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August 3, 1865

# **HORRIBLE TRAGEDY.; Awful Crime in Manchester, Conn. Murder of a Mother and Daughter Arrest of the Son The Victims Chopped to Death An Ax and a Butcher-Knife \$360 in Money the Object.**

From the Hartford Times, Aug. 1.

The quiet village of Oakland, Manchester, about nine miles east of this city, was aroused this morning by the news of the most fearful crime ever perpetrated in this vicinity.

At the early hour of 4 o'clock, or a little sooner, Mrs. BENJAMIN STARKWEATHER, sister-in-law of NATHAN STARKWEATHER of this city, aged 40, and her daughter, HARRIET ELLA, aged 14 years, were both foully murdered while sleeping together in their house.

They were killed with an ax, but they were also stabbed in various places with a butcher-knife.

We saw the bodies after they had been laid out, and hope never to see another such sight. The mother's face was cut in two with a powerful blow from the ax, which divided the nose, crosswise, and out open the face entirely across, crashing through the bones of the upper jaw and cheeks. Over the right eye was another gash from the ax, sinking through the skull and into the brain; and there was another which cut open the side and back of the head, and also a great gash near the right temple. Besides these wounds there were others made by a butcher-knife -- one through the lower part of the chin, the blade penetrating deep into the throat; one deep into the right breast; and another deep one in the left breast.

ELLA, the daughter, presented a still more shocking sight. Her right eye was entirely gone. The ax had cut a terrible gash across the brow, eye and cheek, evidently at one blow, letting out all of the eye, breaking in the skull, and cleaving down to the cheek-bone. Above the right eye, near the top of the forehead, was another fearful gash from the ax, sinking i to the brain; and she was stabbed through the bosom with the butcher-knife.

The first information of the murders was given by the son, ALBERT STARKWEATHER, at 4 o'clock. He came to Mr. HORACE WHITE's, a neighbor, rattling, or rather falling heavily against the back door, and arousing the inmates with this call:

"Get up! -- get up! -- Come over to our house! I don't know but our folks are all killed, and the house is on fire!"

Mr. WHITE ran over, followed by ALBERT, and found his (ALBERT's) room full of smoke and the bed on fire. He took the bed out and put it out of the window. Then he went up stairs, though the smoke was so thick he nearly suffocated. ALBERT did not follow him, but paced hurriedly up and down the lower rooms, sobbing and crying.

On getting into the chamber. Mr. WHITE found the bed all in a blaze, and the bedroom covered with blood. He lifted up ELLA and found her still alive, though bathed in blood and presenting a shocking sight. As he lifted her a bloody ax slipt off upon the floor. Mr. WHITE took it, and lifting the window, placed the ax under it to let out the smoke, while he next got Mrs. STARKWEATHER off the burning bed, and finding her dead, placed her on the floor while he rolled up the bed and threw it out of the window. His hands were blistered and his clothing rendered very bloody

The dying ELLA he carried in his arms to a back window in the adjoining room, in order to give her fresh air; and then sent the hired man (who, with others, had arrived) at once for a doctor. But the poor girl died in a few minutes. Her blood covered the window-sill, on which she rested, and the floor near by. Mr. WHITE at once instituted a search for tracks about the house, but was unable to discover any distinct marks of feet except in the garden.

ALBERT STARKWATHER, 24 years of age, slept on the lower floor in the northeast room. His mother and ELLA slept in the northwest room above. He says a noise up stairs, just before dawn, awakened him, and rushing out of his room he was knocked down, near the foot of the stairs, by a man or men, coming down; that he recovered, and had a scuffle in the dark, and was overpowered, thrown down, and the man or men escaped. He shows a scar over one eye, which he says was caused by the blow the murderer gave him. This mark, unfortunately, was obviously of an older date than this morning.

A jury of inquest was summoned, consisting of Arnold Olmsted, Charles Annis, Charles A. Arnold, Francis W. Cowles, Merritt Buckland, Horace Fuller, Moses Scott, F.C. Buckland, Patrick Fitzgerald, Wm. McNall, John O. Spencer and John C. Robertson -- the latter acting as foreman. They sat from 9 to 10, and, tacitly agreeing upon a verdict, decided nevertheless to have an adjourned session at 7 o'clock this evening, after further facts were developed.

ALBERT's butcher-knife was subsequently brought out during the session of the jury, and its appearance before his eyes caused him to start and tremble. A very ugly fact is that the knife was found in his drawer in his own bedroom!

The Hartford police were speedily put upon an investigation, and Chief CHAMBERLAIN, accompanied by Officers COWLES and PAPE, went over to the scene of murder. CHAMBERLAIN arrested the son, ALBERT, and locking him in the front chamber with himself and COWLES, (after the inquest,) proceeded to subject him to an examination.

While this examination was going on, EDGAR GREEN, a man whom ALBERT had hired to work about the place during the Summer, arrived from Mansfield, where he lives, and where he had driven on a visit, leaving Oakland last Saturday noon. ALBERT had paid him at the rate of \$34 a month for services which never seemed to amount to much, the neighbors said; and they think ALBERT never could have afforded to hire him

at that rate. GREEN, however, shows no evidence of guilt, and was very willing to be examined. He was evidently thunderstruck to hear of the murder.

ALBERT's reputation is not good. He is a rather "fast young man," and his associations are said to have been not of the best. We hear that he was soon to be married.

In his bureau was found a sum of money in National Bank bills, amounting to about \$362. There were three \$100 bills, one \$50, and some smaller.

He says he left the back door open over night, so that GREEN could get in if he returned. (GREEN had taken ALBERT's buggy and his own horse.)

When we left, at noon, the questions of Chief CHAMBERLAIN and his assistants had brought ALBERT to a point where it seemed as if he must soon be forced to admit the horrible truth; for, though he saw it not, the course of the examination was steadily drawing him to a point where his answers would not agree with each other.