

this cord releases the weight which falls and jerks the condemned upward, four feet. At 8:15

THE HANGMAN,

having completed his preparations outside, came in a long black Prince Albert coat and removed the night guard Midgley. He had a hard look about his mouth but a telltale moistness about the eyes. He climbed the stairs and stood on the gallery beside Birchall's corridor door. There an old soldier stood gloomy and sorrowful until the sad procession passed out and down the spiral steps. At 8:23 the executioner was beckoned to go up. He had been walking around the rotunda, holding in his hands the straps with which to tie Birchall's arms, waiting for the signal. He put behind his back and partly under the skirt of his coat the russet colored straps, and went upstairs. A minute or two he took to strap the prisoner's arms behind his back and then the awful march to death began at 8:25. First came the rural Dean, Wade, in surplice, and reading the Church of England service for the dead. Behind him came Dr. Chamberlain, followed by A. D. Stewart and Deputy Sheriff Perry. The prisoner came next, deathly pale, but resolute, his jaws locked with

THE FIXITY OF DEATH.

His steps were steady. His jet black hair and moustache made the pallor of the face like marble. He was dressed in dark colored tweed clothes white flannel shirt with a black bow at collar, and light patent leather shoes. He looked so young, and there was such an expression of unmovable resolution and undaunted courage, that the men who saw him and knew him worthy of death in the eye of the law forgot that he had shot a friend in the back, in a lonely swamp. The faces of half of the men there were as white almost as that of the doomed man. At the foot of the spiral staircase the procession formed and his friend Weetham walked on one side of him with the day guard George Perry on the other. Jailor Cameron followed them after the hangman and the aged sheriff, supported to the door of the corridor overlooking the west yard.

THE MARCH

was slow along the corridor and out into the yard. Weetham walked close by and held one of Birchall's hands in his, with all the assurance of a friend's clasp. The principal actors in the tragedy stopped with the charge fifteen feet from the gallows and the solemn tones of the anglican service thrilled every one there with a horror, that hardly let them realize the tremendous importance of that in which they were taking part. They felt an overpowering pity for the black haired, whited face young man standing on the threshold of eternity. His eyes had not the trace of frivolity that lightened his imprisonment. As he stood listening to the low toned priest his eyes were fixed on the blue sky over to the north. There was not a haunted look nor

was there any fear in his eyes but a fixed purpose that seemed to consume his reason. It is not possible to imagine the expression of his face. He was living a lifetime in that hour and there was no one there but would have spared the strain of his terrible ordeal. It was not despair, but he had strung the whole being up to die game. At the words

"DUST TO DUST"

in the service, Birchall stepped firmly forward; he took his place under the scaffold with his face to the south and turned up slightly. He took Weetham's hand in his and the friends kissed under the gallows. The executioner put a strap around the prisoner's legs just above the knees, when the clergyman took Birchall's hand and kissed it. The suspense was terrible on the witnesses. No human knowledge can say how terrible it was to the man standing alone there on the green sward. As the priest entered upon the Lord's Prayer, the executioner put a black cap over the head of the doomed man and adjusted the noose about the neck. Birchall had declared that he would say nothing at the scaffold and the witnesses did not expect he would. His silence seemed to be the intensity of his purpose. He did not say one word after leaving the cell, except it might have been to mutter a word to Weetham or Wade when he

BADE THEM GOOD BYE

with a kiss. At 8:27, six minutes after the procession had started from the corridor, at the words: "Deliver us from evil," a signal was given and a quick pull on the small rope by the executioner who stood behind the law's victim, released the immense weight. It dropped with the rapidity of thought, and sank six or eight inches in the ground by force of its weight. Birchall had been placed close to one of the uprights and the jerk of the noose drew his body first obliquely, then up. The body was jerked up into the air about five feet and then fell to within two feet from the ground. The convulsions commenced half a minute later, but were not at all violent, more resembling heavy breathing with a slight twitching of the hands and legs. At 8:30½ the convulsions had ceased. At 8:35 Dr. Chamberlain declared life extinct. He said the neck had been broken.

Mrs. Birchall remained in the cell with her husband till 1 o'clock this morning, when she was led away weeping. Birchall slept little, but his demeanor during the night remained unchanged.

He had an impression that some one would publish a bogus confession as by him, so he prepared the following as his final statement:

WOODSTOCK JAIL, Nov. 10, 1890.

"All rights reserved."

If after my death there shall appear in the press or in any other manner, whatsoever, any confession, that I had any hand in the murder of D. C. Benwell, or any personal knowledge of said murder,

with intent or malice aforethought, or any personal connection with the murder on the 11th of February or other days, or any knowledge that any such murder was likely to be committed, or any statement, further than any that I may have made public previous to this date, I hand this statement to the care of George Perry, of Woodstock, Ontario, that he may know that any confessions or partial confessions are entirely fictitious and were in no way ever written by me. Neither have they been demanded from me in any form whatsoever to any person, and the whole is fictitious and without a word of truth. This likewise applies to my story in the *Mail* in which I have made no such confession or partial confession. This holds good throughout.

(Signed) REG. BIRCHALL.

The postmortem examination showed death caused by strangulation. The body will be buried in the jail yard.

THE NORTH POLE EXPEDITION

LONDON, Nov. 12.—Dr. Nansen, who crossed Greenland a couple of years ago, has been writing further details of his plans for reaching the North Pole, which he will start to carry out in the spring of 1892. He says he expects to be able to pass through Behring Strait in June. He anticipates little difficulty in getting his small vessel as far west as the new Siberian Island. He believes that August or the beginning of September will be the most favorable time for pushing north. He intends to use a small captive balloon, in which he can ascend a hundred feet or so for the purpose of studying the condition of things for a large distance around him. He hopes to get into loose ice and make the journey rapidly, at least as far north as Bennett Island. When he reaches the permanent ice-gap he will simply look for the best place to enter it and will then wait for the ice to carry him whither it will. He thinks the chances are good that he will be carried across the pole or very near it, and into the sea between Spitzbergen and Greenland. If it is summer when he arrives he will probably get into open water near a latitude of 80 degrees north. If it is winter, however, he is likely to drift south along the east coast of Greenland and come out somewhere the following summer.

If the ice floes crush his ship, Dr. Nansen thinks there is still an excellent chance that he will get through all right. His party, in that event, will live on ice floes, instead of in the cabin on shipboard. They will have warm tents, made of a double thickness of canvas or similar stuff, well filled with reindeer hair. Such tents will be very warm, and also very light. It is well known that several ship parties, including the *Pansa* crew and a part of the crew from the American exploring vessel *Polaris*, drifted hundreds of miles on ice and finally reached a place of safety.