

Under the Hump

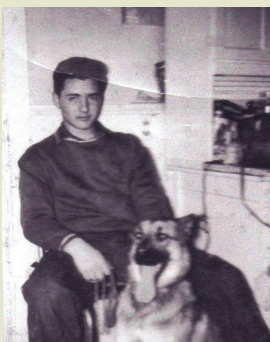
SOCIETY BUSINESS

UPCOMING EVENTS

- November 10th Meeting at CBMS at 6:30 not 7pm Linda Radtke performing
- Historical Society Calendars on sale at the next meeting.
- Renew your dues at the meeting.



CAN YOU IDENTIFY THIS HISTORICAL SOCIETY MEMBER?



Last Issue
Tippy O'Brien

We are coming to the last meeting of the year and it will held at the Crossett Brook Middle School at 6:30 pm instead of our usual 7pm start time. We will have a short business meeting and the be provided with a performance of THE VERMONT CIVIL WAR SONGBOOK.

Dressed in period costume, singer and researcher Linda Radtke, joined by pianist John Lincoln, will bring Vermont history to life with songs from the Civil War period along with commentary and letters from Vermont soldiers.

Seldom-heard songs from the Vermont History Center include the comic but poignant "Grafted into the Army" "Yankee Robinson at Bull Run," "Neath the Pines of Vermont," in which a soldier returns home to die, a satirical song about Jefferson Davis and sentimental ballads from Vermont during the period. This program is suitable for all ages. Being the last meeting that means that it is also time to renew your dues. The membership fee is \$10 and if you

would renew your membership at the meeting with Mark Morse it will save on time and postage. Don't forget that the holidays are approaching and a membership might be a good option for someone on your gift list.



For the second year we have teamed up with the Waterbury Historical Society to produce the 2010 Historical Society Calendar. It will be on sale at the meeting for \$10 and may fulfill the needs of someone on your holiday gift list.

They are also on sale at Bisbee's in Waitsfield, Stowe Street Emporium, Vincent's, Depot Beverage, Cabot Annex, Waterbury Center Bakery and Store and the Li-

brary. Last year each society made \$476 and we printed an additional 50 copies of the calendar this year. Please support this project with your purchases and well as the loan of some photos that we may be able to include in next years calendar.

ISSUE 15 CORRECTIONS

SOME OF THE PHOTO TITLE WERE INCORRECT IN THIS ISSUE. THE CORRECTIONS ARE BELOW AND A CORRECTED COPY HAS BEEN PLACED ON THE WEBSITE.

PAGE 6 - BOTTOM LEFT

MATILDA THOMPSON PEARSON MOTHER OF MARY PEARSON KENNEDY

PAGE 9 EDITH AND ERNEST SMITH WITH ALICE AND HOWARD KENNEDY

A L I C E M E A K E R M U R D E R

Even in modern times it would be shocking to have a murder in the small town of Duxbury. Unfortunately, our small town was the site of the murder of Alice Meaker a young child that was sent here by the Overseer of the Poor to live with her half brother Horace C. Meaker from the town of Charlotte. She was routinely abused by Horace's wife Emeline and within a year of her arrival in the town she was dead. Observant neighbors noticed that Alice was missing and alerted the Sheriff who was able to recover her body and quickly resolve the case. The Duxbury Murderess has the distinction of being the first Vermont woman to be legally executed at the state prison.

The first reports of the murder listed the family name as Meeker and it was later reported as Meaker. They also refer to Horace C. half brother of the victim as an uncle Samuel and E.C. The articles that follow are from the *The Burlington Free Press* providing an account of the tragic affair.

APRIL 28, 1880

BY TELEGRAPH

TO THE FREE PRESS AND TIMES

Up to Three O'Clock this Morning

The Duxbury Tragedy

Additional Particulars

Intense Excitement in the Vicinity

AN INFURIATED MOB

Threaten to Lynch the Perpetrators
Of the Horrible Tragedy

The Murders Arraigned

But the Case Continued

Special Dispatch to the Free Press and Times
Waterbury, VT, April 27 This vicinity is greatly excited

today over a mysterious and dreadful tragedy, which is not yet unraveled and the circumstances of which still rest in obscurity. The facts in the case, as far as can be ascertained, are as follows: The victim of the tragedy is one Alice Meeker, a twelve year old girl, who for time past has been living in Duxbury, with her uncle, Samuel Meeker. On Saturday last she suddenly disappeared after she had been absent from the house for some time her uncle asked his wife about her, and was answered, "Oh, she has stepped out somewhere." At length the attention of the neighbors was directed to the girl's absence, and they finally asked the Meekers that search be made for her. The request, however, was refused, though the Meekers gave no reasonable excuse for her non-appearance. This, coupled with other suspicious circumstances, thoroughly aroused the neighborhood and the conclusion was at once reached Alice Meeker had been foully dealt with. A closed watch was kept upon the Meekers and finally, as a result of the suspicions and clues, Almon Meeker, a twenty year old son of Samuel Meeker and his wife was arrested Monday night, on the accusation of being concerned in the girl's mysterious disappearance. Young Meeker was completely prostrated by his arrest on the terrible charge and made a full confession.

HOW THE GIRL WAS MURDERED

The substance of the confession is that last Friday night at, about 9 o'clock he and his mother took Alice Meeker in a team, drove to a distance of about two miles from their dwelling, and there gave her strychnine in a dipper of sweetened water. They then drove about three miles further on. The poison at once began its fatal work and the unfortunate young girl was soon in the agonies of death. At the end of the three miles mother and son were the only living occupants of the team, the poor girl having breathed her last. The guilty couple then stopped, took the lifeless body and buried it in the dark recesses of a swamp nearby.

Accompanied by an officer, young Meeker went to the scene of the dreadful tragedy and pointed out the spot where the remains of the girl had been buried. Search was at once made and the body found. There was no appearance of violence and everything thus far attests the truth of the young man's story. In order to shed further light upon the shocking affair the stomach has been sent away for analysis. Mrs. Meeker and her son have been imprisoned.

ALICE MEAKER MURDER

LATER

Additional Particulars

THE MURDERS ARRAIGNED

THE CASE CONTINUED

AN ATTEMPT TO LYNCH THE
CRIMINALS

Waterbury, Vt, April 27 - Almon Meeker and his mother, Lucy Meeker, were arraigned before a justice this afternoon on the charge of murdering Alice Meeker. They pleaded not guilty and the case was continued until Monday, May 10th. Almon Meeker has now modified his confession and says that his mother was not with him when the girl was killed, taking the criminality upon himself. Mrs. Meeker on her part denies all knowledge of the tragedy. The excitement has increased hourly and is now intense. The infuriated mob threatened to lynch the Meekers and they have been kept under a strong guard. No event of recent years has so wrought up our people and nothing else is thought of or talked of, the current of the popular feeling running strongly against the accused parties.

Almon Meeker says that the reason of the girl's murder was that she was cross and they wanted to get her out of the way. The strychnine was purchased at Carpenter's drugstore, in Waterbury, and the fatal journey with the doomed girl was from the house of the Meekers toward the valley of the river. Going up the hill, at Henry's, the poison was administered; and the girl died when they had gone about one hundred rods from that point. They then tied a handkerchief across her mouth and buried her in the swamp.

The affair is now being thoroughly investigated and additional details will be forthcoming shortly.

The Evening Paper had this to add
WATERBURY, VT APRIL 28

Alice Meeker's father died two years ago and she and a brother, seven years old, were paupers in the town of Charlotte. The town gave to Samuel Meeker, their uncle, in Duxbury, four hundred dollars to take care of the two

children. Samuel Meeker is about 45 and his wife 40. Alice had been let to service to a farmer to begin next week. After her disappearance the neighbors made inquiries and Mrs. Meeker told them that "she had got out of her window at night and ran away." They asked if search should not be made, and Almon said "Let the ___ critter go; I will not search for her. On Monday the neighbors got excited, and Monday night Almon was arrested, and made his confession. The body of Alice, which was found in the swamp covered with a pile of rails, with taken to Duxbury. It is the general opinion that Samuel, who is quite deaf, knew nothing of the crime. Almon is a harmless appearing young man not over bright. He said "Don't cry, mother; no use crying for spilt milk; trust in God, mother."



EMELINE LUCY MEAKER

APRIL 29, 1880
EVENING EDITION

The Duxbury Horror

SOME ADDITIONAL DETAILS

H.C. Meeker, uncle of the unfortunate Alice Meeker, is a farmer in a small way, living in Duxbury, about a mile and half from Waterbury, and, though poor, has hereto-

ALICE MEAKER MURDER

fore borne a good character. He is a man about forty-five, and his family consists of his wife, a woman about forty years of age, and his son, Lewis A. Meeker, a young man about twenty. Young Meeker is described by a lady who was his Sunday school teacher several years ago as a not very bright boy but orderly and apparently well-intended. H.C. Meeker has received the amount of money heretofore mentioned (\$400) for the care of the children until such time as they could care for themselves, and he could have had no reason for ridding himself of them by a crime, same to relieve himself of their care and the trifling expense they might be to him. Those who live near the Meekers say the children have been shamefully abused by their guardians. Very many times has Alice been whipped very severely by Mrs. Meeker, and this abuse has been frequently spoken of by the good people and gossips of the town.

After the disappearance the elder Meeker, stated that Alice had left her home on Thursday night for the purpose of visiting her mother in Charlotte. This story which was told in the most straightforward manner possible, allayed all suspicions, and the authorities, who had began to move in the matter, were satisfied that everything was straight and proper. But on Monday the gossip was again renewed, and then it was that very many suspicious circumstances were brought to light. Deputy Sheriff Atherton questioned Lewis A. Meeker very closely, and succeeded in learning that he had hired a team, on Thursday night, and he also noticed that he appeared considerably confused as he told of it. This fact, slight as it was, aroused suspicion to such and extent as to make it plainly the duty of the authorities to take decisive steps in the matter. Young Meeker said that he had hired the team simply to drive to Moscow, and that on the way he had stopped at Barre and got a cousin of his, who had come home with him, stayed overnight, and remained to breakfast on the following morning. When H. C. Meeker was questioned, he denied that there was any visitor at this house on Thursday night or Friday morning, and this disparity in the statements of the father and son made the matter look very dark. Mr. Atherton now felt positive that he was on the trail of a horrible crime, and he subjected the young Meeker to a rigorous examination, in the course of which he told him the story as given by his father. Then it was that the young man became nervous, and gave another story, which was to the effect that he and

his mother had taken Alice to Richmond, given her \$6.59 with which to pay her fare to Montreal. He said that he had left her in charge of the station agent, who was to see that she got her ticket all right and embarked upon the right train. Further than that he knew nothing whatever, and concluded his story by saying, "I cannot tell you where the girl is." On Monday night Mr. Atherton

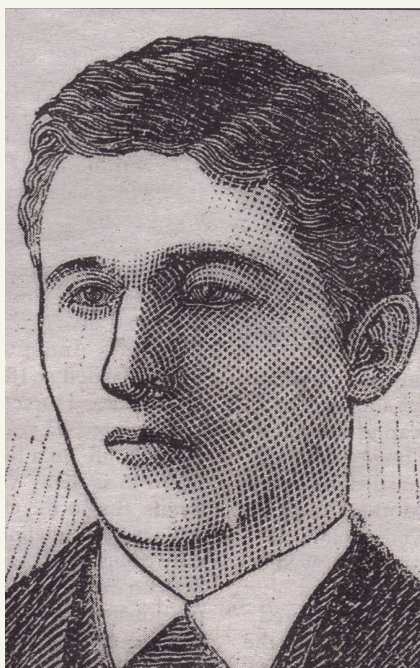
took the boy and his mother to Eber Huntley's in Duxbury, and there again subjected them to a rigid cross examination. They denied any knowledge whatever of Alice's whereabouts, save that which they had already told.

Atherton then took the boy into another room and there accused him of the murder. The only reply which he could get was: "I can't tell you about it," and this was repeated again and again until at last the boy said he was willing to confess the whole matter. Mr. Atherton says that in looking for the murdered girl's body he was obligated to go in about five rods from the main road, through water about an inch deep, and that when he reached a muck-hole young Meeker said, "There she is!" There was a pile of stumps and boards over the body, and removing these and reaching down through the mud, he felt the body. In taking it out from the shallow grave, and in carrying it to the team,

he obliged young Meeker to help him, a duty which did not appear to trouble the young murderer in the least. The body was completely dressed, with the cloak drawn over the head, and there were no signs of disfigurement to be seen. When the body was taken in the wagon, Meeker was told that he must hold the body in his arms during the ride to Waterbury, as there was no room for it elsewhere. To this the murderer objected, on the ground that his arms were too tired.

An autopsy of the body was held by Drs. Washburne, Fales and Kingsbury. The first named physician says that he can find no immediate cause for death, since all the organs are slightly congested; but none of them sufficiently so to alone cause death. On being asked why he murdered the girl, young Meeker said: "She wasn't a very good girl; no one liked her, and she was hard to get along with. I thought she would be better off if she were dead, and so I killed her." The probable motive was simply to get rid of the care of her.

The general belief is that the mother conceived and planned the murder, and used her son as a tool to accomplish her purpose. Her personal appearance indicated capacity for the cruelty practiced upon the child



LEWIS ALMON MEAKER

A L I C E M E A K E R M U R D E R

and for the infernal climax which capped her course of maltreatment. She is very deaf, and is not disposed to be communicative. No admissions have been extorted from her.

The excitement in the vicinity over the murder is unabated, and people from far and near have thronged the home of the Meekers. A pint bottle containing a small quantity of alcohol was found in the Meeker house, and the old man has a recollection now of seeing his son drink from this bottle on the night of the murder, and again the next morning. It has also been ascertained that the spirits were procured at the village drug store and were medicated with camphor. It also turns out that Charles Thompson saw a team on the night in question at Thorndike's, a mile below Waterbury village, which he asserts contained young Meeker and a woman and child, whom he failed to recognize. It wasn't about this point that the fatal dose was given to Alice. Mr. Somerville, who owns the farm on which the Meekers live, has received a letter from the Overseer of the Poor in Charlotte, saying that the only money involved in the case is \$50, which was paid by that town to the Meekers for taking the child. The motive for the crime still remains a mystery, but the stories of brutality on the part of the old woman toward little Alice, as told by the neighbors, seem to substantiate the theory that she was put out of the way as the best means of getting the girl off of their hands. A black spot about the size of a man's hand on the girl's hip seems conclusive evidence of a terrible beating. The funeral of the youthful victim took place early Wednesday afternoon and was attended by large numbers from the surrounding country.



GIVING IN TO PUBLIC SENTIMENT THE BODY OF EMELINE WAS NOT BACK TO BE BURIED IN THE FAMILY PLOT ALONGSIDE ALICE. EMELINE WAS BURIED IN THE POTTERS FIELD AT WINDSOR PRISON

May 3, 1880

The Meeker Murder – The testimony of Nellie, the sister of Almon Meeker, and Horace, the father, was taken before the coroner at Waterbury Friday. Horace says he went to bed at 8 o'clock, on the night of the murder, and slept soundly until morning. Nellie came home from Barre the evening of the next day. Almon Meeker and his mother are in separate cells, and have not been allowed any communication together since going to jail. Almon has told the same story that he told at first, saying that his mother was with him when they gave Alice the poison and buried her in the swamp.

May 14, 1880

The Meeker Murder

EVIDENCE PRODUCED ON THE EXAMINATION – PROOF OF STRYCHNINE POISONING

Prof. Witthaus of the University of Vermont testified that having separated the stomach of Alice Meeker from the contents and treated each separately; he applied the frog and color tests. Having introduced a small quantity of the residuum of the girl's stomach into the body of a frog, the animal was placed upon the table. In a short time a rap upon the table caused a slight titanic spasm in the frog, and soon after another rap occasioned intense contraction of the muscles of the animal's legs. These spasms are the direct result of the presence of strychnine. The application of certain chemicals to the residuum of the stomach, if strychnine were present, would produce a violet color. Judged by these two tests the presence of strychnine in the stomach of the murdered girl was conclusively proven: the quantity the Professor could not tell.

MRS. MEAKER'S ADMISSIONS

Deputy Sheriff F. H. Atherton testified that having pressed Mrs. Meeker for a truthful explanation of the disappearance of the girl, she stated that Alice went to bed the evening of Friday, the 23rd, at seven o'clock. The next morning, Alice not appearing she sent the little brother to call her, who quickly returning, said Alice was not there. She then went to the bedroom, which is on the ground floor, and is entered only through the bedroom occupied by herself. She found the bed looking as if the little girl had left it in the night. Her clothes were gone, and she supposed she had got up in the night, climbed out of the window and ran away. This, she said,

ALICE MEAKER MURDER

was all she knew about it. This conversation took place about half-past nine o'clock in the evening. Later in the night, when the chain of circumstances was tightening around them, Mrs. Meaker called Mr. Atherton into the parlor. She there told him that the child was in Canada, and she would go next day and bring her back, if he would let her. But she could not tell where in Canada, and Mr. Atherton expressed his fears that there had been foul play, and told her she would feel better to tell the whole truth, and if the child was dead to bring her back and give her a decent burial. Here Mrs. Meaker broke down, and in great agitation said, "I can't tell the whole truth. You don't know what they would do with me if I did." She then opened the door and left the room. From this time, about half-past ten o'clock, till midnight, Mr. Atherton, in connection with Mr. Huntley and Mr. Palmer, was engaged in efforts to ascertain the fate of the child, by inquires addressed to Almon Meaker. While Mr. Atherton was receiving Almon's confession in Mr. Huntley's kitchen, at midnight, Mrs. Meaker came in and Almon stopped talking. Mrs. Meaker exhibited every symptom of great distress. She was asked by Mr. Atherton to go out, which she did, and as she left the room said to Almon, "You had better keep still; if you have anything to say, say it on the stand." Almon having completed his confession, promised to go with Mr. Atherton and find the body, and at half-past twelve o'clock they returned together to Mr. Meaker's house to get Almon's overcoat for their night ride. Mrs. Meaker, with loud cries and groans that could be heard in the road, wanted to know if Mr. Atherton was going to take Almon away. Almon answered, "I am going with Mr. Atherton." Mrs. Meaker exclaimed, "Almon can't go, I am the guilty one, take me!" She expressed her fear that Mr. Atherton would not bring her son back, and she should never see him again. Mr. Atherton assured her that he would bring Almon safely back, and her husband and daughter endeavored to pacify her. Almon told his mother that he had "told Mr. Atherton the whole truth, he had kept nothing back, and there was not a lie in his mouth." The balance of Mr. Atherton's testimony related to the "thrice told tale" of the finding of the body, the ghastly return ride to Meaker's house, the painful scenes following the return of all that was left of the forsaken child to the presence of the fiend that had crushed her young life out.

MRS. MEAKER'S CRUELTY TO LITTLE ALICE

Charles Armington testified that he lived till last October in a house owned by Meaker, about one-fourth of a mile from the house occupied by the Meaker family. On one occasion while passing the house Mrs. Meaker was

LINES

WRITTEN ON THE MURDER OF ALICE MEAKER
BY MRS. A. B. CURTIS

ONCE A CHILD OF TENDER YEARS
WAS ENTRUSTED TO YOUR CARE;
DID NO KIND ANGEL WHISPER NEAR
OF MURDER, OH, BEWARE, BEWARE!

WHAT DEMON OF THE LOWER WORLD
TOLD YOU THE AWFUL DEED TO DO?
WAS IT FOR GREED OF SORDID GOLD
OF THE FEAR SHE'D TELL OF YOU?

NO WONDER THAT REMORSE DID COME
UNTO THAT SON YOU LOVED SO WELL;
FOR WHEN THE AWFUL DEED WAS DONE,
THEN TO A SHERIFF HE DID TELL.

OF THAT LONG AND LONESOME RIDE,
WITH NO GUARDIAN ANGEL NEAR,
TO DASH THE POISONED CUP ASIDE,
AS YOU BADE HER DRINK IT HERE.

HE WOULD NOT REST TILL HE HAD TOLD,
WHERE YOU HAD HID HER FORM AWAY,
T'WAS IN A DAMP AND NOISOME HOLE,
FAR AWAY FROM THE LIGHT OF DAY.

NOW, AS YOU LIE IN YOUR PRISON CELL,
THINK OF THE CRIME YOU'VE DONE,
FOR YOU HAVE TIME TO PONDER WELL,
ERE THE DAY OF DOOM SHALL COME.

THEN LIFT YOUR HEARTS TO GOD IN PRAYER
AND AS HIM TO FORGIVE;
THAT YOU MAY MEET HIM OVER THERE,
AND WITH HIM EVER LIVE.

WE TRUST THAT JUSTICE MAY BE DONE;
THAT ALICE AVENGED MAY BE;
THAT NEITHER THE MOTHER OR THE SON
SHALL EVER AGAIN GO FREE.

BARRE, VT.

ALICE MEAKER MURDER

whipping Alice severely in the kitchen. Stopped and looked in. Heard Mrs. Meaker tell the child she would whip her to death if she didn't mind; heard the child beg her not to whip her anymore; would do anything if she would not whip her any more. On another occasion called one evening at Meaker's house. The little girl was knitting; Mrs. Meaker took the knitting out of her hand saying, "Don't you know better how to knit than that?" Slapped her on the side of her head and said "I'll whip you to death and won't leave you alive." On a third occasion, returning home at night, the old lady had the girl out in the shed whipping her over the head and shoulders with a shingle or narrow strip of board. The child begged for mercy; said she would do anything she told her to do. Have heard noises there; have heard her whip that child, and heard the blows and cries at my house. On one of these occasions saw Mr. Meaker upon the hill side with the little boy at work. Think she worked the little girl very hard. Sent her out to work early in the morning picking off potato bugs before going to school; at night after school she was out again picking bugs. Have seen her out picking stones from the fields, carrying them down the hill in a tin pan, across the road and throwing them into the river. She has worked early in the morning and late in the evening.

Richard Thorndike testified: lives across the river from where they were living; one day last fall heard Mrs. Meaker say to the girl, "You little damned bitch, I will kill you"; was pounding her with a broom handle and heard the child's cries; afterwards myself and wife, standing in our garden heard the blows given the child and afterwards spoke to Mr. Atherton about it.

Henry R. Henry had seen Mrs. Meaker whip the child with a stick; had seen her catch the child by the hair with one hand and whip her with the other; had seen her follow the child up into a field with a barrel stave in her hand. Child once ran out when near the house; Mrs. Meaker grabbed her by the back of the neck and shoved her violently back into the house. Last fall, while harvesting grain, the boy and girl ran out of the house together, the girl fell and the old lady seized her by the ear and lifted her up, dragging her several feet, saying, "I'll learn you to run out every time a team drives up."

Again, the child ran up the hill back of the house, the old lady after her; she could not catch her, but screamed out to Mr. Meaker, "what the hell did you ever bring that thing her for to torment me?"

Mrs. E. W. Huntley corroborated the reports of the cheerless life led by the young outcast; had often invited little Alice to come over and play with her daughter, but the only response was a sickly smile on the sad face of the child.

Mary Germaine, the mother of the murdered girl, testified that Alice would have been ten years old the 25th of next August.

March 30, 1883

MRS. LUCY E. MEAKER

Still Claims Innocence and Reproaches the Boy Almon

A Scene in the Jail between the Two Murderers

Almon Hopes to Meet the Women "in a Better World" and Again Urges her to Confess

(By Telegraph to the Free Press and Times)

Windsor, Vt., March 29. – Mrs. Meaker will be hung tomorrow for the murder of her niece. She is almost broken down and at times her mind wanders. She strongly protests innocence. Mrs. Meaker received a letter from her son Almon today offering consolation and urging her to confess saying that his confession made him feel enough better to pay him for the pain it cost him to tell it. It would be better for her in the next world to make a clean breast of the affair. He would lay down his life to save her but, that being impossible, he can only offer her the satisfaction words can give and express the hope that they will meet in a better land beyond, where there is not sorrow or sadness. He says he is trying to lead a Christian life and trusts she will ready to meet her Lord. Shortly after Almon visited his mother. They shook hands, the mother showing a slight excitement over the letter. She claimed that it all was false and that Almon's lies had brought her to this, and demanded to know why he done so. She admitted that he could tell a good story, but claimed that justice should be meted out to all. She said that all the family hated Alice and whipped her severely. Almon asked if she had not asked him to take the child to the mountains to starve. She laughed, saying she never thought of such a thing. During the interview, which lasted an hour, she showed great nerve. She still maintains innocence and says she is ready to meet the Lord. She had an interview later with the chaplain and very uneasy, but failed to confess.

THE MEAKER MURDER

The Story of the Dreadful Deed Retold

Today Mrs. Lucy Emeline Meaker the murderer of little Alice Meaker, expiates her dreadful crime upon the gallows at Windsor. The story of her deed is one of peculiar cruelty and horror. In its deliberate heartlessness, and its fiendish method of execution, it stands among the most revolting crimes on record. Little Alice Meaker,

ALICE MEAKER MURDER

the victim of the tragedy, was the daughter of the brother of the murderer's husband. The family lived in Charlotte; but upon the death of the father, Alice's mother married a man named Germaine, living in South Burlington, and Alice and a younger brother were thrown upon the town for support. The overseer of the poor placed the lad with the sisters of Mercy in this city, and made arrangements with E. C. Meaker of Duxbury, husband of Emeline, to take little Alice under his roof and care for her until she was old enough to earn her own living. The sum paid Mr. Meaker for this purpose was \$400. Alice was taken to Duxbury in 1879, and put in the charge of the Meaker family, which consisted of the father E. C. Meaker, his wife Emeline, their son Louis Almon, about nineteen years old, and a daughter, Nellie. Alice was a timid, shrinking child – of just that disposition which seems to invite, and is unable to resist, persecution – and from the first Mrs. Meaker, a coarse, brutal, domineering woman, seemed to take delight in abusing, and maltreating her. In the spring of 1880 the Meaker family moved to a house near

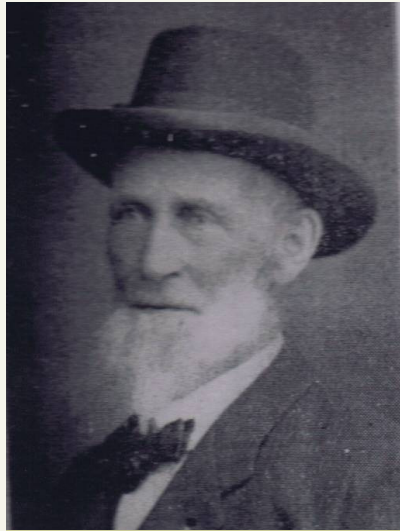
the line between Duxbury and Waterbury, and on the turnpike from the latter village to Moretown. Here Mrs. Meaker continued to abuse little Alice worse than before, beating and scolding her almost constantly, and forcing her to do far more household drudgery than the child's slender strength was equal to. Almon was more gentle to her than the rest of the family, but he was a poor weak minded lad, completely under the control of his vicious mother, and dared not show much sympathy with little Alice, for fear of the watchful virago. The neighbors were aware of the cruelties which Alice suffered, but knowing that remonstrance would only serve to increase them, and that nothing could be done for the child so long as she lived under the same roof with Mrs. Meaker, they forebore to interfere. This state of affairs continued for a few months longer, and then the fatal tragedy occurred. On the night of Saturday, the 21st of April, 1880 after Mr. Meaker had retired, Mrs. Meaker and Almon, whom she had persuaded to be her accomplice in the dreadful deed, stole up to the room where



THE HOME OWNED BY JOSEPH SOMMERVILLE ABOVE THE LARGE BARN ON THE RIGHT WAS THE RESIDENCE OF THE MEAKER FAMILY

ALICE MEAKER MURDER

little Alice was in bed, seized the frightened child, tied a sack over her head to muffle her cries and conveyed her outside to a livery team, which Almon, pursuant to his mother's directions, had hired for the purpose. They drove rapidly along the road for a little distance, until they came to a spring of water. Here Almon got out, and taking some spring water in a cup which her had brought with him, poured in the strychnine, which by his mother's direction, he had previously purchased at a Waterbury drug store, and brought it to Mrs. Meaker. She took the sack from the child's head and forced her to drink the mixture. They then drove on in the direction of Stowe, intending as Almon says, to bury the body in a large sand bank in the vicinity. The poison, however, began to take effect sooner than they had expected. The child screamed with anguish, and went into convulsions. Driving under a covered bridge, they held their hands over Alice's mouth to stifle her cries, and stayed there until the agonized convulsions ceased, and the little sufferer was dead. The bridge was near a swamp and when Alice ceased to breathe, the murderers hitched their team, took the body into the swamp and buried it under an upturned tree. The tragedy was finished and the murderer and her accomplice returned home. On the following day (Sunday) suspicion was aroused among the neighbors and some inquires were made as to the whereabouts of little Alice. These questions not being satisfactorily answered, on Monday Sherriff Atherton of Waterbury went to the Meaker house, had an interview with Almon, the result of which was a partial confession of the circumstances of the crime on the part of that young man. He laid the part which he had taken in the murder entirely to the instigation of his mother, and claimed that she alone was responsible for the deed. The sheriff took Almon in charge, and together they drove to the swamp where Alice was buried, uncovered the body, and brought it back to the house. On the following day Almon retracted his confession so far as his mother was concerned, alleging that the crime was his own, and that Mrs. Meaker had nothing to do with it. Undoubtedly, this retraction on Almon's part was due to the threats or entreat-



JOSEPH SOMMERVILLE
OWNER OF THE HOME WHERE
THE MEAKERS RESIDED

ies of his unnatural mother, who now saw no means to escape except by fastening the crime upon her weak accomplice. Almon adhered to his assertion with devoted persistency, thus preventing the State from using his confession as evidence against his mother. They were both arrested and after a preliminary examination at Waterbury, as few days subsequent to the arrest, were bound over for trial at the coming term of Washington county court. The grand jury found indictment against both Almon and his mother for the murder of Alice Meaker. State's Attorney Frank Plumley of Northfield conducted the prosecution, assisted by Hon. William P. Dillingham of Waterbury, and Mrs. Meaker stood trial, ably defended by E. F. Palmer of Waterbury and Messers. Heath and Carleton of Montpelier. The trial lasted ten days and after a thorough sifting of testimony, Mrs. Meaker and Almon were convicted of murder in the first degree. The prisoners counsel took exception to the judgment of the court upon the following grounds; It appears that mother and son were jointly indicted and that on appearing for trial each demanded a separate trial, on the ground that a jury might be impaneled satisfactory to one but objectionable to the other. The prosecution maintained that the State and not the respondents provided jury, and that while the prisoners at the bar had the right to challenge any juryman, yet they could not say of whom the panel should consist. The right to challenge would not be denied either party by a joint trial as proposed by the state. The court ruled in favor of a joint trial, and after the jury had been impaneled, Almon Meaker came into court and pleaded guilty of murder in the first degree. The case was taken to the Supreme Court, and on the 19th of November, 1881, Mrs. Meaker's sentence was confirmed by Judge Royce. Almon Meaker's sentence, pronounced by Judge Redfield, remained unchanged. He was to be hanged on the second Friday of February, 1883. He and his mother were taken to State's prison, and while there Almon furnished the following confession, which was made the basis of the appeal which resulted in the commutation of Almon's sentence by the last legislature, to imprisonment for life:

The Confession

I, Almon L. Meaker of Waterbury, Vt., now confined in State's prison under sentence of death, knowing that the time of my execution draws near, desire to leave to the public a statement of all the facts relating to the crime for which I was convicted. Alice, the murdered child, came to live with my father in May, 1879, and was murdered April, 1880. She was ten years old. She came to live with father by a contract with the overseer of Charlotte. She was not at all times kind in the family.

ALICE MEAKER MURDER

My mother was not satisfied with having the girl live at our house, and complained to my father about it and wanted him to get another place for her. My mother often punished her severely. Twice she stripped her from clothing and whipped her bare body and drew blood. About two weeks before the murder my mother told me if father did not get another place for her, she should dispose of her in another way. During that week, one day, I was in the house and father was in the field, my mother came into the pantry where I was getting a lunch and asked if I would help her take Alice to the mountain and leave her there to starve. I told her, "no, I would not. It ran along a few days, and she urged me to help her get rid of her. She persisted in taking her off and leaving her where no one would find her and let her starve. I proposed to take her back to Charlotte, and have them take her back. My mother would not consent to this. My mother said if I would not assist her in taking the course she wanted to take, she proposed to kill her outright. She urged me to help her do it; and I did not consent until the Tuesday before. She continually urged me and said it could be done by poison, and it would be an easy death. I will say here that if I had thought her death would have been so terrible, I never could have consented to aid her. She made the plan to procure strychnine, and I procured it of Druggist Carpenter of Waterbury village, and paid ten cents for it. This was Friday night, the night of the murder. I went immediately to Mr. Bates, a livery keeper, and got a team, and went over home and put the team back of the barn. Mother had put Alice to bed with her clothes on; and mother took her out of the window, telling her that we were going to ride. My father was in bed. Mother and Alice walked a short way up the hill through the field and came to the road where I had the team. They got in and I drove through the street, and gave the poison on the "Henry Hill" below the street, where we put it in some sweetened water and gave it to her. We drove on, and in about twenty minutes the poison took effect and she went into convulsions. My mother held her hand over her mouth to prevent her making noise. We started for a sandbank towards Stowe and took a shawl to bury her with. But she died so soon we stopped at a swamp, where the body was shown Mr. Atherton. I agreed with my mother after we were arrested (which she urged me to do) to take all the blame on myself, and clear her, which I have done, until I feel it a duty to tell the facts as above stated. No other person, or persons, had knowledge of the affair but my mother and myself. I had no motive in committing the act, and only did it - what I did do - at the request and advice of my mother. I did not realize what I was doing, nor consider it consequences.

ALMON L. MEAKER

Witness, Wendell P. Rice Windsor Co.ss.

The above statement is made, signed and sworn to the 10th day of Oct., 1882, by the above named A. L. Meaker, before me and in the presence of W.P. Rice, Supt., W.H.H. Bingham, Master in Chancery Before her trial in Washington, County court, Mrs. Meaker was confined in jail at Montpelier, and while there she displayed a full ferocity of her nature, once attempting to set the jail on fire, and another time attacking the sheriff with all the ferocity of a wild beast. She was taken from Montpelier jail and lodged in the House of Corrections awaiting the hearing on the exceptions carried up by her counsel to the general term of the Supreme Court. Upon the final sentence of Judge Royce, Mrs. Meaker and Almon were taken to the State's prison, where they have remained ever since. As the close of her term of probation expires, Mrs. Meaker has gradually grown less and less violent, and has spent much of the time quietly knitting in her cell. Her last request has been, that she might have an interview with Almon before she goes to the scaffold. She speaks regretfully of his participation in the crime, and says that he will regret it on his dying bed.

March 31, 1883

A LIFE FOR A LIFE

Hanging of Mrs. Emeline Lucy Meaker at Windsor Prison

"TELL THEM I AM TO BE MURDERED TODAY,
AN INNOCENT WOMAN"

A Kiss for Her Husband and Nellie

Special Dispatch to the Free Press and Times

Windsor, Vt., March 30. - One of the most remarkable executions of modern time was the hanging of Emeline Lucy Meaker in State jail today. Such wonderful nerve and composure on the scaffold is seldom seen. The condemned woman died protesting her innocence of the crime with her expiring breath. Her last night on earth was passed in undisturbed slumber and she arose at an early hour this morning. When she had completed her toilet, combing her hair down over her temples and parting it in the middle, a slight change from our otherwise faithful likeness, she was told that she looked not over sixteen. She laughed heartily at this pleasantry and said she thought she did look pretty well. For breakfast she ate a large beefsteak, three potatoes, a slice of bread and butter, a piece of meat pie and drank a cup of coffee. The chaplain, Rev. Mr. Hull, came to see her at 8

ALICE MEAKER MURDER

o'clock. She wanted to see the gallows and Sheriff Amsden offered her his arm to assist her. She evinced no fear as she ascended the black steps leading to the scaffold. On being asked what she thought of it she replied: "Why, it is not half as bad as I thought it was." Sheriff Atherton of Washington county, the detector of the crime, paid Mrs. Meaker a visit between 10 and 11 this forenoon. She was very glad to see him and shook hands with him warmly. She asked after her husband and Nellie, and then burst out: "Frank, tell them I am to be murdered today, and innocent woman." After some further conversation, in which she spoke of Almon's confession and stigmatized it as a lie, Mr. Atherton rose to leave. She began to cry for the first time since she has been in the condemned quarters, kissed his right hand twice and said: "Tell them I send them a sweet kiss both, " meaning her husband and Nellie; "good-bye, good-bye," and she watched him eagerly till he was out of sight. For dinner Mrs. Meaker ate heartily two boiled eggs, two slices toast, one potato one doughnut and a cup of coffee.

Her spiritual adviser, Rev. J.M. Hull, went to see her for the last time at 1:05 p.m. By this time there were gathered in the prison guard room some 125 spectators, including press reporters.

TO THE GALLOWES

Sheriff Amsden and his deputies at about 1:25 proceeded to her cell and pinioned her hands, and in a minute more the procession, with the condemned woman partly supported on each side by a deputy, appeared coming down the corridor. A chair was provided on the scaffold for the wretched woman. She walked firmly but looked pale and sad when she stepped on the gallows. She sat down in the chair. Her face was pallid, lips compressed and she showed no emotion except by her hurried breathing. Her hands were clenched and were red as if blood and settled there, and she sat facing Chaplin Hull. The chaplain kneeled and offered an earnest prayer that made a perceptible effect upon the features of the wretched woman. When the chaplain had concluded, Sheriff Amsden, on account of her deafness, did not read the warrant for the execution. He handed her a printed slip as follows:

Emeline L. Meaker: Have you anything to say why the sentence of the law should not now be executed upon you? There is now an opportunity.

She looked sharply at the slip of paper held before her and read it intently. Then in a low voice hardly audible to the audience, she said: "May God forgive you all for hanging me, an innocent woman. I am as innocent as that man standing here," raising her hands toward Deputy Locke. Deputy Lovell then pinioned her ankles, while she moaned, "O, Christ! O, Christ!"

THE END

The noose was then adjusted about her neck by Deputy Wallace. She stepped back upon the fatal drop taking care to be very exact about getting in the right position. The sheriff then handed her this slip of paper which she read slowly through:

The time has arrived now when the extreme penalty of the law will be executed upon you. The Lord have mercy on your soul.

The black cap was then drawn over her face and before anyone was scarcely aware of it Emeline L. Meaker was a dead woman. The drop fell at precisely 1:36 $\frac{3}{4}$ p.m., Boston time, or 1:30 $\frac{3}{4}$, Windsor time. Drs. Rugg of Hartland and Brewster and Morse of Windsor together with Drs. Wright of Orange, Mass., Rice of Springfield, Vt., and Bryant and Shurtliff of West Windsor witnessed the pulsations which were as follows: First minute, 90; 2d, 90; 2 $\frac{1}{2}$, 67; 5th, 130; 6th, 125, 6 $\frac{1}{2}$, 55; 7th, 60; 7 $\frac{1}{4}$, 55, (they could not now get it distinctly); 8 $\frac{1}{2}$, 25; 9th, 70; 16th, 1. At 1:43 one strong throb was noticed and at 1:44 the sheriff pronounced the woman dead, by direction of the jail physician, Dr. J.D. Brewster.

Among those present at the execution were Warden Dodge of New Hampshire, ex-Warden Earle of Massachusetts, Sheriff Sprague of Worcester, Mass., Sheriff Junkins of Essex County, N.Y., Sheriff Atherton and Jailer Dudley of Washington County, ex-Sheriff Drew of Chittenden County, and Messers. G.F.O. Kimball of Vergennes, John Thorpe of Charlotte, Dr. Huntley of Duxbury, Directors Cramton and Thatcher of the prison and Deputies Wallace, Jones, Locke and Lovell of Windsor county.

MORBID CURIOSITY

No execution in the past has excited the community as this one, and from early morning until the time set for the hanging, large numbers thronged the jail corridors to look at the gallows. Sheriff Amsden was besieged as never before for passes to witness the execution. One man in Waterbury wanted a pass for his wife, which request of course was refused. Another man wrote to the superintendent to cut off one inch of the hangman's rope and send him, properly certified to, for his collection. The fatal noose used is the same one used in terminating the lives of Gravelin, Hayden and Carr. The wretched woman died friendless and alone, not a relative being present to offer consolation in her last hours.

MANY THANKS TO DONNIE WELCH
FOR HIS HELP ON THIS ISSUE IN
ADDITION TO ALL HE DOES
FOR THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

ALICE MEAKER MURDER

In addition to the Burlington Free Press articles in the previous pages this news account from a local journal was provided from the archives of Donnie Welch.

MURDER MOST FOUL

A Young Girl Poisoned by Strychnine
Arrest of the Guilty Parties
Confessions of One of Them

Of all the murders which have darkened the annals of Vermont none have been more coolly diabolical, none more utterly unprovoked, or more deliberately carried out, than the terrible crime whose discovery yesterday filled the breasts of the peaceful and law abiding inhabitants of Duxbury and Waterbury with thrills of horror, and made them for once impatient of the law's slow course, and anxious to invoke the swift, retribution of Judge Lynch. So utterly incredible seems the plainest and baldest narration of the circumstances of this crime that if a novelist had woven them into a story he would have been condemned as outraging all probability and attempting to impose on the credulity of his readers; so much is fact stranger than fiction.

THE VICTIM'S FAMILY

About two years ago a man of forty six named Horace C. Meaker, came to Duxbury from Stowe, and hired a farm on the Winooski river, known as the Deline place, situated about a mile below Waterbury village. His family consisted of his wife, Emeline Lucy aged 36, his daughter, Eleanor Mahala, ages 19, and his son, Lewis Almon, aged 17. Mr. and Mrs. Meaker are very deaf. They lived there until about the first of last March, when they moved to a farm owned by Joseph Sommerville, the house belonging to which is situated in the locality known as "Mutton Hollow" in Duxbury, about a mile and a half from Waterbury hotel. There they now reside. Some eight months ago two children came to reside with them, named Alice Meaker, a delicate undersized girl of 12, and Hilie Henry, a boy of 10. They are said to be the half-sister and half-brother of Horace C. Meaker, the offspring of Meaker's father by his third or fourth wife. It is also reported that the children came into Meaker's family by virtue of a trade with the town of Charlotte, upon which they fell after their father's death, and that by this trade, Meaker received \$50 from the town authorities as payment for relieving them of the children's support. Their mother is still living and resides in Charlotte. Some of the neighbors, when the Meakers lived on the Deline place, used to report that the children and especially the girl, were abused; in particular a Mr. Thorndike, who lived in Waterbury, just across the river from the Deline place, went to Deputy Sheriff Atherton and complained of the cruel way in which the children were whipped, saying that the blows were apparently made with a stick and the screams could be heard at this home, nearly a half a mile away, across the meadow and river.

FIRST SUSPICIONS OF THE MURDER

Almost opposite the Sommerville house, in which the Meakers now live, is the residence of Eber W. Huntley, the Town Clerk of Duxbury; a few rods nearer Waterbury, on the same Waitsfield road, lives Jacob Foss, one of the Grand Jurors of the town.

Last Saturday morning they learned that Alice had run away from Meaker's during the preceding night, and had gone they knew not where. The father Horace, told Huntley's fold on Saturday that the girl had "come up missing" in the morning; that she had got up in the night and gone out the window. It seems that Alice slept in a bedroom on the ground floor, which adjoined the chamber in which Mr. and Mrs. Meaker slept. This was all the information the neighbors could obtain. The Meakers made no effort to discover the girl's whereabouts, or to reclaim her; but seemed utterly unconcerned as to her fate. This conduct at first provoked the anger of the residents of the vicinity, and at last aroused their suspicions, especially as Saturday and Sunday passed without any tidings of the girl, who young and penniless, as she was, could not be expected to wander far. Finally, on Monday morning, Mr. Foss went to Meaker's house, and told them that folks had begun to surmise that there was trouble with the girl, and said emphatically that they must make inquiries for her. Mrs. Meaker replied that they should not spend a cent in looking after her; if she had chosen to go off, she might stay; they wouldn't go after her. Mr. Foss tried in every way to make the Meakers tell what they knew about the child, or if they didn't know what they surmised about her; but he couldn't get any satisfaction whatever. At about tea time on Monday afternoon Mr. Foss visited the Meaker's again; told them that people were accusing them of a dreadful crime, and that they must hunt the child up and produce her, or there would be trouble made at once. Under this exhortation Almon Meaker, the son, seemed to exhibit some feeling, but he said nothing. The mother appeared as unconcerned as ever. Mr. Foss and Mr. Huntley, convinced that the Meaker would do nothing towards finding Alice, and becoming more and more fearful that an awful crime - a crime which they hardly dare name - had been committed, went to Waterbury and took legal advice of the Hon. William P. Dillingham and E. F. Palmer Esq. The result of the consultation was the employment of Deputy Sheriff Frank Atherton, of Duxbury, to investigate the mystery, and it is wholly due to his remarkable energy, courage and skill that this blackest of black crimes was so soon brought to light and the murdered entangled in an inextreme cable web of damning evidence.

ATHERTON AT WORK

At the time when Sheriff Atherton was put in charge of the case, on Monday evening, he learned two important facts; first that on Friday evening Almon Meaker had bought at the drug store W.E. Carpenter, in Waterbury, forty grains of strychnine, stating to Mr. Carpenter that he wanted it to kill rats in the buttery with, and had, at about nine o'clock on Friday evening, got a team at F. Bates stable, in Waterbury, and had not returned it until about four o'clock on Saturday morning. By strange coincidence, Almon and his sister Eleanor, called in the family Nellie, were at this very time in Richardson and Fullerton's store. It was now eight o'clock in the evening. Mr. Atherton invited the young man to accompany him to Mr. Palmer's office. He went, and then he told him that he wished to talk with him about the disappearance of the girl. "What about that team you got at Bates' Friday night?" "I got that team to meet a cousin of mine from Barre. I got the team at about half past eight or nine, and drove up through Waterbury street, across the old bridge, and followed up the river a mile and a half beyond, toward Middlesex. There I met my cousin. She came from Barre, and got off the mail train at

ALICE MEAKER MURDER

Middlesex, and told me she would walk down the road. I took her in, and then we drove to Moscow. Near where the letter box is in Moscow we met a girl named Flora Barrows, took her in, and carried her to Stowe. Village, and left her at a house near the brick hotel. Then I and my cousin came back. She got out of the wagon near the stable, and I left the team, and we walked over to Duxbury. She stayed at our home till morning, and ate breakfast. After breakfast I came over to the village with her and she took the half past eleven o'clock train for Montpelier."

"When did you first know the girl was missing?"

"The first we discovered was Saturday morning, after breakfast, and we went into the bedroom, and the bed was tumbled, and she was gone. That is all I know about her."

"Have any of the family written to Charlotte, to ascertain if the girl has gone there to see her mother?"

"Yes, my sister Nellie has written two letters, and mailed them to go to Charlotte. One was to her mother, and one I don't remember who it was written to."

Almon then said he must go home with his sister, and left the office.

Atherton went to Bates' stable, and learned from the hostler that Almon had no girl with him when he brought back the team. Then he and Mr. Palmer drove to Huntley's. They arrived there at about half past nine. Almon had not got home, and Mr. Atherton went to Meaker's and got the father to come with him to Huntley's. Here they tested the truth of Almon's story about the ride to Moscow with his cousin, and found it lacking. Meaker said that the Barre cousin had not been there recently, and had not eaten breakfast that Saturday morning. The old man is so deaf that it is difficult conversing with him, but they managed to make him understand the terrible suspicions which were afloat, and he manifested so much innocence, and told such a straightforward story of his knowledge of her disappearance, that they could not help believing him; and, in truth, no one believes now that Horace Meaker had anything to do with the murder. The Sheriff accompanied Mr. Meaker home, and had a talk with Mrs. Meaker. She said that the girl had retired to bed at about seven o'clock Friday night, and that she knew nothing more of her until she missed her in the morning. She protested her innocence of any crime, and complained that Mr. Foss had been there, and abused them. The old lady is even deafer than the old man, and it is almost impossible to converse with her. This was in the kitchen, and Almon had got home by this time. Mr. Atherton told him that he had not told the truth in regard to the team, and turning to Nellie he asked her if she had written a letter to Charlotte. Nellie replied that she came back from Barre, where she had been at work, Saturday night, and that she had not written any letter to Charlotte. Atherton then asked the old woman whether the cousin at Barre had breakfasted there on Saturday morning, and she replied that she had not; that she hadn't been there since last winter. During all this Almon sat there, and did not say a word. Atherton then told him again that he had told a falsehood in regard to the team; proved to him that his story was impossible in respect to time, because he must have traveled twenty five miles in five hours that night, and have made several stops besides; and reminded him that his father and mother both contradicted him. Almon did not seem to know how to answer these charges, and said nothing.

MRS. MEAKER WEAKENS

The house is placed with one end to the road and the kit is at the other extremity. Next to the kitchen is the sitting room; then the front entry, and between the front entry and the road end of the house is the parlor. Mrs. Meaker went into the parlor with Nellie and sent word to Atherton that she wanted to see him. He went in. She shut the door tight. She said, "I will tell you where the girl is."

"Where is she?"

"She is in Canada. She is all right. I will bring her back tomorrow, if you will let me go after her."

"I am afraid you can't bring the girl back alive. Almon doesn't tell a straight story, and I think there is foul play with the girl. You had better tell me; tell me the whole truth."

The old woman lost her self-control at this, and cried bitterly.

"Mr. Atherton, I can't tell you the whole truth."

"Why?"

"You don't know what they would do to me."

"Is the girl dead?"

"No, I will bring her back tomorrow, if you will let me go."

"Whereabouts in Canada is Alice?"

"I can't tell."

"How can you get her back from Canada in one day, if you don't know where she is?"

Before this question was answered, Nellie came to the door, and they all went into the kitchen, and Mr. Atherton again talked with Almon; told him that it would be better for him to tell the whole truth, and tell where the girl was. Almon choked up, and turned red in the face, but preserved silence. Atherton then asked him to go into the parlor. They went, and Atherton, sitting beside him, once more besought him to tell the truth about the girl.

Said he, "I will. She is in Montreal."

"How did she get to Montreal?"

"We carried her to Richmond."

"Who do you mean by 'we'?"

"I got the team to Mr. Bates' I came over here and met mother and the girl to the top of the hill, (near Foss', between Meaker's house and Waterbury). I took them in, and carried them to Richmond."

"Did you give her any money?"

"Gave her \$6.70."

"Who did you leave her with?"

"With the Station attendant."

"What time of night was it?"

"About midnight."

Being convinced that Almon was still falsifying, Atherton thought he might as well let him see that he was not to be trifled with. So without more delay he asked:

"What did you do with the strychnine you got at Will Carpenter's Friday night?"

Almon seemed astonished, as this was the first intimation he had had that Atherton knew anything about any strychnine.

"Didn't you give it to the little girl?" No answer.

"Didn't you give the little girl the strychnine, and throw her into the river?" We didn't, we carried her to Richmond." Atherton then gave him a severe cross examination as to the situation of the depot at Richmond, as to whether they passed any other depots in going to Richmond on the right bank of the river, the route he claimed the went. His answers made Atherton absolutely certain that he was lying, if he had any doubts before; and he told him so. Once more urged him to tell the truth, and

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asked him again if the girl wasn't dead. He said she wasn't. Atherton then left him, returned to Mr. Huntley's, and reported the progress he had made, and that he was satisfied the poor little thing was dead.

ALMON CONFESSES

After a few minutes consultation, her went back to Mr. Meaker's and induced Almon to accompany him to Huntley's. There he repeated the Canada story, and was again cross-examined. He was informed by them all that they didn't believe him, and was asked to tell the whole truth. The exhortation of all three seemed to have some effect on him, and he choked up and turned red, as he had in his own house. Atherton said, "Almon, you want to tell me the whole story, don't you?"

He seem to soften for the first time, and he and Atherton went into the kitchen, by themselves.

"Go on, and tell me just as it is, is she alive?"

"No; she had gone to a better land."

"Did you murder her?"

"We gave her that strychnine."

"Why did you do it?"

"She wasn't a very good girl, and there didn't seem to anybody like her; hard to get along with her. Thought she would be better off."

"When did you get this strychnine, and who did you get it of?"

"I got is of Will Carpenter, to kill rats. I told him it was to kill rats in the buttery."

"How long before you got the team did you get the strychnine?"

"Not over 10 or 15 minutes; went right from the drug store to Bates' stable."

Atherton tried to have him tell where the body was, but he was very reluctant, and finally declined outright. But he said he would go with him on Tuesday, and find it, he could go where the body was. Atherton talked with him in the kitchen until after midnight, trying to induce him to tell where the little girl's body was; but with no success. He said that his mother was with him all the time, but that she had nothing to do with secreting the body. Atherton thought he would make one last appeal.

"You have confessed that you gave the girl strychnine, and killed her; now you had better tell me where the body is, and get it off your mind." "If you will tell me what you think they will do with me, and won't tell anybody where the body is until you get back, I will tell you God's truth and go with you tonight and get the body." Atherton asked him if he just as soon Mr. Huntley would go, and her said "No, I want to go with you." Atherton gave the required promises, and Almon said that the body was up Waterbury river, beyond the covered bridge above Randall's mill, a few rods from the highway. He then asked him which gave the strychnine to the girl, he or his mother? His answer was: "I don't want to bring my mother in; it is too bad, Frank." "Your mother was with you all the time?" "Yes" "Did she help secrete the body?" No, she didn't get out of the wagon." "Where were you when you gave this strychnine?" "I will tell you on our way after the body."

THE SEARCH FOR THE BODY

It was now half past twelve. They went to Meaker's, got Almon's overcoat and told them they were going away, and would be back in two or three hours. Mrs. Meaker seemed to

be greatly discomposed at this announcement; moaned and cried, and made many incoherent ejaculations. Almon said, "Don't feel bad, mother, I have told them all. There is nothing left back. I am going with Frank." His statement instead of soothing her, had a contrary effect; she redoubled her cries and screamed so that you could hear her in the road. Having procured some wraps to cover the corpse, they started in an open buggy, drawn by one horse. Mr. Palmer went with them to Waterbury village, just above the Sylvester Henry place, Almon said:

"This is the place where we gave her the strychnine."

"What did you give it to her in?"

"A tin cup."

"Where did you get the cup?"

"We brought it from home."

"What did you give the strychnine in?"

"We had a kind of sweetened water in a bottle. We poured the sweetened water into the cup, and mixed the strychnine with it."

"Did she refuse to take it?"

"No."

"Did you give her all you bought?"

"No, I don't think I did, quite."

"What did you do with the bottle and what was left?"

"I will tell you when we get down there, where I threw it away."

"What was the strychnine in?"

"In a little vial."

"Did she suffer?"

"No she died very easy. Didn't struggle but once or twice."

"What did you do with the cup?"

"I don't know; I guess we carried it home."

After this conversation they drove along till they went through the bridge near the mouth of the Waterbury river. Just as they got through Almon said, "I threw the bottle down there, with what was left (pointing at an embankment on the left side of the bridge as they went out) and meant to throw it in the river."

Atherton then asked him how long the girl lived. He replied, "I will tell you, Frank, when we get up to there she died." They drove on about three miles, and crossed the bridge near Leonard Foster's, went towards Moscow and got about five rods above the bridge. Almon said: "This is the place where the girl died; right here." They had driven then about four miles from the spot where he said he gave her the poison, which at an ordinary rate of speed on that road would take about 40 minutes. Atherton asked where the body was. Almon said, "Drive on."

"You take the reins and drive on. You will know where to stop."

Almon drove and they rode to within about four rods on the Waterbury side of John White's watering tub; drove up to a bar post on the left side of the road; and Almon said, "this is the place." They jumped out, hitched the horse, and Almon led the way into the field on the right hand side of the road going up. The ground was wet. He could not find the place at first, but they finally came to a muck hole, and about a rod from that in a very wet land he recognized the spot where the child was hid. The water was ankle deep, and over the body was a pile of brush and pieces of wood. It was buried in the mud a foot deep. They pulled the body out, and Mr. Atherton carried it to dry land and laid it down. She was dressed in a calico dress and apron, shoes and stockings, and a little blue waterproof or cloak, which was pulled up and wrapped around her head. She had on not hat.

Atherton told Almon to help take the body to the wagon. He obeyed. Atherton wrapped it in the clothes he got at Huntley's and then measured the buggy with his whip, to see if he could

ALICE MEAKER MURDER

place it in the bottom. He found that he couldn't. He told Almon to get into the buggy. He did so. Then he unhitched the horse, and turned the team round. Almon asked him what he was going to do with the body.

In reply, Atherton lifted the corpse of the murdered child towards her murderer, and commanded him to take it in his arms. Whining like a dog at the terrible punishment, he obeyed and sat the ghastly object by his side. Said Atherton "Put your arms around it and hold it up, so it will not be marred." With brutish cries of terror, the miserable wretch clasped the rigid remains of this innocent victim, and in that way they rode to Meaker's home in Duxbury. A more solemn ride was never taken. Who can portray the feelings of the murderer, forced to bring home in his arms the fruit of his crime?

SCENES AT THE HOUSE

Terrible as the ride was, the reception was even more awful. The old man was completely overwhelmed at the sight of the dead girl. He sobbed like a child, and his wife and daughter wept with him. The old woman could not bear to look upon her victim, and completely broke down.

The corpse was carried into the parlor, and the mother and son put under house arrest; but they were allowed free intercourse with each other during the day.

Yesterday forenoon, Doctors Fales, Janes Kingsbury and Washburn made surgical examination of the body; took out the stomach, sealed it up in a jar; and yesterday afternoon it was sent to Burlington, to be analyzed by a chemist, in order to see if traces of strychnine can be discovered. The analysis can be nothing more than a matter of form, however, for the physicians could see with the naked eye a quantity of white powder in the stomach, which was undoubtedly strychnine undigested at the time of the poor girl's death.

It is said that one half a grain of strychnine will cause the death of a human being. Almon Meaker bought forty grains, and consequently if she drank one-quarter of it there must be now several grains in the stomach. A thorough examination of all the internal organs of the body was made, and they were all found to be in healthy condition, except they were congested, which would be expected if the subject had been poisoned with strychnine. Besides the white powder in the stomach, the doctor detected signs of the mucous membrane of the stomach having been eaten in places by some substance, presumably a poison. There were no signs of any external bruises on the body, and nothing was found to account for her death unless she had been poisoned.

There was a large crowd at the house in the early part of the day, and among them were many residents of Waterbury, whom the fame of the dastardly deed had attracted. So great was the imagination of the people at the crime that there was talk of lynching, but happily the thought passed off, and like good Vermonters they resolved to let the law take the deliberate course, knowing that although legal retribution is slow yet it is very sure.

The reporter of the ARGUS AND PATRIOT visited the house in the afternoon. A sadder scene he hopes never to see. The mother and son had just been taken to Waterbury. The house was in charge of the neighbors, the women of whom had just laid out the poor little victim's remains in her calico dress, and then covered her with a decent sheet. There she lay in the parlor, her face as calm as if she had never known the harshness of brutal guardians, the agony of poison, the terrible pangs of dissolution. Death had at last given her peace, the

peace which passeth understanding. Unloved and abused in life, in death she had many a sympathizer, and few that entered the room failed to drop a tear to her memory.

In the kitchen the father sat, broken with grief, holding his daughter in his lap, who was weeping with him, and laying her head upon his shoulder. They seemed utterly oblivious of the presence of the crowd, and to be wrapped only in themselves and their misfortune.

THE PRISONERS ARRAIGNED

The murderers were brought to Waterbury at about two o'clock and taken to the office of E. L. Palmer, Esq. who will conduct the defense. In the absence of the State's Attorney, the Hon. W.P. Dillingham acted in behalf of the state.

The legal proceedings took place in the basement of the Congregational church, before Justice George H. Lease. They consisted of merely of arraignment, and the continuance of the case until the 10th of May, in order to permit an analysis of the contents of the stomach to be made before examination. Mrs. Meaker is so deaf that she could not be made to hear the Grand Juror's complaint read and Mr. Palmer for her pleaded "not guilty". Almon said "not guilty" in a firm voice. They were then committed to the custody of the officer, and brought to the county jail in Montpelier last evening. The mother and son seem to be devoted to each other. They *** all the afternoon holding each other's hands and a large part of the time her head was in his lap. Both cried, and the mother at times fairly moaned with anguish. Almon in response to all inquires, says "Mother is innocent; mother is innocent." As to himself he says nothing; but it will be hard to elude the effect of his confession to Sheriff Atherton. While in the cars last evening, Almon and his mother were reading a religious periodical called "The Christian," and Mrs. Meaker also glanced for a minute or two at a pocket Testament.

The family lived in Stowe a many years, and were on a farm belonging to Mr. W. H. H. Bingham. The old gentleman bore a good reputation, although he was unfortunate financially; but the wife had the reputation of being a virago. The boy is not very bright, and it is believed that he committed the crime under his mother's influence.

IN CONCLUSION

In all probability the story which Almon told Sheriff Atherton is substantially true, with the exception of his statement as to the lack of suffering on the part of the little girl after the poison was administered. Physicians say that the effect of the strychnine upon the human system is to produce symptoms similar to tetanus, and that the victim suffers intensely until death ensues. But however great her agony may have been, it made no impression on the hard hearts of her murderers. As far as can be judged, their remorse today is not because they committed the crime; but because they were found out. Both mother and son are utterly callous. As far as can be learned, they drove along while the poor child was in the dreadful agonies of one of the most awful deaths, and, as we can easily imagine, imploring relief with the most touching accents, as serenely as though they were taking an afternoon's pleasure drive. The mind fails to comprehend such depravity. Such persons are not human beings. They are devils in human form, and should be treated as wild beasts - exterminated from the face of the earth like wolves. There should be no mercy for the perpetrators of such a diabolical crime as this.

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If you have any comments or contributions for the newsletter we would love to hear from you.

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DON'T FORGET THE NEXT MEETING NOVEMBER 10TH
CROSSETT BROOK MIDDLE SCHOOL - 6:30PM

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