

of the findings and sentence, and the final preparations for the execution were entered upon. "The clergy took leave of the criminal, he previously passing the crucifix to his lips. Major Russell said to him: "Captain Wirz have you anything to say?"—Wirz replied: "No, sir; only that I am innocent, and will die like a man; my hopes being in the future." "I go before my God, the Almighty God, and He will judge between me and you." Major Russell remarked that he hoped he would not blame him; to which Wirz replied that he did not; that he was doing only his duty. To Capt. Walbridge he remarked, "Well, Captain, good-bye; I thank you and the other officers of the prison, for I have been well treated.

THE GUARD.

At 9 A. M. this morning, the guard was drawn up about the gallows, composed as follows: 150 men of the 214th Pennsylvania, Major W. M. Worrall; 60 men of the 195 Pennsylvania, Captain E. H. Foust; detachments of the 18th, 24th, 9th, 12th, and 14th V. R. C., the whole under the command of Provost Marshal Russell.

SCENES IN THE CELL.

A few minutes past ten o'clock Major Russell, Provost Marshal, and Captain Walbridge, commanding the prison, entered the room of Wirz, when Major R. informed him that he must prepare for the scaffold. He received Major Russell with great ease and urbanity, rising to his feet in so doing. He had been, up to this time, engaged with Rev. Father Boyle, who had been with him from 8 o'clock this morning, and Rev. Father Wiget. He immediately complied with the request to make ready and put himself in position for the black gown to be placed upon him, remarking that he hoped he would "soon have a white gown."

When all was ready, the solemn procession started from the room, Major Russell preceding it; after which came the prisoner, walking with a firm step, between his spiritual advisers, surrounded by a guard.

THE CLOSING SCENE.

While this took place, his legs were being strapped together and his arms pinioned behind him. Major Russell and the others then stepped off the drop, the bolts were pulled out, and the fatal spring was touched at exactly 10.30 o'clock, when the drop fell with a "thug," and the criminal was left dangling in the air. The legs were drawn up slightly several times, and the shoulders shrugged a little, but in about four minutes the body ceased to sway, and all was still. When the body fell, a shout with cheers, went up from the crowd of spectators outside.

The body was allowed to hang fifteen minutes, when it was lowered and placed on a stretcher, and carried to the hospital, where it was examined by Dr. C. M. Ford, surgeon of the prison, Dr. Ensign, 18th V. R., and Drs. Notson and Bliss, who found that his neck had been broken. His body will be placed in a coffin furnished by the Government, and delivered to Rev. Father Boyle, who received from the prisoner his dying requests as to the disposition of his remains.

The executioner upon the occasion was Sylvester Ballou, an United States military detective on duty at the headquarters department of Washington.

THE LAST LETTER OF WIRZ.

The following letter was written by Wirz before mounting the gallows:

OLD CAPITOL PRISON, Nov. 10, 1865.—*Mr. Schade*—Dear Sir: It is no doubt the last time that I address myself to you. What I have said to you often and often I repeat. Accept my thanks, my sincere, heartfelt thanks, for all you have done for me. May God reward you; I cannot.—Still I have something more to ask of you, and I am confident that you will not refuse to receive my dying request. Please help my poor family—my dear wife and children.—War, cruel war, has swept everything from me, and to-day my wife, my children are beggars. My life is demanded as an atonement. I am willing to give it, and I hope that after awhile I will be judged differently from what I am now. If any one ought to come to the relief of my family it is the people of the South, for whose sake I have sacrificed all. I know you will excuse me for my troubling you again.

Farewell, dear sir, may God bless you.

Your thankful H. WIRZ.

EXECUTION OF WIRZ.

*Last Hours of the Condemned Man—He Protests His Innocence—Conduct on the Gallows—Reading the Death Warrant—Scenes at the Scaffold.*

Henry Wirz, condemned by the military commission in Washington, for his connection with the cruelties inflicted upon Union prisoners at the Andersonville prison, in Georgia, was hung in the yard of the Old Capital prison at 10½ o'clock Friday morning, in the presence of a military guard, and about two hundred citizens, in addition to many others who secured prominent positions on horses. The Washington papers give the following particulars of the last hours of the condemned, and his execution:

WIRZ PREPARING FOR HIS END.

Yesterday and last night, Wirz busied himself in making preparations for his approaching end, writing letters and received the ministrations of his spiritual advisers, Fathers Boyle and Whelan. He passed the night composedly and exhibited in all his last hours remarkable coolness. This morning at an early hour he received the consolations of religion at the hands of Fathers Boyle and Weichert. He requested his spiritual advisers to send what books there remained in his cell to his children. A parcel of letters and papers that were left in his cell were taken in charge by one of his spiritual advisers, (Father Boyle,) and it is understood they will be sent to his family.

SCENES ON THE SCAFFOLD.

At ten minutes past ten A. M., the yard door of the prison was opened, and the criminal was ushered forth to the gallows. Major Russell, provost marshal, walked in front, followed by the prisoner, between Rev. Fathers Boyle and Wiget, followed by Captain G. R. Walbridge, commanding the prison. Wirz mounted to the scaffold with a quick step, assisting himself slightly with his left hand, his right hand being in a sling. He took a seat on a small stool, in the rear of the drop and immediately under the graping noose in waiting for him. Father Boyle stooped over the criminal, reciting to him the Catholic death service.—Wirz was noticed to make the responses with some emphasis, frequently nodding his head, and also occasionally shaking it, as if answering negatively to some question. He wore a black gown, but no covering upon his head, and his hair was lifted over his eyes occasionally by the breeze. The walls of the prison, the adjoining house-tops, and the trees in the street and the Capital grounds were loaded with spectators, who indulged in a variety of outcries, not calculated to inspire the criminal in his last moments. In one instance Wirz turned quickly, and with a sort of defiant look in the direction from which some groans and calls of "Hang the scoundrel," reached his ears. Afterwards he gave a cool, comprehensive look towards the whole surroundings of prison yard, spectators, fellow-prisoners looking out at the windows, gallows, &c.

THE DEATH SENTENCE.

Major G. B. Russell, Provost Marshal of the District of Columbia, advanced to the front of the platform, and proceeded to read, in a clear distinct voice, the findings of the court, and the death sentence. He was charged and convicted of combining, confederating, and conspiring with Jefferson Davis, James A. Seddon, Howell Cobb, John H. Winder, Richard B. Wiader, Isaiah H. White, W. S. Winder, W. Shelby Reed, R. R. Stevenson, S. P. Moore, — Kerr, late hospital steward at Andersonville, Jas. Duncan, Wesley W. Turner, Benjamin Harris, and others whose names are unknown, and who were then engaged in armed rebellion against the United States, maliciously, traitorously, and in violation of the laws of war, to impair and injure the health and destroy the lives, by subjecting to torture and great suffering, by confining in unhealthy and unwholesome quarters, by exposing to the inclemency of winter, and to the dews and burning sun of summer, by compelling the use of impure water, unwholesome food, of large numbers of Federal prisoners, to wit: The number of about 45,000, held as prisoners of war at Andersonville, within the lines of the so-called Confederate States, on or before the 27th of March, and at divers times between that day and 10th day of April, 1865, to the end that the armies of the United States might be weakened and impaired, and that the insurgents engaged in armed rebellion against the United States might be aided and comforted, &c.

The order also states that the prisoner was found guilty of the second charge, namely: Murder in violation of the laws and customs of war; and guilty of all the specifications excepting the fourth, tenth and thirteenth, which they set forth that he killed a prisoner by shooting him with a revolver; that he ordered a sentinel to fire upon another with a revolver, and that he beat another with a revolver so that he died.

The order concludes as follows:

"Sentence.—And the Court do therefore sentence him, Henry Wirz, to be hanged by the neck till he be dead, at such time and place as the President of the United States may direct, two-thirds of the members of the Court concurring therein. And the Court also find the prisoner, Henry Wirz, guilty of having caused the death, in the manner as alleged in specification No. 11 of charge 2, by means of dogs, of three prisoners of war, in his custody, and soldiers of the United States, one occurring on or about the 15th day of May, 1864; another occurring on or about the 11th day of July, 1864; another occurring on or about the 1st day of September, 1864, but which finding, as here expressed, is not and did not enter into the sentence of the Court as before given."

This sentence bore the approval of President Johnson, with orders to carry it into effect.

WIRZ PROTESTS HIS INNOCENCE.

At twenty-five minutes past 10, Major Russell concluded the reading