

ANDERSONVILLE.

THE CASE OF WIRZ.

His Approaching Execution.

Moral and Physical Condition of the Prisoner.

HE INDULGES IN LETTER WRITING.

Efforts of Counsel in His Behalf.

HIS AUTOBIOGRAPHY.

Special Dispatch to The N. Y. Tribune.

WASHINGTON, Wednesday, Nov. 8, 1865.

The busy hammers of workmen have been ringing all day long in the construction of the gallows upon which Henry Wirz, ex Rebel butcher of defenseless Union prisoners, is to expiate his revolting crimes on Friday next. The arrangements for the execution are going on under the superintendence of Major Russell, Provost-Marshal of the District, who has the issuing of passes to a limited number of the curious multitude who all day long have thronged his office. The press will be liberally supplied with tickets of admission, and but few of those who desire to be present out of a feeling of curiosity will be admitted.

Mr. Schade, the prisoner's counsel during his trial, to his credit be it said, is untiring in his efforts in behalf of Wirz, and to-day again brought the President for his pardon. He carried with him six affidavits from former Union prisoners impeaching the testimony of the witness claiming to be the grandson of Gen. Lafayette, and asserting that he is a German Jew from New-York. This witness, it will be remembered, swore positively that he saw the prisoner murder one of our men in the stockade.

Wirz still maintains an air of *sang froid* and does not seem to fear in the least the physical pain of death. He will die, he says, with but two regrets—one because of the ignominy which will recoil upon his relatives and friends—and the other because he fears that he will die with a feeling of resentment against his so-called persecutors.

The wound on his arm still continues painful, requiring surgical attention, and last night he slept but little, attributing it, however, not to the dread of his rapidly approaching doom, but simply to the painfulness of his arm.

He avers that he does not feel the slightest resentment against the President or the court martial which convicted him, but finds it at times almost impossible to repress similar feelings toward the witnesses who testified against him.

He is more diligent than formerly in looking after his religious interests, and has finally discarded German novels for books of a more serious nature. He complains of the injustice of the Government in not staying the proceedings of the court until 14 of his most important witnesses could reach here, and says their evidence would have materially modified the conclusion of the court.

He emphatically denies the recently published statement that he was formerly a railroad agent in Switzerland, and was discharged for fraud, and asserts positively that when he left that country no railroads were in operation there. He claims the title of M. D., having, he says, graduated at a Medical College in Switzerland, and also received a diploma in this country. He is still in receipt of letters from all parts of the country some of a sympathizing and others of a denunciatory character. Among the latter recently received, was one from New-York, in which the writer, after saying that he considered him the greatest criminal that ever cursed earth, urged him to prepare himself for death. He closed by quoting several passages of Scripture, not of a very consolatory character. To this letter Wirz thought proper to reply yesterday, telling the writer that, as a specimen of presumption and impudence, his letter was unequalled. After referring breezily to the evidence in his case, Wirz says:

In conclusion my dear sir, let me take the liberty to follow your example and quote Scripture. The passage to which I would especially commend your attention is this: "Judge not that ye be not judged."

This alone exhibits the extreme nervous irritability of the prisoner. He denies that there is a want of affection between himself and wife, and says that when she hears of the paragraph recently published relative to her feeling toward him, it will cause her much pain. He asserts that she left for Georgia simply to look after her children who had been left unprotected by the decease of their temporary guardian. He had intended to pray the President for a respite of a few days to enable his wife to reach here previous to his execution, but has finally reconsidered his determination.

The following brief sketch of the career of Henry Wirz, now under sentence of death for the murder of Union prisoners at Andersonville, may be interesting to the public. It was received from his own lips by a gentleman who visited him to-day, and, in point of accuracy, is perfect:

"I was born in Zurich, Switzerland; came to the United States in 1842, at which time I was unable to speak English. I tried to obtain a position as assistant to some physician, but failed. Landed in New-York City; afterward went to Connecticut, from which State I went to Lawrence, Mass., where I was engaged in a shawl factory. After remaining there for several years, went to Kentucky, where I married. I afterward went to Philadelphia, and thence to a plantation in Louisiana, where I was employed as a physician. I remained there until the breaking out of the war, when I enlisted in an independent company as private; was afterward made Clerk of the Richmond prisons. I was soon after made Captain and Assistant Adj. General on Gen. Winder's Staff, was wounded at Fair Oaks (the wound from which he now suffers); was then made Provost-Marshal of Manchester, Va.; was then sent on an inspecting tour of the prisons in the South.

"In 1863 I went to Europe for the benefit of my health, where I remained three or four months, on my return I was put in charge of Andersonville, Ga., until the Confederacy burst up. I admit that prisoners were brutally treated, but deny that I am the guilty party; I have never shot a man in my life."

Gen. Gardner, the photographer, will be present at the execution and take a number of pictures illustrating the scene.

To the Associated Press.

WASHINGTON, Wednesday, Nov. 8, 1865.

Louis Schade, esq., counsel for Capt. Wirz, had an interview with the President to-day, in accordance with a previous arrangement, for the purpose of asking for a commutation of the sentence. He mentioned, as one of the reasons for his request, that the prisoner was very feeble, and the appearances indicated that he would not live six months longer, therefore the country could well afford to let him die six months later without hanging him. The President being surrounded by a large number of visitors, Mr. Schade did not consider it proper to ask for a direct answer, thinking it possible that some additional facts might come to the knowledge of the President before Friday, which might induce him to extend the desired Executive clemency. He left with the President, however, a short statement with the reasons on which he based the application. The President received the paper and promised to examine it.

Wirz remarked to his counsel to-day that he was not very well in body and quite feeble. He therefore feared that he could not walk to the place of execution with a steady step and that this might be interpreted as a sign of fear and guilt. When this morning he saw workmen building the gallows it astonished him. He said that he did not shudder; but this was owing to the fact that he felt innocent of the crimes with which he was charged.