

**WEBSTER'S TRIAL.**—Report of the case of John W. Webster; by George Bemis, Esq., one of the counsel in the case. Boston, published by Little & Brown.

This is a large octavo volume, of 600 pages, handsomely got out by the publishers; for our copy of which we are obliged to Judge Merrick, who was senior counsel for Prof. Webster. It supplies a deficiency which was felt to exist; for, although the public were already in possession of various reports of this trial, having different degrees of merit, from six penny pamphlets up to the respectable publication of Phillips & Sampson, yet there was wanting a full, correct, and complete report, with the revision of some legal gentleman personally knowing the events narrated. This want is now supplied by Mr Bemis, an accurate and discriminating lawyer, himself connected with the case. In preparing this volume, which bears the marks of great care, he has enjoyed the benefits of all preceding reports, together with other advantages which former compilers did not have. In this report we have, for the first time, a correct publication of the arguments of Messrs Merrick and Sohler, those gentlemen never having authorised any other; the charge of Chief Justice Shaw, written out here with particularity; and a revised form of the concluding address of the Attorney General, Mr Clifford. Mr Bemis also informs the public, in his preface, that the evidence given before the Jury, and occupying a volume of itself, is here one quarter larger in compass, than in any former report. Prof. Webster's ill-fated speech to the jury is, also, here for the first time given in full. The curious reader will find, likewise, in this volume, a fac simile of the far famed "Civis letter." And in all respects the volume is what was desired as a permanent report of this most extraordinary trial; the most remarkable, by far, that has ever transpired in this country. A trial so intensely dramatic might well require a judicial epic, if we may so term this volume, to assign it a place in history by the side of the most important State Trials of Great Britain.

The argument of the Attorney General occupies seventy four pages, and though less professional and more discursive, perhaps, than would accord with the taste of a legal amateur, it is high-toned, courteous, and able. It bears the marks of forensic elegance, and is frequently eloquent.

The argument of Judge Merrick covers ninety-two pages. We have read it with the more care, because of the cavils which were indulged in, at the time, by some few persons who were disappointed with the verdict of the jury. With a different verdict, he probably would have received *their* commendations.—Supposing that he engaged in the cause under some misconceptions of the evidence—by which we mean, that the evidence at the trial exceeded the testimony of the same witnesses before the Coroner's Inquest—we have read to see how he bore up under the terrible pressure. Candor and justice demand that we should repeat, what we heard as the opinion of all discriminating spectators at the trial,—that he gave to the prisoner all that ingenuity, argument, or eloquence could have given. His address is chaste, clear, and impressive. To say that it is pure, and model-like, professionally, would be superfluous. It did not save his client; for two reasons; first, he committed murder, and second, he committed blunders up to the month of his execution; but it did for him all that skill and argument and pathos could do.

At the end of the volume is annexed a copy of a letter addressed to Judge Merrick by Prof. Webster, after all his efforts to procure a commutation had failed, and he was thrown back upon the reflections of his irrevocable doom. In this he retracts whatever of unkindness he had indulged in towards his counsel in his speech to the jury, and bears full testimony to their fidelity.

The book is advertised by the booksellers at *two dollars* in cloth and *two dollars and a half* in law binding. It will undoubtedly meet with a large sale.