

The Trial of Mary Ellen Thomas.

¶ In another column, a brief notice appears of the conviction, in our Circuit Court, of MARY ELLEN THOMAS (free negro) of murder in the first degree. The murder was committed upon an infant about four months old, son of Mr. WILLIAM G. BAER, near Sharpsburg in this county, and the facts in the case, as they were detailed by the witnesses, are thus stated by a Hagers-Town Correspondent of the Baltimore Clipper:—

The girl was employed as a servant in the family to do the washing, and work in the kitchen; immediately after she came into the family, she manifested a dislike to this child, being the smallest of twin children, and remarked she wondered why Mrs. B. should love that *thing* so much, that it did not look like a child, and that if it belonged to her she would make away with it, and fix it as a certain woman did one she had. On the third evening after coming into the family, (being Thursday,) Mrs. Baer had a small bottle of laudanum in her hand, the girl asked her what it was, and upon being told, she remarked "it kills people, does it not?" Mrs. B. remarked "it will not kill you or me," and she should not concern herself about it, and put the bottle away in her bed-room.

The next day (Friday) after dinner, the two children were asleep in a cradle in bed-room, Mrs. B. was sitting at work in the dining-room, communicating with the bed room by a door leading from one to the other, and being the only way of entrance into the bed-room except by a window from a porch running along the front of the house, before which window the bed was standing. The girl had been sent to work on the porch folding clothes that had been washed. Mrs. Baer shortly after the girl had left her to go to work heard something like a scream, and thought it sounded like her child's voice. She became alarmed and jumped up from her work and ran into the room to see what caused it to scream, when she got to the door she discovered the negro at the cradle clasping the child's throat with one hand and pouring the laudanum into its mouth with the other hand, she immediately ran to her and jerked her away, asking her "what in the name of God are you doing?" The girl put the bottle into her pocket and left the room.

Mrs. Baer gave the alarm to her husband and some men that were working near the house, who upon coming to the house saw the girl washing her apron and hands, and discovered some of the laudanum on the face, ear, and clothing of the child, and when asked why she had done so, she denied it. Mr. Baer immediately ran to the stable to get a horse to go after a physician. The girl came to him there and asked his forgiveness for what she had done. The physician was brought and found the child laboring under the effect of laudanum, and tried to rouse it from its stupor, but only succeeded partially, the child immediately relapsing into a stupid state. The doctor observed some marks on the child's throat looking like the pressure made by a hand pressing it hard, and after death a close examination disclosed the marks of fingers on its throat. The child died the following morning at five o'clock.

The defence set up the plea of insanity, but the jury after an absence of fifteen or twenty minutes returned to Court with a verdict of "guilty of murder in the first degree." Harbine for the State, Gaither and Price for the prisoner.

This is the only conviction of "murder in the first degree," which has taken place in our Court since 1819, when the three Côtterells (father and two sons) were found guilty of that high crime. The girl THOMAS is about twenty years of age—of a rather stupid look, and considered by many persons unsound in mind. We understand, that an effort will be made to have her sentence commuted to imprisonment for life.
