

Morning Post Feb 22.

EXECUTION OF COLONEL DESPARD, fsc.

Yesterday the execution of Despard and his six associates took place in the manner nearly in which we yesterday described. Previous to the execution some circumstances occurred which we yet must mention:

Mrs Despard after having taken leave of her husband at three o'clock on Sunday afternoon, came again about five o'clock ; but it was thought advisable to spare the Colonel the pangs of a "second parting, and she was therefore not admitted into the prison. She evinced some indignation at the refusal; and expressed a strong opinion with respect to the cause for which her husband was to suffer. Half frantic with leaving the prison, a part of the mob laughed at her agitation. This again provoked her resentment.

After Mrs. Despard had left the Colonel on Sunday afternoon, he walked up and down his cell for some time, seemingly more agitated than he had been at the period of taking leave of his wife. Between six and seven in the evening he threw himself on the bed, and fell into a short sleep. At eight o'clock he awoke, and addressed one of the Officers of the Prison, who was with him, in these words:— " Me — they shall receive no- information " from me — no — not for all the gifts, the gold, " and jewels, in the possession of the Crown. "— » He then composed himself, and remained silent.

The above expressions might induce some to suppose that endeavours had been made to prevail upon, him to make disclosures. Whether this was the case or not, we are not able to say. Sir Richard Ford was at the prison on Sunday, and we believe saw the Colonel and all the other prisoners, but we have not heard that his visit had for its object to induce them to make any confessions,

After Mrs Despard had left the Colonel, he was visited in the evening by the Gentleman who had acted as his Solicitor, who came to ask him where he wished to be buried. He was silent for some minutes, and at length replied, that he believed several of his countrymen were buried at Pancras: he therefore desired to be buried there.

The Clergyman of the Prison, Mr. Winkworth, had several times made overtures to the Colonel to commune with him. But the Colonel always declined the Clergyman's offer, politely, however, thanking him. Mr. Winkworth on Sunday repeated his request, but received the same answer. Mr Winkworth wished him to accept a book from him, which he also declined. The Colonel, we understand, said, that he was not particularly attached to any form of religion, and that his mind was entirely made up upon religious matters.

Most of the other prisoners, however, passed much of their time in prayer, and with the clergymen. Macnamara, being a Roman Catholic, was attended by a Roman Catholic priest. Graham, and two of the other prisoners, requested Mr. Rowland Hill to send a clergyman to them, which he did. They remained great part of the night in deep and earnest prayer.

When Mr. Ives went to communicate the warrant for execution to two of the prisoners, Wood and Graham, they said, that they wished to have some conversation with him. On Sunday

afternoon, he went to them, attended by the clergyman, Mr. Winkworth. Graham then entered into a long conversation with him, upon the motives of the meeting at the public-house where, they were apprehended; but we do not learn that he threw any new light upon the subject, or made any discoveries of importance.

Macnamara spent the whole of the night in prayer. The Roman Catholic Priest left him at a late hour on Sunday night, and came again early yesterday morning. Graham, Wratten, and another, Wood we believe, were the greater part of the night engaged in a similar manner — they were Dissenters. Broughton and Francis were of the Church of England persuasion. Col. Despard slept from three to half past four; the remainder of the night he passed in walking up and down his cell. The rest of the prisoners slept about two hours.

All the arrangements for the execution were settled on Sunday by Sir Richard Ford and the Sheriff of Surrey, with the Government and the magistrates. Sir Richard Ford slept on Sunday night at Mr. Carpenter Smith's, in order to be near the prison.

At four o'clock yesterday morning the drum beat at the Horse-guards, for a signal for the cavalry to assemble. We understand that four regiments were on duty. Two troops of horse were stationed at the Obelisk. Others patrolled the roads from the Obelisk to the Elephant and Castle, and down the Borough road. The military occupied their stations as soon as it was day light. It was not till past seven o'clock that persons began to pour in any numbers along the Westminster and City roads to Horsemonger-lane.

About eight there was a very numerous assemblage, as numerous as that narrow lane could contain. There are few houses in front of the prison ; all of them, however, were crowded with, spectators — The Dyer's grounds to the right of the prison were gradually filled, till at last all the parts that had a view of the scaffold were completely crammed. We suppose that 20,000 persons might be assembled. They behaved in a very orderly manner.

At five o'clock St. George's bell toiled, and continued toiling for, about an hour.

At half past six the prison bell rang, the signal for the unlocking of the cells. Mr. Winkworth, the Clergyman, and Mr. Griffith, the Roman Catholic Priest, the same Gentleman who attended Quigly when he was executed for treason at Maidstone, came to the prison, and were immediately admitted to the prisoners.

At seven o'clock five of them, Broughton, Francis, Graham, Wood, and Wratten, went into the Chapel; Colonel Despard remaining in his cell; and Macnamara praying in his cell with the Roman Catholic priest. The five prisoners conducted themselves with much decorum in the Chapel. They attended to the prayers with great earnestness, but at the same time without seeming to lose that firmness which they had displayed since their trial. Before they received the sacrament, four of them confessed they had done wrong, but not to the extent charged against them by the evidence, The fifth, Graham, said, he was innocent of the charges brought against him, but that he had attended two meetings, the second at the instigation of Francis. It was Emblyn, he added, who called on him to take him to the meeting, by Francis's desire. For some time the clergyman refused to administer the sacrament to Francis, because he persisted

in declaring that he had been guilty of no crime. — The clergyman said to him, " You admit you attended meetings." He replied, "'Yes.' "You knew they were for the purpose of overturning the Constitution and Government of the Country. I by no means wish you to enter into particulars— -I only wish you to acknowledge generally." Francis then smiled, it seemed to be the natural character of his countenance; he answered, " I admit I have done wrong in attending those meetings." The Clergyman then asked each of them, " how they found themselves." Francis, Wood, Broughton, and Wratten, said, " they were never happier in their lives." Graham remained silent. The sacrament was then administered to them.

The service in the chapel lasted three quarters of an hour. Before it was over Colonel Despard and Macnamara were brought down from their cells. Their irons were knocked off, and their arms and hands bound with ropes. Despard walked up and down before the chapel door, but did not enter the chapel. Macnamara walked about in earnest conversation with the Roman Catholic priest, and with a book in his hand.

Whilst Despard was at the door of the chapel, the Sheriff, Mr. Pepper, addressed himself very humanely to him, and asked him if he could render him any service? The Colonel thanked him, and replied that he could not. The Sheriff added something in a low tone of voice, which, we believe, but are not quite certain, related to Mrs. Despard. Whilst the clergyman was gone out of the chapel to prepare for the sacrament, the five prisoners in the chapel rose, on hearing the Colonel's irons being knocked off near the door. They asked each other " Where is he?" and seemed anxious to see him.

After they had received the sacrament they were brought out of the chapel, and their irons were knocked off. The executioner then tied their arms and hands in the same manner as he had before bound Colonel Despard and Macnamara.

Notice was then given to the Sheriff that they were ready. Colonel Despard, who stood the first, retired behind, and motioned to Francis, who was making way for him, to go before him. The hurdle had been previously prepared in the outer Court-yard. It is the body of a small cart, on which two trusses of clean straw are laid. It was drawn by two horses. The procession moved in the following order: —

The Sheriff of Surrey, The Clergyman in his Robes, Mr. Ives, the Keeper, with a White Wand; High Constable, Other Constables, The Executioner, with a Drawn Sword, Macnamara and Graham, in the Hurdle.

The Hurdle returned, and brought in the same Order of procession, BROUGHTON and WRATTEN; Next, WOOD and ERANCIS; Lastly COLONEL DESPARD.*

Each division was drawn across the Court-yard; an iron gate opened, which brought them to the inside of the outer gate, from whence they ascended a staircase to the top of the building, on which the drop was erected. — Macnamara seemed intent upon the book in his hand. Graham remained silent. Broughton jumped into the hurdle, smiled, and looked up to the scaffold. Wood and Francis both smiled; and all of them surveyed the awful scene with much composure. — Despard shook hands with a Gentleman, as he got into the hurdle, and looked up to the scaffold with a smile.

As soon as the prisoners were placed on the hurdles, St. George's bell tolled for some time. It was about half past eight when the prisoners were brought up to the scaffold one by one.

As soon as they had all been conveyed in the hurdle to the staircase that leads to the scaffold, they were escorted up one by one — the Sheriff, Sir Richard Ford, the Clergyman, Mr. Winkworth, the Roman Catholic Clergyman, Mr. Griffith, preceding them. Seven coffins, or shells which had been previously placed in an upper room, were brought up and placed on the roof, on which the drop was erected. A bag of sawdust to catch the blood when the heads were severed from their bodies, was placed beside them. The block was near the scaffold.

There were about one hundred spectators on the platform, of whom one half were peace-officers. — Macmanus and Townsend were among them. Among the spectators were two sons of the Earl of Uxbridge, and the Hon. Captain Upton and his brother. The roof of the building is about fifty feet by thirty, quite flat, and covered with copper. It is about the height of an ordinary second floor. On this roof the platform, or, as it is vulgarly called, the drop, was erected. The platform was about eight feet high, and the gallows was just of sufficient length to contain the seven sufferers. The peace-officers on the roof were stationed two deep close round the platform. The most perfect order prevailed.

As soon as the cord was fastened round the neck of one, the second was brought up, and so on till the cords were fastened round the necks of all the seven.

Macnamara was first brought up; he still held a book in his hand, and when the cord was placed round his neck, he exclaimed, with the greatest devotion, " Lord Jesus, have mercy upon me! Oh! Lord, look down with pity upon me."

Graham came second. He looked pale and ghastly, but shook not.

Wratten was the third : he ascended the scaffold with much firmness.

Broughton the fourth, smiled as he ran up the scaffold stairs, but as soon as the rope was fastened round his neck he turned pale and smiled no more. He joined in prayer with much earnestness. He was a dark, ill-looking man, like a gypsy.

Wood was the fifth, Francis the sixth. Francis ascended the scaffold with a composure which he preserved to the last. — Wood and Broughton were equally composed. Of all of them, Francis was the best-looking – tall, handsome, and well made. He and Wood were dressed in soldier's uniform. The rest were in coloured clothes.

Colonel Despard was brought up the last, dressed in boots, a dark brown great coat, his hair unpowdered.

As each appeared on the platform a buzz prevailed throughout the mob, and particularly when the soldiers' red jackets were seen.

Early in the morning Colonel Despard desired to speak with the Sheriff and Sir Richard Ford, to whom he communicated his wish to address the spectators. — They told him they had not the least objection to his carrying that wish into effect.

The Colonel ascended the scaffold with great firmness. His countenance underwent not the slightest change, while the awful ceremony of fastening the rope round his neck, and placing the cap on his head, was performing. He looked at the multitude assembled with perfect calmness. The Clergyman who ascended the scaffold after the prisoners were tied up, spoke to him a few words as he passed. — The Colonel bowed, and thanked him.

The ceremony of fastening the prisoners being I finished, the Colonel advanced to the edge of the scaffold, as nearly as the rope by which he was tied up would allow, and made the following speech to the multitude:

" Fellow Citizens, I come here as you see, after having served my country, faithfully, honourably, and usefully served it, for thirty years and up wards, to suffer death upon a scaffold for a crime of which I protest I am not guilty. I solemnly declare that I am no more guilty of it than any of you who may be now hearing me. But, though His Majesty's Ministers know as well as I do, that I am not guilty, yet they avail themselves of a legal pretext to destroy a man, because he has been a friend to truth, to liberty, and to justice." (There was a considerable huzza from part of the populace the nearest to him, but who, from the height of the building from the ground, could not, we are sure, distinctly hear what was said.) The Colonel proceeded: — " Because I have been a friend to the poor, and the oppressed. But, Citizens, I hope and trust, notwithstanding, my fate, and the fate of those, who no doubt will soon follow me, that the principle of freedom, of humanity, and of justice, will finally triumph over falsehood, tyranny, and delusion, and every principle hostile to the interests of the human race. And now having said this, I have little more to add." (The Colonel's voice seemed to falter a little here. He paused a moment as if he had meant to say something more, but had forgotten it. He then concluded in the following manner — " I have little more to add, except to wish you all health, happiness, and freedom, which I have endeavoured, as far as was in my power, to procure for you and for mankind in general."

The Colonel spoke in a firm and audible tone of voice – he left off sooner than was expected. There was no public expression, either of approbation or disapprobation given when he had concluded his address.

As soon as Colonel Despard had ceased speaking, the Clergyman prayed with five of the prisoners. Macnamara prayed earnestly with the Clergyman of his own persuasion. Despard surveyed the populace, and made a short answer, which we could not hear, to some few words addressed to him by Francis, who was next him.

The Clergyman now shook hands with each of them. Colonel Despard bowed, and seemed to thank him as he shook hands with him. The executioners pulled the caps over the faces of the unhappy persons and descended the scaffold. — Most of them exclaimed 'Lord Jesus receive our souls! "

The last and most dreadful part of the ceremony was now to be performed. The most awful silence prevailed, and the thousands present all with one accord stood uncovered.

At seven minutes before nine o'clock the signal was given, the platform dropped, and they were all launched into eternity!! The noise of the platform, and sinking of the unfortunate men, were heard and seen by the populace - they spread the most perfect silence in an instant. As the prisoners sunk down, they were heard to say, in a general but low exclamation, " the Lord have mercy on us."

Col. Despard had not one struggle: twice he opened and clenched his hands together convulsively: he stirred no more.

Macnamara, Graham, Wood, and Wratten, were motionless after a few struggles.

Broughton and Francis struggled violently for some moments after all the rest were without motion. The executioner pulled their legs to put an end to their pain more speedily. Macnamara hung at the left extremity, and Colonel Despard at the right, the soldiers next to him. This was the order: (*diagram of hanging order l-r*)

After hanging about half an hour till they were quite dead, they were taken down. Colonel Despard was first taken down, his body placed upon saw-dust, and his head on a block. After his coat had been taken off, his head was severed by a knife and sawn from his body by persons from St. Thomas's Hospital, engaged on purpose to perform that task. The executioner then took the head by the hair, and carrying it to the edge of the parapet on the right hand, held it up to the view of the populace, and exclaimed, " This is the head of a traitor — Edward Marcus Despard."

The same ceremony was performed at the parapet on the left hand. There was some hooting and hissing when the Colonel's head was exhibited.

The Colonel's body was now put into the shell that had been prepared for it.

The other prisoners were then cut down, their heads severed from their bodies, and exhibited to the populace with the same exclamation of, " This is the head of another traitor."

The taking down and beheading of each occupied about five minutes. The bodies were then put into their different shells, and are to be delivered to their friends for interment. The seven shells, laying side by side, were left on the top of the building.

The populace were struck with the appearance of Macnamara, who, on ascending the scaffolding, bowed, many of them were acquainted with him, "they pitied the situation of his wife, to whom he had been married but a short time; - it was at first thought he was Colonel Despard. The crowd at the entrance or Horsemonger Lane was immense — as the time of execution drew near the people from all parts came with such force as to bear down all opposition. Those who had been in dry situations were pushed into the middle of the road where they stood almost up to the knees in mud. Several lost their shoes by the continual

pushing and jostling. Many fainted, both men and women -of the latter, however, there were but few. While the execution was going forward, the population took off their hats. '

The execution was over by ten o'clock, and the populace soon after dispersed quietly. There was not the least tendency to riot or disturbance. The precautions, however, taken by Government, were certainly proper. We understand that a sky-rocket was sent to the keeper of the prison to be let off, as a signal to the military, in case of any disturbance. The whole of the awful ceremony was conducted by Sir Richard Ford and the Sheriff with the greatest solemnity. "

Macnamara was 50 years of age, five foot six inches high, born in Ireland, by trade a carpenter.

Wood, 26 years of age, about 5 feet 7 inches high, born in Derbyshire, a soldier.

Francis, 23 years of age, about 5 feet 10 inches high, born in Shropshire, a soldier and shoemaker.

Broughton, 26 years of age, about 5 feet 6 ½ inches high, born in London, a carpenter.

Graham, 53 years of age, about 5 feet 10 inches high, born in London, a slater,

Wratten, 35 years of age, 5 feet 9 inches high, place of birth not known, a shoemaker.

They were all strong, well-proportioned men, and all married. Government hearing that Colonel Despard employed his time wholly in writing, sent an order to Mr. Ives to intimate to him, that privilege would not be allowed him, without he permitted the keeper to see what he wrote. Mr. Ives went to him on the day he received his instruction (Thursday noon) and told him the orders he had received. The Colonel replied, 'I have no sort of objection to your seeing what I write.'" The conduct of Colonel Despard on all occasions was the same; with respect to religion, he said to the Clergyman who waited on him after the trial, " I have made up my mind on religion; I have long looked upon it in its proper light ; my religion is in my own breast."

(Extracts from the order for execution conclude the report.)