

THORN DIES WITH HIS TALE UNTOLD.

Murderer of William Guldensuppe Killed in the Electric Chair at the Hands of the Law.

Went to the Dread Chamber with Unflinching Step, Consoled by Religion in His Last Hours.

MARTIN THORN is dead. So far as the laws of man go, he has paid the debt for the murder of William Guldensuppe—a life for a life.

The death bolt struck at 11:17 yesterday morning.

"It was the most successful execution I ever have witnessed," said the prison physician, who has seen many men die in just that way.

"He was the coolest man I ever have seen go to his death," commented the grim Warden, whose nod had summoned the law's lightning.

Certainly Martin Thorn had seemed as composed as a man well could who was about to test in the dread eternity the genuineness of his contrition and his hope of salvation for his soul. The guards reported

chatter of the curious visitors who by this time were being shown through the prison, who were inspecting the down-sitting chair, who were commenting flippantly or with affections of horror on the preparations for the day's tragedy. But if he heard them or thought of the meaning of the unusual stir, he gave no sign. For all he seemed disturbed, he might have been back again tripping about his father's cobbler bench in that Posen of the long ago.

Meantime the slow coaches of Sing Sing town were rumbering up to the prison door, and from them were stepping men who had come from up and down the world to be in at the death. Doctors were there to make professional notes on the physiological effects of the shock of the electric fluid. Newspaper men and illustrators attended as a matter of disagreeable duty. But the others came just to see a man die and to get the little notoriety which would leak to them from association with an "occasion." These straggled their little while, pluming their conceit, and concerned



Chronological History of Martin Thorn's Trial and Conviction.

- June 26, 1897—Section of mutilated body found in the East River.
- June 27, 1897—Missing parts of the same body, except the head, found in the woods near Washington Bridge.
- June 30, 1897—The Journal identifies exclusively the body as that of William Guldensuppe.
- July 2, 1897—Journal discovers that Guldensuppe had lived with Mrs. Augusta Nack, of No. 439 Ninth avenue, and that Martin Thorn was his rival.
- MRS. NACK ARRESTED.
- July 7—Thorn indicted.
- July 30—Thorn arrested.
- November 9—Thorn tried.
- December 1—Thorn found guilty.
- December 4—Thorn sentenced to die.
- December 15—Mrs. Nack sent to prison for 15 years.
- August 1—Thorn put to death in Sing Sing prison.

and the minutes, which had lagged before, became more sluggish and almost stopped as the hearts quickened their beatings.

"The Time Has Come." "The time has come, Martin!" said the Warden as he entered Thorn's cell, while those in the death chamber held their breath in what death they might.

"I must bid you good-by," continued Colonel Sage as Thorn rose from his bunk without a word.

The murderer took the Warden's hand, shook it feebly and said in a low voice, "I wish to thank you for all your many kindnesses to me."

Then the Warden led the way, and Thorn, taking the arm of Father Hanselman, followed out into the corridor and toward the waiting chair.

As he stepped into the death chamber he glanced once at those waiting there, and his look was furtive and fateful.

Here there was a stir. "Looks stretched, heads turned, and there was that indeterminate sunning in one general direction which indicated an important interruption.

which came as it seemed to swell in a last desperate effort to break its bonds. A scar which had shown red upon the exposed knee turned blue. The head was twisted violently to one side.

"Heavens! isn't he dead yet?" muttered one of the onlookers.

It seemed that a quarter of an hour had elapsed since the first fell stroke. As a matter of fact, just one minute had been consumed. Then the current was turned off; the last drops of holy water were thrown on the body; Dr. Irvine made his examinations as to respiration and heartbeat, and the other doctors pressed up to have their turn at the gawsome instruments.

Fathers Hanselman and St. John continued to intone an antiphonal service. The scientific record showing the voltage used, amperage and the time of application of the current was given out, the straps were unhooked, the headpiece removed, and the body of Martin Thorn was carried to that slab in the dim back room, there to be hacked and mutilated as he had been and mutilated the corpse of William Guldensuppe.

So died Martin Thorn, and the experts called it a most successful execution. Certainly it was a dreadful sight to see.

HIS LAST HOURS IN HIS CELL.

Thorn's last hours on the morning of his execution were uneventful, as have been his eight months of prison life. He was braced for the ordeal and only once yesterday morning did he betray the mental turmoil that agitated him. He had awakened at 5:45 o'clock and lay on his cot, occasionally exchanging a word with "Judge" Croak, his lugubriously named death watch outside the cell. Croak was off duty at

staff, inserted thermometers here and there and discussed the results disclosed by the knife.

Thorn weighed 138 pounds, showing a gain of eighteen pounds since his reception into the prison, on December 4 last. His brain was normal—that is, of good size and conformation. The lungs showed traces of a slight tuberculosis at some former time, which had healed naturally. The pigmentation in the lungs was slight, which means that they had not taken on an abnormal color, as would have been the case had Thorn smoked tobacco. He had a granular liver and there was diffuse inflammation of the kidneys.

Thorn's face was blue, the pupil of his right eye was dilated, that of the left eye contracted. The brain and all the organs were congested. These things were due to the action of the electric current. There was a scar on his forehead and a deep sear on the inside of his right leg where the flesh had split apart. The electrodes had caused these marks. The net result of the autopsy was that Thorn was a healthy man, with many years of life before him had he not forfeited them by his crime.

Grave in Calvary. The body will be brought to this city from Sing Sing on the train due at the Grand Central Station at 9:20 o'clock this morning. The burial permit has been made out in the name of State Detective Jackson, who will not leave Thorn's remains until they are safely interred in Calvary Cemetery. Paul Minker, Thorn's brother-in-law, went to Sing Sing yesterday morning with Christian Herlich, an undertaker. Minker gave Warden Sage an order for the body, signed by himself and Mrs. Minker, who Thorn's sister. The signatures were attested by a notary public and the document stated that the expenses of burial were to be borne by Samuel Jpp, of No. 15 East Seventy-fifth street, a barber for whom Thorn worked for six years, and



HIS LAST PRAYER

that he slept well over night. That is the usual formula. As a fact, he turned often, started some, and was broad awake at 5:45, when he could hear the far low peal of the Trinity bells, coming to him like a knell.

Slowly the prison began to wake about him. The guards commenced to stir and their footfalls echoed dimly in the darkened halls. The pipe of a bird came from the bright outside, telling of the awakened life in the world from which Thorn had been shut so long and which he was never to see again.

The death watch was changed at 6:30, and Thorn then shook himself from his couch and put on the suit of sombre black made for him in the prison—ill-fitting, shambling clothes, which made him look like a forlorn unpopular undertaker, but which he pitifully thought made him appear a gentleman.

No wonder he waved away his breakfast. For some reason men are expected to eat under such circumstances, and they generally do; but Thorn had no appetite. His spiritual exaltation had not come to him so early. The gray of the morning brought all the horror of his position fresh upon him.

Thorn had few words for his watchers and soon began to pray. But the light did not seem to break. The grisly thing in the next room was upon him, an incubus and a dread.

"He'll break down yet, and we'll have to carry him in," whispered one watcher to another.

Terror Came at Dawn.

Then they tried to get his mind away from the death chamber. They baited him with inquiries about his past, his Polish home and the land where he "began a life of sinless hope that merged maturely into hopeless sin." The night before he had been quick to talk of his days of innocence. Narration had been easy for him, and his speech flowed more freely than ever before.

But the terror gripped him with the dawn. He told the warden that he dreaded the last hours, and the minutes did not race with him as they are supposed to do with the doomed.

Then the priest came—good Father Hanselman, who had ministered to his spiritual needs ever since the law laid its hand upon his shoulder and said "Thou art the man!"

At once the black horror fled. It was as if the lifting of the cross had expelled the evil one. The exorcism was complete. Thorn was himself again. At least, he was the man which the ministrations of the Church had made of him.

"I am prepared," he said when the warden looked in.

The rest of the morning was given over to the consolations of religion, to prayer and the ministrations of the last rites of the Church. Father St. John, of the village, assisting Father Hanselman in the services, Thorn must have heard the tramp and

about how they themselves would feel in the presence of sudden death.

His Hands Betrayed His Dread.

Warden Sage and Dr. Irvine, the prison physician, were much questioned as to how the condemned man was bearing himself.

"I noticed last night when I shook hands with him that his flesh had that peculiar warmth which comes to all the condemned as they approach the time for death," said the Warden. "The hand feels like a glove filled with warm water. The condition shows that no matter how outwardly calm and unconcerned the man may seem, deep inside of him is one thought and one dread."

The talk drifted to other executions, and the possibility that Thorn might "make a scene," fainting or rising in impotent wrath against his fate, to shake his fists and bite his tongue.

It was recalled that Mayhow, the Irish negro, had threatened not to leave his cell without a fight, though he had been quiet enough at the end.

All the prisoners were hanging with the prisoner driving the guards from the scaffold. Another explained the sudden, unbidden summons to the French guillotine, with the holiday aspect of Parisian death. A traveler had seen the Chinese executioner at work and also the strangling of the garrote.

But as they talked the watches kept coming out and snapping nervously, and the groups were continually shifting. Men gulped and moistened their lips as if bracing for an ordeal. Martin Thorn was not the only one who could not entirely shake out of himself the thought of the chair and the passing of the death angel.

The electricians flustered some. There is always with them the fear that the great force which they so generally control, but only half know, would play some last prank and make of the execution a butchery and a thing to cause a shudder round the world. So they jessed a good deal with the apparatus—State Electrician, Lewis Tyler, his assistant, and Hilbert, who has charge of the prison dynamo.

Everything about the machinery is all right," said Tyler afterward. "But the weakness of it all is at the man himself. If there is any burning of the flesh or failure of the current to do its work, it will be because of imperfect connections with the body, and that is a thing we cannot test."

"I feel certain he will go to his death with composure," said the Warden to cheer a large man who looked faint.

"I think not. They don't do that any more. Speech making before death passed away with the gallows tree and the platform."

This Death Merciful.

"It is the most merciful of methods," said Dr. Irvine. "The stroke is so sudden that the nerves have no time to tell of it to the brain. So the man actually does not know when the bolt comes. As for how the fluid kills there is much yet to learn. We know that we get a temperature of 112 after death, and how much more we cannot



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tell, for the clinical thermometers will not register more than that. We also" stretched, heads turned, and there was that indeterminate sunning in one general direction which indicated an important interruption.

A tall, heavy-barreled man in rusty attire stepped from a carriage and, followed by one whose smart appearance and super-said demeanor marked him for a handler of the dead, stepped hastily into the Warden's lunner room.

"That's the butcher who was concerned in the Birden diamond robbery," went the whisper along the line, and the butcher-convent retreated before the fire of curious eyes.

"That's the cell of Mrs. Place," was another comment as a narrow window was inquired.

"I wish Mrs. Nack were there, too," growled one who all along has held that she was the real culprit, the designing schemer, who sent Guldensuppe to his death, while Thorn was the man of wax in her hands.

"But the body of Guldensuppe never could have been identified without her confession," interjected Dr. McAllister.

"I can't stand this much longer," whispered the fellow with the red tie, looking with yearning eyes toward the door.

"Gentlemen," said the Warden, breaking in with his quiet tone, "Gentlemen, a display of the current will now be made on these twenty lights which you see in the chair. And you will please the Warden very much if, after the execution, all the gentlemen present will retain their positions until invited to come forward."

"There was an accent on the "all," and the appeal of the Warden was intended to prevent a disagreeable episode planned by a newspaper which had sent a doctor to the death chamber with orders to rush forward immediately after the current was applied and secure data for a sensational report. As for the test of the lights, it meant nothing to the lay mind. The twenty lamps ranged in a row burned brilliantly once the current was turned on. Then they went out when the lever was turned back and were taken away.

Suddenly it was noticed that the great door on the right of the room had swung open, soundless and suggestive. There was a natural impression that such a massive portal would shriek and groan when making way for death. Chains should have rattled and there should have been a shivery accompaniment in all the dramas of death, but the silent opening was more impressive.

Again the body was permitted to relax, and again there was the dreadful ching



LAST PICTURE FROM LIFE OF THORN AS HE SAT IN THE CHAIR

Last Scenes in the Life of Martin Thorn, Murderer.

doing over what already had been done, just to make assurance doubly sure and to kill off some of the heavy, fateful time.

"Look at my hands," said former Congressman Henry C. Miner. He was shaking like one stricken with the palsy. The man he spoke to seemed about to drop. Some who had swelled with the importance of their selection as witnesses to the scene shrunk and seemed to wish they were far away.

The Strain on Nerves Intense.

"Visitors must not touch the straps or chair," read the printed warning at the back of the "thing." There was no need of such admonition in that company.

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leaving the mouth and chin exposed, so that there was something of his expression, yet on view.

As the cap pressed home and the salt water of the sponge ran down upon his face he seemed to speak to the official who was making the adjustment. But it was only a part of his prayer.

The words were fluttering on his lips when the Warden nodded. Suddenly there was a sound as full of menace as the rattle of a snake, and Thorn's body strained and wrenched at the fastenings as if he would throw himself writhing from the chair.

The Stroke of Death.

It was the stroke of death. Father Hanselman bent forward toward the chair, muttering the services of the church. It seemed as if the strained, tense body would make reply—as if the lips would move.

Dr. Irvine bent from the other side, watching the jugular vein in the swelling neck. He, too, seemed talking to Thorn, as if expecting an answer. It did not seem possible that the man was dead.

This uncanny situation lasted five seconds. It seemed five minutes. Then the body relaxed and settled back, limp and faced.

"It's all over," whispered one who raised a handkerchief to wipe a dripping brow. But in an instant there was the strain again, and the body grew rigid and twisted once more. The bare leg showed the screw at the top of the headpiece. The hand holding the crucifix had moved as if with life. Foam ran from the mouth, the lips of which had drawn away, showing the teeth clenched as if in agony. Smoke came from the electrode at the leg and there was an offensive odor in the place.

half-past 6, and as he left he said good-by to the condemned man for the last time.

Then Thorn arose and dressed himself, and half an hour later the Rev. Father Hanselman came. The two knelt in prayer, the priest outside and the penitent behind the bars.

Warden Sage came into the cell room at 8 o'clock and talked with Thorn for a few minutes, while Father Hanselman went to the Warden's dining room to get breakfast.

Heretofore the condemned man has walked to the chair without coat, waistcoat or collar, but Thorn asked the Warden to be allowed to dress himself fully.

"I want to die looking like a gentleman," he said, and his wish was granted.

Alone with the Priest.

From 8:30 until 11 o'clock the priest and the prisoner were alone together. They talked earnestly in low tones.

Guard Philip Morris withdrew to a distance, as far as his duty would permit him. A few minutes after 11 o'clock the iron door from the execution chamber opened with a clang and a group of men appeared before Thorn's cell. Simultaneously the heavy black curtains were rolled down before the other cells in the room, shutting out the view from Braun, Meyer, Pullerson and McDonald, the four other condemned men who have been Thorn's companions.

"The time has come, Martin," said Warden Sage, as the guard unlocked the cell door. Thorn stepped out and he and the Warden shook hands. "I must bid you good-by, Martin." The Warden betrayed more nervousness than the murderer.

"Good-by, Warden," said Thorn in a firm voice, though his tones were low. "I desire to thank you for your many kindnesses to me."

Those were Martin Thorn's last words. Father Hanselman and Father St. John ranged themselves on either side of the prisoner. State Detective Jackson stooped down and with a great pair of shears cut a slit through Thorn's right trouser leg and underdraws from the bottom nearly to the knee. Then Principal Keeper Connaughton stepped to Jackson's side and kepters Martin Mallins, Martin Deely and John Durkin fell in the rear. In this order the procession went through the corridor into the presence of the death chair, the Warden leading.

No sooner had Martin Thorn been pronounced officially dead than his body was carried to the autopsy room, behind the chair room, stripped and laid on a great slab of slate. Then luncheon was declared, and the witnesses and physicians and reporters became Warden Sage's guests at a table. It was half an hour after noon when the post-mortem examination was begun.

Body Under the Knife.

Dr. G. W. Goodwin handled the saw and the scalpel. He is assistant orthopedic professor at the Post-Graduate Hospital. Dr. H. T. Brooks, pathologist of the Post-Graduate, and Dr. John McAllister, of Bellevue, were really in charge of the autopsy. Dr. L. Schomer took notes and Dr. Irvine, the prison physician; Dr. Sheehan and Dr. Barnum, of Sing Sing, and Dr. Ogden, of the Manhattan Hospital

Richard Hinchcliffe, a liquor dealer, of No. 1055 Lexington avenue.

The Warden decided to use the utmost precaution to prevent any possibility of an unseemly demonstration over the murderer's remains. For this reason he assigned State Detective Jackson to take charge of the body.

It will be taken to the undertaker's shop, at No. 438 East Eighty-third street, and transferred to a more pretentious coffin, and kept there for a couple of hours. The heavy black curtains were rolled down before the other cells in the room, shutting out the view from Braun, Meyer, Pullerson and McDonald, the four other condemned men who have been Thorn's companions.

FUNERAL TO-DAY AT CALVARY.

The train that is due in the Grand Central station from Sing Sing, at 9:20 o'clock this morning, will carry in its baggage car the body of Martin Thorn. The body will be taken to an undertaking establishment and will be removed from the prison coffin in which it comes from Sing Sing, and placed in a mahogany black casket with silver handles, and a silver plate. On the plate will be inscribed:

MARTIN THORN
Died
August 1, 1898.
Age 33 years.

The hearse with the body will leave for Calvary Cemetery. With it will go two carriages. In the first will ride Paul Minker, Thorn's brother-in-law, and his young daughter. Thorn's sister, Mrs. Minker, is so prostrated by the ordeal that she will not be able to attend.

A man named Faber and two friends, former associates of Thorn, will occupy the second carriage.

Thorn will be interred in consecrated ground, but according to custom it was necessary to obtain a permit from the Rev. Father Thomas J. Hausman, of Holy Trinity Church, Brooklyn, who has charge of these matters pertaining to burials in Calvary. There will be no service whatever as the body is placed in the ground.

A conspicuous feature of the funeral will be a massive floral wreath of blue mauve and green, containing a floral cross of white. It is to cost \$45, and the name of its donor is closely guarded secret. There will be three additional floral pieces of considerable size from Mr. Faber and Thorn's former associates in the barber shop where he last worked.

The expenses of the burial will be borne by Thorn's brother-in-law, Mr. Minker. A large crowd gathered about the undertaker's shop last night and tried to get in, insisting that Thorn's body had arrived, and they clamored for a view of it. Two women dressed in black and closely veiled were very insistent, but they were not admitted to the place. Only the relatives of the dead man will be allowed to view the body.