

STATE OF MARYLAND.

Lynching of Stephen Williams, Colored, in Prince George's.

HANGED AND SHOT BY MEN IN MASKS.

A Hagerstown Minister Denounces the Fair Association—End of the Home Investigation by the Governor at Cumberland—Close of a Mission.

[Special Dispatch to the Baltimore Sun.]

UPPER MARLBORO', Md., Oct. 21.—Stephen Williams, colored, the self-acknowledged assailant of Mrs. Katie Hardesty, was taken from Prince George's county jail Saturday morning and hanged at the iron bridge, just between the town and the railroad depot. At the time of Williams's arrest the excitement ran high, as the offense was one of the most brutal in the criminal annals of Prince George's county. The fact that Williams should have attempted such a deed in so short a time following the execution of Jas. Allen, who was so recently hanged for a similar offense and within a stone's throw of the spot where Williams tried to put his crime into execution was surprising and no doubt caused the excitement which resulted in the tragedy of Saturday morning. When at the preliminary hearing Williams confessed that he was guilty as charged the plan to lynch the prisoner was consummated. Indeed, from the moment that he was identified by Mrs. Hardesty as her assailant his doom was sealed.

The first that the jail officials know that anything was wrong was when several men rode up to the house of Mr. W. J. Sploer, who is the warden of the jail and whose home is about two blocks distant from the jail. Mr. Sploer said: "It was about 11.30 o'clock. I was called by several men, and I looked out of my window. As I did this a man walked past the window wearing a pair of handcuffs. At the same time one of the men said he had a prisoner to be placed in jail. I knew something was wrong. I told the men that my big key was in the safe at Dr. Latmer's drug store and that the inside keys were in the possession of Deputy Warden Dumbhard, at the jail, and he would receive any prisoner they might have. The men left, but returned again. This time they demanded the keys to the jail and at the same time they flourished pistols. I then stuck my revolver out of the window and told them they could get the keys out of that, meaning the pistol. About this time I heard a yell coming from the direction of the jail and the men who had been after me about the keys left at once, going toward the prison. I supposed that the posse had effected an entrance. I got on my clothing and started for the jail, but when I reached there Williams had been taken from his cell and was hanging at the bridge."

Entrance to the jail was made through the

Entrance to the jail was made through the rear door. This door is of iron, and it baffled the efforts of the lynchers for more than an hour. The work done on the door plainly shows that the party who undertook to break the lock did not have an accurate knowledge of the way the door worked, as it was found that most of the time was used in prying bricks out near the door frame, the operators thinking in this way to reach the bolt of the lock. The plan was abandoned when it was found that the back bolt was protected by an iron casing. The lynching party then attacked the lock. The face was knocked off and four iron bolts were out in two. This caused the lock to fall off. While this work was going on Williams, it is said, did not know or realize that the party was after him until Benjamin Lawson, a fellow-prisoner, told him. Williams began to yell murder, and was shouting at the top of his voice, when, looking from the cell window, he was confronted by a revolver and a masked man, who told him to keep quiet and to dress himself.

As soon as the iron door yielded to the intruders several men went up the little iron staircase, and stopping at the head of the steps, where the cell of Williams is located, the men called a halt. One of the number stepped up and struck the hasp of the cell door and it parted and rolled down the steps. Several lynchers entered the cell and pulled Williams out from under his mattress. He was put on his feet and a rope was placed around his neck. He was pulled out of the cell by the rope, down the steps and out of the jail-yard. Five or six men had hold of the rope. Each of the prisoner's arms was held by two men and several others pushed him along. The pace from the prison to the bridge was rapid. About half way over the bridge Williams was told to pray, but all that could be heard that he said was "Oh Lord, oh Lord."

In less than five minutes after leaving the prison the negro was strung up. The rope was thrown over one of the beams of the bridge and he was hauled up. The rope was made fast to the bridge railing. A volley of shots was fired and the lynchers disappeared, leaving the corpse hanging to the bridge. The body was taken down by Warden Spicer and laid under the sycamore tree whose boughs shaded the corpse of Vermillion, the barn-burner, who was lynched on the same bridge about five years ago. Justice James Harris held an inquest, the jury rendering the verdict that "Stephen Williams came to his death by hanging and by being shot by parties unknown."

The body was turned over to Undertaker Hough, who dug a grave in the jail yard and buried the remains. The father of the negro was in Marlboro' just after the hanging. He said he could not blame the people, as it was a bad crime. The citizens of Marlboro', without respect of race, color or condition, all say he richly deserved his fate, and while lawlessness is always to be deplored, yet the act committed by the negro was of such a brutal character that lynching was the only proper punishment. This is the third lynching for this offense which has occurred in the county. James Allen, who was hanged here on July 6 for assaulting Cora Simpson, lived in the same locality where Williams committed his crime.