TO GO UNPUNISHED

No Investigation of the Cocking Lynching Likely.

CHARLES COUNTY SEEMS SATISFIED

Near Relatives of the Victim Express Their Views.

BODIES

From a Staff Correspondent of The Star.

LA PLATA, Md., June 20.—There has been a great awakening in Charles county, and folks seem to be proud of themselves and of Southern Maryland.

The cause is the lynching early Saturday morning of Joseph Cocking, the Englishman awaiting trial for the alleged murder of his wife and her sister, Miss Miller, last April.

The population seems to think that the lynching was an act to be proud of, and that the lynchers are deserving of the highest commendation; and general approval, if not open expressed, is certainly intimated.

The story of the lynching in detail was correctly told in Saturday's Star, and since that time the condition of things at Port Tobacco has been as unruffled as the water in the nearby creek. Twelve citizens viewed the remains, at the direction of the coroner, several days after the lynching had to say, and promptly returned the verdict that Joseph Cocking came to his death at the hands of parties unknown.

That ended the incident of the incident.

The citizens of Charles county never doubted that Joseph Cocking brutally killed the lives of his wife and sister-in-law, and the fact that he would have been lynched the day of the discovery of the

The Jail.

crime had not John Miller, brother of the murdered women, urged to the contrary, is not open to question. When a change of venue was secured and the case was certified for trial in September at Leonardtown, St. Mary's county, Md., all hesitation dissolved. It was determined to do away with the expense of a trial—or farce, as they think it would have been—as well as the possibility of an acquittal, and dispose of Cocking in the manner they thought he deserved. The lynching was planned and carried out so skillfully that not a person outside the mystic circle entertained a suspicion of what was in progress. In order to strengthen the impression that all idea of lynching had been abandoned, the date of the illegal execution was delayed until the last moment, for the prisoner was to have been transferred to the new and secure jail at La Plata within a few days.

The Meeting.

At midnight Friday, when the village was supposedly wrapped in slumber, figures could be seen moving mysteriously in the gloom and disappearing through the doorway of a large structure facing the "plaza," or public square, which, it is claimed, was the rendezvous of the party. This building was for a time after the lynching of the court house pressed into service as the temple of justice of the county. When the assembled party left the place, appearance disguises were donned and the party proceeded to the residence of Jailer Burch. The remainder of the unbroken story has been told.

From talks with several persons who know all about the circumstances surrounding the death of Cocking, and yet who, seemingly, are densely ignorant regarding the occurrence, it is evident that he was not dragged along the road to "Suspension bridge," as it is now designated. Cocking either walked between two of the hangmen, or was placed in a buggy, which at present is on the porch of Julian Cox's hotel, in the village of La Plata, and was permitted to ride to the fatal spot. Although Cocking fought his captors with frenzy, born of disappearing hope, no violence was offered by those who had him at their mercy. The abrasions and bruises on his face resulted from striking the timbers after being thrown from the bridge, which is a modest affair, the floor being not over three feet above the surface of the little stream it spans. The rope was made fast to the hand rail of the bridge, to which the keys to the jail were also attached. In support of the contention that the lynching was carefully planned, it is an interesting fact that the party passed over a bridge more pretentious by far than "Suspension

The Bridge.
Scene of the Lynching.

bridge," and several hundred feet nearer the village, for selection of the scene of the hanging. The big bridge, by reason of its high railings, seemed a more suitable place for a lynching than the one selected, but because of the shallow water it would have been necessary for Jailer Cockin to the high rafters, and the body suspended there might be frightened home in the morning. The illustrations in the Baltimore papers of the scene of the lynching, "Ketched by eye witnesses," are fairly faithful reproductions of the big bridge, not "Suspension bridge"; the alleged eye witnesses were a little mixed regarding the scene of the tragedy.

No Alarm Given.

It is a mystery why the body remained undiscovered from shortly after 1 o'clock until 7 o'clock. Jailer Burch, it is true, was taken to the jail, but he was not locked in. "Why, then," several persons have asked, "was the alarm not given?" I have been assured that had a cry been raised, very few men would have been found at their homes, and those that were would not have made any move to interfere with the proceedings.

Prior to the inquest Saturday morning and during it, many persons assembled in groups about the "plaza." Several of the men, and they may be classed among the best people of the county, yawned at intervals and looked sleepy. At least one was suffering from a cold in the head, and he inadvertently remarked that he got his feet wet "last night." It did not require a shrewd person to guess who might have been concerned in the lynching.

No Investigation Likely.

But there will be no investigation, or, rather, the chances are 90 to 1 against any such proceeding.

It is pointed out as a significant fact that after serving for a month the two grands at the jail were suddenly and unexpectedly withdrawn only a few days ago. Again, it is admitted that Sheriff Wade, who resides only a few feet from the jail, witnessed the removal of Cocking from his place of confinement. It is not denied that Jailer Burch was present and saw the party depart with the prisoner toward the bridge. Yet no effort to interfere was made, no one in the village was disturbed, and the body was left suspended from the bridge six hours being discovered by a colored boy who happened that way about 7 o'clock. In the opinion of some a few shots from revolver would have scared the lynchers and saved the life of their victim. But their part was without obstacles.

Sheriff Wade is a subject for criticism in that he did not remove Cocking from the county for safety, knowing, as he did, the insecure condition of the Port Tobacco jail. Only a few weeks ago the sheriff had two colored boys confined in the so-called jail. The pair finally gave a way of resting and feasting, so one evening they lowered themselves from a second-story window, leaving at their place of rest a scribbled on a piece of paper with a pencil, in this wise:

"Our Dear Sir—Bye-bye, sheriff; you've got the papers against us, but we've decided to leave.

"YOUR PATTENING HOGS."

Of the men in jail at the time of Joseph Cocking, some may reside in the vicinity of Hill Top, where the double murder was committed, and are not residents of Port Tobacco, but, nevertheless, it is said to be beyond doubt that they are all well-known citizens, who were carefully organized for self-protection. And if any one of the number should be summoned on a jury to try the lynching, it is not denied that no jury could be secured to convict, or even indict him, even though the evidence might be clear, direct and undisputed.

Delay of the Funeral.

The body, after being cut down, was taken to the jail and laid in the cell occupied by Cocking but a few hours earlier. On the night shirt was a stain of blood, and the neck had been slightly abraised by the rope. The neck was broken.

All this time the colored boy, who was the only other witness, was almost in a state of terror of spasms from fright, so he was set at liberty and the doors closed on the body, after it had been viewed by the jury.

In that condition, without the cooling of ice, the corpse remained all day Saturday and yesterday until 2 p.m. The absence of excitement in the village was striking, the only break in the quiet being three pistol shots fired in Port Tobacco village late Saturday night or early Sunday morning. A grave had been dug in the church yard at Hill Top by colored laborers, but the pastor of the church declined to permit the burial.

It was then thought that the interment would necessarily be at the expense of the county, and a crew of men, therefore, prepared at the alms house—similar to potter's field in Washington—for burial, and a hearse ordered by the sheriff until the arrival of the coroner, shortly after 12 o'clock, at La Plata. In the meantime regular service was held in the Episcopal Church, directly adjoining the jail, and a reference to the dead man was noted.

Not only Mrs. Frances Cocking, but his sister, as well, came down from Baltimore on the train. It was soon learned that they intended to take away the body on the afternoon train, and Undertaker Wade, a brother of the sheriff, at first was not planning to that end.

The order of the dead man rode with me in a buggy from La Plata to the home of the sheriff, at Port Tobacco, and she expressed herself in unmistakable terms regarding the lynching. She was raised in Charles county, she said, but could not believe it possible that civilized beings would murder a man and had been her brother. "They need not worry about not permitting him to be buried at Hill Top," she continued. "We have made all arrangements to take the body to Baltimore this afternoon. It will be interred in Druid Hill Park cemetery, Towson, and as soon as I am able I shall have the remains of my father and mother disinterred from Hill Top and also removed to Towson. I want nothing more to do with Charles county."

In speaking of the fact that Jailer Burch had sounded an alarm after the departure of the lynchers, she remarked, sarcastically, that Burch was probably paid a dollar to do so.

When asked what steps, if any, would be taken in the way of a legal investigation, the sister answered that so far as she is concerned the matter would rest undisturbed.

"I have lost my brother, who was notoriously already," she said. "I believe in the death penalty, and if a man who murdered poor Joe will certainly suffer their deserved punishment. Joe was as innocent of the crime charged to his account as I am, and the trial we would have proved such to be the case. He was always a gentle and kind boy, and thoroughly incapable of killing a dog, much less his own wife."

I had a long talk with Mr. Thomas Cocking, and learned that although he has not yet reached a decision, it is among the possibilities that suit for damages will be filed against Charles county, on the ground that the county was responsible for the safe-keeping of the prisoner.

"Our detective has been constantly working on this case," said Mr. Cocking, "and before the passing of two weeks we would have laid hold of the man who really committed the Hill Top murders. It is utterly preposterous to think for a moment that Joe was guilty. Why, I have at home a history of the Cocking family, which shows that never has a member been arrested or even accused of crime or misdemeanor. This is the first slur upon the family name, and it is ridiculous on its face."

Without ostentation the body, after being placed in a casket and shipping case, was lifted into a hearse, and at 4 o'clock yesterday afternoon a small funeral procession made its way slowly from Port Tobacco to La Plata. Besides Thomas Cocking and his sister, it contained Sheriff Wade and his wife and daughter, and Joon Miller, brothers of the murdered women. Mr. Miller has believed in Cocking's innocence all along, visiting him daily at the jail. The body was taken to Baltimore on the 5 o'clock train.

The motive of Cocking in committing the double murder, if he was the guilty party, is generally said to have been a spite at Mrs. Cocking's refusal to live with him. After murdering her in a fit of passion, so the story goes, he became afraid to go home, fearing to do away with Miss Miller in order to silence her damaging testimony.

Cocking's three little children are with their grandmother, Mrs. Cocking's mother, at Port Tobacco, Md.

The exceptionally good treatment which Cocking was accorded at the hands of Sheriff Wade, some say, hastened the lynching. It is reported that the citizens became alarmed at the fact that a repetition of the Farrall murder trial a year ago at La Plata, which was enormously expensive to the county, resulted in an acquittal of the prisoner and a bankrupt condition of the county treasury. Then again, it is contended that lynching was the easiest way of starting and object lesson to the colored people of the neighborhood. Whether or not there is any truth in the latter theory, it remains a certainty that the colored population emphasized the lynching at the "Suspension bridge" after nightfall, and habitually make wide detours when leaving their cabins after dark.

It is said that Sheriff Wade has formally reported to Governor Lowndes and Justice Briscoe of the circuit court, among other things setting forth that the sheriff's conscience is clear.

All is quiet at Port Tobacco today, and the episode of Saturday morning is no longer discussed. The lynching of Joseph Cocking has passed into history.

The episode of Charles county has been much before the people of the country. First came the international Farrell poisoning case and its subsequent interesting trial, for a hill the county gave jumped to the front with the almost unparalleled Cocking double murder, followed by the startling lynching of Joseph Cocking.

C. F. C.

FAIR WEATHER.

That is Promised for Tonight and Also for Tomorrow.

Forecast till 8 p.m. Tuesday.—For the District of Columbia, Delaware and Maryland, fair tonight and Tuesday; slight changes in temperature; westerly winds.

For Virginia, fair tonight and Tuesday; northwesterly winds, becoming northerly.

Weather conditions and general forecast.—An area of low pressure covers the Saint Lawrence valley, New England and the lower lake region; the pressure is also relatively low on the Atlantic coast and in Montana. An area of high pressure covers the central valleys and the Rocky mountains generally, highest in the lower Missouri valley. Light rains have fallen in New England and on the northern Rocky mountain plateau; it has risen in the lake regions, the central valleys and the gulf states.

The temperature has fallen slightly in the Saint Lawrence valley and the lake regions, also in the Ohio valley, and remained stationary in other districts.

For the twenty-four hours ending Sunday morning, showers occurred generally in the lake regions, the Ohio and Mississippi valleys, and the middle Atlantic states. For the twenty-four hours ending Monday morning showers have occurred generally in New England, the lake regions, the middle and south Atlantic states.

Fair weather, with slight changes in temperature, is indicated for New England, the Atlantic and east gulf states tonight and Tuesday, but occasional showers may occur in the west gulf states.

The following heavy precipitation, in inches, was reported during the past twenty-four hours: Atlantic City, 1.18; Tampa, 4.44; Abilene, 1.68.

Condition of the Water.

Temperature and condition of water at 8 a.m.: Great Falls, temperature, 75; condition, 1. Receiving reservoir, temperature, 78; condition at north connection, 1; condition at south connection, 13. Distributing reservoir, temperature, 77; condition at influent gate house, 10; effluent gate house, 9.

Tide Table.

Today—Low tide, 3:36 a.m. and 5:22 p.m.; high tide, 10:46 a.m. and 11:14 p.m.

Tomorrow—Low tide, 4:24 a.m. and 6:03 p.m.; high tide, 11:39 a.m. and 11:58 p.m.

The Sun and Moon.

Sun rises, 4:37; sun sets, 7:29. Moon rises, 10:24 p.m.

The City Lights.

Gas lamps will be lighted by 9:06 p.m.; extinguishing begun at 3:01 a.m. The lighting is begun one hour before the time named. If it clear, less lighting may be ordered.

Naphtha lamps all lighted by 9:06 p.m.; extinguishing begun at 3:16. The moon schedule does not apply to naphtha lamps.

Range of the Thermometer.

The following were the readings of the thermometer at the weather bureau today: 8 a.m., 74; 2 p.m., 84; maximum, 85; minimum, 74.

Y. M. C. A.'S HOME.

A Transfer to the Refitted Building Will Be Made Soon.

Such progress has been made in the work of refitting the building of the Y. M. C. A. on New York avenue near 14th street, which was wrecked by fire last August, that it is expected the association will be able to move into its quarters next Saturday next. It is possible that the transfer will not take place during the present week, but at any rate it is considered believed that the change will be made before the Christian Endeavor convention, which opens next week.

As is well known to the readers of The Star, only a portion of the old building has been refitted for what is expected to be the permanent home of the association until a new building can be erected. A flat roof has been put on the walls above the second story, and the exterior walls have been painted and the interior walls plastered and the woodwork painted. The large building in the rear of the building was used as a gymnasium, was a complete wreck. The work on the foundation of the annex at the rear of the two floors, one room deep on the west side of entrance hall, and two rooms deep on the east side.

The basement, of course, will be available for use. At present the association is occupying quarters in the Lenman building, and when the transfer is made the secretary's office will be on the first floor in the room to the east of the main entrance, the reading room in the front room on the first floor and the place for meetings in the rear room. The basement will be used for educational department, when the classes are resumed again in the fall. It was the aim to keep the cost of refitting the building down to the lowest possible point, but still the rooms will be made attractive and light and cheerful, and while the space is convenient stopping short of the elevation on its way toward the fine, new building it is hoped will materialize in the near future.

Transfers of Real Estate.

Augustus Burgdorf et al., trustees, to Flora B. Weeks, lots 44 and 45, sq. 327, $1,250.

James Waters et ux. to Joseph Harris, part lot 11, section 6, Barry Farm; $800.

Osborn Smith et ux. to George N. Campbell, lot 5, section 5, Barry Farm; $1,250.

Mary E. Campbell to Frank Goveen, lots 133 and 134, sq. 621, $1,100.

A. Best Duvall to Ray E. Middaugh, part lot 22, sq. 1025.

Frank Goveen to Wm. P. Wagner, lots 133 and 134, sq. 621, $1,100.

Geo. Haas, jr., et ux. to Annie L. Keene, lot 19, sq. 849, $1,250.

Henry W. Heider et ux. to Ray E. Middaugh, part lot 22, sq. 500; $10.

Mary H. Jackson to Bernard E. Emmert, lot 17, Lily's Columbia Heights; $140.

Ray E. Middaugh to Henry W. Heider, part lot 22, sq. 500; $10.

John P. O'Neill et ux. to Solomon Carr, lots 22, 23, sq. 284; $850.

Wm. H. Saunders et al., trustees, to Mary L. I. Chapin, lot 45, sq. 327, $1,250.

John D. Sullivan to James Mooney, lot 9, sq. 83, $500.

John Sherman, trustee, et ux., to Lillie Downey, lot 20, blk. 42, Holmead Manor; $10.

Charles T. Sparo to Emilie M. Darnelle, lot 18, sq. 809; $10.

C. B. Watson, who was nominated for governor by the North Carolina democratic state convention in Raleigh last Friday night, received an ovation on his arrival home.