

THE SHEA CASE AT ELLICOTT CITY.

Henson's Written Confession in Evidence—The Prisoner's Doleful Verses—Plea of the Defense—He Is Not Mentally Responsible.

[Special Dispatch to the Baltimore Sun.]

ELLICOTT CITY, MD., March 27.—Jacob Henson, the young colored man who killed Daniel F. Shea in Ellicott City February 19, was put on trial for murder today. He is represented by W. Ashby Hawkins, a colored lawyer, who asked that the prisoner be tried by a jury, which was duly impaneled.

Detective Pohler's Testimony.

Detective Herman Pohler, of Baltimore, who obtained from Henson his first confession, told on the stand how the prisoner's statement was obtained without extorting it from him by any threats or by offering him any sort of reward.

Chief of Police James E. Vansant and a number of other witnesses testified for the prosecution, including Louis N. Getz, Samuel Traub, Dr. Bernard J. Byrne, Jacob J. Werner, W. H. Freeburger, Roswell A. Martin, John M. O'Brien, Jacob Henson, Sr., colored, father of the prisoner; Leonard Hulsinger, Agnew Wiles, Robert H. Holtman and John Dorsey, colored.

Prof. W. B. D. Penniman, of the Baltimore Medical College, testified to the finding blood stains on the clothing worn by Henson at the time of his arrest and also on the hatchet with which, according to his confession, the killing was done.

The prisoner's lawyers asked the court to note an exception to the advisability of the testimony of Professor Penniman about the blood stains on Henson's clothing, because it had not been shown, he contended, that Henson wore those clothes on the night the crime was committed. The cross-examination of Dr. Byrne and one or two others of the State's witnesses indicated the line of the defense to be a form of insanity. Dr. Byrne swore that he considered the prisoner a little stupid and slow in his mental faculties, but not, so far as he had observed him, unsound in mind. The case of the state was finished with the submission of a number of Henson's written confessions and also some of his verses. The verses are a prisoner's lament, the first stanza reading as follows:

"A many a day have I sat
Inside these prison walls,
Awaiting for the day to come
That I may see my doom."

His Written Confession.

The following is the fullest of the prisoner's many confessions. He wrote it out in a neat hand and gave it to Deputy Sheriff Robert H. Holtman last night:

"Ellicott City, February 19, 1895.—I went to Mr. Shea's store that night about 8 or 8.30 with some beer and he had his shutters closed and the blind in the door. Mr. Shea closed the door, locked it and put the bar across the door. I was standing up against the wall. I and Mr. Shea drank the beer together and had a little quarrel over the beer. Then Mr. Shea struck me three times in the breast, stunning me for a while, and I picked up the hatchet and struck Mr. Shea with the handle part of it. The first time I can remember striking him he was nearly at the end of the counter and the last time I can remember of striking him he was leaning over the counter. Afterward he fell with his head in the corner, and then I started to go upstairs. Before I went upstairs I took a long pocket-book off the counter and put it in my hip pocket of my old pants and when I came to look for it it was not there. It was a five dollar bill in it. I am most sure I lost the money that night, that's the candid truth. When I went upstairs my nose commenced to bleed. I left the hatchet on the chair. Emann Cole was not to be seen. John Dorsey was the only person to be seen. I did not do the deed on purpose. I did it in self-defense. Washed my hands before I left the room. Left bright light burning downstairs. There was no light at all upstairs. It was all done through drunkenness and excitedness. Did not hear any knocks at the door. More excited than anything else. First time arrested, first time before any court, fair reputation in Ellicott City and surroundings, and also beg the mercies of the court. This is a true statement.

"J. HENSON, JR.,

E. City, Md.

"Any one else getting on the stand at the courthouse and making statements thereon, except Detective Pohler, are not true. I did not strike him after he fell."

Chief Judge Roberts will occupy the bench tomorrow with Judge Jones and the case is expected to be concluded early in the day. The prisoner was in good spirits and closely followed the testimony.