

Hance Lynched.

On Thursday night last about 2 o'clock, a body of men, disguised and thoroughly equipped for the occasion, repaired at our jail and endeavored to persuade the jailer, Mr. John Clements, to the belief that they had in charge a prisoner whom they wished to deliver. Failing in this, they demanded the keys, which demand was persistently refused. The outer door, which merely opens up the jailer's apartments, was promptly forced. The Lynchers then set to work on the outer door of cell over which they labored for 30 or 40 minutes. The inner door, through which there is an opening about large enough to permit the body of a man of ordinary size, was not forced. It is supposed that Hance was either decoyed or frightened through this opening. The victim secured, the lynchers, it is known, halted in the Court House yard and suggested that he be hung there; but for some unknown reason, Hance was conveyed a little beyond the plank bridge, a mile east, on the road leading to New Town church, and there suspended from the limb of a witch-hazel which hangs directly over the public road. It will be remembered that the crime for which Hance was lynched was reported in the ENTERPRISE several weeks ago. He was employed as a hand on the vessel of Capt. Frank Russell, and sent to carry a message to Judge Danl. J. Payne, who resides near St. Clements Bay. On his return from Stone's wharf Hance met Miss Alice Bailey of our county and having inquired of her the way to the Mill and the wharf, made an improper proposal which was promptly refused. The young girl, perceiving her danger, ran and was pursued by the fiend, Hance, who then and there attempted the outrage but, owing to the desperate resistance of the lady and the publicity of the locality, desisted. He was captured by constable, C. Hayden Russell, assisted by Messrs. W. V. Waters and Parran Dawkins and taken before Justice, John C. Hurry, who committed the prisoner to our jail to await the action of the grand jury. At the magistrate's trial the girl testified to the attempt which fact was admitted by the prisoner. At first there was some talk of lynching but it was regarded as mere rumor without any foundation; hence there was no effort on the part of the officers of the land to prevent such an occurrence, Sheriff Greenwell not being at home at the time.

While we feel that nothing more than justice has been meted out to one who grossly violated the laws of the land and outraged public sentiment, nevertheless, standing on the side of law, order and religion, we must condemn that spirit, which induces a few of our citizens to take the law in their own hands. Since our recollection, and in the recollection of some of our oldest inhabitants, no criminal charged with a heinous crime, has escaped justice in St. Mary's,—justice according to a civilized public sentiment, and where the law is efficient, the law should take its course. If lynching is ever justifiable by a truly moral and religious sentiment, it is where, from force of circumstances a fiend escapes justice. To arise, in such emergencies and give security to the peace, happiness and virtue of the community, is, we think, the duty of every citizen. Justice Jos. F. Morgan was at the scene of the lynching about 7 A. M. and summoned the following jury of inquest: J. Simms Fenwick, H. F. Moore, Harry Spalding, E. B. Abell, F. O. Morgan, F. V. King, Wm. H. Hayden, P. D. Love, Wm. H. Ford, W. C. Drury, Jeremiah Jordan and C. W. Armsworthy. At the time of going to press the jury had not rendered their verdict, though the evidence may lead to identification of certain well known county people. Hance had desired and received the ministerial assistance of Rev. Father Jenkins only a few days before the lynching. His remains were interred at St. Aloysius' burial ground.