

## The Late Slave Murder Case in Mecklenberg County—Conviction of the Murderer.

[From the Petersburg (Va.) Express, Sept. 29.]

It was announced in yesterday's *Express*, by our *Clarksville* correspondent, that at the late term of the Circuit Court of Mecklenberg county Charles Hudson was tried for the murder of his slave woman Jane, convicted of murder in the second degree, and sentenced to the penitentiary for eighteen years. Wood Bouldin, Wood Bouldin, Jr., and Edward R. Chambers, Esqs., appeared for the prisoner, and Col. Thomas F. Goode for the Commonwealth.

The *Tobacco Plant* says, very truly, that it is one of those cases which thoroughly vindicate Southern character against the aspersions cast upon us by our enemies at the North. It develops what is as true of us as of any other people on the civilized globe, that we utterly detest and abhor cruelty and barbarity, whether to whites or blacks.

The evidence in the case was that on the morning of the 4th of July last, at eight o'clock, one of the hottest days of the past summer, Hudson stripped the woman naked as when she came into the world, tied her to a persimmon tree, and whipped her for three consecutive hours; with occasional intermissions of a few minutes, until he had worn out to stumps fifty-two switches, and until the bark on the body of the tree was rubbed smooth and greasy by the attrition of the body of the victim. The ground around the tree for seven or eight feet, though it had been freshly ploughed, was trodden hard. One witness testified that he heard distinctly, at the distance of six hundred yards, both the noise of the switches and the screams and entreaties of the woman. The poor creature was buried the same afternoon, only some ten inches beneath the ground, in a rough box, without any shroud. The overseer suggested that the neighbors had better be sent for to see the body before burial, but Hudson declined. The body was exhumed on Friday, two days afterwards, but was in such a state of decomposition that the external marks of violence were well nigh obliterated. But the testimony of the physician who dissected the body, and of several other physicians who were examined as experts, was distinct and positive that the violence used was sufficient to produce death. It was also in evidence that after the protracted punishment Hudson untied the woman and sent her to the creek, some one hundred and fifty yards distant, to wash herself, accompanied by a negro boy, with instructions to bring her back to him; that she complained of great thirst, and was seen to go down to the water's edge; that she remained there about fifteen minutes; that on her return she stopped two or three times, and complained of having a severe colic; that finally she stopped and could proceed no farther, when the negro boy, at the command of his master, took hold of one hand and Hudson of the other, and dragged her towards the tree. The main argument of the defence was based upon the idea that the woman went into the creek, remained there fifteen minutes, and drank to great excess, and that this in all probability brought on a congestion of the vitals, and produced death. Such is an imperfect account of this horrible transaction. The jury hesitated much between a conviction for murder in the first and murder in the second degrees. But finally they agreed and ascertained the term of imprisonment in the penitentiary at eighteen years, the longest term known to the law. Hudson is now sixty-eight years old, and there is scarcely a probability that he can survive his confinement. Indeed he is already exceedingly prostrated.

On Monday morning, the last day of the court, Judge Gholson pronounced sentence upon him. At the request of the members of the bar he permits us to append his charge to this account. It cannot fail to interest the public at large, and especially our own immediate community. It struck us at the time of its delivery as being most appropriate and striking.

Charles Hudson, you have been regularly tried for the murder of your own slave. You have been defended with great ability, and a jury of your own country have found you guilty of murder in the second degree, and fixed the term of your confinement in the penitentiary at eighteen years. In this verdict this Court entirely concurs. It will not go into the details of the shocking deed. You tied and stripped a female, who dared not raise her hands against you—whose only protector in this world you should have been. For three hours did you, in one of the hottest days of the summer, cruelly whip and torture this helpless woman, until, in the language of counsel, "the angel of death delivered her from the hands of her tormenter." You have thus committed a crime against both human and divine law. You have outraged the feelings of the community among whom you lived. You have enabled their enemies to fan the flame of fanaticism, by charging against them the enormity and cruelty of your hard and unfeeling heart, although that community cordially loathe and condemn cruelty towards black or white. But if your crime has been great, your punishment will be heavy. You are an old man. In all human probability before eighteen years have expired you will be dead. The remnant of your days are to be spent within prison walls. The labors of the day will never be followed by the pleasures of home and friends—but night after night, until the last day of your earthly existence, will you be carried to your narrow cell, and hear, as the prison house keeper departs, the harsh grating of the heavy key that keeps the door of your dungeon. From man you have nothing to expect. Your doom is fixed. A murderer—you are now a convict and prisoner for life. And your sentence is just—nay, merciful. Nor is there hope for you beyond the grave, unless you truly and deeply repent. If you will sincerely repent yourself of this horrible deed and your other sins—if you will bow your head to the deserved punishment, and pray Almighty God to pardon your sins and soften and regenerate your heart, there is hope. Yes: if your repentance is sincere, it is certain that God will pardon you; for rest assured that the same power which translated the criminal from the cross to Heaven can and will save alike the penitent convict. Desolate and dreary beyond description is your present condition. With a hard and unfeeling heart, human blood resting upon your head, and your limbs fettered with a felon's chains, whenever weary and tired you may ask, "When shall I be free?" this verdict of eighteen years will answer, "Never, never." Then I trust you will, with deep humility and sincere repentance, feel and confess your crime and sins, and that this sentence may be the means of saving your soul.