

Franz Muller.

expectation. The mouths of the myriad of grimy, yellow faces were open, and all the thousands of eyes were upturned upon the spot where I stood with an intentness that was more appalling to me than the methodical movements of Calcraft and the unimpassioned attitude of Müller. The contrast was marvellous. The hangman was curiously busy. He passed a strap round Müller's legs and huckled it; he put the rope round Müller's neck, and tightened the slip knot just under his right ear; he slipped a noose at the other end of the rope over an iron hook depending from the crossbeam of the scaffold, and last of all he pulled a dirty yellow hag over the man's head to his chin. He then stood aside, and the conversation about which all the dispute has arisen commenced between Dr. Cappel and Müller. The minister stood close to Müller, with his feet on the very edge of the drop; I stood just behind him, but nearer the outside of the scaffold. The conversation was hurried. On Dr. Cappel's part it was earnest and excited, but Müller preserved the same stolid, unimpassioned manner that had characterised his attitude throughout. Calcraft, I noticed, disappeared as soon as they began to speak, and I can see Dr. Cappel now leaning forward, with both hands extended, as if to draw Müller's words to him as the drop fell and Müller disappeared. Calcraft had done his work well. One strong convulsion and all was over. But Dr. Cappel didn't stay to see this. As soon as he recovered from the surprise and alarm caused by the unexpected fall of the drop he dashed down the stairs with his hands aloft, and shouting as he ran, "Confessed, confessed, thank God!" After one more look at the crowd, now a roaring tumult swaying to and fro, I followed close at his heels, and the whole company pressed round him in the chaplain's room, where he told the story of Müller's last words. Three times he repeated the story within ten minutes of the scene on the scaffold, and each time he told it I took down his words, not partly, but wholly and completely, and the story did not vary. I take it that no evidence can be clearer of what Müller said than what was thrice repeated, by the only man who heard him, immediately after he did hear him. And what Dr. Cappel said was this—

"When he was standing on the drop, and all was ready, I said, 'In a few moments you will stand before God. I ask you again, and for the last time, are you innocent of this crime?'

"He said, 'I am innocent.'

"I said, 'You are innocent!'

"And he said, 'Yes, I am innocent; God knows what I have done.'

"I said this—'God knows what you have done, but knows He that you have done this particular deed!'