THE MURDER IN DEAN FOREST.

We (*Western Daily Press*) stated on Wednesday that the four men, Thomas and George Cooper, Richard Roberts, and Thomas Gwilliam, charged with the murder of Sergeant Beard in Dean Forest, had been committed for trial for murder, but that the magistrates, for some unaccountable motive, had refused our reporter, in common with the other representatives of the press, admission to the inquiry. The depositions have since been supplied, and from these it appears that the following are the most important parts of the additional evidence adduced :—

William Gunter.—I am a blacksmith, living at Carter's-place, near Berryhill. On the 17th of August I went to the Speech-house. The prisoners came in about 8 o'clock.

Thomas Jarrett deposed,—I am an iron refiner at Sinderford. On the 17th of August I was at the Speech-house Inn. Thomas Gwilliam came in. My tools lay on a table near us. I had a flat file among them, used for filing metal, and I said to Thomas Gwilliam, "This may be of use to you to make a chisel." He thanked me, and I gave it to him.

William Guest repeated the evidence he gave before the coroner, and added, as a reason why he did not first see Beard at the spot where he afterwards found him, that there were trees, and especially a felled one, between him and the place where Beard was lying. He added—I found the broken stick now produced within a yard or two of Beard. There were pools of blood in several places near Beard, and the stick was bloody, and lay in one of them. I saw his staff partly out of his pocket.

Mr. Coleman, of the Speech-house, also repeated his evidence as previously published, and added,—In the course of the morning several persons visited the spot of the affray. About 1 o'clock in the day the thick piece of oak cordwood now produced was brought to me by a man whose name I had not known. On the 17th of August there were, and still are, many such pieces of oak cordwood of different sizes lying about the spot.

Elizabeth Rooke, charwoman at the Speech-house, repeated her former evidence.

Mr. Hatton, surgeon, described the injuries the deceased had received. He added,—On Sunday, August 18, when I first saw Sergeant Beard, he complained much of his head, and exclaimed frequently that he should die. On the same evening I attended Mr. J. F. F. Brickdale, on his visiting Sergeant Beard. I informed Beard that he was in great danger, and have no doubt that he heard and perfectly understood me. His deposition was then taken by Mr. Brickdale. I read it over to Beard in a distinct and careful manner, and I have no doubt that he clearly and correctly understood the deposition.

Superintendent Taylor.—I saw Sergeant Beard about 9 o'clock on the morning of the 18th of August at the Speech-house. He said to me, "This is a bad job, Sir." He then closed his eyes. About 7 in the evening I was present when Mr. Brickdale and Dr. Hatton attended. He made his mark to his deposition before the magistrates in my presence. He said when the pen was put into his hand he was too ill to write. On Monday, the 19th of August, I informed Beard that four persons accused by his deposition were in custody, and that I was directed by Mr. Brickdale to bring them for him to see. He said, "Don't do so, it will be more than I can bear." I told him it would be important in the event of his death, on which he consented. The four prisoners were then taken up two by two. He looked at each of them, and after they were removed he made a statement to me, which I took down in writing, and is as follows :—

"Thomas Cooper, George Cooper, Richard Roberts, and Thomas Gwilliam, whom I have just seen, are the four men who assaulted and beat me last Saturday night. I watched them leave the Speech-house about 11 that night. They went along the road towards the Fancy pit. I afterwards saw three of them near a gate leading into a small field near the Speech-house. I went to them. I met George Cooper a short distance from the gate. I asked him what they were doing there. He replied, it was no odds to me. I told him I should search him. He then struck me with a stick. I struck him on the head with my staff. One of them called for the fourth man, who came. They all fell upon me. Roberts struck me a heavy blow on the head with a stick. I fell down. They then kicked me about the head and face when I was down. I became insensible, and knew nothing after till I was at the Speech-house on Sunday."

After the statement I said to Beard, "Do you think you will die?" He said, "I am very ill, but I hope I shall live." On the apprehension of Thomas Gwilliam there were a few small spots of blood on the right leg of the corduroy trousers then worn by him.

Police-constable Webber, who was in attendance on the deceased at the Speech-house, stated,—On Monday, the 19th, he seemed to be much worse. I had helped him out of bed, and on his attempting to walk he put his hands to his head, and said, "I can't stand this, I shall die." He had a discharge of blood from the ear, and he seemed relieved. At another time the same day he said to me, "If Guest had come when I called him I should not have been served so bad. I don't think I shall live, and I hope those fellows will be hung." On Tuesday he said to me, "I shall not live; I want to be by myself; leave the room." I left the room but stood at the door, and I then heard him pray. On the following day William Guest and I were in the room, when the same thing again took place.

Police-constable Sollis deposed,—I apprehended the prisoner George Cooper, and charged him with assaulting Police-sergeant Beard. He said, "I have done nothing. I was coming to Coleford; but some policemen get themselves into more bother than they would out of being so fast."

Police-sergeant Richard Rodway.—Thomas Cooper, one of the prisoners, was at the second fair at the Speech-house, and I and Sergeants Beard and Brown were there with others. A sort of contest seemed threatened between East and West Dean, and Sergeants Beard and Brown remonstrated with the people. Thomas Cooper was one of the parties foremost on the West Dean side, and I saw him with others debating with the two sergeants because some one had broken his head. I have no doubt Thomas Cooper knew Sergeant Beard. Thomas Cooper now says, "I know Sergeant Beard very well." I have charge of the prison at Little Dean. On Monday, August 26, George Cooper sent for me, and said, "I wish to make a statement as to what has happened to Sergeant Beard." I told him that whatever he might say I must take down in writing, and take it before the magistrates. He then said, "I don't care about that; I will tell you particulars, and how it happened." He then said as follows :—"On Saturday night, August 17, we went to the Speech-house Inn and had seven or eight pints of beer. We had nets and dogs with us. I am not certain what time we left the Speech-house. As soon as we had the nets 'teeled' we put the dogs over and they 'tongued' a hare. Another man ran down the road before him, then directly upon this Beard came down. He stood opposite the turnpike road. Richard Roberts was at the upper gate, and I at the lower. He passed Richard Roberts, and I went round the corner of the hedge. He had caught hold of Thomas Gwilliam, and I went and told him to loose. He did not say anything for a bit. He put his hand in his coat pocket and took hold of his stick and struck me on the arm; then I cut him two or three times with the stick; then after he hit me on the head and knocked me down; he stunned me for a minute or two. When I got up he was down. Thomas Gwilliam and my brother were together; Richard Roberts never touched him, and I don't think that Thomas Gwilliam did. I was behind the hedge; it was by there he was found; it was dark between the trees and the hedge." On Friday, the 27th of August, while in the airing-yard, Thomas Gwilliam asked me when poor Beard would be buried. I said, "To-morrow." He then said, "We did not intend to kill him. It is a very bad job. I never touched him myself." I then told him that whatever he might say to me I must take it down in writing, and lay it before the magistrates. He then made a statement, which the officer gave in evidence, and which was similar in effect to that made by the prisoner when before the coroner.

The examination lasted about nine hours.

CAPTURE OF COINERS.—Two men engaged in making counterfeit coin were apprehended in a house in the Leylands, Leeds, yesterday morning. Some base coin, two moulds (one for halfcrowns, and the other for florins), a quantity of plaster of Paris, a galvanic battery, and other materials used in the manufacture of spurious coin were found in the house, together with a quantity of molten metal. The prisoners were taken before the magistrates, and remanded.

WINTER ASSIZES.

OXFORD CIRCUIT.

GLOCESTER, DEC. 4.

(Before Mr. Justice WILLES.)

George Cooper, 23, collier, Thomas Cooper, 29, collier, Richard Roberts, 34, collier, and Thomas Gwilliam, 30, quarryman, were charged with the wilful murder of Samuel Beard, on the 17th of August, at West Dean.

Mr. Cripps and Mr. J. J. Powell conducted the prosecution; Mr. W. H. Cooke defended George and Thomas Cooper and Thomas Gwilliam; and Mr. G. S. Griffiths and Mr. Gilmore Evans defended the other prisoner, Richard Roberts.

The charge against the prisoners at the bar was one of wilful murder, and arose out of an attempt made by the unfortunate deceased, who was a superintendent of police, to arrest the prisoners while engaged in the act of night poaching. An affray took place, in the course of which the prisoners, or some of them, attacked the deceased, and beat him while upon the ground, and left him half dead. After lying several hours in the forest in a state of insensibility, the deceased was found and carried to a neighbouring publichouse, where he died in about a week. It appeared from the evidence of a farmer named Guest, that on the night of Saturday, the 17th of August last, he engaged the services of the deceased man to watch for some men, not the prisoners, who he apprehended were about to steal some of his sheep which were feeding on a common. The two men concealed themselves near the Speech-house publichouse, where the four prisoners and several other men were, and at about half-past 10 o'clock four men came out, but one of them went back about a dog, and then all four men went down the road towards Moseley-green. Guest told the superintendent that they were not the men he was to look after. The superintendent had not his policeman's clothes on. The superintendent said that if the men were after the sheep they (the watchers) would have a good hiding, but they must die a good colour. The farmer then left the superintendent, and followed the men down the road. In a few yards he came to a gate where there was a man with a dog, and a little further on he saw three more men by a gate. Guest went on the road, and in about ten minutes he returned, and heard some one call out "Tom" and "Dick." He then heard the sound of blows coming from a spot where the superintendent was afterwards found lying. There was then silence for a few minutes, and presently Guest saw four men coming from a field beyond the gate where he had before seen the three men. They went away towards the Speech-house, and the farmer went in search of the superintendent, but he did not find him till about half-past 4 in the morning. He then found him lying on the ground in the forest, at a distance of about eight yards from a gate in the field from which the farmer saw the four men coming. A net was set on the forest side of the hedge, and there could be little doubt, from the nets, &c., which were found upon the spot, that the men were engaged in night poaching. When the superintendent was found he was lying upon the ground insensible, and was suffering from the effects of blows upon his head, which had caused blood to flow from his mouth and ear. Several of his teeth were knocked out and his left temporal bone was fractured, which fracture, the surgeon said had caused his death. Assistance was ultimately obtained at daylight, but the deceased was so depressed that he begged to be allowed to lie there and die. He was, however, carried to the Speech-house, and medical assistance was obtained, but he died on the following Saturday. In order to identify the men, who had gone down the road, evidence was given that all four prisoners left the Speech-house together, and one of them came back for a dog, and then followed the other three. There was, however, no doubt, upon the statements subsequently made by the prisoners themselves, that they were the parties who had been engaged in the affray with the policeman. Evidence was given that when the prisoners left the Speech-house one of them had a steel rasp, or file, about 14 inches long and one inch and a half in width, with which it was suggested the injuries upon the mouth and teeth of the deceased were inflicted. The instrument, however, was not brought out by the prisoners, but was given to them at the Speech-house to make a chisel of. The main point of struggle during the trial was as to the admissibility of two dying declarations made by the deceased. The surgeon said that previous to the making of the first declaration on Sunday, the 18th of August, he asked the deceased whether he did not consider he was in great danger, to which he replied that he was better than he was in the morning, and hoped he should recover; but, on examination by the learned judge, the surgeon said that when he first saw the deceased he complained much of his head, and exclaimed frequently that he should die. The witness subsequently stated, on cross-examination, that he attached little importance to such exclamations; but he admitted, when again questioned by the learned judge, that he told the deceased he was in great danger in the most distinct manner, and he had no doubt the deceased heard and perfectly understood him. The deposition was then taken, and read over to the deceased, who appeared clearly to understand it.

Mr. Justice WILLES said he should receive the declaration, upon the ground that he thought the deceased made the declaration when he believed his death was impending.

The declaration was read as follows:—

"Last night, the 17th of August inst., at about 11 o'clock, I left the Speech-house. I was in the township of West Dean, in company with William Guest, to watch his sheep, which he informed me he suspected would be stolen. On passing the furthest field belonging to the inn, towards Little Karsley, an open part of Dean Forest, I saw round by the gate four men, who I thought were setting nets for game, and I went towards three of them who were together. The fourth I passed by. The three men were Thomas Cooper, otherwise Crow, of Berry-hill, and his brother George Cooper, and Richard Roberts, of Shortstanding. The fourth man, named Gwilliam, lives in the same neighbourhood, of Berry-hill. The three men first named attacked me. Richard Roberts hit me down with a stick, and they all fell on me when I was down and kicked me on the head. I called for Guest at the first to come to me, but I was down before he came. I know not what happened until I was carried into the Speech-house Inn in the morning. I feel better than I was in the morning, but I still feel that my life is in great danger.

"× (The mark of Samuel Beard.)"

Evidence was given that the four prisoners were taken into custody, and on the Monday they were taken into the presence of the deceased, who looked at them and afterwards made a second declaration, which the learned Judge said he thought was not admissible; but as no objection was made it was read as follows:—

"Thomas Cooper, George Cooper, Richard Roberts, and Thomas Gwilliam, whom I have just seen, are the four men who assaulted me and beat me last Saturday night. I watched them leave the Speech-house about 11 o'clock that night. They went along the road towards the Fancy Pit. I afterwards saw three of them near a gate leading into a small field near the Speech-house. I went to them. I met George Cooper a short distance from the gate. I asked him what they were doing there. He said it was no odds to me. I told him I should search him. He then struck me with a stick. I struck him on the head with my staff. One of them called for the fourth man, who came. They all fell upon me. Roberts struck me a heavy blow on the head with a stick. I fell down. They then kicked me about the head and face when I was down. I became insensible, and knew nothing after till I was at the Speech-house on Sunday.

"× (The mark of Samuel Beard),

"WM. TAYLOR, Superintendent."

After the prisoners were placed in custody, they were kept in separate cells, and no one was allowed to communicate with them, not even their legal adviser. All the prisoners, except Thomas Cooper, subsequently made statements, which were taken down in writing, and the statements made by George Cooper and Thomas Gwilliam were now read in evidence, but they were contradicted by the declarations of the deceased.

Mr. COOKE addressed the jury for the three prisoners George and Thomas Cooper and Thomas Gwilliam, and contended that the offence which the prisoners had committed amounted only to the crime of manslaughter.

Mr. GRIFFITHS also addressed the jury for Roberts, and contended that he had nothing whatever to do with the affray.

Mr. Justice WILLES summed up the evidence with great care, expressing his own opinion that the jury could hardly convict the prisoners, upon that evidence, of wilful murder, but leaving it to the jury to say whether or not the prisoners had not unlawfully caused the death of the deceased.

The jury found all the prisoners *Guilty* of manslaughter, recommending Roberts to mercy on account of his wife and family.

Mr. Justice WILLES, in passing sentence, said the deceased man had been set upon by the prisoners in the most cruel and dastardly manner, and beaten to death. Notwithstanding the recommendation of the jury in favour of Roberts, his Lordship said he could not make any distinction in their sentences, though, if he should see reason to alter his opinion, he would take care to express it in the proper quarter. His Lordship then sentenced each of the prisoners to 15 years' penal servitude.

The prisoners were then removed from the dock amid the groans and cries of their relatives who were in court.