

### The Execution Last Friday.

We print on our first page to-day a full account of the scenes and incidents attending the execution of Joshua Griffin, which took place near Bel Air, on Friday last. It is creditable to the people of Harford county, and especially to the citizens of Bel Air, that so few of them were impelled by morbid curiosity to witness the dying struggles of the unfortunate wretch who paid the penalty of his crime upon the gallows. After the cortege conveying the prisoner to the place of execution left the town, the citizens went about their usual avocations, so that an ordinary observer would not have imagined so dreadful a scene was at that time being enacted near the place. The feeling was not one of indifference, but rather of aversion to witnessing the awful spectacle of a human being dangling between heaven and earth to satisfy the demands of justice.

Griffin made a full confession of his guilt, but contrary to the usual custom of condemned murderers gave no outward sign of contrition. It is to be hoped that his repentance was not the less sincere.

Although he confessed his crime, he did not relate the circumstances attending it, beyond the fact that he thought he struck Miss Taylor twice upon her head with a club, which knocked her down. From an examination of a diagram of the premises it seems evident that he had concealed himself behind or inside of one of the outhouses. When Miss Taylor had milked the cows she took the milk to the house, as it stood on the kitchen table when the house was entered after the murder. It is conjectured that she returned to the stable yard, to turn the horse into the field. As she started from the stable door towards the pump, to give the animal water, Griffin sprang from his hiding-place, and made his murderous attack with the club, which he had previously taken from a cattle rack in the yard.

He had been seen by a little negro girl some days previous to the murder, concealed behind a pig pen near the fatal spot, evidently awaiting an opportunity when the premises should be deserted by all except Miss Taylor. This opportunity occurred on the morning of the 12th of October. The testimony of this girl was ruled out by the court, on account of her incompetency as a witness. The evidence against him, although circumstantial, was as strong as direct proof could have been.

The only other legal execution that has ever taken place previously to the one on Friday, occurred in 1804, when a young negro man was hanged for murder and arson. His victim was an old colored woman who sold cakes and beer near where the residence of Dr. E. Hall Richardson now stands. After killing her, he set fire to and burned her house. He was tried, convicted upon the evidence of an accomplice, an old colored man, who turned State's evidence, and hanged on Dick's Hill, about a mile west of Bel Air, to the limb of a chestnut tree, not far from where Major William H. Dallan's house is now situated.

Two other executions have also taken place, of late years, in the county, both of them of colored men. The first of these was Isaac Moore, who was hanged on the 22d of July, 1868, by the citizens of Bel Air and vicinity, for an attempted outrage upon a highly respectable young lady. He was first arrested and placed in jail. Upon being taken out before a magistrate for examination, his guilt appeared so evident that the most intense excitement was aroused. He was taken out of the hands of the deputy sheriff, dragged to a point on the Churchville road, near Bynum's Run, close to the spot where the outrage was attempted, and hanged to an overhanging limb of a small sassafras tree.

In August of the same year another colored man, known by the name Jim Crow, who had been guilty of a terrible outrage upon an aged lady, was taken by masked men from the cars on the Northern Central Railroad, near Monkton, and carried to the spot, near Jarrettsville, where the crime was committed, and there hanged. Both of these men confessed their crimes before they were executed.