temporary Derangement and a verdict to that effect was accordingly returned. The body has since been opened by Mr Dyer, in the presence of Dr Kinglake, and on examination arsenic was found in different places in the coat of the stomach, and a quantity had passed through the lower orifice of the stomach into the intestines, and the gullet, stomach, and intestines were much inflamed, and in different places eroded.

Further inquests by Mr Caines of Langport.

On Monday at West Buckland, on Catharine Hill, an elderly woman, who on Saturday morning was found dead in her bed. Up to the preceding evening, she had taken her meals regularly, and went up to bed quite as well, and, rather more cheerful than usual. Verdict, Died by the Visitation of God.

The same day at Wootten Courtney, near Minehead, on Mary Ann **Pester** aged 16. It appeared in evidence, that on Thursday last, deceased was riding on a cart laden with potatoes, and sitting by the side of another young woman; that the cart was driven by two horses, and, in descending a hill, the driver very prudently held the reins of the wheel horse, but the leader got off the road, and by that means the cart was upset, and

the deceased was thrown with great violence against a stone wall, by which means her skull was fractured, and her neck dislocated. The other young woman fortunately was not at all injured. Verdict, Accidental Death, and a deodand of fifteen shillings on the leader.

At Pitminster, on Thursday, on the body of Thos **Quick**, a labourer, the account of whose death, by suffocation in a lime kiln, appeared only in part of our last publication; when the Jury returned a verdict of Accidental Death. The body presented a shocking spectacle, both legs and one of the arms of the deceased being entirely burnt off.

December 14th 1825

On Wednesday an inquest was held at Barrington, near Ilminster, by Mr Caines of Langport, on **Rebecca Hale**, aged 71. The death of this poor woman was sudden and excited much interest in the neighbourhood, it having been reported by one of her own sons, that another of her sons had knocked her down with a large stick, and that the blow had caused her death. It appeared in evidence at the inquest, that there had for a long time been frequent disputes about some house property which belonged to the family; and that on the preceding Monday the two sons had come to blows, when one was knocked down. The old woman was present, and expressed herself warmly on the occasion. It was proved that she was extremely passionate; and as there were no marks of violence whatever, but only a quantity of extravasated blood found in the brain, the surgeon (Mr **Davis**, of South Petherton), gave it as his opinion that the deceased died from a rupture of a vessel in the brain, occasioned by fright or extreme passion, and not from violence; the Jury returned a verdict accordingly.

January 4th 1826

Inquests recently holden by Mr Caines of Langport.

At Timberscombe, near Dunster, on **John Huxtable**, an elderly man, belonging to a choir of singers, who, as usual, at Christmas, are in the habit of going round to sing at the farm houses. On the 26th ult, the choir came to Harwood Farm, at about ten in the morning, and having commenced a hymn at the front door, deceased fell down and instantly expired.

At Wilton, near this town, on **Sam Morgan**, a fisherman, aged 48, who on Thursday last, having been drinking and gormandising at the New Inn, nearly the whole day, until his stomach revolted, fell down and expired in a few minutes. Verdict in each case, "Died by the Visitation of God."

And at the Seven Stars Inn, in this town, on **Wm Fox** aged 24. In this case it appeared that on Friday week deceased was employed in lowering the frame work of a fender down some steps from the carpenter's shop, near the family mansion at Orchard Portman when he fell backwards, and received a concussion of the brain, of which he languished at the Hospital until the 27th ult when he died. Verdict, "Accidental Death."

January 11th 1826

A few days since, **Elizabeth Ackland**, resident near the Stone Bridge Bristol, being left in a room alone, whilst playing with a handkerchief near the fire, it ignited, and communicating to her clothes, she was burnt to death.

On the same day, **James Eveley**, age five years, was also burnt to death from confinement in the absence of his parents. It is remarkable that both of these children

were scholars at the infant school in Meadow Street, but on this fatal day both lost their lives from being kept from that excellent asylum of comfort and safety.

On Friday evening, as two children named **Tyatt**, were playing with a wheelbarrow containing some shavings, one of these took a coal from a fire and threw it in the wheelbarrow, the contents of which immediately ignited and caught one of the children's clothes, their cries brought a person to their assistance, who at length succeeded in extinguishing the flames, but too late to save the child, who lingered about two hours and then expired – the left side was so dreadfully burnt that the heart could be distinctly seen.

January 18th 1826

A young man in the employ of Mr **Stacey**, on Tuesday morning about seven o'clock, went to the grist mill, in North Street, to fetch a bucket to give the horses water, and has not since been heard of. It is conjectured that he fell into the river, and every enquiry and search for him have been made in vain. The youth's friends live at Blagdon and he had only two days before left the service of Mr **Waterman** of North Town.

The body of a newly born infant was yesterday discovered in a ditch in the lane close by the East Reach Turnpike House. The inhuman mother had stuffed straw into the mouth of the babe, which, when found, was quite dead, although its birth could not have happened many hours previously.

On Wednesday last two youths sliding on the ice at the Merchant's Floating Dock, Hotwells, fell in, and were unfortunately drowned: and a third in trying to extricate them had nearly shared the same fate.

Accident on the Float at Bristol.

Sunday afternoon, between four and five o'clock, as two men and two women were attempting to cross the river on the ice from the Wapping side, a little below the back part of the New Gaol, to the sea bank side, coming on a weak part of the ice which had been broken on Friday for the purpose of passing a vessel down the river, the whole four were suddenly immersed in the water; one man and a woman were got out so quick that they were able to walk home in a short time; the other man, whose name we understand to be **John Griffiths**, shopman to **Mr Grant**, hatter, Redcliffe Street, was got out alive, but immediately fell on the ice, and unfortunately the Gentleman of the faculty, with all their endeavours could not restore him to life; his corpse now lies at the King George Tavern, Cannon's Marsh. The female who fell in with him, had grasped fast hold of his leg, and was drawn out apparently lifeless; we are, however, happy to state that the Medical Gentleman succeeded in restoring her to animation.

January 25th 1826

Mr Caines, the Coroner, has closed his inquest, which he had commenced on Thursday last, on the body of the newly born child, found in the hedge of a field near East Reach. After a most minute investigation, and considerable exertion by the parish officers, for discovery of the murderer or murderers without success, the Jury returned a verdict of Wilful Murder against some person or persons unknown.

Inquests recently holden by Mr Caines.

At Minehead, on **James McCarthy**, aged 26, and **William Ford**, aged 21, who were found dead on board the schooner Youghall, or and from Youghall, laden with oats, and bound to Cardiff for orders. The schooner put into Minehead on the 14th inst on account of contrary winds. The two unfortunate men slept under the fore-castle, and, to

protect themselves from the severity of the frost, had burnt some Swansea culm (stone coal) in an iron pot, the effluvium of which, they having unfortunately closed the hatches of the vessel, occasioned their death. They were discovered, dead, in their births on Wednesday morning, by the master of the vessel, **Callaghan McCarthy**, who gave his evidence on this melancholy subject with deep emotion and unaffected regret. On quitting the place, he expressed his gratitude to the gentlemen and inhabitants, for the kindness and commiseration bestowed on him, in a manner exceedingly creditable to his feelings. The crew consisted of five persons only, and one of the deceased (**Ford**) had married only the Sunday week preceding. Verdict, Accidentally suffocated.

At Lydeard St Lawrence, on **John Chilcott**, aged 67, whose death was awfully sudden, having expired while taking his breakfast. Deceased had lived in service on the same farm, and in the same family, nearly 40 years, and by his industry and saving had accumulated nearly £100. Verdict, Died by the Visitation of God.

February 1st 1826

Last week at Marston Bigot, near Frome, farmer **William Deacon** and his wife, at the ages of 72 and 73; and in the same parish, at an advanced age, in consequence of a fall which broke his leg, farmer **Jonathan Pinnock**.

A fatal accident happened on Wednesday, the 18th instant, to **James Wood**, a lad in the employ of Lady Bridport, at Cricket Lodge. The deceased was riding on the turf in the park, at the breaking up of the frost, when the horse slipped and fell, and the poor boy was thrown off with such violence as to cause a concussion of the brain on the following Saturday. An inquest was held on Wednesday last, by Mr Caines, of Langport, Verdict, Accidental Death.

Shocking Event.

The wife of Mr **A S Trood**, schoolmaster, of Cannon street in this town, was this morning found dead in her bed, owing to the curtains having taken fire. The unfortunate deceased, though in the prime of life, has been confined to her room by illness for many months past. The inmates of the house slept in the upper part of it, and the unfortunate sufferer on the ground floor.

Two women were apprehended and brought into this town, on suspicion of being the murderers of the newly born infant lately discovered in a field, near this town. They were apprehended at Fisherton, near Salisbury, and will be privately examined this morning. Their names are **Mary Ann Shoal**, and **Elisabeth Shute**.

February 8th 1826

Two women apprehended at Fisherton and brought to this town, on suspicion of being concerned in the late murder of an infant have been discharged after a minute examination.

Inquests by Mr Caines.

On Thursday last, on the body of **John Tozer**, aged 35, a prisoner in Wilton Gaol. Deceased was brought in from Polden Hill on the 26th December last, charged with an assault but his state of health was so bad that he could not be tried at the last Epiphany Sessions. Verdict, "Died by the Visitation of God."

The same day, on **James Davis**, late boots and hostler at the London Inn, in this town. It may be remembered that on the 11th October last, the horses in the Traveller Bristol Coach set off from the Inn before the coachman had taken his seat, and Davis, in his

attempt to restrain them, was thrown down, and the wheels going over him, crushed his thighs in a shocking manner. In this state he was conveyed to the Hospital, where, in spite of the humane treatment and eminent skill by which that excellent Institution is distinguished, the poor fellow lingered until Tuesday last, when he died. Verdict, "Accidental Death, and a deodand of £2 on the coach."

Same day, on Mrs **Trood**, wife of Mr A S Trood, of St James's Street, in this town, who was found suffocated in bed on Wednesday morning last. Deceased had been for upwards of two years in a lamentable state of bodily infirmity, which confined her to her room. In the night previous to, or early in the morning of, her death, she had risen, and on getting again into bed, had, by some means, set fire to the curtains, which, with the bed-clothes, were entirely burnt. Mrs **Charles Welch**, and other persons, deposed to the affectionate care uniformly bestowed on the deceased by her relatives and friends, and particularly by her husband, whose unwearied solicitude for her comfort, the deceased had spoken particularly of a few days only previous to her death. Verdict, "Died by Suffocation."

At Puckington, near Ilminster, on **Samuel Stower**, aged two years.

And at Enmore, near Bridgwater, on **Fanny Elizabeth Knight**, aged 15 months, both of whom were so dreadfully burnt, from their clothes taking fire, that they expired in a few hours.

And at **Colonel Pinney's**, at Lower Somerton, on **William Purchase**, the coachman, aged 22, who, having taken out one of the horses for an airing, with only a snaffle bit, and no saddle, the animal became unmanageable, and the man was thrown against the garden wall, by which his skull was fractured, and he died instantly. Verdict, in each case, "Accidental Death."

February 15th 1826

Inquests by Mr Caines.

At Highbridge Inn, in the parish of Huntspill, on **Wm Coles**, aged 55?, the driver of a stage waggon belonging to Messrs **Brice**, of this town. It appeared in evidence that the deceased was found on Thursday night, about eight o'clock on the turnpike road, with a compound fracture of the right leg, and that on the following morning the limb was amputated; mortification, however, ensued, and he died on the 5th instant. The deceased stated to the surgeon, that some persons, who passed him in a market cart, struck the fore horse, which had knocked him down, and by that means he received the injury. The persons so implicated having been recognised were at length summoned, but they denied the charge, and the deceased having stated that the horse was spirited and often frightened; the Jury returned a verdict "Accidentally killed by being knocked down by the fore horse." Deodand 40s on the horse. In this case the coroner was obliged to adjourn the inquest six hours, until the necessary witness could be in attendance.

At Chard, on **Henry Parker**, aged 88. The deceased, who recently came from Tiverton, and was employed in one of the lace factories, was seized with pain in the head and sickness, became speechless, and insensible, and died in a few hours.

At Curry Rivell, near Langport, on **William Sharrock**, aged 76, who on Sunday, the 5th inst. was found dead in his bed, in a house where he resided alone. Verdict in each of two last mentioned cases, "Died by the Visitation of God."

February 22nd 1826

James Marder Newton, a youth, seven years of age, grandson of Mr Marder of Stoke St Mary, near this town, was drowned at Bickenhull, near Hatch, on Tuesday the 14th

inst and his body was found at Beer Crowcombe, a distance of four miles, on Thursday last. He had been sent to a school at Bickenhall, on the day only preceding the unfortunate event. The youth, it seems, had risen early in the morning, and having, without leave, or intimation of his intention, mounted a poney belonging to Mr **Woodman**, the master of the school, proceeded with it to the river, to give it drink. The stream being much swollen, it is presumed that the horse and its youthful rider were carried beyond their depth. The parents of the youth are very respectable, and the deceased, had he lived, would have succeeded to a good property.

Inquests by Mr Caines of Langport.

At Withypool, in the parish of Winsford, on the 17th inst. on the body of **Richard Burnell**, an elderly man, who, having gone to an outhouse for some fuel, and remaining there longer than was expected, his wife went to look for him, and found him dead.

At Allerford, in the parish of Selworthy, near Minehead, on **Ann Gregory**, aged four months, who was also found dead. Verdicts in both cases, Died by the Visitation of God.

March 1st 1826

Inquest by Mr Caines of Langport.

On Friday, the 21st instant, at Bossington, in the parish of Porlock, on **Mary Groves**, aged six years, who, with her brother, about five years old, went out on Monday se'nnight to pick some sticks, and in crossing an extremely dangerous bridge, over the North River, about thirty feet wide, and which was much swollen from the late rains, the deceased observed to her brother, "the bridge is turning round," and at almost the same instant she fell into the river, and the boy, who was holding by his sisters clothes, fell with her. The boy was carried by the current about 100 yards where he succeeded in getting ashore, and his cries alarmed some people in the adjoining fields, who came to his assistance, and at about a quarter of a mile below the bridge they found the body of his sister washed on a shoal, where she was taken up dead – Verdict, "Accidentally Drowned."

March 8th 1826

A man, of the name of **John Cole**, met his death in the Bristol Infirmary on Tuesday se'nnight, under singular but awful circumstances. The deceased, who, it appears, was afflicted with the disease called St Vitus's Dance, had a shower bath ordered to be administered to him. In consequence, the nurse and a blacksmith, named **Redwood**, placed him in the bath which is supplied by hot and cold water by two parallel pipes. Redwood knowing little of the process, turned the cock of one of the pipes to let in the water; the patient immediately screamed out, but Redwood, thinking this was only in consequence of the shock of the water, took no notice; in a few moments, however, he opened the door of the bath, when he found that he had unfortunately turned the wrong cock, and let in boiling water. The deceased was taken out and put to bed, but his whole body was so dreadfully scalded that, after lingering twenty four hours, he expired in great agony. Verdict Accidental Death; but the Jury, by way of precaution, ordered that the pipes should be marked distinctly, hot and cold.

Taunton.

On Saturday, **Mrs Long**, wife of a tray-japanner, in Hunt's Court, who had been for many months in a declining state of health, was found by her husband lying dead, at the foot of a chair on which she had been left sitting not long before. The coroner is expected to hold his inquest on the deceased this day.

A poor crippled man named **Gale**, residing in Turkey Court in this town, on Sunday last, after returning from church, was about to drink some broth, when he suddenly fell down and immediately expired – An inquest is about to be held on the body.

March 15th 1826

Inquests recently holden by Mr Caines of Langport.

Near the turnpike at Shuttern, in this town, on an elderly man, named **Edward Gill**, whose death was very sudden on Sunday, the 5th instant. In his way home from church, he was overtaken by a heavy hail storm, which occasioned him to increase his speed, probably beyond his natural strength, so as to occasion an excessive circulation, for on his coming into the house, and his wife having put a bason of broth into his hands, he fell out of the chair and expired instantly. Verdict, “Died by the Visitation of God.”

And at Ham Mills, in the parish of North Curry, on **Richard Dibble**, a boatman aged 30. Deceased had got out of the boat to open the gates of the lock at Ham, and from the evidence of another boatman it appeared that, at about ten o'clock at night, on Tuesday, the 7th instant, after he had opened the two upper gates, he sat down and sung while the pound was filling, and in opening the lower gates he unfortunately fell into the River Tone, and was drowned. The Coroner and Jury took a view of the bridge, lock &c, and amongst other observations, it was stated, that as such a number of boats were passing at all hours of the night, a lamp was quite as necessary there, at the Toll house, as at any Turnpike house what, and the Jury returned a verdict “Accidentally Drowned,” with a presentment as follows:- “That the said bridge is dangerous to his Majesty’s subjects, on account of there being railing on one side only; and that a lamp is absolutely necessary, to be fixed at the most convenient place contiguous to the lock aforesaid.” We hope and trust that the Conservators of the River will see the propriety of paying such attention to this circumstance as will prevent any future accident. We understand the poor fellow has left a widow and three children.

April 5th 1826

An inquest was held on Thursday last, by Mr Caines, of Langport, at Long Load, in the parish of Martock, on **Jacob Williams** aged 66. The deceased was well known in the country for his skill as a horse and cow doctor. On the preceding Tuesday he attended Somerton Fair, when, it appeared, he got intoxicated, and on his way home fell into a ditch, where he would have been drowned, had not some persons rendered him assistance, one of whom lent him his horse to ride home, from which he fell, and was ultimately conveyed in a cart to his own house, where he expired on the Sunday following. The jury returned a verdict – “That the deceased died from a violent bruise on his side, occasioned by a fall from a horse, and hurts which he had sustained from having previously fallen into a ditch.”

April 12th 1826

Yesterday, a little boy, about thirteen years of age, belonging to Borough-bridge, fell out of one of the barges on the Tone, in Priory Fields, near this town, and before assistance could be rendered him he sunk never to rise again.

An accident happened at Ashcot, on Monday se’nnight, owing to the negligence of one of the post-boys at the King Alfred Inn, Borough Bridge. It seems he had been with a chaise to the Sessions at Wells, and, returning empty, drove out of the direct road, towards the turnpike gate, to call on his sister, and having left the horses to themselves, at such speed, that the off-horse had his head forced with so much

violence over the bars by the side of the turnpike gate as actually to dislocate the back bone, which, protruding through the skin, caused his death the following day. We understand the driver was much intoxicated.

Inquest by Mr Caines.

On Thursday se'nnight, at Ashbrittle, on Mr **Wm Miles**, late a respectable farmer of that parish, whose death was quite sudden on the Tuesday preceding. He was at a neighbour's house about a quarter of an hour before he expired, when he complained of a pain in his stomach. Deceased was a remarkably hale man, and rather abstemious. On the morning of his death he was unusually cheerful, and ate heartily of a sort of cake (of which he was particularly fond) fried in a pan. Verdict – 'Died by the Visitation of God.'

April 19th 1826

On Friday se'nnight, on **Robert Phillips**, a labouring man, was employed in pruning a maiden elm tree at Thorne St Margaret, near Wellington he fell from the upper part of it, a height of about 30 feet, and having dislocated his back, and received other bodily injuries, languished until the Sunday evening, when he expired. Mr Caines, or Langport, held an inquest on the body. Verdict – accidental death.

April 26th 1826

Inquest. Mr Caines, of Langport, on Tuesday week, held an inquest at Skilgate, below Wiveliscombe, on the body of **Wm Venn**, a child three years of age, whose death was occasioned by drinking boiling water out of a tea-pot, in which some herbs had been infused on the preceding Saturday. The child lingered until the next morning, when it expired – Verdict, Accidental Death.

A Coroner's inquest was held in this town on Friday last, on the body of Mr – **Blague**, of Yarmouth, grocer, who died in consequence of the wounds he inflicted on himself, by cutting his throat, as mentioned on the 12th inst. The unfortunate man lingered until Thursday last. As we before stated, the deceased had been embarrassed in his circumstances, and his mind having become violently disturbed in consequence, he became deranged, of which fact the most decisive evidence was adduced, and the Jury returned, accordingly, and verdict of Lunacy.

May 3rd 1826

Yesterday, as two boys were riding on a colt in the neighbourhood of Chelston, near Wellington, a carter came up with them, and stuck the animal with his whip, which startling it, both the youths were thrown off, and one of them was killed on the spot.

Inquests by Mr Caines of Langport.

At Milverton, on **John Marshall**, aged 18. This young man, who was in the employ of Mr **Richard Young**, was returning from Taunton, with a waggon laden with culm, and had been sitting on the shafts, when, his hat having been blown off, he got down to recover it, and having forced the horses into a trot, in attempting to regain his seat, he fell backwards, and both the near wheels passed over his body. Verdict, Accidentally Killed: deodand on the fore wheel ten shillings.

At Ford, in the parish of Cutcombe, near Dunster, on **William Burnell**. The deceased was a labouring man, aged 61, who, on Tuesday last, had taken his breakfast, of which he ate heartily, and at about seven o'clock was seen crossing a field in the direction in which his work lay. It was afterwards discovered that he has fallen down, and on a person going to his assistance, he was found dead. Verdict, Died by the Visitation of God.

May 10th 1826

It is with regret we announce that Mr **Coles**, a highly respectable paper maker at Wookey, near Wells, put a period to his existence on Wednesday last, by hanging himself. The mills of this gentleman had been for some time stopped, in consequence of disputes with the workmen; and though his property was extensive, it is supposed that the anxiety attendant on this circumstance, in connexion with the peculiar features of the times, led to a temporary derangement, during which the fatal act was committed.

Inquests by Mr Caines of Langport.

At the Cottage Inn, Rowbarton, near this town, on a female infant, who was first seen in possession of some little children, who did not seem to know what it was, it being in a mutilated state, it appeared to have been a full grown child, and had probably been born about two months; but as no conclusive evidence could be obtained as to the cause of its death, the jury returned a verdict, Found Dead. It was generally supposed that this infant had been in the hands of some young medical men, for anatomical purposes; if so, a less indiscreet disposal of the subject would have been more creditable to them, and consistent with the respect due to public feeling on the occasion.

At Staplegrove, near this town, on **Thos Shaddock**, aged 35. It appeared at the inquest, that the deceased had been sitting on the fore part of a cart, driving a horse without reins, and that, in turning a corner, one of the wheels was drawn against a bank, by which means the cart was upset, and deceased fell under the horse, where he was found dead, and the animal so much injured, as to be of no value. Accidental Death.

At Dulverton on **Samuel White**, aged 69. Deceased had formerly lived in a respectable manner; but of late years he had squandered away nearly all his property, and had been wandering about the country. A short time since he returned to Dulverton, where he was still possessed of two small cottages; but he was in such a deplorable state of filth, that no one liked to take him in. At length the parish officers humanely sent for him, procured him a lodging, fed and clothed him, and early on Tuesday morning he was found dead, from the rupture of a blood vessel.

Also, at the same place, on **Mary Blackmore**, aged 35, whose death was very sudden. On the day preceding her death, she had been at work, planting potatoes, and on the morning following, her husband, by trade a comber, left her in bed at six o'clock, to proceed to his work; she did not then make any complaint, but appeared very well. At about seven, a person went to the house, for the purpose of speaking to her, and called her, but receiving no answer, she proceeded up stairs, and found her, reclining on her left side, dead, with the babe on her left arm, and sucking at the lifeless breast. Verdict, Died by the Visitation of God.

May 24th 1826

On Saturday, a boy residing in the Alms house, whilst climbing a tree, to get at a bird's nest, lost his footing, and falling to the ground fractured his skull and otherwise bruised himself so seriously that there is not the slightest chance of his recovery.

May 31st 1826

Mr Caines, of Langport, on Friday last, held an inquest at Upper Chilcott, Dulverton, on the body of **Martha Leigh**, aged 69. Her death was awfully sudden. Her husband who is a reduced farmer, breakfasted with the deceased when she appeared perfectly

well. Half an hour afterwards, she came to him, and he was her return into the house, with a few sticks in her hand, and in about ten minutes after, her grandson found her stretched on the floor, quite dead. Verdict, Died by the visitation of God.

June 7th 1826

Inquests by Mr Caines.

On Friday last, at Fiddington near Stowey, on the body of **Thomas Morris**, aged 55, who was seized with apoplexy on the Wednesday preceding, and died in about three hours.

At Pitminster, on Saturday last, on **Thomas Valentine**, 45 years of age, who was also suddenly seized with illness, and died in a few minutes.

At Broadway, near Ilminster, on – **Matthews**, who died after an illness of a quarter of an hour only. Verdict in each case, “Died by the Visitation of God.”

On Wednesday, at Dumball Clyes, in the parish of Puriton, on **Simon Olman**, aged 62. Deceased had the care of the clyes (flood gates) many years; having been at Bridgwater, where he had drunk freely, he came homewards on the new road now forming from Bridgwater to Pawlett, and walking close by the side of the river, and it being dark and rainy, he fell over a precipice of ten feet, which occasioned his death. Verdict, “Found Dead.”

At Staplegrove, near Taunton, on the driver of a cart belonging to Mr **J Payne**, of Bishop’s Hull, miller; on Saturday, as he was returning with the cart towards the mill, on descending the hill near Staplegrove stop-gate, the horse began to kick, and set off at a violent pace; when deceased leaped out of the cart, and falling against a bank, was killed on the spot. He was a stranger, and his name could not be ascertained. Verdict, “Accident; and a deodand on the horse of 40s.”

At Higher Chilcott, in the parish of Dulverton, on **Martha Leigh**, aged 69, who was found dead. Verdict, “Deid by the visitation of God.”

June 28th 1826

Bridgwater.

On Saturday, a little boy, named **Taylor**, whilst playing on the banks of the river, by some accident, fell in and though a diligent search was immediately made, his body was not found till this morning, when the tide had washed it on shore near the dock gates.

July 5th 1826

On Tuesday night, the 20th ult., as Mr **John Millard**, a respectable farmer and auctioneer, of Wookey, near the above city, was returning from Wedmore, he met his death under rather suspicious circumstances. It appears the deceased left Wedmore about 1 o’clock at night (some say rather elated with liquor) on a spirited horse, from which he was either thrown or knocked off near Hinton, about three miles distant from Wedmore. He was found the next morning, about five o’clock, in a small brook by the road side, lying across the base of the arch. On taking him up a dreadful fracture was found in the back part of the skull, so as to admit the fingers of the person who assisted in raising him. The deceased being found in such a situation, after receiving such a wound, which must have caused almost instant death, with his pockets rifled of his pocket book, his watch, and all the silver he had about him, it is evident he was robbed if not murdered. He had £6 or £7 in notes in his watch pocket which escaped the notice of the villains. It is hoped that the perpetrators will not escape detection. One or two very suspicious characters reside in the neighbourhood.

July 12th 1826

Inquests by Mr Caines.

At Stoke Saint Mary, near this town, on **William Pool**, aged seven years, whose death was occasioned by a kick from a colt which fractured his skull; he died on the eighth day after the accident. Verdict, "Accidental Death"

At Wembdon, near Bridgwater, on **Sabrin Wills**, aged 43, who, on Sunday, the second instant, went to be in perfect health, and on Monday morning her husband discovered she was a corpse.

At Spaxton, on **William Gibbs**, aged 65, who was found dead in his bed in the poor house.

At Brompton Ralph, on **Robert Burnett**, aged 60, who, whilst employed in making a hay rick, fell down and expired without making a struggle. Verdict, in each case, "Visitation of God."

And at Isle Abbots, on **William Cotty**, aged 14, who, on Tuesday the fourth instant, having gone into the River Isle to bathe, with two other boys, and being unable to swim, he got out of his depth and was drowned. Verdict, "Acidental Death."

July 19th 1826

On Thursday last, an inquest was held by Mr Caines in this town, on **Wm Symmonds**, aged ten years, who was drowned the preceding day, at a place called the Two Shoot weir, adjoining the River Tone. Deceased was observed a short time before the accident, sitting by the side of the stream, with a book in his hand, where it is supposed he had fallen asleep. The book and his hat were found in the river. Notwithstanding most extraordinary and highly praiseworthy efforts were made to recover the body (in the course of which a man, named **Quick**, sunk with him twice) it was upwards of an hour before the corpse was taken out of the water. Verdict – "Accidentally drowned". (The being no statute to compel Overseers to pay persons for such persevering and hazardous exertions as the above, it was resolved that the Foreman and others of the Jury should wait on the Select Vestry, to solicit some reward for this man, as a stimulus on any future occasion.)

On Saturday, another inquest was held by Mr Caines, on **Edw Squibb Cornish**, aged 22, who was drowned on the preceding day, while bathing in French Weir, near this town. Deceased was the son of Mrs Cornish, of Hammet Street – was a young man of excellent character, and had but very recently completed his apprenticeship to a linen draper of Bridport. From the evidence of a witness, it appeared that the deceased, soon after entering the water, suddenly stooped as if he wished to immerse the whole of his body, and immediately sunk. Assistance was speedily procured; but, as the body was not discovered until nearly an hour before the accident, the attempts made to restore life were of no avail. A black man, belonging to the 32d Regiment, passing through the town, courageously and skilfully dived into various parts of the stream, and at length bore up the corpse. It is much to be lamented that in so populous a town as Taunton, and where, from the facilities afforded for the recreation, bathing is so much practised, that no institution has been established with the praiseworthy object that distinguishes the Humane Societies of London, Exeter, and many other places. As the spot where the above unfortunate youth met his death is every year the scene of many distressing accidents of the same nature, and appears still to be preferred by bathers, it has been suggested that drags and other implements for the recovery of drowning persons should be kept at the nearest house in North Town, where access to them, at the shortest notice, might always be had. Should this recommendation be attended to,

a most desirable point will be certainly gained; but the establishment of a society would comprehend every detail of the kind, and, no doubt, that most useful one of offering rewards to individuals instrumental in rescuing bodies. We shall be truly happy to learn that steps are about to be taken to fill up the blank now existing among our many benevolent institutions, by the addition of the one we have in view, and we trust, should some spirited promoters be found, that a pursuit of the object to its immediate adoption will appear to be highly necessary, as affording the happy means of averting any additional calamity during the remaining portion of the summer months. (Since writing the above, we have been informed that some benevolent individuals rewarded the black soldier by a donation of upwards of three pounds).

Inquest by Mr Caines.

On the 11th instant, an inquest was held at Burnham, on **Benjamin Dean**, aged 63. It appeared in evidence, that the deceased had been apparently in good health on Sunday evening; at about 9 o'clock; that he had taken his meals as usual, and made no complaint whatever. In about half an hour afterwards his wife discovered he was unwell, called the neighbours, and sent for a doctor, but deceased was a corpse before he arrived. Verdict, Died by the Visitation of God.

August 2nd 1826

Inquest by Mr Caines.

At Hillfarrence, on **William Chidzey**, aged 16 months, who was accidentally burnt by his clothes taking fire in the absence of his mother, who had stepped into the garden to take in some linen.

And at Cutsey, in the parish of Trull; on **Wm Manley**, aged 16, servant to **Wm Blake** esq who fell out of an empty waggon in which he was riding, and the off wheels having passed over his body, he died instantly. Verdict, Accidental Death, in each of the above cases.

August 9th 1826

Inquests by Mr Caines.

In this town, on **James Ball**, aged 77; deceased was well known in this neighbourhood from his having been accustomed to travel with drapery goods, by which means he had accumulated a competency. On Saturday last, in the absence of his housekeeper, he fell into a fit to which he had been subject, and died in a few hours. The jury returned a verdict, Died by the Visitation of God.

At Westonzoyland, on the 5th inst on **James Martin**, aged 22; deceased was a blacksmith, and on the 3d inst was on his return from Bridgwater market with a cart loaded with coals and iron, and in consequence of a loud clap of thunder, the horse became frightened, and it was with difficulty it could be stopped. Part of the iron having fallen off, and deceased with some assistance having reloaded it, the horse again started off, and the young man, in endeavouring to reach the reins, fell before the off wheel, which passed over his head and fractured his skull, of which he died in about three hours. Verdict, Accidental Death. Deodand on the wheel, half a crown.

Bridgwater

On Thursday evening, a young man named Taylor, was drowned whilst bathing in our river, it is supposed from his feet sticking in the slime whence he was unable to extricate himself. The body was found about an hour afterwards and medical assistance immediately procured, but life was extinct.

August 16th 1826

Several of the crew of the schooner Union, of Bristol, who were massacred at St Andrew's, on the coast of Africa, were natives of Bridgwater and its vicinity. Mr **Feeben**, the master, was from a highly respectable family lately residing at Stowey; the parents of Mr **Geo Bullard**, the mate, are living at Bridgwater; he possessed ability and enterprize, and was an only son.

August 30th 1826

Inquests.

On Saturday last, an inquest was held at Chard, on a man aged above sixty, unknown except as a common mendicant. On the evening of the preceding Thursday the deceased arrived in Chard, accompanied by a man named **England**, an occasional inmate of the workhouse at Chard, and the same evening died suddenly at his lodgings. Verdict, Died by the Visitation of God. It is a singular coincidence that the other man (England) was unable to walk to the workhouse, and rode to it on a donkey, where he soon became speechless, and expired on Friday evening. This man had for a long time been in a deplorable state of emaciation from disease, and was much addicted to drinking.

September 6th 1826

Inquests by Mr Caines.

At the Taunton and Somerset Hospital, on **Isaac Hartnell**, aged 14. The deceased was employed in driving a cart with two horses on the turnpike road, near Langford Bridge, and being riding in the cart, the horses took fright at some dogs which ran across the road. The deceased, in jumping out, pitched on the fore part of his head, which caused a fracture at the basis of his skull from ear to ear. He languished from Tuesday to the Friday following, and then died of concussion of the brain.

At Stoke St Gregory, on **Thomas Goodland**, aged 60, who, being subject to fits, fell from the towing path, at Curland, into the river Tone, where he was drowned. Verdict, Accidental Death, in each case.

At Stogursey, on **Charles Witch**, aged 34, a remarkably healthy man, whose death was awfully sudden; and at Closworth near Yeovil on **John Hoskins**, an elderly man, who dropped down in a barn, and instantly expired. Verdict, died by the visitation of God.

September 13th 1826

On Wednesday morning, **John Nethercott**, a carpenter, was found lying dead at the foot of the staircase, in his house at Bishops' Hull. He had been attending the races in this town on the preceding day; it is supposed, on his return, going up stairs to bed, he had fallen backwards, and received an injury that led to his death. His wife, unfortunately, was not at home, and there was no one in the house at the time who could give any evidence on the case. A coroner's Jury returned the verdict of Accidental death.

Terrors of a guilty conscience.

A singular illustration of the miseries attendant on a mind imbued with a sense of guilt, occurred a few days ago, at Milverton, in this county. An upper servant in a large and very respectable Ladies' Boarding School in that town, on Saturday, the 26th ult became violently agitated from some unknown cause, and under its oppressive influence was heard to reproach herself in the most sorrowful terms for the worthless and sinful life she had been pursuing. Some secret which she dreaded to divulge was

evidently preying on her mind, and at length produced a degree of mental aberration, during which some expressions escaped her which revealed her implication in a long continued system of robbery, committed both on the property of her mistress and of the pupils. It seems that the young ladies had in a most unaccountable manner from time to time missed their silver thimbles, scissors, and other articles, and upon searching the servant's trunks, these were found in a most extraordinary quantity, together with other purloined property. The girl's frenzy continued to increase, until it reached the crisis of raving madness, and at the end of ten days after her removal to the house of her father, who is a humble and industrious man at Fitzhead, the unhappy maniac expired! During the few lucid intervals she experienced, she solemnly cautioned those around her against the commission of dishonesty, and implored them to profit by the dreadful lesson her unhappy condition presented. Her two fellow servants have been committed to Wilton Gaol for trial, and a respect of public justice alone deters us, at present, from any statement respecting them.

September 20th 1826

Inquests by Mr Caines of Langport.

At Stogumber, on **Hugh Dudderidge**, a labouring man, aged 60, who, on Friday morning last, was found hanging to the side timber of the roof of a hay loft. At the inquest it was proved that the deceased and his wife had lived most unhappily for a considerable time; that the latter had locked him out of doors, denounced vengeance against him, if he dared approach the house; and that she had otherwise treated him in the most brutal manner. Verdict, That the deceased, being lunatic and distracted, in a fit of despair, hung himself.

At Williton, near Watchet, on **Henry Langdon**, an infant about a month old. It appeared in evidence, that the deceased having suffered from wind in the stomach, a servant was sent to a grocer's shop for a bottle of Godfrey's Cordial, and that instead of the genuine article, she was supplied with four pennyworth of a spurious kind; part of this was given the child, which threw him into a state of stupor, in which state he continued for 16 hours, when he awoke, was seized with a fit, and almost instantly expired. The Coroner observed to the shopkeeper, that having a license, he was duly authorised to sell Patent Medicines; but he was not justified in compounding and selling in the manner before stated, and he entreated him to refrain from again endangering the lives of his Majesty's subjects. Verdict, Died from the effects of a too powerful dose of an opiate, falsely designated and sold as Godfrey's Cordial.

October 18th 1826

Suicide.

Thomas Gosney, of North Curry, barber, was found suspended, on Sunday morning last, from one of the side timbers of his house, having hung himself on the preceding night. The deceased had on no other covering, when discovered, but his shirt and stockings. He had shaved his customers until about eight o'clock on Saturday night, and was as cheerful as usual. The deceased was 24 years of age, and being of dissipated habits, his necessities, it is supposed, led him to self destruction. No evidence, however, being offered to shew any tendency to lunacy in the conduct of the deceased, the Coroner's Jury returned a verdict of Felo-de-se, and he was ordered to be buried between nine and twelve o'clock at night, pursuant to the late Statute.

Inquest by Mr Caines.

At Dunster, on **Charles Summers**, shoemaker, aged 57, who, in a scuffle with a man named **Morgan**, with whom he had been drinking, received several falls, in one of which he sustained much injury, particularly a contusion on the head, which laid his skull bare to the extent of about three inches. He was taken home, and had medical aid, but without success; he died, after languishing a fortnight. Verdict, that “the deceased, in a scuffle, accidentally fell with his head against a stone, and that he died of mortification in consequence thereof.”

November 8th 1826

Inquests by Mr Caines.

At Ashcott, on **Richard Whiting**, aged 52, a farmer of Woolavington, whose death was the melancholy result of intoxication. It appeared in evidence, that on Friday se’nnight, the deceased had attended a Court Leet at Street inn, and that on his return through Ashcott, with two other persons, who were also much intoxicated, he had stopped at the inn, where they drank gin and beer. About nine o’clock in the evening they left that village, and whilst riding at a furious pace, deceased dropped from his horse, near the nine-mile stone, when, falling on his head, he received a concussion of the brain, of which he died the next morning. Verdict, Accidental Death.

At Sherstone, in the parish of North Petherton, on **Samuel Nash**, an elderly man, who, whilst in the act of turning a winnowing machine, fell down in the barn and instantly expired. Verdict, Died by the Visitation of God.

At Ashcott, on Polden Hill, on **Elizabeth Traves**, aged five years, who accidentally fell into an uncovered well in a garden. Verdict, Accidentally drowned.

November 15th 1826

Inquest by Mr Caines.

On Sunday se’nnight, at Voale Farm, in the parish of Mark, on the body of **Gabriel Chapple**, aged 18. It appeared in evidence that on Monday, the 30th ult deceased was driving some pigs out of an orchard, and that he struck one of them (a large boar) twice, at which the animal became so much enraged, that he commenced a most furious attack on the young man, and actually penetrated his body to the depth of about two inches, fracturing two ribs, and lacerating the lungs. Mr **Williams**, an eminent surgeon, was sent for, who found deceased in the state above mentioned and about two feet of the intestines protruding from the body. The poor fellow languished until the Friday following, and then died of mortification. Verdict, “That the deceased died from the furious attack of a boar; which was declared a deodand, and of the value of 20s. The Coroner observed to the Jury, that he was sorry to call them from their homes on Sunday – that he never held inquests on Sunday, except from pressing necessity; and this seemed to be a case of that description, for several reasons, which he enumerated.

At Pawlett, near Bridgwater, on **Job Bastable**, aged five years, who, on Saturday se’nnight, was so dreadfully burnt by a part of his clothes taking fire, so that he expired in a few hours, Verdict, Accidental Death.

Death of Mr Welch.

Our correspondent at Bridgwater sent us the following melancholy intelligence by last night’s post. “Mr **Welch**, the organist of this place (brother of Mr **Thomas Welch**, the celebrated Vocalist) on Friday morning was seized with a bowel complaint, and died on Saturday night, after an illness of only 38 hours – a friend of mine was with him for a quarter of an hour on Friday morning – he was then in perfect health - he died

lamented and regretted by all – his friends adored him – those to whom he was only slightly known, respected him – he had no enemies. His abilities as a musician were of the highest order, and his talents procured him the respect and friendship of the principal residents in this town and neighbourhood – his loss will be felt deeply here – he was the principal support of our excellent choir, and of our delightful Glee Club.”

November 22nd 1826

Inquests by Mr Caines.

At Pitminster, near this town, on **Sarah Drake**, aged 62. It appears in evidence, that on Thursday, the 11th inst deceased had been to Taunton Market, and that on her return she sat with a neighbour till between 11 and 12 o'clock, when she left the house, and appeared as well as her friend had ever observed her; and that was the last time she was seen alive. On the following Wednesday the neighbours, not having seen her for some days, became alarmed, and, on going to her lodgings, they found the door locked, with the key inside. On entering the premises, she was discovered in bed, a corpse; and it appeared that she must have been dead some days.

At Brushford, near Dulverton, on **Margery Cruse**, aged 66, who was found dead. Verdict, “Died by the Visitation of God.”

On Thursday last, as Mr **William Govier**, of Stowey, was returning home from Monksilver, his horse became frightened at a waggon laden with bark, which he was passing; Mr G's leg got entangled with the wheel of the waggon, and in endeavouring to extricate himself he struck the horse with his spur; the animal immediately threw him, and he was taken up shortly after with his skull fractured.

November 29th 1826

An inquest was held by Mr Caines last week, at Blue Anchor, near Watchet, on the body of **John Cridland**, aged three years, who was, on Thursday last, so much burnt in the absence of his sister, appointed to take care of him, that he expired on the following day. The Coroner animadverted upon the carelessness of the sister in leaving the child, and also on the culpability of the parents, who, it was supposed, in consequence of symptoms of idiocy appearing in the infant, had left it to its fate, without sending for medical assistance. Verdict, Accidental Death.

December 6th 1826

Inquests.

On Monday morning, an inquest was held at the White Lion, in this town, on the body of Mr **Henry Newton**, belonging to Messrs **Parsons'** silk manufactory, who, on Sunday afternoon, suddenly fell down at the corner of Holway Lane, and immediately expired. The jury returned a verdict of – Died by the Visitation of God.

On a child named **Frances Gibbs**, five years old, who was burnt on Friday, the 24th ult and died on the Sunday following, at Williton near Watchet. It appeared in evidence, at the inquest held by Mr Caines on Saturday last, that the mother of the deceased had gone to the mill, and was absent nearly two hours, leaving the deceased, and another child under three years of age, in a room by themselves – that in her absence the clothes of deceased caught fire, and that the poor little thing ran into the street, enveloped in flames. Assistance soon arrived, and medical aid was procured; but the burns were so extensive, that deceased soon fell into a state of torpor, in which she remained till her death. Verdict – Accidentally burnt.

December 13th 1826

An inquest was held at West Monkton, last week, on **John Haddon**, aged 77, who resided near the Eastern Turnpike Gate of this town. The deceased was crippled, but, in other respects, his bodily health was good. On Tuesday se'nnight he was engaged, up stairs, in sawing off the top of a bedpost, and whilst so employed the saw dropped from his hand, he fell on the floor, and expired without a struggle. Verdict, Died by the Visitation of God.

Bridgwater.

An inquest was holden this morning before Richard Anstice, esq. Mayor of this borough, at the Guildhall, on the body of **William Taylor** – it appeared from the evidence that deceased was employed in cracking stones on the turnpike roads, and was in the habit, with many other persons of the same description, of sleeping in the lime kilns near this town. Deceased was in company with one **William Bulpin**, about 9 o'clock last evening, at **Mr Tuttiett's** lime kiln, where Bulpin left him to go into the town for some provisions. On his return he discovered deceased lying on the stones in the bottom of the kiln; having obtained assistance, he was immediately taken out, and medical aid procured, but without effect. The Jury returned a verdict of "Died from Suffocation."

December 20th 1826

Inquest by Mr Caines.

On Friday last, at the Half Moon Inn, at Wellington, on **Ann Marshall**, aged 10 years. It appeared in evidence that on the 11th inst, the deceased was employed as a nurse maid at the Tone Dale factory, belonging to Messrs Fox, and being in the nursery or school room, with many other nurse maids and children, she had occasion to go to take something off the fire (a stove) the door of which being left open, the girl's pinafore caught fire, and she was so dreadfully burnt that she expired on the 18th inst. Verdict, Accidentally burnt.

January 3rd 1827

Mr Caines the Coroner, held an inquest on the 27th ult. on **Stephen Hyatt**, aged 46 who was found drowned on the 23d as reported in our last. Verdict accidentally drowned.

January 10th 1827

Mr **Wm Lucas**, an inhabitant of this town, was last night unfortunately killed by the upsetting of a gig in which he was returning from Bridgwater. The accident happened at Bathpool.

Inquests by Mr Caines.

In this town, on **Thomas Payne**, aged 35, late servant to Mr **Kingsbury**, coal merchant who died at the Hospital, in consequence of a compound fracture of the leg, by falling from a ladder, which slipped from the door of a hay loft – Verdict, Accidental.

And at Halscombe Farm, in the parish of Kingsbrompton, near Dulverton, on **John Mellhuish**, a farmer of respectable connections, aged 72. It appeared in evidence, that on Monday, the first instant, deceased was on his way home from Exton, on the new road leading from Minehead to Dulverton, and that near the stop gate at Chilly Bridge, there being no fence whatever by the side of the road, which is considerably

above the adjoining lands, the unfortunate man fell off the road to the depth of about 5 feet and received a compound fracture of the right leg; and that he was not discovered until about seven o'clock on the following morning and in the evening of which day he died. The road being under the sole management of the Trustees, the jury returned a verdict "That the death was attributable to the neglect of the Trustees, or the Surveyor or Surveyors of the new Minehead Turnpike Road."

January 17th 1827

Dreadful Accident.

The substance of the subjoined account was given in part of our impression only last week. Tuesday se'nnight, about eleven o'clock, as the Exeter coach was on it's way to Bristol, the driver found the road impeded between this town and Bridgwater, by a waggon and a gig, the latter being upset. On the passengers alighting, they found one gentleman lying dead on the road, the fore wheel of the waggon having passed over his body, and another much bruised. The latter stated, that in attempting to pass the waggon, the wheels of the gig came in contact with a heap of stones that had been carelessly left in the road, by which means it was upset. The gentleman killed was Mr **Lucas**, of East Reach, in this town.

January 31st 1827

Yesterday se'nnight, as Mr **William Tremlett**, a respectable farmer of Wembdon, near Bridgwater, was assisting to throw a tree, it fell upon him, and crushed him so dreadfully as to occasion his death.

Inquests held by Mr Caines of Langport.

At the Somerset Hotel, Wells, on **William Lawes**, late of Frome. It appeared that the deceased had come to Wells Session, to prosecute a person for picking his pocket; but that he had been in a state of intoxication every day from the time of his arrival. When the court broke up (nearly 12 o'clock) on Friday night, he was in the street still very much in liquor, where he remained in the same state, till 3 on the morning of Saturday, when he was taken into a wagon-house for safety. About 7 o'clock on the same morning he was found in the waggon house in a dying state, and he expired almost immediately afterwards. Verdict, That the deceased, having been in a state of intoxication and exposed to the inclemency of the weather, died by the visitation of God. In the course of Saturday, the prisoner whom the deceased had come to Wells to prosecute was tried, convicted, and sentenced to seven years transportation.

At Lympsham, near Weston Super Mare, on **John Notley**, butcher, aged 43, who, while in a state of intoxication, fell from his horse into a pond, and was drowned. Verdict, Accidentally drowned.

On Saturday last a grave was ordered to be made in St Paul's burial ground in Bristol, of 10 feet deep and width accordingly, and to be finished by ten o'clock in the morning. Fortunately, the undertaker was punctual to the time for the arrival of the corpse for interment the grave was found nearly filled up, and groans were heard coming from underneath. Assistance was immediately procured, and after digging some depth a hat and wig came up, and soon after the grave digger himself made his appearance; he was taken out in a very exhausted state, and carried home.

An inquest was held at the Oxford Inn in this town by Mr Caines of Langport on Saturday last, on the body of **Samuel Perry**, a labourer aged 73, who, while in the act

of collecting fuel on Thursday, suddenly fell down, and expired immediately. Verdict, died by the Visitation of God.

February 7th 1827

Bridgwater.

An inquest was holden yesterday morning, by **Richard Anstice** esq Mayor of this Borough, on the body of a female named **Staunton**, who was discovered on Sunday evening, lying dead on a flight of stairs in a house in York Buildings where she resided. She had been left about an hour and a half before, in perfect health, and it was the opinion of the medical gentlemen who were called in, that she had been seized with a fit of apoplexy. The jury returned a verdict of – Died by the Visitation of God.

Ilchester Gaol.

A conspiracy amongst the prisoners confined in this gaol, to break prison, was, we understand, a few days since discovered, and the discovery was made by a person about whom the public curiosity was for some time strongly excited. It will be recollected, that the execution of **Thistlewood** and the rest of the unfortunate wretches who were hanged and decapitated at the Old Bailey for high treason, the man in the black mask and sailor's dress, who suddenly appeared on the platform with the knife in his hand, and separated each head from the body with so much dexterity was an object of very horrible interest. Various were the surmises about the identity of that individual, who, it was admitted, performed his duty as well as **Botting** ever did his, but conjecture was quite at fault, until the attempt, of which we have spoken, was made at the County Gaol of Somersetshire. A short while ago a gentleman named **Clarke**, who had walked the London Hospitals, was induced by the difficulties which the surgeons met with in their search after subjects, to volunteer in the service of the profession at the rate of £12 per head for the dead. He pitched upon one of the most extensive burial grounds in Bath for the scene of his operations, and took a very good house, the back windows of which looked into the churchyard, where he was "to burst the cerements of the sepulchre." He commenced business in this abode of life and death with wonderful success. The graves gave up their tenants with scarcely the appearance of being violated, but by accident one of the departed was seen moving into Mr Clarke's house one night at the two pair of stairs window. The fact could not long be concealed. The house was searched, and there was no longer any doubt as to the trade of the proprietor. He was apprehended and conveyed to Ilchester Gaol, where he represented to his comrades in misfortune, the impropriety of remaining in confinement, when they had an opportunity of going amongst their friends without any hazard. It is said that his proposal was, that each prisoner should put a stone, or any other heavy article, into his prison stocking (a thick worsted one) and salute the turnkeys with it about the head if necessary. The inmates of the prison thought well of this project, and every thing was arranged in the cause of liberty. Mr Clarke however, suddenly repented him of the suggestion, and in the apprehension that murder might be the consequence, very properly intimated to the officers of the prison what was going forward. The intentions of the prisoners were of course completely frustrated. Mr Clarke, to whom the visiting magistrates acknowledged the county was under very great obligations, was requested to state the particulars of his life, and amongst the most interesting, he mentioned that he had presided on the Old Bailey platform with his knife, when Thistlewood died, after Mr Botting had retired with his ropes. We understand that the case of Mr Clarke is to be forthwith represented to the Secretary of State, with the strong recommendations of the County Magistrates.

(A Wm Clarke was admitted to Ilchester Gaol on 2/4/1826)

February 14th 1827

Inquests by Mr Caines.

At Cheddon, near this town, on **Robert Ree**, aged 69, who died on Monday week. Since his death it had been reported that he died in consequence of a blow from a farmer of that parish, but after a full investigation of all the circumstances, the jury were satisfied that there was no foundation for the report, but that his death was occasioned by inflammation on the lungs and they returned a verdict accordingly.

At Tatworth, near Chard, on **George Lawrence**, aged 8 years, who being employed at the lace factory in Perry Street, on Wednesday, the 24th ult. Having gone too near a stove, his apron (which had been saturated with turpentine and other inflammable materials was ignited, and notwithstanding many persons were in the room, he was so much injured that he expired the following day.

At a cottage on Chard Common, on **Robert Sparke**, aged two years, who, on Saturday, the 27th ult being left in a room where there was a fire, in the momentary absence of his mother, was so much burnt, that he also expired the following day. Veridict in each of the last cases, Accidental Death.

February 21st 1827

A Man Killed by a Lion.

On Thursday evening last, the following dreadful occurrence took place. At the Star Inn, Bedminster, was a caravan of wild beasts, and the keeper being in want of an attendant, a person who had from his infancy been accustomed to the business, offered his services on the Wednesday, and was accepted. He was, however, cautioned not to go within reach of any of the beasts; this caution he unhappily neglected. A party came to see the animals, and as the lion was asleep and did not appear willing to rise, the man imprudently went into his den. The beast suddenly awakened, and probably hungry and alarmed at the presence of a stranger, darted forward a paw, with which he seized the showman by the shoulder, at the same moment with the other he dreadfully lacerated the face. The miserable man cried piteously, and struggled to get loose, but his efforts were in vain, and the lion, now infuriated, seized him by the throat with his mouth, and held him in that situation until death put a period to the too horrible sufferings of the victim. A gentleman happening to pass, who lived in the neighbourhood, immediately brought his pistols; and another person called to a blacksmith, who had a piece of iron red hot, to afford assistance, but it was 20 minutes before the animal would quit his prey, although his mouth was much burned; at length the head of the unhappy man fell from his jaws, a spectacle too horrible for description, when the body was drawn from the cage. We understand that under ordinary circumstances the animal was exceedingly quiet and docile, so much so, indeed, that two women and two children had actually been in the cage with him on the preceding day. We hope this will be a warning to persons not to entrust themselves within the reach of such ferocious animals; and we should be glad to learn that the disgusting practice of hallooing down the throats of lions and tigers was discontinued – Bath Journal.

From the Bristol Mercury we learn that the unfortunate victim was **Joseph Kiddle**, a young man twenty-five years of age, and a native of Sherborne, in Dorsetshire.

The lion, Nero, is the same who refused to fight the dogs at Warwick, and that even, while chafed with the canine attacks, suffered his keeper to enter his den and caress him. As soon as the body of Kiddle had been removed, the lion, either from the loss of

his prey or the injuries he had sustained from the hot iron, became dreadfully agitated. He lashed his sides with his tail, and sprang round his den with great force. He continued in this disturbed and violent state till midnight; since which he has resumed his usual peaceable demeanour.

The editor of the Bristol Mercury subjoins the following observations:- “Exhibitions of beasts of this description are at once useful and interesting; they are the book of nature, in which the page of Natural History may be most faithfully studied; but we deprecate these rash, foolish, and worse than useless temptations of danger. Perhaps nothing is so uncertain as the temper of these powerful animals. Even those otherwise faithful creatures, the dog and cat, have been frequently known to bite the hand that fed them: how much more dangerous is it, then, to place oneself within the power of these half savage creatures, whose tempers are liable to excitement from accidents over which even the keeper can have no control. We recollect seeing a man enter a den with a lioness and tigress, and that each rested their head on his breast, and crouched at his side. The man afterwards expressed the fears he entertained at ...nt, from the foolish act of some thoughtless person who was witnessing this extraordinary feat, and which, if it had attracted the attention of the animals, might have cost him his life. Even in this exhibition on Friday last, while a number of respectable persons were in the menagerie, the keeper was exhibiting a fine Leopard, which, on account of its tameness, he lets out in front of his cage. The hyena in an adjoining cage flew towards the Leopard, who turned upon his assailant. The keeper interfered, when the animal threatened an attack upon him, and the people were seen flying in all directions some with their children in their arms. Mr **Hassell**, a magistrate who resides near, has very properly interfered, and Mr **Rochester** (the proprietor of the menagerie) has promised that on no account will he incur the same risk with any of the animals in future.

February 28th 1827

Sudden death at Frome.

During Divine Service at Christ Church, on Saturday se’nnight, an elderly man, of the name of **Roper**, suddenly dropped down and expired; on the following day, as Mrs Ayres, relict of the late **James Ayres**, esq aged 90, was standing by her window, she was seized with apoplexy and died instantly; and Thursday, **Walter Payne**, at an advanced age, was found dead in his bed.

Captain **Manteo Abadiz**, one of the Spanish Refugees who served under Lord Wellington with distinguished courage, has lately been an inhabitant of the Bristol Infirmary, labouring under a disorganization of the heart. He had since been convalescent; but, whilst taking his usual walk, a few days since, he fell down and instantly expired.

March 7th 1827

An inquest was holden at the Crown and Sceptre, in North Town, on Friday last, on the body of – **Hawkes**, a labourer employed upon the Taunton and Bridgwater Canal, who left his lodgings on Wednesday night, to attend his work, and the next morning was discovered floating in the Canal, near Fire-pool Weir. It was supposed that the wind blew his hat off, and that in endeavouring to regain it, he fell in, and was drowned. Verdict – Accidental Death.

March 21st 1827

Suicide.

On the night of Tuesday, **Caroline Lloyd**, an unfortunate female of the lowest class, threw herself from the towing path near the Old Bridge, Bath, into the Avon, and was drowned. She had been quarrelling with a male companion, and the irritation, caused by that circumstance and intoxication, led her to commit the fatal act.

Saturday afternoon, the body of a gentleman was taken out of the Avon, near Bitton, lifeless; in his coat pocket was a gold snuff box, likewise a gold watch and chain, and silver spectacles were about his person. It was soon ascertained to be Mr **Knubly**, of the York Club House Bath, and the body was conveyed thither, to the inconsolable grief of Mrs Knubly and family; he committed the rash act in a fit of despondency, the occasion of which is not known. He was a man highly respected by all who knew him.

March 28th 1827

Inquest by Mr Caines.

At North Perrott, on **John Story**, aged five years, and at South Brent, on **Eliza Weare**, aged four years, both of whom died in consequence of having been severely burnt, the former by his pinafore taking fire, and the latter from having fallen out of her chair on her face upon the fire. This poor child languished a fortnight notwithstanding her eyes were nearly destroyed. Verdict in each case, Accident.

At Curry Mallet, on an infant, found concealed in a ditch. It was first discovered by means of a pig which turned up the soil which covered it. A young woman, who resided in a cottage near the spot, had been some time ago suspected of being pregnant, and about six weeks since blood was discovered in a line from the cottage to the neighbourhood of the spot where the child was discovered, but there being no notice taken of it at the time, nor any other evidence, the Jury returned a verdict 'found dead, but how or by what means it came to its death no evidence appeared.'

The loss of the sloop Thomas, of Bristol, was mentioned in our last. The following additional particulars of this unhappy event have since transpired:-

On Thursday, the 15th instant, the sloop Thomas, of Bristol, **Daniel Bird**, Master, bound from Newport to this port, with a cargo of coals, owing to the dreadfully tempestuous weather, got on the Culver Sands, near the Steep Holmes, where she lay till the next tide, when the sea was seen from the shore at Burnham breaking over her, half mast high, and shortly afterwards the mast was seen to fall over her side, when all on board found a watery grave; and we are sorry to add that Mr **H Crossman**, an honest and industrious man, who kept the Fountain Inn, in this town, was on board at the time, with two other passengers who were on their way to Exeter, but whose names are unknown. Mr Crossman has left a wife, near her confinement, and seven children, to deplore his loss; a subscription is about to be raised for her and the family.

April 4th 1827

Inquest by Mr Caines of Langport.

On Wednesday last, at Wootten Courtney, on the body of **James Burnell**, aged 75, who, not having returned home from his labour at the expected hour, was, on search being made for him, found in a dying state on the road. Verdict, Died by the Visitation of God.

On Friday last, at Crowcombe Heathfield, on the body of **Sarah Jones**, a child five years of age, who was found drowned in a pond, on a plantation of **Robert Harvey** esq. It appeared in evidence that a brother of the deceased had been sent nearly three fourths of a mile for water for culinary purposes, there being none of a good quality nearer the cottage in which the parent lived. The mother supposed that deceased had accompanied her brother, but on his return alone, apprehensions were entertained that

some mischance had befallen her, and, on searching the contiguous grounds, the child was found drowned in a pit. The pit in which the body was found had not been fenced off. The Coroner and Jury viewed the spot, and were unanimously of the opinion that there had been great want of caution on the part of the parents in having suffered the child to go into so dangerous a situation, but it did not appear that the deceased had been sent for water on this occasion, although that was evidently the child's object; the pitcher, which she took for the purpose, having been found floating on the surface – Verdict, Accidental Death.

Last week a poor man dropped down from fatigue on his journey through Crewkerne. He was taken to the workhouse where he survived but a few days. It appears that the stranger was a native of Holland, and that he was travelling to London, to seek the means of returning to his native country; but a want of sufficient nutriment disabled him from proceeding farther.

April 18th 1827

An inquest was held on Friday last, at the Oxford Inn, in this town, on the body of **Agnes Baker**, aged 19, who hung herself on Wednesday morning last. Deceased was an apprentice to a dress maker, from whom she had purloined some very trifling articles; and having been reprov'd for her offence, the dread of further exposure and punishment so afflicted her mind as to lead her to self destruction – Verdict, Insanity. On Sunday se'nnight the child of a labouring man named **Snelling**, of Shepton Mallet, in the momentary absence of her mother, caught up a tea-pot full of boiling water, and drank therefrom, so as to cause her death, shortly after, in the most excruciating torture.

April 25th 1827

On Friday evening last, as Martin's Bath Coach was returning to this town, one of the horses fell at Walford, and by the violence with which the animal came to the ground, a young man, named **Holloway**, was jerked from the box, and having pitched on his head, he received a concussion on the brain, which terminated his life at five o'clock the next morning. The deceased was the son of a person of the same name, who kept the Talbot Inn, at Bristol, and occasionally acted as a supernumerary coachman. He had unfortunately undertaken the care of the coach from Bridgwater only on the night of the accident. **Mr Martin**, the regular driver, having remained at that place. On the 14th inst an Inquest was holden by Richard Anstice esq Mayor, on the body of an old man named **Howell Davis**, who was found dead in his garden the preceding evening. Verdict, Died by the Visitation of God.

May 2nd 1827

Inquest by Mr Caines.

On Saturday se'nnight, at Shapwick, on Polden Hill, on **Joseph Sully**, in the hundred and first year of his age, well known as a sievier. The deceased had been on Thursday to Bridgwater market, and while riding with two other persons in a light cart, the horse (a pony) fell on his knees, and the passengers were all thrown out in the road; when the old man received such a concussion, that he instantly expired without a groan or a struggle. It appeared in evidence that there were no obstructions on the road, and that no blame attached to any one. Verdict, Died of concussion from an

accident. We understand that about a fortnight since the old man was met a few miles from home, and on being asked where he had been, he replied, "To Glastonbury, - where he had had a little business." It seems he actually walked 12 miles that day.

Execution.

James Clase, better known by the name of Blue Jemmy, and **Wm Hewlett**, suffered the extreme sentence of the law upon the new drop at Ilchester, on Wednesday, having been condemned to suffer death at the late Assizes held in this town. James Clase appears to have been a very notorious character. He is said to have confessed having stolen no less than a hundred horses, and when the miserable man was informed that Mr Justice Park would become his Judge, conscious of having several times been arraigned before him, exclaimed "Then I am sure to be hanged." He was at his last trial charged with having stolen a mare, the property of **Charles Holcombe**. It appears that Clase, otherwise Blue Jemmy, called at a public house, known by the name of the Crown and Anchor, in the parish of Misterton, kept by Mr **Mills**, having the horse with him. Mr Mills having heard of his fame as a horse stealer began to suspect that the horse was stolen, and enquired of him at what price he would sell it. Clase offered to dispose of the animal for £25, and afterwards was willing to take £19. Mr Mills, being certain that the mare was worth more than either of the afore mentioned sums, became more of opinion that it did not really belong to the prisoner, and consequently took an opportunity, unseen by Clase, to enter the stable and cut three notches in the mane of the horse, so as to be able to know it again. The prisoner in the course of the day took the horse and left the house. On the following day, a hand bill was left at the inn, offering a reward for the recovery of a mare that had been stolen. Mr Mills on reading the bill, found from the description that it must be the same which he saw in the possession of Blue Jemmy on the preceding day. He immediately made known the circumstance, and pointed out the direction in which the prisoner went. Clase, on finding himself pursued, left the horse concealed in a pit, where it was afterwards discovered. The animal was again brought to Mr Mills, who testified that it was the same which the prisoner brought to his house, and which he could certainly identify from the marks which he had made to the mane. The facts of the case being thus clearly stated, the jury soon found the prisoner guilty, and when the Judge proceeded to pronounce his doom, the miserable culprit several times fell to his knees and earnestly begged that his life might be spared. It is said that Clase had been brought to the bar nineteen times; he had been tried at Dorchester, Exeter and in this town. At a former Assize he was liberated in consequence of there being a dark spot found on the foot after a witness had sworn that all the feet were white. In early life, he lived as post boy at Salisbury, afterwards he joined himself to some gypsies, and at length began those practises that brought him to an untimely end; aged 52. **Wm Hewlett**, aged 23 was found guilty of having stolen 7 ewe sheep and 8 lambs, the property of **Thos Thatcher**, 10 lambs the property of **William Thatcher**, and five hog sheep the property of **Christopher Lodge**. This miserable man after being condemned, seemed to imagine that his was a very hard ... He said that he had never, previous to the commission of the above offence, stolen more than four and twenty sheep! Thus was terminated the existence of these unfortunate men.

May 9th 1827

At Bridgwater, at an advanced age, Mr **G Penny**; he complained of a violent pain in the head, and before medical assistance could be procured, he was a corpse.

Awful Visitation.

On Saturday se'nnight, an inquest was held by Mr Caines, at Ridler's Farm, in the parish of Dulverton, on Wm Webber, a farmer's servant, aged 21. It appeared from the evidence of **Robt Hill**, a fellow servant, that on the Monday preceding, he was at work with the deceased and several other persons, in a field called Sanctuary Hill, where they were all employed in burning the sward – that about three o'clock in the afternoon, he was at the distance of about three land yards from the deceased, when he heard thunder at a distance, but saw no lightning – that it soon became dark, a few drops fell, and that he was instantly struck down, but by what means he knew not. Witness then stated, that after recovering his senses, on looking around, he saw deceased lying on the ground, naked, and soon discovered he was dead. A horse, which had been employed on the spot, was lying near, upon his back. He discovered that all the other party had left the field, and he then proceeded to the farm house, to tell the melancholy tale. On his way he met some of the persons, with whom he returned to the place where the awful event occurred. The sight was truly wonderful. The clothes of deceased were scattered in countless pieces around him – some driven into the earth, in an aperture of about two feet in diameter, and some much scorched. Deceased had received a wound on the back part of the head, and three or four on his feet; there were also some stripes extending down the body, and blood was oozing from the ears. Deceased had a watch in his pocket, the enamelled face of which was completely destroyed, and the machinery twisted in a singular manner. He had on a remarkably strong pair of shoes, with large nails in the bottoms, some of which had been forced out, and the upper leathers rent asunder. Near the spot where the horse lay was another aperture, similar to the one before described. None of the other persons saw any thing of the catastrophe, nor did either of them receive any injury. One of them, who was at a distance of about 50 land yards from deceased, stated, that he felt his hat move at the time of a remarkable flash of lightning, and that he and those near him left the field, to seek shelter at the farm. Verdict, Died by the Visitation of God. The horse continued in a torpid state until the following morning, when he was killed, there being no possible chance of his recovery.

May 23rd 1827

An inquest was held by Mr Caines, on Wednesday last, at the White Horse Inn, Stogumber, on **Richard Hall**, a labourer, aged 53, who, on the previous Monday, was found drowned in a mill stream near that town. Soon after the Jury were sworn, the clergyman of the parish, the **Rev G Trevelyan**, entered the inquest room, and presented the Coroner with a paper; it was a bill for forty quarts of ale, two glasses of gin, and 4 ½d for tobacco, furnished the deceased at the house aforesaid, between Tuesday morning and Saturday evening, at which time he left the house in a state of intoxication. The Coroner expressed himself obliged by this communication, and said it should be duly attended to. In the presence of the landlord and his wife, the Coroner animadverted on their improper conduct; the deceased had been suffered to neglect his master's business, had spent too much money for a man in his situation, and, in fact, had ultimately lost his life from their imprudence. Verdict, That being intoxicated, he fell into a mill stream, and was drowned.

May 30th 1827

Fatal Pugilistic Contest Between a Father and Son.

On Wednesday, an inquest was held at Culmstock, near Wellington, before **Isaac Cox** esq Coroner, on the body of **Philip Stark**, a shoemaker, aged 68, whose death was

occasioned by very peculiar circumstances. It appeared that the deceased, who resided at Uffculm, had gone to Culmstock fair on Tuesday, and having spent the day, as is usual on such occasions, in drinking with his friends, was met by his son and some others at two in the morning of Wednesday, when an altercation ensued, and the father stripped to fight his son; some blows ensued, and the deceased having missed his aim, fell (according to some of the witnesses) over a bank; he remained there some time, almost in a state of insensibility, and died before medical assistance could be obtained. The evidence was very contradictory as to the particular fact of his falling, some of the witnesses attempting to criminate the son, by saying that he kicked his father in the bowels and side, and forced him over the bank; and others, that no such acts of violence were committed. The verdict shall be given in our next.

June 6th 1827

Mr Caines held an inquest at the Full Moon, in this town, on Thursday last, on the body of – **Lane** a child about two years of age, who, on the preceding day, in falling backwards from a chair, received so much injury in its head, as to occasion death in a few hours – Verdict, Accidental Death.

The Coroner's Jury, assembled on an inquest at Culmstock, to inquire into the circumstances relating to the death of **Philip Stark**, aged 68, who was killed in a pugilistic encounter with his son (as stated in our last) returned a verdict of Manslaughter against the latter, who has been committed to the Devon County Gaol. Since his commitment, he has evinced the utmost sorrow for the fatal consequences of the unfortunate affair.

Murder of a wife by her husband.

A few days since, a couple, named **Amesbury**, who lived in or near the parish of Wedmore, in this county, whose employment was the buying and selling of turf, were at work in the adjoining moor, some angry words arose between them, in consequence, it is said, of the supposed adulterous or improper intercourse of the husband with some other women; these words ended in blows. The parties, however, returned home, when similar angry feeling and words again arose, which also ended in blows, in the course of which the husband gave the wife a blow which terminated her life on the spot! The coroner's jury returned a verdict of Wilful Murder against the husband, who is fully committed for trial – Bath Chronicle.

June 13th 1827

Yesterday, Mr Caines held an inquest at Exbridge Mills near Dulverton, on the body of **Ann Hookworthy**, aged two years. On Friday morning last, the mother had given the child a bit of meat, and observed at the same time a cat following the child about. In a few minutes afterwards, the child not returning into the house, the mother, on searching for her in the yard, discovered the cat looking very attentively into the mill stream, but where the child was not visible. On examining the stream, into which the unhappy mother plunged, and wading along its bed, she, at length discovered the deceased in the water, the rapidity of the stream having driven the body upwards of 200 yards from the spot where it had fallen in. It is remarkable that the animal above mentioned as having been looking intently into the stream, has ever since continued its attachment to the spot, which it is ascertained must have been where the poor child fell in. The Coroner very properly censured the occupant of the property, for not better securing that part of the premises from accident, this having been the third case of drowning, at precisely the same place, that has happened within the last 15 years – Verdict, Accidentally Drowned.

On Saturday last, as two men and a boy were in a boat at the mouth of our river, in consequence of being overladen, the boat went down; one of the men, named **Baker**, immediately sank; the other took the boy on his back and swam with him to shore, a distance of more than half a mile. Baker's body has been searched for, has not yet been found.

June 20th 1827

Inquest by Mr Caines.

Thursday last, on **Peter Maynard**, aged 70. Deceased was by trade a plasterer; on the preceding Tuesday, he had ascended a ladder, to the height of about 17 feet, and, whilst in the act of reaching another, which was being handed to him from a person below, the poor old man fell, and, having fallen across an iron pan, he received a rupture of the intestines, of which he died on the following day. Verdict, Accidental Death.

On Friday last, at Bicknoller near Williton, on **Chas Carrot**, aged seven months. Deceased, one of twins, was placed in the bed between the father and mother (who were paupers and lived in the Poor House) and early in the morning of Tuesday, the 12th inst was found dead. Verdict, Died by the Visitation of God.

At Winsham, near Chard, on Saturday last, on **John Reece**, aged 20. Deceased had, on the preceding Saturday, attempted suicide by cutting his throat with a razor; from which cause he bled rather copiously; but, from the evidence of the surgeon (**Mr Spicer**) the wound, being above the windpipe, which was uninjured, did not cause his death which happened on the following Friday and in witness's opinion, was occasioned by disordered brain and delirium. The jury consisting principally of respectable yeoman, returned a verdict accordingly.

On Monday last, at Stoford, near Stogursey, on **John Baker** of Bridgwater aged 35, of whose melancholy fate was gave an account in our last, namely his being drowned on the 9th instant, at the mouth of the river Parret – On Saturday the body was found on the strand, at a place called Hinkley Point – Verdict, accidentally drowned.

June 27th 1827

Mr Caines, on Saturday, held an inquest at Merridge, in the parish of Spaxton, on **Jas Porter**, aged 33. It appeared, that on Wednesday last, deceased, his father, and brother, had been assisting at a sheep shearing, about two miles from their home, and, as is usual on those occasions, that the party had made rather free; deceased, in particular, was much intoxicated. In their way home, he fell several times; his father and his brother supposed, after he had slept a short time, he would return safe home, and they left him; but as he did not arrive by break of day the following morning, the father went to look for him, and found him in a state of apoplexy, of which he died in a few hours, Verdict, Died of apoplexy, from the rupture of a vessel on the brain. Bridgwater.

On Wednesday last, as three men, in the employ of **Mr Biffen** of Crossmoor Mead, near this town, were returning from sheep shearing, much intoxicated, in consequence of some altercation, a wrestling match took place between them, and one of them was thrown, another man having fallen on him; the farmer was so much injured by his fall that he died on Saturday. The body has since been opened, and the cause of death is found to be the division of the intestines, which, from the force of the fall, are completely cut asunder.

Lamentable Accident.

On Monday se'nnight, three sons of Mr **Taylor**, brush maker, Arcade, of the different ages of 16,14, and 11, took their fathers horse from the stable, in order to have a ride, which they did alternately on the road near the Orphan Asylum; when the youngest (Alfred) was mounted, his feet were placed in the leathers, as the stirrups were too long for him. One of the brothers then unfortunately struck the horse, which feeling only the controul of a child, became restive, and threw his rider on one side, who hung by his foot in the stirrup; the horse now took fright and set off at speed, with the poor boy dangling at his side, until he reached the Black Horse, Stokes Croft, where the leather giving way, the unfortunate youth was left, a most affecting spectacle on the ground. The upper part of the head was gone, and the arms lacerated and broken. A Coroner's Inquest was held upon the body on Tuesday, by **Wm Joyner Ellis** esq and a verdict of Accidental Death returned – Bristol Mercury.

July 11th 1827

On Saturday evening, **G Hall** of Adsborough, near this town, in the employ of **Mr Wm Warren** of Clavelsey Farm, was thrown off a load of hay, in consequence of it being upset; he was conveyed home in a state of insensibility, and expired on Sunday afternoon, leaving a widow and two children.

On Friday last, the corpse of a man, apparently about 40 years of age, was discovered in a field between the first mile stone from this town, and the village of Bishop's Hull. The body, which it is said must have lain in that situation nearly a fortnight, was in a frightful state of decomposition. Nothing could be found in the clothes of the deceased that afforded any clue to his name or residence; but he is supposed to have been a mendicant, subject to fits, who, about three weeks since, was seen and relieved in the streets of this town. An inquest has been held on the remains, and a verdict of Found Dead returned.

On Friday last, an inquest was held at the Dolphin Inn, in the parish of Weston, on the body of an unknown man, who appeared to be about 60 years of age. He was seen about 10 o'clock, Monday evening, walking to and fro near the gates, and on finding himself discovered, he muttered a few words, and walked quickly away. The following morning a hat was found by a boatman placed near the hedge, and in the course of the day some obstruction was discovered on shutting the gates, for the purpose of the passage of boats, and, on clearing it, the body of this unfortunate man was pulled up, his leg much shattered by coming in contact with the gates. On examining the body it was found that the throat was cut, but not so as to cause speedy dissolution. A knife was in his breeches pocket, shut up and bloody, the coat pockets full of stones, with three half pence. The jury were of opinion that he destroyed himself in a fit of insanity, and returned their verdict accordingly.

July 25th 1827

Inquest by Mr Caines of Langport.

At Milverton on **Phoebe Seaman**, aged 51. The deceased left her home with another woman on Saturday the 14th inst to go out to a wood to gather some sticks, and in the wood they parted. Deceased was then in perfect health, and after some time had elapsed without her having returned, some persons went to look for her, and at length discovered her, lying speechless. She was conveyed home, but never spoke afterwards. Verdict – Deid by the Visitation of God.

At Wiveliscombe, on **William Allen**, aged 33. It appeared in evidence, that Wednesday last deceased was employed in a slate quarry at Oakhampton, in that parish, with several other persons, some of whom were in the act of lowering a large

mass of bile (a sort of slate stone) which appeared to be in a dangerous situation, and that in doing so, it fell in a different direction to what had been anticipated, and came in contact with the deceased, he received a compound fracture of the left thigh, and the principal artery having been materially wounded, he died at the dispensary (to which place he was immediately removed) in about two hours. No blame was attached to any one of the party who were on the spot, they having cautioned him of his danger. The deceased has left a distressed widow and four orphans. Verdict, Accident.

At Minehead, on **Catharine Jones**, aged 53. Deceased was a pauper, and resided alone in an apartment of the Almshouse, in Market place lane. She was missed by her neighbours on Tuesday, and being called without making any reply, some of them went up stairs and found her dead, lying across the bed partly undressed. She had the preceding day complained of a pain in her ear, but in other respects she appeared as well as usual. Verdict, Died by the Visitation of God.

On Friday at Bathford near Bath, on **John Brewer** aged 27. It appeared in evidence, that on Wednesday deceased was driving a stone carriage loaded with a block of stone, about 5 tons weight, on the turnpike road, and being in the act of reaching forward to place something on the carriage, he fell, and the fore wheel passing over his body he died instantly. Verdict, Accident: and a Deodand of five shillings on the wheel.

At Bathampton, on **Robert Fisher Jones**, aged 48. Deceased was a pensioner, and amused himself in general with fishing. On Wednesday he was seen on the Canal bank, and said to a woman who passed by that it was too hot there, and he should go by the side of the river; his hat, handkerchief, fishing rod, &c were found on the bank; the body was not found till Friday, and then in a position nearly erect, his head a few inches under the surface of the water. He was a man of regular habits, and was respected by his acquaintance. Verdict, Deceased was subject to fits, and was accidentally drowned.

August 1st 1827

Dreadful Accident.

On Saturday as **Mrs Giles**, housekeeper to **T Clifton**, esq of Hatch Court, accompanied by Mrs Ashton and her little boy, were returning from Taunton market, about two o'clock in the day, in a light market cart, driven by a lad about 12 years of age, the horse took fright near Mare Elm Turnpike, and set off at full speed. Mrs Giles leaped out of the cart, and escaped without much injury, Simon Smith, the gate keeper, observing the horse coming towards the Turnpike, with the view of stopping the animal, endeavoured to close the gate, but, before he had time to fasten it, the horse rushed against it with such violence, the poor man was dashed to a considerable distance, and so dreadfully injured, that he survived the accident but a few hours. The deceased was a very inoffensive man, and a faithful servant, having been for many years a collector of the tolls at the station where he unhappily met his fate. The death of his grandson, occasioned by a fall on Bathpool Hill, we mentioned a fortnight ago; and the son, who was also until lately a collector of tolls, but now a very trust worthy servant in the employment of **Mr J E White**, brewer, of this town, has now to lament the 12th relative, whom he has followed to the grave within the last thirteen months!

Inquest by Mr Caines of Langport.

At the Workhouse at Wiveliscombe, on **Joan Nurcombe**, aged 60. This poor woman had been subject to flatulent complaints, and the digestive organs appeared to have

lost their functions. She dropped down on Monday evening, and died without a groan or struggle.

At Nortonfitzwarren, on **Henry Borrow**, iron founder, aged 34. This man expired on Monday also, and in precisely the same manner as mentioned in the above case. Verdict in each case, Died by the Visitation of God.

At Sampford Brett, near Watchet, on **Cornelius Chedzey**, aged 68. It appeared in evidence, that on Saturday, the 21st instant, deceased went with some letters to the Post Office, at Monksilver, in the evening, and about ten that night, he was sitting by the road side, about half a mile from his home, but that he made no complaint, and that on the following morning, at about four o'clock, he was found in the same place in a dying state, and that he died almost immediately.

August 8th 1827

On Sunday last, **Geo Bussell**, of the parish of Otterford, who had been a patient at the Fivehead Lunatic Asylum, and had only left it on the preceding Tuesday, hung himself in a hay talet, on the premises of Mr **Smith**, of Middleton Farm, Clayhidon. The parish officers of Otterford had taken him out of the care of the respectable proprietor of the Fivehead Asylum, and placed him as a labourer, under Mr Smith. The deceased, who was about fifty years of age, it is supposed, did not like his change of situation from inactivity to hard work, and, while his master was at church, took the opportunity to destroy himself in the way stated. Mr **Cox**, of Honiton, held an inquest on the body the same day, and the jury returned a verdict of Lunacy.

Inquest by Mr Caines of Langport.

At Gortnell, near Wellington, on **John Honniball** of Oak, baker, aged 23. Deceased had formely been subject to fits, and on Friday morning he was found by his father, dead, by the side of the road in the parish of West Buckland. Deceased had been driving a cart in which he had some bread, and the cart being met by the father without a driver, he went on, anxiously fearing something had happened, and the melancholy result was as we have above stated. Verdict, Died by the Visitation of God.

At Minehead, on **Shifner James**, aged 33. It appeared in this case that the deceased on Thursday, at about midnight, was employed with other persons, in clearing out of the harbour, the Shannon sloop, of Waterford, that he was in the boat alone, and having fallen overboard, he was drowned. Search was instantly made for him, and continued for some time, but he was not found until Friday morning. Verdict, Accidentally drowned.

At Fivehead, near Langport, on **Jacob Taylor**, aged about 10 years. The cause of death in this case was principally attributed to the narrowness of the road (only 13 feet wide, exclusive of a causeway) and here unfortunately, on Monday week, two wagons happened to meet, on one of which the deceased and the driver were sitting; and the latter having endeavoured to draw in his team, the near wheel struck against a stone, which caused a sudden jerk, and the deceased being thrown on the road, the fore off wheel went over his leg, which was dreadfully lacerated, and although no fracture was the consequence, the poor lad died of mortification early on Wednesday morning. Verdict, Accidentally Killed, and a deodand of 10s on the wheel. The Jury presented, that the highway (a road very much used, particularly by lime wagons) was insufficient in width. The conduct of the driver of the wagon was very properly censured; and we understand he is to be summoned before the magistrates at their next monthly meeting.

On Thursday, **William Spiller**, a labouring man, of Combe St Nicholas, while at a place called Mill Court, in that village, suddenly dropped down, and immediately expired. The deceased was about 50 years of age, and had previously exhibited no appearances whatever of indisposition.

August 22nd 1827

Inquests by Mr Caines of Langport.

On Thursday last, at Curry Rivel, on **Robert Cousins**, aged nine years; deceased attempted to get a piece of timber which was being drawn on a carriage on the turnpike road, but having missed his hold, he fell backwards, and the near hind wheel passing over his head, the skull was so much fractured, that he died instantly. No blame whatever was to be imputed to the driver, who was in the proper place. Verdict, Accident, deodand on the wheel, ten shillings.

At Chipstable, near Wiveliscombe, on **Agnès Yeandle**, aged 46; deceased had been in a state of lunacy and distraction, for a long time, and about six months since, she made an attempt at suicide, but failed to destroy herself. Since that event, she had been in the Exeter Asylum, but received no benefit there, and for some weeks, had been home with her husband. On Friday last she called at a neighbour's where she contrived to secrete a razor, with which she inflicted a wound across her throat, and, some hours afterwards, she was found dead, weltering in her blood, with the razor in her right hand. Verdict, Lunacy.

August 29th 1827

Inquests by Mr Caines of Langport.

On Monday se'nnight, at the George Inn, North Petherton, on – **Jenkins**, aged 26, who, on the previous Saturday, was found drowned in the Canal near the hamlet of Huntworth. Part of the clothes of the deceased were first discovered by the side of the Canal, and afterwards the marks of the shoes he had on, when found, were so distinct as to leave no doubt that the person had thrown himself into the water. Mr **Joseph Prew**, of Bridgwater, gave evidence that deceased had been living with him for some months – that at intervals he certainly evinced symptoms of mental derangement, and that on the day previously to his committing the melancholy act, he had discharged him for getting intoxicated. Verdict, Drowned himself in a moment of Lunacy and Distraction.

On Thursday, at Ashill Inn, near Ilminster, on **John Durman**, aged 73. Deceased lived at a place called Cupid's Isle, on Ashill Forest, and used to attend this market with fruit. On Wednesday last, he mounted a ladder for the purpose of picking pears, and, whilst standing on a branch of a tree, the limb split from the trunk, and deceased, having fallen on his head about 12 feet, received a violent concussion of the brain, of which he almost instantly expired – Verdict, Accident.

On Friday, an inquest was holden by **Richard Anstice**, esq on the body of **Peter Chamberlain**. The deceased had returned home very much intoxicated the previous evening; and had fallen from the top of a flight of stairs; he was conveyed to bed, and in the morning was found dead. Verdict, Died from Excessive Drinking and the Effects of a Fall.

On Friday at Bridgwater Mr **Dyer** of Bath, whilst at breakfast he broke a blood vessel and expired in a few minutes.

September 5th 1827

Inquests by Mr Caines of Langport.

At Bickham, in the parish of Timberscombe, on **J Gregory**, aged 46. Deceased was employed, on Monday week, in conveying wheat on horseback, and whilst preparing to load one of the horses, the animal kicked the deceased on the breast, whereby the breast bone was fractured, and the poor man received so much internal injury as to cause his death on the following Friday. Verdict, Accidentally killed by the kick of a horse, which was declared deodand 30s.

At Minehead, on Mrs **Sarah Bailey**, aged 73, sister of the late **Mr Ball**, of Williton, Coroner. Deceased had been for some weeks on a visit at her niece's, **Mrs Cross**, and on Wednesday last had taken her breakfast, when she appeared in perfect health, and had stated that she was going to market. Shortly after this, one of the female servants, having gone into the garden, found her corpse.

At Upton, on Brendon Hill, on **Henry Palmer**, aged 42, son of Mr Palmer, of Sperren Farm, in the parish of Huish Champflower. On Saturday morning, deceased was assisting some other persons in carrying faggots out of Billiscombe Wood, and whilst so employed, having two on his back, weighing only about 70 lbs, fell down and instantly expired. Verdict, in each case, Died of Apoplexy, or other sudden Visitation of God.

Sir, I have recently met with The Examiner, in which I have seen some statements pro and con, relative to the remuneration of Coroners, and in that paper of the 26th inst I observe a copy of a letter to the Editor, giving, what I have no doubt is a correct statement of the number of inquisitions, miles travelled, &c &c by a brother Coroner in a neighbouring county (Wiltshire); and I confess I am pleased to see such a fair, manly, expose of facts, so minutely detailed. This has induced me to turn to my accounts of inquisitions taken, miles travelled &c and I find that they shew a corresponding discharge of duties performed, and of inadequate remuneration. Now, since the subject has been so banded about, and so many mis-representations made of what the Coroners receive I take leave to annex my statement of inquisitions, and miles travelled, for the last three years, ending Michaelmas Sessions, 1826:- viz

Years	Inquisitions Taken	Miles Received for	Amount Received
1824	95	1711	£159 3 3
1825	107	1968	180 17 6
1826	123	2239	206 19 3
	===	=====	=====
	325	5918	£547 0 0
	Not paid for returning	5918	
		=====	
		11,836	

If you should think proper to publish the statement of the Wiltshire Coroner, I see no reason why mine should not appear at the same time. At all events you have my consent to give it publicity, and I pledge myself to its veracity; and I beg to add an instance of the manner in which I was employed in one week, a short time since.

I left home on a Monday morning to go to Dulverton, in the vicinity of which place I had to hold an inquest on the following morning. The distance from my house is 40 miles, and after using the utmost diligence, I reached home on the Wednesday, about noon. In the course of that night, I was called out of my bed to proceed to Wells, and from thence I had to go to Bicknoller, near Watchet. On my return to Taunton, I received a letter, requiring my attendance at Lady Bridport's, at Cricket, and on

Saturday night, I returned home, thus actually travelling in six days 197 miles, for which (as travelling expenses), I got from the county £4 3s 3d and not a shilling more, either directly, or indirectly, except four pounds for the four inquisitions, the same as the Coroners were paid eighty years ago. At that time there was no house tax, nor window tax, nor horse tax, nor gig tax, nor servants tax, nor a great number of other etceteras which I will not trouble you with naming.

A great deal has been said about the county rates falling so heavily; yet it cannot be denied, that the amount paid out of the county rates to the Coroners is trifling comparatively speaking. For the years 1824, 1825 and 1826, the annual average amount to the three Coroners was only £457 15s 1d. Now the impression on my mind, is, that the day is arrived, when a petition for an increased remuneration to Coroners would be signed by thousands of the very persons (in this county), who contribute to the county rates, and I confess I should like to know what answer the House of Commons would give to such a petition.

For the present I have not leisure to say more on this subject, only that if your readers will trouble themselves to peruse these statements, very little more will be necessary to convince them that the Coroners are not fairly paid.

I am, Sir, your obedient Servant,

R P Caines, Coroner

Langport, August 30, 1827.

September 19th 1827

On Thursday, Mr Caines held an inquest at Pitminster, on the body of **Elizabeth Oaten**, a child about 18 months old, who, on the preceding Monday, had fallen from a bed room window, and sustained such serious injuries, that she expired the next day. Verdict, Accidental Death.

Bridgwater

An inquest was held on Friday last, by Mr Caines, on the body of a man aged 86, named **Thomas Williams**, who had gone to Wembdon, for the purpose of picking apples, and was found dead. Verdict, Died by the Visitation of God.

Execution of Four Persons.

On Wednesday last was presented at Ilchester the melancholy spectacle of four unfortunate persons undergoing the last awful sentence of the law, viz **John Burton**, **Wm Kerlake**, **T Wiltshire** and **Wm Latcham**. **Elizabeth Dix** (accomplice with Wiltshire, in robbing her master, Mr **Jameson** of Larkhall) was sentenced to be executed at the same time; but, owing to the successful efforts made by some gentlemen of Bath, a reprieve arrived for her on Tuesday morning. **Richard Lovell**, 71 years of age, and **Wm Southwood**, for burglary, were also, we understand reprieved. Burton, it will be recollected, was a travelling tinker, convicted for assaulting and robbing a poor man, named **Bartlett**, at one of the fairs in this county. He was at the head of an organised band, who were in the habit of infesting fairs, and committing the most atrocious assaults upon those who happened to fall in their way. Kerlake was a native of Beaminster, the only worthless member of a large and industrious family. He was convicted of robbing the house of **V Stuckey**, esq banker of Langport, and stealing a quantity of plate, &c to the amount of nearly £300. From his youth he had been addicted to vicious habits, and had before undergone sentence of seven years transportation, for robbing a cloth manufactory at Ilminster. The prisoners, after condemnation, yielded to a sense of their awful situation and received

the greatest attention from the **Rev Mr Valentine**, the chaplain; from Mr **Hardy**, the keeper, and from the officers of the prison; to all of whom they expressed their gratitude. During the greater part of Tuesday night they were in fervent prayer, and slept but little. Early in the morning they were conducted to the chapel, where the sacrament was administered to them; after which prayers, as usual, were read in the chapel to the whole of the prisoners. At half past eleven, the preparations being completed, the unhappy culprits were conducted to the scaffold, where, after joining in fervent prayer with the chaplain, they were launched into eternity. Latcham and Wiltshire died almost instantly; but Kerslake and Burton appeared to suffer much:- The concourse of spectators was unusually great; there were, it is supposed, nearly 10,000 present.

At Westbury upon Trym, near this city, at a very advanced age, of hydrophobia, **Susanna Powel**, a pauper of that parish; she was bitten by a dog about three months since, at the time supposed to be mad; to remedy the ill effects of which, she underwent the horrible and superstitious process of being dipped, almost to suffocation, in salt water. The above fact is made public to record another victim to this most dreadful malady, and to show that no reliance can be placed upon salt water dipping to obviate its deplorable effects – Bristol Mercury.

September 26th 1827

Inquests recently held by Mr Caines of Langport.

At Tatworth, in the parish of Chard, on **Wm Lush**, aged 11 years, who, with another person, on the 8th inst. was driving an empty wagon on the road leading from Bridsmore Gate, in the parish of Thorncombe, towards Chard, and near Sadborough Pound; deceased by some means fell, and one of the near wheels having gone over his body, her was taken up senseless, and carried to his home at South Chard, but her expired on the road.

At Chard, at the Pack Horse Inn, on **Mary Honeybond**, aged 21. The circumstances of the death of this poor unfortunate woman (a loose character) were singularly remarkable. On Monday, the 11th instant, she was seen at Chard market with a basket selling pears; she was also seen on the Tuesday following leaving Chard, and going on the Honiton new road, and on Thursday last she was discovered in a very extraordinary manner by a farmer's servant, dead, under a wheat mow, which, on the night of the Tuesday before mentioned (a very rough night it might be recollected) had been blown off the staddle, pitching nearly in an erect position; it seemed pretty evident that the deceased must have gone there for shelter, and that the mow fell on her, and from the weight and pressure of the corn and the timber frame on which the mow was placed, she was so dreadfully crushed that she must have expired instantly.

At Ilminster, on Mr **Thomas Satchel**, of the firm of Ash and Satchel, coach builders. It appeared in evidence that on Tuesday, the 18th instant, deceased, his partner, **Miss Ash**, and a man named Collard, were returning from Martock races in a pony phaeton, and that in going down a declivity leading from Martock to Petherton Bridge, the carriage having pressed against the hind part of the horse, the animal became unmanageable, and drew the phaeton against some stones, whereby all the party were thrown out, and deceased received a concussion of the brain; he was placed in a car, and conveyed home with great care, but he expired in the following day. Verdict in each case, Accidental Death; and in the last mentioned, Deodand on the horse, twenty shillings.

October 10th 1827

Sarah Ellis, a servant at no.12 Paragon Buildings, Bath, in charge of the house, was found Saturday se'nnight, in the passage dead; it is supposed she had been dead four days as she had not been seen since the preceding Monday. As no marks of violence appeared on the body, the medical gentlemen were of opinion she died of apoplexy.

Bridgwater

On Wednesday, **Jacob Watson** esq held an Inquest on the body of a woman **named Sarah Taylor**, who was found drowned in our river, that morning. She had been observed on the banks of the river the previous evening, and her pattens found there by a boy; a relation stated that she had laboured under a depression of mind for two years, and had frequently appeared rather wild in her demeanour. Verdict. Drowned herself in a Fit of Insanity.

Inquest by Mr Caines

At the Barracks, in the town, on Sergeant **Robert Sayers**, aged 64, who died suddenly on Friday evening last.

At Wellington, on **Sarah Thorne**, aged 82, who occupied two apartments on a ground floor, in which she resided alone, and was found dead in her sitting room on Friday morning. Verdict in each case, Visitation of God.

At Milverton, on **John Sealy**, aged 66, who for the last thirty years acted as clerk of the parish, and was much respected. On Monday se'nnight, deceased was driving a pony cart from Lovelinch Farm towards his home; when, opposite Bunhill Copse, one of the wheels was drawn against a bank, the cart completely turned over, and the poor man was found dead, with the side of the cart lying across his body; in which state he must have been more than an hour before he was discovered. Verdict – Accident; deodand on the horse 20s.

October 24th 1827

On Monday se'nnight, the clerk of the parish of Milverton was hired by the Rev Mr **Gardiner**, to take him in a carriage to the neighbouring town of Wiveliscombe, when, yielding to a propensity to which, it is said, he was much addicted, he got intoxicated; in that state he left Wiveliscombe and some hours after was found dead in the road, under his vehicle.

October 31st 1827

On Wednesday last, an inquest was held by Mr Caines, at Fivehead, near Langport, on Mr **William Cozens**, aged 69, a native of that parish, where he held some landed property, and where, on Monday last, while visiting his tenant, who was a near relative, he was found dead in the garden. The deceased was some years since a wholesale mercer in Broad Street, London, but had latterly resided in Jersey, and in France. It appeared in evidence, that the deceased had latterly complained of pains in his head and stomach, that he had been making arrangements to call on a surgeon in the morning, to consult a physician at Taunton, and that he got up rather earlier than usual, and appeared cheerful; about a quarter before nine he left the house, and about eleven he was found dead as described. Verdict, Died by the Visitation of God.

November 7th 1827

A shocking accident happened on Leckhampton Hill on Wednesday. Two boys, one about seven, and the other about ten years old, were at play on the rail road where the trams loaded with stones descend; one of the trams was descending with upwards of a ton of stone, being let down by a windlass, when the rope broke, and the team came down with the greatest velocity, and killed both the boys on the spot. The father of one of them was working the windlass.

An accident, fatal in termination, lately occurred at Buckfast Flour Mills, near Ashburton:- **Mr Hannam**, while in the act of setting the bunting, with the mill in work, was dragged among the machinery; two persons were present, but such was the power of the water wheel, that it was with considerable difficulty he was extricated; his thighs were broken, and his body and legs dreadfully lacerated; in this state he lived two days, when death terminated his sufferings.

Inquests by Mr Caines.

At Ashcott, on Polden Hill, upon **Ann Buttle**, aged three years. It appeared in evidence that the mother of the deceased had been recently confined, and on Wednesday last she was alarmed by the cries of the deceased and another of her children, aged five years, and that on some neighbours having also been alarmed, they ran into the house, where they found the deceased enveloped in flames, and so severely burnt, that she expired in a few hours. Verdict, Accidentally burnt.

At Luckham, near Porlock, on **Elizabeth Hole**, an elderly woman, an inmate of the Poor house, who had for many years been casually employed by the worthy Rector, to whose house she appeared to have been bending her course on Monday se'nnight, and was found by one of the domestics in the shrubbery, speechless, and in a dying state. Verdict, Died by the Visitation of God.

November 21st 1827

Inquests by Mr Caines.

Yesterday (Tuesday) at Combe Florey, on **J Williams**, aged 46, a sergeant in the staff of the Somerset Militia, who, early on the preceding morning, was found dead on the turnpike road leading from this town to Minehead. From the depositions of witnesses, it appeared that the deceased attended Divine Service in this town on Sunday, and late in the evening proceeded to Combe Florey, to visit a relation. It also appeared that he had for some time been subject to spasmodic affections, and being found without any marks of violence, or of his having struggled &c the Jury returned a verdict of – Died by the Visitation of God.

Thursday last, at Lympham, on the body of **Mary Coles**, aged six years, who was burnt in a dreadful manner on the 3d inst. and expired early the Tuesday following. On Saturday she was buried, without any inquest having been held, and the next day, information having been sent to the Coroner, at Langport, he caused the body to be disinterred on the 15th, when it appeared from the depositions taken, that her death was occasioned by her clothes accidentally having taken fire. The Jury returned a verdict accordingly.

At South Brent, on **W Hurford**, aged 15, who, on the 13th inst., was riding a horse most furiously in the parish of Mark, when, in turning a corner, the animal fell and the boy, having pitched on his head, received a concussion of the brain, of which he died the following day. Verdict, Accident.

December 5th 1827

It is expected that the shipping in the Bristol Channel has experienced great damage from the late violent gales. A dead body was drifted on shore, near Uphill, on Sunday last.

On Thursday last, an inquest was held by Mr Caines at South Braden, near Ilminster, on **George Dalley**, aged two years, son of **William Dalley**, sawyer. It appeared that the dwelling house was under repair, and that a door-way had been recently made close to the river (a branch of the isle), the door of which had been temporarily placed in an oblique manner, and the deceased having crept through a small aperture, must accidentally have fallen into the river, in which he was discovered drowned by his mother. Verdict, Accidentally Drowned. Braden is a very small parish, in which there is no church, chapel, or burying ground, and, in this case, the body will be interred at Puckington.

December 19th 1827

Mr Knight, on behalf of one of the Coroners for this county, who, by reason of his pecuniary difficulties, has been for some time incapacitated from attending to the duties of his situation, obtained leave from the Lord Chancellor, on the 8th inst, that the order for his dismissal might be suspended till after the Epiphany Sessions, when the Coroner had no doubt he should be able to perfect an arrangement with his only detaining creditor, and resume the active functions of his office.

The dead body which was drifted on shore near Uphill, (as mentioned in this paper of the 5th instant,) was that of one of the crew of the Flying Fish, of this port, which was totally lost on the Culvers about a fortnight since – the rest of the crew saved themselves by swimming to land.

December 26th 1827

Inquests by Mr Caines.

At Charlinch, near Bridgwater, on **Joseph Sully**, aged 63. the deceased was employed on Thursday, with another man, in rooting up and throwing down an ash tree, which falling before it was expected, and in a contrary direction from that which was intended, fell across the body of the deceased, whereby he was so dreadfully crushed that he expired on Saturday.

At North Petherton, on **Francis Richards**, aged 10 months. The death of this child was rather singular, having fallen on his face, into a frying pan, just taken off the fire, in which there was a quantity of fat, nearly in a boiling state. The accident happened on the 7th instant, at which time the sufferings of the infant were very great; but he soon became tranquil, and continued so until Sunday, when he suddenly expired in the arms of his nurse. Verdict in each case, Accidental Death.

January 2nd 1828

Inquests by Mr Caines.

At the Lamb Inn, near Ilminster, on **Samuel Hake**, aged 77. Deceased had been, for five weeks, on a visit to his daughter, at Langport, and, on Sunday se'nnight, was returning home to Combe St Nicholas, accompanied by his son in law, **Wm Berry**, with whom he lived. A horse was lent him, on which he rode as far as he chose, but had sent it back, and was walking on the turnpike road, near the mile-stone at Broadway Hill, when he exclaimed, "I cannot walk! I shall fall down!" when he dropped and instantly expired. Verdict – Died by the Visitation of God.

At the Castle Inn in the parish of Buckland St Mary, on **John Gush**, aged 65. The most material witness in this case was **John Wyatt**, who stated that on Friday, the 21st

ult he was cutting furze on Buckland Hill, and saw the deceased at work, at the distance of about 100 yards. In about two hours afterwards, on looking again in that direction, he observed him on the ground, making an effort to get up, but seemed unable to do so. He went to him, and discovered that his dissolution appeared fast approaching; he then procured assistance, and removed him to his lodgings at the Old Castle (formerly the Inn) where he expired in about an hour after. Verdict as in the above case.

January 9th 1828

Inquest by Mr Caines of Langport

On Friday last at St James' workhouse in this town, on the body of **James Shattock**, aged 73 who on the 25th September last, fell downstairs at Chelston Heathfield, near Wellington and received such severe injury in his head and legs, that, after a lingering illness, two months of which he passed in a state of delirium, he died on Wednesday. Verdict, Accidental Death.

January 30th 1828

Inquest – At Porlock, on **John Fry**, aged nine years. Deceased, with another child, got into the mill house at Bossington Mills in the absence of the miller, and was amusing himself by riding round on part of the mill work, when he fell, and was drawn by the machinery between the lanthorn and the cog wheel, by which means the mill was stopped, which led to a discovery of his situation, and it was half an hour before he could be released. A surgeon was sent for; but the sufferer expired in about two hours. Verdict – Accidental Death.

Robbery and dreadful murder at Bath.

Early this (Sunday) morning, Jan 27, about two o'clock, the neighbours and watchmen in Marlborough buildings were alarmed by the reports of pistols and repeated cries of murder, which were found to proceed from a window of No 16 in the above named buildings. On the arrival of the watchmen and others, and having gained an entrance, a dreadful spectacle presented itself, the servant – a fine young woman, nearly 30 years of age, was lying on the floor in the kitchen, with her throat cut from ear to ear, quite dead. The servant who had fired the pistols, was in his bed room and the door screwed together; the servant was awakened by the noise of the screwing, and fired first of all through the key-hole. The thieves, it appears, nothing daunted by this, had not only committed the horrid murder above described, but had regaled themselves with what wines and spirits they could meet with in the kitchen, and packed up several things ready to carry off; but, in consequence of the arrival of the watchman and some of the neighbours, it is supposed that they decamped without any plunder. The poor servant, it appears, had not retired to bed, and had come down stairs alone for the purpose of getting some water to wash her feet; but the mistress and likewise the man servant had been in bed some time. The darkness of the night favoured the escape of the robbers, which was, no doubt effected through the field at the back of the house. The alarm had been dreadful for **Mrs Cox**, the inhabitant of the house, who is a lady highly respected. She and her two servants were the only persons in the house. The murderers have left a large bludgeon by the side of their victim.

February 6th 1828

The murder in Marlborough Buildings, Bath – Confession of the Murderer.

We last week gave an account of a horrible murder that had been committed on the person of maid servant, at the house of a lady named **Coxe**, in Marlborough

Buildings, Bath. On a Sunday week an inquest was held on the body, and it having been supposed that the crime had been committed by some persons who had broken into the house, and who, upon the alarm, had made their escape, the Jury returned a verdict of wilful murder against some person or persons unknown. Subsequently, strong suspicion fell on the butler, **R Gilham**: but it was not until Thursday that any thing of a positive character, sufficient to warrant his committal, was discovered. The following particulars are derived from the Bath Journal, of Monday last:-

“It was ascertained that Gilham had some property secured in a room at the back of Northampton street; and this circumstance, coupled with his declaration, when questioned by one of the jurymen on Sunday, that he had no property except what was in Mrs Coxe’s house, led immediately to strong suspicion of his guilt; and, in order to make sure that the statement of his evidence was correct, the Mayor sent **Wilcox** and **Mr Curry** down to the prison, to put the same question to him again, when he unequivocally reasserted the same. He was, in consequence, again brought up for examination; and on entering the Mayor’s room, and seeing the property he had stowed as above stated, which consisted of three hampers, three boxes, a frail basket, and a large saucepan; altogether as much as two chairmen could bring in twice on their horse, he became much agitated; and on their being opened, and the contents shown to him, his spirits sank, and he fainted away. Some water was brought to him in a basin, when, having twice sipped a little, he, with an eagerness that betrayed a tremendous internal fever, swallowed the whole contents of the basin. After this followed a further examination, and still so prevaricating were the prisoner and his wife, that it was with the utmost difficulty the Mayor, **Mr George**, and others, who put questions to them, could elicit the truth. The first hamper opened contained seventeen bottles of wine; the other hampers contained china, earthenware, and tin ware; &c in great variety; two of the boxes contained candles, one moulds, and the other dips; the other box contained knives and forks, fire-irons, chamber candlesticks, a patent corkscrew, and various other articles.

On his return to prison, after this examination, there was an evident alteration in his appearance. He asked for a Bible, and requested a person present to read to him. And the next morning (Friday) the prisoner requested the assistance of a clergyman; in consequence of which, the **Rev Mr Marshall**, chaplain to the prison, was sent for, who, on entering, found the prisoner with the gaoler in attendance. Upon the Reverend Gentleman’s saying that he understood the prisoner wished his assistance, and that he had something to communicate, he desired to know whether or not he wished it to be in private. Upon his replying in the affirmative, the gaoler of course withdrew; and the Reverend Gentleman, having desired that he would communicate his wishes, his reply was – “I cannot pray, for I have been a very wicked man and have done many acts that are very improper, more particularly as regards the robbing of my mistress.” Upon which the Chaplain, in the most delicate manner remarked, “There must be some more heinous offence weighing heavily upon your mind, besides this”. At which remark the prisoner’s lips quivered, and he became so agitated, that he was near fainting; and the gaoler was called upon to give him a glass of water, After which, nothing further was stated by him. The Chaplain, of course, immediately communicated the purport of this interview to the Mayor; and on Saturday morning, at eight o’clock, the Chaplain again visited the prisoner, when he made a full confession of his guilt. He stated, that there had been repeated quarrels of late between the deceased and himself, in consequence of her declaring her belief that he had been purloining her mistress’s property; and that, on the Saturday night at half past eleven o’clock, he was in his pantry packing up some things when the deceased

came down again, and accused him of bad practises, and finished by saying “Well, I’ve quite enough to hang you.” That he immediately seized a stick and struck her a blow upon the back of her head; deceased then turned round, and clung to him round the neck; and so strong did she hold him that he could not shake her off. That he then pulled his penknife out of his pocket, and cut her throat. (It is generally supposed the prisoner is incorrect here, and that he must, after having felled his victim, have cut her throat with another knife, in order to effect his malignant purpose securely, as the neck was cut into the vertebrae, and the knife had made an inclusion into the bone.)

“Saturday morning, the Mayor attended early, and the prisoner’s confession was reduced into the regular legal shape; but the prisoner was in such a deplorable state of mind and body, as to be unable to stand, and quite unable to sign his name; the same was therefore signed by the magistrates, as having been witnesses to it. Nearly the whole of the day was occupied in examining over again all the witnesses in the presence of the prisoner; and the Mayor told the prisoner to cross-examine the witnesses when he thought fit.

“The whole of the property stolen had been conveyed to the room he had taken as above stated, by the prisoner himself, after dusk, on the Thursday, Friday, and Saturday evening previous to the committal of the horrid deed. And when it is recollected with what effrontery the prisoner made such cautious statements before the coroner’s jury, on Sunday, as could not in the least implicate himself, the enormity of his crime seems tenfold more dreadful. A more deliberate murder than it now appears to be was never recorded in the annals of crime. He now, whether justly or not, we cannot say, admits nothing that will not tend to screen his wife”. He says that all the derangement in the house, the bursting open the door, the fixing the gimblet at the door at the bottom of the garret stairs, &c were all done by himself, and that his wife knew nothing of it. He did not use the bludgeon that was found by the side of his victim; he struck her about the head with another stick, by which severe blows were inflicted, and then burnt it. He then placed the stick where it was found, by her side; because, having the appearance of a faggot stick, he thought it would prevent detection.

“Various circumstances now transpire to show, with more forcible evidence, the truth which the wretched man has confessed. Had practised burglars been so dreadfully brutal as to have glutted themselves with wine after the murder was perpetrated, they would have been less cautious than this cold blooded monster, who did not leave, with one trifling exception on the parlour floor, a stain of blood anywhere about the premises – not even where the wine was stated to have been drunk; nor was a drop of wine spilt upon the table.

“The examination closed at seven o’clock on Saturday evening, when the prisoner was fully committed for trial at the next Taunton Assizes. He was removed to the gaol in a sedan chair; and so inveterately did the populace show their abhorrence of the heinous crime he had committed, that, notwithstanding the utmost endeavours of the officers, they broke the glass of the chair to pieces.

“Mrs Coxe, the lady at whose house the horrid scene was acted is the widow of the late **Charles Coxe** esq of Lypiatt, near Stroud and is 83 years of age. She is now, we understand, tolerably composed, and will shortly leave Bath.”

February 13th 1828

On Saturday last an inquest was held by Mr Caines, at the Market House, in this town, on **Mrs Sarah Langdale**, aged 63. At three o’clock in the afternoon, the Jury (consisting of fifteen respectable inhabitants) assembled, and being sworn, the

Coroner stated that this inquest was demanded by him in consequence of a letter received, the previous evening from a respectable person, which conveyed to him information that the deceased had died on the preceding Tuesday, and that there were circumstances attending her death which rendered it necessary that an inquest should be held. **Mr Rodber**, surgeon, wished to know from whom the Coroner obtained his information, when **Mr James Turle** (one of the jurors) replied, "It was I who sent the letter." After a few other preliminary observations from the Coroner, the inquest was proceeded in, and the following was the substance of the evidence:- That the deceased (who was a widow possessing property to some considerable amount) was about to be married, and the day fixed for the wedding was Monday, the 11th instant – that on Sunday, the 28th ult., she accompanied her intended husband to Wellington and back again, and in the course of the night she was taken ill. On the following morning she was attended by her medical friend, who treated her medical complaint in the usual manner, not then suspecting any immediate danger; she was also visited by the person who was about to marry her, who administered a little wine, and occasionally some gin and water, on the Saturday – two glasses. On Sunday she became insensible and speechless, and on Tuesday she expired. It soon became known that the deceased had, in May last, made her will, and had appointed her medical attendant (**Mr Rodber**) one of her executors, when reports, very prejudicial to the character of that gentleman, soon became prevalent throughout the town. Two other medical gentlemen attended at the inquest, and the head having been opened, and these gentlemen having heard the whole of the evidence, they gave it as their opinion that the deceased died of serious apoplexy, occasioned by over-excitement and that the treatment and conduct of **Mr Rodber** were judicious and honourable. At eight o'clock the jury returned a verdict – Died by the Visitation of God.

An inquest was lately held by **Isaac Cox**, esq, Coroner, at Clivehaves Farm, in Churchstaunton, on the body of **Robert Harris**, a fine youth, aged about fifteen years, who was found that morning, suspended to an apple tree, in an orchard belonging to the farm. Deceased was an apprentice, bound by the parish of Churchstaunton, to **Mr Richard Blackmore**, a respectable farmer and maltster, with whom he had lived six years, during which time, he had conducted himself with great propriety, and his master was much pleased with him. On the morning of Wednesday, **Mr Blackmore** went from home, having previously given directions to the deceased, to rack a hogshead of cider, and look after some malt. He racked the cider, and attended to the malt, and left his master's house about 12 o'clock; at two in the afternoon, he was seen in the meadow belonging to the farm, setting mole-traps. He did not return in the evening, and the family went in different directions to find him but without effect. He was discovered on the following morning, as above described, in an orchard called West Wood, some distance from the farm quite dead. When found, he had a mole trap with a mole in it, in his hand. The jury returned a verdict of *felo-de-se*, and the Coroner ordered him to be privately buried in the church yard of Hemyock, within 24 hours of the finding of the inquest, and between nine and twelve o'clock at night. No cause for this rash act could be traced, except a slight rebuke he received from a young girl in the house, for whom it seemed he had formed some attachment.

On Saturday, died at Cannington near this town, the **Revd Robt. Eyton**, aged 84. Although he died possessed of nearly ten thousand pounds, his life was marked by nothing more than his frugality or rather stinginess; he resides in a house of his own at Cannington, and kept no servant, but performed all the menial duties himself. His

horse was turned out at night to graze on the hedges by the road side, and every market day brought him to this town; on that day, his general practise was (if not invited anywhere to dinner) to buy a penny loaf, and then, to go to the butter stalls in the market and taste the contents of several baskets, and this constituted his meal for the day; sometimes however he made his visits to the cheese market for the same purpose. His death was the consequence of a broken thigh and during his illness he employed no less than ten surgeons discharging them immediately after their first visit; he has been known frequently after having had medicines sent him by his medical men, to return them with a request that he might have credit given for them in his account; when taken to his room after breaking his thigh, it presented a scene which rivals description, his bedding consisted of a bed and sheet, the colour of which was scarcely distinguishable from that of the ground, and in the corner of the room was a collection of filth, the proceeds of the sweepings of his room which took place once a week; he had been never known to buy any other joint of meat than a breast of mutton which was hung up on his chimney corner to dry, and a slice cut off each day as it was wanted.

On Wednesday se'nnight, as the wife of **Mr Langton's** coachman, of Combhay, was passing over the locks of the canal with her husband's linen, which she was conveying from Southstoke, she fell into the water and was drowned. The deceased was far advanced in pregnancy, and has left three young children.

Murder of Maria Bagnall at Bath – Further particulars of the murder.

(from the Bath and Cheltenham Gazette of the 5th inst).

On leaving the room in which the examination took place **Gillham** was conveyed into the Officers Room, and on arriving there, exclaimed to those who were about him, "Well I know they'll hang me for this; but thank God I am innocent of the murder!" On this, **Mr Bourne**, the keeper of the prison, who was present, observed to him, 'Don't say a word about it – don't add lies to crime.' The prisoner made no reply to this; but remarked, "Ah! We (alluding to his wife) have been like bees during the last summer, collecting our honey; and now like bees, I suppose our hive will be destroyed and our honey taken." After this conversation, it appears he never once denied he was the murderer.

Among other circumstances which transpired, was the following. In the course of the day Mr Bourne had seen the wife of Gillham, who acknowledged to him that her husband's returning up stairs to bed, on the night of the murder, she thought he appeared much agitated. She strove to ascertain the cause of it, but was repulsed; and her husband told her "not to say a word to Nanny (their old fellow-servant) about his going down stairs;" and added, that she must say, "he had not gone down stairs at all; and that he went to bed before she did." And on the examination before the Coroner's jury, as well as subsequently at the Hall, the statement was made by both of them.

Shortly after five o'clock on Sunday morning, Gillham was conveyed in a chaise under the custody of Wilcox and Humphries, the Mayors officers, to Shepton Mallet gaol; there to remain until the approaching Assize for Somerset, which will be holden at Taunton on the 27th of the next month (March); when the wretched culprit will take his trial for the enormous crime which he has perpetrated.

Richard Gillham is a native of Taplow, Buckinghamshire. He was born in May 1803, and is consequently now in the 25th year of his age. He is about five feet eight inches high, and of stout make. He had lived five years, previous to his engagement with Mrs Coxe, with the **Rev. Vansittart Neil**, and left that gentleman's service with an excellent character. One of his brothers, a young man of respectable appearance,

and has for many years filled the situation of gardener to a gentleman of Burnham in Bucks, with credit to himself, came to Bath on Saturday for the purpose of seeing him. In consequence of his application, he was apprized by some of the officers that he might see the prisoner on the following morning, when he would be conveyed to Shepton Mallet gaol. The afflicted brother of Gilham accordingly repaired the following morning to the Wells road, and awaited the arrival of the chaise near Devonshire Buildings, where a painful interview took place, but nothing of importance transpired.

After all, the public will naturally be anxious to inquire what could be the motive which could thus induce one servant – and that a man – deliberate to plan the death, and eventually to raise his murderous hand against his fellow servant – a woman, living under the same roof with him.

We believe we have the means of satisfying inquiries upon this head. In the first place, Gillham had married his present wife, while both were in the service of Mrs Coxe, unknown to that lady. This circumstance was, however, at length communicated to Mrs Coxe by the deceased; who also, from time to time, mentioned other particulars to her mistress respecting Gillham's wife. There can be likewise no doubt that Gillham was aware that his dishonest practices were known to **Bengall**; and as, by indulging a habit of listening to the conversations of his mistress and her own maid, he has overheard the communications of the latter respecting his wife, and probably about himself also, his enmity towards the deceased is at once accounted for. Certain it is, that both he and his wife were under notice to quit Mrs Coxe at the time of the murder; and as his wife had cherished an expectation of getting an annuity at her mistress's death, the disappointment of this hope by the dismissal of her and himself must have still further increased his hatred of **Bagnall**, and supplied an indictment to revenge. Indeed he acknowledged after his commitment that he had long contemplated her destruction; and, dreadful as the idea is, that he eagerly embraced the first opportunity of effecting it.

We hear that, in the event of the capital conviction of Gilham at the ensuing Assize, a strong application will be made to have the execution carried into effect in this city.

The circumstances that the screams, which the poor creature uttered when her murderer was attempting to effect his diabolical purpose, were not heard by any other person in the house, is accounted for by the fact, that the only person who might have heard them was Mrs Coxe, who slept in the back attic; but this, her extreme age and attendant deafness effectually prevented. The only two other persons in the house were the old housemaid (also very deaf) and Gillham's wife, both of whom slept in the garrets; and being shut in by the door at the bottom of the garret stairs, no sound from the kitchen could ascend to them.

The remains of the murdered woman were on Wednesday morning interred in Walcot burial ground, a vast concourse of persons attending the funeral.

A sister of the deceased, with her husband, arrived here last night. In consequence of their having removed their residence from Hammersmith to Brompton, the post letter acquainting them with the dreadful fate of their relative, did not reach them: but they accidentally read the paragraph of the murder in a neighbour's newspaper on Sunday evening last; when they took the first Bath coach yesterday morning. The deceased has no parents; her mother died six months since; but she has two surviving sisters.

Early on the Monday morning succeeding the murder, **Mr Gahagan**, the sculptor residing in the Walks, in this city took a model of the body of Maria Bagnall, as it lay in the midst of its blood, and the resemblance in every particular is understood to be remarkably accurate. Mr G. likewise took a model of the head after the hair was cut

off, which shew all the wounds that were inflicted; these were seven in number on the head, besides one on the throat. The skull was not bruised; but the blood inside the head was found to be coagulated from the effect of the blows. The head was opened by **Mr Gore**, the surgeon. Mr Gahagan has also taken a model of Gillham the murderer.

Feb 20th 1828

The Bath Murder.

It is satisfactory to find that since the committal of the wretched man, **Gillam**, to Shepton gaol, he appears to have become duly sensible of the enormity of the crime he has already confessed, and his behaviour has been altogether that of a sincere penitent. On his way to prison, however, he evinced an earnest desire to extenuate his guilt, saying that 'he was driven to it by the bad temper of the deceased.' He also acknowledged to the officers, that had he even left the service of his mistress without accomplishing the murder, he really thought he should have found some other opportunity of carrying his horrid purpose into effect. His wife after leaving Bath on Thursday se'night set out for Shepton Mallet for the purpose of seeing him, and had since had several interviews with him, through the grating. She has returned to Bath, and not gone into Herefordshire, as previously stated. Gillham expresses himself perfectly satisfied with his treatment in the prison, and takes his regular food and rest. The chaplain visits him daily, and pronounces him to be very penitent. The prisoner has sent an order for his wife to receive the monies belonging to him in the Saving's Bank, as well as the wages due him from his mistress.

Inquests by Mr Caines.

At Puriton, near Bridgwater, on **Daniel Pople**, aged 68. Deceased was a cordwainer, and lived in a house by himself. He was missed by his neighbours on Wednesday last, and, on his not appearing as usual, on the following day, a person called at the house several times, without receiving any reply. At length a ladder was placed against the bed-room window, when it was discovered that he was dead. Verdict, Died by the Visitation of God.

At Durston, near this town, on Monday last, on **Joseph Davey**, a boat boy, aged 15. In the night of Saturday, deceased was employed in driving a boat-horse from Bridgwater to Creech. The boat was laden with 37 tons of coal, and did not arrive at Creech until six o'clock on Sunday morning; shortly afterwards the boy was sent back with the horse, which, it is conjectured, he was riding under the bridge, near Buckland Farm – a practice not unusual, but extremely dangerous, the towing-path under the bridges never having been intended for riding upon. In this manner, it is supposed, he must have fallen off the horse into the Canal, where, about seven the same morning, he was found drowned by the side of the towing path, nearly in a standing position. Verdict, Accidentally drowned.

By the 3d article of the Regulations of the Navigation on the Canal, persons navigating a boat thereon, between one hour after sun-set and an hour before sun-rise, are subject to a penalty; and it is highly necessary that this regulation should be strictly adhered to, for many reasons. It is not improbable that the poor boy, above mentioned, may have fallen asleep from fatigue, and that he might, in this way, have come in contact with the arch of the bridge, there being a slight contusion on his forehead.

February 27th 1828

The election of a Coroner for this county, in the room of **Mr Peter Layng**, who has resigned; will take place on Wednesday next, March 5th, at the Town Hall, Ilchester. The address of **Mr Ashford**, of Castle Cary, and Mr West, of Shepton Mallet, who, some time since, declared themselves as Candidates for the situation, appear among our Advertisements. The latter Gentleman announces that he does not intend to offer himself on the present occasion, while the former (Mr Ashford) actively renews his canvass. As Mr A enjoys an excellent reputation, is most respectably connected, and powerfully recommended, his ultimate success may be regarded as almost certain.

Inquests by Mr Caines.

On Tuesday se'nnight, at Chard, on **Charity Anning**, aged 50, who was found dead in her bed, on the preceding Sunday, without having suffered under previous illness. Verdict, Died by the Visitation of God.

On Thursday, at the George Inn, Crewkerne, on **Mr Wm Budge**, who, on the preceding Tuesday night, about ten o'clock, fell from his horse, on Chillington Down, between Chard and Crewkerne. The deceased, who was an industrious and respectable young man, had recently entered on Haselbury Farm, and had that day been attending a sale at Mosbury, for the purpose of purchasing stock. It was clearly ascertained, on opening the head, that the deceased died from the rupture of a vessel on the brain. A brother of the deceased was but a short distance behind him when the accident happened, but did not see him fall. Verdict, Accidental Death; Deodand on the horse; 40s.

March 5th 1828

A youth 15 years of age in the employ of a miller at Lydeard St Lawrence was unfortunately rode over, from his horse taking fright, on Monday last, and survived the accident only four hours.

The inhabitants of Wellington, within the last fortnight, have had, almost daily, melancholy intimations, by the tolling of the church bell, of the decease of some of their townspeople. The destructive career of the smallpox, we hear, in a great measure, account for the distressing mortality, in otherwise, a very healthy town.

March 12th 1828

On Thursday last, Mr Caines held an inquest on the body of **Isaac Clement**, aged 15, who, whilst riding on the back of a horse, drawing a cart, at Nethercott, in the parish of Lydeard St Lawrence, was thrown off, from the animal's taking fright, and the wheel of the cart passing over him, he received such severe injury that he expired in the course of a few hours.

The fact but not the particulars, of this accident were given in our last. The jury returned a verdict of Accidental Death: deodand on the wheel, 2s 6d.

Election of Coroner

On Wednesday last, the Election of Coroner for this county commenced at Ilchester. About nine o'clock in the morning, **Mr Lovell**, the Under Sheriff, attended at the Town Hall, where a large and respectable body of the Freeholders were collected, and entered on the business of the day by stating that they had assembled for the purpose of electing a Coroner in the place of **Mr Laing**, whose unfortunate circumstances had compelled him to relinquish the office, which he had for many years most ably filled. He added, that those gentlemen who intended to propose the candidates should obtain a free and impartial hearing. After the reading of the writ, &c had been finished.

Sir **Alexander Hood** rose to propose **Mr Daniel Ashford**, as a fit competent person to fill the office of Coroner. Mr Laing's misfortunes having deprived the country of his valuable services, he felt the greatest confidence in asserting that the candidate whom he had the honour of proposing and who was a person of the highest respectability., would not, in the performance of his duty, fall short of his predecessor. He likewise added, that Mr Ashford would comply with the wishes of the electors to reside in any part of the country where his services might be most required.

Mr Jillard seconded the nomination of Mr Ashford, and said that Mr Ashford's time would be exclusively devoted to the duties of his office.

Dr Shaw rose and proposed **Dr Spencer**, a person, he believed, of the strictest honour and integrity, and, as he considered, well calculated to fill the vacant situation.

Mr Murly said, he rose to propose **Mr Burnard**, young gentleman of great respectability, and one of a numerous and respectable family well known in this county. He had received a liberal education and is by profession a surgeon; had regularly attended the hospitals and anatomical schools of London and Paris, and is a Member of the Royal College of Surgeons. He (Mr M) considered him a person well adapted for the situation, and felt assured that his young friend would discharge the duties of the office with patience and vigilance.

Mr Isaac Sparks, in seconding the proposition of **Mr Murly**, said, his young friend to all appearance promised well; and felt confident he would perform his duty with credit to himself and advantage to those who elected him.

After a desultory conversation between Sir Alexander Hood, Mr Murly, and others, as to the residence of the future Coroner, and the profession best adapted for the office.

Mr Jillard observed, that he thought the Coroner should reside in the Eastern part of the county – about twelve miles from Bath - that point being near the Collieries, where accidents so frequently occurred.

Dr Spencer, who was on the right of the Under Sheriff, rose, and as a freeholder of the county, begged to second the proposal of Dr Shaw. For his own part he thought himself particularly well calculated for the situation, as he had been brought up to the medical profession, and he had obtained some knowledge of the law from frequent experience, having had no less than eleven law suits on his hands at one time (*a laugh*).

The Under Sheriff then requested to know if there were any other candidates to be proposed, and there being no reply, a show of hands was immediately obtained, which was decided to be in favour of Mr Barnard. A poll having been demanded.

Mr Ashford said, if he should succeed in procuring the situation for which he stood a candidate, he would be willing to reside in any part of the county which the freeholders might be pleased to appoint.

Mr Tomkins, surgeon of Yeovil, addressed the freeholders in favour of Mr Burnard. For twelve months he (Mr B) had resided with him as an assistant, and he could decidedly testify that Mr Burnard was a man of integrity and honour.

Dr Spencer immediately resigned; and the following is the state of the poll up to Saturday evening.

	Wed	Th	Frid	Sat	Total
Mr Burnard	273	382	314	164	1133
Mr Ashford	135	269	217	214	865

At the close of the poll, on Monday, Mr Burnard's majority was reduced to 238; and at three o'clock on Tuesday, Mr Ashford was only 35 below his opponent – the state of the day's poll to that hour being, Ashford 332 – Burnard 129.

At the close of poll on Tuesday, Mr Burnard's friends announced his resignation, and Mr Ashford was declared duly elected. Some indiscreet friends of Mr Burnard, by the issue of an intemperate placard, accelerated the result in Mr Ashford's favour, by the disapprobation it excited among all respectable persons.

March 19th 1828

On Thursday last, Mr Caines held an inquest on the body of **Abraham Collins**, aged 15, who, on the preceding day, while driving a cart with a load of elm saplings, and in the act of turning a corner at a place called Deadman's Cross, Corfe Lane, Ditson, in the parish of Pitminster, from the horse turning too quickly, and the wheel taking the bank, was killed by the upsetting of the cart. Deceased was found under the load, and taken out, dead, in about half an hour after the accident. Verdict, Accidental Death.

The body of the deceased we learn, was culpably allowed to remain exposed at the roadside, while an officer of one of the two parishes, the boundaries of which happened to be just about where the deceased was found, came into this town, to ascertain the precise situation of the limits, in order that no unjust funeral charges might be made on the parish rates!

Election of a Coroner for the County of Somerset.

The warm and spirited contest for this office, which commenced on the 5th inst. was terminated on Wednesday, the 12th, by the election of Mr Ashford. In consequence of the resignation of Mr Burnard on the preceding night, messengers were dispatched to various parts of the county, to apprise the Freeholders in the interest of the former gentleman, that their attendance at Ilchester had been rendered unnecessary. Their suffrages, if an opportunity of voting had been afforded them, would have greatly increased the majority in his favour, even on Wednesday's poll. His opponent, therefore, prudently discontinued a struggle, from the protraction of which, he could only anticipate a more signal and complete overthrow. After Mr Ashford had been duly sworn in and chaired, he proceeded, accompanied by many of those who had actively supported his cause, towards his residence at Castle Cary. On their arrival, within four miles of that place, they were met by a respectable body of yeomanry on horseback, who having formed themselves into regular order, preceded the carriages; as they advanced, the numbers increased, evincing by their spirit and enthusiasm, the delight they felt, at the triumph of their favourite candidate. At the entrance of the town, the horses were taken from the carriage, on a box of which Mr Ashford was seated, and the people themselves drew him through the streets amidst the acclamations of thousands. The town itself presented a sight which must have been to him most gratifying, every house, nay, every cottage, even the humblest, was decorated with branches of laurel. At the habitations of the more wealthy, flags and ribbons were tastefully arranged among these victorious emblems. The ladies were seen on every side displaying blue ribbons and waving their handkerchiefs.

Their presence contributed in no small degree to heighten the animation and the gaiety of the scene. The bells rung a merry peal, and the cheerful strains of an excellent band of music exhilarated the hearts of the joyous multitude. When the procession was concluded, a party of the friends and supporters of Mr Ashford assembled at the George Inn. Several gentlemen addressed the company on the subject of the recent contest, and congratulated them on its successful issue. This event they attributed solely to the prompt and spirited exertions of those numerous and respectable individuals, whose kind and effectual aid on this occasion deserved the highest praise and the warmest gratitude. Many appropriate toasts were given and drunk with re-

iterated cheers. Nor were the humbler classes forgotten, hogsheads of strong beer and cider were distributed among them; mirth and good humour universally prevailed. In short, one feeling only appeared to pervade all ranks, namely, that of heartfelt joy at the triumph, which the cause of Mr Ashford had obtained.

April 2nd 1828

Inquests

Mr Ashford of Castle Cary, on Friday held an inquest on the body of **Eliza Tanner**, an infant 14 months old. The mother of the infant having been engaged in an affray with another woman, the child it is supposed, sustained some injury on the occasion and died in consequence. Verdict. Accidental Death.

And on the following day at Nempnett, on the body of **Thomas Patch**, a respectable farmer aged 53, who having gone out to serve his cattle, was found dead in the field by his neighbour; the deceased had been in an ill state of health for some time. Verdict. Died by the Visitation of God.

April 9th 1828

The first prisoner put to the bar was a labouring man named **James Bough**, charged with slaying and killing **Benjamin Hamilton**, by throwing a stone, which mortally wounded him in the temple, on Monday, December 10. It appeared in evidence that on the above day a quarrel took place between two individuals of a drunken party. James and **Offer**, who were beginning to fight it out, when the prisoner (who, if he may possibly have the phrenological hump of combativeness, certainly had no physiognomical criterion whereby we might judge him out to be of that disposition, for he had an perfectly simple and good looking countenance), interfered for the purpose of preventing the fight; whereupon, a man of the name of **Wilcox**, alias **Morgan** came forward to remonstrate with Bough for his interference, which involved another quarrel between him and Bough; the former taking a stick out of Bough's hands and beating it about his head, for attempting to destroy a good fight, in which he took great delight; he told them therefore to stand back and fight it fairly out. They accordingly did so, while Bough went to the wall at the side of the road; and after the fight, Wilcox came up to him for the purpose of again assaulting him, holding a stick in a menacing attitude; and Bough, having no more lawful weapon with which to defend himself than that of a large stone, which he took from the top of the wall, held it up as a counteracting menace, threatening that if it were a cannon ball, he would shoot it through the body of any man in his own defence. Wilcox remained, notwithstanding, in his redoubtable attitude, and was going to lay the stick upon his person, when Bough threw the stone, directing it to Wilcox's right arm, in which he held the stick, which, missing him, struck **Benjamin Hamilton** in the temple as aforesaid, and mortally wounded him. (He died on the Wednesday following). The surgeon, **Mr Baynton** of Rodstock, six miles from Leigh on Mendip, where this occurrence took place, stated that he went to examine the body on the Thursday following and he had no doubt but that death was occasioned by the blow – a great many witnesses were called by which it was substantially proved, that the stone was thrown in self defence and that it killed Hamilton by accident; and the judge in recapitulating the evidence told the jury that if he intentionally threw the stone at Hamilton it was manslaughter, but if at Wilcox in self defence it would be justifiable homicide, if it was a small stone. The laws allow a man to defend himself provided he takes only such means as the offence offered to him warrants. If they thought he was not in danger of his life from Wilcox, then this throwing and killing by so large a

stone as what Wilcox stated it to be would amount to manslaughter but if they did not believe Wilcox who is the father of the deceased – his natural child – then they could not find the prisoner guilty. The stone missing Wilcox, and striking the other did not materially alter the case, they were to consider whether he was justified in using so large a stone had it struck Wilcox; the other's death was accidental – if he were not justified in so doing, then the case would be manslaughter, the same as if he had killed Wilcox; but (observed his Lordship) no other witness except Wilcox has described it as a large stone, and as Wilcox, the father, appeared naturally enough to have his feelings strongly excited and was very prevaricating in his testimony, it is a question, whether or not his evidence should be credited. The jury after about ten minutes consultation, returned a verdict of Not Guilty.

The body of a man; in sailors dress was picked up near the bridge, at Bridgwater on Friday. His features were greatly disfigured it is supposed by the fishes. He has not yet been owned.

April 9th 1828

Murder at Bath

Trial of Robert Gilham

The court was filled at a very early hour, to witness the trial of **Robert Gilham**, aged 24, of the parish of Walcot, Bath, for the wilful murder of **Maria Bagnall**, aged 42, a lady's maid, living with Mrs Cox, 16 Malborough buildings, Bath. The prisoner pleaded 'Not Guilty.' **Mr Gunning** for the prosecution detailed the particulars of the case, and requested the jury, for the discharge of public justice, to dismiss from their minds, all prejudice of opinion, all remembrance of indecent exhibitions, and ill rumours on the subject. It was with some satisfaction, that the prisoner would now have the best assistance and fullest benefit which the law could afford. The prisoner was a butler living in that capacity with **Mrs Cox**, an aged lady, of 80 or upwards, who also had in her employ Maria Bagnall as lady's maid, the prisoner's wife; as cook, and Anne Spackman, an elderly domestic, who had held her situation for 14 or 15 years.

Anne Spackman was the first witness who was examined, she was 70 years of age, remembers that on the Sunday morning of the 26th January last, at half past two, she was alarmed by some one crying 'robbers were in the house;' she got up and called prisoners wife, and then heard a pistol go off; she went into Maria Bagnall's room, and found the bed untumbled, with all the appearance that no one had slept in the room. After lighting a fire in her mistresses's room, she went down stairs with some watchmen who, at that time had arrived, and there found the deceased Maria Bagnall lying on the floor, quite dead. It was Gilham's place every night to bolt and bar the garden door – Cross examined by **Sergt Bompas**. – Witness went first to bed, and therefore did not know what was done after 10, on the night in question. (During the examination of this witness, she recognised the prisoner with some difficulty, on which he said, smilingly, 'what! Don't you know me?')

Tresley, an old servant of Mrs Cox was called – he was at Mrs Cox's the 26th January last; and left there about ten minutes after ten o'clock, after having supped Maria Bagnall did not sit at the supper table, but on one side of the fire eating bread and cheese. Witness now lives at Windsor, when he was in the service of Mrs Cox, there were four horse pistols belonging to the house. Witness had no conversation with Gillham about Maria Bagnall, on his once coming to see him at Windsor.

John Robins, servant to **Mr Valentine**, supped also at Mrs Cox's with the last witness on the night in question, and did not know of any quarrelling.

Roger Morton, esq lives at Bath, and had received by the prisoner from Mrs Cox four days previous to the 26th, a present of a hare, the blood of which was not very wet.

Charles Billingham, watchman on the Crescent, deposed, that on Sunday morning, the 27th, at half-past two o'clock, he heard a report of fire arms, went up to the street door of No16, Marlborough Buildings, and could gain no admittance, he then went accompanied by three other officers round to the back of the premises, and ran down a field, with a garden door open facing him – here he picked up a white cloth about the size of a pocket handkerchief. Witness then went to the back door of the house, where he saw another door open, leading to a large cellar, on the left of which, lay a basket with bread and meat. He perceived a light burning below. Witness went up stairs, on the floor lay a pair of snuffers and extinguisher, and a large bundle tied up with a case alongside. Witness then went to the front door, and being joined by some more watchmen, went towards the front garret at the top of the house, and heard a voice say 'where are you,' – saw Gilham, on the floor of the landing place, lay a gimblet, which Gilham observed was what he had been fastened in with. Gilham was in his nightcap with fustian clothes on. Witness pointed to a case, which he said was a plate chest, containing an urn valued at 100g. Prisoners wife and **Anne Spacknell** were now coming downstairs. Witness and prisoner were going over into the drawing room, when one of the constables called from below – 'Have you found the murderer?' – To which the witness said 'No.' Witness proceeded to the kitchen, and found the deceased, Maria Bagnall, lying in a 'gore of blood,' her head towards the kitchen fireplace, with her face turned down; on the left hand side there was a large bludgeon, and a cap belonging to the deceased a few yards off. Witness then begged Gilham to examine the bundle which was seen on entering the house; it was undone, and a coat and pelisse were found therein, which belonged to the prisoner and his wife. Witness begged to be shown something else, whereupon they went downstairs, and saw a basket with some bread and a loin of lamb in it. Witness did not go again into the kitchen, 'for he had seen enough.'

Benjamin Bedwell was a watchman at King's Place, about a quarter of a mile from Marlborough Buildings. On the Sunday morning in question, heard the report of fire arms, and proceeded to No 16, went up stairs, and observed the prisoner with the garret door open; a goblet was lying on the floor about six inches from the door; the prisoner directed his attention to the bullet hole in the door; he said, that on finding the latch fastened, he had loaded a pistol and fired at the door. Witness stated that the door was very slight, and that a strong man or boy might have forced open the pannels with ease. Witness then went down to the kitchen with the assistance of a light, perceived the deceased lying on the floor, her face turned on the ground, and her head towards the kitchen fire, which was out. An hour or two afterwards **Mr King**, surgeon, arrived and saw the deceased. The prisoner got some beer for Mr King, and served it out in small cups to those present, standing at the time about five feet from the corpse.

Thomas Hill, a cabinet maker, deposed that about sun-set on the 26th he observed a person come out of the back garden door with a spade, he rubbed it against the wall, and then putting the spade inside the door, jumped over the wall into the garden. Witness can swear that the prisoner at the bar was the man.

The Mayor's officer, Vincent, proved that he went into the prisoner's sleeping room, and found a pair of small clothes, the knees of which were covered with blood, in the butler's pantry was a jacket and waistcoat with sleeves; on the left sleeve was some

blood, and in the right hand pocket. Witness thinks that the two knives produced in court were found in the pockets of the waistcoat.

George Wilcox, tithingman of Bath, deposed that he went to the house No 16, about seven o'clock in the morning, and entered the pantry with the prisoner and his wife, all things appeared in great confusion; there was a basket full of provisions. Prisoner took from a chopping block two staples, pushing the bolt of the door out at the same time, observed, 'There I found it'. Witness then went to the outside of the door, and observed every appearance of its having been forced open, by impressions on the wood and removal of the paint.

Thomas King, esq surgeon, examined, had attended Mrs Cox's family a number of years, and saw the body of Maria Bagnall on the floor near the fire place, the deceased was lying horizontally with her face to the door. I took hold of her arm and found it was quite stiff – I then turned her head on one side and saw that her gullet, windpipe and carotid artery had been divided, as also the integuments down to the vertebrae of the neck. The coagulated blood on the floor was very great, and had extended itself about a foot and a half on each side of the deceased's head. I thought she had been dead about two hours.

R.T Gore esq surgeon, stated that he examined the deceased on Monday 28th of January last. There were two cuts across the throat and seven wounds on the head, he thinks the wounds in the neck were caused by a sharp knife; but those on the head by a stick or bludgeon such as had been just shewn him in court.

Mr Bourne, gaoler of Bath, stated that the prisoner was brought up to him on 30th of January last; next morning saw prisoner in his cell, reading the 20th chapter of Exodus. Prisoner wished to see his wife; Mr B. did not desire him to make any confession. Witness knows **Tom Robert's** house, William's Place, went there with Wilcox, and saw conveyed to the Guildhall eight packages on two horses. When prisoner was brought into Mayor's office, he was so greatly agitated, that he almost dropped into witnesses' arms when two of the packages containing wine were opened. After all the packages were examined prisoner went to Beadle's room and sat down. Gilham said, 'Well, they will hang me for this I know, but thank God I am innocent of the murder.' Mr Bourne observed 'don't add lies to crime,' to this Gilham rejoined, 'I suppose we have been like bees this summer, and now like bees we shall have our hive burnt and our honey taken from us.' Prisoner was returned to the gaol, and next morning appeared very dejected, walking about the room. Prisoner still denied any participation in the murder. **Mr Bourne** asked him if he was still in want of a spiritual adviser, to which the prisoner replied, 'he should wish one above all things, and would be very glad if he could get one.'

I accordingly went for Rev W Marshall, the Chaplain.

Rev Mr Marshall examined – Has been a Chaplain and Curate 25 years; resided at Bath. At the request of the last witness went to see the prisoner, who wished Mr M to pray with him and read to him for he was not in a state to do so himself. On Mr M expressing his sorrow at finding him in such a situation, he said – 'He knew he was a sinner, and should soon die.' Mr M. asked him how he knew this. Prisoner made answer – 'He had been told so at the hall, for taking the goods from his mistress.' Prisoner sat down and began relating that himself and his wife were about to settle, and had purloined a few things from their mistress. Mr M. conjectured from the perturbed and distressed state of the prisoner's mind, that there was something still more heavy on his conscience. Prisoner said he was a sinner as other men, and was aware suspicion fell upon him as the murderer.' Mr M replied, if he was innocent, to maintain his innocence, but if not, warned him not to add sin to sin by dissembling

before God. Mr M further said, that next to confessing sins before God the beauty of repentance was to repair by all means any injury he had done to his fellow creatures. During the conversation the prisoner was walking hurriedly about the room, at one moment playing with his finger and at another picking up bits of cinder from under the grate. Mr M read a portion of the Communion Service, after which he thought the prisoner had something to communicate and was asked if the gaoler should be sent for; prisoner told Mr Marshall he wished now he had never sent for him; Mr M then took his leave with a request from prisoner that he would return. (A chair was here ordered for the prisoner who seemed somewhat fatigued with standing.) At the second interview, Mr M states the prisoner did not attend so well as the first, and told him that unless he had confessed himself before God he could not pray with him or afford him any consolation which it was his earnest wish to do. After a long conversation relative to the confession of his sins; it was evident some impression had been made on him. Mr Bourne, the gaoler was again called and gave evidence of what had passed – after the Rev Mr Marshall had had some interviews with the prisoner. Witness said ‘I have seen your wife, and what I said to you in the morning is correct. I find by your wife that you did go down stairs a second time after meeting Maria Bagnall, and that you remained below, a considerable while, and then when you returned you were very cold and much alarmed. On getting into bed you told your wife to lay father from you for you were not very well. This, prisoner’s wife told witness was the first time he omitted kissing her on getting into bed since they were married. Prisoner likewise told his wife not to say anything to Nanny about his going downstairs, nor to any one else, but to say that she was in bed first. Prisoner on hearing this told him by witness, clasped his hands with great servency and sat down.

Mr Sergeant Bompas and Mr Moody now addressed the Court, and put it to his Lordship whether it was an act of justice that the confession of the prisoner extorted from him by religious hopes and fears, and instilled into his mind by the Rev Mr Marshall, could legally be brought as evidence against him. Mr Justice Gilbert, Judge Best and Lord Eldon, were cited as precedents in not allowing such evidence, and the wisest judge which England had ever produced (Sir Michael Foster) had declared that confession by such means were more liable to contain falsehood than truth and was of all evidence the very worst. Mr Bourne re-examined – Prisoner said, ‘I’ll tell you all about it.’ Witness cautioned him as to a confession. Prisoner said it was true; he did go down stairs again, and that he found Bagnall in his pantry; that she began quarrelling with him, that he took up a stick and struck her repeated blows till she fell – she kept screaming, and said she would have him hanged. He by some means or other found himself upon Bagnall; he knelt upon her and took a knife from his waistcoat pocket and cut her throat; he took away her purse, with some halfpence; he put the halfpence in his waistcoat pocket, and put the purse where it was found on the following morning. He then washed his hands and knife and went upstairs, took out the wine and spirits from the cellaret and drunk some, and threw some of it away – left the bottles as they were found. Every thing that was packed up – the tea urn and the bread; he also placed where they were found, then he went to bed. He said he endeavoured to make up his mind to confess on Monday; requested the Mayor might be sent for to the gaol, to prevent his going through the streets. Prisoner particularly wished to see the clergyman again. This was between eight and nine in the morning. Begged jailor to read to him. Before the Mayor arrived, he told witness all he had said before was not correct. (By the judge – witness never said it would be better for him if he confessed, and the worse if he did not.) Prisoner said he met her at the kitchen door and stuck her without speaking to her. – (Cross examined by Sergeant Bompas) –

Never said to prisoner his wife had told witness all about it – never said any thing to prisoner about his wife being the weaker vessel.

Tugwell, esq Mayor of Bath examined – Mayor of Bath examined – was Mayor in January last, recollects going to the gaol on 2d Feb accompanied by Mr George, the town clerk – I saw Gilham in Bourne's room – told Gilham I came to see him, as I understood he wished to make a communication – witness cautioned him ... the examinations; as in the nature of the communication he wished to make, and told him he would retire and would not be angry with him for sending for him unnecessarily if he had changed his mind: Prisoner said he did the deed – Did not take this down in writing. (The confession of the prisoner before the Magistrates was then read in court) – The confession was read over to the prisoner by **Mr George**, who asked him if he had any objection to sign it – he said that his hand shook so that he could not write his name, but it was all true.

Mr P George, Town Clerk of Bath, corroborated the evidence of the Mayor.

George Vincent, constable, saw Gilham in officer's room on 21 February – said he was better since he had eased his mind. I said it was a shocking thing he should put himself in such a passion – the prisoner said he was obliged to stand and hear the deceased run out against himself and wife and he did not dare to say anything, if he had done so, he would have been discharged, and that it made his blood boil to hear it; he said that if he had not committed the murder when he did, he should most probably have done it at some future time. Witness asked which one of the two knives he did the act with, the one with the saw, or the other – Prisoner said the other – (two pocket knives were here handed to the jury.)

George Wilcox took the prisoner to the county gaol, on the 3^d February; on the road the prisoner said twas a horrible thing, but he could not help it; he said he heard the deceased running out against himself and his wife, and that his blood was boiling. Prisoner said he did the deed at eleven at night; said he was going upstairs to bed, and met Bagnall coming down stairs; went to bedroom door with his wife, said he was ill in his bowels, and came down stairs again, met Bagnall at kitchen door, and struck her across the forehead. She went back into the kitchen; he followed her, striking her as she went; in the scuffle both fell; as she went down, he took out his knife and cut her throat – Prisoner said he had no difficulty, and he was not more than three minutes about it. Hoped God would forgive him, and said he was ready to forfeit his life immediately. Prisoner said he wanted to write, to say his wife knew nothing of the business; he had made a confession which was true and would do so on the trial. Prisoner said, when the things belonging to Mrs Cox in the hampers were found, it hurt him more than any thing. After he committed the deed he found his mind quite relieved. The state of the premises (it will be recollected, they were found as if they had been broken open externally) was occasioned by himself. He broke open the door with a bill hook; and he brought down the urn from a plate chest, and scraped the walls with a spade, to make it appear that someone had got over the wall. Prisoner said he did not know how the hair came on the stick found by the side of the deceased. The stock he used was a shorter one.

The evidence for the prosecution closed at a quarter past seven. The prisoner on being called on for his defence, merely said he was innocent of the dreadful charge alleged against him. Mr Justice Littledale summed up the evidence to the jury in an address which occupied upwards of two hours. About a quarter to ten, the jury after ten minutes consideration, returned a verdict of guilty. His Lordship immediately put on the black cap, and addressing the prisoner animadverted on the twofold wickedness of his crime, and proceeded to pass the awful sentence of death, without holding out to

him the slightest prospect of mercy. He was ordered to be executed on Thursday next, and his body to be given over to a surgeon for dissection.

The prisoner's countenance, during the trial, underwent very little variation; but on receiving sentence, he held down his head a death like paleness came upon him, and he appeared to be at once labouring under the workings of an overburdened conscience, and a sense of his dreadful situation.

Messrs Gunning and Follett conducted the prosecution, and Mr Sergeant Bompas and Mr Moody the defence.

The court was exceedingly crowded throughout the trial, and the attendance of fashionably-dressed females very numerous.

The remainder of the sentences in our next.

April 23rd 1828

Inquests – On Monday, an inquest was held by Mr Ashford of Castle Cary, at Rodney Stoke, on the body of Mr **John Masters**, who was killed by a fall from his horse; and on the following day, at the New Rock Colliery, Midsomer Norton, on the body of **Isaac Carter**, whose death was caused by a quantity of coal falling on him whilst he was at work under ground. Verdict, in each of the above cases, Accidental Death.

On Friday, an inquest was held by Mr Caines, of Langport, at a cottage on Sampford Moor, near Wellington, on **Sarah Page**, aged 86. The deceased was enjoying perfect health on Wednesday morning, and was preparing breakfast for a person with whom she resided, who, having gone out, on his return found the deceased had fallen from her chair, and was lying on the floor, quite dead. Verdict, Died by the Visitation of God.

April 30th 1828

Inquests – Yesterday week, Mr Ashford of Castle Cary, held an inquest at Butcombe on the body of **Susannah Davis** who hung herself. It appeared, from the testimony of her husband and other witnesses, that the deceased had been in a very melancholy way for some time, and had often attempted to destroy herself. The jury returned a verdict of 'Lunacy'.

On Thursday, at Horsington, upon the body of Mr **Chas Newman** of Sturminster Newton who was returning from Bruton Fair, about six o'clock in the evening, and, whilst in the act of paying the toll at the turnpike gate, fell back in his gig, and instantly expired. Verdict, 'Died by the Visitation of God'.

May 7th 1828

Melancholy Accident.

On Friday last, **Mrs Fewtrell**, of this town, took an airing in a wheeled chair, drawn by a female, and accompanied also by her maid-servant. On returning up the hill, near Shoreditch Inn, about a mile and a half from this town, a horse in a cart was seen running at full speed towards them. **J.Trump**, a labourer employed on the road, observing the imminent danger of the female party courageously sprang forward, and endeavoured to stop the horse; but, in the generous attempt, was knocked down, and so seriously injured that he expired the next morning, leaving a wife and two children. The animal continued his career, Mrs Fewtrell's chair was upset, and that lady was found to have her collar-bone and arm broken by the cart going over her. The woman, who was drawing the chair, had also her collar-bone broken, and sustained other serious injury. The boy, who had the charge of the horse, did not receive any hurt, and

cannot account for the sudden escape of the animal from his control. Mrs Fewtrell is an elderly and infirm lady, and had the misfortune, only a few months ago, to break her arm, from which accident she was recovering when the present calamity overtook her.

Inquest by Mr Caines of Langport.

At Shoreditch Inn, on Monday last, on **James Trump**, aged 30. On Friday, deceased was at work on the Turnpike Road at Shoreditch Hill, on the right hand side of the road, when a horse drawing a cart ran towards deceased at a very rapid pace. A boy was running at the side endeavouring to stop the horse. There were a pair of drags in the cart. About forty yards distant, a lady was, in a Bath wheel chair, coming that way in about the middle of the road, and the person guiding it, turned it to endeavour to get out of the way. The horse continued at great speed, when deceased attempted to stop it, and in doing so was knocked down either by the horse or the end of the shaft, but most probably the latter. The horse in its progress upset the chair, and the wheel of the cart passed over the woman who was drawing it. Deceased got up against the hedge for a short time and was taken to the Shoreditch Inn. He complained of a pain in his side. A surgeon was immediately sent for but deceased died early the next morning. **James Gillard**, the boy, who was driving the horse, deposed that the horse set off suddenly on a full gallop without any known cause whatever. Witness said he had known the mare a twelve month, and always found her very steady. **Hannah Hopkins** deposed, that she lived with Mrs Fewtrell, in St James's Street, Taunton, and on Friday was attending her in her ride on the turnpike road, as far as the new bridge on the Chard road. About noon they were returning, another woman (Rebecca Rodber) was driving the chair, and as they were coming up the hill, they saw a cart coming at great speed in the manner before stated, and **Rebecca Rodber** drew the chair round to the proper side of the road, but the horse continued advancing so fast that they could not get out of the way, and the chair was upset; Mrs Fewtrell was thrown out and injured (the collar bone and arm, we lament to say, are broken) and Rebecca Rodber was also much injured. Deceased was at work on the road, and in his endeavouring to stop the horse, was knocked down in the way stated. **Mr H Liddon**, surgeon, deposed to his having attended deceased on being sent for after the accident. Deceased complained of great pain in his stomach, and was very sick. He had also sustained an injury on the left hand side of the head. His skull was lacerated to the extent of an inch, and he died the next morning. Deceased told Mr Liddon that he made the attempt to stop the horse purposely with the view of saving the life of the lady, whose danger he foresaw. Verdict, Accidental Death. Deodand on the horse 20s. The cart belonged to **Mr Harris** of the Shoreditch Inn, and the horse to **Mr W Durston**. The deceased was a remarkably fine young man, and had distinguished himself as an energetic and skilful wrestler.

Inquests by Mr Ashford of Castle Cary.

Yesterday week, at Holton, on the body of Mrs **Betsy Ames**, who died suddenly. Verdict, Died by the Visitation of God.

On the following day, at North Bruham, on the body of **Mary Matthews**, aged four years, who died in consequence of being dreadfully burnt. Verdict, Accidental Death.

May 7th 1828

Mysterious Adventure at the White Hart Inn, Taunton.

A very strange, unaccountable circumstance happened in this inn about the same time; one of those occurrences that puzzle the philosopher, and strengthen superstition in weak minds. Three or four gentlemen of the neighbourhood were drinking wine in one of the rooms, when the landlord of the inn (as it appeared to them) walked into the room, and coming up to the table around which they were seated, they addressed him with "Mr Baldwin, how do you do? Sit down and take a glass of wine with us." But instead of doing as requested, the supposed innkeeper walked out of the room, without making any reply; which not only surprised but offended the company, who rang the bell violently, and on the waiter's appearance, they ordered him to send in his master. The waiter informed them that his master was not at home. The gentlemen replied that he was at home a few minutes since, and therefore they insisted on seeing him; but the man assured them they were mistaken, as his master was in Bristol, and had been there several days. They then ordered the waiter to send in Mrs Baldwin, who immediately appearing, the gentlemen asked her where **Mr Baldwin** was, and she informed them, as the waiter had already done, that he was in Bristol, and had been there for several days; on which the gentlemen grew very angry; and swore that Mr Baldwin had just before come into the room, and on their requesting him to partake of their wine, had insulted them by going out of the room without deigning to give them an answer. Mrs Baldwin then drew out of her pocket a letter she had that morning received from Mr Baldwin, by which it was apparent that he really was in Bristol. The story was then told round the neighbourhood, and all the old women concluded that Mr Baldwin must certainly be dead, and that he died at the very instant that the gentlemen saw him come into the room; but Mr Baldwin returning two days after, rendered it necessary for them to vary their story; they then asserted that it was a token on some warning of his death, and had no doubt that it would very soon happen. It was generally thought that Mr Baldwin was weak enough to pay such attention to the story and the inference as to hurt his health, as he really died within a year after, and the old women were not a little pleased at the event, as it tended to justify the truth of their prediction.

The mayor of Wells has received a letter from the Secretary of State, informing him that he had received information from the Sovereign of Kinsale, stating that private Frederick Johnson has acknowledged that his confession of the murder of the late Dr Lee of Wells, as noticed in a former paper was entirely false.

Shocking Accident.

On Tuesday, as the Patent Safety two-horse coach was approaching Bristol, from Bath, it came rapidly down the hill opposite Kensington Place, and, in turning the sharp corner around Arno's Vale, upset, when most of the passengers were thrown off and seriously injured; amongst them, was **Mr Thornley**, hatter of Clare St Bristol, who received such severe contusions that he is since dead.

Execution of **Richard Millard**, for uttering forged Bank of England Notes.

This unfortunate victim to the offended laws of his country, was executed yesterday, pursuant to his sentence, on the drop erected over the entrance to the new gaol. Several benevolent individuals, amongst whom stands foremost the Rev T Roberts had asked considerable interest to obtain a transmutation of his punishment; and both our worthy Members, Mr Hart Davis and Mr Bright separately applied for this purpose at the Office of the Home Secretary of State; but the only answer was, that his case was of such a nature, that Mr Peel could not, consistently with his public duty, recommend the prisoner to His Majesty for any extension of the royal mercy. Millard

himself fortunately had never been buoyed up with any hope of pardon; and it is gratifying to know, that he met his fate with a penitent mind, and with no inconsiderable firmness of spirit. He was regularly attended by the Rev W Day, who with his accustomed devotedness to the duties of his station, it is believed made every suitable impression upon the prisoner, and prepared him, so far as earthly admonition could go, for the awful change and premature fate which awaited him. The unfrequency of execution in this city attracted, of course, an immense assemblage to witness the execution; certainly not fewer than 20.000 spectators were present. Having finished his devotions with the Rev Chaplain, who on this morning was accompanied also by his son, Millard ascended the platform at about a quarter past one; the last words he was heard to utter in his cell were, in allusion to the preparations, "How long you are, how long you are," and without addressing a single word to the multitude, or to those immediately near him, he was, in a very few minutes after, launched into eternity, and without the least struggle, appeared to expire. His body, after hanging about an hour, was cut down and delivered to his friends, who were in waiting – Bristol Paper.

May 21st 1828

Gilham the murderer – we can state from authority that he will be hung on the 4th June, the day to which the sentence was respited.

Friday, a woman was committed from Frome, to the gaol at Shepton Mallet, for some offence, about two o'clock in the afternoon; and shortly after, she killed her child, which she had with her, by dashing its head against the bedpost.

A few days since, as some labourers were removing a quantity of earth, in a garden at Shepton Mallet, about three feet below the surface they discovered a few bones. It appeared that they were those of a human body; and the earth being carefully removed, the skeletons of three persons were brought to view. The teeth were in a perfect state, but some of the bones were rather decayed. No trace of the bodies being deposited there can yet be ascertained. The house adjoining the garden was formerly an inn, of a low description, frequented by travelling pedlars &c: and it has been reported, that when so occupied, several persons were suddenly missed from the premises, and not afterwards heard of.

May 28th 1828

Fatal Accident – On Thursday evening, as a party of seven persons were taking their pleasure in a boat on the Avon, when near the mill at Bathampton, the eddy drew the boat under the weirs, when it was instantly filled with water, and two of the party, **Mr Howard** and **Miss Knight**, were drowned. Another young lady, **Miss Daly**, the daughter of the late Col. Daly, was rescued and recovered; but being of an exceedingly weak constitution, having been many years ill, the fright had such an effect on her system, that she survived only a few hours. The remaining four fell into the water, but saved themselves by swimming, and by the aid of the ferry rope. The body of Miss Knight could not be found until Saturday afternoon, the river drawn for that purpose. Great credit is due to a party of gentlemen who were rook shooting in the neighbourhood, for their prompt exertions in the attempt to save the party, and particular to **Liet Col Manly** for the immediate assistance he rendered them and for his kind attentions to the survivors. An inquest was held on the bodies on Saturday by Mr Ashford, who had arrived the evening previously for that purpose, and the evidence was agreeable to the above statement. Verdict – Accidental Death.

June 4th 1828

Inquests.

On Saturday last, Mr Caines, of Langport, held an inquest at Weston Zoyland, on the body of a child, aged three years. On the preceding Saturday, the mother of the deceased, having poured some water out of a boiler into a tub in the kitchen, left the child sitting in a chair near it, while she went to a well to refill the boiler. In her absence the child fell backwards and was so dreadfully scalded, that it expired on Thursday night.

At Dunster, on Saturday last, on **Wm Winter**, a labouring man, who, while employed in quarrying stones; and standing on a projecting rock at Alcombe, fell into a pit of water beneath, and was drowned. Verdict in each case, Accidental Death.

At Long Sutton, on the 23rd ult., on the body of **Jane Slade**, aged 22. Deceased was governess in the family of Mr Chard. On the Wednesday night before her death, at nine o'clock, she went into the kitchen for a candle. She complained of a head-ache, next morning, and asked the nurse-maid to request that Mr Chard would allow her to have her tea in the room; it was carried up to her accordingly. She soon became very sick. She said the pain was in her head, but had taken no medicine for it. She had been subject to frequent headaches. About two o'clock, the nurse-maid found her out of bed and struggling on the floor. Assistance was called for, and on lifting up deceased, she breathed three times, and expired. **Mr Sparke**, a surgeon, saw deceased after life was extinct, and expressed his opinion that she died from some rupture of a blood vessel on the brain. Verdict, Died by the Visitation of God.

June 11th 1828

On Wednesday, **Mr John Foster**, a respectable builder of Bristol, was thrown from his gig, by which unfortunate accident his skull was fractured, and he died in about three hours.

On Monday se'nnight, a poor man, named Ball, residing at St Phillip's, Bristol was smothered through a culpable experiment of his landlady. For several months he had been in very ill health, arising from poverty and starvation, and his landlord and landlady (**John and Margaret Shipp**) were desirous of getting rid of him and his wife as tenants; for this end they had repeatedly warned them off, but the unfortunate creatures knew not where to go – Mrs Shipp, however, thought of an expedient which was effectual though fatal; she sent for a chimney sweeper, and requested him to fill up the top of the chimney with wadding; in order, as she said, to render the room uncomfortable and untenable; but she omitted to tell the occupiers of the room what she had done; the consequence was, that the wife of the deceased, having made a fire in the grate, went out, leaving her husband, who was ill, in bed; on her return, which was in about five minutes, she found the room full of smoke, and the poor man in the agonies of death; he died in less than ten minutes from the time the chimney was stopped. The jury decided that **W Ball** died of an asthma, but his death was accelerated by the smoke; whereupon the Coroner recorded a verdict of Manslaughter against J and M Shipp.

Execution of Gilham.

Ilchester, June 4 1828. This being the day to which Gilham had been reprieved by the humane Judge who tried him, that the question of the admissibility of the Rev Mr Marshall's evidence, which detailed the confession of the prisoner, should be decided by the twelve Judges, and they having determined on the legality of the evidence, the law was allowed to take its course.

The Rev Mr Valentine, the Chaplain of the gaol, has been unceasing in his attendance on the unhappy man ever since his condemnation, and Gilham has passed his time in penitence and prayer. His wife has not left Cheltenham, where she was delivered of a child a few weeks ago; but she has written her husband a letter a few days since, stating that she was neglected and looked cold upon by every person whom she had formerly been friendly with, and that suspicions were entertained that she was privy to the committal of the crime, and that her life was embittered forever. The letter deeply affected the poor wretch, who declared most positively, that his wife was totally innocent, even in any suspicion of the deed, and that he alone committed the crime for which he was about to atone. He said he wished he had informed his wife of his intention, for then she would have prevented the crime. His brother, who arrived at Ilchester a few days ago, took his final leave of him on the evening previous to his execution.

At four o'clock in the morning he was dressed and engaged in prayer. From the enormity of the offence for which the miserable wretch was to suffer, it excited the greatest interest not only in the neighbourhood of Ilchester, but the whole country, and early in the morning, country people were seen journeying from all parts. But in consequence of the early hour and heavy rain, that fell constantly all the morning, the multitude was unusually small, not above one hundred persons were present, and they we are shocked to say it, were more than half females. In consequence of apprehension that there would be an immense concourse of spectators, and that accidents might happen in their crowding near the banks of the river, Mr Hardy, the jailer, humanely requested the sheriff, Mr Lovell to cause the awful ceremony to take place much earlier than common, viz half past nine, instead of twelve, the usual hour. The executioner, who resides about three miles from the town, and is a small farmer, arrived early in the morning, and the preparations for the awful finishing of the law were completed. The bell of the prison was the only sound that broke on the ear, save the busy humming of the populace.

The Rev Mr Valentine was early in attendance on the unhappy man in the morning; and after he received the Sacrament, which he did with every appearance of attention, he was informed that the time drew nigh; he signified he was ready, and he proceeded to the yard where his arms were pinioned. The clergyman then began to read the solemn service of the church, and the procession moved towards the drop. He walked up the scaffold without faltering, engaged with a prayer book in his hand. When standing on the drop, he looked round upon the people, and made a faint inclination of his head, when the clergyman engaged him in prayer for a few minutes, then shook him by the hand and retired. The executioner then commenced his last melancholy offices, removed his neckcloth and placed the halter round his neck, and fastened the other end to the fatal beam, placed the cap over his face, and shook him by the hands. He then requested to have the cap pulled up for a moment, for he thought he saw his brother in the crowd; his wish was complied with, he looked round very composedly, but he could not see him; the cap was again drawn over his face, and in a few awful moments of suspense, during which he seemed to pray fervently, the drop fell. A few convulsive struggles, deep drawn sighs, and heaving of the breast, told the strife that was going on, and then all was still.

After hanging the usual time, his body was cut down, and delivered to a person, who took it immediately to Bath, where it is to be publicly dissected. The crowd, which had considerably increased as the morning advanced, dispersed, and the town rapidly resumed the same monotonous stillness.

Gilham had no appearance that bespoke the ruffian, but looked a respectable servant man; and had rather a mild look than otherwise. He had much fallen off since his committal, and was in a very exhausted state, but still did not for these last few weeks seem to suffer so much as previous to his trial:

The following literal extracts are from a letter addressed by the criminal to his friends at Taplow:-

‘I entreat you not to grieve for me, for I am not worthy for you to trouble about, for my sufferings are not half bad enough for me – they are nothing compared to my sins, which are great. I feel I can’t pray enough: oh! what could have possessed my worldly heart I own that I justly deserve the dreadful curse denounced against every sinner; and now I see the evil of sin and wickedness, for our sins are sure to find us out one time or another; it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. Oh! my time is but very short before the fatal cord must be placed around my neck; my eyes must be covered never more to behold the cheering light, or the face of man. Oh! the signal is given – my standing gives way – I drop – I agonise – I die – and; in a moment, appear before an offended God.’

In another part he says – ‘I exhort you, my dear parents and relations, no longer to trifle away your precious time, but improve it by preparing yourself for your latter end, for it is in this world, and not in the next, that you have the opportunity of fleeing from the wrath to come.’ His anxiety to exculpate his wife from any share in his crime is evident from the following passage. ‘Oh! how it rends my heart when I think of the distress I have brought upon you all, and particularly upon my poor dear distressed wife. Oh my dear friends, I hope you will not think light of her, for I can assure you that none of this distress was through her, for she was always persuading me for my good.

Bath, Friday.

The body of Gilham, the murderer, was brought to the Bath United Hospital on Wednesday night, at nine o’clock. All the surgeons and pupils belonging to the establishment assembled at the hospital as early as four o’clock yesterday morning, when the dissection commenced, and from which they only desisted long enough to partake of a slight breakfast. The head of the murderer was shaved last night, and a plaster cast of it taken. The loss of the hair has produced a great change in the appearance. From the mild expression of the countenance, no one would suspect that he was looking on Gilham, the murderer; on the contrary, it would lead to the decided inference that he was incapable of so cruel a deed.

June 18th 1828

Inquests by Mr Caines of Langport.

At Allowenshay, near Ilminster, on **Robert Brice** aged 12 years. It appeared in evidence, that on Thursday last, the brother of the deceased, the son of a small farmer, was amusing himself in shooting sparrows, and for that purpose had gone into a waggon house, where he had pointed the gun between the spokes of a waggon wheel, and kneeling on one knee, he snapped the gun, but it hung fire. Immediately as the gun had been snapped, the deceased, (who is supposed to have been watching his brother) advanced on the opposite side of the waggon, and the fire having been effected, nearly the whole of the charge penetrated his left breast, which caused his death in about half an hour. Verdict, Chance Medley.

And on Saturday last, at Rockwell Green, near Wellington, on **James Twose**, aged 39. At the inquest, some persons gave evidence, that on Thursday last, they were

employed in carrying hay, and having rested to take dinner, the team were released from the waggon, and that one, a mare, having a colt confined at home, ran away, and having forced open the gate, it ran with such violence against the deceased, who happened to be driving a loaded waggon on the road adjoining the field, that he was knocked down before the fore wheel, which passed over his body; and he expired in less than an hour. Verdict Accident, Deodand on the Mare forty shillings.

At Dunster, on a man unknown, who was found dead in the road leading from Dunster to Timberscombe, about nine o'clock in the morning of Tuesday se'nnight. He appeared to have been a travelling hat-dresser, a bottle of liquid, apparently used for the purpose of that business, having found in his pocket, but scarcely any thing except 3d besides. He had slept the preceding night, at Timberscombe, when he stated that he came from Porlock, and was proceeding to Bridgwater. He had no marks of violence about him.

At Dowlish Wake, near Ilminster, on **Elizabeth Walters**, aged upwards of 70, who was dead under the following circumstances. The deceased lived in a large house by herself, and not having been seen by her neighbours for some days, the front door was forced open, and she was discovered, partly undressed, sitting in a settle, reclining on her right hand. She appeared to have been dead a day or two. Verdict, in each case, Died by the Visitation of God.

At the decoy in the parish of Aller, near Langport, on **Ann Lock**, aged three years. The child had not been missing many minutes before she was found, drowned, in a ditch. Verdict, Accidentally drowned.

June 25th 1828

Inquest by Mr Ashford.

At Banwell, on **Jos Haymans**, who it is supposed, was killed by lightning, having taken shelter under a tree during a severe thunder storm. Verdict – Died by Visitation of God.

July 9th 1828

Inquests by Mr Ashford.

At Bruton on the body of **Richard Prankard**, whose death was occasioned by a fall from a cart.

At Dunster, on the body of **Harriet Davis**, aged two years and a half, who, whilst playing with some other children, accidentally fell into a mill pond and was drowned.

At Frome on the body of **Geo Blanning**, who, in attempting to clean a part of the machinery of a steam engine at the factory of **Mr H Dyer**, was drawn between the wheels, and so much injured, that he survived only a few days. The deceased had been repeatedly cautioned not to go near the engine, whilst it was at work. Verdict in each case, Accidental Death.

At Shepton Mallet, on the body of **Mrs Ann Chambers**, aged 77 years, who had retired to rest in good health on the evening previous to her decease.

At West Compton, on the body of **Wm Coombs**, aged 60. It appeared by the evidence that he had been sitting upon the edge of a tub, and conversing with an acquaintance, when he suddenly fell backwards and instantly expired. Verdict in each case, Died by Visitation of God.

At Wedmore, on the body of **Joseph Barrow**, who was found dead in a pond, at which he had been occasionally seen in the act of drinking. Verdict, Found Drowned.

July 16th 1828

Dreadful Thunder Storm

A tremendous storm, accompanied with thunder and lightning, commenced here last evening, at eight o'clock, and continued till twelve o'clock. The houses at Widcombe, at the bottom of Cleverton Hill, were inundated by a land flood to the depth in some cases of 12 feet, and so rapidly that **James Moody** (late a carrier of this paper) and his wife, occupying a lower apartment in Chapel row, leading to the Canal, were drowned in their beds! The soil and trees in several parts of Beechen Cliff have been displaced by the violence of the tempest and swept into the valley beneath; and at Weston, by the sudden rise of the brook, a chairman named **Hunt** was drowned. Bath Chronicle July 10.

In the neighbourhood of Beechen Cliff, which is over the old bridge, and by the side of the Wells and Bristol roads, a vast deal of injury was also done. A worthy man named **Moody**, aged 70 years, and his wife, were both drowned in their bed! Poor Moody had been in the employ of **Mr Cruttwell**, the respectable proprietor of the Bath Chronicle. They lived in a court called Sussex Place, which is at the bottom of Widcombe Hill, from which the waters poured down with terrific fury, rushing through the court, and bursting into the houses. The stones, gravel, &c hurried along by the waters, literally broke open the windows and doors; and in five minutes the rooms or parlours, and kitchens were filled with water. Most of the inhabitants escaped terrified, but with the greatest difficulty; by great activity all were rescued, except the poor aged couple whom I have just mentioned. They slept in the underground room of a house at the top of the court. They were either asleep or unconscious of their danger; and being at the top of the court rendered the difficulty of getting there, to search or give the alarm, a task of great peril, even if the fact of their being there occurred to any one. They were discovered in their room yesterday morning. The bodies remain in the state in which they were discovered, to wait the Coroner's inquest. The room is visible through railings; but the water there, still remains four feet high! In the whole of that neighbourhood much distress is visible; most of the shops about there are closed, and the people are engaged in removing the mud and filth left where the water had receded or had been carried off. The losses to the inhabitants in many instances have been ruinous.

July 23rd 1828

Inquest on W Dymond

On Monday last, an inquest was held by Mr Caines, at the Rising Sun, in this town, on the body of **W Dymond** the Wellington carrier, who was unfortunately killed, under the following circumstances:-

Mr **W C Cox**, of this town, being sworn and stated – that “on Thursday last, about six in the evening, I was in my own house, up stairs, and happened to be looking out of the window, when I saw the deceased driving his waggon; he was driving towards Wellington, and was on the proper side of his horses. I saw the horses drawing the waggon had become frightened. There was a bear idle in the street, **opposite Mr Chorley's** in the road, not on the pavement, and it was standing erect. My attention was more particularly called to Dymond at the moment, and I saw him having hold of the shaft horse, endeavouring to keep the horses off one of the posts bounding the Market Place. He was unable to prevent the team from drawing that way, in consequence of the horses having been frightened. The waggon was loaded with coals, and drawn by two horses. I presently saw deceased fenced by the near fore-wheel against one of the posts before spoken of, and with great force, which caused deceased to fall. The horses still went on until the fore wheel had gone over his thigh.

I ran down; many persons had by that time go to the spot, and deceased was taken off to the hospital. I am quite sure that the horses took fright at the bear, and not at any thing else; I saw the horses shy at the bear. I had seen the bear loose before that time, but cannot take upon me to say positively whether he was loose at the time I have spoken of or not. The drover of the waggon appeared to be perfectly sober, and was generally so."

Mr Standert, surgeon, sworn – "Between six and seven o'clock on Thursday evening, I received the deceased into the Taunton and Somerset Hospital. His left thigh was broken – a simple fracture; there was a bruise on the left side of the abdomen. He was sensible, but had the appearance of having sustained a very serious bodily injury. He stated that he had been crushed by the waggon against a post, the horses having been frightened by a bear in the street. He complained of violent pain in the abdomen, and felt assured he should die. He received the necessary attention at the Hospital. I saw him during the night, and frequently until he died, about four o'clock on Saturday morning – On examining the body, the cause of death appeared to have been the rupture of a large vein in the porch of the liver, which the pressure, to which the accident exposed him, was likely to produce."

The Jury returned a verdict of "Accidental Death;" and presented, that "the death of the said William Dymond would not have happened, but from the inattention of the Beadle, **James Wood**, whose duty it was to have prevented disorderly persons from obtruding themselves in the streets of this town, and which duty, on the day before mentioned, he neglected to do."

On Friday, an inquest was held by Mr Caines at Pitney, on the body of **Selina Chambers**, aged eight years, who, on the preceding day, had gone to the fire, to toast some bread, when her clothes got ignited, and she ran into the yard, enveloped in flames, whereby she was so much scorched that she died in a few hours. Verdict, 'Accidental Death.'

On Friday, an inquest was held by **R Uphill**, esq at the Barley Mow, Walcot, on the body of **Thomas Burnell**, aged 61, who met his death by being knocked down by **Mark Anthony Broom**, jun in a scuffle, and his head coming in contact with the stones in the road, which fractured his skull. It appeared that the parties had been playing at skittles, and some altercation having taken place between Broom and his brother, about seven o'clock in the evening of Wednesday, Burnell interfered, and endeavoured to reconcile the parties, when Broom used very abusive and irritating language to the old man, who rose from his seat and took him by the collar, upon which Broom gave him the fatal blow. Burnell was taken up and led home, and died the following morning about four o'clock. After a very patient investigation of a great number of witnesses, the jury returned a verdict of manslaughter. Burnell had been for twenty years Hospital Serjeant in the 2nd Somerset Militia, and was universally beloved and respected for his quiet, inoffensive disposition.

Shocking accident – Dancing Bear.

On Thursday evening last, about six o'clock, the horses in a cart laden with coals, standing nearly opposite Mr William C Cox's, in this town, took fright at a bear near the spot, and the owners of the cart, immediately sprang forward to stop the horses, but in the attempt was thrown violently against one of the iron posts which bound the North side of the Parade and fell under the wheel of the cart, which passed over his body. The by-standers promptly ran to his assistance, and it was only by backing the cart that the unfortunate man could be extricated from under the wheel! It was then

ascertained that his thigh was broken, and the upper part of his body dreadfully bruised. He was immediately borne to the Hospital, where the usual prompt and humane measures were adopted, but the sufferer expressed his conviction that he should not survive the mischief – an opinion which was unhappily verified on Saturday morning at four o'clock at which time he expired. A respectable Jury sat on the body on Monday last, and returned a verdict of Accidental Death, accompanied by a special presentation of their opinion that the Beadle of the town had neglected his duty in not preventing the itinerant exhibition which occasioned this tragic event. The deceased had been for many years past employed as a carrier, principally of coals, between this town and Wellington, and being exemplary as an industrious, honest and sober man, was not only much esteemed by his general acquaintance, but by every respectable person in his neighbourhood. On hearing of the accident, the Rev W P Thomas very kindly sent off his servant to ascertain his condition, and offered every possible assistance; and that gentleman, with **W Jones** esq of Foxdown, **E A Sandford** esq of Nynehead, and many other benevolent persons, both in Wellington and in this town, have concurred in a subscription for the benefit of the deceased's widow and her six children. One of the unfortunate man's sons, about eight years of age, was with his father at the moment of the accident, and very piteously wept over and bemoaned the agonies of his parent. The owners of the bear were admonished that they would not be allowed to quit the town until the final result of the calamity they had occasioned could be ascertained. Very early, however, the next morning, (Friday) they managed to release the animal from the place where it had been confined, and escaping with it towards Wiveliscombe, have not since been heard of.

July 30th 1828

On Sunday and yesterday, an inquest was holden before **Jacob Watson**, esq mayor of this town, on the body of a child aged between four or five years, named **Sparry**. A great number of witnesses were called for, from whose evidence, it appeared that on Tuesday last, as the child was crossing the High Street in this town, a man named **James White** was riding furiously through the street, and his horse struck the child down, and the injury he sustained was the consequence of his death. On White's behalf, several persons were called, who had seen the horse run away, and proved that it was out of White's power to stop him. The jury, after a patient investigation of the case, returned a verdict of Manslaughter against James White, he having been guilty of great negligence in riding the horse with a snaffle bit.

A fatal accident occurred in North Street, opposite the Savings Bank, in this town, on Saturday last. **Thomas Glass** aged 18, in the employ of **Mr Bond**, of Wellington, whilst sitting on the shaft of his waggon, laden with coals, in the act of mending his whip, fell on the ground, between the body and the fore wheel of the waggon, which, passing over him, caused such violent internal injury, that the deceased expired in a few minutes. At the Coroner's inquest held on the body on Monday, **Mr H Liddon**, surgeon, stated that he had examined the body of the deceased, and had found that the blood vessels of the large globe of the liver had been completely ruptured, and that the abdomen was filled with blood. The Jury returned a verdict of Accidental Death.

Inquests recently taken by Mr Ashford.

At Pensford, on the body of **Thomas Price**, who was accidentally drowned. Verdict Accordingly.

At Marston, near Frome, on the body of **Elisha Pope**, groom to the Earl of Cork, who, while saddling his Lordship's horse, dropped down, and instantly expired, in consequence of rupturing a blood vessel. Verdict, Died by the Visitation of God.

At Coomb Hay, on the body of **Geo Hill**, a child, who fell into a tub of boiling water, and was so dreadfully scalded that he died in a few days.

At Batheaston, on the body of **Benjamin Abrahams**, who, having got out of his depth whilst bathing in the River Avon, was drowned. Verdict in each of the last cases, Accidental Death.

At Wincanton, on the body of **Samuel Roberts**, a blacksmith, who hung himself. It appeared in evidence, that the deceased had been labouring under insanity for a considerable time; he had been very narrowly watched until within a few days, when he appeared so far recovered as to be enabled to follow his business. Verdict, Insanity.

August 13th 1828

Shocking Accident. A labouring man named **John Wall**, in a fit, fell into a lime kiln, at West Hatch, on Wednesday last, and was so dreadfully burnt before he was discovered, that he was conveyed to the Taunton and Somerset hospital, but with faint hopes of his recovery.

August 27th 1828

The late mail coach accident at Wiveliscombe.

An inquest was held on Thursday last, at the Lion inn, at Wiveliscombe, on the body of **Mrs Abigail Slowly**, whose death was occasioned by the overturning of the Barnstaple mailcoach on Saturday se'nnight. The following gentlemen composed the jury:- Messrs **James Waldron**, Forman; **Nicholas Collard**, **Horatio Dunn**, **Henry Trewolla**, **Henry Pyke**, **John Rogers**, **J.B. Clarke**, **J.A. Smyth**, **Henry Davey**, **Wm. Collard**, **John Taylor**, **Joseph Powell**, **Wm. Dunn**, **Thos. Criddle** and **John Norman**. The Jury, after viewing the body, examined the witnesses:-

Henry Sully, esq M.D. having been sworn, deposed that about 2 o'clock on Saturday last, he arrived at Wiveliscombe, from Taunton, and found the deceased in bed at the Lion Inn; he made some enquiries as to the injury she had sustained, and found that she was perfectly sensible. Witness had ascertained that the deceased had a complaint in the chest, for some time previous to the accident. Mr S. found her in a state of considerable exhaustion, owing to a blow which had been occasioned by a trunk falling on her chest. The deceased had also her arm fractured, which was of no material consequence. A stronger person would have resisted the fall of the trunk, but where there was previous disease, death was accelerated by that circumstance. Deceased was attended by witness, **Mr Cranmer**, and **Mr West**, until the hour of her death. She had never said that the accident was attributed to any person or persons. There were several external marks on the chest. Deceased's eye was also bruised and lacerated, the vision was not however impaired. The death was evidently occasioned by the blow received.

Mr John Featherstone, Surveyor of the Wiveliscombe Roads, sworn, stated, that on Saturday last, about 20 minutes after ten, he was standing near the Lion Inn, at the time the mail arrived. There were two ladies on the roof, and the mails topped at the Lion Inn to change horses. It is usual on the stoppage of the coach to plug the hind wheels; this was done on the present occasion. Witness saw the horses changed; they were apparently quiet with the exception of the off-leader, which had been slightly irritated whilst the horsekeeper was adjusting the reins. Previous to the horses starting, the coachman was at the head of the off-leader, and the horses at the time were

perfectly steady. No one was seen to whip the horses or to frighten them, and if they had witness must have seen it. On a sudden the horses unaccountably moved off. As they started the guard was on the near side of the coach endeavouring to put on the drag. The coachman and both horsekeepers held on, and endeavoured to stop the horses. Witness thinks the drag was not on, and that the plug had not been removed; it is not usual to put on the drag, except at the time the plugs are taken away. Has been in the habit of seeing these horses on the road, also at the Lion Inn, has frequently travelled with them, and ever found them perfectly quiet. The coach had been stopped at the usual place, and the horses on starting instantly got into a gallop. The horse keepers and the coachman held on as long as they were able, which was more than half way down the street, until they were in imminent danger of their lives. Witness followed the coach for a considerable distance; saw the near wheel above the ground, and heard the coach go over, but did not see the coach upset, and was the first to come up to it after the accident. At the spot where the coach was overturned, witness considers it necessary that something should be done for the protection of travelling.

Mr Clatworthy, clothier, said that it was usual on the starting of the coach, to remove the plugs, and put on the drag, and on this occasion, every diligence was used, by the horse-keepers, guard and coachman. He further stated, that the evidence given by the last witness, was in every way correct, and similar to his own, but that he did not see the mail come in.

Mr John Featherstone, re-examined. There was nothing in the road to impede the passing of the coach.

John Harris, blacksmith, saw the coach coming down the street at full speed, and when it got to the bottom of the street, round the corner, the leaders had been freed from the coach, (by the props of the main bar having been broken) and were got over a low wall, into the area near witness's house; at this moment he saw the coach with the deceased on top, overturn, he observed her on the ground after the coach was upset, and a trunk, leathern apron and coat lying on the deceased. The trunk was very heavy, being nearly a hundred weight. Deceased when taken up appeared to be dead; Witness assisted in carefully removing her to the Lion Inn.

Mr West, pupil to Dr Sully, said that he also assisted in bringing the deceased to the Inn, and afterwards saw her so often, that he was confident every care and attention had been paid to her.

The Coroner here observed, that he was perfectly satisfied, from the evidence which had been adduced, that not the slightest blame could be attached to the guard, coachman, or proprietors, and in this belief the jury expressed their decided concurrence; who having been left to consider their verdict, in ten minutes returned the following:- "The Jury are all unanimously of opinion that Mrs Abigail Slowly died in consequence of an injury sustained by the overturning of the Barnstaple mail-coach, which happened by mere accident, and without the slightest inattention or negligence of the coachman, guard or any other person."

At the suggestion of the Coroner, in conclusion of the above inquest, it was deemed necessary that a deodand should be levied; but whether it should be declared on the horses, coach, or trunk was a matter of some discussion. The horses or coach were evidently the remote cause of the accident – the trunk the immediate one; and the Foreman of the inquest having aptly quoted the Hudibrastic proverb –

"Whatever moves and strikes on dead

It's deodand and forfeited".

It was finally decided that a deodand of one shilling should be levied on the trunk.

Calamitous Occurrence.

Yesterday (Monday) another melancholy accident occurred on the River Avon. The circumstances are as follows: A party of three persons consisting of **Mr Hooper**, brother of Mr Hooper of Cornwall Buildings Walcot; **Miss Harriet Heath**, residing at the same place; and **Miss Ann Norvill**, her niece; ventured on an aquatic excursion. It appears that on taking the boat, the young man was cautioned to be careful in managing it, the water being unusually high; and subsequently they were advised not to approach to near to Pulteney Bridge; failing to pay timely attention to this admonition, the boat was carried by the violence of the current under the bridge and precipitated upon the weirs below, where it was upset. Miss Heath retained sufficient presence of mind to grasp at the hatches, by which she held until a boat from the lower water was brought to rescue her from her perilous situation; Mr Hooper was also taken into it; but Miss Norvill sank to rise no more! The deceased had just attained her 15th year. The affliction of her bereaved parents can be better conceived than described. The body was found soon after 10 o'clock this morning, near the South Parade ferry, and was conveyed to the Shakespeare tavern, in Orchard Street, where an inquest will be holden this day by the Mayor.

Insanity and Murder.

At the Wells Assizes, a poor woman named **Elizabeth Joyce**, was indicted for having murdered her own son in the gaol at Shepton Mallet, by seizing him by the heels and beating his brains out against the bed post. It appeared from the evidence, that the prisoner had formerly been subject to violent paroxysms of insanity while nursing, and that she always suffered under what is called "the milk fever" whilst in a purporeal state. She was in this condition when brought to the gaol and the milk fever had been aggravated by her having drunk some beer, and been much jolted in the vehicle which conveyed her to prison. She was shut up in a dark cell in the gaol, and this she herself assigned as the immediately exciting cause of the fit of madness in which she killed her child. She was proved to be very affectionate towards the deceased as well as her other children and the jury acquitted her of the murder, on the ground of her being insane at the time of the act. Mr Justice Park made some observations upon the case, in the course of which he stated that many wise men had been of opinion that solitary confinement was, in many instances, the cause of madness, and that such a punishment ought, therefore, to be resorted to with the greatest caution.

September 17th 1828

Inquests by Mr Caines of Langport.

On Friday the 12th inst, on **George Collard**, aged seven years. Deceased was the son of a thatcher, of this town, and had been attending his father: having finished some work, he was on his way home, but not by the regular path, and, having attempted to pass over a clize (or flood gate) he fell into a pool, near French Weir, where, in about two hours afterwards, he was found drowned.

At Nether Stowey, on the 9th instant, on **Betty Swaffield**, wife of the clerk of that parish, aged 60. It appeared, that on the preceding Sunday, some altercation had taken place at the house where deceased lived, in consequence of one of the family having misconducted himself – that deceased, being rather timid and nervous, had left the premises, and proceeded to a neighbour's house, out of the noise – that the person, to whose house she went, left her there alone, except an infant, and that, on her return,

she found deceased stretched on the floor, quite dead. There were no marks of violence about her. The jury returned a verdict of – Died by Visitation of God.

October 1st 1828

Inquest by Mr Caines of Langport.

On Wednesday last, an inquest was held at Tatworth, near Chard, before Mr Caines, on **Eliza Stevens**, aged 11 years. From the evidence, it appeared that on the preceding Monday a woman, named **Russell**, was riding on horseback, on a man's saddle, on the Turnpike road leading from Axminster to Chard, and that the deceased, who was walking with her sister, asking permission to ride, she took her behind her, on the horse's bare back. Having proceeded a few yards towards Chard, they heard a coach coming down the hill towards them, and there being a bend in the road, with high banks on each side, they did not see the vehicle until it nearly reached them, when the woman alarmed at the near approach of the coach, gave a shriek, and the horse having, as the witness expressed it, "shoved back," they both fell, and the hind wheel came in contact with the thigh of the deceased, but did not go over her. The coachman immediately pulled up, and every attention was shewn to the females by the passengers, but the violence of the fall caused the rupture of a vessel on the brain, of which the deceased died instantly. Among the passengers was **Admiral Rodd**, who was sitting on the box, by the side of the coachman, and who, with another gentleman, who also witnessed the melancholy scene, addressed letters to the Coroner, exonerating the coachman from any blame. On the conclusion of the evidence, the Coroner and Jury went to view the spot, and on the road being measured found that it was only 15 feet wide from bank to bank, including a drain of two feet, into which, if the wheels had passed, the coach would in all probability have been upset. The jury returned their verdict that "the death was accidental, but in some degree attributable to the narrowness of the road, and that no blame was attached to the coachman or any other person."

October 8th 1828

Yesterday, (Monday) afternoon, as two men named **Forester** and **Johns**, were engaged on Bridgwater Quay, some altercation ensued, when Johns, who was in liquor, struck Forester; the latter returned the blow, and Johns fell over the iron railing into the river – a distance of 20 feet; he was shortly after taken up, quite dead, and dreadfully disfigured by the violence of the fall. Forester is in gaol, until the result of the Coroner's Inquest shall be known.

Inquest by Mr Caines.

At the Luttrell Arms, Dunster, yesterday, on the body of **Thomas Cade**, aged 61. Deceased, with a man named **Pole**, of Bridgwater, left the latter place in a gig on the 5th ult, to proceed to Minehead; at which place they arrived, and returned by way of Dunster, and left at six in the evening, on their return home. On descending the hill near Loxhole Bridge, the horse suddenly sprang to one side; deceased fell out, and Pole jumped after him; but the horse having run away with the gig, and Pole, not having then ascertained that deceased had sustained any injury, ran after and secured the horse. On his return to his companion, he found him with a compound fracture of his leg. He was conveyed back to Dunster, and the fracture was reduced, and amputation advised, but then rejected. On Sunday week, the operation was performed, and the leg amputated, and deceased was going well until Saturday last, when he died of apoplexy. Verdict – "That deceased accidentally fell out of the gig, and that the

fracture was caused by a kick from the horse.” Deodand on the horse, 40s. It was satisfactorily proved that no blame attached to the driver or any other person.

Death by Fighting.

On Thursday evening, a quarrel took place at the Penn Mill Inn, near Yeovil, between a journeyman glover, named **Allen**, and an itinerant dealer in corks, named **Smith**, in consequence of which the former challenged the latter to fight. Smith, who was in some degree intoxicated, was at first unwilling to comply, but provoked by his antagonist, and urged by his wife! he at length entered into the contest,

And in the second round received a blow in the neck, which in the state of excitement, arising from liquor and anger, he was in at the moment, caused instant death. A Coroner’s inquest was held on the body on Friday evening, by Mr Uphill, when a verdict of manslaughter was returned against Allen, who has absconded.

October 22nd 1828

On Monday morning about 8 o’clock, a person named **John Priddy** of Freshford committed suicide by cutting his throat in a dreadful manner. It appears that he had given up a good situation in expectation of receiving some property, but which it seems did not amount to what he had anticipated. We regret to state he has left a family of small children to deplore his loss.

A youth named **Dudden**, about 17 years of age, in the employ of **Mr Wm Perkins**, of Wells, was found, on Saturday last, nearly lifeless on the road-side, about a mile from that city, just where the road branches off to Bath and Frome. His head was fractured, his chest crushed, and bruises appeared on his side, thighs and legs. It appeared he had been driving an empty cart, without any reins, which was found, at a short distance, on the Bath road. From the boy’s known ill treatment of the horse, and the appearance of stripes recently inflicted on the animal, it is conjectured, that while going at a rapid pace, to prevent the horse turning to the left, to proceed up the Bath road, the boy leaped from the cart, and must have been crushed between it and the wall, underneath which he was found, as his route lay on the Frome road. He was taken to a neighbouring cottage of his master, where medical aid was soon procured, but without avail. He appeared totally insensible, became convulsed, threw up a large quantity of blood, and shortly afterwards expired.

Inquests by Mr Caines.

Yesterday, at the George Inn, High Street, in this town, on the body of **Joseph Pitman**, painter, aged 48. It appeared, that on Monday se’nnight, deceased, who was infirm, was crossing the road, opposite Paul Street, at the time the North Devon coach was leaving this place for London. The coach was going at a very slow pace – not more than five miles an hour. The coachman, seeing the man in some danger, called to him; but he appeared to take no notice, and was knocked down and trodden upon by one of the leaders, by which means one of his ribs was fractured, and he died, in consequence, on Sunday night. Several persons of respectability attended the inquest, and most completely exonerated the coachman from all possible blame.

On Monday, at Somerton, on **Henry Pittard**, aged four years. On Saturday last, deceased, with another child, was playing at his father’s lime kiln, and having gone too near the edge of the pit, his frock took fire, and he was so dreadfully burnt, that he expired in about six hours.

At Moorlinch, on the 15th inst, on **Geo Venn**, age 74, who, on the preceding day, being employed with his son in taking down an old cob wall, which had been propped

up by a stone buttress, on removing the support, the wall fell with such force upon the old man as to occasion his death in a few hours. Verdict, in each of the above cases, Accidental Death.

On Friday, at South Petherton, on **Betty Priddle**, aged 64. Deceased was sister to **Mrs Clarke**, of the Wheat Sheaf Inn, in South Petherton, and occasionally assisted there. On Wednesday, she went into the cellar, to draw beer, where she was found dead.

On **Elizabeth Burge**, aged 42, who died from the effects of abscess, on the road between this town and Thurlbeer, on Thursday last. Verdict, in the two last cases, Died by the Visitation of God.

October 29th 1828

A fine girl, about five years old, daughter of Mr **William Withers**, at Milton, near Wells, was dreadfully burnt on Friday last, by a spark from the wood fire on the hearth having caught her clothes; her mother, who had but just gone upstairs for some domestic purpose, being alarmed by the sudden piercing shrieks of her child, immediately hastened down, and found her completely enveloped in flames, which the servant girl was endeavouring to extinguish, which it seemed had been drawn from the dairy room by her cries – the utmost promptitude was however insufficient, and surgical aid proved ineffectual; she died early on the following morning. A Coroner's inquest has returned a verdict of 'accidental death'.

Yesterday an inquest was held at Wilton House of correction by Mr Caines on the body of **Thos Burton** aged 60. Deceased was a native of Cornwall and was convicted, at the last Somerset Michaelmas Sessions, of stealing poultry, and was sentenced to two months imprisonment. In a few days after his conviction, it was disclosed that he was labouring under a general dropsy. He was removed to the Infirmary Ward and regularly attended by the medical gentlemen of the prison, and every possible care taken of him: but he expired on Sunday last. His death was occasioned by dropsy on the chest. Verdict – died by visitation of God.

November 5th 1828

Inquests by Mr Caines.

At Pitney Door, in Kings Sedgemoor, on Thursday last, on the body of **John Seale**, aged five years. The father of the deceased being at work on the preceding day, about half a mile from his house, sent the child home for some fire, and having been supplied with some coals in a tin kettle, he returned towards his father; but, soon after leaving the cottage, his clothes took fire, and he was so dreadfully scorched, that he expired in three hours.

On Friday at the Crown and Sceptre, in North Town, in the Parish of Taunton St James, on the body of **Charles Merrick**, aged five years. Deceased's mother, on Saturday, the 11th ult., had occasion to go to Wilton House of Correction, and in her absence, which was not more than an hour's duration, deceased, who was left with another child, seven years of age, had seated himself upon the hob by the fire side, and, having fallen asleep, he fell into the fire, and was discovered with his clothes completely burnt off his back, and although attended by medical gentleman, who testified to the care and attention paid to the child after the accident, he expired on Thursday last. Verdict in each case, Accidental Death. In both these sad instances, the Coroner forcibly admonished the parents on their imprudence in allowing the children to be placed in such a situation as to lead to the disastrous results above stated, and in which admonition the jury unanimously concurred.

Inquests by Mr Ashford.

At Wells, on the body of **Geo Dudden**, who was killed by a fall from a cart.

At Frome Selwood, on the body of **Jas Coles**. It appeared in evidence that the deceased was a waggoner of Messrs Giles and Hooper, and in attempting to strike one of the horses, whilst incautiously standing on the shafts, he overbalanced himself, fell from the waggon, and died of effusion on the brain, produced by injury of the neck. The deceased bore an excellent character, and was a very valuable servant. Verdict, in each case, Accidental Death.

Also, at the same place, on the body of **Jas Long**, who was found dead in his bed. Verdict, Died by the Visitation of God.

At Wells, on the body of a little boy, three years and a half old, belonging to **William Tucker**, a stone-mason, who was sitting with his mother, by the fire, on Wednesday evening last; a spark from some wood that was burning caught his clothes, and, before the poor woman could extinguish the flames, the child was so shockingly burnt as to cause his death on Friday evening last. Verdict, Accidental Death.

November 19th 1828

Melancholy Circumstance

Corporal Webb, of the 3d Foot Guards, who had been stationed some years in this city, on the Recruiting Service, proceeded on Friday to Pensford, accompanied by a comrade, for the purpose of tending the fair on the next day. Having arrived at the place, they proceeded to the Inn, and called for some refreshments, which the Corporal had scarcely tasted, when he complained of a pain in the shoulder, fell gently on the seat and instantly expired.

On Monday last, an elderly man, named **Hugh Nicholls**, of Bishopsnympton, was going to Dulverton, and when he came to the Cuckoo public house, about half-way on the road, he went to refresh himself with half a pint of beer; whilst sitting before the fire, he complained of being unwell, and expired soon after.

A Coroner's inquest was held on the body by **T Copner**, esq. Verdict, 'Visitation of God.'

Inquests by Mr Caines.

On Thursday last, at Oath, in the parish of Aller, on **Jane Lock**, aged 70. Deceased, on the preceding day, had taken her breakfast as usual, and gone into the fields, to assist in wheat sowing, where she was taken ill, and in about 20 minutes became a corpse. Verdict, Died by the Visitation of God.

At the Clock Inn, Rockwell Green, near Wellington, on Monday last, upon **Charles Baker**, aged seven years. Deceased, on Friday last, being alone, and having gone to the fire, to take off some meat which was cooking, his pinafore took fire, and his trowsers at the time being unbuttoned, and about his heels, the whole of his clothing became in a blaze, and he was discovered enveloped in flames to the height of several feet, and was, in consequence, so dreadfully burnt, that he expired on the same day. Verdict, Accidental Death.

At Stoke Gregory, on **T Gervis**, aged 24. It appeared in evidence, that about nine years since, the father of the deceased became embarrassed in his circumstances, and was placed by the overseers of North Curry in a house in that parish, where he had continued ever since, rent free, and had occasionally been relieved by the overseers; but they had recently discovered that the man not only did not belong to their parish, but that he actually was in the receipt of from £20 to £30 a year; consequently they took legal measures for dispossessing him of the premises, and on Wednesday

se'nnight, a constable, tithingman, and the overseers, went to demand possession. This occasioned a long discussion, and it was at length agreed that the family should remain in the house until noon on the following Friday. The deceased, who had been apprenticed to a carpenter, but had left his place on account of ill health, formed part of the family, and who, having heard the conversation, after the officers were gone, remarked, that as they must all leave, he wished to go that day to his brother's, at Stoke; and a donkey being provided, he mounted accompanied by the father, and rode to within about 100 yards of the brother's house, where, having dismounted, and got over a stile, he dropped down, and instantly expired. **Mr Marchant**, surgeon, deposed, that he had attended the deceased, who had been suffering from disease of the lungs – that he had seen him late on the preceding Sunday, when he appeared to be better – that if his opinion had been asked as to any danger of his being removed, he should have said "No;" and that, in his opinion, deceased died from a rupture of some vessel about the heart, but not from violence used towards him in any respect; and in his opinion the jury concurred.

At the New Inn, Langport Westover, in Curry Rivell, on **Wm Hartland**, aged 60. Deceased had been unwell; but on Friday was at work, ate a hearty dinner, and in the afternoon was found dead in the garden. Verdict, as in the last case, Died by the Visitation of God.

At the Buck's Head Inn, Long Sutton, on **Eleanor Andersey**, aged about two years. Deceased was an illegitimate child, and the mother, in April last, married a young man, named **Downton**, who stated in evidence, that on Friday morning he placed the child on a mat, at a little distance from the fire, and that he went to assist his wife in carrying out a basket of clothes to dry, and having so done, he went to the stable. This was corroborated by the wife, who added, that a few minutes after he had left the house, the deceased came into the garden, enveloped in flames, and was so much burnt, that she expired about two hours later. Verdict, Accidentally burnt.

Inquests by Mr Ashford.

At Holcombe, on the body of **Jas Chivers**, who died in consequence of an explosion of fire damp at the Coal-barton Colliery, occasioned by one of the men incautiously carrying alighted candle in his hand to his work, under ground, instead of using one of the safety lamps, which had been provided for that purpose by the proprietors. Verdict, Accidental Death.

At Pensford, on the body of **Robert Webb**, a corporal in the 3d Foot Guards, who had been sent from Bath with a recruiting party, for the purpose of attending the fair at Pensford the following day. The deceased was on the point of taking some refreshment, when he complained of a pain in his chest and shoulder, sat down on a form, and instantly expired.

At Temple Cloud, on the body of **Mr Joseph Kingston**, a respectable farmer, who, whilst attending his work people in the field, died in a fit of apoplexy. Verdicts, in the two last cases, Died by the Visitation of God.

At Cheddar, on the body of **Farmer Tucker**, of Westbury, near Wells, who was found lifeless on the road-side near Cheddar. It appears that the deceased had been attending Axbridge Fair, and was returning thence late in the evening, when, it is supposed, he was thrown from his horse into a wet ditch, and killed by the contusions received in the fall, or by suffocation from the water, in which he was found the next morning. Verdict, Accidental Death.

At Bruton, on the body of **Peter Padfield**, who died from excessive drinking. Verdict accordingly.

At Keynsham, on the body of **Wm Cantle**, aged about six years, who, with some other children, got into an empty cart that was proceeding down Dapps Hill, which unfortunately upset, and killed the child on the spot. Verdict, Accidental Death.

November 26th 1828

Inquest by Mr Caines.

On Wednesday last, at the Waggon and Horses, in East Reach, on the body of **Jacob Newman**, aged 40. From the evidence of **Mrs Taylor**, the landlady, it appeared that deceased came to the house on Thursday night; the next day he paid for his bed, and went in and out of the house several times. About nine in the evening he returned, and appeared to have had a fall, from the dirty appearance of his coat; he had some gin and ale and went to bed. On Saturday morning he complained much and said, if some one did not come and see him soon, he must die. A medical gentleman attended, and deceased told him, that in running to get over a staked gate, he seriously injured himself. He was treated with the utmost attention and kindness; but mortification had taken place, and he expired on Tuesday morning. Deceased did not impute blame to any one, and was perfectly satisfied with everything that had been done for him. Verdict, Accidental Death.

Desperate Suicide.

A most tragic scene presented itself on Thursday morning last, at Chagott Lodge, near Dunster, the residence of **Rowland Unwin**, esq., and on Saturday, an inquest was held by Mr Caines. Sixteen respectable jurors being sworn, and the body of a female, aged 38, having been inspected, evidence was adduced to the following effect:- **Mrs Broughton**, on whose control the female part of the establishment devolved, deposed, that on the Wednesday month preceding, the deceased, **Martha Lonsdale**, came to the Lodge, having been engaged by an agent in London, and she was to undertake the duty of a plain cook. Witness thought deceased appeared to look wild, and that her manner and conduct were altogether strange. On the following morning deceased commenced the duties expected from her, but in a very unsatisfactory manner. Several letters of character were produced and read; from one of which it appeared that deceased had lived in the Talbot family, whose mansion was burnt to the ground some months since, and that her last situation was in Welbeck Street, London. Deceased continued to get on but very indifferently for a fortnight, when witnesses discovered she had committed a strange and unaccountable mistake in preparing dinner, so that the article was actually unfit for use, and thrown away. Another similar disappointment soon followed, when witness remonstrated, and deceased gave warning to leave at the expiration of the month. This was readily acceded to by witness, and arrangements were made accordingly. From the time deceased came to the Lodge, she appeared to continue as at first described; and witness added, that she several times saw her crying, and on one occasion lifting up her hands as if in the deepest grief. On Wednesday last, the month having expired, witness called deceased into the drawing-room, to settle wages. Thirty-five shillings was the sum due to her; but, for some reason, it seemed desirable that she should be actually leaving the Lodge before she was paid. It was pretty clearly ascertained that deceased had no more money, and she begged seven shillings of witness, which was promised her when she left. In the course of that day, witness sent for a man to take her to Dunster; but when the man came, although at her own request, she refused to go. At length it was arranged that she should leave at about noon on Thursday; but, on that day, the house-maid having been directed to ascertain that the plate and other things were all

right, she missed a silver spoon and a dessert knife, and having gone up stairs, to ask the deceased for those articles, she found the bedroom fast, and received no answer on calling to her. At length other persons came up, the door was opened, and deceased was found lying on her face, weltering in blood, having cut her throat with the knife that had been lost, and which was lying by her side.

Mr Abraham, surgeon, was sent for, and he examined the body, which was dead and cold. There were two cuts across the throat, and three stabs; the latter were such as to have caused instant death.

All the domestics corroborated the evidence of the first witness, as to the wild appearance and general conduct of the deceased.

Deceased had destroyed many papers on the preceding day – and on opening her boxes &c – it appeared that her whole stock of money, amounted only to three half pence.

The jury were unanimously of opinion that the dreadful act was committed by herself, and that when she did so she was melancholy and distracted, and they returned a verdict to that effect.

The gardener and groom both considered her in a distressed situation and they had both promised to render her some pecuniary assistance. Deceased was 38 years of age and a native of the county of Durham.

December 3rd 1828

Inquests by Mr Caines.

On the 30th ult, at Donyat, near Ilminster, on **Richard Thorn**, aged 38. On Friday the 28th, deceased was employed with three other persons in grinding apples, when he suddenly became unable to proceed further with his labour, sat down, and complained of severe pains in his stomach. His companions carried him into his own house, and up stairs. A surgeon was instantly sent for, but before he arrived deceased was a corpse. A short time before deceased was seized as described, he had eaten heartily, and appeared in perfect health. The surgeon, **Mr Sampson**, who attended the Inquest, stated, that in his opinion, some vessel had suddenly given way, in consequence of a little exertion; at a time when the stomach was rather full.

Yesterday, at the workhouse of Taunton St Mary Magdalene, on the body of **William Buncombe**, aged 68. Deceased had been for many years in a deranged state of mind, and for a long time has been confined to his bed. On Sunday morning, when the woman went to make his bed, at the usual time, she found him a corpse. Many witnesses were called to prove that the deceased had experienced every possible care and attention, and this was most satisfactorily exemplified. Verdict, as in the last mentioned case, Died by the Visitation of God.

R Unwin esq, of Charget Lodge, has favoured us with some additional particulars respecting his female servant, whose suicide was stated in our last. It seems that not the slightest doubt can arise as to the woman's insanity, not only from the first moment of her entering his service, but at the time, also, when she quitted London. She had proposed to quit her place at midnight, which was very properly objected to until the morning. Mr Unwin says there was no imputation on her honesty.

“She had said she had as many letters in her boxes as would take three days to read, and that their contents were such as she should be sorry for any master to see. It afterwards appeared she was up a whole night burning these papers, and as she had threatened to “kick up a row” before she left. I am inclined since to think these words alluded to the manner of her death, by which she thought others would be brought into

trouble. I also think she destroyed any money she was possessed of, as she had five pounds when she left London; but it is difficult to say, as her boxes were never sealed, and had to wait the Coroner's arrival. In her last situation, her fits of passion were so great that she has been known to faint under them. She was in the habit of swearing on the most trifling occasions, and from her coming here in a post chaise, and from on of her limbs being found tied or bandaged, I have no doubt she laboured under some bodily as well as mental disease, as she was lame, and complained that she could not sleep at night. Her relations assert that her passions were most violent, and as to her age being 38, she looked at least 50, with a wild maniac appearance about her eyes and temples. For any one to have opposed her departure, would have been "penny wise and pound foolish," as her funeral has not cost me less than £6."

December 10th 1828

We are concerned to state, that **Richard Cook**, esq, of Ileigh water, near Chard, on the evening of Saturday se'nnight last was so seriously burnt in his sitting room, by the sofa on which he was sitting having caught fire, that he expired on the Wednesday following. Mr Cook was a gentleman well known in this town, and was lodging at Chard when the melancholy event occurred.

Inquests by Mr Caines.

Fatal Accident. On Friday last, about five o'clock, **Mr Faithful Cape**, a highly respectable farmer, of Cottey Farm, near Wellington, was returning home, on horseback, from the house of his landlord, **J.Waldron**, esq of Bishop's Hull, accompanied by his daughter, who was also on horseback. Whether deceased found himself unwell, or became fearful of the mare he was riding (a very spirited animal) is not known, but he said, "My dear Jane, don't ride so fast; if you do, I shall never get home!" Shortly after this, they passed a cart on one of the bridges, called 'The Three Bridges,' and were then riding at a rather slower pace; but, soon after, Mr Cape's horse made a spring or start, and went off at great speed – so much so, that from the time of the evening, and a bend in the road, he was soon out of sight. Miss Cape followed, and soon came up to her father, who was lying on the road, speechless. Assistance soon arrived, when the deceased was placed in the cart before mentioned, and taken to Wellington, where the body was examined by **Mr Pyne**, surgeon, who opened the jugular vein, from which blood flowed copiously, but, from the evidence given at the inquest, it appeared that the skull was fractured at its base, and that he ceased to breathe shortly after he was put into the cart, nearly three miles from Wellington. An inquest was held on Saturday, at the Eight Bells Inn, Wellington, when the jury returned a verdict of Accidental Death by falling from a bay mare. Deodand 40s.

On the 5th instant, at Chedzoy, near Bridgwater, on **Betty Gillard**, an elderly woman, who lived in an apartment of a house alone, and slept in the same room which was below stairs. She was a person generally esteemed, and visited by respectable persons, and, amongst others, by a farmer, of the village, named **Crane**, who used to read to her, and generally left her at her usual bed time, rather early in the evening. On Tuesday, he quitted her, apparently in perfect health, and was the last person who saw her alive. Wednesday morning, a neighbour, who lived under the same roof, on going to light her fire, discovered her lying on the floor, in a dying state, and without any other clothing than her chemise. Neighbours were called in, and deceased expired in a few minutes. Verdict. Died by the Visitation of God.

On the 7th inst, at Luckham, near Porlock, on **Ann Vaulter**, aged 10 years, who, on the 2d instant, was employed in keeping birds from off the recently sown wheat, and having kindled a fire, her pinafore caught in a blaze, and in a few minutes the whole of her clothes were burnt off her back. In this state the poor little thing ran across the field to another child similarly employed; and the mother, being at a short distance, carried the sufferer home. Medical aid was immediately called in, but of no avail, the burns being so extensive, that in three hours death put a period to her existence. Verdict, Accidentally burnt.

A singular coincidence occurred during the time this inquest was being held, which was at the house of the overseer:- A person came to announce that a pauper, **William Withycombe**, an elderly man, had been found dead at the poor house. The jury being resworn, and witnesses examined, it appeared that a person had been employed by the overseer to attend to the deceased, but that she had not seen him for the last 24 hours previously to his death, and even then not until it was known that the man was dead. He had, however, been supplied with sustenance in the interim from the Parsonage. The conduct of this unfeeling wretch, and another woman who lived in the same house, was very properly censured by the Coroner and Jury. Verdict, Died by the Visitation of God.

Inquests by Mr Ashford.

At Rodden, on the body of an old woman named **Betty Harris**, who was found dead in the road leading from Frome to Rodden. It was supposed she died from over-exertion, having walked many miles during the day. Verdict, Died by Visitation of God.

At Wincanton, on the body of **Thomas Read**, a boy about 14 years of age, who. Whilst cutting some sticks from a tree which hung over a river, fell in and was drowned.

At Woolard, near Pensford, on **Elizabeth Druggest**. The deceased had been desired by her mistress to wash some clothes, and instead of washing them in the house, as was the usual custom, she took them to the side of the river to do it; deceased not coming home so soon as she was expected, her master sent a person to see for her, but she could not be found; they then went to the side of the river, where they saw some of the clothes washed, and the rest floating on the water; they immediately commenced dragging the river, but did not succeed in finding her till the next morning. Verdict, in the last two cases, Accidental Death.

At Brislington, on **John Weeks**, a gardener. It appeared from the evidence of **Thomas Nott**, that he saw the deceased come into the tap room of the White Hart at Brislington, about six o'clock in the evening, when he appeared very much intoxicated. Deceased called for a pint of beer, of which witness took one glass. Witness did not see any more of him till nine o'clock; he was sitting in the same place, and did not seem much more intoxicated than when he came in. Witness (being an old acquaintance of the deceased) waited till after 10 o'clock to see him home; they went into the bar and had one glass of gin and water each, after which they went out into the road together, to go home, when witness found he could not get him home, and took him back to the inn, and requested **Mr King**, the landlord, to let him have a bed there, to which Mr King immediately consented, and assisted the deceased upstairs, and laid him on the bed; deceased refused to have his clothes off, as he said he should only want to lie down for an hour or two; the landlord then left, and saw no more of him till he was called the next morning, when he found a corpse. Verdict, Died of Apoplexy, brought on by excessive drinking.

At Marston, on the body of **James Ashford**, who had been at work with a team of horses, hauling stones for the repairs of the road, and whilst taking off one of the horses, to give it some hay, the horse kicked the boy in the back part of the head, which caused his death in a few hours.

And at Lullington, on the body of a child, only two years old, who, in the absence of its mother, fell into a well and was drowned. Verdict in both cases, "Accidental Death."

December 17th 1828

The Inquest held on **Mr Smith**, the unfortunate gentleman who destroyed himself at the London Inn, in this town, as stated in our last, returned, as we anticipated, a verdict of "Insanity," the propriety of which was fully borne out by the evidence adduced on this occasion. **Mr Stanley**, partner in the very respectable firm, in King Street, Cheapside, London, of which Mr Smith was the principal, attended, with Mr Stanley's brother, to the funeral of the deceased on Sunday last.

Inquests by Mr Caines.

On Thursday last, at Wick, in the parish of Stogursey, on **Geo. Dyer**, aged 72. Deceased was a small farmer, and had for many months appeared much impaired in intellect, and shown strong symptoms of insanity. On the Tuesday preceding, he had left his house, and on his wife going to look for him, she discovered him drowned in a small pit of water not more than 12 inches deep, in the cattle yard. There being no positive proof that the deceased had drowned himself, the jury, at the suggestion of the Coroner, returned a verdict of Found Drowned.

And on Friday last, at Bathpool, near this town, on **Mr Abraham Hobbs**, aged 58. Deceased had been much afflicted with gout, and had for some years retired from business; and lived with his daughter and son-in-law, **Mr England**. On Tuesday se'night, after taking some broth, he was attended by Mrs England, to his bed-room, when, after getting into bed, he said he felt comfortable. In about an hour afterwards, Mrs England had again occasion to go into her father's apartment, and found him dead. Verdict, Died by Visitation of God.

December 24th 1828

Inquest by Mr Caines.

At the Clock Inn, Rockwell Green, in the parish of Wellington, on the body of **Isaac Channon**, a boy, under ten years of age. The jury having been sworn, the Coroner observed that it frequently happened that there was no mystery or difficulty in occurrences which Coroner's Juries had to investigate, neither did there appear to be any mystery or difficulty in the present case; but, if the information he had received was correct, there must be considerable blame attached somewhere. The legislature had very wisely provided by the Statute 3 Geo IV (the General Turnpike Act) that if any person entrusted the care of a cart to a child under the age of thirteen, such person should be subject to the penalty therein stated, recoverable before any Magistrate in the district in which such offence was committed; and he hoped and trusted, that if the facts in the present instance were as they had been represented, such steps would be taken as should prevent a similar occurrence. It appeared in evidence, that on Friday last, the deceased, with three other boys, having the care of loaded carts, were passing on the turnpike road, near the eight-mile stone upon the road towards Cullompton, when the horse that the deceased was driving made a spring to the side of the road, and knocked him down; the near wheel passing over his body, he was taken up, placed in a cart, and conveyed to the house above mentioned; but before medical

assistance arrived, he was a corpse. Verdict, Accidentally killed by a cart. Deodand on the horse 3l. and on the wheel 10s. We understand that some of the principal persons composing the jury undertook to apply to a Magistrate for a summons to recover the penalty from the owner of the cart.

December 31st 1828

On Monday evening, **John Eardley**, a shoemaker, of North Curry, was discovered lying on the ground at Creech Moor, apparently in a state of intoxication; he was lifted up by a person named **Lockyer**, who resided near the spot, and left to pursue his journey towards home. Nothing more was heard of him until yesterday morning, when his body was discovered in a pond belonging to **Mr Chard**, of Ham, within a short distance of the place where he was assisted by Lockyer. It is supposed that the deceased, in consequence of his inebriety, accidentally fell into the water, and met his death as above described. – A Coroner's jury has been summoned to sit upon the body.

Inquest by Mr Caines.

On Wednesday evening last, at the Dolphin Inn, in Ilminster, on **Jas. Austin**, aged 35. This inquest excited much interest, and occupied a considerable time before a respectable jury, of which **V.T.Langworthy**, Esq was Foreman. The deceased formerly conducted himself with much propriety, but had for a long time been a frequenter of public houses – was much addicted to drinking, and led a dissolute life; and on Sunday se'nnight he died rather suddenly. On the following morning it was currently reported that his death had been occasioned by something of a poisonous kind having been give him in beer. **Mr Mules** opened the body, and was fully convinced that the charge had been made (against a young man of respectable family) had no foundation whatever, and that his death had been occasioned by inflammation of the lungs, produced by intemperance; and the jury returned a verdict to that effect.

Inquests by Mr Ashford.

At Frome, on the body of an elderly female, named **Chaffen**, inmate of the Blue Coat Asylum in that town. Deceased was found dead in her bed. Verdict, died by the Visitation of God.

At the Spring Garden Factories, on the body of **Joseph Hooper** and **Peter Papps**, workmen in the employ of Messrs Sheppard, who were, as usual, attending to a cistern which is used for the lately invented process of heating and steaming clothes, and the cover of the cistern having been removed, and Hooper sitting on its side, letting off the water, he was unintentionally pushed by Papps, by which he lost his equilibrium, when, in attempting to recover himself, he laid hold on Papps, and they both fell together into the cistern, containing hot water, about 18 inches deep, heated to 150 degrees Fahrenheit, and were both so dreadfully scalded as to cause their deaths on the third day. It is but justice to notice, that the humanity and benevolence of their employers were evinced by sending their own medical friends, Messrs. **Millers** and **Slade**, and bestowing every other requisite assistance their sympathy could suggest. The same day, on the body of a female child of **Mr John Tuck**, whose death was occasioned by her clothes taking fire as she was removing a saucepan from the fire-place. Verdict, in each of the last three cases, Accidental Death.

At Paulton, on the body of a poor lad, who accidentally fell into a quarry, in which were eight or nine feet of water. A poor man, named **Joseph Hew**, hastened to the spot, and, although entreated by the by-standers not to venture, he persisted in making the attempt to save the life of a fellow creature, and plunged into the water, when, alas! Both sank into a watery grave. It was observed that the poor fellow succeeded in

grasping the lad, and bringing him to the edge of the water; but, as the sides were steep, and no footway to be obtained, his strength failed him, and both fell back, to rise no more. A delay of 20 minutes was occasioned in procuring ladders to get the bodies out, when every exertion was made to restore life, but all to no purpose. The jury, without hesitation, returned a verdict of Accidental Death, occasioned by the wilful neglect of **Mr Wm Bartlett**, the proprietor of the quarry, in not erecting a fence against the said quarry, after having been repeatedly desired so to do.

January 14th 1829

Inquests by Mr Caines.

At Burnham, on the 8th inst, on **William James**, aged 18. It appeared in evidence, that on the 13th ult. the deceased, with three other young men, got into an empty boat, lying in the River Brue, a few yards above Highbridge – that the tide was receding, and there being a strong current in the river, almost immediately, the boat drifted against the middle pier of the bridge, swung round athwart the arch, and instantly sunk. Providentially the other three young men, with much difficulty, got ashore; but the deceased was never seen after the boat went down, until picked up by the crew of a strange vessel, off Black Rock, on Monday se'nnight. Verdict, accidentally drowned.

January 28th 1829

Inquests by Mr Caines of Langport.

On the 19th inst, at the Poulett Arms Inn, at Lopen Head, near Crewkerne, on **Ann Rowsell**, aged six years. It appeared in evidence that the deceased (on the 14th instant) was sitting by a fire of skimps of flax, that her clothes accidentally caught fire, and in that state she ran home to her parents, and by the time she arrived there she was nearly naked, and so dreadfully scorched that she expired on the 16th.

Verdict, Accidentally burnt.

On the 24th instant, at Tone Dale Factory, near Wellington, on **Thomas Phillips**, aged 13. These premises are very extensive, and there is a large manufactory of woollen goods carried on by Messrs. Fox, who have for some time been making arrangements for lighting the whole with gas, and on Wednesday last the arrangements were nearly completed – **Mr Charles Fox**, **Mr Edward Fox**, and the father of the deceased, were, at about four in the afternoon approaching the gasometer, where he was seen looking down into the tank; at this instant some of the gas having escaped, an explosion took place, the gasometer rose, and the deceased fell into the tank, in about seven feet of water; and in consequence of the gasometer having again fallen, it was a considerable time before the deceased could be got out, when life was extinct. **Mr N W Langley**, surgeon, was soon in attendance, and he found that deceased had received a large wound on top of the head on the left hand side, and marks of a violent blow on the right side. He gave it as his opinion that the death might have happened from either of the following causes, namely – from the effluvia of the gas, from the pressure of the gasometer, or from suffocation by drowning, and the jury returned a verdict to that effect.

At Ilminster, on **John Coleman**, a respectable tradesman, and one of the choir of singers. On Tuesday last deceased had been with some friends to collect some money for the choir; and had been taking a cheerful glass, but did not appear to be at all intoxicated. It was rather a late hour when he got home, and his wife gave him the key of the door from the bed room window. Shortly after, in ascending the stairs, he fell in a fit of apoplexy, and in about half an hour was a corpse.

At Shapwick, on Polden Hill, on **John Hockey**, aged 72. On Wednesday he was employed in digging some gutter on Rent Farm. At two o'clock he ate his dinner and appeared perfectly well, and at four he was found dead where he had been at work.

And at Milverton, on **Betty Graves**, better known as **Betty Oddy**, aged 70. Deceased used to go round to the villages begging, and was particularly fond of her pipe. On Thursday she called at Court House, and having lighted her pipe she said she was going out to pick some sticks. On the following morning she was found frozen to death – Verdict, as in the three last mentioned cases, died by visitation of God.

February 4th 1829

Inquests by Mr Caines.

At Chard, on the 29th ult, on **James Bourne**, aged six years. In the absence of his mother (who has gone for some bread) his clothes caught fire, by which means he was dreadfully burnt, and expired in a few hours.

At Kingston, near this town, on the 30th ult, on **Maria Dollen**, aged three years, whose death was occasioned by circumstances very similar to the above – verdict in each case, accidentally burnt.

Inquests by Mr Ashford.

Jan 17, at Beckington, on the body of **Martha Clements**, aged 86, who was found dead in her bed.

At Shotwell Farm, on **Charles Symes**, who died suddenly. The deceased had been a valuable servant to the occupiers of the farm for upwards of 40 years.

Jan 26, at Priddy, on **Jas Bishop**, aged 67. The deceased had been a short distance from home, and on his return was taken suddenly ill (supposed from the inclemency of the weather) and in less than ten minutes was a corpse. Verdict, in each of the above cases, died by visitation of God.

On the same day at Farmborough, on the body of **Barnaby Emery**. It appeared in evidence, that the deceased had been to Bath, with a cart load of coal, and had stopped at different public houses, on his way home, to drink; he was overtaken on the road by some of his acquaintance, who offered to treat him, if he would let them ride in his cart, which he promised to do; and soon after they set out, the deceased, in attempting to get into the cart, fell down and injured the spine of his back; he was conveyed home, where he lingered some time, and then expired.

Jan 29, at Frome, on the body of **Louisa Clarke**, an infant, who was accidentally burnt to death, occasioned by her clothes taking fire in the absence of the woman who had taken care of her. Verdict in the last two cases, accidental death.

The same day, at Yatton on Mrs **Lucy Cook**, who died suddenly.

Jan 31, at Shepton Mallet Prison, on **Chas Gilbert**, aged 19. Verdict in each case, died by visitation of God.

Feb 2 at Wells, on the body of two children, **John Small** and **Geo Langworthy**, who were accidentally drowned. Verdict accordingly.

February 18th 1829

Inquests by Mr Caines.

At Chedzoy, near Bridgwater, on **Richard Sparke**, aged 59. On the preceding Saturday deceased had been employed in thrashing barley for **Mr Crane**, of that parish; and in the evening, as he was returning to his home, he was stopped and searched by one of Mr Crane's sons, who found upon him about three quarters of a peck of barley which he had stolen from his employer. Deceased was taken before a magistrate, and four persons agreed to sit up the night with him. About nine o'clock,

while they were at supper, deceased cut his throat with a large clasp knife, which occasioned his death in about half an hour. No symptoms of insanity having been at any time apparent, the jury, consisting of 15 persons, returned a verdict of *Felo de se*, and the Coroner issued his warrant for the interment of the body the same night, between the hours of 9 and 12, pursuant to the statute of the 4th of his present Majesty. At Pawlett, on **Ferdinando Parsons**, aged five years; on the 25th ult, while at play with other children, his pinafore caught fire, and he was so dreadfully burnt, that he died on the 6th instant. Verdict, accidentally burnt.

At Huntspill, on **Jane Burnett**, aged 15 months, who, unnoticed, escaped from her mother, and was shortly afterwards discovered in a ditch, in which she was drowned – verdict accordingly.

February 25th 1829

Inquests by Mr Caines.

At Crewkerne, on **Jane Prior**, aged about five years. On Monday se'nnight, the deceased, being on the turnpike road, was attacked by a cow in a most violent manner, and her death was almost instantaneous. From the evidence it appeared that the cow had a very young calf – that some persons were driving her out of a field, and that their rough treatment enraged the animal so as to cause her to make the desperate attack on the child, as at other times she was very gentle. Verdict, Accidentally killed by a cow. Deodand £5.

At Wiveliscombe, on **Isaac White**, who, on the 13th instant, was employed in driving a horse and cart, laden with turnips, when the breeching harness got loosened; the horse became unmanageable – drew one wheel against a bank, and upset the cart upon the deceased, by which means his collar bone and three of his ribs were broken, and he expired on the 16th. Verdict, accidentally killed by a cart falling upon him. Deodand upon the cart 1s.

March 4th 1829

On Saturday evening, a hamper, apparently containing wine, was brought to the George Inn in this town, for the purpose of being sent to London, by the Freemason Coach; the bosquer thinking the straw appeared very loose, put his hand into the bottom of the basket, when he felt the feet of a human body. The hamper was immediately opened, and it was found to contain the body of a woman. Immediate search was made in the churchyards around, and on the following morning it was discovered that a grave had been opened in the churchyard of Cannington, and the body of a woman who had been buried there on Friday, extracted. Several persons are now in custody, on suspicion of being concerned in this affair, but the man who brought the hamper to the George has absconded.

Inquests, before **Frederick Axford**, esq Mayor of Bridgwater.

On Friday, on the body of a girl named **Lockyer**. It appeared that about a fortnight previously whilst the deceased was employed in lighting a fire, her clothes ignited, and she was so dreadfully burnt that she lingered until Thursday last, when she expired – verdict – Accidental death by fire

On the same day, on the body of a lad named **Henry Budd**, who, in getting from one of the vessels at the Quay into a boat, fell overboard – verdict – accidentally drowned.

March 11th 1829

Inquests by Mr Caines.

On Monday last, at Pitminster, on the body of **John Upham**, aged 52. Deceased was in the employ of **Col. Cooper**, an was driving a cart on Saturday last at Blagdon, and fell from the shafts, and being entangled by his clothes, he was dragged several yards when the wheel went over his body. He remained insensible for some time afterwards and expired in three hours. Verdict, accidental death. Deodand 2s.

On Wednesday last, at Barrington, near Ilminster, on **John Follett**, an elderly man, who was found drowned in a ditch in that parish. Verdict, Accidentally drowned.

At Otterford on the borders of Devon, on **Samuel Rogers**, aged 72. Deceased had for many years kept the New Inn, in that parish, and on the 4th inst, in going thence to his present residence, he fell down, and was found dead. Verdict, died by the visitation of God.

Inquests by Mr Ashford.

At Timsbury, on the body of **Mary Bingham** age 51. Deceased went to bed, apparently in good health, and about five o'clock on the following morning, the daughter, hearing her groan, asked her what was the matter: but, receiving no answer laid down again, and did not get up till seven o'clock, when she discovered her mother to be in a dying state. Finding this to be the case, she immediately ran downstairs, to acquaint an old lady, who resided in the house, with the circumstances, and on their arriving in the bed room, found her dead. Verdict, died by visitation of God.

At Shepton Mallet, on the body of **John Sibley**, aged three years, whose clothes, in the absence of his mother, by some means caught fire, and the poor child was so dreadfully burnt as to render all surgical assistance hopeless; he survived but a few days. Verdict, Accidental Death.

March 18th 1829

Charles Young was returning home from Charles St Bristol. Met cart on road into Wilsbridge. Collided. Broke legs. Mortification set in. Died.

The following are some further particulars of the disinterment of a body at Durleigh, and of the discovery of a body at the coach office, in this town as mentioned in a former paper. The affair has occasioned a great sensation in the town, the more especially as a suspicion had arisen in the minds of the family of the late **Mrs Watkins** of Silver Street, in this town, who was buried in Durleigh churchyard about a month ago, the grave was opened on Monday se'nnight, when it was ascertained that her corpse had been removed and carried away. About 11 o'clock on the 28th ult, a basket was brought to the George Inn, in this town, to be forwarded by one of the coaches to London, and was deposited in the inn yard. On the arrival of one of the Bristol coaches at the inn, the landlord (**Mr Sutton**) thinking the basket might contain some valuable property, desired some of his men to remove it to a place of greater safety. In endeavouring to do so, part of the basket gave way, and one of the men from it's heaviness, wishing to ascertain the contents, thrust his hand into the opening, when, to his surprise, he grasped the foot of a human being! This of course led to a farther examination of the contents of the basket; it proved to be the body of a woman named **Bryer**, who died in childbirth, and was buried in Cannington churchyard. Mr Sutton caused the Magistrates to be informed of the circumstance and an inquiry was instituted as to the person who brought it to the George, when it was discovered that a man named **Edward Barber**, commonly called 'Nimrod' had carried it there from the White Horse Inn; at which house it had been left by a person named **Thomas Jones**, who lived at Durleigh. Two constables were dispatched to Jones's residence; but they

could not find him, and there is every reason to suppose that he had absconded. It appears Jones got a man named **Channing** (who was hauling some sane to this town in a cart) to suffer him to place the basket in his cart, and upon his arrival near the Malt Shovel public-house, he took it from the cart and carried it to the White Horse. Some doubts have arisen as to whether Barber might not be an accomplice, he was committed to gaol for further examination. The remains of the woman were re-interred on Sunday. The direction of the basket was "Mr J Jones, Mr Hall, 41 Duke St. Little Britain, London" which was written on the back of a doctor's printed circular. On the 18th ult. A basket was sent from this town, by the Hero Coach for London, to be left at the coach office, (Castle and Falcon) till called for. After remaining there some days, the office keeper, smelling something offensive in the basket, took it upon him to open it in the presence of several respectable persons, when, to his great astonishment, he found it to contain a fine male child, about four years of age. It has since been discovered that in the neighbouring villages of this town five bodies have been recently disinterred.

March 25th 1829

Inquest by Mr Caines of Langport.

In this town, yesterday, on **J C Gooding**, a child eight months old, who was discovered by his mother, in bed, in a dying state, and survived about twenty minutes only – Verdict, died by the visitation of God.

At Blue Anchor Inn, near Watchet, on **Mary Moggridge**, aged 10 years, on the 15th instant, deceased was employed in a field of Mr **Hurford's**, the Landlord, in keeping birds and she had kindled a fire. At two o'clock her sister carried her dinner, and at about three, Mr Hurford hearing someone groan in the yard, on going out he saw deceased with all the upper part of her clothing burnt off her back; and deceased was so much scorched that she expired on the 27th.

At Crewkerne, on the 21st instant, on **Albert Trone**, aged two years, who died of concussion of the brain, from falling out of a bedroom window of the height of about 14 feet.

And at Spaxton, on the 23rd instant on **John Culver**, aged 72. On the 8th of January, the deceased was going on foot, from Cannington to Bridgwater market, and notwithstanding, there was an excellent footpath, deceased was walking on the turnpike; several persons were on horseback, and going in the same direction, and were met by a cart, in endeavouring to avoid which, one of the persons (**David Tudor**, the foreman to Messrs. Watson and Co.) rode against the deceased, and struck him down, by which means he received a severe wound on the right knee. In a few days it became necessary to call in medical aid, and he was constantly attended by Mr Axford, until Thursday last, when he died of mortification. The jury were unanimously of opinion, that not the slightest blame was imputable to any one, and they returned a verdict as in the last mentioned cases of "Died from an Accident".

Inquests by Mr Ashford.

At Banwell, on the body of a poor woman, who died suddenly. Verdict, died by the visitation of God.

At Frome Woodlands, on the body of **Jas Snook**, who was killed by the overturning of a cart. No evidence was adduced to prove how the accident happened, as no person was present at the time. A **Mr Ley**, passing by soon after, found the cart turned over, and the horse struggling in the ditch, he immediately called some persons to his assistance, and with some difficulty got the horse and cart out of the ditch. The poor man was taken up quite dead. Verdict, accidental death. Deodand on the cart 4s.

April 8th 1829

Inquests by Mr Caines.

At the King George, East Reach, in this town, on the 30th ult, upon **Ann Sansom**, aged three years. It appeared in evidence that the deceased was sent to school on the 14th, and that, being left alone in the school room for a very short time, she fell from a window upwards of twenty feet, and it will, perhaps, appear wonderful, that notwithstanding the skull was fractured – the bones of the forehead in many pieces, and the brain protruding, and a considerable portion of it lost, the poor, little sufferer languished until the 29th. Verdict, Accidental Death.

At Huntspill, on **Benjamin Lloyd**, aged 46. On Friday, the 27th ult, the deceased was employed in racking cider, and appeared to have drunk rather too much, and on his way home he fell into a ditch, where he was found, drowned, on the following morning. Verdict, Accidentally Drowned.

Inquests by Mr Ashford, of Shepton Mallet.

March 22, at Pensford, on the body of **Wm. Durnell**, who hung himself. It appeared in evidence that the deceased had been at work for a **Mr Adams** of Publow, and that they had been together at the George Inn, at Pensford, till late on Saturday night, when Mr Adams asked him if he was going to Publow; he replied, he was, and would go with him. They accordingly set off together, and, on their arrival at Adams's house, the deceased was invited to take some refreshment, which he did, and in the meantime Mr A. fell asleep, and did not awake till Durnell was leaving the house. On the following evening, Mr A. having occasion to pay some money to a person of Pensford, discovered he had lost from his pocket book £20. The deceased, having absconded, was suspected of taking the money, and, after some days, was apprehended at Paulton, where he had sent a woman to change a ten pound note, to pay for some beer. On being taken into custody, he became very abusive to the officer – so much so, that it was found necessary to confine him in the watch house, previously to his going before a Magistrate for examination; and in the course of two or three hours after he had been locked up, the officer, thinking he would then be quiet, went to give him something to eat and drink; but, on opening the door, found him tied up by the neck, with a silk handkerchief, to a ring in the watch house, about three feet from the ground, quite dead. The jury, after a long investigation of the case, returned a verdict of Felo de se. The coroner issued his warrant for interment according to the statute in such cases made and provided.

On the 23rd at Pilton, on the body of **Job Cook**, who died in a fit of epilepsy. Verdict, died by Visitation of God.

On the 24th, at West Cranmoor, on the body of a child, about eight years of age, who died in consequence of a severe burn, occasioned by his clothes taking fire in the absence of the mother. Verdict, Accidental Death.

On the 31st at Timsbury, on the body of **Jane Lane**, aged 42, some reports were circulated of her having been poisoned, but from the evidence of several respectable persons, as well as the medical gentleman who attended her, it appeared the reports were unfounded, and that she had been seized with a paralytic affection attended with apoplexy. Verdict, Died by the Visitation of God.

On the 4th of April, at Binegar, on the body of **Amelia Rossiter**, seven years old, who was accidentally burnt. Verdict accordingly.

April 15th 1829

Inquests by Mr Caines.

At a cottage in the parish of West Hatch on the 7th inst. upon the body of **Wm Humphreys**, age 11 years. From the evidence of a brother of the deceased he had occasionally used an old gun for the purpose of shooting sparrows, and on the preceding Wednesday he had left it, loaded with slugs, placed against a wall in the garden, and, from the evidence of another boy, it appeared, that whilst deceased was stooping to tie his shoestring, the gun fell, untouched by any one, and the contents (the slugs) were lodged in the fleshy part of the arm, whereby it was dreadfully lacerated, and deceased lost a considerable quantity of blood before medical aid could be procured, and on Sunday evening he died of mortification. Verdict. Accident; gun deodand. The coroner observed to the boy, who had been entrusted with the gun, that he hoped in future he would stick to his trade (a tailor) and leave the use of guns to others who better understood them.

On Thursday last, at the Black Lion, Bradford near Wellington, on **John Gillard**, aged 46. It appeared from the evidence of a little boy, named **Dimond**, whose father (a carrier) was accidentally killed by a waggon in this town, a few months since, that the deceased came with the same wagon to Taunton, for goods, on Tuesday, the 7th instant, and that he had drunk at several places (altogether too much) and at about nine in the evening, at the bottom of Rumwell Hill, in Bishop's Hull parish, the deceased, who had been walking by the side of the horses, in attempting to get on the shafts, fell, and both near-wheels passed over his body, which caused his death in a few minutes. Verdict, Accidentally killed; deodand 5s.

Inquests by Mr Ashford, of Shepton Mallet.

On the 6th inst. at Beckington, on the body of **Mary Bourne**, who was found dead in her bed. Verdict, Died by Visitation of God.

On the 7th at Wells, on the body of **Ann Moyson**, who hung herself. The deceased, it is supposed, committed the rash act, in consequence of having been disappointed in marriage. About three weeks since, the young man, who had been paying his addresses to her, having obtained all her money, under pretence of preparing for the wedding, deserted her, and has not since been heard of. From that time the poor woman had been in a desponding way, and on Monday last, not coming down to breakfast at the usual hour, one of the family went to call her, and found her suspended to a cross beam in the bed-room quite dead. The jury, without hesitation, found the following verdict: 'That the deceased hung herself while in a state of temporary derangement'.

On the 8th, at Midsomer Norton, on the body of **Harriet Bryant**, who was accidentally burnt. Verdict accordingly.

April 29th 1829

Inquests by Mr Caines of Langport.

On Monday the 13th instant at the Ship Inn on Chard Common, **John Sharp** aged 18 months. It was proved at the inquest that on the preceding Thursday the deceased was standing by the fire, and whilst the grandmother merely turned her back, he inhaled steam from a tea kettle, which had just been taken off the fire, and was so much scalded that he expired the following day.

At East Brent on the 15th instant, on Farmer **Benjamin Hudson**, aged 36, who on Friday last had been assisting a neighbour in removing some household goods. On his way home, he was seen riding in the waggon, whipping his horses, and driving furiously: and shortly afterwards, about nine o'clock in the evening, he was found in the road, seriously injured, on of the wheels of the waggon having passed over his

body, which caused his death on the following evening. Verdict in each case, Accidental Death, and in the latter a deodand on the wheel.

At Drayton, on **Betty Cossens**, aged 49. The death of this person was awfully sudden. She had gone to a shop in the village, where she had purchased some articles, and was apparently in perfect health; and on leaving the door she dropped and instantly expired. Verdict, died by visitation of God.

At North Curry, on **George Rich**, aged 5 years. It was stated at the inquest that on Friday last, the water had risen in the street to an unusual height, and that the deceased was seen standing at the mouth of the common sewer stirring the straws which had collected, when he fell and instantly disappeared. The sewer extends nearly the whole length of the street, and at the mouth of it, it is 14 by 24 inches. Openings were made at several places, it was an hour and a half before the body was discovered, having been driven by the current nearly 100 yards. A grating would have prevented this melancholy accident; but the place is altogether dangerous, as it is only a few months since, a gentleman's carriage was upset there. We understand it certainly will be indicted, if not properly attended to before the next Sessions. Verdict, Accidentally Drowned.

May 6th 1829

Inquest by Mr Caines.

At Kingsbrompton, on Wednesday last, upon the body of **John Tarr**, aged 71. Deceased, it appeared, had been in the habit of taking the letters from Dulverton to Baron's Down House, and on Thursday se'nnight, he went as usual, and left the latter place about ten o'clock at night; it was then raining violently, and extremely dark. Deceased not returning to Dulverton at the usual time, his son and daughter, about eleven o'clock, proceeded to look for him. They could gain no intelligence of him after his leaving Baron's Down House; but on the following morning, the basket he usually carried was found with it's contents, but not in the direct road he ought to have come. Search having been made, he was found drowned in the River Exe, near the house of one of the keepers of the Earl of Carnarvon. Reports had been circulated, previously to the inquest, that deceased was murdered; but not the slightest circumstance occurred to the jury to sanction so unfounded a rumour. The deceased had no doubt, missed his way and had fallen into the river. A verdict of 'Accidentally drowned' was returned.

May 13th 1829

Inquests by Mr Ashford of Shepton Mallet.

At the workhouse in the parish of Walcot, Bath, on the body of a young man who was found dead in his bed.

At Frome Selwood, on the body of **James Haynes**, who, whilst at work, fell down and instantly expired.

At Croscombe, on **George Duckett**, aged 70, who was found dead in his bed.

At Wincanton, on **W Luffman**. Deceased went into the Dolphin Inn, about half-past one o'clock, and sat down in the kitchen, apparently in good health, but was soon afterwards taken violently ill, and was a corpse in a few minutes. Medical aid was immediately procured, and a proper treatment adopted, but without effect. Deceased had drunk only one or two glasses of beer there, nor did he appear the least intoxicated when he went into the house.

At Corton Denham, on a child only nine weeks old, who was found dead by the side of its mother. Verdict in each of the above cases, Died by the Visitation of God.

On Monday morning **Henry Aplin** a carpenter while employed on the new buildings at the corner of Silver St in this town fell from a height of 22 feet into a wheelbarrow below, and was so severely injured as to render his recovery very doubtful.

May 27th 1829

Inquest by Mr Caines.

On Thursday last, upon the body of **John Palmer**, aged 39. On Tuesday, the 19th inst, deceased was being conveyed by the tithingman of Cutcombe and his assistant to the Wilton House of Correction, on a charge of burglary. On arriving in this town, at North Town Bridge, about eleven o'clock at night, he suddenly disengaged himself from custody, and threw himself over the parapet of the bridge into the river. A person, named **John Warren**, who was on the spot, called out to the prisoner, who was swimming, and admonished him, that if he proceeded in that direction, he would certainly be lost; upon which the prisoner replied, that he could not proceed in a contrary direction, on account of the current. It did not appear that the deceased had any intention of drowning himself, but only wished to escape from justice. He was seen in the act of swimming below the bridge, where the water was ten feet deep, and was found the next morning, about seven o'clock. Verdict, Accidentally drowned. Deceased was an accomplice of a man, tried at the last Somerset Lent Assizes, and transported for sheep stealing, against whom he had turned King's evidence; and it was for breaking open the house of the wife of that man for which he was in the present instance apprehended.

Inquest by Mr Ashford of Shepton Mallet.

On the body, of **Joseph Oram**, aged six years, who was killed by the explosion of a canister of gunpowder, kept in the house for blasting rocks, which he had approached with a lighted stick, during the absence of his parents.

June 3rd 1829

Inquests by Mr Ashford of Shepton Mallet.

On 19th May, at Portishead, on the body of **Wm Kingdom**. The deceased was one of a party of six, who, on the 5th of April last, went out in a boat from Bristol, off Portishead Point. The tide running high and rough, and the party not being strong enough to manage the boat, it upset, and four of the party were drowned. Verdict, Accidentally drowned.

At Lyncomb and Widcombe, on **Emma Cox**, an infant, who was found dead in her bed.

On the 28th, at Wincanton, on the body of **Charles Mitchell**. Deceased was engaged in lowering the road at Anchor Hill, in the parish of North Cheriton, and his death was occasioned by a quantity of earth falling upon him. Medical aid was immediately procured, and a proper means resorted to but he survived only a few hours. Verdict, in the last two cases, Accidental Death.

June 10th 1829

Inquest by Mr Caines of Langport.

At Ruishton, on Sunday last, on the body of **Joseph Persey**, who was drowned on Thursday preceding, near the lock in the River Tone, in the parish of Creech St Michael. Deceased and another boy, **Joseph Honeyball**, aged 11 years, were seen together by some boatmen and other people, on the wall of the lock, about eight o'clock on Thursday evening, and at about a quarter past eight, Honeyball returned

alone, and being interrogated as to what had become of the other, he said he had not seen him, and this assertion he persisted in for a considerable time; but at length, after being threatened with the consequences, he admitted that he had heard something fall into the water. With much reluctance he was taken to the spot, and pointed to the direction where he thought the body lay, where it was found about nine o'clock. A suspicion was entertained that Honeyball had quarrelled with his companion about some muscles which, it appeared, they had both been collecting. No muscles were found on the deceased; but the other had a great many in his possession. However, no evidence appearing which tended to incriminate Honeyball, a verdict of 'Found Drowned' was returned, after an investigation which lasted three hours.

June 17th 1829

Inquest by Mr Caines

On the 1st inst at Kingsbury in this county, on the body of **Thomas Nevil** aged 4 years. The deceased having been slightly corrected by his mother, threw himself into so violent a passion as to bring on spasms of which he died in a few minutes – verdict accordingly.

June 24th 1829

A woman named **Mary Thrasher** drowned herself on Sunday morning at Sampford Brett nr Williton. Mr Caines the coroner of Langport holds an inquest today.

July 1st 1829

Inquest by Mr Caines.

At Sampford Brett, near Williton, on Wednesday last, on **Mary Thrasher**, who drowned herself (as mentioned in our last) in a brook, the preceding Sunday morning. From the evidence it appeared that the deceased, a pauper, 70 years of age, had for a long time been much distressed in mind, and that she committed the act under the influence of temporary insanity. The jury returned a verdict accordingly.

Bridgwater.

Yesterday, an inquest was holden before **Jacob Watson**, esq, Deputy Mayor, on the body of a seaman named **Thomas Linden** who, on the Tuesday preceding, in endeavouring to pass from one ship to another, fell overboard and was not seen again until Sunday, when his body was picked up near the bridge. Verdict, found drowned.

July 8th 1829

Inquests by Mr Caines of Langport.

On Tuesday se'nnight, on the body of **Emeline Bindon**, aged seven years. The landlord of Blue Anchor Inn having sent a horse and cart for a hogshead of cyder, the man who had charge of it rode in the cart without reins, and when near the inn, one of the wheels caught against the bank, which, upset the cart. The deceased, who was riding in it, was thrown out, and received so much injury by the concussion as to occasion her death in a few minutes.

At Ilminster yesterday, at the Angel and Crown Inn, on the body of **William Harvey**, aged 89. Deceased yesterday, was coming towards Ilminster, and, near the one-mile stone, was met by a horse, which was furiously running away with a cart, and the wheel passing over his body and neck, death immediately ensued. The horse and cart belonged to Mr **W Patch**, builder, and no blame appeared chargeable to any one. Verdict in each case, Accidental Death. Deodand on the wheel, 5s.

Inquests by M Ashford, of Shepton Mallet.

At Frome, on the body of **John Garrett**, aged 18 months. A tin cup containing about half a pint of boiling water, had been placed upon the edge of a table by another child, when the deceased, in endeavouring to reach the cup, turned it over, and was so much scalded, that he expired on the following day.

At Axbridge, on **Ann Criddle**, aged nine years, who fell from a staircase, and was taken up, under every appearance of being dead; but after a short time, she recovered a little, and on examination the skull was found to be severely fractured. Medical aid was immediately procured; but, from the extent of the injury, there appeared to be little hopes of her recovery. She expired on the day following, in consequence of the severe shock the system had sustained by the fall.

At Priddy, on the body of **Angelina Savage**, aged two years. The deceased had been left with some other children in a house by themselves, whilst the mother was hay making; in going too near the fire, her clothes caught, and she was so dreadfully burnt, that she expired in a few hours. Verdict, in each of the above cases, Accidental Death.

July 15th 1829

The subjoined lines have been sent us, on the death of this poor blind giant, whose case excited so much benevolent interest in Taunton and Exeter in the year 1826; at which latter place a large, commodious caravan was given him by subscription, for exhibiting himself about the country. He died at Swansea, on the 5th inst, aged 24 and was, by the faithful humanity of the man who travelled with him, in partnership, brought to this town in the carriage, for interment on Monday last, **Sewell** having made it a particular request to lie here, for his grateful recollection of the relief shown him during his stay amongst the inhabitants. To the man who brought his remains to Taunton, the greatest praise is due, in having done his duty to the deceased.

Brooms Grove, his attendant brought the corpse in the caravan from Swansea, through Gloucester and Bristol to this town, where it arrived on Monday last, having, much to his credit, resisted a great number of applications for the disposal of the body.....Quick lime was thrown into the grave, and the best expedients adopted to accomplish the wishes of the deceased, regarding the security of his remains. A Somerset dwarf, named Farnham, only 37 inches high, followed the caravan as chief mourner at the funeral....The deceased was seven feet four inches high, and weighed 37 stone or 518 lbs. His friend, the dwarf, weighed 68 lbs only. Sewel's dress required five yards of broad cloth for his coat, five yards of cloth and lining for his waistcoat, seven yards of patent cord for his trowsers, his shoes were 14 ½ inches long, and 6 ½ inches wide.

Murder.

On Sunday last, the 12th inst, an inquest was held by Mr Caines, of Langport, at Withypoole in the parish of Dulverton, on the body of **Mary Reed**, about 30 years of age, wife of a labourer of that parish, who died on the preceding Monday, after an illness of 20 hours. The death of the deceased was occasioned by poison mixed in cream, alleged by her to have been given by **Abraham Reed**, her husband, also aged about 30. The man, having been committed for trial, we shall, for the present, mention only the following particulars:- Reed and his wife had been married about twelve months, and lived unhappily. On the 5th inst, she was taken ill and said she had been poisoned; and on being asked what she had taken for breakfast, replied, "Bread and cream". On being asked, if all the cream was eaten, her husband said, he had thrown it away, and dashed the cup to pieces. Deceased continued ill, but no medical man was

called in. After vomiting, and being much affected in her bowels, and in continual pain, she expired on the following day. It was not until Wednesday that she was seen by any medical man; nor were the circumstances made known to the Coroner until Friday last. A jury consisting of 17 of the most respectable inhabitants of the neighbourhood (principally from the adjoining villages) were summoned, and sworn, who, after a full investigation of the circumstances of the case, which occupied nearly 12 hours, returned a verdict of MURDER, and that the death of the deceased was occasioned by arsenic being mixed with cream, and given her by her husband, Abraham Reed; whereupon he was fully committed to Wilton House of Correction, to take his trial at the assizes to be holden at Bridgwater.

An inquest was also held by Mr Caines, on Thursday last at the King's Arms Inn, at Winsham, near Chard, on **Peter Broom** aged 63. On the 1st inst, the deceased was employed in Thorncombe parish, with several other persons, in removing some hay which was in danger of being swept away by the floods; and it being very wet weather, and laborious work, they were plentifully supplied with cider, but from the evidence given it appeared that the man was by no means intoxicated. In going over a bridge, which crosses the river Axe, (the division of the counties of Somerset and Devon), he was seen to fall in, and, notwithstanding many persons continued to search for the body for several days, he was not found until Wednesday last. Verdict, Accidentally drowned.

July 22nd 1829

Bath Herald.

A man, named **George Tanner**, who was employed by **Mr Boon**, plumber, at Messrs. Williams, brewers, on the Quay, in this city, to mend some pipes, on Tuesday, slipped from the top of one of their large vats, and fell outside to the ground, by which he fractured his skull so severely that he died soon after being taken to the hospital. The accident was not known for some time, as the poor man fell behind the vat, and being rendered senseless by the fall, he remained there till he was discovered by some of the men. His widow and five poor children were dependent on him for support.

July 29th 1829

Inquests by Mr Caines.

On Friday last at Blagdon, in the parish of Pitminster, on the body of **Thomas Goddard**, aged 67. On Monday preceding, deceased was in the employ of the Hon **Mrs Welman** of Poundisford Park, and on a waggon loaded with hay, when in passing over a gutter, by a sudden jerk, deceased was thrown off and received so serious an injury of the spine, that he died on the Wednesday following. Verdict – Accidental death. Mrs Welman's son and another young gentleman were both in the waggon at the same time, but happily were not thrown off, nor did either of them receive any injury on this unfortunate occasion.

On Monday last, at Wilton Gaol, being the fourth inquest there sine Christmas. It may be as well to state that this increase in the duties of the Coroner at the gaol, is not in the slightest degree imputable to the persons having the management of the prison, but is solely to be attributed to the increase of crime, and the consequent extended population of the establishment. In the present case, it appeared from the evidence of the father of the deceased, who attended the inquest, that **James Commins**, aged 17 for the last three weeks, previous to his committal, about five weeks since, had been suffering from violent pains in his head, attended with external appearances of eruptions, but that it was not until Tuesday last, that he made any complaint to the

jailor or his officers, although it had been remarked that his appearance was rather stupid or sullen. From the moment that he first made the complaint to the jailor, he was regularly attended by the Messrs **Liddon**, surgeons, to the prison, one of whom stated in his evidence, that the deceased had experienced the kindest treatment and attention – and that he died of inflammation of the brain, and not from any other cause, and the Jury returned a verdict accordingly.

August 5th 1829

Inquest by Mr Caines.

Yesterday (Tuesday) week, at Watchet, on **Mrs Potter**, aged about 70, who, on the preceding Sunday, ate a hearty dinner; soon after which, she complained of violent pains in her stomach, and in less than a quarter of an hour was a corpse!

On Saturday last, at Norton Fitzwarren, near this town, on Ann, aged five months, the illegitimate child of Mary **Manning**, who, on Thursday morning, was found dead by the side of its mother. Deceased had been suffering from cough and difficulty of breathing; but on the preceding night appeared perfectly well. There was no evidence whatsoever tending to criminate any person; and the jury, in this, as in the before mentioned case, returned a verdict – Died by the visitation of God.

August 12th 1829

Last evening, between seven and eight o'clock, as **Henry Webber**, a child, about eight years of age, residing with a person named Ward, in Upper High Street, was fishing in the stream at the bottom of the Crescent Field, he accidentally fell in and was drowned.

Inquest by Mr Caines.

On Friday se'nnight, at Wiveliscombe, on **Elizabeth Harriet Dunn**, aged 18 months who fell out of a bed room window on the 3^d inst, and received a concussion of the brain, of which she died on the 6th – Verdict, Accidental death.

Inquests by Mr Ashford of Shepton Mallet.

At Clevedon, on the body of **Geo House**, aged 21. The deceased was one of the unfortunate seven persons who went in a small boat from Bristol to the Holmes, on the 30th of June, and on their return, it is supposed, the boat upset, and all on board were lost.

At Portishead, July 29th, on **Wm Evans**, aged 31 and on the same day at Kingston Seymour, on **Joseph Gillmore**, both of whom were of the party with House. Verdict in each case, Found Drowned.

At Farrington Gurney, July 23rd, on the body of **John Wyatt**. The deceased was at work under ground, when a quantity of earth fell upon and killed him instantly – Verdict, Accidental Death.

August 19th 1829

Coach Accident.

An inquest was held last week on the body of **Capt Wyndowe**, who was killed at Bristol by the overturning of the Regulator coach through the axle-tree breaking, when, after a patient investigation of the circumstances, the Jury returned a verdict of “Accidental Death, with a deodand of 1s”. Capt Wyndowe was one of the heroes of Waterloo, where he had a horse shot under him – Bath Herald.

Melancholy Accident.

On Monday week, some masons were engaged in scraping the pillars and ornaments of the interior of the chapel of the Lord Bishop of Bath and Wells, when a boy, who

was scraping the moulding of the roof, and standing on steps placed on a scaffold, nearly 40 feet high was precipitated from his perilous situation to the floor, and falling on his back, so dreadfully fractured his skull as to cause instantaneous death. His Lordship, with his usual benevolence caused the remains of the unfortunate lad to be interred at his expense.

Inquests by Mr Caines.

Yesterday se'nnight, at the Guildhall, Langport, (by virtue of his office as Portreeve for the present,) on **Elias Beck**, aged 13, who, on Monday, fell out of a boat into the River Parret, near Langport Bridge. Verdict, Accidentally Drowned.

On the same day, at Curry Rivel, on **John Bray**, aged 50. On the preceding evening, deceased was at the Bell Inn in that parish, and apparently in perfect health, when he suddenly fell backwards and instantly expired. Verdict, Died by the Visitation of God. Inquest by Mr Ashford of Shepton Mallet.

On Wednesday last, at Batheaston, upon the body of **Joseph Nutt** (a youth about 16 years of age, in the employment of **Mrs Lidiard** as gardener) who, on Sunday last, after eating a hearty dinner, went out into the fields, and having exercise himself by running about for some time in a violent manner, dropped down and expired. The body was opened, and the jury returned a verdict of Apoplexy.

August 26th 1829

Inquest by Mr Ashford of Shepton Mallet.

Aug. 10 at Bedminster, on **Jas Hall**. It appeared in evidence that the deceased was riding in a cart, without reins; the horse set off at full speed, when the poor man, in endeavouring to jump out, fell between the horse and the cart, and was dragged a considerable distance; on being taken up, he was found to have received so severe a fracture of the skull as to cause his death in a few hours. Verdict "Accidental Death".

On the same day at Portbury, on the body of a man unknown, who was found drowned, the preceding Saturday evening, in a fish pond belonging to **R Bright** esq. the deceased had been seen wandering about the parish in the daytime but did not speak to any person. He appeared from his dress and other circumstances, to have been a mason. Verdict "Found drowned; but how, or by what means, no evidence thereof doth appear to the jurors".

At Berkley, near Frome, on **Rebecca Edwards**, aged 70. the deceased had been in a field adjoining her house, and in returning fell down, when she instantly expired. Verdict, "Died by the Visitation of God".

September 2nd 1829

Sudden Death – Thursday, as a boy named **Joseph Skrine** was pelting down the walnuts from a tree belonging to a tradesman at Twerton, he was called by the owner to desist, with a threat of punishment, and ran into an adjoining privy for concealment. The man, on coming up, opened the door, when the lad, either from excessive fright or some other unknown cause, gave three deep sighs, and dropt down dead.

September 9th 1829

Somerset Assizes Bridgwater.

Continuation of the trial of Abraham Reed (not Edward, as mentioned in our last) for the wilful murder of his wife.

Mr Westcott examined:- Prisoner asked for the poison quite publicly (there was no apparent wish for concealment) and allowed himself to be so seen by the witness as to

know him again. *The judge here cautioned the witness never again to sell poison to persons whom he did not know.*

Robert Stoneman deposed to having had a conversation with the prisoner on 29th June in the morning; in the course of which he remarked to witness, that he had “contributed to a great many burials during the course of the year,” and said, he “wondered how much he should have from the club, if his wife should died.” Stoneman, who was himself a member of the club, replied, he thought “about £6 or £7”. This occurred about seven o’clock in the morning when the poison was purchased and Reed was on his way back from North Molton to Withypool at the time.

Richard Hole, a farmer living in Knighton, in the parish of Withypool, stated that the prisoner worked for him occasionally. On the morning of the 7th July, Reed came to his house, and borrowed a gray horse, to ride to North Molton, in order to procure the club money allowed from his wife’s funeral.

Joan Hole, mother of the last witness, deposed to the fact of Reed having asked her, when he was leaving work on Saturday, the 4th July, if she could spare him half a pint of cream next morning. She consented, and prisoner called on her between nine and ten on the following (Sunday) morning, (5th July) and obtained three quarters of a pound. He brought a cup for it, which witness examined previously to putting cream into it, and found it to be quite clean. Prisoner did not eat any of the cream while in witness’s house. Witness’s family, ten in number, partook of the remainder of the cream at dinner and tea, and none of them were ill in consequence.

Ann Quick, wife of **James Quick**, stated that Reed and his wife lived under the same roof with her in June last. They had resided in Withypool from Lady day in the present year. A wall separated witness’s house from that of the prisoner; but both were under one roof. Before the house was a “curtilage” (small court yard) in one corner of which there was a mud pool. Witness kept pigs, and Abraham Reed fowls, in the curtilage. On the evening of Saturday, July 4, witness saw Mary Reed, the deceased who appeared to be in good health. On the following morning, about ten o’clock, witness heard prisoner and his wife quarrelling. Witness was in her own house at the time. She also heard the sound of shards (crockery ware) broken. Prisoner and deceased did not live happily together. In about half an hour after the noise, prisoner called witness, who went into his house, and found **Mary Reed** on a chair, apparently in a fit. Her husband was supporting her. She continued in this state for about ten minutes, and then requested to have the kettle put on the fire to make tea. Her husband procured water. She took a cup of tea, and appeared better. She complained greatly of a pain in the stomach. About five in the afternoon witness saw prisoner and deceased walked across the court. In a quarter of an hour afterwards, witness, hearing himself called by prisoner, went into his house, where she saw him and his wife. Deceased exclaimed, on seeing witness, “I am poisoned! I am poisoned! Send for the doctor quickly or I shall be dead before he comes”. Prisoner said nothing. Witness asked Mary Reed what she had eaten. She said “Cream” and that there was arsenic in it. Witness asked where she had got it. Deceased replied “at Knighton”. Witness replied “They at Knighton died not put poison into her cream” and asked to see it. Deceased said, her husband had “taken it out of her hand, thrown it away, and broken the cup abroad”. When witness said, “They at Knighton did not put poison into her cream,” Mary Reed said, “You don’t know what I know.” Witness said, “If you don’t tell me, tell somebody else.” Witness asked, if prisoner had eaten any of the cream. He replied, “No, I had some at Knighton. I brought home this to her. She is so by everything I bring into the house; she says it is poison or dirty. I have a good mind

to make a resolution never to bring anything more to the house.” Witness’s boy was set for prisoner’s mother. It was proposed to send for a doctor, and Reed offered to go for one; but deceased said, “If he went he would never come back again.” No doctor was sent for. Deceased was purging and vomiting two or three times while witness was in the house. Witness remained about half an hour; she returned a little before nine the same evening, and found Mary Reed in bed, complaining of a great pain in her stomach. The same symptoms of sickness continued. She drank cold water and said, “It was the best thing she could take”. On Monday morning, the 6th, about six o’clock, witness saw Mary Reed again; she was then in bed, complaining of a great pain in her stomach, and expressed a wish that witness would go to Mr Boyce, the clergyman of the parish, to bleed her. Witness went; on her return, at seven o’clock, she met Abraham Reed, who told her “his wife was gone.” He appeared to be crying, and had a handkerchief; witness went into Reed’s house, and found the deceased a corpse. Witness had two pigs in the curtilige; on Monday they were as well as usual; when she carried them their food about two o’clock on the following day, one pig would not eat. It was sick, and died in the course of Tuesday night, after manifesting symptoms of poison. One of the prisoner’s fowls died on Monday, another on Tuesday, and a third on Wednesday or the day after. The pigs and fowls had access to the mud pond.

John Thorne, a carpenter, who had been employed by the prisoner to make a coffin for the deceased on the day of her death, proved a conversation that passed between himself and Reed on the Tuesday when the coffin was brought home. Witness expressed an opinion to Reed that his wife “had not died a natural death,” and, in common with the women who assisted in laying out the body, suggested that Mr Collins, a surgeon, living at Dulverton, should be sent for to examine the deceased. Prisoner, after some hesitation, took a horse for the purpose of going to Mr Collins. On his return, Reed said “he had seen Mr Collins who expressed an intention to open the body”. Prisoner asked witness “whether he thought that he (Reed) could prevent her being opened.” Witness answered “he did not know.” Prisoner said, “If it lay in his power, he would never allow his wife to be opened.” He also represented that the deceased had a strong objection in her lifetime to a post mortem examination of her person, and had said “The person who opened her should have no peace upon earth, for she would haunt him as long as he lived.”

Cross examined – There exists a strong dislike among the lower orders to the bodies of their friends being opened. Witness never knew of any person being opened before the present instance.

The clerk of the attorney for the prosecution proved having received some of the same arsenic as had been sold by the witness **Westcott** to the prisoner and deposed that he handed it over to Mr Collins, the medical man, who opened the body of the deceased. Mr C P Collins, a surgeon, residing at Dulverton, stated that the prisoner called on him on Tuesday, the 7th July, about five o’clock in the evening, and asked him to go and see his wife, who was dead. Reed wished witness to go and look at her, because his neighbours said she had been poisoned. Prisoner described to witness the manner in which his wife had been taken ill, and the symptoms that accompanied her complaint, much in the same manner as had already been stated by preceding witnesses. I opened the body, prisoner giving his consent after a little hesitation; on opening it, I found that the stomach and bowels appeared in a state of considerable inflammation. The peritoneum was only slightly, if at all inflamed. I observed several spots of inflammation on the stomach. On some parts of the stomach there were spots of this sort as large as a shilling; on the lower part of the stomach I observed a very

considerable degree of inflammation; the colour of the spots was a rather dark red. The bladder and the uterus were empty. There was nothing peculiar about the heart. There were spots of a darkish colour in the uterus. The lungs I found particularly turgid with blood. The stomach and bowels were inflamed in several parts – the stomach more than the intestines – the small intestines more than the larger ones. I am now describing the appearance presented on opening the body. I removed the stomach, placing a double ligature at each extremity, for the purpose of carrying it away. I procured a clean bottle, and put the contents of the stomach into it. I heard that a pig had died suddenly the day before, and requested it might be brought to me. It was, and it was opened under my directions. I took the stomach of the pig; its appearance was highly inflammatory; the whole stomach and bowels were in a high state of inflammation, considerably more so than those of the woman. The inner coat of the stomach was completely destroyed. There were no spots, but the whole stomach and bowels of the pig were in a state of redness. I took both stomachs and their contents home with me. I found about three parts of a pint of fluid in the stomach of the woman – no solid contents whatever. After trying a few tests for arsenic or corrosive sublimate, without satisfying myself of their presence, I thought it best to have some one more experience than I was in examining the contents of the stomach to assist me and I took both stomachs to Taunton to Mr Standert, a surgeon. We examined the stomachs together; the woman's stomach appeared generally inflamed – at the bottom, where I discovered a large patch of inflammation. I found it more highly inflamed than elsewhere. The inner coat was destroyed and resembling a pulpy substance. We went through several chymical tests, without coming to any satisfactory conclusion as to the presence of arsenic, or any other corrosive substance. We also examined the coats of the stomach with a microscope, but could discover no mineral substance. After we had made every inquiry we thought necessary, I left Taunton, taking the stomachs with me. The day after my return I boiled both stomachs in water. There was an alkali added to the water. On applying the usual tests to discover arsenic or corrosive sublimate, I discovered none. To satisfy myself that the tests I used were good and proper, I mixed a solution of arsenic with a portion of the fluid contents of the boiled stomach; another portion I left unmixed; and I added a solution of arsenic to water. On testing these, I discovered what proved the presence of arsenic in the latter mixture, but not in the two former; both of these afforded results precisely alike. My inference is, that there may have been some animal substance in the stomach which defeated the tests, and prevented the presence of arsenic (which was certainly in one of these mixtures) from manifesting itself in the usual manner. But I do not mean to say positively that there was arsenic in the portion of the contents of the stomach into which I did not introduce it. Neither in substance nor in solution could I discover any arsenic. This state of things is not inconsistent with the possibility of a person taking arsenic early on the Sunday, vomiting copiously, so as to discharge the whole of the poison from the stomach, and dying on the following morning. The witness proceeded to say that the arsenic might produce death under such circumstances, and not afterwards be found in the stomach. The symptoms experienced by the deceased were such as would have been caused by arsenic. The appearance of the stomach could not be well accounted for from natural causes. Witness saw prisoner in bed in his neighbour's house, about 11 in the forenoon of Saturday, the 11th of July. He complained of being unwell; but appeared to suffer more in mind than body. He besought witness to befriend him, and offered him money to induce him to do so. Witness promised to do what he could for him, consistently with his duty, but of course declined accepting the money. On being

asked if he had ever had poison for any particular purpose, prisoner replied "No." He did not know poison when he saw it. Witness asked him if he had never seen poison. He said, "Never but once," and that it was his mother-in-law's, where it was mixed with meal in a pan; and added "that her neighbour, **Mrs Scott**, had some also." Prisoner said his wife also knew it was there, and had often been to her mother's, and had occasionally got cream there.

Mr H C Standert agreed to a great extent with the last witness in his conclusions as to this case, and added that the result of the experiments instituted by Orfila and Brodie was, that when arsenic was administered to animals capable of vomiting copiously, the presence of the poison in fluid in the stomach was rarely detected.

Anne Colmer deposed, that about three weeks before Mary Reed's decease, prisoner told her "He would go to Winsford revel (a village fair) if his wife died before it took place." Witness asked him, "what reason he had for thinking his wife would die, as she (witness) had seen her the day before in good health." Prisoner replied, "she would not live a fortnight longer." On being asked his reason for saying so, he said, "Mark my words, whether she will or no." Winsford revel took place on the Monday on which Mary Reed died, This was said in the presence of Miss Hole.

Cross-examined – Miss Hole is not here.

William Chamberlain stated, that about the time mentioned by the last witness prisoner told him he wanted some mercury or arsenic (witness could not say which) to poison rats, and inquired if there was a druggists shop at Forelock where he could procure it?

Mr R P Caines, coroner, held an inquest on the body of the deceased, and examined prisoner, who declared he had only been in two houses in North Moulton on the 29th June. These houses he stated to be the inn and the residence of Kingdon, to whom he had paid the balance of the subscription to the club. The learned judge charged the jury, and recapitulated the whole of the evidence in a most elaborate manner. The summing up, which lasted more than two hours, having been concluded, the Jury, after consulting together for a few minutes, returned a verdict of Guilty.

The prisoner, a mild looking person, seemed rather abstracted in his manner when placed at the bar. On being called upon to plead to the indictment, he made no answer for a few moments: he then started and said "not guilty," in a nervous and hurried way. He watched the jury with some apparent anxiety, while the oath was being administered to them: during the progress of the trial, however, he did not display any particular feeling of interest till the evidence of the medical men was taken, when he appeared to rouse himself from the apathy that possessed him at other periods of the proceedings. The jury having pronounced their verdict of "Guilty" the prisoner was called upon in the usual manner, to say why judgement of death should not be pronounced against him: a slight convulsion passed over his features for a single moment, and he muttered in an indistinct tone, "The witnesses hav sworn falsely." Towards the close of the trial, which lasted upwards of nine hours, the prisoner seemed rather exhausted; he displayed no visible emotion at the announcement of the verdict, and in the opinion of many persons in the court, heard the sentence, which was pronounced by the learned Judge in a manner the most feeling and impressive, perfectly unmoved. It seemed however, as if the senses of the unhappy man were lost in reverie; he appeared in a sort of a waking dream, and remained with fixed eyes, leaning upon the bar, until the gaoler seizing him suddenly by the arm, he again started as when first placed in the dock, and hastily retired.

Execution.

On Monday se'nnight, the sentence of the law was carried into full effect, at the gaol of Ilchester, on **Abraham Reed**. On Saturday se'nnight he was visited, at the gaol at Bridgwater, by the Under Sheriff; to whom he made a full and satisfactory acknowledgement of his guilt, and said he was induced to commit the offence from the unhappy manner in which they lived, and that he mixed in the cream which he gave to her about an ounce and a half of the arsenic he had bought. On his arrival at Ilchester, on Saturday afternoon, he was attended by the Chaplain of the prison, who remained with him some time, affording him spiritual consolation. On Sunday he attended the Chapel and heard an impressive discourse from the Chaplain, who took his text from the 28th chapter of Exodus v 13, "Thou shalt not kill," the culprit seemed much affected. After which, he (the Chaplain) attended him in his cell, and for some time continued in prayer. On Monday morning he was again attended by the Chaplain, who remained with him until the arrival of the Under Sheriff, **Edmund Broderip** esq, when service was performed in the presence of the prisoners, at the conclusion of which the sacrament was administered to the unfortunate culprit. At half last eleven he was pinioned, and was conducted to the fatal platform, where, having joined in fervent prayer, for about a quarter of an hour, the signal was given, and he was launched into eternity; he appeared to suffer much. He was about 32 years of age.

September 16th 1829

Last week at Ham, in the parish of Creech, a child belonging to **Mr Davidge**, in the attempt to get a pear which hung over the river, fell in and was drowned.

On Sunday se'nnight, the corpse of a man, about 70 years of age, was discovered in a dry ditch, in a field between Bradford and Wellington in a shocking state of decomposition. A loaf was found near the body. The deceased's name was **Wm Sydenham**, a person in humble circumstances, who resided at Bradford and who had been missing a fortnight. The last time he was seen alive was on the 21st ult when, after drinking a quart of cyder, he complained of a pain in his head, and said he should go out and take a walk. Nothing was heard of him from that day until he was found as above described, by a person who was nutting. There were no appearances on the banks of the ditch, to induce a suspicion that he had come by a violent death, it is therefore supposed that he died suddenly, from the effects of a fit. An inquest has been held on the body, and the jury returned a verdict – Found dead, but how, or by what means he came to his death there is no evidence."

Inquest by Mr Caines of Langport.

At the George and Crown Inn, Hinton St George, on **Christian Palmer**, an elderly woman, who, a short time after having eaten a hearty dinner, was found dead – Verdict, Died by visitation of God.

At Berrow, on a man unknown, who was found washed ashore; deceased had the appearance of a common sailor, and is supposed to have belonged to the *Industry* of Weymouth, a boat having that name on her stern, having also been washed ashore near Burnham – Verdict, "Found drowned."

September 30th 1829

As some children were playing about a coat-pit near Bedminster, on Sunday, a little girl, Named **Sarah Nash**, took hold of the rope attached to the windlass, to shew her playmates how the men went down into the pit, and on letting it go she lost her balance and was precipitated to the bottom. Instant death ensued.

On Friday last, **Mrs Norman**, wife of a respectable bricklayer, residing in Upper High Street, suddenly fell down and instantly expired. She had been previously in very good health. The deceased was between fifty and sixty years of age.

An inquest was held by Mr Caines on Saturday last, at the Rose and Crown, Porlock near Minehead, on the body of Mr **Robert Falvey**, aged about 40, landlord of the Castle Inn, in the same place, who, on Thursday last, was discovered suspended from the span piece of the roof of the stable. **James Davis**, the ostler at the Castle Inn, on going into the stable, about eleven o'clock in the morning, found the deceased hanging to a beam. Witness, after calling on a neighbour, cut the cord, and the body fell dead on the floor. Witness had not previously seen the deceased that morning; had known him nearly 40 years. He was generally hearty and cheerful, except at times that he had the gout; but, within the last three or four days, it was observed that he appeared different to what he used to be; he did not speak to witness, and was not at all like the same man. Mr **Robert Phelps**, surgeon, examined – Had known and been intimate with the deceased almost all his life; attended him professionally. His state of health was various: at times he was rather unwell and highly nervous. He was much affected by piles and his habit of body was generally costive. He had occasional fits of the gout, but none to any serious extent. Witness saw him on the Sunday preceding; he was looking pale and dejected, and said his stomach was very painful; administered some tincture of rhubarb, and was informed, in the evening that he was much better; the next morning heard he was so much better, that he had gone on a journey. The following day (Tuesday) he was seen in the shop, attending to his business as painter and glazier; he appeared still low and dejected. He was a great sufferer from debility of the stomach, and often complained of it, remarking, he thought death would be a pleasure to a man so afflicted. He was often wandering about like a man lost; the slightest domestic affliction was almost too much for him. Witness, told his daughter, he could not imagine what was the matter, he appeared such an altered man. On the night previous to destroying himself, “I advised him (said Mr P) to repeat the medicine, and send him some, as before; but, on sending to inquire for him, was informed he was just the same and had not taken it. I called, and with much reluctance he took it in my presence; I saw him again in the evening, and he was in a most pitiable, melancholy condition.” On the Thursday morning, upon calling to inquire for him, witness was told they thought he had gone a “long journey” (!). Mr Phelps mentioned his fears about him to his daughter, and advised that a strict watch should be made as to his conduct. The daughter said she thought he was deranged, or he would not act as he had done, and remarked, that she thought no medicine would be of service to him. The jury returned a verdict of guilty.

Inquests by Mr Ashford, of Shepton Mallet.

Sept 4th at Yatton, on **George Jenkins**, an infant who died from drinking boiling water from the spout of a tea-kettle; his mother was in the same room, and only turned her back for the purpose of placing a table nearer the fire, when the accident happened.

On the 19th at Nailsea, on **Thomas Cribb**; the deceased was sent from Bristol to Nailsea with a load of beer, and was engaged in letting a barrel down the cellar stairs, at the Butcher's Arms Inn, when it overpowered him, and he fell under the cask, and was killed instantly.

The 22nd, at Bedminster, on the body of Kenneth? **Harding** who, whilst at play with other children fell into a coal pit 91 fathoms deep and was – verdict, Accidental death.

On the same day at Bath on **John Bealis**? Who was found dead in a garden house of Capt. Renruddocke where he had been accustomed to sleep to guard the premises. Verdict, died by the visitation of God.

Also, on the same day, on John Shepherd, who was killed by a pig frightening his horses as he was driving a load of flour through Twerton; the wheel passed over him, he was so much injured that he died after lingering two or three days. Verdict, accidental death.

October 7th 1829

Inquest

On Friday, the 25th ult, as some boys were gathering blackberries on Clifton Down, they discovered a reticule basket under one of the bushes, which was found to contain the dead body of a new born infant. The body was removed to the General Draper public house, where an inquest was held on the following day, before W Joyner Ellis, esq. Evidence was adduced of a widow woman in the neighbourhood (who had been strongly suspected of pregnant) that she had been suddenly delivered of a child, which had died before she had recovered herself, and not knowing what to do with it, she, to hide her shame, had put it into the basket and left it as before stated. The Jury, after hearing the opinion of Mr King, surgeon, gave credit to the woman's statement, and returned a verdict that "**Mary Canary**, alias **Kenelly**, had been delivered suddenly and by surprise of the said new born female child; that the said child had died from the mother having neglected to secure the umbilical cord;" and that they further found, "that the mother had concealed the birth of the said child." It is not perhaps generally known, that, by a recent enactment, a woman may be punished for concealing the birth of a child, although, as in this case, the Coroner's Inquest did not find the child to have been murdered.

October 14th 1829

Last week at Creech St Michael, a boy named **Sharman**, the son of a boatman, whilst driving his horse, was so dreadfully kicked in the head that he instantly expired.

October 21st 1829

Somerset Michaelmas Sessions

Duty of Coroners

On the first day of the present sessions the following memorial was presented by Mr R P Caines, one of the Coroners of this County, to the Magistrates assembled in the Grand Jury Room:

Complaint of R.P Caines, Coroner, against the inhabitants of Ilminster.

"Many deaths have happened in this parish, on whom the Coroner thinks inquests ought to have been held; but the parish officers declined giving any notice. Amongst many instances within a few years are the following, and the Coroner wishes the Magistrates to inform him how he ought to act in future, as he conceived whenever he should be called on to hold inquests in any such cases, and should decline to act, he would be liable to be prosecuted.

"A young man named **Hopkins**, fell out of a gig by driving over a heap of stones: he was carried to an inn where he expired in a few hours.

"A child was burnt and died in about three days.

"**Mr Slee** was walking (apparently in good health) in company with **Mr Hanning** and another gentleman, and he fell down dead. Mr Hanning, in this case ordered that no inquest should be held, as he was present and saw him died.!

“A person named **Govier** was driving a cart or van, and fell off his seat, received an injury in his head, was carried home; and died in a few hours.

On the 29th ult a lad named **Lawrence**, was sent from a mill near Chard, with a horse for his master to ride home from Ilminster, in the neighbourhood of which place there had been a ploughing match, and many persons had congregated together, particularly near the Swan Inn to which place he was directed to go; and on his arriving at the inn, the horse became frightened, (probably from the noise of a drum which was then being beat) the lad fell off and was dragged in the stirrup to the turnpike gate, say about 100 yards, where the horse in leaping over the gate left the rider behind, He was carried into an adjoining house much injured, attended by medical men, and on the 8th instant he expired.

“The Coroner received information of this death, and on the 10th, he went to Ilminster, and sent from the George Inn, to the Assistant Overseer who came to him. The Coroner asked him (the Assistant Overseer) if he was aware that a person was lying dead in that parish who had died in consequence of an accident, he replied that “he could not say but he had heard of it.” The Coroner then said, “then you are not aware that an inquest was necessary?” to which he replied, “I am only a servant, and I do nothing but what I am directed and I understand that Mr Hanning says, when a person is seen to die, there is no occasion for an inquest.”

“The Coroner observed, that he thought Mr Hanning could not have said so, and that at all events, he should demand an inquest in this case. The Overseer then said he would send the Constable, and such other persons as the Coroner should require, consequently, the Coroner proceeded to prepare a warrant for the jury, &c, and after waiting half an hour or more, the Overseer returned saying he had seen Mr Hanning, and that he insisted on it that no inquest should be held. The Coroner afterwards saw Mr Hanning with his brother churchwarden, Mr **Stayner**, and he, the Coroner, told Mr Hanning, that he understood the law required inquests to be held in such cases, and asked Mr Hanning if the law was different at Ilminster from other parts of the County or Country at large with regard to inquests. He said “No, certainly not.” The Coroner observed, because he had forbidden an inquest in a case was a man was lying dead, where the death was occasioned by an accident. Mr Hanning replied, “I do forbid it, and I insist on it, no inquest shall be held, many persons having seen the accident, and the young man was attended by medical men, and persons were present when he died. I will set my face against inquests of this kind. I have prevented several, one about a fortnight ago, on poor **Govier**. I will not see the country put to such unnecessary expence, and I will bring the subject before the Magistrates; at the Sessions, I will take the sense of the country upon it.”

“The Coroner endeavoured to explain, but Mr Hanning replied, “I shall not argue the case with you: I insist on it, no inquest shall be held.”

“The Coroner had previously tendered the warrant for the Constable to the Overseer, but he, the Overseer, refused to act, or to have any thing at all to do with it. No inquest was held.

17th Oct 1828. R P Caines, Coroner.

The subject if this Memorial occupied the attention of the Court a considerable time, and Mr Hanning stated his views of the Coroner’s duty at some length, after which the Coroner was called in and asked many questions as to the general practice of holding Inquests, and amongst others the following was put by Mr Stuckey, - “Suppose a person was now to drop down dead on the Parade, and twenty persons should see it, would you consider it necessary to hold an Inquest,” to which the Coroner replied “certainly”.

The court at length concurred, that they were losing much valuable time in debating a subject on which they would not come to any conclusion and on the motion of Mr **Hobhouse**, the Coroner was requested to withdraw. On his doing so, he was asked if he wished his letter to the Magistrates should be read, to which he replied, "Certainly." We understand that no official communication was afterwards made to the Coroner, consequently he will go on discharging his duties in the normal manner.

November 4th 1829

Duty of Coroners.

We lately had occasion to insert the grounds of a complaint made by one of the Coroners of the county against the inhabitants of Ilminster, for refusing a Coroners Inquest being held in cases where death occurred in a sudden but obviously natural manner. The difficulty of discriminating, in some instances, between cases so occurring, and those in which a doubt might be reasonably raised, probably led to the prevailing practise of applying to the Coroner in every case of sudden death. The motion proposed was to ascertain and bring into practise a course of uniform procedure, in unison with the law, and which might render the practise satisfactory to the public, by giving general information as to the cases in which inquests ought to be held, and when they are not so required. The office of Coroner is of very ancient origin, instituted in barbarous ages, when murders were frequent, and the public welfare required this public trial by a jury as a mode of inquiry into the cause of such unnatural deaths and for this purpose by a law passed in the 4th year of Edw. I. c. 2., it was enacted "That in cases if persons murdered, drowned, or found suddenly dead, inquests shall be held," and the 1st of Henry VIII c.7, enacts, "That the Coroner shall, upon request, come, and upon view of the body, inquire as to the persons slain, drowned, or otherwise dead by misadventure."

On reading these enactments, it appeared to many Magistrates that the Coroner's duty was not to claim and inquest, but hold one upon request of the parish officers where the death occurs; and to secure the information and request, the parish officers are indictable, if the body so dead is buried without due notification to a Coroner to execute his duty. But it is presumed such cannot be construed to extend to all persons who die in their beds, or in the presence of their family or attendants, or where no suspicion of violence exists as to the cause of their death. If a line of duty is not defined, inquests may be claimed by a Coroner, not on the principle of justice, but on the sums he may obtain from the county rates; so would parishes become burdened by charges such coroners may create, and which, if resisted, would be found an illegal demand, and, added to this unnecessary taxation, a cruel infliction of domestic distress is thus brought to aggravate the misery of families otherwise suffering under the loss of their dearest relatives. By a reference to the list of verdicts returned, and paid for by the county, it will be found that a large proportion of the dead have neither been murdered, drowned, slain by misadventure, nor found suddenly dead, but that they had died by the visitation of God; and if the last return is made to extend to all persons so dying, it is evident the right of holding inquests will far exceed the letter or contemplation of the legislature.

The forgoing we believe to be the substance of the argument adopted in favour of the view taken on this important subject.

November 11th 1829

One of those serious calamities which frequently attended the setting off of fire-works on the 5th of November, occurred in Wells, on Thursday evening last. A fine lad about

14 years of age, son of the late **Mr Snelgrove**, at Dulcot, near that city, had a squib burst in his hand, that ignited five or six others of great force, which he had imprudently put into his trowsers pocket; he was instantly enveloped in flames, and in his fright, ran into the bar of the Somerset Hotel, where several people promptly assisted to cut off his fiery clothes, but not until he was dreadfully burnt from his knee to his armpit, spreading from the centre of his back round his right side of his left breast; he now languishes in a very dangerous state.

Inquests by Mr Caines.

At Hardington near Yeovil, on **Susan Geage**, aged three years; at Over Stowey, on another child, aged six years; and at South Brent, on **Edna Sophia Counsell**, aged three years, all of whose deaths were occasioned by their clothes taking fire, and notwithstanding, in each instance, medical aid was called in, and the best attention paid after the accident, every endeavour to save them proved of no avail. It is lamentable, that in each case the little victims had been left by their mothers, without persons competent to take proper care of them. Verdicts, Accidental Deaths – At Stogumber; on **Theophilus Vickary**, aged 35. Deceased had been for some time past in the habit of wandering from home (but not as a mendicant, having relatives who supported him) and frequently lodged in outhouses. On the 2d instant, he was found in a dying state in a cow-crib, and on his being taken into an adjoining house, he expired. At Porlock, on **John Jarvis** aged 66. The death of this man was awfully sudden; he had eaten his dinner, and drunk some cider in a field, where he was labouring with several others, and appeared in perfect health, when he was seen to fall, and instantly expired. Verdict in the two last mentioned cases, Died by the Visitation of God.

Inquests by Mr Ashford of Shepton Mallet.

At West Harptree, on the body of **John Wyatt**. The deceased, who was very infirm, in going up stairs, fell backwards, was taken up in a state of insensibility, and expired in a few hours.

At Blagdon, on the body of Mr **Anthony Field**, who accidentally fell from a ladder, on which he was standing to gather some apples. His son, who was at a short distance from him, heard a noise, and on looking round missed his father from the ladder, and, on going to the spot, found him lying on his back upon the ground. Assistance being called, he was taken home, where he lingered a short time, and died from an injury he received in the spine. Verdict in each case, Accidental Death.

November 18th 1829

An awful instance of sudden death has occurred within the last few days, by which a most excellent and really pious young man is lost to a numerous circle of friends, and an afflicted mother bereaved of an only and truly affectionate child. On Thursday se'nnight, at Montacute, near Yeovil, the Rev – **Phillips** not finding his guest (the **Rev J Raynor**) down at his usual hour for breakfast, went to ascertain the reason, when he was shocked to discover his friend lying partly out of bed, dead and cold. The cause of his death is a supposed sudden affection of the heart, and deceased feeling himself affected with sickness, was in the act of leaning over the bedside. He had retired to rest the evening preceding in perfect health, and had written a letter to his mother before getting into bed. The Rev. gentleman was only 28 years of age, and but very lately collated to the living of Tamerton; he was chaplain to **Wm Langmead** esq when sheriff for the county of Devon; and was son of the late **Capt Raynor**, RN who, it will be recollected, about 28 years since was lost with his ship and crew – it is supposed in the channel – as no account was ever heard of her after, about six weeks

after his marriage. This young man had been Mrs Raynor's only consolation and solace for her heavy and sad bereavement of an affectionate husband.

Several erroneous reports are in circulation in this town respecting the death of a young female, aged 19 named **Thorne**, in King Street who, it was reported, after some medicine given her by mistake at a chemist's, had been seized with sudden illness and soon after expired. We have made due inquiries on the subject, and find that there was no mistake at the chemist's. Steel dust having been recommended by a relative of the deceased, who was subject to a violent hysterical affection, the deceased imagined, being herself similarly affected, that the same medicine might be equally useful to her. She accordingly applied at the chemist's, on Monday se'nnight, when, instead of enquiring for steel dust, she asked for tin dust, which latter article was supplied to her, with a particular caution not to take more than five grains; this injunction however, was not regarded, and she took as much as would cover a six pence (about a drachm) which had no immediate bad effect, on the contrary, she fancied herself subsequently better. The next evening she repeated the quantity, and soon after became worse, and died on Friday last. These facts having been duly substantiated, by a scrupulous investigation of the circumstances by medical gentlemen and others of this town, it was obvious that no blame whatever could attach to any person at the respectable chemist's where the deceased was supplied with the medicine and where the most careful enquiries were made, and particular directions given by the assistant, previous to the medicine being furnished.

Sir, A few days since, I observed in your paper another paragraph on the "Duty of Coroners" and as the writer of that article (which has been copied in most of the other local journals) has omitted to make quite a full statement of the Statutes referred to, I trust that you will pardon me for troubling you with a few observations on the subject:-

The more immediate cause of complaint by the Coroner against the inhabitants of a certain parish was, for suffering bodies to be buried without Inquests where it was evident persons had died in consequence of accidents; and he mentioned one or two cases of persons dying suddenly, where no notice had been given to any Coroner.

The statute of the 4th of Edward I as quoted in the article alluded to, goes a little further than the writer has stated, and I herewith transmit a copy taken from the statute for your perusal, but I am not aware that it will be necessary to lay the whole before the public; the enactment will be found to contain the following words:- "If he be certified by the King's bailiffs, or other honest men of the country, he shall go to the place where any be slain, or suddenly dead, or wounded." And the other statute quoted of the first of Henry VIII, does not, in any degree, alter the former, but relates to fees, and the penalty on a Coroner who will not endeavour to do his office upon every person dead by misadventure.

I shall only trouble you with my idea of cases where persons are seen to die by the families, or attendants of persons so dying suddenly, or by misadventure. It is a melancholy fact, that, notwithstanding the "march of intellect," crime is keeping pace with it, and we seldom see a newspaper without reading of some murders or death by poison, in almost every way the human mind can contemplate. Many of these persons, perhaps most of them, are seen to die, and are attended for days by relatives, friends and even by medical men. Would it not then be a questionable policy, were no inquests to be held where persons are seen to die – and is this a time to check or prevent the law from having it's full effect? It might be true that, in the Coroners' returns to the Magistrates of Inquests held, there are many verdicts "Died by the

visitation of God;” but I think it will be admitted that it would be better that too many inquests should be held, than to suffer one to escape where a detection of crime might be the result, if the law had been suffered to take its course.

It is true the Coroner may indict in case the Parish Officers should neglect to send for him in such cases; or, by receiving credible information, it seems, by the Statute alluded to, he is bound to act.

I have considered it right to make the foregoing observations in order to prevent persons being influenced by wrong impressions, and,

I remain Sir, Your obedient Servant, S.P.B.

By the 4th of Edward I, Statute 2d A.D. 1276, “Of what Things a Coroner shall inquire: - A coroner of our Lord the King ought to enquire of these things – if he be certified by the King’s Bailiffs or other men of the country – 1st He shall go to the place where any may be slain, suddenly dead or wounded or where houses are broken, or where treasure is said to be found, and shall forthwith command four of the next towns, or five or six, to appear before him in such a place, and when they are come thither, the Coroner upon the oath of them shall enquire in this manner:- viz to wit, if they know where the person was slain – whether it was in any house, field, bed, tavern or company, and who were there. Likewise it is to be enquired who were culpable, either of the act or of the force, and who were present, either men or women, and of what age soever they be (if they can speak or have any discretion) and how many soever be found culpable by inquisition, in any of the manners aforesaid, they shall be taken and delivered to the sheriff and shall be committed to the gaol, and such as be founden and be not culpable, shall be attached until the coming of the Justices, and their names shall be written in Rolls. If it fortune any such man be slain which is found in the fields or in the woods, first it is to be enquired whether he were slain in the same place or not, and if he were brought and laid there they shall do so much as they can to follow their steps that brought the body thither, whether he were brought upon a horse or in a cart. It shall be enquired also, if the dead person were known or else a stranger, and where he lay the night before, and if any be found culpable of the murder, the Coroner shall immediately go unto his house, and shall enquire what goods he hath, and what corn he hath in his graunge, and if he be a freeman they shall enquire how much land he hath and what it is worth yearly, and further what corn he hath upon the ground; and when they have thus enquired upon every thing, they shall cause all the land, corn and goods to be valued in like manner as if they should be sold incontinently, and thereupon they shall be delivered to the whole township which shall be answerable before the Justices for all, and likewise of his freehold, how much it is worth yearly, over and above the service due to the Lords of the free – and the land shall remain in the King’s hands until the Lords of the free have made fine for it, and immediately upon these things being inquired, the bodies of such persons being dead or slain shall be buried – In like manner it is to be enquired of them that be drowned or suddenly dead, and after such bodies are to be seen, whether they were so drowned or slain or strangled by the sign of a cord tied straight about their necks, or about any of their members, or upon any other hurt found upon their bodies, whereupon they shall proceed in the form above said, and if they were not slain, then ought the Coroner to attach the finders and all other in the company” – Next follows Treasure found, &c. &c.

November 25th 1829

Yesterday se’nnight, at Milverton, as a child, about six or seven years of age, named **Perrot**, was in the act of taking a kettle of boiling water off the fire, his pin-afore was

caught by the flame, and he was so much burnt in consequence, that he expired on Thursday.

Sir – A substance popularly known by the name of putty powder, and commonly used by burnishers for polishing metals, glass, and other articles, has been lately taken in mistake, by a young woman of this town, from granulated powder of tin. About one dram of this substance was swallowed in two instances, on two successive days. The effect of the first was not sensibly injurious, but that of the second, occasioned in the course of the next day distressing pain in the stomach and bowels, followed by repeated vomiting and intestinal discharges. These symptoms continued with but short intermissions, during about forty-eight hours, when violent convulsions and death ensued.

It is reasonably supposed that the substance mentioned was the unhappy cause of the mortal event stated. It appears, in the evidence adduced at the Coroner's inquest, held on the deplorable occasion, that the deceased personally applied at the shop of a highly respected druggist in this town for tin dust, instead of steel dust, or rust iron, the latter of which had been previously taken with advantage. The person serving the tin dust, desired the purchaser, with intelligent caution, to limit its dose to five grains. This restriction however, was not regarded, and as much as would lie on the surface of a sixpence was actually taken, that being the usual dose of the steel dust, with which the patient had long been familiar. The small quantity of five grains would probably not have proved even hurtful, much less destructive of life.

This lamentable occurrence attaches no just blame either to the person who served the article in question, or to the conduct of the druggist who offered it for sale. Reprehensible inattention, however, would seem to be imputable to the authors of the different Pharmacopaeias, in not sufficiently distinguishing the granulated powder of tin from putty powder, which in correct chemical definition is oxide of tin. In those publications, they are both denominated tin powder; and it may be presumed, the two preparations though possessing essentially different properties, are but too often indiscriminately used for each other.

In Dr Todd Thomson's Conspectus of the London Edinburgh and Dublin Pharmacopaeis, published in 1827. The properties of the filings and powder of tin are thus confusedly described:-

“Odour peculiar when rubbed, insipid, colour white, softish.”

The white colour and softness here stated, are applicable to putty powder or oxide of tin, and not to the granulated preparation of tin, which in strictness is not a powder, and its colour is of a livid or grey hue. The putty powder or oxide of tin, therefore appears to be fully recognised in the description here given.

The granulated tin powder is comparatively inoffensive, and may be safely taken in doses from half a dram to half an ounce, whilst the putty powder or oxide of tin is not an authorised medicine, and cannot be substituted for the granulated tin powder without incurring an imminent risk of a poisonous result. This danger arises from its containing arsenic in the alleged proportion of about one eighth of its bulk. This estimate is probably over-rated, but arsenic is no doubt a constituent part of its composition, and its affinity to the compound is so strong as not to admit of its being detached by the subliming or volatiline influence of high temperature.

From this view of the subject, it is obvious that the public safety indispensably requires that the nominal designation of the two articles referred to, should be in dispensatories as well as in druggist's shops, granulated powder of tin, and oxide of tin. The former is a safe and may be occasionally an efficacious medicine, the latter is

unknown in medical practice, and of course should not be used as a medicinal agent; on the contrary, it is reputed and held to be poisonous.

Your giving publicity to the above statement may serve as a salutary warning and protection against a repetition of the regretted confusion, and perhaps fatal error therein recited.

Yours respectfully,

Robert Kinglake Taunton, Nov. 24 1829.

Inquest by Mr Caines.

At the Oxford Inn, in this town, on **Mary Thorne**, aged 19. The deceased, who had been unwell for some time, had swallowed, by mistake, about 50 grains of the powder of tin, instead of the like quantity of powder of steel, which she had been in the habit of taking, and from which she appeared to have before received some relief. From the evidence it appeared that she had taken the mixture on the 9th and 10th inst, and that on the 11th it was discovered that it was likely to be productive of dangerous consequences. The other mixture was then given, but it was too late. On the 12th the deceased became extremely languid, and lay in a state of stupor till nine o'clock, when she was seized with convulsions, and on the 13th expired. On being seized with convulsions, Dr Kinglake was called in, who attended the inquest, and gave his evidence at considerable length. After an investigation of five hours, the jury returned the following verdict, "That the said Mary Thorne had been in a weak state previous to her death, and that she had taken powder of tin, commonly called 'putty powder,' in mistake for steel dust, but whether the powder of tin so taken was sufficient to cause death, the jury have no evidence before them. The jury fully exonerate the druggist and his apprentice, of this town, from any blame whatever, and think that the mistake occurred in consequence of want of caution in the compilers of Pharmacopeias, in not distinguishing granulated tin from tin dust, commonly called putty powder."

At the Ship Inn on Chard common, on **Sarah Ann Long**, aged 17 months. On Saturday, the 14th instant, some boiling water had been poured into a large dish, which was placed near the fire, into which the deceased fell, and was so severely scalded over the abdomen, as to cause her death on the following morning. Verdict, Accidental Death.

December 2nd 1829

Inquest by Mr Caines – At Pariton, on Thursday last, on the body of **James Trueman** aged seven years – deceased was in a school room on Monday the 23rd ult with many other children and having gone near the fire, his pinafore caught the flames, and all his clothes became in a blaze. Medical aid was called in but the child died on the following day – Accidentally burnt.

At Wellington on Friday last, on **Sarah Kirswell**, aged 65 years; deceased, it appeared by the husband's evidence, on Wednesday the 25th ult, whilst standing at the washing tub, was seized with a fit, and died in almost half an hour – Died by the visitation of God.

Horrible Murders and Suicide at Bath

Two murders, of a most horrible nature were committed in this city early on Monday morning, by a man named **James Beere** upon his wife and child! And after perpetrating the dreadful deed, it appears he drowned himself in the river. Beere lodged with his wife and child at No. 1 William's Place, at the back of St James's

street, St James's square; and about six o'clock on the morning in question, Mrs Chappel, who occupied a room next to that of Beere's, hearing a noise proceed from their apartment resembling a gurgling in the throat, went to the door and enquired if Mrs Beere was ill. Receiving no answer, she began to suspect that all was not right, and having procured a light, returned to the room, when she discovered the mother lying on her back, with one hand across her breast, and her throat cut from one angle of the jaw to the other, dividing some of the principal arteries and windpipe; and the little child, about four months old, which appeared to have been lately drawn from the breast for the murderous purpose, was lying on its side, with its head nearly severed excepting a piece of skin at the back part of the neck. It appeared that the deed was committed while the sufferers were asleep, there having been no noise heard by any of the lodgers or neighbours, nor were the bed clothes disturbed. Mr White, surgeon of St James's square was called in at six o'clock but too late, of course to be of any service. The bloody razor was lying open on a box, by the side of the bed, and the case was lying on the dresser down stairs in the kitchen, and with it a lath hatchet. Immediately after the discovery of the murders the officers of justice were quickly on the alert to apprehend the perpetrator, and shortly after day-light a baker's jacket with blood on it, was seen lying on the bank of the river near Bedford street, Walcot, in consequence of which, Mr **William Russell**, of Walcot, took a boat to search the river, and found the body of Beere in the water, near the bottom of Bedford street, with life quite extinct. In his pockets were found 13 sovereigns, 2 guineas, and 5 shillings.

Beere is described by the lodgers as being a very steady man, fond of his wife and his home, and dotingly fond of his child, which he was always caressing when at home; not have they latterly seen any alteration in his conduct. All the previous day, Sunday, both Beere and his wife were at home, and appeared, as usual, very comfortable and happy.

Beere was a native of Widcombe; and was several years errand boy to Messrs **Barnard**, of Bridge street, where his conduct was every way commendable. He saved up money enough to apprentice himself to a baker. His wife came from Frome. They were married about eighteen months ago, at which time he resided near the toll gate in the Wells road, where he for a short time carried on business on his own account; but for about twelve months past he had been employed as foreman by Mr Davies, of James's street, St James's square. His employer had found him attentive to his business, a trustworthy servant in his master's absence, particularly obliging, and apparently happy. Mr and Mrs **Davies** was no alteration in his conduct up to the latest period, on Sunday evening, when he went to make preparations for the Monday's baking.

The Coroner's Inquest on the Bodies.

An inquest was held on Wednesday at Walcot poor house before – Ashford, esq Coroner, on the body of **James Beere**, **Mary Beere** his wife and **Charles Beere** their infant son. The jury, having been sworn, proceeded to view the body of the man lying in the poor house, and also the bodies of his wife and child, at the house where the murder was committed. The bodies of the latter presented a horrible spectacle, the mother having a large and deep gash completely across the throat, and a smaller one just below the chin; the child's head was nearly severed from the body, the vertebra being quite cut through, and nothing but a small portion of the flesh kept the head from complete separation. The bed was covered with blood. On a box which lay beside the bed was found a razor deeply notched and clotted with blood, and in the kitchen below was found a case, apparently the case of the razor, and a plasterer's

hatchet or lathing hammer, which appeared sharpened and newly ground. When the jury returned, the first witness called was Mr W Russell, who, with the assistance of two men, succeeded in finding the body of Jas Beere, and conveyed it to Walcot poor house.

W. Muckleway, a fellow servant of Beere's, next deposed that he had lived with the deceased 15 months, and during that time could speak as to his general good character, and had never noticed any indication of insanity. On the Saturday previous to the murder, Beere had complained of illness in his head, and had left his work about six o'clock on that evening; witness saw him again on Sunday morning about nine o'clock, at the bakehouse, he still complained of illness, and appeared particularly dejected and low; he proceeded with his work until 11 o'clock, when he said he should wish to go home and left. Witness did not see deceased afterwards. He had always believed him to be a fond and affectionate husband, and had never heard him speak of his wife but in the best terms.

Catherine Elizabeth Chappell was then called; witness slept in the next room to deceased on the same floor; she heard no noise of quarrelling on the night in question, and must have heard it had such an event taken place. She had seen the deceased on the Sunday morning after his return from work, taking lunch with his wife comfortably and happy; she had never seen any indication of insanity, and coincided in the opinion of the former witness that she believed them to be a happy and contented couple. The husband of the witness confirmed the above statement.

This concluded the evidence touching the case of James Beere, but the jury deferred giving a verdict until the witness had been examined relative to the deaths of the mother and child. Touching this part of the case Catherine E Chappell was recalled, and deposed that about half past five o'clock on Monday morning she heard someone open the door of the room where Beere and his wife slept, and hurry down stairs; she also heard a noise like the gurgling of blood in the throat; and thinking that Mary Beere had been taken ill, she got out of bed, and knocking on the door inquired what was the matter. No answer being returned, she entered the room, but the darkness prevented her from perceiving anything amiss, and again receiving no answer she desired her husband to bring a light; upon entering the room with the candle the horrid scene presented itself; the throat of the woman being cut from ear to ear, the head of the infant nearly separated from its body, and blood running from the bed to the floor, in a continued stream. After recovering from the shock she dispatched her husband for a medical gentleman, and alarmed the neighbours; immediate intelligence was also given at the Town Hall to the police officers.

Cottle, the police officer, stated that on the first intelligence of the murder he made enquiry for the husband at the house of his parents in Upper Bristol road; he found the mother and daughter seated at breakfast, and on asking the mother if she knew where her son was, they appeared much agitated, and enquired of what crime he had been guilty. He then told them that their son had committed murder on the bodies of his wife and child; upon hearing this, the daughter exclaimed to her mother – "Oh mother, then you are done!"

On the examination of **Jane Beere**, the girl who made use of the above expression, she solemnly denied this particular part of the officer's statement; but there was much prevarication throughout the whole of the evidence, and many things were denied by her, which subsequent witnesses (her own father and mother) proved to be fact. The evidence of the father and mother, who were examined went to prove that a great degree of jealousy and ill will had existed between the female part of the family, on account of a charge made by the deceased against his sister of taking money; and that

they (the father and mother) had frequently quarrelled with their son on account of his marriage with the deceased, to whom they had a strong dislike; though it appeared that she had always conducted herself with great propriety.

The jury, after many hours patient investigation, at a late hour yesterday evening, returned the following verdicts; in the case of **James Beere**, *felo de se*; in that of the mother and child, wilful murder against James Beere, the husband; who is to be buried, according to the late Act providing for such cases, in the church yard, in the night time, but without the usual burial service.

A fatal accident occurred at Moloden, in the parish of St Stephen, in Banwell on Saturday last. A child, about two years and a half old, son of a person named **Pollymounter**, was left under the care of an aunt, whilst it's mother was engaged in digging potatoes. The aunt, having observed that a pig had got out of it's sty, went to drive it in again; on her return to the house, she met the poor infant running towards her, with it's clothes on fire, and before she could extinguish the flames, the child was so dreadfully burnt, that after lingering till Wednesday morning, it expired.

December 9th 1829

Atrocious Murder near Chard.

The atrocious crime which it is now our duty to record, and which is rendered doubly horrid from the cruel circumstances of aggravation with which it was perpetrated, was committed on the body of an amiable young woman named **Turner**, who had been for some time past engaged in the lace manufactory at Chard, where she distinguished herself by her assiduous attention to her duties, and the kindness of her manner. It appears that on Monday, the 30th ult. after leaving work, she visited an individual, of her acquaintance who had recently undergone the amputation of a leg. She left his residence for the purpose of returning home about half-past eight, since which time she was not heard of until the following morning, when her body was found lying on the Ilminster road, about half a mile from Chard, in too horribly mangled a state for the power of language adequately to describe it. The head was almost severed from the body by a gash which must have caused almost instantaneous death; a deep wound, which was inflicted on the breast passed nearly through the body, penetrating to the very back; and, as if the blood thirsty purpose of the monster who could perpetrate such a crime were not sufficiently accomplished by this he severed one of her breasts nearly from the body, to which it was found attached merely by the skin, and hanging down over a velvet spencer worn by the deceased. Information was immediately given to the proper authorities, and the body was conveyed to the workhouse, to await the Coroner's inquest. Strong suspicion having been excited against a man who had lately assaulted the deceased with a criminal intention, and for which she had summoned him before a bench of Magistrates, he has been apprehended, and in his lodgings a pair of stockings and a handkerchief have been found, upon which the marks of blood are evident. He is, therefore, detained in custody until the decision of the Coroner's inquest shall be known. The deceased, who is a native of Marshalsea, Dorset, was a young woman of the most unimpeachable character, and was highly respected by her employers and every individual of her acquaintance.

Horrible murder near Chard.

Another deed of blood has been committed close to the town of Chard, of which the shocking murder of **Betty Trump**, about six years ago, a few miles only from the

scene of sanguinary violence in the present instance, furnishes a memorable parallel. The statement which appears in another page of this paper discloses the chief particulars of this monstrous atrocity, and the following additional facts comprise all that at present can properly be submitted to the public:-

On Tuesday morning, the 1st inst, at day-break, as some persons were going across a field eastward of, and a short distance from the town of Chard, they discovered, lying near the path, the body of a female with her throat cut and her person much exposed. A stab had been inflicted in the neck, a little below the right ear, and a horrible gash on the left side divided the principal vessels of the neck, and had caused immediate death; there were also two more cuts through her clothes upon the right shoulder: these were the only acts of violence by any weapon or instrument. The circumstances were soon known in the town, and hundreds of persons visited the spot in the course of the morning. The body being removed to the workhouse, was identified as that of Joan Turner, a young woman about 20 years of age, who was employed in one of the lace factories. It is supposed that she was attacked by some miscreant on her way to her lodgings situate about a mile from the town, after leaving work at about eight o'clock on the previous evening. Mr Caines, the coroner, with a respectable jury, were most assiduously employed during three days in investigating this mysterious and diabolical transaction, without being able to obtain evidence sufficiently clear to warrant a committal of any of the suspected parties, and the jury accordingly returned a verdict of "Wilful Murder against some person or persons unknown".

Great praise is due to the **Rev W B Whitehead**, a magistrate of the county, as well as to many professional gentlemen for their unwearied assistance during the whole of the investigation. Immediately upon the close of the inquest, a meeting of the inhabitants was held at the Town hall, which was most numerously attended. Resolutions were entered into, and a committee formed, to sit daily, for the purpose of using very means in their power for the discovery and punishment of the perpetrator of this horrid deed. A reward of £100 has been offered for the discovery of the murderer, and a liberal subscription commenced for defraying all necessary expenses, the Committee having determined no means shall be left untried, that personal exertion or money can procure, to bring the criminal to justice, and it is hoped that their efforts will be attended with success. This dreadful occurrence has awakened feeling of the most intense anxiety in the minds of all classes in the town and neighbourhood.

Several persons have been apprehended on suspicion of having perpetrated this diabolical deed, but up to the period of our going to press, no conclusive evidence of guilt had been adduced against any one.

December 23rd 1829

Inquests holden by Mr Ashford of Shepton Mallet.

At Frome, on the body of an infant who was found dead in bed.

Wednesday, 11th of December, at Midsomer Norton, on **James Robbins**. It appeared in evidence, that the deceased was at work at the colliery in that parish; and on coming to what is called a faulty piece of ground, it gave way; a very large stone fell on him and bruised him so dreadfully, that he survived the accident but two days.

And on the 16th at Clandown Coalworks, on John Yard, who fell from the landing place to the bottom of the pit, a depth of twenty fathoms and was killed on the spot. Verdict in each case - Accidental Death.

The Murder of Joan Turner near Chard.

John Russell, a man engaged at one of the factories in Chard, after having undergone several examinations before the Magistrates in that town, was, on Saturday last, fully committed for trial, on suspicion of having perpetrated the above offence. Russell had been taken up and examined immediately after the murder; but the circumstances against him then were not deemed sufficient to warrant his committal, and he was accordingly discharged; he remained at large until the early part of last week, when further evidence having been obtained, he was again apprehended, and the result had been that we have above mentioned. The prisoner was lodged in Ilchester gaol on Monday morning.

Inquests holden by Mr Ashford of Shepton Mallet.

At Frome, on the body of an infant who was found dead in its bed. Wednesday, 11th December, at Midsomer Norton, on James Robbins. It appeared in evidence, that the deceased was at work at the colliery in that parish, and on coming to what is called a faulty piece of ground, it gave way, a very large stone fell on him and bruised him so dreadfully, that he survived the accident but two days. And on the 16th, at Clandown Coalworks, on **John Yard**, who fell from the landing place to the bottom of the pit, a depth of twenty fathoms and was killed on the spot. Verdict in each case – “Accidental Death”.

December 30th 1829

Inquests by Mr Caines.

At Moorlinch on **Joanna Shute**, aged two years, who, in the absence of her mother who had gone to Bridgwater market, went so near the fire that her clothes got into a blaze, and she was so dreadfully scorched that she expired in a few hours. It is but justice to the mother to add, that in this case an iron guard was placed before the fire, and that the deceased was left in charge of an elder sister aged about nine years, who had only stepped into another apartment of the house, during which the deceased got between the iron railing of the guard, and met her melancholy death in the manner above mentioned.

At the Rising Sun, Taunton on another child, **Elizabeth Callard**, aged 10 years, who was burnt on Sunday last, and carried to the Hospital, where she died in a few hours. Verdict in each case, Accidentally Burnt.

At Wellington, on Monday last, on the body of **John Southey** aged about 43. It appeared by the evidence of two persons employed with him, that on the 24th instant, in cutting down an oak pollard the deceased was struck by a limb of branch of the tree falling, which caused a slight wound in his head, and he fell to the depth of nine or ten feet into a ditch. He was immediately taken up, and appeared perfectly sensible, but complained of great pain in his thigh and in his bowels. He was carried home (a short distance) and a medical gentleman called in, who discovered that his thigh bone was dislocated; deceased appeared faint, but particularly desired to be bled, a vein was accordingly opened in the arm, and a very small portion of blood taken off. Mr N W Langley, the surgeon, thought it advisable to call in a medical friend (Mr Pyne) to state the case to him, and it was eventually agreed to see the deceased in a short time, which they did, together with Mr Langley, sen, when deceased not appearing in a state to undergo the process of reducing the fracture, it was resolved to postpone the operation for an hour, before which time the man expired – Verdict, Died in consequence of some internal injury from fall of a tree – Deodand on the tree, 5s.

On the 20th inst, in the prime of life, and full enjoyment of excellent spirits, Mr **Thomas Westall**, of the Market Place, Bath; a young man of the most respectable

family and connexions, and highly esteemed for his frank, manly, and generous feelings. He had soon after breakfast, retired to his bed room to look out for a few articles of wearing apparel for his journey to London, where he intended to pass the Christmas with his relatives, when, at an awfully sudden moment, he was seized with apoplexy, and fell down in the hearing of his servant, who was in the adjoining room. The servant instantly entered, and seeing her master on the floor in a fit, ran out for medical assistance, which arrived in a few minutes, but was of no effect, the spark of life being quite extinct.

January 6th 1830

On Tuesday se'nnight, a man was taken to the infirmary with the bones of his arms and ribs miserably fractured from having slept while riding on the shafts of a cart, and thereby fell under the wheel. He lingered for three days after the accident and then died.

Bristol Mercury.

January 13th 1830

On Thursday last, a poor woman, about 70 years of age, named **Ann Every**, who resided in Holway Lane, suddenly fell down in an apoplectic fit, in East Street, and instantly expired. An inquest was held on the body by Mr Caines. Verdict, Died by the Visitation of God.

On Friday last, an inquest was held at Milverton, by Mr Caines, on the body of **Richard Aplin**, aged about 60. Deceased was a person who lived on an income of £20 a year, in the town of Milverton, and in the course of the preceding Tuesday complained of illness. In the progress of the day he took nearly half a pint of gin and three pints of cider; about one o'clock he ate a hearty dinner; between five and six he smoked two or three pipes with out drinking anything, and soon after became exceedingly sick. He went upstairs in a very restless state, and refused to send for medical assistance; the inmates of the house, however, became alarmed, and went for a surgeon, who speedily attended; but the deceased expired previously to his arrival. Verdict, Died by the Visitation of God.

January 20th 1830

Inquests by Mr Caines of Langport.

On Monday last, at North Curry, on **Mary Stacey**, aged twelve months, who, on the preceding Friday, had been left in the care of an elderly woman, who had been for some time in a paralytic state, and in the afternoon, a girl who was near the house heard the screams of the woman and child, and on entering the room, she found the former lying across the fire with her clothes burning, but they being principally of stuff, she was not materially injured. It appeared that she had been endeavouring to take off a teakettle from the fire, and in doing so, she had upset it, and that part of the contents in a boiling state, had fallen over the child, by which she was so much scalded as to cause her death on the following day.

And at the work-house in Saint James's Parish, in this town, on **James Major**, aged five years, son of a poor woman residing at Norman's Place, who being left by his mother (on account of her illness) in the care of a neighbour, his clothes come ignited by standing too near the fire, on the 8th instant, and he was so much burnt as to cause his death on Sunday last – Verdict in each case, “Accidental Death.”

Inquests by Mr Ashford of Shepton Mallet.

At Englishcombe, on the body of **Sarah Robins**, the deceased was 88 years of age, and very helpless, she had been left by the person who had the care of her, but a few minutes, when some of her neighbours thought there was a smell like something burning, and went into her apartment to ascertain what it was, when they found the poor woman so dreadfully burnt, that she survived only till the following day.

At Tickenham, January the 13th, on a child three years old, who was likewise burnt by its clothes taking fire in the absence of its parents. Verdict in each case, "Accidental Death."

And on Saturday, the 15th instant, at Mells, on **Roger White**, from the evidence, it appeared that the deceased was employed in quarrying stones for the Overseer, and not coming home at his usual time, his wife became alarmed, and called some of her friends to go and seek for him, after calling at one or two houses, where they thought they might find him, they proceeded to the quarry, and found the unfortunate man lying on his face quite dead, though not cold. Medical aid was promptly procured, and every proper means used to restore animation, but without effect, the vital spark had fled. The Jury, after a minute examination of the case, returned a verdict of "Died by the Visitation of God."

January 27th 1830

On Saturday evening last, a man named **O'Connell**, an itinerant vender of glass, was found dead in the road, in the parish of Batheaston, with his skull fractured. An inquest was held on the body and the Jury, not being able, from want of evidence, to come to a decisive verdict, found "that the deceased was discovered dead, with his skull fractured, but how or by what means he came by his death, they cannot for want of evidence determine." Man has been taken up on suspicion, and was yesterday examined at the Guildhall before the county magistrates, and was remanded for a further hearing this day.

Bath Herald, Saturday.

Inquests by Mr Caines of Langport.

At the Gaol in this town, on Monday last, on **Thomas Paul**, aged 65. The deceased was formerly a man of considerable property, and his family connexions respectable, but he was of an avaricious disposition, and at the Lent Assizes, he was convicted of stealing some cattle, for which he has sentence of death recorded against him. He was afterwards ordered to hard labour, and for a short time he worked on the wheel at the tread-mill, but for a long time past, being rather a feeble man, his work was very light. On Thursday morning last, he was seized with apoplexy, of which he died. Verdict, "Died by the Visitation of God."

At Wiveliscombe, on **Sarah Stevens**, aged about 60. On Tuesday week, the deceased went into the service of Mr Waldron, solicitor of that place, who, on the following evening, gave directions to his servants to rise early, as he wanted to go from home. Deceased was the first who got up, and having got a light, she returned to call her fellow servant, saying it was half past five o'clock. She then proceeded to go below again, and in descending the back stairs, when about half-way down, she fell, and having fallen on her head, received a violent concussion, of which she died in a few hours. Verdict, "Accidental Death."

February 3rd 1830

Inquest by Mr Caines.

At the gaol in this town, on **Wm Willis**, aged 34. The deceased had been seized with a fit on Monday, the 25th and lingered until Wednesday last, when he expired.

And on the body of **Matthew Wallace**, aged about 35. Deceased had been confined to his bed between four and five months, and died of consumption. Verdict in each case – Died by Visitation of God.

February 17th 1830

Distressing Accident.

On Monday, the 25th ult. as two boys named **Rich** and **Carpenter** (the former 15 years of age and the latter about 13, sons of respectable farmers residing at Bleadon,) were going to Lympsham to school, in passing a narrow footbridge over the old river Axe, Carpenter fell in; Rich being a swimmer, boldly ventured after him; but, we are sorry to add, became himself the victim; in consequence, it is supposed, of Carpenter's grasping him so closely as to prevent the use of his arms. The accident being observed by a lad in the employ of Mr Rich, he hastened to the spot and plunged into the water. There is every reason to fear that the three lads would have perished, had it not been for the timely assistance of Mr Rich (the unfortunate father of the deceased) who arrived in time to rescue the other two. We will not attempt to describe the feelings which must have agonised the poor father when he found that all his efforts to save his only child had proved unavailing.

An inquest held at the Carriage Inn, on Coombe Down, by **D Ashford** esq one of the coroners for this county, on the body of Ann Bowen, aged 60. After two days investigation the jury returned a verdict of Died by the Visitation of God; but that her death was accelerated by unkindness and ill treatment. After which the coroner proposed, and it was unanimously carried, that a vote of thanks be given to Mr **Burgess**, sen. and Mr **Whitaker**, for their exertions in bringing this case before a jury.

February 24th 1830

Death from starvation.

A coroner's jury assembled at St Bartholomew's Hospital, on Tuesday last, to inquire into the death of **Elizabeth Jones**, who, it appeared, had come up to London from Somersetshire, to procure a situation as a servant, but had perished for want of the common necessities of life. The hospital surgeon stated it as his opinion, that want, not disease, was the cause of death. From her manners, she appeared to have been in respectable life. The deceased was taken to the hospital on Saturday night, by a watchman, who found her in the street, near Tower Hill. She told the nurse that she could obtain relief no where, and had had only three half pence worth of coffee for three days. The only clothing on her was a cotton gown. The jury expressed their indignation at the way in which the poor were bandied about from one parish officer to another, and returned a verdict – "That the deceased came to her death from want of the common necessities of life, and by exposure, without proper clothing, due to the inclemency of the season."

Inquests by Mr Caines of Langport.

At Shepton Beauchamp, on the 18th instant, on **Ruth Davey**, aged 75. On the preceding Monday evening, deceased was seen on her way home carrying a small bag, and she appeared to be going on very well; she was not seen by any one afterwards until the following morning, when she was found drowned in a small

brook, within about 100 yards of where she was seen on the preceding evening.
Verdict, Accidentally Drowned.

And at the Lethbridge Arms Inn, at Bishop's Lydeard, on **Thomas Blackmore**, aged 72. On Saturday morning, at about seven o'clock, the deceased was thrashing in a barn for **T M Charter**, esq and a little after eight, his wife went to call him to breakfast, but not finding him in the barn, she went into an orchard adjoining, where she found him dead – deceased had fallen in a fit a few months since, and once afterwards, but in other respects, he generally enjoyed good health, and previously to his going to his work, he had taken some bread and butter and half a pint of cider.
Verdict, Died by the Visitation of God.

March 10th 1830

Inquest by Mr Caines of Langport.

At Lympsham, on the body of **Charles Pitman**, who died a few hours after being engaged in a fight, arising from a public house quarrel with a man named **George Hardacre**, who, with his second, **George Parsons**, were committed to prison for trial at the next assizes.

Died.

On Saturday morning last, of peritoneal inflammation, Mr **Wm Biddlecombe**, of Enmore, near Bridgwater, aged 56.

At Carlisle, at the house of her mother, Mrs **Elizabeth Lockhart**, whose death is attributed to grief occasioned by the shock she received by the sudden and melancholy decease of her beloved husband, Lieut **Chas Lockhart** R.N. in December last, at the Plume and Feathers Inn, Wine Street Bristol.

Mary, wife of Mr **Geo Lobb**, saddler and harness maker – whose death was accelerated by fright; her husband, about six weeks ago, was attacked by a paralysis, which took away his speech and the use of his right side, and his being brought home in that state so shocked his wife, then on a sick bed, that it terminated her existence, leaving five small children now deprived of the help of either parent – Bath Journal.

March 17th 1830

Inquests by Mr Caines of Langport.

On Tuesday se'nnight, at Minehead, on the body of a respectable farmer and maltster, named **Giles**, whose death took place under the following circumstances:- The deceased, who resided in Selworthy parish, and kept on a malthouse in the village of Bratton, near Minehead, was a few months since fined a considerable sum, in consequence of his having deviated from the Excise regulations. The penalty he incurred had, however, been reduced to a moderate sum, and the money paid by his brother-in-law, who took a receipt for the same, in order the more fully to satisfy the deceased that all proceedings against him were at an end; but of this the deceased appeared suspicious, and eventually became melancholy. For some time past he had, in consequence, been carefully watched; but on the night of Friday week, he escaped from his bed unnoticed, and on the following morning, at a quarter past six o'clock, he was discovered by one of his labourers suspended by a rope, one part of which he had secured fastened round the principal timber of an outhouse, and the other round his neck. The jury returned a verdict of Lunacy.

At the Castle Inn, at Enmore, near Bridgwater, on **John Biddlecombe**, aged 52, this unfortunate individual also committed suicide, by drowning himself in Lord Egmont's pond, near the Castle in Enmore Park. He was respectably connected, and was much

esteemed by his neighbours; but for some time he had addicted himself to drinking, and his affairs having got into a deranged state, caused great dejection of spirits. Verdict, Insanity.

March 24th 1830

The body of – **Herniman**, who not long since was in the employ of Mr **Titherleigh**, of Fitzroy, near this town, was found in the river Tone, at a place called Long Run, not far from the French Weir Fields, on Sunday morning. He had long left his home at Staplegrove the day before, telling his wife he was going into Taunton. He had been in a low and desponding state for some time, and it is supposed that he committed suicide. He was a prudent man, and had accumulated a large sum for one of his station of life, which he had deposited in one of the banks of this town.

Inquests by Mr Ashford of Shepton Mallet.

On the instant, at Portbury, on the body of Mr **Wm Yeeles**, a respectable yeoman, aged 78, residing at that place, it appeared that the deceased had been in a low desponding way for many years, so much so, that at times, it was necessary to put him under restraint, and he was aware of the necessity, for at the approach of these attacks, he would desire his friends to consign him to bed. For some time previous to the 8th inst he had enjoyed tolerable health, and appeared quite collected in his mind, but on that day he was absent from the house about an hour, and upon search being made by his friends, he was found in a pond in a field adjoining his house, dead; every means were used to restore animation, but without effect. The Jury, which was highly respectable, after consulting on the evidence, returned a verdict of “Lunacy.”

On Tuesday, the 16th inst, at Laverton, near Frome, on the body of **John Wells**, aged 59?, when the following evidence was adduced: - the deceased had been attending the Methodist chapel in the afternoon, on the preceding Sunday, and upon his return home, he complained of pains in his head and arm, which did not excite particular attention in his wife, as he was occasionally subject to pain and giddiness in his head; soon after he came home, he had occasion to go out, and not returning, his wife, in about five minutes afterwards, found him dead at the back door, extended on the ground quite dead. Verdict, “Died by the Visitation of God.”

March 31st 1830

Dreadful accident and loss of life.

On Friday last, as seven men and two boys were being drawn up from the coal pit at the Paulton engine, when they were nearly half way up, the rope suddenly broke, and they were precipitated to the bottom, a distance of 150 feet. Five of them were dashed to pieces, presenting, on their being brought up, a more melancholy spectacle than was perhaps ever witnessed. The other four were dreadfully injured: of two there are no hopes of cure, and very little of the others. The cries and bewailings of the wives and children were heart-rending – waiting in dreadful suspense, for a period of five hours, before they could attach the new rope, and bring up the mangled bodies, to know whom were the widows and orphans of the ill-fated victims of that dangerous employment. We have not learned the names of the sufferers; but we hope the hand of benevolence will be extended to their families. The rope was examined only a few days previously, and pronounced fit for 12 months’ wear. It was only a day before that a large party of the respectable inhabitants of the neighbourhood had decided on taking a descent to the bottom. They must shudder when they think of the dangerous risk of such an enterprise – Bath Journal.

April 7th 1830

Inquests by Mr Caines of Langport.

At Puddimore, on **Elizabeth Bennett**, aged six years, who, having gone to dip water from an uncovered well, fell head foremost to the bottom and in that state was found and taken out dead in about six hours afterwards. Verdict accordingly,

At Yeovil, on **William Smith**, aged about 20, late of Winsham, who, on Saturday se'nnight, came to Yeovil on a visit to his sister, and up to the Wednesday evening following he appeared perfectly well and made no complaint whatever, and went to the Tabernacle to hear the evening service. At about 8 o'clock he was seen returning home alone, and was observed to stagger and fall, and in an instant he was a corpse. Verdict, Died by the visitation of God.

At Kingsbrompton near Dulverton, on **Wellington H Blackmore**, aged about four years, who, on the 2d instant, being left with other children, whilst his mother was gone to the doctor for another child who was ill, his clothes became ignited, and he was so much burnt that he expired on the following day – Verdict, Accidentally burnt.

April 14th 1830

On Friday last, an inquest was held by Mr Caines, at Saint James's workhouse, in this town, on the body of **J Sturges**, late driver of the Barnstaple mail, who, on Thursday morning, about 11 o'clock, was found in the yard adjoining his house, in Coal Orchard, St James's Street, on his knees, with blood issuing from his mouth, and apparently very unwell. A neighbour **E Dunscombe**, was the first who discovered his situation; the last words he spoke, were to beg that she would put on his shoe, which had fallen from his foot. Witness immediately sought medical assistance, but before it could arrive, the deceased had expired. Mr **F Welch**, surgeon, deposed to his having found deceased a corpse, that there was externally no appearance of wound or injury in the body, and that he believed the death had been occasioned by the rupture of an artery. The jury returned a verdict, Died by the Visitation of God. The deceased was a remarkably stout man, and had been a coach driver many years.

Inquests by Mr Caines of Langport.

At Sutton Mallett, near Bridgwater, on **Wm Bacon**, aged 28, who, on the 8th inst was discovered to have hung himself in a hay house. From the evidence of several persons, it appeared that the spirits of the deceased had been for some months much depressed, and that latterly he seemed unconscious of what he said or did, and that his mind had been thus impaired, by being slighted by a fellow servant to whom he wished to have been married, and for which purpose, he had purchased two rings which were found in his pocket. Verdict – lunacy.

At Lopen, near Crewkerne, on **Elizabeth Mudford**, aged seven years, and John **Mudford**, her brother, aged about sixteen months. It appeared by the evidence of **C Bulgin**, that on Good Friday, his attention was drawn to a chimney sweep who had ascended to the top of a chimney, and was scraping the soot from some stones which had been placed so as to prevent the chimney from smoking, when he observed a large stone about a hundred weight suddenly gave way, and fall on the two children above mentioned, one of whom was leading the other on the foot path. The former was taken up dead, and the latter expired in about six hours, the skulls of both having been fractured.

And at Ilminster, on **C Mann**, aged 18 months, son of the foreman of the Dowlisford factory, who, on Sunday last, was found drowned in a water course near the factory.

Verdict in the last mentioned cases – Accidental death.

And at Bishops Lydeard yesterday on **J Baker** labourer, aged 56. On Good Friday, deceased was at different places seeking labour, and had drunk freely of cider. At seven in the evening of that day, he was found near the Lethbridge Arms in a ditch, by the side of the turnpike road, speechless and insensible. He was conveyed to his place of abode, and medical attention procured, but he died at three o'clock the next morning. Verdict. Died by the Visitation of God.

The Chard Murder.

John Russell, a decent looking man, 33 years of age, was placed at the bar at eight o'clock. The clerk of the arraigns read the indictment, which charged the prisoner with having on the 30th November last, murdered **Joan Turner**, by cutting her throat, with some sharp instrument. The prisoner was then asked whether he were guilty or not guilty. To this the prisoner replied, or rather called out, in a very loud manner, "not guilty, my Lord." The governor of the gaol told him to conduct himself with greater propriety. He was then told, if he had any objection to make to any of the jury, he might do so; to which he answered in a subdued tone, "Thank you, Sir".

Mr **Follet** (with whom was Mr **Beare**) then addressed the Jury for the prosecution, and called the following witnesses:-

Harriet Waite - I live in the parish of Chard. I know Mr Langston's six acres; there is a path across the field, leading to Avishay Lane. On the morning of the 1st of December I was in the field. I found the body of **Joan Turner** in that field; she was dead. I saw Summers directly after. I called him.

Jacob Summers - I live at Lower Tucketts. I was going to Chard the morning this body was found. My wife and **Harriet White** were with me; it was about half-past seven by the factory time. Harriet White came up very much frightened, and caught my wife round the neck. I ran on and when I came up the hill I saw the body about two yards on the right of the path way; it was lying on the back, with the throat cut from one ear to the other; the head lying a little to the right; her petticoats were tucked up as high as her middle; on the left thigh was the print of a man's bloody hand, there were marks of bloody fingers of the other thigh. I went to pull her petticoats down, and found her cold and stiff, as though she had been lying there all night. In my hurry I did not know whose body it was for a few minutes. I knew the deceased very well before her death. She lived at one **John Rice's**; his house is about a quarter of a mile from Chard. I saw a piece of what I thought flesh near the body. Under her left shoulder, I found the top part of a pound loaf of bread soaked in her blood. I left my wife and Harriet White with the body; and went to the foot of Chard and cried out there was murder; and there came to me Mr **Richards**, Mr **Moore**, Mr **Bowditch**, **Henry Ferum**, **Thomas Theaker**, and another man; they came from the foot of Chard, and we all returned to the body, and I showed them the form and fashion in which I had found her; this was about a quarter to eight. I remained with the body and all the rest went away - I heard the factory bell ring: I was by the body alone at that time; it was the first factory bell which rings at eight. A lad came up.

I sent him to the girl's brother. Other persons came, but not from Chard. The overseers came, and conveyed the body away in a cart.

Joan Summers, wife of the last witness, corroborated his testimony.

Northcote William Spicer - I am a surgeon of Chard, and was called to see the body of the deceased about nine o'clock on the morning of the 1st December. I found a deep wound which commenced a little below the left ear behind the angle of the jaw;

it was continued in a direction a little downward across the throat into the windpipe. The wound was not inflicted by one cut, but by many repeated cuts. The principal blood vessels were divided, which caused the death of the young woman. I likewise found two long cuts through the clothes over the right shoulder, but the skin was merely divided; the surface of the bowels and both thighs were covered with blood, as if the hand had been wiped over them. I consider the wounds were inflicted with a sharp pointed knife, but not a good cutting knife. In my opinion the wound in the neck caused her death. There was no medical proof of any other violence. I saw the prisoner that morning in custody at the workhouse. I observed some scratches about his face. They were such as the nails of small fingers would make. The skin was broken from above downwards.

John Bragg - I work at Mr Rist's factory. I know Mr **Weare's** house, which is next door to mine, and is near the Greenhill cottages. I know Mr **Langston's** Six-acres, which I can see very plainly from my house. It may be nearly half a mile. On the 30th November, in the evening, about half-past eight, my boy came home. About ten minutes after, I heard a terrible scream, which appeared to come in at the window which looked towards the Six-acres, and while I was speaking I heard another, and then, we heard another not so loud. I then heard no more.

Cross-examined - **On the following morning I heard of the murder about half-past eight. I knew of an inquest, but was not able to go to it. I mentioned this to many people, but never went before a magistrate, because I was not asked to do so. I told Norris the constable of it.**

Robert Bragg - I am not twelve years old. I remember the morning the body was found. I work at Rist's factory, and know the prisoner. I left the factory on the Monday, about 10 minutes after eight o'clock, and was going towards Fernham.

I saw the prisoner opposite the mile stone. I heard him speak. There was another person on before, but who that was I don't know. The prisoner overtook me, and passed me shortly from the mile-stone.

Cross-examined - Most of the people of the factory leave at eight o'clock.

Mary Ann Carter - I work at Rist's factory. I knew Joan Turner. She worked in the same factory. I met Joan Turner on the Monday night at Mr **Edward's** back door. She took hold of my hand as far as between Mrs **Chapman's** and Mr **Langston's** and then she let go my hand, and I lost her as far as Mrs **Welch's**. I stopped there about three minutes. Joan Turner overtook me again, and caught hold of my hand, and did not let me go till we got to Stephens's lane, which leads to Fernham. I heard a man jump in Stephens's lane. It appeared to me to be a man with hob-nails in his shoes. I heard some one go up to Avishay-lane before me, I went home, and left Joan Turner. I don't know if she went up Avishay-lane, or across the fields. There is a footpath across them which leads to her house.

Joan Turner wore pattens that night.

Cross-examined - I did not hear any terrible scream before I got home.

Joseph Salisbury - I am a constable living at Chard, and took the prisoner into custody on the 1st of December. The prisoner told me he went home the previous evening when the bell rang, with **Thomas Harp**; and that he went into his house for a bag to get some leeks and some greens, and went with Harp after them. I asked if he saw any one that he knew. He said no; only different people going from market, and some boys he did not know. I asked him how long he stopped. He said only a few minutes.

Cross examined - I took him up about ten o'clock in the morning. Harp was examined before the coroner, and then the prisoner was discharged. A girl first told me of the murder about eight o'clock in the morning.

Robert Norris - I am a constable at Chard. I took the prisoner into custody on the 1st December, at Rist's Factory. I went into the Six Acre field, on Thursday, the 3d December, there were two large spots of blood in that field. It appeared to me as if a person's arm had been drenched in blood and that he had wiped it off there. On the 3d of December I had a conversation with the prisoner's wife. I told the prisoner of the conversation I had had with her, to see if they were both in the same story. I asked him if what his wife had told me respecting his coming home on the Monday night was true. He asked me what she said. I said "she told me you came home about half past eight or before half past eight; and she says you did not stop in the house half a minute, but that you took up a little bag and said you were going to Fernham after some greens; and she said, 'Don't stay as I have some potatoes boiling, and they'll soon be done,' that you staid away about 20 minutes, and then returned - that you had your supper and went to bed - that it was about ten minutes up or down of nine o'clock - that you were not out afterwards till she called you next morning to go to work - that you could not stay up long as there was but a little bit of candle in the house - that they put out the candle and went to bed." The prisoner said it was all right. Both the prisoners said he had been in bed the whole night and that neither of them had got up till the first bell ringing in the morning. The prisoner had on a white pair of cotton stockings on the Tuesday morning; he said he wore black ones on the Monday. I took Thos and **Wm Harp** into custody on Wednesday. The prisoner was discharged on Friday, and he was taken up by Salisbury a second time.

Susan Denham - I am a servant of Mrs Clarke's. On the 30th November, the family consisted of Mrs Clarke, **Sarah Carter** and **George Edwards**. Mr Clarke was not at home that night. We went to bed at half past ten. Sarah Carter sleeps in the same room with me, in the back part of the house. The window at the end of the house is in our bed room. We can see the kitchen window of the prisoner's house from our room. We can't see his chamber window. When we went to bed, I saw a light in the kitchen window of the prisoner's house. I got up in the night in consequence of hearing a noise. I think it must have been two or three in the morning. I heard the pump going, which is very near the prisoner's house; it works with two handles, it does not work quietly, it makes a particular noise; we can hear it when we are working in the kitchen. When I heard the noise, I saw a light in the kitchen window. I went back to my bed in about five minutes. When I went to sleep I left the pump going; it was going all the time I was at the window. I did not go to sleep for a quarter of an hour. I got up before the first factory bell rung, just as it was day light. I saw a very great light in the prisoner's house, it was in the kitchen window. I saw a woman walking backwards and forwards in the kitchen; she had every day's dress on. I judged it was the prisoner's wife. There is no other window where the light could have been. There is a stair case which goes from the kitchen into the bed-room; when Russell took possession of the house, about a month before this, I cleaned the bed-room floor; there were no spots on them.

Cross examined - There is a fire place in the kitchen. I did not see any candle.

Sarah Carter - I am servant to Mrs Clarke. When we went to bed, I saw a light from the kitchen window of the prisoner's house. I got up about four or five o'clock in the morning, and saw a light in Russell's kitchen window.

Cross-examined - I do not know any thing of my fellow-servant having got up in the night.

By the Judge - I am certain I heard the factory bell ring that morning.

William White - I am carter of Mr **Fortescue**. In the Monday night I was going from Avishay's house to Langport for coal. I went up the road by the meeting house about half past ten. I saw a great light come over the wall parting Russell's yard from the meeting house - it appeared to me to be out of doors.

Hannah Wire - I am in my eightieth year. I live at Chard. I know Russel's house. I lived in one of the adjoining houses. My daughter and son in law live with me. Her name is **Mary Preedon**. **William Long** lodges with her. They were the only persons in the house. I went to bed at half past nine on Monday evening. I did not go to the pump that night. I went to the pump the next morning. I found bloody water in the trough. I thought something had been washed there; there might have been a quart or more of bloody water. A little had run down the gutter from the trough. There were two whittings heads in the trough. They were very white.

John Morris - I cleaned two small whiting at the pump on the Monday evening. There was no blood in them. I did not go to the pump for the night.

Wm Boobiere, I was the last person who went to bed in the house, about eleven o'clock. I locked the front door of the passage; I did not leave my room during the night.

Mary Peedon - I live adjoining the prisoner. On the night before the murder my mother went to bed at five minutes past nine. I then went to supper with my husband. At half past nine I put a candle in my back window as I was going out. I was out about five minutes; the candle remained there till ten minutes past ten. The prisoner came to my house after he had been liberated after the murder, and told me he saw a candle in y back window at half past eight, when he came home. I told him I thought my candle was not there at that time. While I was speaking, William Long came in, and I asked him what time he came home, as my candle was then in the window. He said ten minutes after ten. The prisoner said he thought it was not so late as that, and asked me, if I should be called upon, if I would give evidence about my candle being in the window? I told him it was what I did not like to do. The candle remained in the window from half past nine till ten minutes after ten. I did not get up till eight o'clock in the next morning. I had not been out all night. When I was returning from the garden at half past nine in the evening, I heard a noise in Russell's house. I thought they were quarrelling; there were more than two persons there. I stopped a few minutes to see if I could hear what it was. I told prisoner when he called about the candle, that I thought he was ill treating his wife that night, as I heard he had done so before. Prisoner said there was something between them, but nothing of any consequence. All the persons occupying any of the adjoining houses or apartments in them, were called. They all said they had not been to the pump that night.

Mrs Clarke - I live at Chard. I was not at home on the night of the 30th of November. I was out about a fortnight - The prisoner occupied a house of mine:

he took possession in November. About a fortnight after the murder I went into his house. I saw marks on the bedroom floor: they appeared to me to be spots of blood. They were just on the top of the stairs. There were several spots. Some appeared very fresh. I had been in the house shortly before Russell took possession; there were no spots there then.

Cross-examined - The spots were all over the top of the stairs. Some of them were of a very deep red colour. I think they did not extend a yard from the top of the stairs.

George Edgar - I was servant to Mrs Clarke, on the 30th of November. I went to bed at half past ten. I got up at half past six in the morning. I had not been out during the night.

Francis Mayo - I am constable. I went to Russell's house at about eleven o'clock on Tuesday morning; I found a shirt partly wet, and a light coloured waistcoat, partly wet; and, in the room underneath, a pair of black worsted stockings on a line behind the door, partly dry. The breast and sleeves of the shirt were wet; and the other part of it was dry.

Aaron Loveridge - I work at Mrs Risk's factory. I remember the morning Joan Turner was found. I saw Russell at the factory about a quarter or twenty minutes before eight that morning. I observed an unusual change in his linen, his shirt and neckcloth were clean, his shoes were blacked and clean; his trowsers were clean; he was not generally clean as he was then.

Cross examined - Russell was standing by his own machine; his trowsers were dark blue or black cloth. I can't see whether I saw him or not on the Monday. His neckcloth was of different colours.

Robert Grubham - I know the prisoner. I saw him on the 1st of December in the workhouse, in custody about nine o'clock I observed his linen; he had a clean shirt. I examined it.

Mr **Spicer** recalled - On the Tuesday morning I saw the shirt at the prisoner's house; both of the sleeves were uniformly wet from the bottom to the elbow. The bosom was wet nearly the front of the shirt. I observed no smell whatever. I am of opinion that it had been washed. I saw it about eleven or twelve o'clock. I saw both the stockings and waistcoat, they were wet. On the 23rd of December I went to his house again, and saw spots of blood on the third and fifth steps; on the second and third steps from the top there were five dashes of blood against the partition, on the side of the staircase. In the bedroom there was a great number of the same coloured spots on the floor; there were a few blotches. **Mr Weare**, with some warm water, readily washed out half a dozen of them; the appearance of the spots resembled blood mingled with a little water, rather than

blood itself; they were confined near the staircase; this was between two and three o'clock in the afternoon. There were one or two spots of clotted blood.

The others appeared to have dropped from some bloody clothes. I am of the opinion they could not have been there more than a few weeks; but they might have been there as long as a few weeks. Some appeared more recent than others which I account for from the dirt. At the time of the murder the roads were unusually muddy.

Cross examined - I saw no appearance of blood on any of the woollen clothes, nor of their having been washed.

Thomas Hayball - I am a carpenter. There were no spots on the floor when the prisoner took possession of the house.

It being now eight o'clock in the evening, and there being a greater number of witnesses to be examined on the part of the prosecution than had yet been heard. The learned judge said, he thought it would be better to adjourn at once than continue till twelve o'clock, and be obliged then to adjourn. In this the jury concurred, and the Court was adjourned to eight o'clock tomorrow morning.

The prisoner, on the suggestion of Counsel, was allowed a chair about three o'clock. He appeared throughout the day to be in a state of nervous agitation, struggling hard to appear composed. There are upwards of seventy witnesses for the prosecution.

April 8

The prisoner Russell was placed at the bar at eight o'clock this morning; his appearance was much the same as yesterday. The governor of the jail was ordered to place a seat for him.

Simeon Stuckey proved the correctness of the model of the premises, and that the prisoner's kitchen window could be seen from Mrs Clarke's servant's bedroom, but could not be seen from any of the windows of the adjoining houses.

Mr **William Summers**, a surveyor, proved the correctness of the plan he produced.

Benjamin Richards - I live at Chard, and am the owner of a factory there. My residence is half way up to the town hall, beyond Mrs Clark's house. I left my house a little after half past seven on the morning of the 1st December. As I was going towards my factory I overtook several persons opposite the factory.

There were **Charles Hill** and **Thomas Theaker**, and at Tapstone I overtook **Perram, Summers, Moore, Bowditch**, and another person I did not know. Perram said, "Run, here's murder down here." Hill did the same. Upon this we all went up to Mr Langdon's Six acres, through the Five acres. We met Summer's wife and White's daughter half way up the Five Acres. We did not meet any one else. I did not remain with the body above five minutes; we all remained during that time; we then returned into the town together; we met **Sarah Homeyard**; we overtook Mrs Summers and Harriet White; I went towards the workhouse, and passed Mr Rist's factory; before I came to the factory, and after I passed **Harriet White**, I met my son going to my factory; I met some of the factory people at Edward's corner; this was a few minutes after eight o'clock; they were going to breakfast; I told them what I had seen; none of them seemed to know it before; I went towards the factory, and to the lodge door, which is the entrance to the factory; there is no other entrance, I saw **Hutchins**, the timekeeper, there, standing at the lodge door; I told him; he had not heard it before. A person named **King**, one of the factory men, was in the lodge; I mentioned it to King; he had not heard of it before; I then went to the workhouse, but met nobody else; I there saw the governor's wife, Mrs **Williams**, and told her of the murder; no one there had heard of it. I then went to the overseer at the King's Arms; I saw his daughter, and told her of the murder; no one there had heard of it. I went back to the workhouse, and saw the governor; I went home to my own house; it was then half past eight or rather more.

Cross examined - I judge of the time by seeing the factory people going in to breakfast; I was the first person in the town after the murder was discovered. **Robert Hutchins** - I live at the porter's lodge at Rist's factory; the first bell rings at 20 minutes past six, the next at 20 minutes before seven, and the next at eight, for the people to go to breakfast; the next at twenty minutes after eight, for them to return. Mr **B Richards** came to the Lodge about a quarter past eight of Dec 1; I had not then rung the 20 minutes past eight o'clock bell, but I had rung the eight o'clock; he told me about the murder; I had not heard

of it. I told Mr **Gawler**, the clerk of it; no one can go out of the factory or come in without my knowing it; no one went out that morning before eight o'clock; every one going out must produce a ticket.

Cross examined - I looked at the clock when Richards came in; it wanted a minute of the quarter. I go up to the top of the factory to ring the bell, and a person might then go out or come in without my knowing it.

Thomas Rist - I am the son of the owner of the factory. Gawler told me of the murder about twenty minutes past eight. I had not given any ticket for any one to go out of the factory that morning.

George Gillett - I work in the factory of Mr Rist; I know the prisoner; he was working there; I work in the machine shop; I worked there on the 1st of December; that morning I saw Russell in the machine shop before 7 o'clock at his machine; he is in the machine shop at meal times, because he lets the boys go to their meals; he stays

till the boys come back from their meals. That morning I saw Russell in the machine room; he was then at his machine at work; I can't say whether it was before or after eight o'clock; the noise from the machine prevents our hearing the bell ring. My machine was near Russell's. Russell spoke to me about ten minutes after I saw him. Russell said to me, "There was a girl murdered out in Avishay's lane going across a field." I asked him if he had seen the girl? He said no; he would go and see her when he went too breakfast. I asked him who the girl was? He said, "A girl with a squint eye, that works in our mill." I asked him if she was a short girl? He said "Yes" and I said, "Then I know her." After this we both continued to work at our machines. I saw someone speak to Russell in about five minutes after; it was Thomas Harp. I did not hear what they said. I continued 20 minutes after he had told me of it, and then I went and saw the girl in the field.

Henry Fowler - I worked at Mr Rist's factory on the 1st of December, in the same room as the last witness. I went to his machine that morning. He told me something. I had heard that morning of the murder from Gillett. It was five minutes before eight. I know the time because I saw the people go out soon after, and they go out at eight o'clock. I saw a boy called **John Lake**; I told him of it directly.

R.P.Caines - I am the Coroner who held the inquest. The prisoner was in custody. This is the statement he made before me.

By the Judge - He made the account voluntarily. The prisoner's examination, taken before the Coroner, was then read. He stated that he left the factory on the evening of the 30th of Nov, at eight o'clock. He went for some leeks and returned home soon after half past eight, and did not go out after. **Bird** was the first person who told him of the murder after he returned from breakfast.

-**Wood** - I worked in the factory on the 1st December; I heard **Thomas Harp** say to Russell between seven and eight o'clock in the morning, "what sort of engagement had you last night? Prisoner replied, "a d-d hot one." They were about nine or ten feet from me.

Cross-examined - There were two men between Russell and me. I will swear that the words were not "I'll have a d-d lot of them." I will undertake to swear I did not make a mistake, but that those are the words. They might have said something more but I did not hear it. If they had spoken in an audible voice I must have heard it. I have found in the course of my life, that my ears have misled me.

Robert Hebditch - I am a lace worker at Mr Rist's factory. I was in the brass room on 1st of December. I saw the prisoner and Thomas Harp there, at twenty minutes past seven. I heard Harp ask Russell, "Well Jack, what engagement were you in last night?" Russell answered him, but I could not make out the words.

John Rendall - I work a Rist's factory. I saw Russell there on Monday. He said to me, "I am going to have a d-d bl-y good battle by and by, after I leave work." I asked him who with? He said he was going fighting along with a -

John Balch - I work at the factory, in the same room with the prisoner. On the day of the Coroner's inquest I saw Russell. After he was liberated, about a week after, I told him I wanted to speak to him, and asked him how he got on up there, and why he could not get himself free before. I said, I could if I was innocent." He said he could not, from one and another coming in against him. I asked him if he was not in the same room to hear what was said against him. He said, of course he was, or how could he contradict them. I asked him if there was any one of the witnesses likely to hurt him more than the other. He said there was one who when he came in made him shake. He took a spindle up and let it drop, and said he thought his life was as near gone as that.

Robert Mills - I am a shoemaker at Chard. After prisoner had been liberated I saw him near the Guildhall. I heard someone say to him, "They have accused thee of the murder, arn't they?" He answered, "Yes they have; they shall have a d-d hard job to get it out of me, and a d-d sight harder to hang me."

Mr **John Gunn** - I am the minister of the dissenting congregation at Chard. I visited the prisoner at his own request; he was in custody at the time. On the Monday after he was committed in December we were left alone. I told him I was not aware of his object in sending for me, but if it was with a view of making a confession, I begged he would not make it to me. I spoke to him of the awful situation in which he stood, and of his former life; he wept and said, "God knows I have sins enough to answer for without this murder." Mr **James Edwards** said, in the presence of the prisoner, he understood the prisoner wanted to inquire of me concerning the possibility of pardon for murder. I told the prisoner there was pardon from God upon repentance and humiliation. I continued

with the prisoner a quarter of an hour; I exhorted him to confess his sins to God, and I read some portion of Scripture to him.

Cross examined - I understood his expression to imply that he was not guilty of the murder.

Several other witnesses were examined on the part of the prosecution, and the prisoner being called on for his defence, said, "The charge, my lord, I am now lying under, and which affects my life, I know nothing of, therefore there is nothing lying on my conscience for it; and I hope by the help of God and his mercies, I shall be restored." He then left the rest for his counsel.

Two persons were called who gave the prisoner a good character.

The Learned Judge having summed up the evidence, the Jury consulted for about ten minutes, and returned a verdict of Guilty.

The prisoner was asked in the usual way what he had to say why judgement to die should not be passed upon him. He addressed the Court. "My lord, what I have to say is this - I am free and innocent of the crime so help me Almighty God. I am happy to leave this life and to meet my God under the circumstances I am now placed in." The prisoner then recapitulated what he had said in his examination before the coroner, and said that the child wanting something in the night, his wife went down in the kitchen to get it something and continued - "I am wholly innocent; I know nothing more of it than a sucking child, and the Almighty will find it out, and the world will know that I am innocent".

Mr Justice **Gaselee** then passed the sentence, ordering the prisoner to be executed on Saturday next (this day) and his body to be dissected.

The prisoner then fell to his knees and said in a firm and loud voice, "I am happy to say, my lord, that you have passed sentence of death upon an innocent man." He was then removed.

April 21st 1830

Chard Murder.

We understand that enquiries since the trial, respecting this horrid deed, have been going on at Chard, an impression having been excited that some other person besides **Russell** was implicated in it, but nothing has been divulged that tends in the remotest degree to disparage the verdict against the prisoner, It seems, indeed, unreasonable to expect any such discovery. The chain of circumstantial evidence of the crime seemed to have left no shadow of doubt in the minds of the Jury, who promptly gave a verdict, which the judge received without comment or hesitation, and on which he

immediately pronounced a decisive sentence. An ingenious defence might have awakened some doubt, but the prisoner said nothing but what might be fairly interpreted as a confirmation of his guilt. He had said no light was in his house on the night of the murder; it was clearly proved on the evidence of two witnesses, that they saw a great light in his house from a quarter past ten at night to day-break in the morning. In his short defence, the prisoner admitted that there was a light in his house and that his wife got up to prepare food for the child – but the child was a very young infant, and suckled by its mother, and therefore it would be highly improbable that food would be required for it at night – but, if required, a short time would be sufficient to warm it – for this purpose there could be no necessity for keeping up a large fire during the whole night. We make this comment because a contemporary makes the following remark:- “The strongest evidence against him (the prisoner) appears to be that of a servant who stated that a fire was seen in his house the whole night. This he positively asserts is false. He says, where there is nothing to confess there can be no need of a confession, and that the whole is a collusion against him.” Where there has been a patient trial, and an unhesitating verdict received by the Judge, without the least remonstrance to the Jury, and the sentence immediately pronounced, the more denial of a crime can have no weight. The re-iteration, through a course of many months, of a malicious intention towards the murdered girl, in consequence of his having been fined 5s for a brutal attack upon her – the prompt recognition by him to **Wood**, the day after the murder, of the conversation held by him with **John Rendall**, the day before, which evidently pointed to his diabolical intention – the wet and recently washed shirt at the breast and sleeves – his unusually cleaned shoes the day after the murder – his remark after one of the examinations, that one of the witnesses had made him tremble – the action of the pump during a great part of the night – the bloody water found therein and the manifest falsehood of the interpretation of the facts by the prisoner, together with the mass of corroborating testimony adduced on the trial, furnish such irresistible proof of guilt, that it would be infinitely more astonishing if such facts should appertain to the prisoner if innocent, than they should be identified with the horrid act of which he was the perpetrator. Circumstantial evidence should doubtlessly be allowed its reasonable limits only, but diffidence of judgement must be carried to a fastidious excess indeed, if it can be extended to a case like the present, where a possibility of innocence can alone be opposed to the most unimpeachable and overwhelming evidence.

A poor old man, named **Vile**, living in Huish’s almshouse, Hammet Street in this town, met his death in the following shocking manner, on Wednesday night. He had gone to bed at the usual hour, and his son left him there about eight o’clock, with a candle burning in a chair at the side of the bed. Nothing further was heard of him until the next morning, when the milk man, upon calling, was surprised to find that his customer did not make his appearance as usual. Upon opening his bed room door, a suffocating smell presented itself. The deceased was found a deplorable object; several parts of his body were shockingly burnt, while the bed clothes about him were reduced to cinders. The candle and candlestick had been upset, and had rolled from one side of the bed to the other. It is suspected that having gone to sleep, after neglecting to put out the candle, deceased had accidentally knocked the light from the chair to the bed to the place where it was found. No cries were heard in the night by the persons in the next room; it is therefore presumed that the unfortunate deceased was suffocated by the smoke before he was burnt. An inquest has been held on the body, and a verdict of Accidental Death returned.

April 28th 1830

Inquest by Mr Caines.

On Tuesday last, at Huntspill, on Thomas **Dibble**, aged about three years, son of a respectable farmer. At about half past six on Sunday evening, the deceased was seen playing about the premises, and in about a quarter of an hour after, the servant girl was passing through the yard, and saw him lying in the water on his face in a “dipping place;” – she called aloud for assistance and immediately drew him out of the water; a medical gentleman was soon in attendance and for an hour or more the usual means were used to restore animation, but all attempts proved fruitless. Verdict – Accidentally drowned.

Another murder near Chard.

Chard and its immediate neighbourhood have obtained melancholy pre-eminence in crime. Another frightful outrage on humanity has just occurred at Buckland S Mary, by which a poor lad had become the victim of the savage violence of his father. A sufficient portion of details as they transpired on the Coroner’s Inquest, will be found in our seventh page, on this atrocious case, to justify the satisfaction we feel in stating that the unnatural parent is in the hands of justice, and fully committed to take his trial for this aggravated barbarity. The wild, hilly, and almost mountainous district of this county, wherein **Lane** resided, has been an obstacle to the penetration of the benevolent assiduities of society in its desire to diffuse the enlightening benefits of moral and religious instruction, to which circumstance, in some degree, must be ascribed the frequency of crimes of the deepest turpitude in that neighbourhood. It is within the same parish in which Lane dwelt that the violation and murder of **Betty Trump** occurred a few years ago, so that, including the murder for which **John Russell** was to have been hanged this day, (whose sentence is respited until the 12th May), this is the third murder which has disgraced the immediate neighbourhood of Chard within the last seven years.

J Roberts, esq a very respectable solicitor, of Helstone, died at the White Hart, Wellington, on Friday last, in consequence of the severe injuries received by the upsetting of the Bath and Exeter Mail, on Monday, the 12th instant.

Horrible Murder at Buckland.

On Monday last, an inquest was held by Mr Caines, at the Castle Inn, Neroche Hill, on the body of **John Lane**, aged 12. It appeared from many witnesses that for a long period past the father of the deceased, who is a small farmer, living at Deadman’s Post, in the parish of Buckland St Mary, near Chard, had treated him with extraordinary brutality, such as flogging him with a rope – at other times with an enormous stick – and occasionally by kicking him. His treatment of the child was such, that the latter was induced in some circumstances to go from him and beg for sustenance and protection amongst the adjacent neighbours; he was very diminutive, and looked languid but notwithstanding, his father compelled him to work; and on Friday last, he was seen in the morning churning butter. In the afternoon, at 3 o’clock, he was seen assisting his father planting potatoes. At six in the same evening, the father hailed a person, who was travelling over the Hill at a short distance, and on the approach of this person, whose name is **John Ball**, he informed him “that there was a dead body there.” On enquiring who it was, he said “it was Jack,” meaning his son. Ball went into the field, where the unfortunate boy was lying under a hedge. Ball

knew the boy and spoke to him by name, and asked him to get up. The sufferer said "I can't." The father then took him and, without any hesitation, threw him from off the bank on which he (the father) was standing, into the ditch; after which, Ball got over and lifted him up out of the ditch, in which there was some water. The father then came over, and shook his son, and desired him to stand, but he was unable to do so. The father then struck him a violent blow on the forehead. Deceased never spoke afterwards. Two other persons came up about this time, one of whom saw the blow inflicted; the other, **George Bryant**, of Curland, said, "Farmer Lane, you have used this boy cruelly bad, and I think he'll die before the morning." Upon which, the wretch said, "I hope to God he will." Bryant said, "If he does he'll be crowned, and you'll be sent to prison." After this, an attempt was made to put the deceased on a horse, but it was found impracticable to sustain him thereon, upon which Ball assisted to bear him for about forty yards, when the father took him by the arm, and dragged him on about ten yards more. He then took the son upon his back. The boy's eyes were closed, and his legs hung down, as the witness described it, "like thrashels." He carried him home, and carelessly threw him on the floor. The unfortunate victim of this brutality, as we before stated, never spoke from the time of receiving the blow on the forehead, but languished until Saturday morning, seven o'clock; and, notwithstanding the poor creature was in the state described, he was not noticed by his father or mother from Friday night 9 o'clock, when he was put to bed with his two little sisters until six the next morning, an hour before he breathed his last! Mr **Wheadon** and Mr **Spicer**, respectable medical gentlemen of Chard, attended, and whose testimony was such, in addition to that before adduced, that the Jury, after slight hesitation, returned a verdict of wilful murder against **James Lane**, who was thereupon committed to Ilchester Gaol, by virtue of the Coroner's warrant, to take his trial accordingly. The investigation lasted from half past twelve at noon until nine the same evening.

Inquest on Joseph Roberts esq.

On Friday last, an inquest was held at the White Hart Inn, Wellington, before Mr Caines, and a respectable Jury, on the above-mentioned gentleman, whose death was occasioned by the upsetting of the Bath and Exeter Mail, as described in a former paper.

Christopher Wallis **Popham** esq deposed as follows:- On Monday week, I was travelling with the deceased by the Bath and Exeter Mail – I was in the inside of the Mail, and the deceased was on the box with the coachman, and when the coach got to the bottom of the hill, near the inn (at Beam Bridge) I observed a stallion kicking and prancing in the road. It happened at a wide part of the road, and the horse appeared to have been led off to that part of the road. At this time I let down the glass of the coach door, and we were soon breast of the horse and the coach was instantly upset. I got out through the window and saw Mr **Roberts** leaning against the hedge on the right hand side. I ran to him and asked if he was injured. He said, he believed his leg was broken. As soon as possible, he was brought with great care to his house. I never heard him attach any blame to the coachman or any other person, nor am I aware of any blame to be attributed to any one.

Thomas Willis, driver of the Mail sworn:- On Monday week, in coming towards this place, at the time the drag was taken off, at the bottom of White Ball Hill, I saw a colt and a stallion in the road before me. The stallion was off the road as far as the leader could conveniently take him. The colt ran towards the stallion, and when I got opposite to them, my leaders turned off towards them. I could not prevent them; and

by their sudden turning off, the coach became locked, and instantly upset. I saw him leaning against the hedge, and I soon learnt that his leg was broken. At the time my horses turned off, the stallion was kicking and prancing. One of the leaders, the off one, was a gelding, and the other was a mare. I have driven the gelding more than two years, and the mare a considerable time; never knew either to shy or to become unmanageable before.

Humphrey Langley esq, Surgeon, sworn – On Monday week, on the arrival of the Mail at this house, in the forenoon, I was called to by a person from the coach, who stated that an accident had happened. The deceased was being taken from the coach into the inn, and was carried into a bed-room upstairs; I followed and found on examination a compound fracture and dislocation of the left ankle joint. Mr **Bridge** and Mr **Pyne**, surgeons, soon came to my assistance. I found two pieces of the inner ankle bone broken off and driven into the wound; they were removed with little difficulty, the joint reduced, and the edges of the wound brought together. The usual mode of application was adopted, and deceased appeared from almost constant and daily attention to be going on well, up to the night of Friday the 16th inst. I then discovered some unfavourable alteration. On the Saturday morning he became alarmingly ill. **Dr Kinglake**, Mr **Standert** and Mr **Barnes**, were called in; the two former in the morning, and the latter, from Exeter, in the evening. They all concurred, and said that it appeared to them every thing proper had been done, and the limb placed in the usual proper position, and that nothing more could be done but to endeavour to allay the feverish irritation which deceased was labouring under, and which, more or less, is the constant attendant of accidents of this nature. Everything was continued to be done for the deceased in the manner advised as long as he survived. Deceased lingered until yesterday about three o'clock, and he evidently died from the effects of the accident. I never heard the deceased impute any blame to any one. Mr **Bridge** and Mr **Pyne** corroborated the evidence of the last witness, and the former added, that, in a conversation with the deceased, he said “he thought the accident happened in consequence of a colt, which was running loose about the road.” The Coroner having summed up the evidence, the jury returned the following verdict:- “We find that the death of Mr **Roberts** was occasioned by the upsetting of the Mail Coach, in consequence of the leaders being frightened by a colt straying in the road, and meeting a stallion – that no blame is attached to the coachman, or the leader of the stallion; and we levy a deodand of 5s on the colt, owner unknown.”

The deceased was a highly respectable solicitor, from Helstone, in Cornwall. He was 50 years of age, had a very extensive practice, was universally esteemed, and has left a widow and eight children to lament his loss. The melancholy event has excited considerable interest in the neighbourhood of Wellington.

May 5th 1830

Fatal Accident, as a female child, three years old of the name of **Carr**, whose parents reside near the Jolly Sailor at Bedminster, were crossing the wood on Tuesday morning, she was thrown down by the Barnstaple mail coach, and the wheels passing over her, she expired in about ten minutes after the accident. An inquest was held on the following day when a verdict of Accidental Death was returned, and a deodand of 1s levied on the wheels.

A most melancholy and fatal accident occurred on the road between Yeovil and Martock on Friday last. As Mr **Chaffey** jun a respectable surgeon, of the latter place, was driving his lady and infant child, in a gig, the horse started at some object in the road, became unmanageable, broke the traces, and ran the vehicle against a heap of

stones, in consequence of which, it was upset, and the whole party at once thrown out. Mr Chaffey falling on his head, fractured his skull so severely that he died on the spot; but his lady and child fortunately escaped with some slight injuries. The sad event has caused a deep sensation of regret throughout Martock and its vicinity. Mr Chaffey had been married but little more than a twelvemonth to the lady who, under such distressing circumstances, survives him.

A correspondent of Chard relates the following particulars, relative to the life of **Russell**, now confined in Ilchester Gaol under sentence of death, for the murder of **Joan Turner**. J Russell is a native of Crewkerne, in which town his mother is at this time a resident. It does not appear that he evinced any signs of a roving disposition until he was 12 years of age, when it seems he left his parental roof, and proceeded to Chard, engaged himself as an errand boy in the service of Mr **Cook**, baker, with whom he remained for some time; he has subsequently been employed in more than one of the extensive lace factories in the same town, by which means he was earning an honest and comfortable competence, and gave satisfaction to his employers: of late however, his moral became corrupted, and it has been ascertained that on the Sunday previous to the perpetration of the horrid deed he was engaged in drinking until a late hour. His brother George, who resides in Chard, has often entreated him to forget any misunderstanding, which might have occurred between him and the deceased. He still continues to assert his innocence.”

May 12th 1830

John Russell, found guilty of the murder of **Joan Turner** at our last Assizes, and whose execution was appointed for this day, has again been respited!!! We are the more surprised at this, since the fact has been authenticated and submitted to the Judge subsequently to the trial, that on the morning of the murder, the following articles were supplied to Russell from a neighbouring huckster's shop; viz. half a pound of candles, half a pound of soap, and a quarter pound of pearlash and entered to Russell's account accordingly. Russell it will be remembered, denied having any light in his house during the night of the murder; but the fact of a light being seen during the whole night, and until day break, was distinctly proved by Mrs **Clarke**'s female servants.

An inquest was held by Mr Caines, on Thursday last, at Black Moor, in the parish of West Buckland, on **John Coram**, aged 65, who died rather suddenly on the preceding Monday. The deceased had been in the army, and was a pensioner, and his health had been much impaired as to render him quite idiotic, so much so as to be incapable of feeding himself, and, on the afternoon of the 3d instant, he rose from his seat, rambled across the room, and fell against a table, whereby he received a mortal injury from the lung being lacerated, and in about an hour he was a corpse – verdict accordingly.

Inquests by Mr Ashford of Shepton Mallet.

At Wookey, on the body of **Susannah Cook**. The deceased had been out to see some friends on the preceding evening, and returned to her home about half past eight o'clock in perfect health, and went to bed immediately, where she was found dead the following morning.

At Butleigh, on **Thomas Vearing**, aged 70. Deceased left his home about six o'clock in the morning to go to his work, taking his dinner with him; he came home in the evening about five o'clock, rather intoxicated, and sat down to his supper, and whilst eating it, fell back in his chair and instantly expired. Verdict in each case, “Died by the visitation of God.”

And at Portbury, on **James Tippett**, aged 16 where a verdict of Felo de se was returned in consequence of the following evidence:- Mr **Joseph Cox**, yeoman, deposed – that he resided at Portbury, and the deceased lived in his service five years, and had in general conducted himself well, except in two or three instances; and on the day the deceased destroyed himself he had behaved himself ill in his master’s absence; upon his mistress reproving him he went away, and they saw him no more. **George Sheddire** being sworn, said that he was a servant to the preceding witness – that the deceased was wanted about five o’clock in the evening to go milking, but he could not find him; he made every enquiry among the neighbouring houses to no purpose. He then went with his mistress to milk the cows; and in our way, my mistress saw a hat and a knife lying by the side of a ditch, in a drove leading to her field. I went to the spot, but did not discover the deceased; I then walked round the field, and then returned to the place where the hat and knife were found, and on looking at the water in the ditch, I observed that the surface was disturbed. I went and got a rake, and upon dragging the water, discovered the deceased; and with the assistance of another person who was passing by, we contrived to pull out the body. A large stone which he had secured by his braces was found round his neck, and the whole time which had elapsed in this work of self destruction could not have exceeded half an hour. Other witnesses proved that the deceased had never exhibited anything irrational in his manner or conduct – but he had at times threatened to drown himself, when displeased. After a very patient investigation of the case, the Jury returned the above verdict, and the coroner issued his warrant accordingly, - the body being interred the same evening in the Church-yard, without the usual burial service.

June 2nd 1830

Fatal Occurrence – On Saturday se’nnight, a young man named **James Nutt**, who resided with his mother in an alley in Broad Street, St Philips, Bristol, was killed in a contest with his own brother.

On Monday se’nnight, Mr **John Hodge** of East Ashford committed suicide by cutting his throat. A coroners inquest was held on the body, and a verdict of insanity was returned.

On Sunday last, **Robert Jenkins**, a boy, in attempting to take a bird’s nest, near North Petherton, fell from a ladder and after lingering until ten next day, expired.

Inquests by Mr Caines.

On Monday last, at a cottage near the six mile stone, from Bridgwater, on Cock-hill, on **Samuel Fisher**, aged 19. On Saturday, the 29th instant, deceased was the driver of a common stage cart, drawn by a grey pony mare, and was on his return from Bridgwater to Street; the cart was rather heavily laden, and deceased and two persons who had been riding on the load had alighted on coming to an acclivity of the hill, and near the spot beforementioned. When the pony had reached the summit of the hill, she began to jib, and backed the cart into a ditch adjoining the road. Deceased had put his shoulder to the wheel to prevent the cart from running back, and, in his endeavours to do so, he was forced back into the ditch, where the cart was upset, and the nave of the near wheel was forced against his neck, whereby the vertebrae were so much injured as to cause his instant death. Two other persons who happened to be on the cart when it upset, together with part of the load, were thrown into an adjoining field, but without incurring any injury whatever. It was stated at the inquest that the mare was in the habit of running back in the manner stated, and the Jury were of opinion that it

was an improper animal for the purposes for which she was used, and they declared her deodand, and value five pounds, with a verdict of Accidental Death.

And at Scilly, in the parish of Cutcombe, near Minehead, on **Eliza Heard**, aged three years, who, on Friday last (being left, for a short time only, by her sister, to whose care she was entrusted) having gone too near to the fire, her clothes soon got in a blaze, and she was so much scorched that she expired early on the following morning. Verdict, Accidentally Burnt.

June 9th 1830

Inquests by Mr Caines of Langport

At Staple Fitzpaine on **William Virgin**, aged 18 months. The deceased had gone out unnoticed by his parents, and was not missed by them until an account was brought of his having been found drowned in a brook a few yards distant. It appeared from the evidence that he could not have been absent a quarter of an hour. Some ineffectual endeavours were used to restore life. Verdict – Accidentally drowned.

At Stoke Sub Hamdden, on **Charles Chaffey**, who having been employed with some other persons in quarrying stones for a lime kiln near Holy Tree, incautiously undermined too far, when an immense quantity of the pit gave way and fell, and completely covering him, so that nearly twenty minutes elapsed before the earth could be sufficiently removed to extricate him. Verdict. Accidental Death.

At the Dolphin Inn, Ilminster, on **George Harwood**, aged 9 years. On Friday the 21st ultimo, the deceased was employed throughout the day with his father, in planting potatoes, and performed his work without complaint. Twice in the course of their labour they partook of bread, cheese and cider and during the day the deceased went to a farm house at a short distance to procure more liquor. They continued in the field till about half past six o'clock, when a heavy shower coming on, they proceeded with some other persons, to a barn on Ilminster Hill, for shelter within a few yards of which the deceased was observed to stagger, as was then imagined from intoxication. He soon became speechless and insensible, and unable to walk; upon which his father carried him home and put him to bed, still believing him to be intoxicated. About five o'clock on the following morning, it was discovered that his case was of a more serious nature, and Mr **Mules**, surgeon, was called and speedily attended, but the deceased had expired previous to his arrival. Shortly after, a rumour prevailed that a blow which the deceased had received on the preceding Monday, and not an extra quantity of cider had caused his death; but, after a long investigation the jury returned the verdict – Died of Apoplexy.

Inquests by Mr Caines of Langport.

At Montacute, on **Chas Godfrey**, aged 27, who, on Wednesday, the 2d June, was employed in quarrying stones for the use of the Turnpike, and having prepared, and set fire to a charge of gunpowder for blowing a rock, and not having gone far enough off when the explosion took place, a piece of rock, about 10 pounds wt, fell upon his head, and he was killed on the spot, his skull being severely fractured. Verdict, accidentally killed.

At Crowcombe, on Saturday last, on **Sarah Reed**, aged 17. Deceased had been living a few weeks with a farmer named Payne, at Little Quantock, and on the preceding Wednesday, in the morning, and up to dinner time, she appeared perfectly well; at about one, she sat down to dinner with the family, but it was observed that she did not eat, and soon became sick, vomiting frequently; at about four o'clock, she complained of a pain in her head, and of thirst. Mr **Payne** gave her some mint tea, and also, in the course of the afternoon, a little cider mixed with water, and sent her to bed. The

vomiting continued at intervals, and on Mrs Payne (who appeared to be very kind towards her) going into her bed-room between six and seven in the evening, having left her a few moments only, she found her dead. Notwithstanding the symptoms of the case, as above stated, there did not exist the slightest reason to suppose the deceased had taken any thing of a poisonous, or that she could possibly have done so, and the jury were fully satisfied, after hearing the evidence of several persons, (amongst whom was a surgeon of eminence) that the deceased died by the Visitation of God and they returned a verdict accordingly.

And at Dulverton, on Monday last, on **Richard Cockram**, aged 61. On the preceding Wednesday, deceased was on a cart loading faggots, which were handed to him by another man, whilst the cart was standing still, he fell, and pitched on the back part of his neck, which caused a paralysis of all the lower parts, and on Friday, he died. Verdict, Died from injury of the spine, occasioned by an accident.

June 16th 1830

A young man of the name of Nuth, son of Mr **Nuth**, baker of Frome, was thrown from his horse returning from Binegar Fair on Thursday se'nnight, and received such serious injury that he expired on Monday last.

William Fell, the cook at the Bath Hotel Clifton, who last week shot himself, died at the infirmary on Tuesday morning. On a post mortem examination the bullet was found lodged in the upper part of the head. A verdict of "insanity" has been returned upon a coroners inquest.

On Saturday last died, in the 20th year of his age, Mr **Toms**, bookseller of this town. The immediate cause of the death of this lamented youth, was the rupture of a blood vessel on the lungs. Notwithstanding his long immersion in the water, while bathing, in Priory Field as stated in our last, life having been restored, sanguine hopes were entertained of his recovery; but, to the deep regret his friends, their expectations have been fatally disappointed.

Inquests by Mr Caines of Langport.

An inquest was held on Monday last, by Mr Caines, on the body of a newly born female child, at the house of **W Betty** situate at North Newton near North Petherton. The evidence stated that **Hannah Pathe** had lived servant two or three years with Mr W Betty, and was suspected by the mother of Mr Betty of being with child, which she constantly denied. On Saturday last, it was discovered that she had delivered herself, and concealed the body under some straw in the cider house. She stated that having fallen downstairs the night previous, she had struck herself on the side, and had miscarried. The child was a fine and full grown one, and excepting on the face, which was swollen and slightly disfigured, there were no marks of violence on it. Three causes were assigned by Mr **Parker** and Mr **Strong** as those which might have occasioned the death of the child; but the jury returned a verdict of Wilful Murder, and the coroner issued his warrant for committing Hannah Pathe to Wilton Gaol, for trial at the next Assizes, as soon as she can be properly removed.

At Charlinch, on the body of **Sarah Thomas**, aged eight years who, on Saturday last, being left with two other smaller children, whilst in the act of blowing the fire, of which there was very little in the hearth, a spark caught her clothes, which instantly came to a blaze, and from her running into the open air, the flames spread so rapidly, that her clothes were destroyed, and she was so dreadfully burnt that she expired in about five hours.

And at the Lethbridge Arms, Bishops Lydeard, on **Robert Jennings**, aged 28. Deceased, on Saturday last, was driving a wagon near Dean's Cross, loaded with culm, and drawn by two horses, which deceased whipped on at a most furious rate, and having passed a cart, and attempting to pass another wagon, also loaded, the driver of which endeavoured to make way for him, deceased was seen to fall on his face on the road, and the two near wheels passing over him, his collar bone was broken, and he received such other injuries as to occasion his death in about an hour. Deceased was notorious on the road for his misconduct in violently driving his cart, and only the Saturday before his death, had been committed at the instance of the **Rev S Smith**, in the mitigated penalty of 5s for furious driving. The deceased was in the habit of drinking to excess and in this state probably met his death.

June 23rd 1830

Murder

On Wednesday last an inquest was held at Frome, by Mr Ashford, on the body of **Benjamin Butcher**, the young man who was so dreadfully injured in the ferocious attack made by the Irishman, at the Angel and Crown Inn, (as was stated in a former paper) and who expired on Monday last, in consequence. The jury returned a verdict of Wilful Murder against one of the Irishmen named **Tekin**, it appeared that he commenced the attack without any sufficient provocation. Tekin has been committed to take his trial for the offence. The unfortunate deceased has left a wife and three children.

Fatal Consequences of Furious Driving.

An inquest was held on the 11th inst at Oakhill by Mr Ashford of Shepton Mallet, on the body of Mr **William King**, sadler, of Castle Cary, who died on the 9th instant. It appeared in evidence that deceased, accompanied by a man named **Fone**, of Castle Cary, who drove, was proceeding in a gig at a furious pace through Oakhill, on the 24th ult and that soon after they had left the village, the deceased, at the request of Fone, jumped out of the vehicle, and occasioned a compound dislocation of the ankle. The case went on favourably for seven or eight days, when locked jaw took place, which terminated the poor man's sufferings. The conduct of Fone, at an earlier part of the day, was described by the witnesses as shamefully reckless and improper; and just before the accident, he was seen to lash the horse up a hill, standing the whole time upright in the gig. The Jury, after some deliberation, returned a verdict of Accidental Death, occasioned by the incautious driving of **Wm Fone**, with a deodand of eight pounds on the horse. When the verdict was returned, Mr Fone was called on and the foreman of the Jury addressed him (since it appeared he had shown great indifference and insensibility to the calamity he had caused) to the following effect. Mr Fone, as foreman of the Jury now assembled to consider the verdict on the melancholy death of Mr Wm King, it is perhaps, a duty devolving in me to make some observations. This calamitous event, Mr Fone, has happened, I do not, I dare not say thro' any wilful intention of yours, but from the evidence of several respectable persons, who were eye witnesses, through your extreme incautions and furious driving, and this poor man has been hurried into eternity, his afflicted wife left a widow, his children fatherless, and for aught you cared, he might have been left far from home without a friend to sympathize with him, or alleviate his sufferings. For, sir, if my information be correct, you never saw him from the day of the accident to the day of his death. Nor had you the humanity, altho' living in the same town, once to call on his family to inquire for him. Such conduct has naturally drawn from each of us feelings that cannot be

suppressed or concealed. Notwithstanding this cruel conduct on your part, the poor sufferer found kind friends among strangers, who most anxiously did every thing in their power to soothe his bodily and mental sufferings, until death put a period to his existence. We hope that the awful death of a fellow creature, and a neighbour too, will so operate on your future life, that you will not fail to contribute every thing in your power to compensate the loss which the widow and children have so awfully sustained.

At Frome on the body of **John Newth**, who was killed by a fall from his horse. At Clevedon, on **George Caple**, who was drowned while bathing.

At Meare, on **Ann Corp**, who accidentally fell into the river Bru, and was drowned. Verdict in each case, Accidental Death.

At Weston Super Mare, on the body of an elderly lady, who went to bed in perfect health, and was found a corpse on the following morning by her servant. Verdict, Died by the Visitation of God.

Suicide.

An inquest was held on Monday by Mr Uphill, coroner, at the George public house, at Bathampton, near Bath, on the body of Mr **Martin Mason**, a surgeon, who has for some time past resided at No 2 Queen Street. It appeared, that at ten o'clock in the evening of Wednesday last, the deceased attended at the accouchement of a patient of his residing in the vicinity of Monmouth street. He repeated his visit at three o'clock on the morning of Thursday; but in the interval the case of his patient had assumed a dangerous aspect, and on leaving the apartment in which she was confined, "the Doctor" evinced great agitation. At about ten o'clock the same night the woman died. It appeared that Mason left his lodgings about eight o'clock in the morning of Thursday, and returned there no more; nor was there any thing heard of him until about eight o'clock; on Sunday morning when a man named **Lewis**, discovered his body suspended to a tree, in a field near the stone bridge at Hampton. The deceased was in needy circumstances, and had for some time been labouring under depression of spirits. He was 76 years of age. Verdict, Temporary Derangement.

Hydrophobia

On Wednesday the 16th instant, aged 58, died, deservedly regretted, Captain **Gillam**, of this town. The disease to which the lamented deceased fell a victim, exhibited most characteristically every symptom of rabid hydrophobia, and that too with extraordinary violence. As usual, in that appalling malady, life was terminated on the third day after it's development. It is reported that the deceased should have cursorily remarked about six months since, that he had been lately bitten by a dog, but no observation was made either at that time or at any subsequent period in reference to any supposed rabid state of the animal. The peculiar aspect and irresistible progress however, of the horrible affection, fully warrant the conclusion that some such virulent cause must have preceded the tremendously mortal effect that deplorably ensued. The sudden and awful termination of the life of this highly respected gentleman, furnished occasion, on Sunday last, for a most eloquent effusion of pulpit oratory, by the Rev R F **Follett**, at the church of St Mary Magdalen, which powerfully excited the sympathies of all present.

Russell the Murderer

This villain convicted at our last Assizes of the murder of Joan **Turner**, has, to the surprise of every one, had his sentence commuted into transportation for life, and has

been sent off to the hulks accordingly. We believe the instance to be without precedent, where a man found guilty of a murder, should be allowed to escape the retribution of public justice. In this case the vindictive motive was clearly shewn and the facts and circumstances of the atrocity were irresistibly established against the prisoner. The man was either innocent or guilty, and should have been dealt with accordingly, either by immediate discharge or prompt punishment. He could not have been moderately guilty. In all the suggestions for the improvement of our criminal code, we have met with no one which contemplates a case like this, in which a kind of half way station for ultra-humanity to stop at, seems to have been selected. If a murder may be commuted by a transportation for life, it is certainly an offence expiable on easy terms. As the matter now stands, the neighbourhood where this foul deed was committed is left in a state of indescribable astonishment at the result – there not being a single soul who heard the trial, who has the slightest doubt of the propriety of the verdict. A variety of particulars most conclusively illustrative of the prisoners guilt, have also transpired subsequent to his conviction, and the Committee who so perseveringly sat, with so much credit to themselves, to investigate the facts, among whom were Magistrates, Clergymen, Solicitors, and the most respectable persons of the town and it's vicinity, all concur in one unqualified opinion of the monster's guilt. While we respect the motives of a Judge for inclining the balance of an opinion, which, by the bye, at the time of the trial, he did not express to be doubtful, in favour of a prisoner, it is to be deplored that the present instance should have been deemed proper for the exercise of any merciful sensibilities, believing as we do that they could not have been bestowed on an object so utterly unworthy of their application.

On Saturday evening, as a man named **Laing** was proceeding towards his home, near Kingston, much intoxicated, he was taken up, near Rowbarton turnpike, behind a person who was going on horseback in the same direction. Laing had ridden but a short distance when he fell off, and pitching on the back of his head, he lay in a senseless condition on the road, blood flowing very rapidly from his ears. He was carried to the house of Mr **Spurle**, wheelwright, where every attention was bestowed on him, but without effect – He died on Monday morning.

Inquest by Mr Caines.

At Brompton Ralph, on Friday last, on the body of **J Chaplin**, aged 58, who, on the preceding Tuesday, having stood some time in the water of a sheep wash, at Mr **Burston's** of Higher Stone Farm, was taken ill, and on coming out, fell on his knees and almost immediately expired. The practise of washing sheep in this manner is generally dangerous, and can easily be obviated by letting the water fall from a trough, on the sheep, as is done in most well regulated farms. The verdict in this instance was – Died by the Visitation of God.

June 30th 1830

Inquests by Mr Caines.

On Wednesday last at the Cottage Inn, at Rowbarton, in the parish of Taunton St James, on **Joseph Laing**, aged 37. On the preceding Saturday the deceased was on his return from the market and got on a horse to ride behind another man; being intoxicated, and the horse going at a trot, he fell off, and pitching on his head, received a concussion of the brain, of which he died on the Monday following. Verdict, Accidental Death, deodand on the horse £5.

At Trent, near Yeovil, on **Mary Symes**, aged 47. The deceased had latterly been an occasional servant at the public house in that parish, but had left about three weeks, not being able to perform her work; having got better, she applied to be again employed, but was told she was not wanted; since which time she had done but little, and had received some parochial relief. On Friday last she went to offer service at Yeovil, and on her return showed a paper containing some powder, which it appeared she took, and died in about two hours afterwards. **George Edward Wellington** and his brother, sons of Mr Wellington of Yeovil, druggist, proved that on Friday last she bought at their shop two penny worth of arsenic, saying that it was to kill rats, and that it was for Mr **Whittle**. It was proved that the deceased was of weak mind, and in great poverty, and the Jury returned a verdict of Lunacy.

At Sandford Orcas in this county, on **Hannah Langdon**, aged seven years, who on Friday last, being in the street at the time an empty wagon was turning a corner, was forced by the hind wheel against the corner of a house, which caused a concussion of the brain, of which she died in a few hours. Verdict, Accidentally killed: deodand on the wheel 5s.

At Sampford Brett, near Williton, on **John Woolcott**, aged about 70. This poor man had for some time past shown symptoms of insanity, so much so as to render some confinement necessary. On Tuesday afternoon he was found suffocated in a shallow pool of water, the depth not being sufficient to cover him. Verdict, Accidental Death.

At Watchet, on Monday last, on the body of **John Vickary**, aged 17, who, on Saturday, whilst sculling a boat outside the pier, fell out of it, and was drowned. Being high water, it was nearly four hours before the body was found. Verdict, Accidental Death.

At Taunton, on Monday last, on the body of **Benjamin Jefferies**, esq. aged 60. The deceased was a much respected inhabitant of this town, and on Saturday last, the morning of his decease, had been to market, and called on several of his friends. On his return home, he was sitting down to dinner, but fell, and died instantly. Verdict, Died by the Visitation of God. It was remarked at the Inquest, as a very singular fact, that the father and grandfather of the deceased died equally sudden. The latter was a Dissenting Minister, and expired in his pulpit.

Committed to Wilton House of Correction. **Hannah Pathe**, for murder of a new born child.

July 21st 1830

Inquests by Mr Caines of Langport

At Wellington, near the Monument, on **Thomas Yandall**, aged 72. The deceased fell from a hay-rick, about which he was employed, and ruptured a large blood vessel; he died almost instantly. Verdict, Accidental Death.

At the Old Inn, at Bishop's Hull, on **James Sparkes**, aged 8 years, who was amusing himself by angling by the side of the river Tone, and, having incautiously approached too near the brink, fell in. Notwithstanding the occurrence was witnessed by his companions, it was more than a quarter of an hour before he was taken out of the water, and all endeavours to restore life proved fruitless.

At the Full Moon Inn, High Street, Taunton, on **John Fooks**, an illegitimate child, aged 9 days. The particulars of this case are of a nature not proper to appear; but the circumstances had excited a considerable interest in the town. After an investigation of about five hours before a Jury consisting of eighteen respectable inhabitants, they

returned a verdict that the deceased had fallen into some water in a scalding state, and that the death was accidental.

July 28th 1830

Inquests of Mr Caines of Langport.

At Lymington, near Ilchester, on **Jane Woodbourne**, aged 35. Deceased was the wife of a shoemaker, and had a year ago been under the care of Mr **Shorland**, who considered her then to be consumptive; but since that period she had appeared to be recovering, only occasionally complaining of pain. On Monday, the 19th instant, after taking an egg and some bread and butter, and sitting in her chair apparently well, she suddenly became alarmingly ill, and instantly expired.

At Ham, in the parish of Creech, on Farmer **John Broom**, aged 70. On Saturday, the 17th inst, the deceased had taken his supper (bread and cheese and onions) and drank moderately of cider; soon after which he went to bed, and on his family following him, they found him in a dying state, and in ten minutes from the time he went upstairs, he was a corpse. Deceased was universally respected as a truly honest man, and had scarcely ever been ill. Verdict in each case, Died by the Visitation of God.

At Milborne Port, on **Ann Frost**, aged about two years. In this case considerable blame attached to the parents, for having left so young a child without a person competent to look after her; and also to the owner of the premises for having suffered a well to remain without a cover or protection of any kind whatever into which the poor child fell, and was there found drowned. Verdict accordingly.

And at Bathpool Inn, in the parish of West Monkton, on **George Burge**, aged about ten years. The deceased was employed to attend on of the locks on the River Tone, to prevent an unnecessary waste of water; and on Saturday last, a person passing by observed a hat on the surface of the water; and on making some inquiry, the deceased was missing, and was after a little search found drowned in the pound of the lock. Verdict, Accidentally Drowned.

August 18th 1830

We beg that our friends may not be too much horrified on reading the following narrative of another murder, presumed to have been committed near Chard. The neighbourhood of that town seems, indeed to have lately possessed a monopoly of misdeeds and atrocities, and, in consequence, a very ready credence is bestowed upon any event of kindred character to those which have already transpired. "Give a dog an ill name, and hang him," says the adage – not that they do hang a Chard offender who has been proved to deserve that fate, as the conviction and inexplicable escape, upon any rational grounds, of RUSSELL, at the last Assizes, for the murder of JOAN TURNER, sufficiently proves; but this, as every one knows, was an extraordinary exception to established precedents. In the present instance, we have little doubt that Mr Stuckey will, at no distant period, be found rebuking or laughing at his anxious neighbours, for asserting that he has been murdered, and, like Mr **Partridge**, the almanack-maker, may be found eventually putting himself in a passion with folks, who, in despite of his presence, persist in affirming that he is dead, and that he ought to be ashamed of himself for being seen walking out of his grave; - Mysterious Circumstance – On Monday se'nnight, Mr Simeon **Stuckey**, a respectable builder, of Chard, left his home, about four o'clock in the afternoon, for Stratton, in the parish of South Petherton, where he was superintending a building. In his way thither, he called at Windwhistle Inn, and took a glass of cider with the landlord, intimating where he was going, and that he would call, on his return, the same evening. About one o'clock

on the following morning, as – **Norris**, jun. sheriff's officer, of Crewkerne, was riding from the town to Windwhistle Inn, he found a pony with a bridle and saddle, straying on Chillington Down, which he laid hold of, and took through the turnpike gate to the inn just by, where it was recognised by the landlord as being the horse on which Mr Stuckey rode; the landlord then turned it into his field, and went into bed. In the morning he proceeded about his ordinary business; and it was not until five or six o'clock on Tuesday that he communicated the circumstance to the friends of Mr Stuckey, who, from the lateness of the hour, were prevented from making any effectual search until the following morning, when, at day-break, a number of persons formed themselves into parties to proceed in different directions, enquiring at several cottages on the roadside, at one of which they were informed that a hat and stick had been picked up the preceding day, which, on being produced, were identified as being the property of Mr Stuckey. This cottage is situated on the bye road from Lopenhead, through Dinnington, by Earl Poulett's Park, to Windwhistle Turnpike, and is distant from Hinton St George one mile from Crewkerne and Ilminster three miles, and from South Petherton four miles, and Chard six miles. Near the cottage where the hat was found were discovered evident marks of a dreadful recontre, as if the body had been dragged across the road and laid in the ditch, near which was a quantity of coagulated blood, and other evidences of violence and struggling, leaving unequivocal proofs of murder having been committed. The search has been continued; a reward for the discovery of the body has been offered, and every means which appeared feasible have been adopted, but hitherto without effect. Mr Stuckey was universally respected at Chard, was in an extensive way of business, and not known to have an enemy."

August 25th 1830

Caution – A servant girl named **Lemann** (of Henstridge Somerset) was burnt to death at the Chough Inn, Blandford yesterday se'nnight, by her clothes taking fire, on going upstairs, much fatigued, she sat down on the bed and fell asleep leaving the candle in such a position that the flame communicated with her clothes.

Murder - The judge having given orders that the ladies leave the court, **Hannah Pathe** was put on her trial, charged with the wilful murder of a new born female child, at North Petherton, on the 13th day of June last, by placing her hand on the mouth and nose of and thereby suffocating it. Two surgeons, called as witnesses, proved these facts which, on examination showed that the child had been born alive; and the mistress and her mother proved the concealment of the birth and her repeatedly denying the fact, when charged with her pregnancy. The girl, when the circumstance was discovered, described the cause of the death of the child to be want of medical assistance, and the child's falling down; which circumstances might, according to the surgeons testimony, have produced such ruptures as were evinced, on internal examination, to have produced death. This circumstance, together with the girl's excellent character, and having lived with her mistress, in whose service the accident happened, three years, concurred to induce the Jury to find her guilty – not of murder, but of the lighter offence – concealment of birth. Sentence, six month's imprisonment.

Murder – **James Lane** was placed at the bar, upon an indictment which charged him with the wilful murder of his own son, aged twelve years.

Mr **Bere** conducted the prosecution, and having stated the case to the Jury, called and examined John **Ball**, who deposed, - I live at Staple Hill. I know the prisoner James Lane, and knew his son, **John Lane**. He was 12 years old. On Friday, the 23rd of

April, about six in the evening, I saw the prisoner in a field; he called to me and said, "I have a dead fellow here." I answered, "The deuce a bit; and not dead, I suppose." I asked who it was, and he said "Jack;" I went in over the hedge and took him up, and asked him to stand. He said he could not. I asked him to go home, and I would help him. He answered that he had tried, and could not. I leaned him back against the hedge. His father said to him, "If thou doesn't get up and go round the hedge, "I'll take a good stick to thee." The father took him by the top of the smock frock to the top of the hedge, and let him fall into the ditch. The top of the hedge was six feet from the ground. I took him from the ditch and put him on the bank. I said to the prisoner, "I believe he is as good as dead now." The prisoner said there was nothing the matter with him any more than with me, only the sulkiness of him. A boy named **Cross**, now came up on horseback, and the prisoner asked Cross to carry the boy home behind him. I attempted to put the boy on horseback, but he could not sit. The father said, "Let him go; he can sit as well as you or I" He was not able to sit on horseback, I took the boy down, and the prisoner took one side of him and I the other, and we carried him about 20 yards. He attempted to walk, but gave way in his knees. One of my arms was injured, and I was obliged to let him go. The prisoner then took the boy on about 20 yards more, and gave him a gentle slap on the temple, and threw him on the ground. He said to the boy, "Thee ought to have a good stick, and be beat to death." Prisoner then took the boy on his back, and carried him home. I went with the prisoner home. When he came to the house, he let the boy fall on the floor, which was a hard one. He said to the boy at the same time, "~Lie there, you d-d sulky young beggar. I'll never heave thee up any more." The mother said to the boy, "Get up, go to the fire, and don't lie there." She took him up and carried him to the fire. He lay there a few minutes when the prisoner said, "I'll see if thee can move." He then took the boy, and put his head within three inches of the fire, and between the fire irons. The boy's clothes were very wet. The boy seemed to make a bit of a moaning noise, and seemed to have tears come from his eyes, but he could not draw himself from the fire. I took him back and placed him where his mother had put him. The father said to the boy, "D-n thee, thou shan't lie there, comforting thyself." He then put the boy back in the place where he had first dropped him from his back. I said, "Don't serve him like that, Mr Lane, put him to bed. He'll not trouble you or anybody else after the next morning. I tried to give the boy some food, but he would not take it. The prisoner's daughter, Eliza, then came in, and the prisoner told her he'd give her a penny if she'd – in the mouth of the boy. The prisoner said nothing about sending for a doctor. I had seen John Lane, the boy, that morning before about ten o'clock. He looked pale and wish't he was able to walk, and in his usual health. Other witnesses were examined, when the counsel on both sides entered into a consultation of some length, of which the result was, that the prisoner, with the permission of the learned Judge, withdrew his plea of not guilty, and pleaded Guilty to the charge of manslaughter, of which lesser crime he was then found guilty by the Jury. The Judge, after commenting upon the enormity of the prisoner's offence, intimated that he should be transported for life.

Murder – Saturday morning, **Michael Teaken** stood charged with the wilful murder of Benjamin Butcher on the second day of June last, by beating and wounding him with a poker over the right leg. It appeared that a quarrel took place between **Butcher**, the deceased, and his brother on one side, and the four Irish hawkers, the prisoner, Michael Teaken, his brother **Matthew Teaken**, **McMullen** and **Patrick Keating** on the other, relative to Lydia Jones, a girl of light character; that in the course of the quarrel deceased took off his hat and coat, with intention to fight Matthew Teaken,

and gave him a blow with his open hand on the cheek, and that before Butcher had struck Teaken, his brother, the prisoner, took a large poker from the fireplace, and grasping it in both hands, struck Butcher with it such a violent blow that it felled him to the ground in a senseless state; that on Butcher brother then interfering, Teaken gave him a blow just above the right eye, and he likewise fell senseless; then they ran away (all four of the Irishmen) Teaken taking the poker with him, and within ten minutes after, two of the party were taken into custody at the Ship Inn. The prisoner was taken into custody subsequently. The evidence of Mr **Bush**, surgeon, clearly proved that Butcher's death was caused by the blow inflicted by the prisoner. One of the witnesses for the prisoner, **George Jelly**, swore that he believed that the prisoner thought himself in danger when he took up the poker in his defence. This, together with the testimony of several witnesses, who had known Teaken for some time, and who spoke as to his general peaceable and inoffensive disposition, induced the Jury to acquit him of murder and find for manslaughter. Sentenced to transportation for life.

Alleged murder of **Stuckey** at Windwhistle.

We are confirmed in our opinion on this subject. The mysterious murder is neither a murder or a mystery. The marks of blood, and other indications of a violent rencontre on the road, which have been considered as conclusive of the murder, actually occur within ten yards of one cottage, and a very short distance from another, the inmates of both of which heard the horse go by, but no other noise or struggle of any kind. From thence to the lime-kiln, where some have sapiently conjectured that his body was carried and consumed, must be at least a mile, and to have gone thither the murderers must have exposed themselves to the chance of observation the greater part of the way in the high public road from Chard to Crewkerne! And what was to be gained by all this pains taking? The hat, stick, and horse remained. It is desirable therefore to raise an idea of his murder, and leave the matter to the conjecture and exaggerations of the credulous, that active pursuit after the offender might be paralyzed. This has answered accordingly. His friends affirmed that his circumstances were good, and that he had £1000 after payment of his debts. This is notoriously untrue. Parties who have lent their names to his bills are threatened with proceedings upon them, and the remarkable celerity with which his property is already to be disposed of, does not auger well for those to whom he stands indebted. Stuckey was very active in collecting every shilling due to him, immediately before his disappearance, and it is known that he took a considerable sum away with him. His account at the same time was overdrawn at the Bank, and his acceptances were becoming due daily. Why a meeting of his creditors had not been called, and the statement of his affairs submitted to them, is to us not mysterious, not is it impenetrable to us, why those in the secret should still insist on his being murdered. Stuckey's parents lived very near the spot where it was said he was way laid and killed; and it is not a little remarkable, that on that particular night he called upon them after they had gone upstairs to bed, and took an affectionate leave of them, though he has been repeatedly known to pass the door without calling. So many frightful deeds of blood have occurred in this part of the country of late, that we are sincerely glad in being able to assist in dissipating the alarm which, in our opinion, has been so falsely and infamously excited on the subject. The statement in some of the Papers, that Stuckey's body had been found under a rick of brushwood, has no more truth in it than the numberless other tales afloat on the subject.

A notice appeared in the Friday's Gazette, in reference to the supposed murder of Mr Stuckey of Chard, offering his Majesty's pardon to any one (except the person or

persons who actually committed the deed) who shall discover his accomplice or accomplices, so that it may lead to apprehension and conviction, and a reward of £100 is tendered to any person (except as before stated) who shall discover the offender or offenders.

On Saturday last, a young man, named **George Blatchford**, who had been unwell for some time, while standing at the door of his residence in Concord Row, suddenly fell down, apparently very ill. A surgeon was immediately sent for; but, before his arrival, the poor fellow had expired. The immediate cause of his death was the rupture of a blood vessel. The deceased was an engineer at Mr **Rawlison's** lace manufactory, and in the 29th year of his age.

September 1st 1830

Discovery of the body of Mr **Stuckey**.

Although a report, founded on a letter from Lambrook, was very generally raised on Saturday last, that Mr Stuckey's body was found, yet it was soon known to have no foundation. Yesterday forenoon, however, the melancholy fact was indisputably ascertained, the deceased having been found that morning by a party of reapers, in the trench of a wheat field belonging to Lord **Poulett**, occupied by Mr **Harris**, of Dinnington, about a quarter of a mile from the spot where the deceased's hat was picked up. In his pocket was found his watch, with some country bank notes and three sovereigns. A vast multitude from all parts of the neighbourhood were hastening to the spot where the hat was found. The nature of the wound which occasioned his death will no doubt be the subject of very scrupulous investigation, and the result of it will probably be conclusive as to the real character of this strange and deplorable event. It is no more than justice to our respectable correspondent at Chard, that we should avow our thankfulness to him for his earnest assiduities on this subject, and though his explication of the mystery, which enveloped the affair has proved erroneous, yet we are quite sure that he could not, by any possibility, have had either a sinister interest to promote, or any personal pique or prejudice, to gratify. As we last week remarked, it was certainly desirable that the town of Chard should be defended from any unnecessary stain on its reputation, such a series of atrocities having of late years been perpetrated in that neighbourhood; and it is not too much to say that the value of habitable property in that Borough and its vicinity, has been, if not affected, at least endangered thereby. While therefore we could fairly sustain our correspondent's opinion, we felt it our duty so to do. Whether the unfortunate man has been murdered, or in what other manner he met his death, will in all probability transpire on the Coroner's Inquest which has been summoned on the occasion.

Inquest held by Mr Caines of Langport.

On Saturday, the 21st ult at the George Inn, Crewkerne, on the body of **Joan Dean**, who committed suicide, by cutting her throat with a razor. A verdict of "Insanity" was returned. The following is a copy of a letter in her own handwriting:- **William Dean** you have what your wife as she is wery of living as my brother was sharp to me to sign my rite to him that destroyed my Peace, it terefy me that made me low, i cannot raise my spirits So i took upertunity of my husbands abastance as i was wary of living. He was a good Husband, don't trouble me for i am happy, as you have no children no one to care of but your self. Wreten with my own hand Joan Dean.

September 8th 1830

Inquest on Mr S **Stuckey**

In our last we stated that the deceased was found in the furrow of a field of standing corn; about a quarter of a mile from the presumed spot where he was murdered – his hat being found in that place. A messenger having been dispatched to Mr Caines the coroner, at about four o'clock that gentleman arrived, and after swearing a jury of eighteen respectable persons, they proceeded to view the body. They found the body laid on the back at full length on a slight declivity, the head downwards, and the left arm over the head; the spurs were on, and one of them was deeply indented in the earth, apparently in the struggle; the coat was torn across at the skirts; one of the braces lay at some distance; the waistcoat was unbuttoned, and the shirt discovered as if the body had been dragged into it's situation head fore most. In the pockets cash amounting to £13 12s 6d was discovered, and near the body some halfpence were scattered; the watch also remained in the fob. The corpse was in a state of decomposition, the eyes had been devoured by the birds; it presented a frightful appearance. For the convenience of surgeons, it was removed in a shell to the Red Lion Inn, at Chard, and the inquest adjourned until nine o'clock on Wednesday morning, at the George Inn.

On Wednesday morning, at ten o'clock, the jury having been sworn, the two reapers who found the body were the first witnesses called.

Edmund Harris labourer, lives in the parish of Dennington; was employed in a field belonging to Mr **Joseph Harris**, on Tuesday; was cutting wheat with **Charles Harris**, his master's son; had been employed in the same field on the previous day; at about ten o'clock in the morning witness discovered the body lying in the furrow in the same position as he was shewn to the Jury; witness then called his comrade; did not at first know who it was, but had heard of a suspected murder; there was also a little boy in the field; witness immediately dispatched Charles Harris to his master to give information, and himself remained with the body until persons arrived from Chard; witness did not observe any track leading to the body, but the wheat around it was rolled down for the space of several yards.

Charles Harris corroborated the evidence of Edmund Harris.

John Coles is a cabinet maker; lives at Chard; went to a field at Dennington on Tuesday morning, where it was reported a body had been found; discovered to a certainty by the memorandum book that it was the body of **Simeon Stuckey**; witness then deposed as to finding the various articles – his rule, cash, &c.

Robert Perry, labourer, lives in the parish of Chillington, with his daughter, in the road leading from Dennington to Windwhistle; on the night of Monday, the 9th of August, went to bed about nine o'clock; about eleven o'clock heard a horse pass the house in a gallop; it appeared from the noise to be a small horse, but it seemed as if going towards Dennington; witness got up the next morning about half past four o'clock, and left home about five, to go to work, which is his usual time of commencing his labour; he went on the road towards Dennington; about 100 yards from his house, near the gate of Mr **Dowall's** field, on the left hand side, he discovered that a person had been sick to some excess; he then proceeded until he came to a crook in the lane, about 140 yards farther on; there he found a hat on the right hand side; he then carried back the hat to his own house; he did not observe any bruises or dirt on the hat; told his daughter that if any one called and owned the hat that they were to have it.

Amy **Perry**, his daughter, confirmed the account given by her father.

Susan Matthews, being sworn, stated that on Tuesday morning, the 10th August, about half past eight in the morning, she came into the road at Dowell's gate, near

Perry's cottage, and discovered a few yards on the road indications of a scuffle having taken place; the ground was kicked and torn up on the left side; she saw a vomit, and a little further on some blood; the road also had the appearance as if timber had been dragged along; and about three feet from the blood she discovered a stick, which was subsequently given up.

Margaret Lucy, on the night of 9th August, saw a man sitting on a pony in the road, about half past ten o'clock, who asked her the road to Chard; she did not think he was tipsy; she told him the way; he asked her to go and put him in the right road; she said, "No Sir, I shan't do that," and went in and fastened the door. The man had on white trousers and a dark coat.

Joseph Woodland, a neighbour of last witness, deposed to the same effect.

Hugh Clark is a master mason – recollects Monday three weeks, that he was in the Windwhistle Inn; he went to the inn within a quarter of an hour of six o'clock in the evening. Deponent had a pint of cider – saw Simon Stuckey come in about half-past six o'clock. He had a pint of cider – sat in the settle – came in alone. He asked the landlord to drink with him, which the landlord complied with. Mr Stuckey remained there about a quarter of an hour. There were present six or seven persons, one of whom said his name was **Rowe**; he lived at Winsham. Before Stuckey left, he took out his purse, and paid for the cider with a sixpence; he was sitting about six feet from deponent. It appeared to deponent that there was a quantity of money in the purse; it was a yellow canvas purse; the contents of the purse looked as large as an egg; he put the purse into his left hand pocket, from whence he took it; he went away by himself, and left the same party in the room as was there when he entered. After Stuckey was gone, the landlord's wife came in, and an old man who had on a short smock frock. No conversation took place about Stuckey after he had left. Deponent knew Stuckey, but was not acquainted with him. He left Windwhistle Inn about half past seven, to go to **J Russell's** house at Cudworth, where he lodges; he there found Russell's wife, and Henry Down, of Ilminster, who was white-washing the house. He went to bed about ten o'clock; Down was there then.

Mr **Richard Sampson**, on the Wednesday after the supposed murder, proceeded to the spot where the hat was found, about 20 yards on the road towards Dennington; perceived marks on the ditch and bank, as if persons had been sitting there; on the other side there were similar indications.

William Smith – is a Smith; lives at Chard; on Monday 9th August attended a funeral at Chillington church yard; left Holcombe Lodge about eight o'clock in the evening, and returned to Chard, accompanied by his wife; in his way from Holcombe Lodge to Windwhistle met a woman on Chillington Down; she asked him if she was in the right road for Lopen; deponent asked if she was going to Lopen that night; she said yes; deponent said it was some distance; she said she was going to see her son who lived at Lopen Mill; next met a waggon on the Chard side of Windwhistle; three females were in the waggon; old **Martin's** wife was driving; next met a man near the lane going to Chaffcombe; he was walking towards Windwhistle; thinks he wore a light fustian jacket; he was a middle sized man; the next person he met, was **John Matthews** of Chillington, near Lady Bridport's bars; he then met a man near the three mile stone who asked him if he had had met a man on before, and he told him he had; this man was dressed in the same style as the other; he appeared to be a man between 30 and 40, and was also a middle sized man; neither of the persons named was a native of Crewkerne.

Mr **Eustace** – of Ilminster, surgeon, stated that on removing the hair of the head, with the assistance of Mr **Sylvester**, we discovered two wounds on the right side; the one

was smaller than the other; and on removing the scalp, a very considerable extravasation of the blood was found between the scalp and the skull, immediately connected with the wounds; on removing the skin under the largest wound, which was at the back of the head, a fracture was discovered to the extent of five inches and three quarters extending to the base of the brain; from this proceeded several smaller fractures, which would probably cause instant death; and their opinion also stated that most probably the fractures were inflicted by a blunt instrument. Mr Eustace of opinion that the larger wound on the head would have caused a considerable flow of blood, and a discharge from the stomach. Mr Sylvester said, that the conviction on his mind was, that it was almost impossible for the deceased to have gone to the place where he was found after the receipt of the wound.

Lawrence Biss, landlord of the Windwhistle Inn, was next sworn:- Mr Stuckey came to my house on Monday afternoon about five o'clock: there were present Mr **Baker**, of Crickett, **Richard Hutchings** of Purdington, **Joseph Cranton** of Crickett, **Hugh Clarke** of Ilminster, **John Balford**, his son **William Balford**, and his brother Samuel from Butleigh; Mr Stuckey had a pint of cider and paid me for it; I saw the purse, but do not know what was in it or which pocket he put it into; he did not stop ten minutes; I drank part of the cider with him; on parting he said he should not wish me good evening, he should see me again, as he was not going to stop; the persons in the house dispersed before seven o'clock; I think Clarke was the first who started, and the Balfords and Cranton were the last; they all went together; his wife was not at home, and he remained in the kitchen nearly the whole time that they were there; no conversation took place relative to Mr Stuckey's money; his wife returned between eight and nine, accompanied by the coachman from Lady Bridport's; a woman came in after the parties had left; she was going to Lopen; **James Morris** was helping me to finish the roof of a hay rick that afternoon; **John Stanton** had also been assisting; likewise **James Cranton** and **James Hill**; they all came in about 8 o'clock; I gave some meat and drink to Morris and Skinner, because they were not labourers; to the others I gave cider; Hill and Cranton left soon after drinking the cider, and when I went to bed at ten o'clock I left Morris and **Skinner** down stairs, my wife came up stairs about 10 minutes past 10, and she shut the door and made it fast after they had left – some time after one o'clock in the morning, Mr Norris called at my window which my wife opened, and he asked her if I was there – she told him I was and in bed – he said I must come down directly, for he wanted me for something very particular. I went down and saw him on horseback, with another horse in his hand – he told me that he had found a horse on Chillington Down upon the road near the clump of firs and he asked me if I knew it – I looked at it a minute and said "I know it, what don't you? why 'tis Mr Stuckey's Old Tom," and he said "Well I believe 'tis now," and then I begged him to take it on to Chard – I asked him if he had seen any person on the road between Crewkerne and there and he said no, he had not seen anyone pass at all – Norris refused to take the horse on to Chard, and I begged of him to let them know it was there the first thing in the morning – I think **Norris** was a little in liquor – he then started for Chard – I took the bridle and saddle off, and turned the poney into the field – I noticed to Norris that there was no appearance on the bridle or saddle of Stuckey's having been thrown – and I observed the horse might have escaped from the stable where Mr Stuckey was staying, and that if he came on he could have a comfortable bed at my house – the horse had been warm, but was at this time cool – I went to bed again at twenty minutes past one, and got up the same morning (Tuesday) between five and six, when my men came to work – we did some little work in getting the carts ready, and went away to the wood after breakfast at nearly eight o'clock – I

did not say any thing about Stuckey until eleven or twelve o'clock when I returned home, and finding the poney still there, I mentioned the circumstance to the men and wondered the poney had not been sent for – we then went back to the coppice, where I remained till a little after four o'clock, when we returned with two more loads of wood, and on finding the poney still there, I bridled and saddled it, and sent my boy to Mr Stuckey's house with it. Mrs Stuckey then sent to know how the poney had come in my possession, and then I told the young man how and what time it came there – the young man then proceeded on to Stratton in search of Mr Stuckey. On the Tuesday morning I was up the first, and went into the field where the horse was – my workmen all breakfasted in the house on that morning – some of Mrs Stuckey's people came up on that night at nearly eight o'clock, and then went on to search but I did not accompany them – I was never asked to go.

Two females were afterwards examined – it appears that they were returning home in the neighbourhood late on Monday evening, and each of them distinctly heard a whistling as if more than one were concealed.

The inquest was adjourned on Friday morning at the Windwhistle Inn, and the depositions of several other witnesses were taken; but the evidence they gave was unimportant, and did not tend to throw any light on this melancholy and mysterious occurrence. The investigation terminated on Friday evening, when a verdict of Wilful Murder against some person or persons unknown was returned.

The funeral of this lamented individual took place on Thursday last. The procession moved soon after four o'clock, from the Red Lion Inn, Chard, where the body had lain from the day on which it was discovered, and an immense concourse of people was assembled on this interesting but melancholy occasion. The remains were attended to the grave by many of the most respectable inhabitants of the town; by all the workmen of the deceased, some of whom carried the body, and by a long train of his personal friends and acquaintances. The afflicted widow, who had not been permitted to see the body (for very obvious reasons) followed the corpse in a chaise, accompanied by two female friends. It is supposed that from 2,000 to 3,000 persons attended – all of whom, by their conduct, shewed the respect they felt for the deceased, and during the service in the chapel great number were bathed in tears. The funeral service was performed by the **Rev John Gunn**, pastor of the Independent Church, of which the deceased had been for many years a useful and consistent member.

The discovery of the body of Mr Stuckey has afforded the greatest satisfaction to his numerous friends, who were well convinced that nothing but death could have detained him from his home. This circumstance will convince the public that the false reports which have been so busily circulated, are wholly untrue – A man more universally respected in life, or lamented in death, than Mr Stuckey, has seldom existed.

The following letter on this subject appears in the last Sherborne Mercury:-

“Sir, Perceiving an article in the Taunton Courier, of the 25th ultimo, which so deeply reflects on the character of Mr Stuckey, and those friends of his who have taken an interest in his fate. I cannot suffer it to pass uncontradicted. It is stated in The Courier that ‘there is neither murder nor mystery in his fate?’ But what will the writer of this assertion say, now that his murdered body is found? He further says, that it was desirable to raise the idea of his murder, in order to prevent pursuit.’ and that ‘the parties who lent their names to his bills are threatened with proceedings upon them.’

Let him name those parties if he can; but the fact is, such parties have no existence. With regard to the disposal of part of his property, so convinced were Mr S's friends that nothing short of his death could have caused his disappearance, that they advised his widow to discontinue the business as soon as possible, and to dispose of his horses and farming stock immediately, which was done fourteen days after his disappearance. What could a woman, in her afflicted state, do with an extensive business (in which about thirty men were employed) but to dispose of it as soon as possible? Horses standing idle – cattle neglected – corn ripe for the sickle:- under these circumstances it was deemed advisable to sell the whole of the farming stock, to free the widow's mind as much as possible from perplexity and anxiety, and in due time to advertise the business and stock in trade to be disposed of either by auction or valuation. It is then said that ' Mr Stuckey had been previously actively engaged in collecting every shilling that was due to him – that he carried off a large sum with him, and that his account at the bank was overdrawn and his acceptances became due daily.' The whole of this is incorrect. His account with his bankers is most respectable, and the last time it was balanced, he was, indeed, debtor in the very heavy amount of 18s 6d. At this moment the bank is indebted to him for work which he has done.

Stratton was Mr S's native place; and he was never known to enter the village without calling on his parents, but once, and at that time he was particularly occupied. On the 9th of August last he called, as was his custom. His father was unwell, and in bed. Mr S went up stairs, to see him, and remained a few minutes only, because it was late. His father asked him, if he had brought back a basket which he had sent him with some plums to which Mr S replied, he had not; but he was coming again to Stratton the next day or the following, and he would then do so. This interview is magnified into 'taking an affectionate farewell of his parents – in a way, too, which he had never done before.'

Now sir, I challenge the writer of these statements to a proof of the facts asserted, if he have any. I am sir, yours, &c.

A friend of the late Mr Stuckey.

September 15th 1830

We lament to announce the death of R **Carpenter** esq. of West Monkton House. An accident, by a fall from his carriage, in London, occasioned a degree of injury which led to this very melancholy event.

Murder of Mr S Stuckey – Taunton, the Bow Street officer was in this neighbourhood last week, on the look out for a man strongly suspected of having committed this horrid deed. We shall forbear, for obvious reasons, making any communication to our readers, until we are authorised by the Committee, which has been associated at Chard on this subject, so to do. The Magistrates and gentlemen who have very laudably, and with unceasing diligence, devoted themselves to the investigation of this frightful event, have spiritedly announced their intention to increase the present reward of £120 and a free pardon to an accomplice, to £500 on conviction, which sum, it is presumed, would be raised by the neighbouring towns of Ilminster and Crewkerne.

September 22nd 1830

Shocking Accident – On Sunday morning last, about eleven o'clock, Betsey **Jackson**, the wife of a labourer, who had a few days previously arrived in this town from Newton Bushell, to attend the funeral of her father, went into a house in Holway Lane, in this town, for the purpose of writing a letter to her brother in Bath. Whilst thus engaged, **Philip Summers**, a young man in the employment of Messrs **Reeves**,

of North Steet, came in and asked to borrow a gun, which he, and a young man, the brother of **Betsey Jackson**, took down from over the fire place, without making any enquiry whether it was loaded. Summers was examining the lock, and was cautioned to be careful with it. This admonition had not been uttered more than a few moments, when the gun went off, and lodging its contents in the head of the unfortunate woman, killed her on the spot, and she fell from the chair without uttering a word or a sigh. Being considerably advanced in pregnancy, Mr **Standert** and several other medical gentlemen who were present, were about attempting the Caesarean operation, with a view to save the life of the child, but they were violently opposed by some friends of the deceased, and a promiscuous assemblage of women, and the lapse of an hour frustrating that intention, the child was extricated, but dead. It appeared a fine infant, and its mother was in about the eighth month of her pregnancy. An inquest was held on Monday by Mr Caines when it was clearly proved that Summers had never before seen the deceased, and that the tragic event was quite accidental. The coroner reprimanded Summers for the manner in which he was spending the Sabbath, and advised him never again to meddle with a gun. The jury returned a verdict of accidental death, with a deodand of five shillings on the gun, which was directed to be delivered over by the Constable, to the Steward of the Manor. It was in fact a worthless article, and ought never again to be used. The grief of Summers as the author of this melancholy event, has been distressingly great, and he remains inconsolable. A question arose at the sequel of the investigation whether a separate inquest was not necessary on the child – upon this point considerable time was occupied; but at length the jury, which was very respectable gave it as their unanimous opinion, that such an inquest was uncalled for. The funeral of the unfortunate deceased and her infant took place yesterday afternoon. The melancholy procession, which excited much attention and sympathy, was followed to St Mary Magdalen's Church, by a crowd of spectators, principally females.

Inquest of Mr Caines of Langport.

At Halse, on Monday last, on **Wm King**, six years of age, the child of a labouring man, who was found drowned in a pond, into which there is no doubt he had fallen by accident. Verdict accordingly. The parents of the deceased were at work for Mr **Hancock**, at a neighbouring lime kiln, when the accident happened.

October 6th 1830

We regret to state that Mr **Chas Gough**, solicitor of Bristol, committed suicide on Thursday by hanging himself in his stable at Bishport. He had been for upwards of two months afflicted with a depression of spirits, for which his friends were and still are, unable to account. He was a young man much respected, and has left a widow, to whom he was married only in May last, in deep affliction at her severe loss, and the melancholy circumstances attending it – Bristol Mercury.

October 13th 1830

Inquest by Mr Caines.

At Uphill, on a man unknown who on Saturday week, was found washed ashore on the Strand in that parish. The deceased from his dress had the appearance of having been a sailor, but the body appeared to have been in the water some weeks, as one arm was gone, and it altogether presented a shocking spectacle. Verdict, Found dead having been washed ashore, but how he came to his death the jury had no evidence. Since the inquest was held, the following information has been obtained:- Some

persons living at Porlock, having received information of the above event, went purposely to Uphill and identified the body, which proved to be that of a man of the name of Webber, who, about three weeks since, being in company with two others in a boat in Porlock Bay the boat was upset in a violent gale, and this poor fellow was drowned; providentially the other two were washed ashore without received any injury.

At Moorland, in the parish of North Petherton, on **George Browning**, aged 64; the deceased was a butcher, and early on Monday morning, the 27th ult he left his home to attend a fair, and having rode about two miles, the mare he was riding started on one side, when the stirrup leather (which had been mended) gave way, and the deceased, who was a remarkably heavy man, fell off, whereby he received a dislocation of the shoulder, and fractured his collar bone and three of his ribs; of which he died on Tuesday the 30th ult. Verdict, Accident, and a deodand of £5 on the mare.

On Monday the 4th instant, at Uphill, on **George Payne**, aged two years who was found drowned in an uncovered well, or dipping place. The jury having represented this place as dangerous to the lives of his Majesty's subjects, the parish officers engaged that it should either be filled up or have a proper fence to surround it. Verdict, Accidentally drowned.

October 20th 1830

Dreadful Accident.

On Wednesday morning, as some workmen were employed in removing the roof of an old building at the back of Morford Street, the place on which they were standing by some means gave way, when the whole of them, six in number, fell down a height of at least 33 feet and were covered with dust and rubbish, one of them, a man of the name of **Bennett**, from Bristol, having a wife and two children, had his skull dreadfully fractured. He was taken to the united hospital, where he soon after expired. The remained were all more or less seriously bruised and injured (two of them have been taken to the hospital but are likely to do well. Bath Journal.

Fatal Accident.

On Saturday night last, about eight o'clock, as **Mr Knight**, of Hemel, in the Parish of Stogumber, was returning from Taunton market, he was thrown from his horse in the street of Lydeard St Lawrence, and falling from his head, received so severe a contusion as to occasion his death about three o'clock the next morning. To the irreparable loss sustained by his family, consisting of a wife and eight children, is added that of a man whose benevolent disposition has gained the respect and esteem of his neighbourhood.

November 3rd 1830

Inquests by Mr Ashford.

On Friday, at Orchardleigh House, on the body of **John Hare Bussell**, aged about 72 years, who came to his death by falling out of a tree, where he had incautiously ventured to a height of nearly 50 feet from the ground, for a purpose of cutting some dry wood. On descending, it is supposed, some of the dry limbs gave way, and the poor man was so severely injured by the fall as to cause his death on the following day.

On Wednesday, the 20th October, at Frome Selwood, on **Mary Lidbury**, aged eight years, who was drowned. The deceased had not been missing from the dwelling house

more than a few minutes, and on search being made for her, she was found in a pond in the garden. Every means for her resuscitation were used for a considerable time, without any effect. Verdict in each case, "Accidental Death."

On the same day at Charlton Horethorne, on the body of **Wm Fizzard** who fell down in the road; and instantly expired. Verdict, "Died by the Visitation of God."

On the 28th, at Marston Magna, on the body of a little boy named **John Shepherd**, who, whilst standing to see a tree cut down, though at a distance of 12 or 14 yards from the spot, was killed by one of the large limbs striking him on the head. The child lingered till the following day, and then died. Verdict, "Accidental Death."

November 10th 1830

Death by fighting.

An inquest was held by Mr Caines on the 6th instant, at the Golden Lion Inn, Huntspill, on **Edward O'Hare**, a licensed Hawker of Irish linen and drapery goods, aged about 30. deceased had for a few days previous to his death, lodged at a house licensed under the new act to sell beer. It was full of company and on Tuesday, the 21st inst a quarrel arising between the deceased and one **James Bennett**, it was agreed that they should fight for a stake of 5s each, on the following morning. They were, however, prevailed on the next day not to fight, and they ate and drank and shook hands together, but the stake holder, a **Mr G Toogood** having arrived at the time appointed the preceding evening, for the fight, refused to give up the stakes unless they fought for them as originally proposed. In consequence, the two men, accompanied by a rabble, went into an adjoining field, where they fought ten or twelve rounds, until O'Hare was unable to continue the combat, having received many blows upon the head, whereby he became insensible, and in about three hours afterwards expired. After an investigation of nearly five hours before a jury of 15 respectable yeomen, they returned a verdict of "Manslaughter" against **James Bennett**, and against Toogood, the stake holder, **Meshec Dirrick** and William, the brother of James Bennett, and **John Searls**, of Burnham, as accessories, who had acted as seconds. Toogood, Dirrick, and **Wm Bennett** have absconded, warrants are out for their apprehension, the other two are in Wilton Gaol to take their trial at the next Assizes. Toogood occupies a farm of £300 a year, and has a wife and nine children. **O'Hare** was buried the day after the inquest, when an eloquent sermon appropriate to the occasion was delivered by the **Rev Mr Elliston**, who expatiated on the evils of beer houses, and the ministers of other congregations in the neighbourhood, also preached impressive sermons on the same occasion. **Chubb**, the landlord of the house where the quarrel occurred, the next day dissuaded the men from fighting, although we are informed that in the first instance, he promoted the fatal contest.

Inquests by Mr Caines.

At the Fleur De Lis Inn, at Yeovil, on the 5th instant on **Charles Barrett**, aged about 70. The deceased had for some years since been living rather a sedentary life. On Tuesday the 2d instant, he had spent the evening with some of his friends, and went to bed sober and apparently in perfect health, and on the following morning he was found dead - Verdict, died by the Visitation of God.

November 24th 1830

Inquests by Mr Caines of Langport.

At Weston Zoyland, on **Wm Bunter**, a carpenter, aged 55, who, on Monday the 15th instant, dropped down in the turnpike road near the village, and instantly expired. Deceased was a man of remarkably regular habits, and a very healthy, robust man, but rather asthmatic, and had been using great exertion in driving some pigs for a neighbouring butcher, whom he met with on the road. Verdict, Died by the Visitation of God.

At Pitney, near Langport, on **William Waldron**, aged 66, who was found drowned in a ditch, on Friday last. On the preceding Wednesday, the deceased had been at one of the newly licensed houses for selling beer and cider, where he had drunk four pints, and he being a feeble man, it is presumed the effects of the liquor overpowered him, and that he accidentally fell into the ditch, and was drowned.

And at Kingsdon, near Ilchester, on **George William**, aged 16. On Monday, the 8th instant, the deceased was sent to a field for a horse, but never returned with it, and being missed the whole of that day, it was supposed he might have gone off to Bath, where he had frequently said he would go; consequently, no search was made for him, or but very little, until it was ascertained he had not been there, and he was on Friday found dead in a ditch, in the field where he had been sent for the horse. There were no marks of violence about his person, but the neck was dislocated at the second vertebrae, and there were marks of a horse's feet in the ditch where the body lay. The Jury returned a verdict – Found dead with a dislocation of the neck, but how, or by what means the neck was so dislocated, there was no evidence.

December 8th 1830

Friday se'nnight, an idiotic daughter of **Mr Bobbett** of Creech St Michael, near this town, having been left for a short time by her parents near the fire, whilst in the act of reaching something from a table, her clothes caught the flames, and she was so severely burnt that she died the next day.

December 15th 1830

Inquest by Mr Caines.

At Eddington, on Polden Hill, on **Amelia Ann Pitman**, aged four years who, on the 7th instant, was so much burnt by her clothes having accidentally caught fire at about eight in the morning, that she expired at about nine the same evening. Verdict, Accidentally Burnt.

On Monday last, at the White Hart Inn, at Wellington, on **Wm Fry**, aged 68, late of Rockwell Inn, in that parish. The death of this man was awful sudden. He was a butcher, and on Friday last, immediately after having slaughtered a sheep, he dropped down and instantly expired. Verdict, Died by the Visitation of God.

December 22nd 1830

On Saturday last, **Sarah Perry**, a silkweaver, about 40 years of age, residing in King St, in this town, who appeared previously to have been in good health, was found at the side of the bed, on her knees, in a state of insensibility. Assistance was called, but she expired within half an hour.

Inquests by Mr Caines.

At Stoke Sub Hambdon, on **Eliza Glover**, aged four years on Tuesday se'nnight the deceased was seen running out of a neighbour's house in a blaze of fire, her clothes having accidentally become ignited, and she was so much burnt as to cause her death on the following day.

At Broadway, near Ilminster, on **W Harvey**, aged three years. This child was also burnt on Tuesday, and died on Wednesday, under similar circumstances.

At the White Lion Inn in this town, on **Samuel Properjohns**, aged three years. The death of this child was occasioned by a tea kettle of boiling water having been accidentally upset, and part of the contents falling on the head and body, the accident happened on Saturday, the 11th, the deceased lingered until Wednesday, the 15th.

Verdict in each case, Accidental Death.

And at Huntspill, on Saturday last, on **Francis Hill**, aged three years, who, on the 15th instant, in the absence of his mother, a poor woman, who was employed in washing for a neighbour, and had left the deceased in care of a little brother, aged about ten years, went so near the fire, that his clothes were ignited, and he was so much burnt that he died on the following day.

December 29th 1830

Shocking Accident.

On Friday evening, as **Miss Clarke**, daughter of Mr Clarke, of the Old Angel, in this town, was standing by the fire, her clothes caught the flames, and she was soon enveloped in a frightful blaze. Her father hastened to her assistance, and burnt himself most severely in endeavouring to extinguish the fire, which he at length did, but not until his daughter had received so much injury as to render her recovery very doubtful.

Inquests by Mr Caines.

At Moorland, in the parish of North Petherton, on **George Parker**, aged 65. The deceased was an infirm man, and of weak mind, and on Thursday last, he had called on two or three of his neighbours who gave him some cider, but it did not appear to have made him intoxicated. In his way home however, he fell off a gate into some mud, where he was found insensible, and where he must have lain about two hours, from the effects of which, he died on the following day. Verdict accordingly.

And at West Buckland, near Wellington, on **Betty Markes**, aged 69. On Friday last, the deceased was in a room alone, when she was heard by a brother in law in an adjoining room, to call to him by name, and he went to her, and found her stretched on the floor, a corpse. She had previously been attending her usual domestic concerns, had taken her breakfast as usual, and on the proceeding day had walked to Wellington. Verdict, Died by the Visitation of God.

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