

The Execution of Wirz.

His Last Moments—He Declares his Innocence—The Scene at the Gallows.

WASHINGTON, Nov. 10.—Capt. Wirz was hung between 10 and 11 o'clock this morning. On the gallows he declared his innocence. He died without exhibiting any signs of fear. Father Boyle this morning administered the sacrament, and Father Wigget, also of the Roman Catholic church, then placed upon the prisoner the black cambrie robe. He remarked as he did so, "I hope this will be turned into a white one in the other world." There were several hundred spectators besides the military. Amid profound silence Provost Marshal Russell proceeded to read the order of the war department, founded on the verdict of the court martial which tried the prisoner. The following is the President's order:

EXECUTIVE MANSION, Nov. 3, 1865.

The proceedings, findings and sentence of the court marshal in the Wirz case are approved, and it is ordered the sentence be carried into execution, by the officer commanding the department of Washington, on Friday, the 10th of November, 1865, between the hours of 6 in the morning and 12 noon.

(Signed)

ANDREW JOHNSON,

President of the United States.

When the reading of the order was completed, Wirz conversed with those on the platform with seeming calmness and self-possession, and it was remarked that he had a smiling countenance. To his spiritual advisers he said: "I am innocent. I have to die, but I can die like a man. I have hope in the future. I have nothing more to say." His legs and hands were tied, the noose passed around the neck and the black cap placed over his face. He stood erect, without faltering, evidently having nerved himself for the solemn event. Those on the platform retired to the railing, leaving the doomed man in the centre of the structure. After a few moments of profound quiet the drop at a preconcerted signal fell. The sound thus occasioned having reached the ears of a promiscuous crowd outside the Old Capitol grounds was responded to by repeated shouts of approbation. The convict directly after falling was considerably convulsed in his legs, but the agony was soon over. He hung about fifteen minutes and was then cut down, the body laid upon a stretcher and conveyed to the prison, where it was placed in a coffin and transferred to Father Boyle for interment. His neck was broken by the fall. The proceedings occupied about three-quarters of an hour.

Wirz was in his cell attended by Fathers Boyle and Wigget. Last night he ate a hearty oyster supper, and then went to sleep, reposing quietly until he awoke about three o'clock this morning. He then wrote his farewell to his wife, and made some statements about his connection with the rebellion, avowing that he had maltreated prisoners in accordance with orders from superior officers, but solemnly asserting that he had never killed any one or perpetrated the cruel acts ascribed to him. After the sentence was read to him in prison Wirz said, "I'm d—d if the Yankee eagle hasn't turned out to be what I expected, a d—d turkey buzzard." He then asked that Rev. Father Boyle be sent for, and also Mr. Schade, his counsel, and since that time these gentlemen have been almost constant in attendance upon him. Besides these some ladies have called—one of them paying her last visit to him yesterday, when she brought him some delicacies. As she was leaving, he manifested emotion as he expressed his gratitude to her and remarked to Mr. Schade, who was present, that that was the last tear he would shed in this life. A couple of ladies, said to be of the family of a prominent officer, visited him also yesterday, and in reply to the question of one, said: "Certainly, Madam, the greatest sinner has hope, and I, being innocent, must surely have hope." Yesterday he received a letter from his wife, dated Cadiz, Ky., in which she used the most affectionate language, and expresses the hope that they then were seeing their darkest hour. She urged him to cheer up and prepare for the worst, but is satisfied that if the government knew how much anguish they had suffered he would not be condemned to death. She also states that she intends with her children to go to his people in Europe. Wirz has been an infidel, but of late he has professed repentance, and one of his religious advisers assures me that he truly repented just before the hour appointed for execution.

Major Russell came from the prison at quarter past ten, followed by the criminal, who was escorted by his spiritual advisers. He was a much taller man than I had expected to see, and he walked with a firm step, glancing up at the clear sky as if refreshed by the sunlight and air. His long, black hair was brushed smoothly down his head, showing a high forehead. His beard and mustache were full, almost concealing the expression of his face, and his cunning eyes twinkled with a defiant expression of apparent indifference. On reaching the gallows he ascended the steps with alacrity and seated himself in a chair placed upon the drop. Father Boyle, from whom he had received the sacrament, stood at his right hand, holding a small crucifix, and at his left hand stood Father Wigget. Major Russell then read in a clear voice, the long charges and specifications, in which the name of Jeff. Davis was included. Wirz listened to the tedious document with attention, nodding assent to some portions and shaking his head negatively when other sections were being read. Father Boyle would occasionally present the crucifix to him as if to strengthen him for the coming struggle by hopes of divine forgiveness. Occasionally the impatient crowd without would give hideous yells, at which the criminal would betray some uneasiness. Then Father Boyle would display the symbol of redemption, saying, "Faith, hope, charity, repentance will save you." At last the reading of the charges, the specifications, the finding of the court and the President's approval of the sentence had been completed, and Major Russell turning toward the prisoner asked him if he had any remarks to make. He replied in an unconcerned tone that he had no wish to say anything to the public. To the major he would say that he died innocent. He had but once to die; his hope was in the future. Major Russell then shook hands with him, receiving his thanks for courteous treatment. The priests bade him farewell, with words of consolation, and retired. He stood erect upon the drop. The hangman pinioned his arms and feet, adjusted the fatal noose and put on the black cap. Then commenced unearthly yells from those outside of the prison yard, as if execrating the perpetrator of atrocious cruelties. Major Russell raised his cap—the drop fell—Henry Wirz, with a sudden plunge, was hanged by the neck until he was dead. It was seven minutes after the drop fell before the convulsive movements of the body ceased, and the subsequent surgical examination showed that his neck was not broken. After hanging fifteen minutes the body was taken and carried into the dead room, where it was placed in a coffin and entrusted to Father Boyle. The body is to be deposited in the vault of the Catholic cemetery until the wishes of Mrs. Wirz concerning it can be made known.

His Attempt at Suicide.

WASHINGTON, Nov. 12.—Capt. Wirz, in his incomplete diary, under date of Oct. 1st, says a man was at that time placed in his cell to prevent any attempt he might make to take his own life, but the man fell asleep. He writes that the reason why he did not put an end to his existence was, because what he suffered was by the will of God, and in the second place, he owed it to himself, his family, relatives, and to the world at large, to prove his innocence. But the fact has just been made public that some weeks ago, during the visit of Wirz's wife to Washington, an attempt was made by her to forestall the sentence of the court in her husband's case by poisoning him. When kissing him at parting in the cell, after one of their interviews, she managed to convey from her own mouth into his a little ball of strychnine covered with coatings of oiled silk and licorice. Col. Baker, who was present and noticed the suspicious proceeding, sprang forward, and, by seizing Wirz by the throat, compelled him to spit out the article. An examination showed its poisonous character and the object it was designed to accomplish. Mrs. Wirz was not again allowed to visit her husband in his cell.