

Daily Evening Bulletin

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DOUBLE SHEET, THREE CENTS.

EXTRA.

PROBST!



THE GALLOWS GETS ITS DUE.

THE EXECUTION THIS MORNING.

THE SCENES IN THE PRISON.

HOW THE CONDEMNED MAN BEHAVED.

HIS LAST HOURS ON EARTH.

His Farewell Letter, Written Yesterday.

The Crowd Excluded.

HISTORY OF THE DEARING MURDER.

Original Anecdotes of Probst.

Copy of the First Letter to His Parents.

The dread sentence of the law was executed upon Anton Probst, this morning, for the murder of the Dearing family in April last.

Sheriff Howell early determined to make the solemn occasion accord strictly with the spirit, as well as with the letter of the law, and to that end he confined the number of witnesses of the execution to those persons whose presence were imperatively necessary, absolutely refusing to yield one iota of this determination, even though undergoing a constant pressure from influential parties.

At half-past 9 o'clock this morning the Sheriff, a few of his special deputies, his jury, his legal advisers, and seven representatives of the newspaper press, met by previous private arrangement, at the Assembly Building, and taking a special car, at 9-45 o'clock, on the Tenth street railway, the entire party was soon within the walls of Moyamensing Prison.

The Sheriff in the Prison.

A little after 10 o'clock the Sheriff and his party reached the prison, and they were admitted into the Debtor's apartment from thence they proceeded to the prison in regular order.

The roll of the jury was called, and all having answered to their names, Charles Gilpin, Esq., the Solicitor of the Sheriff, proceeded to read the warrant for the execution of the prisoner.

These preliminaries having been disposed of, the Sheriff sent word to the attending clergymen that he was in attendance for the purpose of performing his duty, and would await their pleasure and the convenience of the prisoner within the limits of his instructions from the Governor.

The response was that they were quite ready, and the Sheriff, accompanied by Mr. Perkins, the Superintendent of the prison, and a representative of the press, proceeded to the cell.

Probst was alone with his clerical advisers, and he had evidently been engaged in earnest devotion. He held a crucifix in his hands.

The Sheriff addressing the culprit said in substance, "Anton, I am here for the purpose of performing the unpleasant duty of executing the punishment which the law has imposed for the offence of which you have been convicted. Your excellent religious advisers inform me that you are quite ready."

To this Probst replied briefly: "That is so."

The Sheriff then motioned the party from

the cell, and, preceded by Messrs. Howell and Perkins, and followed by fathers Grundner and Carbon, Probst proceeded towards the place of execution.

He seemed perfectly resigned and evinced much firmness, when an incident that occurred just outside the cell door excited an emotion he had not before exhibited any evidence of.

The keeper who had had charge of him since his arrest, put out his hand, and said "Good-bye!" "Good-bye!" responded Probst, with a voice choked with emotion, and tears came into his eyes. The march to the scaffold was then resumed.

The prisoner wore no clothing except a coarse muslin shirt, a pair of coarse, grey prison pants, and a pair of brogans. He had neither coat, vest, hat, nor suspenders.

The attending clergymen had requested that, as they desired that Probst should carry a crucifix in his hand to the scaffold, the usual ceremony of pinning his arms in his cell should be dispensed with.

As the Sheriff had already determined to adopt the military mode of handcuffing the condemned behind his back, this request was complied with, and he was not thus manacled until after he had reached the gallows.

The march to the gallows was then taken up in the following order:

Order of the Procession.
Henry C. Howell, Esq., Sheriff.
Wm. B. Perkins, Superintendent of the Prison.
Clergy—Father Grundner.
ANTON PROBST.
Clergy—Father Carbon.
John P. O'Neil, Attorney of Prisoner.
Wm. B. Mann, District Attorney.
John A. Wolbert, Attorney of Prisoner.
H. Yale Smith, M. D., Physician of the Prison.
Charles Gilpin, Sheriff's Solicitor.
J. Eldon Salter, Assistant Solicitor.

SHERIFF'S JURY.
Wm. H. Kern, Robert P. King,
Geo. H. Roberts, A. J. Plomerfelt,
Samuel P. Hancock, John Thornley,
Spencer Roberts, Wm. Elliot,
Hiram Horner, Jas. V. Stokes,
Geo. J. McLeod, Alfred Taylor,
Notary Public—Samuel L. Clement.

REPRESENTATIVES OF THE PRESS.
Charles C. Wilson, Casper Souder, Jr.,
Wm. J. Jones, Charles Graffen,
Robert S. Davis, M. L. Simons,
H. Egle.

OFFICERS OF THE PRISON.
DEPUTY SHERIFFS.
W. R. Leeds, James Bain, Jr.,
Wm. Andrews, Samuel Daniels,
Henry J. McIntire, Joseph S. Allen,
Jos. Watts, John C. Smith,
Richard B. Ott.

During the march from one extremity of the prison yard to the other, the gallows being fully in view meanwhile, the clergymen were constantly exhorting the doomed man, and whispering words of religious comfort in his ears.

Probst meantime repeatedly clasped the crucifix to his breast and pressed it to his lips, and gave every evidence of religious fervor.

On the Scaffold.

Upon reaching the scaffold, Probst ascended the steps with entire firmness. There was no sign of defiance or bravado about his demeanor, but an appearance of constant pressure from influential parties.

The culprit was accompanied by his religious advisers, by the Sheriff, and by Mr. Perkins. Probst, plant as a child, took his place upon the drop, and knelt with the attendant priest; together they recited the acts of Faith, Hope, Charity, and Contrition; the Lord's Prayer, the Hail Mary, the Apostles' Creed, in the German language; the condemned man repeatedly kissing the crucifix which he held in his hands.

The trio then arose to their feet, and the Sheriff stepped forward and, having slipped on the handcuffs, proceeded to adjust the rope about the neck of the wretched man. His lips moved constantly, apparently in prayer, and his suffused eyes were turned to heaven.

A curious evidence of the German phlegm was afforded in the fact that, while in the midst of his religious fervor, he settled his head and neck to suit the fatal noose.

There was nothing but the placing of the white cap needed to complete the work of material preparation, and while this was being done the reverend gentlemen were whispering short prayers in the ears of the wretched man.

We watched the culprit closely at this dreadful moment. His shrouded face was turned heavenward, his limbs were planted firmly on the hollow floor, and but for the heaving of his chest there were no signs of agitation. But the breast did heave, and it told of the terrible struggle going on within.

Father Grundner stood upon the steps of the scaffold when all others had left the wretched man, and he continued to encourage him until the last moment.

At fifteen minutes before eleven, all the preliminaries having been arranged, Mr. Grundner gave the signal, and, the Sheriff pulling the cord attached to the prop, Anton Probst hung dangling betwixt heaven and earth.

The condemned man had a fall of about three feet, and his neck was probably

broken on the instant. There was a convulsive twitching of the hands and legs for a minute or two, and then all was over. The murder of eight innocent mortals had been avenged and the law had been justified.

After hanging until the death of the condemned man was clearly ascertained, the body was cut down and handed over to the medical faculty.

The Decorousness of the Execution.

The strict limitation placed by the Sheriff upon the number of persons who should be present at the dread scene, had the effect of producing a scene of almost unexampled decorum. Everything was done with entire decorousness, the Sheriff performing his entire duty with far more pain to himself than he had inflicted upon others by depriving them of the opportunity of gratifying a morbid curiosity.

The Crowd Outside.

Although there was nothing but stone walls to be seen, a considerable crowd gathered outside the prison. There was a strong force of police present and no disorder whatever occurred.

The Gallows.

The gallows was the same that was used in the execution of Langfeldt, the Skupinski brothers, Arthur Spring, Peter Mattocks and Thos. J. Armstrong. It is a very simple, but a most effective contrivance, the entire floor giving way in an instant upon the removal of a supporting prop.

The instrument of death was erected in the extreme northwestern part of the yard of the prison, at the end of the north corridor, on the convict side of the prison. Sheriff Howell chose this location for it in order to prevent the prisoners in the cells from witnessing the execution, and also to shut it out from a view from surrounding elevations. It was put up yesterday afternoon, and the blows struck by the workmen could be distinctly heard by the prisoner in his cell. A sound more gloomy and soul-depressing than the falling of the cloud upon the coffin-lid.

Probst's Last Hours on Earth.

During yesterday the Rev. A. M. Grundner, Pastor of the Church of St. Alphonsus, was in almost constant attendance upon the condemned man. He exhorted him earnestly to place his trust in his Redeemer, and the wretched criminal appeared to be sincerely devout and earnestly penitent.

Last evening the formal confession of Probst was received by Father Grundner, and absolution was given. Early this morning the same reverend gentleman was in attendance, together with Rev. Peter M. Carbon, Pastor of Trinity Church. The condemned man received the Communion this morning, fasting. The attending clergymen then engaged in prayer and exhortation with the prisoner, and continued these exercises until the arrival of Sheriff Howell.

Probst retired to his pallet at a seasonable hour last night, and appeared to sleep soundly. Perhaps he dreamed; perhaps he dreamed of his old home in Baden; of the old father and mother whose hearts he has crushed and whose heads he has bowed in grief; perhaps he dreamed of "Little Mary," the sister of whom he was so fond, and who had known him in more innocent and happier days.

But then, perhaps, he dreamed of his butchered victims, and saw the ghastly ghosts of the slaughtered family, from the strong father, the fond mother, "the stranger that was within their gates," on down to the little prattling babe, and then with his soul frozen with horror he awoke to chains, and grim bars and bolts, and to the avenging doom that was tracking close upon his heels and sure to overtake him before many hours had sped.

The words of Mrs. Heman's song of The Wakening, rush fresh to our memory in this connection:

"And some, in the gloomy convict cell,
To the dull deep note of the warning bell,
As if heavily calls them forth to die,
When the bright sun mounts in the laughing sky!"

The condemned man awoke about four o'clock this morning from a sound sleep. He ate a hearty breakfast, and seemed perfectly cheerful and resigned. We have already stated that he was engaged in religious exercises until the arrival of the Sheriff.

History of the Case.

The crime, or rather series of crimes, for which Anton Probst paid the forfeit of his life upon the gallows, stands foremost in atrocity in the annals of blood. Probst was a day laborer employed upon the farm of Christopher Dearing. The farm was in the "Neck," near Jones' lane, and about a quarter of a mile from the Point House road. It was in an out of the way location, with but very few houses in its immediate neighborhood. The family of Mr. Dearing consisted of himself, his wife, five children, the youngest a babe, and a bound boy named Cornelius Carey. One of the children was absent from home at the time of the murder.

On Wednesday, the 11th of April last, the attention of a man employed on a neighboring farm was directed to the fact that the horses and cattle of Mr. Dearing had not been seen out of the barn for several days. He went to the barn, fearing that something was wrong, but little suspecting the truth. Everywhere was silence; the house was

closed, and no sign of human life appeared. The barn was deserted, except by the poor animals tied in their stalls, nearly dead from thirst and hunger. To his horror the neighbor saw in a dark corner a human foot protruding from a heap of hay. He looked no further, but fled from the spot; rushed to give the alarm, and in half an hour had returned with others, and dragged from beneath the hay the mangled decomposing bodies of Christopher Dearing and his niece, Elizabeth Dolan. The bodies lay side by side, with their feet toward the door of the barn, and their heads not far from the aperture leading into the crib. The skulls of the victims were crushed in, evidently by heavy blows with an axe, and their throats were cut and mangled most horribly. It was, perhaps, half an hour before the bodies of Mrs. Dearing and her four little ones were found heaped together in the crib; a decomposing mass, covered with dirt and hay. They were not three feet distant from the place where Mr. Dearing and Elizabeth were discovered.

The house had evidently been ransacked in search of plunder, and the few valuables in it were carried off. Probst and the bound boy Carey were both missing, and it was at first thought the murder and robbery were the joint work of the two. On the following day the body of the poor boy was found concealed under the edge of a haystack which stood at a considerable distance from the house, and the horrid fracturing of the skull and the gashing of the throat told plainly that the bloody deed had been committed by the same criminal hand.

This made the list of victims eight, as follows:

Christopher Dearing,	aged 38 years
Julia Dearing,	" 45 "
Elizabeth Dolan,	" 25 "
John Dearing,	" 8 "
Thomas Dearing,	" 6 "
Anna Dearing,	" 4 "
Emily Dearing,	" 2 "
Cornelius Carey,	" 17 "

Mr. Dearing, as it was subsequently discovered, had left his family early on the morning of the previous Saturday, to go to the city to attend to some business; he was to meet his niece, Miss Dolan, at one of the steamboat wharves, and drive her to his home. He missed her, and had got within a short distance of his farm when he overtook her and carried her to his home, where they both shared the cruel fate that had already befallen the hapless wife and little ones.

It is not necessary for us to enlarge upon the fierce excitement that followed the discovery of the murder; and the prompt arrest of the criminal by the officers of the law, who were early upon his track, kept alive the feeling of the people. The suspected murderer was arrested on the evening of Thursday, April 12, and it was with great difficulty that he could be shielded from popular violence.

On the following day the criminal had an informal examination before Mayor McMichael, and he confessed to the killing of the boy Carey, and the sharing of the proceeds of the robbery of the victim; but he declared that all the other victims fell by the hands of an accomplice, named Jacob Gantner. The investigations made by the detectives proved the falsity of the story of an accomplice, several articles which he said Gantner had carried away having been traced directly to the custody of the prisoner.

On Saturday April 14th the funeral of the eight victims took place and caused a profound sensation in the city. On the 15th of the same month the grand jury found true bills against Probst for all the murders. On the 25th he was brought up for trial, Wm. B. Mann, Esq., conducting the case for the Commonwealth, and Messrs. John P. O'Neil and John A. Wolbert defending the prisoner, at the request of the Court. On the 25th he was found guilty of the murder of Christopher Dearing; on the first of May he was sentenced to death by Judge Allison; on the 9th of May his death warrant was read to him by Sheriff Howell, and the sentence of the law was executed this morning.

The excitement about the Court-house, the wild of the angry mob whenever sight could be obtained of the criminal, conspire to render the trial a most memorable one.



Probst's Confession.

The murderer made several confessions. On either, he made the same confession on different occasions, and he made one statement that was notoriously false. The latter we have already referred to. The truthful confession was first made to his religious attendant, Father Grundner, it was repeated to his counsel on the following day, and on the same day, May 7th, he made a full statement to the representatives of the press. The substance of this confession was, that his cupidity had been excited by seeing Mr. Dearing, who was a cattle dealer, counting large sums of money; he determined to rob him, and to the end, to first murder the family. He had first thought of killing them one by one as they came down stairs in the morning; but he finally adopted the expedient of getting them in separate places, killing them in detail, and then accomplishing his object of robbery. He first killed the boy Carey, near the hay-stack, then got Mrs. Dearing into the stable under pretence that a steer was sick; he killed her there, covered up the body and then got the children over one by one and killed them and concealed their bodies. He awaited the coming of Mr. Dearing, and was surprised to find him accompanied by Miss Dolan. The latter went into the house; Mr. Dearing got into the stable by the same expedient that had been practised upon the wife, and there he was killed, and Miss Dolan was tempted into the slaughter-pen by the same means and the grim work of murder was completed. He ransacked the house for valuables, found but little to repay the search, packed the Miss Dolan's traveling bag with plunder, and made his way to some dens of vice in the lower part of the Eleventh Ward, where he soon wasted in dissipation the means for which he had stained his soul with the blood of eight innocent creatures. He declared that he would have confessed the entire truth at the start, but he feared that if he did so the populace would tear him to pieces. He said he had all along intended to make a clean breast of it as soon as the trial was over, and he would no longer be compelled to face the angry multitude.

The Antecedents of Probst.

Anton Probst was born in Uehlingen, Baden, in 1842, and was twenty-four years and five months of age. His father and mother are still living, and he worked at home at farming for his father, who, though a carpenter, had never taught Anton any trade. He denies that he ever committed any crime in Germany, and says that he came to the United States because he thought this a better country. This declaration is sustained by information received from the Old World; his reputation there was good. On May 9th, 1865, he arrived at New York in the ship Columbus, from Bremen. Two hours after he was on shore he enlisted in the Twelfth New York Cavalry, from which he deserted while in Washington. He then enlisted in the Forty-first New York Infantry, and deserted again after serving nine months. The Fifth Pennsylvania Cavalry was his next regiment, in which he remained till May 28th, 1865, when he was discharged. According to his statement, his thumb was shot off accidentally. He was discharged from the army on pilot duty before Richmond. After his discharge he came to Philadelphia, where he spent his bounty money in two weeks, and then seems to have wandered about, working at different jobs, in this city, New York, and the country, alternating between labor, in which he obtained money, and dissipation, in which he spent it. Much of last winter he passed in the Blockley Almshouse. In 1855 he was employed by Mr. Dearing, and after staying on the farm about three weeks was discharged. He returned there in February and asked for work, telling Mr. Dearing he had been to Germany. He was again taken into the employ of Mr. D., and the rest of the story of his connection with the unfortunate family we have already given.

Probst Writes Home.

Between the time that the murderer made his false statement, and the period of his truthful confession, he wrote a letter to his parents. He knew this letter would be examined before it would be suffered to leave the prison, and he was compelled to make it accord with the story that he had already told. He probably desired, too, to break the blow to his parents, by lessening the apparent enormity of his crime. We have procured a literal copy of this letter, the original being in German. It is as follows:

Probst's Letter to his Parents.

PHILADELPHIA, 18th of April, 1866.—Dear Parents, Brothers and Sister: I write to you now for the last time, and desire to inform you of the terrible fate which has befallen me. I have now got so far in America, that, with a companion from the Canton, Schaffhausen, I deprived of life an entire family, consisting of eight persons. Although I was taken on the third day after the fearful occurrence, and now do not know on what day I must die, they have not as yet caught the one who was with me. At first I did not wish to write to you any more, but I could not bring it over my heart; I felt that I must let you know of the awful murder. No doubt, it will be a matter of surprise to you to know how I could have fallen so low. I will tell you.

Immediately upon my arrival in this country I became a soldier, in which position I heard nothing but cursing and swearing, and soon became a sharer in every wickedness. When then I was freed from the army, I gave myself up to evil companionship, and to every sort of licentiousness; and thus I soon reached such a pitch, that I no longer believed in God nor in anything. Now I humbly ask you all to forgive me, and do not take the matter too much to heart; it has happened, and we can now no longer change it. Therefore, I only ask your forgiveness once again. I

beg of you, pray, pray for me, for I greatly need it. When I only think how good and kind you always were to me, and how happy and comfortable I always was while I was with you; and now I have sunk so low that here, in the years of my youth, I must die on the gallows, I would desire but one more hour to spend with you, then I would willingly die. When I think of you at home, father, mother, brothers, and little sister Mary, my senses almost leave me. But it has once happened, and now I can no longer remedy it. Once again I ask your pardon. Do not let this trouble crush you. I only beg of you, help me by your prayers, help me as much as you can.

I will now close my letter with many thousand greetings. I have been

Your ungrateful son and brother,
ANTON PROBST.

P. S.—Once more I ask you all, forgive me! I wish you much happiness, and many blessings, and pray for me.

The accomplished scholar who made the translation at our request, says concerning it, "I need scarce remark that I have endeavored only to translate it literally, endeavoring to preserve his idiom and style of expression, at least, as far as possible."

Probst's Last Letter to his Parents.

Yesterday afternoon the murderer asked for writing materials, so that he might write a farewell letter to his family in Germany. They were furnished to him, and he wrote, in quite good German, a letter of which the following is a translation. It was addressed on the envelope as follows:

"Mr. Martin Probst,
Uehlingen Amt,
Baden,
Grand Duchy of Baden,
Germany."

"PHILADELPHIA, 7th of June, 1866.—Dear Parents, Brothers and Sister:—I do not know whether or not you received my last letter, in which I sent you the sad intelligence of my fate. I desire to write to you once again, to inform you how I have spent my time here in the prison. I have spent eight weeks in this cell, and have endeavored to prepare for my death as well as I possibly could. The clergyman has visited me every day, and has instructed me well. I have several times confessed and received holy communion. Besides this, many prayers are offered up for me throughout the entire city, and therefore I am now so cheerful and consoled that I can gladly offer my life as an atonement for my fearful crime. I trust that you also will be consoled and cheerful as I am.

"The clergyman will send you all the particulars of my death. I only entreat you all, pray for me. Have the holy sacrifice of Mass offered up frequently for the repose of my poor soul.

"Joseph Wechter has also visited me several times during my imprisonment. He will send you my picture and a lock of my hair.

"The eighth of June has been appointed as the day of my death, and tomorrow will be the eighth of June, on which I am ready to offer up my life with greatest joy for my sins.

"I trust to meet you all in eternity, in a happier and better place, and this hope makes me rejoice with my whole heart.

"I will now close my letter with many thousand greetings to all of you.

"I send a most heartfelt farewell! May we meet again, in a better world."

"ANTON PROBST."

Joseph Wechter, who is alluded to in the above letter, is the only person known to be connected with Probst's family in America. His sister is married to a brother of Probst in Germany.

Post Mortem Proceedings.

After hanging about twenty minutes, the body was cut down and laid upon a hurdle where it was inspected by numerous persons who were admitted to the prison after the execution.

The body was then placed in the hands of Dr. B. Howard Rand, who, with five assistants, proceeded to make a number of scientific experiments. The first of these consisted in the examination of the eye, with the aid of a powerful electric light, for the purpose of detecting an image remaining upon the retina.

The right eye was afterwards taken out, to allow of more careful examination, as there is a modern scientific theory that events occurring immediately before death remain impressed upon the retina.

The galvanic battery was then applied, one pole being placed in the mouth and the other to the temple. A powerful current was then passed through the wires, producing a fearful contortion of the frame.

The jaws worked convulsively and the chest heaved as if with a strong respiration. This action was of course purely mechanical, as the neck had been broken by the fall and life was entirely extinct.

Dr. Rand and his assistants were still prosecuting their experiments when our reporters left the prison. The post mortem of the body will be made by Dr. Hancock before the class of the Jefferson Medical College, to-morrow.

The Department of the Culprit.

The peculiar stolid manner of the prisoner has been a subject of much remark. He was believed to be impassive, utterly without feeling, and void of any feeling of remorse for his monstrous crime. This, we are assured, by those who are thoroughly qualified by experience and opportunity to judge, is a mistake. He had but a limited knowledge of the English language, and he disliked to converse except in German. When he was spoken to in his mother tongue, and the better traits of his nature were aroused, he seemed, to use the words of our informant, to have an "underlying of good in him." His feelings of remorse for his crime were represented as being most acute, and he often saw, in his mind's eye in the silent watches of thought, the ghastly corpses of the men, women and

(Continued on the last page)