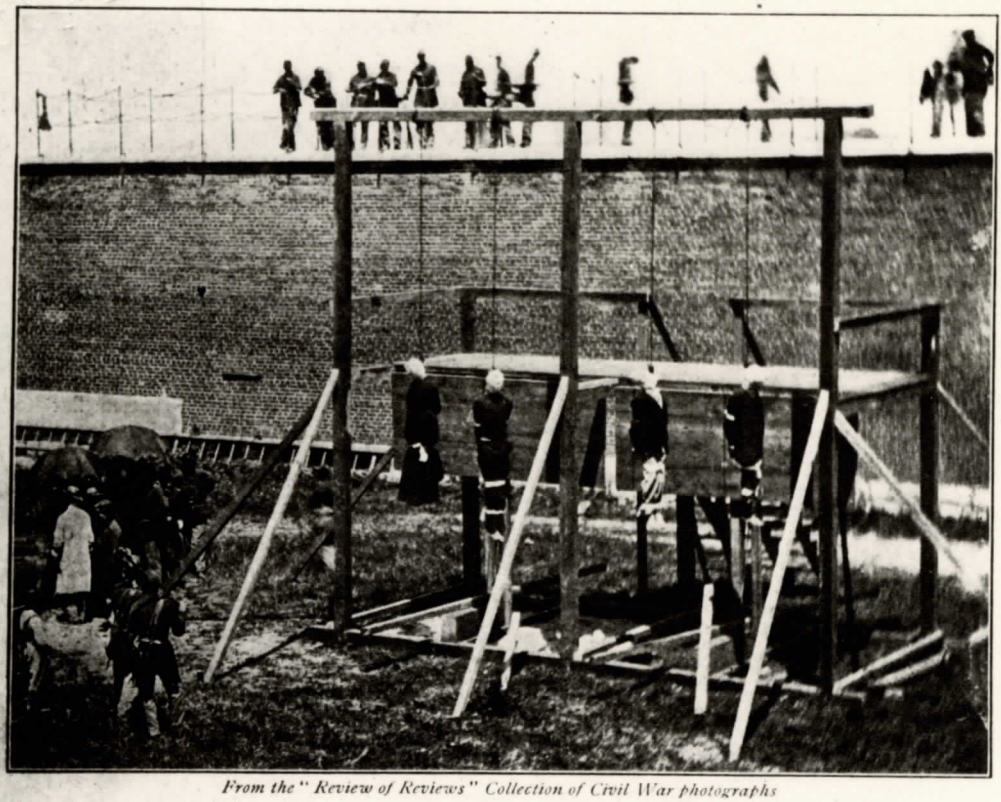
McClure's Magazine
Vol XXXVII No 6
October, 1911



From the "Review of Reviews" Collection of Civil War photographs

PHOTOGRAPH TAKEN AT THE HANGING OF THE LINCOLN CONSPIRATORS AFTER THE TRAP HAD BEEN SPRUNG

THE FATE OF THE LINCOLN CONSPIRATORS

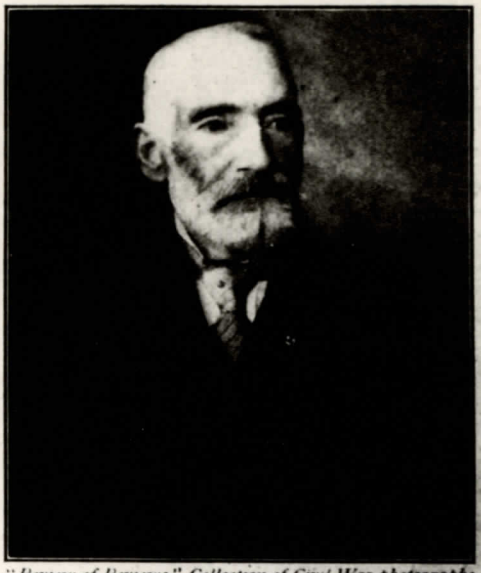
THE ACCOUNT OF THE HANGING, GIVEN BY LIEUTENANT-COLONEL CHRISTIAN RATH, THE EXECUTIONER

BY JOHN A. GRAY

"LEE had surrendered, and the great war was over; the nation had begun to think of the work of reconstruction. The air was full of hopefulness, and there was a spirit of optimism everywhere. Then came the great tragedy which plunged the nation into the greatest grief, bringing disastrous consequences to the North, and to the South consequences even more disastrous. The shooting of Lincoln by John Wilkes Booth, Booth's escape to the home of Dr. Mudd, where he had his leg set, his sojourn there for a few days, his escape in a boat across the Potomac in company with Herold, and his last stand in a barn, are matters well known to history.

"Of course, a frenzy of indignation and resentment broke out in the North. The feeling toward the South was perhaps more bitter than it had been at any time during the war. Jefferson Davis himself was suspected of being behind the plot, and soldiers were sent out to arrest him and his staff. The country was full of Secret Service men, following up every clue they could find, and putting under arrest every one who came in any way under suspicion. The old penitentiary at Washington had been used as an arsenal during the war. As the suspects were brought in, they were placed in cells in the arsenal, and guarded carefully. Davis was captured while attempting to effect an escape, and his entire staff was placed under arrest with him. His secretary, Burton Harrison, together with others of the staff, was sent to Washington, while Davis himself was sent to Fort Delaware. It was believed, as I have said, that Davis was behind the assassination of Lincoln, and that Harrison knew all about it, too. So the object was to put these two men in different prisons, where there would be no possibility of any communication between them, and where the one would not even know the whereabouts of the other.

"I was serving with General Willcox in the Ninth Army Corps, and the arsenal was in charge of General Hancock, who sent for General Hartranft to take charge of the place when the suspects began to come in. Hartranft had been a sheriff in Norristown, Pennsylvania, before the war, and Hancock, who had known him then, knew that he could manage a prison. I was well acquainted with Hartranft; we had met in many battles, and I had broken many horses for him, both of us being lovers of fine animals. I was provost-marshal for Willcox, while Hartranft had no provost-marshal; and one day I was ordered to report for duty as provost at the prison. Had I known what I would have to do there, I would never have taken the office.



"Review of Reviews" Collection of Civil War photographs

LIEUTENANT-COLONEL CHRISTIAN RATH
WHO HAD CHARGE OF THE HANGING OF MRS. SURRATT, PAYNE, HEROLD, AND ATZERODT



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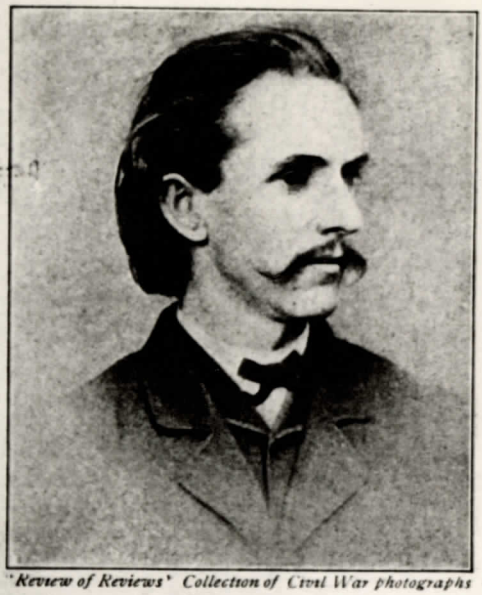
GEORGE A. ATZERODT
ONE OF THE FOUR CONSPIRATORS WHO WERE HANGED

"There were then in the prison over twenty suspects, among them Mrs. Mary Surratt, a comely widow of forty-five, who had kept a rebel house for the enemy during the war, and whose home was a rendezvous for the conspirators. There was also Herold,— a companion of Booth — Atzerodt, and Payne, all of whom were hanged; Dr. Mudd, O'Laughlin, and Arnold, each of whom was sentenced for life to Dry Tortugas; Spangler, lackey to Booth, who was sentenced to imprisonment for six years; and, of course, Burton Harrison, who was detained at Fort Delaware for a time, and was finally liberated.

"When I arrived at the prison, all the prisoners were there and the trial was about to begin. My duty was to see that no one entered the court-room without the necessary credentials; while Colonel Richard Watts, of Adrian, Michigan,— now a banker, and formerly justice of



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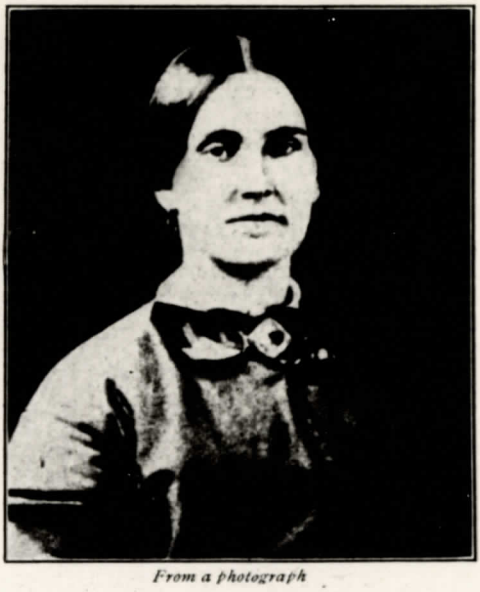
JOHN H. SURRATT

MRS. SURRATT'S SON, WHO WAS DEEPLY IMPLICATED IN THE CONSPIRACY, BUT ESCAPED FROM THE COUNTRY BEFORE THE TRIAL TOOK PLACE



From a photograph

MRS. MARY E. SURRATT

WHO WAS HANGED ON CIRCUMSTANTIAL EVIDENCE FOR COMPLICITY IN THE ASSASSINATION OF LINCOLN

the circuit court,— was acting adjutant-general, attending to all the communications between the prison and the War Department.

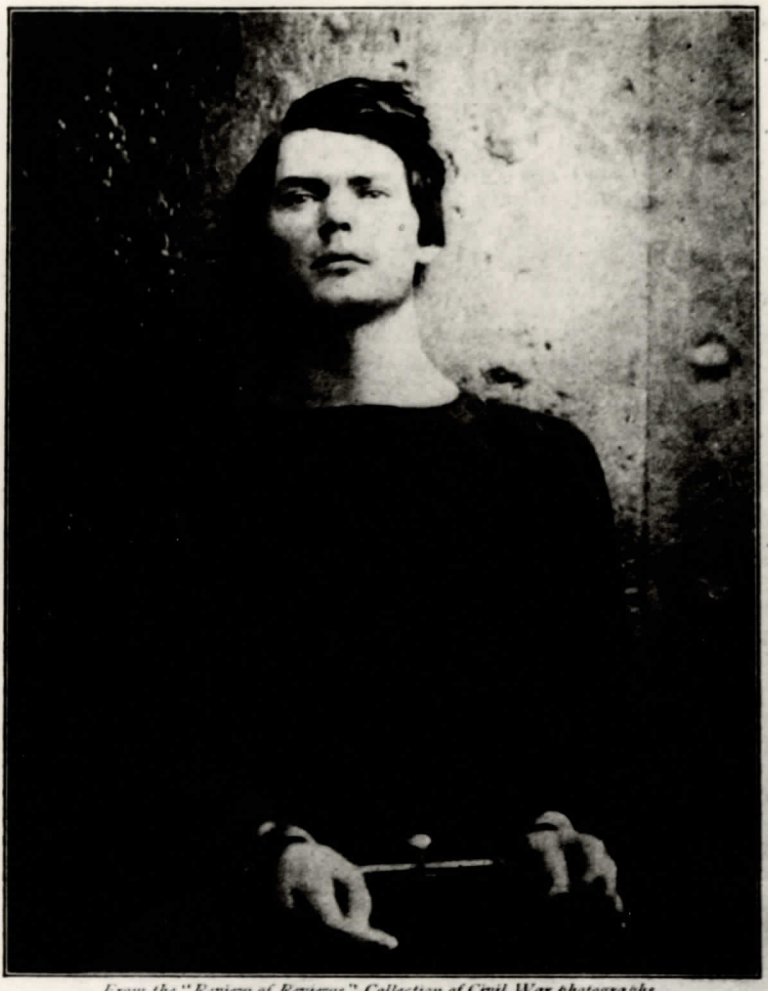
"The day that I took up my new duties, Burton Harrison was brought in as a suspect. He was immediately brought before me, and I ordered him to be searched. His dress was strangely different from the ordinary dress seen in those days. Factories had been idle for years, and few new clothes had been made, and prices had gone so high that only the very rich could afford good clothes. Harrison was well dressed from his hat to his boots; but the one thing that most attracted me was the pair of long boots he wore. I had been a shoemaker before I became a soldier, and loved to see a nice pair of leather boots. There was something about this particular pair that held my attention. When he removed them, I noticed that instead of being limber in the legs they were stiff, and besides that they were strangely heavy. I examined them, and found that the lining of the legs was padded as with metal — for protection, I imagined. Fancy my surprise when, upon opening them, there rolled out hundreds of dollars in ten-dollar gold pieces. When I looked at Harrison, he was looking at me with a fearful look in his eyes. People said in those days that when Davis made his escape with his staff, he depleted the Confederate treasury, taking all the gold, and that when he saw that capture was inevitable, he divided the money



"Review of Reviews" Collection of Civil War photographs

ANNIE SURRATT

MRS. MARY SURRATT'S DAUGHTER



From the "Review of Reviews" Collection of Civil War photographs

LEWIS PAYNE

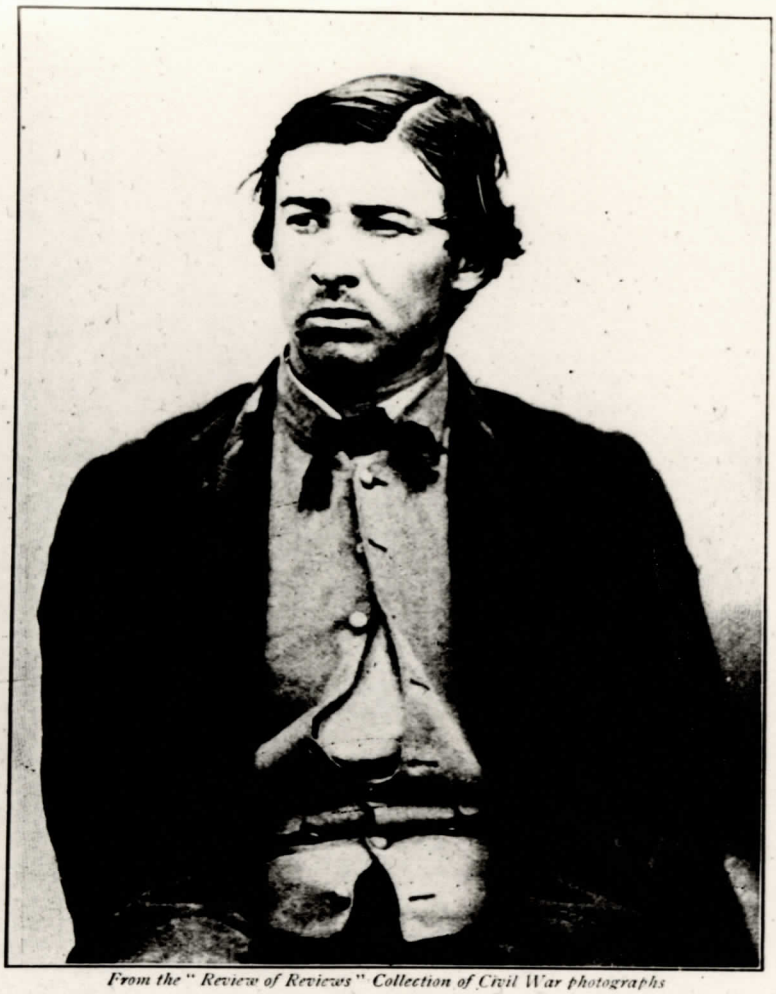
WHO ATTEMPTED TO STAB SECRETARY SEWARD TO DEATH. HE WAS HANGED IN COMPANY WITH MRS. SURRATT

among his companions. I kept the money and the boots, and forwarded them both to the War Department, where Harrison found them at the end of his prison sentence.

"I had Harrison in the arsenal for some months. One day, after the execution of the chief conspirators, I was ordered to take him to Fort Delaware. I went to him and said: 'We are going to hang you next.' He replied as coolly as could be: 'What for, Captain?' I replied: 'For the murder of Lincoln. We know that Davis was behind it, and that you were a party to it, too.' He laughed as with a light heart and said: 'If that is all you are holding me for, I'll never hang. Jeff Davis is too high-minded a man, and admired Lincoln too much, to stoop to such a trick as that; and, besides, Davis wouldn't harm any one.' All of which we afterward found to be true.

Harrison a Model Prisoner

"I was to take my prisoner to Philadelphia over the B. & O. from Washington; so I said to him: 'We are going to take you away.' He asked me where he was to go, and I told him. He said he didn't want to go, and seemed annoyed at the prospect. I explained that my orders were to take him there, and he promised he would make no attempt to get away from me. I told him to pack his traps and come for a ride on the cars. I was offered a strong guard of



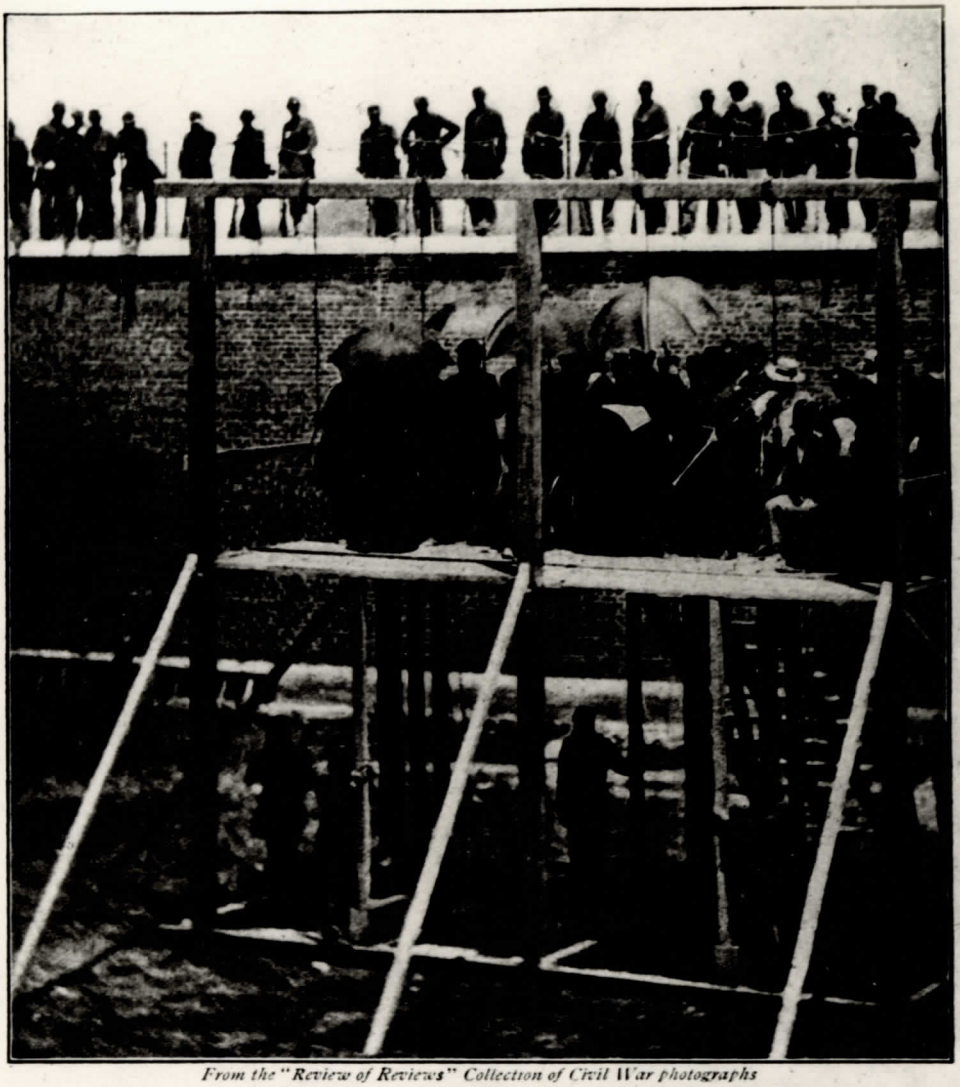
From the "Review of Reviews" Collection of Civil War photographs

DAVID E. HEROLD

WHO ACCOMPANIED BOOTH ON HIS FLIGHT THROUGH MARYLAND. HE SURRENDERED WHEN THE FEDERAL SOLDIERS SURROUNDED THE BARN IN WHICH HE AND BOOTH HAD TAKEN REFUGE

soldiers by General Hancock, but I took only one man, to wait on Harrison. I did not want any one to notice us, as the times were so unsettled. Harrison knew that I had a revolver in my pocket, and he knew I would kill him without compunction if he made an effort to escape.

"I had orders to take my prisoner to the Vine Street wharf in Philadelphia, where Captain Charles Ford, post quartermaster at Philadelphia, would meet me with transportation. We arrived at Philadelphia, but Ford did not appear. I waited around for a couple of hours, and then concluded I had better hunt him up; but I didn't know what to do with Harrison. Seeing a hospital tent flying the United States flag, I took my prisoner over, and said to the major who was in charge: 'I have Burton Harrison here, and am taking him to Fort Delaware; but I can not find my man with our transportation. Can you keep my prisoner for a while until I can look him up?' He said he had a dungeon where he kept unruly fellows who got full, so I left Harrison there. I could leave him in charge of a soldier, but not a sheriff or any other civilian. I found Ford, who had forgotten all about me. He had made arrangements for me to take a despatch-boat from the foot of the Vine Street wharf, so I went after my prisoner, and we took a street car to the pier. On the way, Harrison was glum and silent. I



From the "Review of Reviews" Collection of Civil War photographs

A PHOTOGRAPH OF THE SCAFFOLD, TAKEN DURING THE READING OF THE WARRANT

asked him what was the matter, and he replied: 'I don't think it was a bit nice of you to lock me up in a place like that, after I had given you my word of honor not to escape.' I replied: 'Harrison, I am a soldier and must obey orders.' He felt better after this, and we got on board the boat. I told the captain who my prisoner was, and told him to get us a good supper. I told him that Harrison had lived on hard-tack, pork, and coffee for two months, and could stand a good meal. The cook made raised biscuits, and real honey and good butter were placed on the table. I bade my man good-by at Fort Delaware, and returned on the despatch-boat to Philadelphia. The boat arrived at midnight, but I stayed on board till morning, when I took the train for Washington.

"Harrison was not treated as badly at the prison as he might have been. He was a model prisoner, and every one appreciated his position and respected him. He was always very anxious to get the newspaper, and after a time I let him have books and gave him all the news. We used to let him take exercise in the yard, and often sent him extra delicacies from the officers' mess.

"John Wilkes Booth alone was behind the conspiracy. His original plan was to abduct



From the "Review of Reviews" Collection of Civil War photographs

A PHOTOGRAPH OF THE SCAFFOLD, TAKEN WHILE THE NOOSES WERE BEING ADJUSTED

Lincoln and send him to Davis at Richmond as a hostage. A gang of mounted men were to surround Lincoln's carriage at a lonely spot on one of the President's drives, seize the coach, and carry Lincoln across the Potomac. The plot failed because on the night that the conspirators assembled Lincoln did not appear. Secretary Chase drove out in his stead.

"The actor made his plans to kill all the heads of the departments on the same night. Lewis Payne (Powell) was to kill Seward, John Surratt was to kill Grant, and Booth was to murder Lincoln. He called the conspirators together and revealed his plot. He wrote to O'Laughlin and Arnold, ordering them to come to Washington to participate in the triple murder. These two men had been implicated in the attempted abduction of the President, but wrote back refusing to be mixed up in the murder. This letter was afterward found among Booth's effects, and saved the lives of the pair, although they were sent to Dry Tortugas for life.

Payne Tries to Kill Himself in Prison

"Payne, on the night of Lincoln's death, knocked at the door of the Seward mansion, and found that the old man, having retired early,

was in bed. The attendant refused him admittance, but Payne pushed him aside, forced his way upstairs to the hall, and encountered Seward's son Frederick. A scuffle ensued, in which Payne, who was a giant, forced his way to Mr. Seward's room and stabbed him as he lay on the bed. He thought he had killed him, but he had only succeeded in inflicting a wound in the breast. There was great excitement, and in the confusion Payne escaped by the back door. He made his way out of the city, and hid in the trenches for some days; but, finding himself in danger of starving to death, he came in the night to Mrs. Surratt's house, and hid in the cellar, where he found plenty of food. He was found there by the officers when they came to look for him. Upon his being brought up out of the cellar, Mrs. Surratt cried to the officers: 'So help me God! I don't know the man, and didn't know he was in the house. I never set eyes on him before.' Payne also denied that she knew him, and maintained it to the last. He was taken to the prison under heavy guard, and placed in one of the cells on the main floor of the prison.

"One night the guard heard some commotion in Payne's cell, and, creeping up quietly and looking in, he found the man lying on the floor, bathed in blood. Upon investigation, he found that Payne was not dead, but had tried to beat his brains out against the bars of his cell. He was immediately placed in a padded cell; a cotton cap heavily padded with batting was put on his head, and a pair of handcuffs with a fourteen-inch iron bar were put on his wrists. The other prisoners, with the exception of the woman, were hooded in the same way. In a few days the effect of this began to tell on the men. The summer was warm and the heat told on the prisoners. Major Porter, the prison physician, was afraid they would lose their reason, so he ordered the caps removed, and then the men felt better.

"Payne never complained — no matter what you did to him, he never said a word; and I grew fond of the fellow, and was sorry for his predicament. He had been a Confederate soldier, and was wounded at the battle of Gettysburg, taken prisoner on the field, and sent to the hospital at Washington. When he became convalescent, he was paroled — upon taking an oath that he would never bear arms against the Union again. He loafed around the city, and finally fell in with Booth, being willing to do anything for the sake of the cause which he loved and believed in.

John Surratt's Long Flight

"John Surratt was a coward, and when the time came to kill Grant, he lost his nerve. Before the murder of Lincoln he escaped from the city; he fled to Canada, then to England, then to France, and from there to Italy, where he joined the Pope's army and remained a year. Then he began to talk — for he couldn't keep his mouth shut — and told his fellow soldiers who he was and that a price was on his head. He didn't know that every other nation was cooperating with the United States for the apprehension of the conspirators, and that Queen Victoria had ordered that all suspects might be arrested in Canada and taken out of country without extradition. While in the Papal Zouaves he was recognized by an acquaintance and betrayed; but the day after his arrest he broke away from the six men who were guarding him, jumped over a cliff, and made his escape. He went to Naples, and from there sailed to Egypt, but was recaptured and sent back to the United States. He was tried by a civil court; but the war was over, and the jury disagreed, so Surratt was liberated. Had he been tried by a court martial, he would surely have been hanged.

"Mrs. Mary A. Surratt was the widow of an army man, and she kept a blockade for the rebel government, as her sympathies were all that way. She had formerly owned a hotel at Surrattsville, just outside of Washington, but leased the place to a man, and took up her residence in the city, where she ran a house at which the conspirators frequently met, and where the plot was hatched. While she denied her guilt to the last, it was known that on the afternoon of Lincoln's murder she had gone to Surrattsville, and had left guns and provisions at the place, to be called for that night. It was afterward found that Booth and Herold called at the place after the murder of Lincoln and took the things away; so she was convicted on circumstantial evidence, as were all of those who were executed.

Spangler the Most Cowardly of the Prisoners

"One day they brought in a prisoner named Spangler. He had been on the stage with Booth when he shot Lincoln, and it was generally supposed that he had left open the door through which Booth escaped after the crime. We found he had been lackey to Booth for ten years, followed him like a dog, and wore his old clothes. He was a harmless fellow, a big coward, and very fond of eating. He was always hungry, and could eat anything that was placed before him. For a long time we weren't sure just what his name was; so, one day while the prisoners were exercising in the yard, I passed him, slapped him on the back, and said: 'Well,

Jenkins, how are you to-day?' He replied at once: 'My name is not Jenkins; my name is Spangler.' I have said he was a coward, and this is true. The day after the hanging, the gibbet was still standing in the yard, and when Spangler went out to the yard he turned to me and said: 'Captain, I have been in hell for twenty-four hours. I heard the condemned pass my cell; then my heart stopped beating, for I expected to be called next. I heard the drop fall, and my agony was terrible. I had no relief till supper-time, when I couldn't eat, and this hurt me worse than anything else.' Up to this time the rest of the conspirators hadn't been sentenced and didn't know their fate.

"Dr. Mudd was hard to get along with. He was never satisfied, no matter what you tried to do for him. He protested his innocence all the way through; but we knew perfectly well that he had set Booth's leg after the shooting of Lincoln, and we felt that this alone showed that he was in league with the conspirators, and that he could easily have told where Booth was, as the actor was at his home for three days. The men were allowed to go into the yard, and we listened to their conversation and learned many things that we never could have learned otherwise. They never denied their guilt among themselves, only disagreed on dates. Payne held himself aloof from the others, although they all knew one another.

Payne and the Old Slave Woman

"There was a mystery about Payne. He was a great big fellow, and as brave as a lion. One day General Hartranft said to me: 'There is a colored woman here who comes from Florida and claims she knows Payne; and she says his name is Powell, and that his father is a Baptist minister there. I will seat her in the court-room, and you bring Payne up and perhaps we can identify him.' When I took Payne upstairs, the old woman, who had been a slave, was sitting in the center of the room. As soon as she saw the prisoner, she ran to him, embracing him and calling him by endearing names. But he repulsed her, looked at her with a stolid look, and said: 'I don't know you, woman; go away.' She wept and crooned over him, and there was no doubt in my mind that he really was Powell.

"With Mrs. Surratt was arrested her daughter Annie, about seventeen years old, who was held as a material witness. Each day she was brought to the prison, so that she would be on hand in case the judge advocate wanted to see her. One day word came to send her up, and I ordered a soldier to precede her and stand in front of Mrs. Surratt, hiding her completely from her daughter. I knew there would be a scene, and that she would attempt to go to her mother, whom she had not seen for some time. When Annie returned to the waiting-room, she said to me: 'I didn't see my mother. Was she there?' I told her of my ruse, and she fell on the floor in a dead faint. I was nonplussed, for, though I had fought in twenty battles, had heard the shot and sheli, and had faced death a score of times, I had never seen any one faint. I remembered, however, that I had heard that cold water would revive any one who had fainted; so I ran from the room, got a cup of water, and sprinkled it on her face. She suddenly came to, and then such a tirade of abuse I never heard in all my life. She gave me the worst tongue-lashing I had ever had; but all I can remember of what she said was, 'You mean old Yankees.'

The Meeting between Mrs. Surratt and Her Daughter

"After the trial, an orderly came to my room one day and told me there was a young woman there to see Mrs. Surratt, with an order from the judge advocate. I went to the door and found Annie Surratt. I took her to the court-room and brought in Mrs. Surratt. General Hartranft told me to 'stay in the room and listen to all they say.' When Annie saw her mother, she threw herself on her neck, and such a torrent of weeping I have never seen. I couldn't stand it, and left the room, saying: 'I will let you have your visit alone; do as you like.' In about two hours I went back and said to the girl, 'Don't you think it is time to go home now?' She didn't say a word, but bade her mother good-by, weeping all the time. Mrs. Surratt bade her daughter keep up, and apparently was as stolid as a rock.

Afterward Annie was a daily visitor to the prison, and often ate her meals with her mother, staying nearly all day. When I returned from taking her home after that first visit to her mother, I said to the general: 'That woman is like a rock. When she saw her daughter she acted as though she hadn't any heart.' The general said: 'You think so? Then you ought to have been here when I went to take her to her cell. She collapsed, cried terribly, and we had to carry her bodily from the room.'

"Payne thought he had killed Seward, and when he was confronted by Mr. Seward in the court-room, he was amazed. I had often wondered why Payne hadn't used his revolver instead of his knife, and one day I examined the Remington army pistol in the court-room; then I understood the reason. The pin on which the

barrel revolved had got bent when it struck the bannister in the scuffle in the upper hall, and it wouldn't explode. Then, there being no time to see what was the matter with it, Payne had to use his knife.

Payne's Grim Humor on the Scaffold

"Payne had a grim sense of humor. One day we were discussing our nerve, and afterward I threw myself on the bed for a little sleep. Suddenly I awakened, feeling as if an icy hand had gripped my heart. There was Payne looking down at me, with an ugly expression on his face. I wondered how he had got out of his cell, and just then saw Lieutenant-Colonel McCall in a corner, laughing. Payne laughed, and I knew they were only trying my nerve. I was not afraid, though I was startled for a time.

"Payne's grim humor could come pretty close to being gruesome. On the death march to the gallows, Payne, who was bare-headed, took McCall's straw hat off his head and put it on his own. His head was large and the hat was too small, and he wore it until it was time to adjust the noose on his neck. It was not because of his lack of reverence, but because of his great sense of humor. He was a good fellow. We used to pitch quoits in the yard together; he was always good-natured.

"I often wished that Annie Surratt would give her mother something that would put her into everlasting sleep, but she seemed to share my hopes that her mother would be reprieved. I never mentioned this hope to the girl, and I was glad afterward that I hadn't; but I hoped right along until the last. The day before the execution, General Hartranft informed me that I would be expected to hang four. So I went to the carpenter of the arsenal, who made the army boxes, and told him what I wanted him to do. I thought he was going to faint, and he said, 'Captain, I have made everything out of wood except a gallows, and now you ask me to do that.' I told him it was necessary, and that I would give him some soldiers to help him. I drew up a draft of the gallows, and he went to work upon it. I had more trouble getting men to dig the graves. All the workmen at the arsenal were superstitious, and refused; so I got soldiers to do this work, and for coffins had boxes sent from the navy-yards. I got some rope from the navy-yards; it was 31-strand $\frac{3}{4}$-inch Boston hemp. I had been a sailor and knew the kind to get. I put seven knots in each one except one, and I only put five in that, for I fully expected that Mrs. Surratt would never hang.

"I wanted to be sure that the rope would work, so, after tying the nooses on the cross-beam of the gallows, I took a length of it out behind the prison, filled a bag with shot, and climbed out on the limb of a tree. A crowd stood around watching me, interested in the experiment. I threw the bag from the limb, first securing it to the rope. It brought up with a jerk, the limb broke off short, and I was precipitated to the ground with great force. But the rope held. I was bruised a little, but I didn't care, as my experiment had proved a success.

Payne Makes a Last Effort to Save Mrs. Surratt

"That night Payne sent for me and said: 'Captain, if I had two lives to give, I'd give one gladly to save Mrs. Surratt. I know that she is innocent, and would never die in this way if I hadn't been found in her house. She knew nothing about the conspiracy at all, and is an innocent woman.' He knew that the sentence of death had been read to her an hour before, as it had been read to all those who were to die.

"I hastily conferred with Major Eckhart, telling him what Payne had told me. We hurriedly sent word to the War Department, and in an hour had orders to take Payne's statement. Then I was filled with a great hope, and thought that the woman would be saved, after all. But I didn't communicate any of my hopes to the woman herself, and I was glad afterward that I had not.

"Each morning a hundred soldiers reported at the prison for any duty that might be assigned them. On the morning of the execution, I looked them over in order to pick out the men I wanted to help me. I chose two husky fellows to knock the posts from the platform under the drop. I instructed them in the signals, and everything went off without a hitch. Four others were chosen to place the nooses around the necks of the condemned, and I had three to lead the condemned men from their cells and bind them securely before they were executed. I had Lieutenant-Colonel McCall lead Mrs. Surratt from her cell to the gallows, as I didn't want an ordinary soldier to lay his hands on her.

"I told these men that they must volunteer their services, as I could not command them to take part in the gruesome work. I was simply overrun with volunteers; seemingly they regarded it as an honor to serve in any capacity in avenging the death of Lincoln. I told my men I would relieve them from all other duties for the day, and would, in addition, give them each a drink when the thing was over.

"All in readiness, the march to the gallows began. I had received orders from General Hartranft to execute Mrs. Surratt, Payne, Herold, and Atzerodt. The order read to have the execution take place at two o'clock, or as near thereafter as circumstances would permit. This was July 7, 1865. The execution was delayed because of the absence of General Hancock, whose presence was necessary at the hanging, and who, for some reason or other, did not appear.

The March to the Gallows

"The march to the gallows, however, was begun, and those who were in the yard saw a little gate behind the scaffold opened, and the soldiers stand at attention and at order arms. The flags were run up before each company, and the civilians bared their heads in the fierce sun. First came the woman, walking between two shaven priests. She was dressed and veiled in black, and her face could not be seen. But her carriage showed her agitation, as she staggered first against one priest and then against the other. The priests carried crosses in their hands and were reading the service of the dead. A quartet of soldiers came after, with guns at shoulders, followed by Lieutenant-Colonel McCall.

"Behind them came Atzerodt, guarded by soldiers and accompanied by a Lutheran minister. The man shambled unsteadily, shrinking from the sight of the dangling nooses. He had chains upon his ankles, and these clanked as he walked. He had a long white cap on his head, which gave him an uncanny look. An armed quartet of soldiers followed him also.

"Next came Herold, who had been Booth's attendant on the night of his crossing the Potomac. He was a mere boy, full of fear and cringing like a coward. He was attended by a minister, and followed by a guard of four soldiers, like those who preceded him.

"Last of all came Payne. He walked like a king about to be crowned, his fearless blue eyes roving carelessly over the scaffold and his yellow hair shining like a golden halo in the sun. He, too, was attended by a minister and guarded as were the others. The condemned marched up the steps to the gallows, and were seated in arm-chairs behind the drop, the dangling nooses swaying before their eyes. I wanted to give Mrs. Surratt any honor I could, so I seated her on the right, Payne next, then Herold, and the German fourth. The warrants and findings were read to the four by General Hartranft in a low voice, an umbrella being held over his head by an attendant during the reading. Another was held over Mrs. Surratt.

The Hanging

"Payne was dressed in his trousers and a close-fitting jersey shirt, open at the throat and showing his powerful neck. When the nooses had been adjusted and the caps pulled over the heads of the condemned, before I gave the signal to the men below to knock the posts from under the drop, I stepped up to Payne, tightened the noose around his neck under the cap, and said: 'Payne, I want you to die quick'; to which he replied in a soft voice without a single tremor: 'You know best, Captain.' That was the last word he ever spoke.

"When Hancock failed to put in an appearance, I was sure Mrs. Surratt would be saved. But at last he came, and, turning to me, said: 'All is ready, Captain; proceed.' I said to him: 'Her, too?' 'Yes,' he said; 'she can not be saved.' I gave the signal, the two drops fell with a sickening thud, and, as one, the four bodies shot downward and hung in mid-air. After twenty minutes Major Porter pronounced them dead, but I let them hang ten minutes longer. Then I ordered them cut down, put in the boxes, and buried. I took charge of Mrs. Surratt myself, not being willing that any hand should desecrate her. I lifted her tenderly in my arms, her limp body bending as I held it. I removed the noose from her neck, and with my own hands and alone placed her in the box. Colonel Watts, of Adrian, Michigan, placed a bottle containing the names in each of the coffins, and in an hour the terrible work of the day was at an end."

[LIEUTENANT-COLONEL CHRISTIAN RATH, who had charge of the hanging of Mrs. Surratt and her three companions, is a German by birth; he served in the Ninth Army Corps under General Hartranft, and since the close of the war has lived near Jackson, Michigan, where he has a large fruit farm and is engaged in breeding chickens. Rath had taken an oath not to tell what he knew of the Lincoln conspirators until permitted to do so by the War Department, and for forty-six years has been consistently reticent, although his friends and his neighbors and his comrades in the Grand Army Corps knew of his connection with the trial. An account by Mrs. Burton Harrison, recently published, has incited Captain Rath to tell the story as he remembers it, and his interview, given to Mr. Gray, is published here for the first time. THE EDITORS.]