

HORROR!

Terrible Tragedy at Mount Ver- non.

Judge Lynch Holds Court and
Passes Summary Sentence

On Five Brutes in Human Form.

The Murder of a Highly-Respected
Citizen and Faithful Officer
Fearfully Avenged.

A Graphic Picture of the Exciting
Scenes Attending the Exe-
cution of the Criminals.

The Particulars.

MT. VERNON, IND., October 11.
Special to the Courier:

At 8 this morning the long roll of a drum echoed through the streets in which crowds of people stood on the corners waiting the outcome. At the Court House corner a tall man under the influence of liquor addressed a mob which gathered round him and urged that

THEIR WIVES WERE NOT SAFE as long as the bestial villains were allowed at large. He was summarily stopped by several citizens, and then the command several hundred, started out of the city and assembled in the dark woods, half a mile out, on the road where

ONE HUNDRED LONG BLACK MASKERS were ready. They spent one hour in preparing the work and taking oaths of secrecy. Meanwhile your representative went into the jail with Ed. Hays, Marshal, and talked with the doomed men. In the corridor lay old Harris, lean and bloody, with frowsy whiskers. He was unable to talk above a whisper from the loss of blood. His right arm was shot to pieces and had a load of shot inside had nearly done the work. He raised on his arm and said he had done

THE SHOOTING

which killed Thomas, but thought the men were George Daniels and Henry Jones who had threatened to kill him. He reluctantly admitted things which placed his guilt beyond a shadow of doubt.

JEFF HOPKINS,

A tall, black brute, 42 years old, was next, and he denied his guilt.

WM. CHAMBERS,

The third man, was a tall, brown fellow, with black mustache, and has just been acquitted of the murder of Pat. McMullen at Grand Chain last winter, although everybody believes he was guilty.

JAMES GOODE, who has just been pardoned for rape, a villainous-looking six-footer, magnificently built, denied in the most solemn manner his connection with the affair. "You want me to tell the truth, gentlemen," said he, in deep tones, and without a quiver, "and I say, before GOD AND MAN, that I never had nothing to do with it."

EDWARDS, the last of the five, was a young, slim and slouchy-looking boy of twenty-one, coal black and as cool as a cucumber. When called to the cell door he quit praying in a monotonous voice and told the reporter, in a calm and even voice, that he was not in the crowd that

RAVISHED THE WOMEN;

that he had been sick all Monday and Tuesday. He was arrested in bed by the officers, but they say he was

SHAMMING,

and when in the cell he appeared as strong as any well man in the crowd. Old Harris alone presented a pitiable appearance, looking weak and sick, but was cool and unmoved. He lay on a pallet without uttering a sound, while the other four, who were locked in the first cell from the door, were kneeling on the floor, with their heads bowed to the wall, praying in the loud, monotonous, thrilling tone of the camp meeting negro. A single candle shed a sickly light upon the scene, and the last hours in the cell were terrible in their gloom. Just as your representative had finished his last interview, the crack of a pistol was heard. Ed. Hayes threw open the door and said: "Now, let slip, boys; there's murder on hand." The reporter and one or two other persons privileged to enter, hastily ran out into the beautiful Court House yard, shaded with heavy locusts. The night was clear, and a bright moon pouring its light down, made

the scene ghost-like and impressive. The cannon which had been used to defend the jail in the morning, had been brought to the jail entry, loaded and primed, and pointed blank at the door. A gunner stood ready with lighted matches to apply if necessary, while Ed. Hayes, Matt. Nelson, Wm. Kenna, Charles Baker, Frank Wright, and another, armed with shot guns, took their positions about the jail and ordered the large crowd to clear the yard for fear of accident in whatever might ensue. The crowd, consisting of two or three hundred, fell back to the fence and across the street. The miserable, guilty wretches on the inside began to pray and

CALL ON GOD

to save them. For ten minutes it appeared to be a false alarm, but there was heard the steady tramp of two hundred feet, and a few minutes later one hundred men, the best of the

YEOMANRY

of the county physically and probably in reputation, marched up the street and filed by twos into the yard and up to the guards without a word. Every man had on a long black mask, falling from forehead to chin, like the inquisitors of old. All had changed their coats, some were turned lining out and a hundred ways of disguise ashamed. Not a word was spoken, not a demand made, but as the leader

arrived at the door where Hayes, the Marshal, stood, at a signal the little knot of

GUARDS WERE SEIZED.

Another company of masks had deployed to keep the crowd back, and as the guards were attacked a volley of pistol and gun shots were fired. A melee ensued, in which the guards and gunner were overpowered and their weapons taken from them, not without a strong resistance, however, for in the discharge of the weapons Alexander Crunk, the new Sheriff, who was standing in the yard, had his right eye destroyed by buckshot. His brother had his face and neck filled with shot, and two other men were slightly wounded. So far there had not been a word uttered, and, except the firing of the guns, no sound was heard except the low, plaintive prayers of the doomed wretches, which those who were near could hear, rise in the stillness that settled down. Hayes, who had not had time to get away, had the key of the outside

door taken from him, and in a moment more the door was opened and fifty masked men were in the corridor. Here lay old man Harris on his pallet and over him the mob crushed with iron heels before his groans warned them of his presence. A light was brought and it was then discovered by the determined men that another and stronger door stood between them and four of their prey. In ten minutes a cold-chisel, sledge hammer and a crowbar were brought, and in willing hands the work of cutting through the iron wall began. The hapless victims of the thirsting mob had paid no attention to the dread avengers, but kept on with their prayers. As the first heavy, cold blow of the sledge fell on the iron, the plaintive voices urged unconsciously to a heightened key, began to cry: "Oh, God, have mercy on yo' lamb." "Oh, Jesus, save yo' child." One moaned out, "Oh, I see de walls of Jordan and de feet of de Lamb. Oh, save yo' innocent child." But minute after minute the dull thuds fell with unfeeling certainty, and as bar after bar gave way, the crowd began to thirst more for blood. Outside, all was quiet as the grave, and not a sound was heard. The crowd stood stock still, and only the ghostly figures of the masked marauders who stalked about with guns and pistols cocked, speaking not a word to any one. While the awed and expectant crowd were outside, a

HORRIBLE DEED

was committed on the interior. The surging crowd rendered desperate by the slow destruction of the iron door, had, with hushed voices and almost by glances, agreed upon an awful vengeance for Thomas' death. The old man, Harris, who lay on his pallet like one indifferent to his end, was suddenly surrounded by men from whose hearts all humanity seemed to have fled, and the place filled with a demon. Without a word, he was seized, a hand clutched about his throat to stifle any scream, and a knife

PLUNGED INTO HIS HEART.

In five minutes his body was cut into pieces like a hog, head, arms, legs, all separated, and the sickening mass of human flesh was flung into the privy. So quietly was the awful act perpetrated that not a soul knew of its commission until after the dread culmination of the night's horrid work. Who did this deed nobody knew, or if he does or sus-

pects, he dare not open his lips. In forty minutes from the opening of the door this crime was committed, and in five minutes more the cell door yielded to the chisel and sledges, and with a crash the heartless crowd were in and seized the prisoners. Rope and twine had been prepared, and in five minutes each of the four had his wrists tied tightly behind his back and a rope thrown about his neck. The doomed men uttered not a word of pleading nor faltered an instant. Each bore himself with the nerve and coolness of a hero. At five minutes before 11 the little group at the jail door received orders, and the masked guards again moved back the crowd which had begun to struggle into the yard. A minute later a little procession entered from the jail door. First came Bill Chambers, with three men leading him by the rope about his neck, while one walked with him. He said nothing, but his step was firm. Next came Jim Good, John Hopkins and Ed. Warner, in the order named, all walking firmly, but on either side of the latter walked a man who appeared to support him unnecessarily. There was no abuse and not one of the doomed worthies craved mercy. The gloomy procession moved to the fence on the south side of the square, just where the massive portico of the splendid new Temple of Justice and mercy looked upon the scene which mocked its pretention and stained its portals. Here stood three locust trees within ten feet of the fence, three of the majestic rows that fringe the square. The five men were led under the fatal trees whose branches reached out ready for the work. The rope about Jeff. Hopkins' neck was thrown over the limb at the first trial, but the others caught in the leaves, and three or four minutes were spent in having men climb the trees and put the ropes over. Not a word was yet said, except that the prisoners were softly praying, and they stood as firm as a rock. On the street in front, a dense crowd was drawn up, patrolled in front by masked men with gleaming pistols, and as far as sound was concerned, the whole might have been a ghastly dream or vision. Although Hopkins' executioners were ready, they seemed to falter.

GOODE

was the first to be pulled up. As the man who put the rope over finished his task, he caught the end and holding it, swung from the limb to the ground. The tension caught Goode and pulled him on tip toe. When the executioner released his hold, Goode fell back on the rope and could not be lifted. He had fainted and his death was painless. Five men seized the rope and swung him up three feet clear and tied the end to the

fence post nearest. Another moment and Hopkins and Warner went up in a similar manner. There was not a tremor or a twitch. Bill Chambers was still on *terra firma*.

THE FIRST PULL

broke the fragile limb and he fell back to the earth. While waiting to put the rope over a new branch, the crowd gathered and he was asked if he had anything to say. He began to talk, and newspaper men were called on to hear it. He began a rambling talk about playing cards with Jim Goode, which had no reference to the case. He was prolix, and was hurried up when he said "I am innocent before God" One man who was weak-hearted said, "We ought not to hang an innocent man." "No, by God," retorted his executioner, "But we must hang the guilty." The rope was then run through the forks of the tree, and he was pulled up by strong arms and held. In attempting to tie the rope about the trunk, some man

CAUGHT HIS LEGS,

pulled them out at right angles and let him fall against the tree, his face scratching the rough bark. From the hanging of the first to the last man ten minutes had not passed, and but for the

BREAKING OF THE LIMB,

it would have been done in three. After hanging 15 minutes the crowd was admitted to gaze on the bodies, which were left hanging, and are now still suspended at three o'clock. No arrangement has been made for their removal thus far. The masked men disappeared like ghosts, and the crowd quietly left after viewing the scene, and the town was quiet as the grave. It was the most respectable hanging for years.

Special to the Courier.

MT. VERNON, October 11.

The quiet little town of Mt. Vernon is stirred to its very centre by the maddest excitement. Not only is it violently excited, but the whole country for miles around is agitated by the most stirring and doleful news. All day an infuriated and ungovernable mob has had possession of the city, and nothing is heard on the streets but clamors for the surrender of four colored prisoners confined in the county jail. The whole city appears to have risen as one man, to avenge their beloved fellow-citizen, Deputy Sheriff Oscar Thomas, who was murdered while assisting in the arrest of a colored man named Harrison.

THE COMMENCEMENT.

On last Monday night seven colored ruffians forced their way into a house of disreputable character in that part of the city known as Belleville, and presenting revolvers at their heads, ravished the inmates—four white women. Four of the law-breakers were recognized, and, upon warrants being issued, were committed to jail to await the action of the Grand Jury. But the incensed citizens had already had reasons to feel the strongest alarm for the safety of their homes. Feeling that their little town would eventually become a dangerous home if there was no relaxation to this shameful lawlessness, they employed ex-Marshal Hays to ferret the matter to the bottom, for the purpose of ridding themselves of a gang of ruffians.

THE RESULT.

After shadowing Daniel Harrison's son for days, Mr. Hays informed the citizens for whom he was acting that he had clear evidence of his guilt.

After the arrest of James Good, Bill Chambers, Jeff. Hopkins and another, the suspected colored men still at large made their boast that somebody would be killed if any more arrests were attempted.

It then became an object with the detective, Mr. Hays, to house young Harrison and make the capture without bloodshed. To do this he shadowed him till two o'clock this morning, when, in company with Captain C. O. Thomas, Deputy Sheriff, and Wm. Russell, Constable, he caged the supposed criminal in his father's house.

THEY INVEST THE HOUSE.

Hays stationed himself at the back door to prevent retreat in that direction, while Thomas, advancing to the front door, knocked and demanded entrance. But as Thomas passed a window on his way to the door, old man Harrison poked a shot gun through a broken pane, and leveling it at the Deputy Sheriff, emptied the contents into his person. Twelve buckshot took effect in the face and body. One shot passed through the heart, another parted the jugular vein, and a third making its way through the eye, lodged in the brain. Old Harrison immediately wheeled upon Mr. Hays as he entered the back door, who, in a twinkling, discharged two barrels of his revolver, the balls striking the neck and breast of old Harrison. While Hays was picking up his companion the two Harrisons

ESCAPED.

When the news spread all became wild commotion. The best citizens organized themselves into a mob and started in pursuit of the murderer.

Discovering blood marks in the house, they traced old Harrison's flight to a cornfield near by. After knocking him down and beating him most dreadfully, they carried him to the public square, and were preparing to finish their bloody work, when the authorities hurried their prisoner off to jail.

AT THE JAIL.

Here, while the people were raging with anger, a colored boy, curious to know the cause of the crowd, approached. He was knoceed down, and as he took to his heels, received two or three shots from the mad rioters. The scene beggars description. It was to prevent this very lynch law that is now likely to be fully satisfied that Deputy Sheriff Thomas and Ex-Marshal Hays proceeded so carefully. Nothing now but the victims will appease the enraged mob.

The crowd is continually augmented by the people, who appear to be flocking from all quarters to join in this great upheaval of indignation. The solid mass of people who fill the public square, displaying their arms, and in all ways manifesting their eagerness to avenge their murdered brother, has only broken now and then—and only then to prevent any steps to defeat their designs. Every precaution has been taken to foil any police interference. Private telegrams have been passing between Mt. Vernon and Evansville, with the object of guarding against any reinforcement from the latter city. The reports were rife that the prisoners would be moved to Evansville for security; also that the Rifles and others would be sent down to aid in the removal. The 9:10 passenger train from Evansville was stopped near Mt. Vernon,

When a squad of men had satisfied themselves, by marching through the coaches, that they had nothing to fear from her, they allowed the train to move on, and returned to guard their fated prisoners. What augurs worst for the prisoners is the appearance, in the bloodthirsty mob, of the most respectable citizens, whose determined looks tell that four souls will be winging their way to another world, with little preparation, before another sun rises upon this. Before this reaches you, just retribution will have overtaken one of the most infamous gangs that ever cursed our town, and whose crimes have of late greatly shocked and scandalized our town.

Another Account.

MT. VERNON, IND., October 11, 1878.

Special Correspondence of the Courier.

Terrible excitement here. At two o'clock this morning Captain C. O. Thomas, Deputy Sheriff, in company with Ed. S. Hays, Deputy Marshal, and Wm. Russell, Constable, proceeded to the house of one Harris (negro), residing in Belleville, for the purpose of arresting Harris' (the negro's) son. Hays went to the rear of the house to prevent them (the negroes) from escaping by the rear entrance, and Thomas, the Deputy Sheriff, started to knock and demanded entrance at the front door, but in order to reach the door he (Thomas) was compelled to pass a window, and it was while in the act of passing the door that this man, or negro, Harris shoved a shot-gun, loaded with buckshot, through a broken pane in the window and fired, twelve shot (buckshot) taking effect in Thomas' face and body, one buckshot passing through the heart, one severing the jugular vein, and one passing through the right eye and entering the brain.

Mr. Thomas was a man well liked and respected by all who knew him, and a man who had many friends in both town and country, and at this time—3 o'clock p. m.—many are congregating on the streets in squads with their shot-guns slung over their shoulders, and muttering threats of vengeance, and there are ten chances to one that one if not five "darkies" will be dangling at the end of a rope before 2 o'clock to-morrow morning.

Even our best citizens think this a justifiable case for mob law, and Judge Lynch reigns supreme at the present time. The town is terribly excited.

Mr. Thomas leaves a wife and three children, and the wife is *enceinte*.

THE MURDERED SHERIFF.

Oscar Thomas, in all the positions of life, whether as river man or officer, had won nothing but golden opinions. The esteem in which he was held is shown by the expressions of unfeigned sorrow from all who were acquainted with him. The feeling for him is one of unmixed grief.

HOW THE NEWS WAS RECEIVED HERE.

The feeling on the events which were so agitating Mt. Vernon, yesterday, was, if possible, as intense here as on the scene of action. Nothing else was discussed but the mob—all else seemed flat and tame compared with the stirring occurrences in our sister city. Some little interest was lent to the matter by a false rumor that the Rifles were ordered to the field of action. Reports were exaggerated and magnified, till one would have thought that the streets of Mt. Vernon were about to run with blood. What added to the excitement here was the fact that many of the most prominent citizens of Mt. Vernon, and among them Mayor Terry, Gen. Hovey, Major Milner, and Bush Gardner, Esq., were in the city, and in constant communication with their friends. They were divided between their sympathy for the mob and their opposition to lynch law. They may as well congratulate themselves that they were happily spared from taking any part one way or the other. The conviction with these gentlemen, as with all others informed as to the true state of affairs, was that it was only a question of a few hours till their city would see bloody work.