

JUSTICE IS FINALLY METED OUT.

Murderer Geo. O'Brien Suffers the Full Penalty of the Law — Foul Murder Perpetrated on Christmas Day, 1899, Are at Length Avenged—O'Brien's Life Pays the Forfeit for His Crimes—The Scaffold Upon Which the Execution Took Place Located in the Prison Yard—Had Been Previously Tested—The Execution in All Its Details.

At 7:35 this morning the trap was sprung which launched George O'Brien into eternity. The condemned man maintained his innocence to the last, and went to his death cursing all who had any part in his trial or execution.

Contrary to expectations George O'Brien spent his last night on earth in perfect quietness. Representatives of the press were admitted to his cell at 9 o'clock in the evening and they were the last visitors he had. At 10 o'clock he had composed himself for the night and within a half an hour was asleep. His slumbers during the night were fitful and he tossed about upon his blankets scattered upon the floor of his cell, at times seeming to awake but not wholly regaining consciousness. He troubled his guards but once during the night, and then it was to ask for a drink of water.

In the course of the interview mentioned, nothing in the way of a confession so eagerly sought was given. On the contrary, he maintained time and again his innocence and insisted with all the fervor at his command, that he was being punished for the sins of another.

It seemed much perturbed at the sheriff having refused him the privilege of swearing to the document had dictated to Mr. Bleecker yesterday, and stated as he stood on the trap today with the noose about his neck and at the very verge of the grave, he impudently asked the sheriff as a last favor to be permitted to make oath as to the truthfulness of his statement. He desired as the last act of his life to be allowed on the scaffold to kiss the Bible in solemn affirmation of his innocence.

Another thing which troubled O'Brien greatly was his place of burial. With great vehemence he insisted that the ground within the jail enclosure where his grave had been dug had been continuously defiled by the prisoners for the past two years; he objected most strenuously to being laid to rest in such soil. To one of his interviewers he begged and pleaded that he see to it that he was interred in the same spot where the Indians are buried.

Not a word was uttered concerning the doings on Christmas day, 1899, although he seemed to be willing to be interviewed, and inquired of the news paper men if they had any questions to ask him. They on their part asked him if he had any further statement to make to the public and he replied that he had not.

Throughout the entire interview, lasting fully a half hour, O'Brien remained on the blankets and spoke as intelligently and rationally as any sane man in Dawson. His voice was low, and somewhat inclined to be hoarse, but his words were enunciated distinctly in a well modulated tone.

He did not once refer to the personification of the Virgin Mary, nor the crimes he has placed upon those whom he holds responsible for the taking of his life. At the parting he said: "Goodnight" rather cheerily and the press representatives replied: "Goodnight, O'Brien; we'll see you tomorrow."

The visit, the last which he will ever receive from a newspaper man was more in the nature of a call upon a sick man rather than to receive the last message of one who had but a few hours to live.

At 5:30 the first bearer of a pass appeared in the jail yard. He had lost his "open sesame" to the gratesome night and was in distress lest the sheriff might not issue a duplicate. Six o'clock came and O'Brien was

still sleeping, nor were his slumbers disturbed until the guard of the day was being changed. Then he awoke—awoke to the realization that he had but two short hours yet to live.

At 6:30 a number of the curious had begun congregating on the sidewalk about the jail and 15 minutes later an armed patrol was established on three sides of the prison and all who were inclined to loiter were firmly requested to "move on."

Within a few moments O'Brien arose from his bed, dressed himself and almost immediately began raving in the manner similar to that employed several weeks ago. His cries were loud and lusty and were easily heard on the street, but in a short time he relapsed into silence. Shortly after 7 o'clock those who had passes had assembled in the jail yard and 7:15 they were admitted to the scaffold. There had been nearly 100 tickets issued, but a guard at the stairway admitted only the 35 who first appeared, the others being compelled to remain beneath.

At 7:20 Sheriff Eilbeck in company with officials and representatives of each of the Dawson papers repaired to O'Brien's cell. The prisoner was released from his chains and brought out in the corridor. No sooner did he view the small crowd assembled than he began his sacrilegious recriminations. His voice was strong and betrayed not the slightest sign of fear or emotion.

"What do you want with me now?" he asked of the sheriff. "I suppose you want to torture me some more do you?" The sheriff replied in a calm tone that he wished to read his death warrant.

"Take it away," he said, "I don't care to hear it. I have the power to place a curse upon you all; I am the Virgin Mary and I have placed my curse upon those five men. You are sending me to everlasting hell fire and I shall send you there. Go on and kill me, torture me if you like, but you shall not escape my curse."

At 7:45 it was generally remarked by the crowd in the jail yard who had obtained ticket of admission that the Rev. Father Gendreau had not arrived. O'Brien had spent his last night without the consolations of religion, and it seemed likely that he would go to his end in that frame of mind.

Seeing the futility of trying to read the death warrant the sheriff announced that it could be considered as having been read and at a signal the hangman, his features hidden beneath a black mask, appeared with four broad straps. Two of these were used to strap his arms to his body, one of these at the elbows and one at the waist. While the hangman was making his preparations and placing the black cap on the head of the guilty wretch, O'Brien engaged in a ceaseless flow of bitter vituperations. The only ones present in whom he had any confidence or showed the slightest interest were Constables Jack Connor and Assistant Provost Burke, the former one of the death watch during the past two

months. To him O'Brien turned and in beseeching tones begged him not to allow them to cut up his body. Burke was likewise appealed to prevent his burial in the jail enclosure. When all was ready the march to the scaffold was begun, the guards leading, followed by O'Brien with a guard on either side, then the hangman, the sheriff and the reporters.

The condemned man walked with a firm step, never faltering an instant, but talking constantly and laying his curses right and left. He without assistance took his position on the trap, where his legs were pinioned at the knees and ankles. Deftly the hangman passed the rope around his neck, measuring at a glance the length requisite and in an instant he had the noose made, the knot at the back of O'Brien's head. As he was about to pull the cap over his head the sheriff stopped him and said:

"George O'Brien, you are about to enter the presence of your God, and I ask you now and the last time to confess your crimes."

It is a duty you owe to the judge, the jury and the police and every one in this community to tell how you murdered those poor boys on that Christmas day. Are you man enough to do it?"

The silence was so intense as to be impressive, every nerve of those present being strained to the utmost, for it was thought that if a confession was to be had at all, that was the time it certainly would be given. O'Brien never quavered an iota, but looking the sheriff in the eye he said, in a voice perfectly calm:

"Do you want to hear the truth. I did not murder those men." "Who did murder them, then?" asked the sheriff.

"I do not know, nor do I know anything about it." The hangman was bidden to do his

duty and at once pulled down the black cap, shutting out forever the light from George O'Brien's eyes. He stepped back off the trap, there was a moment of suspense and as the sheriff snapped his fingers, the lever was pulled aside, the yawning jaws of the trap sprang open and at 7:35 the most notorious criminal in years was launched into eternity. He never uttered another sound, never moved a muscle. A nine-foot drop was given him and it is thought the fall dislocated his neck. The body was allowed to hang 15 minutes, when it was examined by Police Surgeon Thompson by means of a phonoscope and pronounced dead. The coffin was carried to a convenient place and at 7:49 the corpse was lowered into its last resting place. In removing the rope it was found necessary to cut it, so tightly was the knot drawn.

The coroner's jury immediately viewed the body and rendered a verdict that the deceased had come to his death by being hanged by the neck until he was dead.

Silently the crowd wended its way out onto the street and thus was the curtain rung down on the last act of the most frightful tragedy of modern times.

Whatever may be said of George O'Brien, it must be admitted he went to his fate with a calm indifference difficult to contemplate. As he walked up the stairway he asked one of his guards in a most matter of fact way: "How long did it take the other poor fellows to die?"

He was clad in blue shirt, blue overalls, with suspenders and moccasins upon his feet. He died as he lived, fearing neither God, man nor the devil, an enemy to mankind and a foe to all who crossed his path.

THE GALLIWS. Grim and silent, straddled by a 15-foot wall of unplanned boards stood

the gallows awaiting its victim. From the outside nothing could be seen which would indicate that the vengeance of the law was being meted out to a cowering wretch within. There was a subdued hush, a perceptible high tension apparent in every face save in the masked visage of him whose gruesome task it was to commit the soul of O'Brien to its Maker. The instrument of death was practically the same as that from which King so stoically went to his doom. The beam to which the rope was attached, a well seasoned 8x8 stick, and the trap and its mechanism had seen like service before. The four corners of the beam for a space of two inches were well rounded off so as to prevent any cutting of the two coils of the rope which encircled it. Of the trap, the last spot from which O'Brien viewed the sunshine of Heaven, that Heaven against which he had so grievously sinned, little need be said. It was the same kind that is used in every legal execution; merely double doors five feet square when closed, which open from below. When closed, a clip of iron on either side which projects underneath it holds the doors in position.

Connecting with these clips by a simple mechanism is a lever which passes up through the floor to a height convenient to a man's hand when standing. It is here at this lever that the hangman stood awaiting the prearranged signal from the sheriff. At the proper time he grasps the lever, moves the top of it less than a foot, the clips are withdrawn, the doors fly apart, being held in their position when open by weights, and whoever or whatever may have stood a moment before in security is precipitated to the depths below. In the northwest corner of the scaffold stood an officer with the halyards in his hands running to a small flagstaff surmounting the stockade. At the instant the trap was sprung a small black flag was hoisted to the breeze, it remaining on high until the body was cut down.

The scaffold proper is about ten feet above the ground, the space it occupies being 16x24 in size. Leading from the outer enclosure to the upper portion is a covered stairway. Leading to the scaffold and south of it is a space equally as large as the platform which accommodated those who did not care to witness the painful preliminaries. The view of the condemned man as he stood with the noose about his neck was hidden from those below, nor could they see any part of the execution until the body had passed through the opening and was writing in its last convulsive death struggles.

O'BRIEN'S STATEMENT.

Yesterday afternoon Attorney Bleecker in response to a request of O'Brien called at the jail and took down the following statement:

Statement of George O'Brien to Henry Bleecker, his advocate, August 22, 1901: I deny having murdered F. W. Clayton, Lynn Wallace Relfe or one Olsen, as charged against me and for one of which murders I am condemned to death. My defense as written by me to be published, is true in all particulars. I make this declaration as my last statement on the day previous to the day appointed for my execution and protest with all my power that I am innocent of the crimes charged against me and that I am to suffer for the deeds of others.

GEORGE O'BRIEN. George H. Tweedy, Jno. A. Connor, Witnesses.



GEORGE O'BRIEN, THE MAN WHO WAS EXECUTED. (Sketched From Life.)

DISASTER

the Temporary land, Ohio—A sulted From A List of

peered down with ears intent, sounds ceased again. The mouth of the shaft it was traced and the iron work was

The water that was thrown need to steam at once. After a deluge of water had down on the smoldering shaft, was heard from the bottom, for help. A line was thrown the shaft and slowly and carefully man at the bottom was raised. His face covered with slime, his eyes and hearing chest told of or he had gone through during he had spent in the tunnel. William Curry, of Canton, as he could gasp, Curry said: "I're all at the bottom of the hurry up."

ck succession seven others were up from the foul and stifling. They were in a pitiable condition reported that two men ing unconscious at the bottom. A workman volunteered to these men and he was quickly into the shaft, and in a few s the unconscious men were up more dead than alive. and possibly two men are sup- lying dead in the tunnel, away from the shaft to be re-

this afternoon it became pos- sible that there men are still tunnel. Their names are Adam and Eugene and Victor Kauff- later is known to be dead other two could scarcely have the dead air all these hours. attempts were made to reach at the rescuers were driven out.

Sunday Work. case of Sabbath violation. Manager Miner of the N. was on trial before Magis- Wroughton this afternoon. idence of three carpenters, whom was the foreman who arge of the work was taken prosecution. The evidence that the work had been that date as charged but in set up was the work ne under the greatest neces- the shelling which was be- laced; was unstable and was easing source of danger to rks, and that had the work one on any other date it have been not only a great ore expensive but would ve been of serious interfer- the business of the con- d a great inconvenience to ling public and especially to ers who would have been ed to lose valuable time to have their orders filled. e was postponed until Mon- st.

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