cipline into effect by constant negotiations with the representatives of a majority vote, the conditions could hardly have been worse than on some of our railways.[1]

It is not only in the various modes of transportation that indications of such a period of transition are visible. The steady decrease in freight rates, giving capable employers a wider market and bringing local employers into contact with more and abler competitors than they had known before, has made the "pace" in manufacturing so fast that it can be endured in the long run only by those who are able to manage very large establishments, supply very wide markets, and make profits from many sales at low prices, rather than from a few sales at high prices. All these conditions have brought temptations and opportunities for discord parallel with those offered in transportation, and they have had much the same results. These results have had their good side. The patriarchal features of employment have gone; and, picturesque as they were, it is more than probable that the industrial world will be the better for their absence. The workman will no longer be either child or ward, to be cared for and coerced for his own good, but a man with all a man's rights and responsibilities. But the change will for a long time bring its own embarrassments.

It must be, however, that as managers and men become more accustomed to the wider fields, new conditions will bring their own traditions. Some railroads have never lost or even suspended them, for they have progressively accommodated their system to the changing conditions around it. They have still trained their own men and trusted them; and strikes and lockouts have been alike unknown. But their generosity in anticipating and providing for the material needs of their men now comes not as a charity, but as a recognition of the men's share in making the company's prosperity. Other forms of industry have brought employer and employee closer together by the various types of profit-sharing.

Is there not fair reason to hope that these are the coming forms of employment? That loyalty in employment is not dead, but is rising to higher and better forms? That it is no longer to be the mere loyalty of the employee to the employer who provides for and protects him, but the mutual loyalty of employer and employee — their common adherence to the high standards set by the traditions of the service? And that the troubles of the past few years have been but one phase of industrial progress, a step towards a better and fairer conjunction of labor and capital?

OPEN LETTERS.

Judge Holt and the Lincoln Conspirators.

IN the "New York Tribune" of September 2, 1873, there appeared an anonymous communication, written from Washington under the signature of "Truth," so grossly calumnious of General Joseph Holt, Judge Advocate General in the trial of the assassins of President Lincoln, that he demanded the name of the author, who proved to be John T. Ford, of Ford's Theater, where the fearful tragedy was enacted, and who, at the time, was committed to the Carroll Prison, where he was kept — on suspicion, it is presumed — over a month, when he was liberated without being brought to trial. Naturally enough, perhaps, he harbored a strong prejudice against General Holt, and sought to defame his character under cover through the press. Among other things he accused General Holt with having kept Mrs. Surratt "heavily manacled during her trial, and also of virtually depriving her of reputable counsel" — referring to the Hon. Reverdy Johnson, who, as clearly appears by his argument, which was upon the question of jurisdiction, voluntarily withdrew, leaving the case in the hands of his associate counsel, Messrs. Clampitt and Aiken. General Holt met the other charge by a letter, addressed to him, under date of September 4, 1873, from General J. F. Hartranft, who, referring to Ford's article in the "Tribune," said:

> I think it proper, in justice to you, to declare publicly that its statements, so far as they relate to occurrences within my own observation, are absolute falsehoods. As marshal of the court before whom the conspirators were tried, I had charge of Mrs. Surratt before, during, and after the time of her trial, in all a period of about two months, during which she never had a manacle or manacles on either hands or feet; and the thought of manacling her was not, to my knowledge, ever entertained by any one in authority.

One would suppose that proof so conclusive ought to set forever at rest the "manacle" charge; and as regards the reference to Reverdy Johnson, it is plain beyond doubt that "had he desired to continue in the case, assuredly there was no power that could have prevented him from doing so."

Yet, notwithstanding this and the overwhelming testimony on the other more serious and wanton charge against General Holt of withholding from President Johnson the recommendation of five members of the court that the sentence of Mrs. Surratt be commuted to imprisonment in the penitentiary, John. T. Ford appears again in the "North American Review" for April, 1889, in an article reiterating the falsehoods of his anonymous communication, and trying to show that General Holt was guilty of withholding from President Johnson the aforesaid recommendation of Mrs. Surratt to mercy.

Now, in as brief a manner as possible, I will recite some of the stronger evidence, clearly proving the falsity of this last charge, made first before President Johnson's term expired, and afterwards by Johnson himself, when he was seeking "to curry favor with the South in the hope of being elected to the presidency." He did not dare to make the charge while he was at the head of the Government, because he knew if he did that General Holt would instantly *demand*, as he did ask for, in 1866, a court of inquiry, which the President declined to order, and that all the facts and circumstances of the case would come out. General Holt, I think, took little, if any, public notice of this slander until he found it had received the indorsement

[1] Professor Hadley attributes a recent increase in railway accidents to this employment of new men, citing in evidence the fact that "in the majority of detailed railroad reports we find some allusion to increased wages as an important element in expense." He attributes it, however, to "the special demand for railroad labor," due to "the larger proportionate amount of local traffic under the operation of the Inter-State Commerce Act," or, more commonly, to unhealthy competition and abnormally low freight rates. ("Quarterly Journal of Economics," January, 1889, pp. 174, 175.)

of ex-President Johnson, when in a communication, published in the "Washington Daily Chronicle" of August 26, 1873, he produced the most incontrovertible proof that "President Johnson had knowledge of, considered, and commented on the recommendation of Mrs. Surratt to clemency by members of the court before her execution." It had been publicly asserted that President Johnson approved the findings of the court "without having seen the recommendation or known of its existence," although it was known, of course, to every member of the court, and it was also made known to Secretary Stanton, both by General Holt and by Judge Bingham, one of the special judge-advocates in the trial, immediately after the close of the trial. In his answer to General Holt (see "Washington Daily Chronicle" of November 12, 1873) Mr. Johnson undertakes to support his assertion that he never saw that recommendation by showing that it was omitted in Pittman's authorized publication of the proceedings of the trial. But this omission was fully explained. It arose simply from the fact, as stated by Col. H. L. Burnett, special judge-advocate, who superintended the publication, that "the recommendation to mercy constituted properly no part of the record of the trial," and was not therefore furnished by him to Pittman for his book. In a letter of December 22, 1873, to General Holt (see "Washington Daily Chronicle," December 1, 1873) Mr. Pittman also says, "The recommendation in favor of Mrs. Surratt was not inserted in my book for the reason that it formed no part of the proceedings of the trial; it was not mentioned at any open session."

Judge Bingham says:

Before the President had acted on the case I deemed it my duty to call the attention of Secretary Stanton to the petition for the commutation of sentence upon Mrs. Surratt, and did call his attention to it before the final action of the President. . . . After the execution I called upon Secretaries Stanton and Seward and asked if this petition had been presented to the President before the death sentence was by him approved, and was answered by each of those gentlemen that the petition was presented to the President and was duly considered by him and his advisers before the death sentence upon Mrs. Surratt was approved, and that the President and the Cabinet, upon such consideration, were a unit in denying the prayer of the petition; Mr. Seward and Mr. Stanton stating that they were present.

Attorney-General James Speed, in a letter to General Holt, March 30, 1873, says:

After the finding of the military commission that tried the assassins of Mr. Lincoln, and before their execution, I saw the record of the case in the President's office, and attached to it was a paper, signed by some of the members of the commission, recommending that the sentence against Mrs. Surratt be commuted to imprisonment for life; and, according to my memory, the recommendation was made because of her sex. I do not feel at liberty to speak of what was said in Cabinet meetings. In this I know I differ from other gentlemen, but feel constrained to follow my own sense of propriety.

James Harlan, Secretary of the Interior, states positively that "after the sentence and before the execution of Mrs. Surratt, I remember distinctly the discussion of the question of the commutation of the sentence of death pronounced on her by the court to imprisonment for life, had by members of the Cabinet, in the presence of President Johnson." He thinks there were only three or four members present, and when he entered the subject was under warm discussion. He does not remember hearing read in Cabinet meeting any part of the record of the trial or the recommendation of clemency, but says he was "told that the whole case had been carefully examined by the Attorney-General and the Secretary of War," the two Cabinet officers more immediately concerned, officially, in the matter. At this period Mr. Harlan was the editor of the "Chronicle," and in reference to the recommendation to mercy he said, "Had such a paper been presented, it is, in our opinion, hardly probable that it would, under the circumstances, have induced him to interfere with the regular course of justice."

James M. Wright, at the time Chief Clerk of the Bureau of Military Justice, states that when President Johnson sent a messenger to General Holt requesting him to bring the papers before him for his action, the recommendation for mercy was among them, in plain sight, and that when the case came back through the Adjutant-General's office it remained attached to the other papers.

General R. D. Mussey, President Johnson's private secretary, says, "On the Wednesday evening previous to the execution (which was Friday, July 7, 1865) Mr. Johnson said to me that he was going to look over the findings of the court with Judge Holt, and should be busy and could see no one." Two or three hours afterwards, Mr. Johnson came out of the room where he had been in conference with General Holt and said to him (General Mussey) that "the papers had been looked over and a decision reached." General Mussey continues:

I am very confident, though not absolutely assured, that it was at this interview Mr. Johnson told me that the court had recommended Mrs. Surratt to mercy on the ground of her sex (and age, I believe). But I am certain he did so inform me about that time, and that he said he thought the grounds urged insufficient, and that he had refused to interfere; that if she was guilty at all, her sex did not make her any the less guilty; that he, about the time of her execution, justified it; that he told me that there had not been "women enough hanged in this war."

General James A. Ekin, one of the commissioners in the trial, relates, under date of August 26, 1867, a conversation he had with General Holt soon after the trial, in which he states that General Holt told him

that the entire case, including all papers, had been placed before the President, and that his particular attention had been directed to the recommendation of certain members for the commutation of the sentence of Mrs. Surratt; that the President had carefully scrutinized and fully considered the case, including the recommendation to mercy on behalf of Mrs. Surratt; but that he could not accede to or grant the petition, for the reason that there was no class in the South more violent in the expression and practice of treasonable sentiments than the rebel women, etc.

General H. L. Burnett, in an address before the Loyal Legion, New York, on the 3d of April, 1889, published in the "New York Tribune" of the next day, in giving an account of the trial and explaining why the recommendation for clemency to Mrs. Surratt did not appear in Pittman's book, said:

When I reached my office from the War Department on June 30, or possibly on the morning of July 1, I attached the petition for mercy to the findings and sentences, and at the end of them. I carried the findings and sentences, and the petition or recommendation, and delivered them to the Judge Advocate General in person; and I never saw the record again until many years after, I think in 1873 or 1874. After Judge Holt's interview with the President, on July 5, the former came to Mr. Stanton's office in the War Department. I was with Mr.

Stanton when Judge Holt came in. He said, "I have just come from a conference with the President over the proceedings of the military commission." "Well," asked Mr. Stanton, "what has he done?" "He has approved the findings and sentence of the court," replied Judge Holt. "What did he say about the recommendation to mercy of Mrs. Surratt?" "He said that she must be punished with the rest; that no reasons were given for his interposition by those asking for clemency in her case, except age and sex."

Now, is there a fair-minded person living who would require more or better proof that the recommendation for the commutation of the sentence of Mrs. Surratt to imprisonment for life was in President Johnson's office, and that the question was fully considered by him in conference with several, if not with all, of the members of his Cabinet before the day of execution? True, no one states that he actually saw it in the President's hands, though Judge Bingham says both Secretaries Stanton and Seward told him it was presented to him and duly considered before the death sentence was approved. But Attorney-General Speed, a direct eyewitness, could, had he chosen to speak, have made this fact certain beyond doubt or cavil. Mr. Ford professes amazement at General Holt's anxiety for more detailed testimony from Mr. Speed, as indicated by their correspondence on the subject in the "North American Review" for July, 1888. I am myself free to confess that I do not think any additional proof whatever is at all necessary for General Holt's complete vindication; but Mr. Speed had been a lifelong friend of his, and knowing that he saw the aforesaid recommendation in the President's own hands, is it strange he should insist that he should tell him so? He may be, and is, I think, over-sensitive. In his preface to Pittman's book of the trial, Major Ben: Perley Poore, who unwittingly repeats the false newspaper manacle story, observes, "General Holt is an inflexibly upright administrator of justice, yet humanities have a large place in his heart"; and General Mussey, speaking of the call made by General Holt at the White House on the morning of the execution, when Miss Surratt was there and the President had refused to see her or any one in her mother's behalf,—overruling, also, at the same time, Judge Wylie's writ of habeas corpus,—says, "I shall never lose the impression made upon me of your [General Holt's] deep pity for her [Miss Surratt] and of the pain which her distress caused you." But will Mr. Ford or any other of General Holt's persistent calumniators be so kind as to state why General Holt should have been so anxious for Mr. Speed to tell the whole truth, had he not known, beyond the remotest question, that it would have been conclusive testimony in his favor? Would he have asked Mr. Speed to say more than he did say, if he had had the least doubt on that point? Surely not.

It is not the purpose of this article to go into the evidence regarding either Mrs. Surratt's guilt or innocence; but I cannot refrain from brief comment on the following quotation from Mr. Ford's article, wherein, referring to Mrs. Surratt, he says:

The very man of God who shrived her soul for eternity was said to be constrained to promise that she should not communicate with the world. As the poor martyr walked in her shroud to the scaffold, it is also said that she begged the priest by her side to let her tell the people "she was innocent." She was told that "the Church was permitted only to prepare her soul for eternity; that already she was dead to all else."

This looks strangely, to say the least; and I am reminded by it that it was just this which the late John M. Brodhead, Second Comptroller of the Treasury, once told me was, in his view, conclusive proof of Mrs. Surratt's guilt. He believed that had not the priest known from her confession that she was guilty, he would never have prohibited her from declaring her innocence, but would himself have insisted on it to the last moment. One thing is certain, there was no man living who more firmly believed in her guilty participation in the assassination of Abraham Lincoln than President Johnson, who, in commenting on the appeals made to him for clemency, said at the time to Rev. J. George Butler of St. Paul's Church, Washington, that "he could not be moved; for, in his own significant language, '*Mrs. Surratt kept the nest that hatched the egg.*'"

I have observed that General Holt at one time asked for a court of inquiry. It was in September, 1866. In his answer, November 14, 1866, Edwin M. Stanton, Secretary of War, wrote to "Brevet Major-General Holt, Judge Advocate General," as follows:

Your letter of the 11th of September applying for a court of inquiry upon certain imputations therein mentioned as made against you, of official misconduct in relation to the prosecution of Mrs. Surratt and others charged with the assassination of the late President, Abraham Lincoln, and in the preparation of testimony against Jefferson Davis and others, charged with complicity in said crime, has been submitted to the President (Johnson), who deems it unnecessary for your vindication to order a court of inquiry.

In communicating the President's decision, it is proper for me to express my own conviction that all charges and imputations against your official conduct are, in my judgment, groundless. So far as I have any knowledge or information, your official duties as judge advocate general, in the cases referred to, and in all others, have been performed fairly, justly, and with distinguished ability, integrity, and patriotism, and in strict conformity with the requirements of your high office and the obligations of an officer and a gentleman.

WASHINGTON, D. C. *Horatio King.*

Boston Corbett.

THE authors of the "Life of Lincoln," in their description of the pursuit of Booth and his death in Garrett's barn, say:

Booth, who was clearly visible by the flames through the cracks in the building, was shot by Boston Corbett, a sergeant of cavalry, a soldier of a gloomy and fanatical disposition, which afterwards developed into insanity.

I was a member of the 16th New York Cavalry, and well acquainted with Corbett, and I feel a grave injustice is done him in the above description of his disposition. He was intensely religious, and was actuated by his convictions of duty under all circumstances. This frequently drew upon him the jeers and insults of the coarser and more reckless spirits of the regiment, but their persecution never deterred him from doing what he conceived to be his duty. If this was being a gloomy fanatic then he was one, but in no other sense.

My recollection of him—and we soldiers learned to know one another as we roughed it together on picket and on scout—is the very opposite to this. I have never known a person so cheerful and heroic under circumstances of intense suffering and great provocation. His example has been a source of inspiration to me through all the years since last we parted. I well remember he allowed himself to be reduced to the ranks and suffer a humiliating and cruel punishment

rather than withdraw a charge, which he believed to be true, that he had made against an officer. He was actuated by his convictions then, and I believe he was inspired by the same high motive when he fired the shot that slew the assassin of Lincoln. He believed it was better to disable Booth — for that was his intention — than to permit him to shoot Lieutenant Doherty, which evidently in another moment he would have done.

I have read with intense and ever-increasing interest the "Life of Abraham Lincoln," and as it is destined to become a classic and make history, even the most humble individual who appears in its pages should have dealt out to him a full meed of justice. I am sure no persons have a more earnest desire for this than the authors.

Austin Potter,
Late Sergeant Co. G, 16th N. Y. Cavalry.

METHODIST PARSONAGE, DUNGANNON, ONTARIO.

An Anecdote of the Blairs.

MR. FRANCIS P. BLAIR, SR., already a prominent figure in national history in the days of Andrew Jackson, was the father of Montgomery Blair in the Cabinet of Mr. Lincoln, of Frank P. Blair, Jr., a major-general in the Union army and the commander of a corps of Sherman's forces in his famous march from Atlanta to the sea, and father-in-law of S. P. Lee, an admiral in the United States navy.

It was the daily habit of Mr. and Mrs. Blair, each of them then approaching their eightieth year, to ride around the country, along the byways, and off the public roads. This couple were known by all the country folks for miles away from their home, which was at Silver Spring, the famous and historic spot where the destiny of so many men in public life was fixed or changed. The roads leading into the city of Washington were well guarded; so well, that the pickets were very near each other. These pickets were changed every day, and of course the guards who saw this couple ride one day and who had become acquainted with them would be displaced on the morrow and new men would take their places. It so happened that Mr. Blair had adopted the idea of wearing a short green veil over and around his high hat, so as to shade his eyes in the strong sunlight which was reflected from the sandy roads under a summer sun. For the same reason, Mrs. Blair wore a bonnet coming far over her face and hiding her features. In this odd and unique style of dress they roamed and rode at will, far and near, as they had both been accustomed to do for a quarter of a century preceding.

It so chanced that one picket, who happened to be on duty a number of times at different places, was struck with the queer appearance of the couple, which did not at all comport with the fine-blooded horses they rode,[1] and becoming gravely suspicious, he determined to report them at headquarters as worthy of being looked after. This done, the order went out the next day that this was a case to be carefully examined, as many spies were known to be prowling about in search for news to be sent across the lines to the enemy. A sagacious and faithful man was specially detailed on a certain day to guard a particular road which it was known the "suspects" must take on their return across the country. When the suspicious couple at length came in sight of this picket, after the order "Halt!" had been given, the usual questions were put, as follows: "Where are you from?" "Where are you going?" "Have you anything contraband about you?" etc. All these inquiries being responded to in a satisfactory way the picket then broke out abruptly with other questions not on the regular list, and began thus, "Well, who are you, anyway?" The old gentleman, who up to this time had done all the talking on his side and had responded to all inquiries, and who had much quiet humor in him, turned to his wife with the remark, "Betty, who are we?" With a smile the old lady turned to the picket and replied, "Well, guard, what would you think if I said we had a son who is a Cabinet minister, and another son who is a major-general, and another son who—" The guard, not waiting for any more, quickly interrupted with the retort, "And I suppose you will say another son who is an admiral!" "Yes," responded the old lady, "an admiral, also." "Well, now, old woman, that is coming it a little too strong. If you had left out the admiral, I might have believed you; but as it is, I think you are both subjects for the headquarters; and so come along." There was no course but submission, and the three rode along some distance, the prisoners in front of their captor, and all the way the latter kept a watchful eye upon the supposed spies.

At length a group of officers approached, each making a salute and halting to speak to the captured rebels. "Why," said one of these officers to Mr. Blair, "what does this mean? You in the hands of a military guard? One might suppose you were prisoners and on your way to headquarters." "Well," said Mr. Blair, "so we are." The officer, quickly turning to the soldier, demanded to know what he had been doing. Much abashed and crestfallen, he explained to his commander in an undertone, "Well, sir, when I questioned the old man I believed him to be all right; but when the old woman told her darned story about her having one son in the Cabinet, and one son a major-general, and then on top of that added another son an admiral, I thought she was yarning, and I would not believe anything but that they were real spies, and I arrested them on the spot."

I tell the story as it was told to me by Mr. Blair himself immediately after the incident.

Eliza Clagett Allen.

NEW YORK CITY.

"The White League of New Orleans."

A LETTER has been received by the editor from Mr. F. R. Southmayd, formerly of New Orleans but now residing in Chicago, in which he refers to Mr. Cable's story, "The Haunted House in Royal Street," published in THE CENTURY for August, 1889. He denies that the White League ever had a badge of any kind. He also says that it "was not the organization of a political party"; also that the purpose of the White League, as declared in the second article of its constitution, was to "support the constitutions of the United States and of the State of Louisiana, and to

[1] Mrs. Blair, who was a superb equestrian even up to the year of her death, at this time was riding "Black Shaggard," the war-charger used by Major-General George A. Stoneman in his renowned raid around Lee's army and afterwards presented by him to General Frank P. Blair, Jr., who gave it to his aged mother.

Century Magazine
Vol XXXIX No 6
April, 1890