

## BRUTAL ASSAULT.

**A Colored Man Assaults a Young White Woman--The Brute Captured and Jailed--The Friends and Neighbors Take Him from Jail and Swing Him from a Tree.**

John Knott, an industrious laborer, with his wife and a little thirteen-months-old child, lives in a small two-story frame house on the land of Maj. James H. Steele, between Mt. Airy and Watersville, about two miles from the former place, in the lower part of Carroll. Mr. Knott works for his father, a mile or so away, and was engaged there on Saturday last. About four o'clock in the afternoon Townsend Cook, a colored man, with a club, surprised Mrs. Knott by pushing the back door open and walking in. He asked Mrs. Knott for something to eat, and she gave him two rolls. He next asked for a drink, and he was given a tin cup and told he could go to the spring. In an instant the bread and cup were thrown down on the floor, and Cook had dealt Mrs. Knott a terrible blow on the head with the club. She was knocked senseless to the floor. When she recovered she realized that she had been outraged by the brute. When he got up to go he said: "Must I kill you?" She said, "For the Lord's sake don't kill me!" He said he would kill her if she told on him, and after asking her how to go to the railroad he left, going out the way he came, she at once went to the house of Mr. Pinkney Davis and told him what had been done.

Acting upon the description given by Mrs. Knott, Mr. Davis and Constable Philip Detrick found Cook at the home of his mother, on the farm of Justice George A. Davis. He stoutly denied having been at Mrs. Knott's. He was taken to her house by Justice Davis and the constable, where Mrs. Knott identified him by a small protuberance or wart on the lid of the right eye. Cook told a story of his whereabouts during the afternoon, but upon investigation it was found to be almost wholly untrue. Justice Davis heard the evidence in the case in the house of Mrs. Knott in the presence of herself and husband, the prisoner and a number of residents of the neighborhood. Several demanded that Cook should be lynched on the spot, but this was not done, and the justice was permitted to commit him for the action of the Carroll county authorities. Constable Detrick, Pinkney Davis, Thomas Hatfield and Emmanuel Crawford took Cook in charge, and he was kept all night at Mr. Davis's house, a few hundred yards from the home of the Knotts. About daylight Sunday Cook was removed to Constable Detrick's house, near Mt. Airy, where he was given breakfast, and then transferred to the jail here, arriving about 10 o'clock.

Had the officers started to bring their prisoner here Saturday night, Cook would have never seen the inside of the jail. A party of determined men waited on the Westminster road for him from 9 o'clock until 5 o'clock Sunday morning, in a drenching rain, and only dispersed when daylight appeared. They intended to lynch Cook without much ceremony.

Dr. B. H. Todd attended Mrs. Knott. He said she had received a very severe blow on the left side of the head, causing contusion, and sufficient to stun her for awhile. He found the muscles of the neck severely strained from choking, and the neck discolored by the man's fingers. There were also other evidences of the man having accomplished his purpose.

When the negro was brought here on Sunday morning last, rumors of lynching were current, but as nothing of the kind was attempted at Mount Airy, no importance was attached to this talk. Again, Monday afternoon, reports of an intended attack on the jail were circulated, but still no credence was given to them. The citizens were abed at the usual hour except Bailiff Zeiber, Constable Mackintosh and a few others. Sheriff Shower remained up until midnight, when he too retired. About half-past twelve o'clock, some fifty horsemen entered the city by Liberty street from the direction of Mount Airy. They proceeded to Main street, thence to Centre, where a portion of them turned down to the jail, while others went on to the prison by way of Court street. All hands waited in front of the jail and at once threw out guards to prevent any interference on the part of the authorities. Sheriff Shower was apprised of

the left side of the head, causing confusion, and sufficient to stun her for a while. He found the muscles of the neck severely strained from choking, and the neck discolored by the man's fingers. There was also other evidence of the man having accomplished his purpose.

When the negro was brought here on Sunday morning last, rumors of lynching were current, but as nothing of the kind was attempted at Mount Airy, no importance was attached to this talk. Again, Monday afternoon, reports of an intended attack on the jail were circulated, but still no credence was given to them. The citizens were abed at the usual hour except Bailiff Zeiber, Constable Mackintosh and a few others. Sheriff Shower remained up until midnight, when he too retired. About half-past twelve o'clock, some fifty horsemen entered the city by Liberty street from the direction of Mount Airy. They proceeded to Main street, thence to Centre, where a portion of them turned down to the jail, while others went on to the prison by way of Court street. All hands waited in front of the jail and at once threw out guards to prevent any interference on the part of the authorities. Sheriff Shower was apprised of their approach by a messenger before they reached the jail and sent for Attorney-General Roberts, who lives close by. Mr. Roberts hurried out, but had not gone far before he was ordered to halt. He attempted to keep on, when four men advanced towards him and presented four cocked pistols at his head, the muzzle of one almost pressing against his neck.

"Are you a friend or foe?" inquired one of them.

"You know me, gentlemen," he replied. "I am Mr. Roberts, the Attorney-General of Maryland, and it is of no use to point your pistols at me."

Mr. Roberts remonstrated against the proceedings, but the lynchers had captured their man and carried him off. After a short delay they permitted him to pass on, and he went to the jail, where he found five men detaining Sheriff Shower until the captors could make good their escape.

"Gentlemen," exclaimed Mr. Roberts, "for God's sake don't do this. The prisoner is in jail and I will see that he is tried, and if guilty punished. Trust it to me, and do not do any violence. I have just been to Annapolis in the Cooper case, and will see justice done in all such cases."

"Yes," said the men, "and you found counsel there defending Cooper. We have got our man and we are going to hang him ourselves. We must make an example of him to protect our wives, sisters and daughters from such brutes."

Mr. Roberts saw that the men were determined from the coolness with which they were conducting their proceedings and retired from the scene. Before he went, however, the lynchers referred to another case in which a rape was attempted at Poplar Springs in Howard county, and again said that Cook must be made an example of.

Before Attorney General Roberts arrived at the jail, three men rode up and dismounted. They rapped at the door and Sheriff Shower raised the window and asked who they were and what they wanted.

"We want to get in," was the reply.

"I cannot allow you to enter the jail," said the sheriff in decided tones.

They then said that they would not harm him (the sheriff) nor disturb his family, but that they intended to take Cook.

The sheriff still refusing, one of the three men drew a whistle from his pocket and blew a shrill blast, and the lynchers advanced to the jail.

"He won't let us in, boys," exclaimed the man who had given the signal.

"We must get in ourselves then," replied several of the party.

Three heavy rails were then procured from a neighboring fence, and with these the doors were soon battered down. The men made a rush for the opening and five men soon had the sheriff in their grasp.

He struggled manfully with his captors, and in his struggle tore off the mask of one of the lynchers. He was warned that a repetition of this would not be safe for him.

The other lynchers in the meantime hunted about until they found the keys. They unlocked the door of the prison portion of the building. A pistol ball was fired into Cook's cell, but it did not hit him. The firing was probably only intended to intimidate the prisoner. The cell was quickly opened and Cook was dragged out on the porch where a rope was placed about his neck. Then he was put in a wagon and driven rapidly off.

The lynchers quietly left town and proceeded to the limestone quarries of Thos. Stevenson about two miles off.

On reaching there they lynched Cook, suspending him from a limb of a large white-oak tree. As to the particulars at the lynching no one knows a single incident, except those engaged, and of course they have not divulged any. The daily papers of Baltimore, except the News, doctored and added to the reports of the local correspondents and inserted matters gathered by special reporters at other points, until they were unreliable to some extent and sensational to a

to protect our wives, sisters and daughters from such brutes.

Mr. Roberts saw that the men were determined from the coolness with which they were conducting their proceedings and retired from the scene. Before he went, however, the lynchers referred to another case in which a rape was attempted at Poplar Springs in Howard county, and again said that Cook must be made an example of.

Before Attorney General Roberts arrived at the jail, three men rode up and dismounted. They rapped at the door and Sheriff Shower raised the window and asked who they were and what they wanted.

"We want to get in," was the reply.

"I cannot allow you to enter the jail," said the sheriff in decided tones.

They then said that they would not harm him (the sheriff) nor disturb his family, but that they intended to take Cook.

The sheriff still refusing, one of the three men drew a whistle from his pocket and blew a shrill blast, and the lynchers advanced to the jail.

"He won't let us in, boys," exclaimed the man who had given the signal.

"We must get in ourselves then," replied several of the party.

Three heavy rails were then procured from a neighboring fence, and with these the doors were soon battered down. The men made a rush for the opening and five men soon had the sheriff in their grasp.

He struggled manfully with his captors, and in his struggle tore off the mask of one of the lynchers. He was warned that a repetition of this would not be safe for him.

The other lynchers in the meantime hunted about until they found the keys. They unlocked the door of the prison portion of the building. A pistol ball was fired into Cook's cell, but it did not hit him. The firing was probably only intended to intimidate the prisoner. The cell was quickly opened and Cook was dragged out on the porch where a rope was placed about his neck. Then he was put in a wagon and driven rapidly off.

The lynchers quietly left town and proceeded to the limestone quarries of Thos. Stevenson, about two miles off.

On reaching there they lynched Cook, suspending him from a limb of a large white oak tree. As to the particulars at the lynching no one knows a single incident, except those engaged, and of course they have not divulged any. The daily papers of Baltimore, except the *News*, doctored and added to the reports of the local correspondents, and inserted matters gathered by special reporters at other points, until they were unreliable to some extent and sensational to a great degree. The reflection on the sheriff and authorities, in the *American's* report, for lack of preparation to guard the prisoner, was not furnished by the local representative.

The presence of the lynchers soon became known in this city, and in an hour's time two-thirds of the people were up and on the streets. Many of them followed the direction taken by the party, and upon arriving at the spot, found Cook dangling in the air from the limb of a tree. His body was stripped naked to the waist, and there were two holes found in his scalp, produced by a pistol ball. On the trunk of the tree was a paper on which was written, "This man confessed his crime."

The body was taken down by officers and conveyed to the almshouse, where Drs. Jas. P. Summers, W. K. Fringer and John S. Mathis made an examination. They found the scalp wounds mentioned above, and, cutting down to the vertebra, discovered that the neck was broken.

A coroner's inquest was held by Justice Crapster between 10 and 11 o'clock in the day, and a verdict was rendered that Cook came to his death by hanging at the hands of parties unknown. The coroner's jury was composed of Milton Schaeffer, Wm. P. Tyler, Clarence Seabrook, Edwin L. Zahn, John Thomson Wash. L. Brown, Israel Zeiber, John F. Driscoll, J. J. Baumgartner, John B. Eckenrode, A. H. Barnes, Jas. P. Summers.

At the inquest Sheriff Shower, City Officer

Zeiber, W. T. Seabrook and Deputy Sheriff Mackintosh all testified to seeing the crowd in town and to the carrying off of Cook, but they did not know any of the lynchers. Some wore black masks, but many did not. Persons in town who conversed with some of them say that they are evidently men of respectability. They were particularly orderly and did their work quietly. The feeling here was generally with the lynchers. The ladies, particularly, sanctioned the act.

Business was mostly suspended during the day, and the lynching was the general talk of everybody. Many country people came to town. They also sanctioned the summary disposal of Cook.

Cook's remains were buried on the Alms House farm Monday afternoon.

The outrage referred to by the lynchers in their talk with Mr. Roberts as occurring near Poplar Springs, Howard county, was an attempted rape on a twelve-year-old daughter of a Mr. Pickett by a negro named Gaither. He dragged his victim some distance into a woods, and was only prevented from accomplishing his hellish purpose by the cries of the child attracting assistance from some one passing along the road. Gaither worked for Bealle Warfield, and is well known.