

EXECUTED ON THE GALLOWS

PUNISHMENT OF JOSEPH LAPAGE.

THE MURDERER OF JOSIE LANGMAID HANGED

AT CONCORD—CONFESSION OF THE CON-

DEMNED MAN—LAST MOMENTS—THE

STORY OF HIS CRIME.

Special Dispatch to the New-York Times.

CONCORD, N. H., March 15.—Joseph Lapage was hanged here at a few minutes past 11 o'clock this forenoon, for the murder of Josie A. Langmaid on the 4th of October, 1875. Lapage had been confined in the prison for nearly two years and a half. He had occupied the same cell which E. N. Major, who was executed in January, 1876, occupied. During the time of his confinement, he was perfectly docile, giving no trouble to the Warden or any of the keepers. He has made no complaints about his treatment, nor asked for anything. A perfect stolidity and indifference characterized him from the time of his entrance to the last scene this morning. He did not seem until yesterday to realize the terrors of the fate that awaited him. His final interview with his family was held last Monday. But little emotion was manifested by any of them. One of his daughters shed a few tears, and this was the only sign of grief shown. At parting, he kissed his wife and daughters, but only shook hands with his two boys. He had only seen his family three times during his imprisonment. His spiritual advisers for the past have been Rev. J. E. Barry, of Concord, and J. B. Millette, of Nashua, both being Catholic priests. Mr. Barry visited him about once a week during the year. Mr. Millette, who is a French priest, had the principal charge of his spiritual condition for the last 10 weeks, and heard his confession. He received his religious instruction quietly, and at times would join with the priests in prayer. It is doubtful, however, whether his religious advisers really made any deep impression on him.

Lapage was removed from his cell for the last time at 6:45 o'clock last evening, and was taken into the Deputy Warden's room. He appeared unusually cheerful, and conversed with the Deputy for nearly two hours, when Mr. Barry and Mr. Millette came in. They prayed and held conversation with Lapage until 11:25 o'clock, at which time they retired. At 10:45 Lapage partook of a hearty supper. He then remained quiet for 30 minutes, when he suddenly beckoned the Warden and Deputy to come to him. They did so, when he threw himself on his knees before them and said: "Me kill gal. Me kill two gals. Too bad! Too bad!" He then broke down completely, and sobbed bitterly for some time. When he had become more composed he confessed to two murders, one at Pembroke and the other St. Albans, Vt., to the Warden. He also drew maps of the scene of the murders. After making his confessions he seemed greatly relieved. A short time after he exclaimed, "My wife! no matter; no matter. My children! oh, God! too bad! too bad!" He inquired how many would be present at his execution, and when told seemed pleased that there were to be so few. He also wanted to know how many St. Albans persons would be there. The Warden retired about 1:30 o'clock, leaving the prisoner alone with the Deputy. Lapage was advised to go to bed, but he refused, saying he could not sleep. He said about half the nights since he had been in prison he would lie awake. He occupied his time in pacing the room, conversing, and looking at stereoscopic views. His mind, however, seemed to be continually on the end, or "finish," as he termed it.

At 7:30 this morning Rev. Mr. Millette arrived, and an hour later Rev. Mr. Barry. Lapage ate a hearty breakfast at 8 o'clock, after which the priests remained with him until the last scene, trying to prepare him for his fate. The gallows were erected in the corridor of the north wing of the prison this morning. It was the same on which four other murderers have been hanged. At 11 o'clock the witnesses were admitted into the corridor. Among them were a number of the Sheriffs and Deputy Sheriffs of the State, the Sheriff of Franklin County, Vt.; H. H. Farnsworth, of St. Albans, Coroner at the time of the Ball murder; F. Langmaid, of Pembroke, father of the murdered girl, and several reporters. At 11:04 o'clock the condemned man was taken into the guard-room, accompanied by Warden Pilsbury and Rev. Messrs. Millette and Barry. Mr. Millette administered the sacrament, after which he was given into the hands of Sheriff Dodge, who, with two deputies, took him to the gallows and placed him on the drop. At 10:05 the death-warrant was read, which occupied two minutes. The noose was then adjusted, the black cap drawn on, the arms pinioned, and at precisely 11:08 o'clock the Sheriff touched the spring, and Lapage was launched into eternity. A slight twitching of the legs was the only motion observable after he fell. The medical gentlemen officiating, Drs. A. H. Crosby, C. P. Gage, and J. W. Barney, of this city, noted the variations in the beatings of the pulse and heart. At 11:27 the Sheriff was notified that Lapage was dead, after hanging half an hour. The body was delivered to the undertaker for burial. All details of the execution were carried out promptly and without the slightest accident.

The alleged confession of Lapage, which appeared this morning in certain papers, was entirely bogus. Lapage stated last night, under oath, that the confession made to the Warden and Deputy was the only one he ever made. His counsel also state that he never confessed to them. By a singular coincidence, John R. Pinkham, of Durham, who was sentenced at Dover, a few days ago for murder, to be hanged March 14, 1879, was brought to the prison last night. He was placed in the cell just vacated by Lapage, so the murderers' cell was not without an occupant a single night.

The crime for which Lapage suffered punishment was one of the worst known in the history of New-England. It was committed in the town of Pembroke, about six miles south of this city. Miss Josie A. Langmaid, a daughter of one of the leading citizens of Pembroke, about 18 years old, was missed, Oct. 4, 1875, from the academy where she was attending school. As she did not return home at the accustomed hour, search was made by her family and a large number of the neighbors. At about 8:30 o'clock that evening her dead body was found secreted in a clump of trees several rods from the highway over which she was accustomed to pass. The head was cut entirely from the body, and was not found until some time afterward. The body was mangled and mutilated in a shocking manner. The clothing was torn in many places, and the nature of wounds found on her person indicated that there had been a terrible struggle before the villain accomplished his purpose. When the news of this murder became known a thrill of horror spread through the community. Every sympathy and assistance was extended to the afflicted family, and the Police officers of this city and the county, as well as a number of detectives from Boston, at once began to make every effort to apprehend the murderer. Two suspected parties were arrested and examined, but, for lack of evidence, were soon released. Meanwhile, certain parties in St. Albans, Vt., informed the authorities at Pembroke that a Frenchman named Lapage, suspected of having murdered a Miss Ball in St. Albans, and who had been tried for the offense, was in the neighborhood of Pembroke. Suspicion was directed toward Lapage, and he was arrested Oct. 14. During the next fortnight evidence was accumulated showing him to be the guilty man. During this fortnight, by the way, he made two efforts to escape, one of which was nearly successful. An indictment was found against him, and he was brought before the Grand Jury Oct. 28. To the charge of murdering Miss Langmaid he pleaded not guilty. His case was assigned for trial at the January Term of Court following. His trial in January, 1876, lasted 10 days, and excited intense interest. The evidence against him was very strong, and it was shown that he had been seen with a club in his hand near the scene of the murder, and that the same club was found near by covered with blood. Lapage's clothes had blood-stains on them, which on analysis proved to be human blood. Testimony as to his previous character showed him to be brutal, cruel, and lustful beyond measure. Among other witnesses his sister-in-law, Julienne Rouse, of Canada, testified that while living in Southern Canada, in 1871, a man wearing a mask attacked her one day, while she was in a pasture some distance from home, choked her, rubbed sand into her throat, outraged her, and left her insensible and nearly dead. The man she knew to be her brother-in-law, Lapage. When the trial was concluded, the jury, after being out less than two hours, returned a verdict of murder in the first degree, and the prisoner was sentenced to be hanged Jan. 19, 1877. Arguments for a new trial were made by his counsel at the succeeding law term of the Supreme Court, and a new trial was granted, on the ground that the evidence of Julienne Rouse was inadmissible. The granting of a new trial occasioned general surprise and considerable indignation at the time.

The second trial began Feb. 26, 1877, and closed March 9. The new evidence introduced by the prosecution, especially the testimony of blood experts, tended to still more strongly fix the guilt on the prisoner. In this trial, as before, great interest was taken, and the court-room was crowded every day. The jury returned a verdict of "guilty of murder in the first degree" within 50 minutes after the case was given to them. Lapage was again sentenced to be hanged on March 15, 1878.

Joseph Paget, alias Lapage, was born in Canada about 50 miles north-west of Montreal. He was about 40 years old. His father, who is living, is a respectable farmer. He married a woman three years older than himself when he was 20 years of age, by whom he had five children. Five years after his marriage he removed to Saint Beatrice, Canada. By this time he had gained a very bad reputation. He abused his wife shamefully, and associated with the vilest company. While living in Saint Beatrice he outraged and nearly killed his sister-in-law, who testified at his trial. He was arrested for this, but knocked the officer down and escaped into the United States. He removed his family to St. Albans, Vt., in September, 1871. The next year he returned to his former residence for a short time, during which he was suspected of setting some buildings on fire belonging to a man who was active in causing his arrest the year before. On this visit he was seen to make an assault on a young unmarried woman. He struck her with a club, causing various injuries, from which she did not recover for a month. He also attempted to entice a little girl, 14 years old, away with him into the woods. After this he returned to St. Albans, where he lived a disreputable life, working occasionally at farming and chopping for a livelihood. In the afternoon of July 24, 1874, the body of Miss Marietta Ball, a school-teacher of St. Albans, was found in the woods near a road over which she

had been seen to pass. At the inquest it was shown her skull had been fractured with a stone, and that she had been ravished. After two weeks investigation everything pointed toward a resident of the "French settlement" (where Lapage lived) as the perpetrator of the deed. At an examination of Lapage, however, witnesses testified that they had been with him berrying on the afternoon of the murder, some distance away. Lapage was released, and soon after disappeared from St. Albans with his family. Upon subsequent investigations it was found that the testimony upon which he had been released was false. Lapage's life in Suncook (one of the villages in Pembroke) was in keeping with his previous career. He was frequently known to lie in wait for women for an opportunity to gratify his passions. He had attempted once to ravish one of his own daughters, and his treatment of his wife was absolutely brutal. During his trials he manifested but little emotion. He could speak but little English, and his communications were made through an interpreter.