

LETTER

FROM JOHN KEAN TO THE LORD PROVOST AND MAGISTRATES.

An account of the Public Whipping of JOHN KEAN, for Shooting at JOHN GRAHAM, a Cotton-spinner, which took place on Wednesday the 11th of May, on a Platform erected in front of Glasgow Jail, in presence of an immense multitude of Spectators. Also, the Copy of a most extraordinary Letter which he presented to the Lord Provost and Magistrates on Monday last.

THE above unfortunate individual, it will be recollected, was tried and found guilty of a most diabolical attempt to murder John Graham, a cotton-spinner, by shooting him with a pistol, as he was returning home from his work, in the Calton. The prisoner is a native of Belfast, about 30 years of age, and has a wife and young family. He was always considered a sober, honest, inoffensive tradesman, till the unfortunate misunderstanding betwixt the Master Cottonspinners and Operatives occurred, when it is much to be feared that he was urged on to the commission of the crime of which he was found guilty, more by the suggestion of some hidden villains, than by the innate depravity of his own disposition.

The following is the Petition which he presented to the Lord Provost and Magistrates, on Monday last, praying for a mitigation of his punishment:—

Unto the Honourable the Lord Provost and Magistrates of Glasgow,
The Petition of John Kean, prisoner in Glasgow Jail,
Humbly Sheweth,

That the punishment which the petitioner has been adjudged to suffer, on the 11th of May, being left to the discretion of your Honours, he, in all humility, throws himself at your feet, imploring for mercy in the number and quality of stripes, being constitutionally delicate and nervous, increased by the nature of his employment, and rendered unwell and weak from deep anguish and long and close confinement, and having mother, wife, children, brothers, sisters, and friends, whose hearts will be convulsed at the punishment, and whose feelings he is more anxious to spare than his own: beseeching you to recollect, that to exhibit cruel punishment to the public does not reform but deteriorates character, and is opposed to the intelligence and benevolence of good men:

And your Petitioner shall ever pray.

JOHN KEAN.

Glasgow, 9th May 1825.

At an early hour this morning a number of men were engaged in putting up the scaffold which was erected at the usual place of execution in front of the prison. It consisted of strong tresses, across which were laid stout planks, and in the centre of which was firmly fixed a whipping-post, the whole being surrounded by a strong railing. The culprit ascended the scaffold soon after 12 o'clock, and after having been bound by the hands and feet to the post, and his back stripped bare, the Executioner proceeded to inflict the punishment, when he gave him 80 stripes, and from the appearance of the unhappy man's body, he must have felt great pain. A great number of the public works having been shut up, the crowd was the largest since the execution of James Wilson for high treason; and with shame do we say it, a great proportion of whom were females. The whole operation did not last long, the crowd being nearly all dispersed by half-past 12 o'clock.

We trust that the punishment thus inflicted, will have a most salutary effect on those for which the above awful example is intended, and teach them that the arm of the law is strong, and able to reach and punish all who transgress, or were guilty of such criminal proceedings.

Since the trial of Kean took place, the Lord Advocate of Scotland has given notice of his intention to introduce a bill into Parliament to extend Lord Ellenborough's Act to Scotland, by which all crimes of the above description, will in future be punished with Death.

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