

Staunton Trial.

out of the home. On her return to London she communicated with the police, and a watch was set on the neighbourhood of Little Grays farm, but no one was seen who corresponded to the description of Harriet Staunton. Suddenly, on Sunday, the 15th of April, Mrs. Butterfield was summoned by telegram to 34 Forbes Road, Penge, where she found her daughter's corpse. Harriet had died on the preceding Friday.

The little that is known of her short and unhappy married life can be given very briefly. Her child, a boy christened Thomas Henry, was born on the 23rd of March, 1876. She got well over her confinement, and was described afterwards by the doctor who attended her as being in good general health and bodily condition. Besides the professional nurse, she was looked after by Alice Rhodes, whose cousin, an orphan girl of fifteen, named Clara Brown, acted as general servant. Alice Rhodes herself was only nineteen, and of attractive appearance; and a guilty intimacy between her and Louis seems to have begun at that period, perhaps even earlier. In June the Louis Stauntons went to live at Gipsy Hill, Norwood, but shortly before their removal the baby had been taken down by them to the Woodlands, near Cudham, which had recently been taken by Patrick Staunton, who made a precarious livelihood as an artist. The Woodlands, also known as Frith Cottage, was a tiny house in a desolate and unfrequented corner of Kent, standing away from the road, and hemmed in at the back by a plantation. Mrs. Patrick had two small children of her own, more or less under the care of Clara Brown, and it was agreed that Harriet should leave her baby with them while she and her husband continued at Norwood. In August an arrangement was made by which Harriet became a regular inmate of the Woodlands, her husband paying his sister-in-law £1 a week for her board. It is clear, from an ill-spelt, affectionate letter to her husband, written in the following month, that Harriet did not look upon the separation as a permanent one. What Louis intended is not so certain, but he had, as his letters to his brother showed, contracted a strong aversion to his wife. If Harriet entertained any suspicions, she had not the strength of character to give expression to them—she was mentally and physically in the power of her husband and his relations.