

# EXECUTION OF MRS. GRINDER.

## Particulars of the Last Scenes—The Execution.

Correspondence of the Philadelphia Inquirer.

### THE EXECUTION.

PITTSBURGH, Friday, Jan. 19—2. P. M.

The guilty soul of Mrs. GRINDER has been sent to the judgment bar of God. At exactly 1:15 o'clock this afternoon the Judge's sentence, that she be hung by the neck until she be dead, was executed. The scene was a sad, solemn and deeply impressive one. The only person present who seemed to be not in the least affected was the murderess herself. The execution took place in the southern jail-yard of the Court-house, and was witnessed by about one hundred persons. The windows of the Court-house which overlook the jail-yard on the west were also filled with spectators eagerly watching for the eventful moment when the prisoner's body should dangle between heaven and earth.

### THE APPROACH OF THE END.

At 1 o'clock Sheriff STEWART, accompanied by Deputy Sheriff CLULEY, proceeded to the cell of the doomed woman, and on entering, Mrs. GRINDER remarked, "Are you coming for me?" The Sheriff replied, "Yes, Mrs. GRINDER." She calmly arose and said, "My Saviour is coming for me." The Sheriff then pinioned her arms and the funeral procession moved slowly down stairs, the Sheriff in advance, followed by the condemned, and supported on her right by Rev. Mr. HOLMES and on the left by Rev. Mr. SINSA-BAUGH. Following her were Dr. A. G. McCANDLESS, THOMAS M. MARSHALL, Esq., and Deputy Sheriff CLULEY.

### HER APPEARANCE.

Mrs. GRINDER was dressed in a brown alpaca dress, trimmed around the neck and down the front with white lace, lightly made kid slippers and white stockings. She took a seat provided for her on the scaffold, and remained entirely unmoved while a prayer was being offered in her behalf. Her features wore a pleasant smile from the time she left her cell until the fatal white cap was drawn over her face. Not a muscle quivered; not an expression of the countenance escaped her that could by any possibility be construed into either remorse or fear of death, mental agitation or any kindred emotion. There was nothing like a forced determination to appear calm and composed; it was evidently natural, and entirely unaffected; while words were being spoken to her by the Sheriff, her spiritual adviser and others on the scaffold, even while the noose was being adjusted, she bestowed on each a remarkably graceful inclination of the head, coupled with a sweet smile.

In answer to the question whether she desired to say anything or have anything said for her, she replied in a mild and cheerful tone, her face still beaming with smiles, that she wished nothing more, but before the cap was drawn over her face she glanced pleasantly around at the spectators, and then cast her expressive blue eyes upward.

### THE END.

The fatal moment arrived, and still the culprit stood like a statue. The staging was cleared, when Sheriff STEWART touched with his foot the spring which controlled the upright or support of the drop, and the next instant Mrs. GRINDER was suspended in the air struggling convulsively with death. Owing to the damp weather the noose did not work as smoothly as it otherwise would have done, and the neck was not broken by the fall. She struggled violently for several minutes, and at one time her right hand caught hold of the platform where it fitted to the drop, in spasmodic efforts to relieve herself.

There was a slight pulsation at the wrist twenty minutes after the drop fell, at which time she was pronounced, by the physician in charge, dead. After hanging for half an hour, the body was cut down and placed in a neatly painted coffin, lined with white muslin; soon after which the cap was removed, and, to the astonishment of every person who saw it, the face wore exactly the same placid, cheerful, smiling expression which characterized it on the scaffold. During the trial, and on all other occasions, the face looked as though she might be in a sweet sleep. There was no discoloration or disfigurement save a red mark around the left side of the neck; the eyes were closed, but when the lids were pulled back, they still looked bright and animated. Thus ended the career of a woman who was fully the peer, not the inferior in crime, of the world-renowned Lucretia Borgia.

Had she been a titled lady, like her predecessor, or even walked in superior society, her name would yet figure in plays and romances. All accounts agree that her character is one of the most singular on record, for while, as will be seen below, she confessed to the horrible crimes charged against her, still she had a most abiding faith in the future salvation, and always has had.

### HER LAST HOURS.

A few hours before her execution she remarked to her counsel, "I know that I am a great sinner, but still I know that Jesus Christ is a great Saviour." She lay on a couch in her cell, awaiting the hour of her execution, and no child of our Summers could display more simplicity or calmness, or apparent thoughtlessness of having committed a crime. Shortly before being led to execution, she desired to have her head dressed, and was very particular in her instructions to the woman in attendance to do up her hair so that it would not come down. On several occasions during the morning, she stated emphatically that she had not the slightest fear of death, as she knew she would be saved, but only expressed her regret at being made a sort of public spectacle of, and the manner of her death displeased her.

There is something inexplicable in the entire conduct of the woman. Something more than courage, physical strength, or even faith has conduced to enable her to bear herself with such astonishing, not only fortitude but meekness, gentleness, and childlike cheerfulness. She has been a marvel and a wonder to all who have had association with her since her conviction. The execution was conducted with great propriety, and Sheriff STEWART and Deputy-Sheriff CLULEY deserve great credit for the manner in which everything was managed. Not long before the execution Mrs. GRINDER made the following confession, which was given to the members of the press immediately after she was hung:

### CONFESSION OF THE CONDEMNED.

PITTSBURGH, Jan. 18, 1866.

In view of my departure, in a few hours, from earth, I want to say that I acknowledge my guilt in the case of Mrs. Caruthers, and also in the case of Miss Buchanan, but I am innocent of all other charges made against me in the papers, for poisoning people. But, bad as I have been, I feel that God, for Christ's sake, has forgiven me, and through his mercy I hope to find an entrance into Heaven. I die without any hard feelings to any one, forgiving all as I hope to be forgiven.

Mr. Stewart has been very kind to me, doing all in his power to make me comfortable, and I pray that he may be assisted in his duty, and be rewarded for his kindness. Mr. White has also been very kind, and has treated me with respect always. May God be good to him. If I had been faithful to my church duties it would have been different with me now. But I am thankful that God is so good as to return to me, now that I do try to come back to him.

Her

(Signed)

MARTHA X GRINDER.

mark.

Witnesses, A. O. HOLMES, H. SINSA-BAUGH.

The New York Times

Published: January 21, 1866

Copyright © The New York Times