

THE ASSASSINATION OF LINCOLN

Mr. Frederick Stone, a Democratic member of Congress from Maryland, a grandson of William Stone, who signed the Declaration of Independence, and a distant kinsman of Moncure Conway, who is connected with the same Stone family, was counsel for Payne, the assassin, who almost killed Mr. Seward. After an interview with Payne, Mr. Stone made this statement, which is now printed for the first time in a letter to the Chicago Tribune:

That fellow is the most extraordinary and irredeemable ruffian in Christendom. He is built like a gigantic savage, has no idea of fear, possesses no sensibilities, and wants to die with promptitude. He said to me, " I don't want a trial; I deserve to be hanged and expect it. I don't want to be led out into court every day with chains on my legs and a daily hurrah. I meant to kill that old Seward, and how I failed I can't imagine. I believe I was right in trying to kill him, and all I regret is that I didn't kill him. First I went at him with my knife, and then with my pistol butt; if I had possessed anything else I should have finished him."

Mr. Stone asked him the extent and nature of the conspiracy.

X " It was a plan to carry off Lincoln and give him up to the confederates," said Payne; "but when that failed, Booth, who was the only one in earnest, proposed to kill Lincoln and all the Cabinet. All the rest backed out and scattered like a lot of beggars. We never heard of Surratt, of Arnold, or any of them again. I told Booth that I would go in with him, and he preferred to kill Lincoln, while I was set upon Seward. (If Atzerodt or Herold were in the matter, they were mere hangers-on.) I deserve to be killed, and so does Booth. The rest were women and babies." X

Mr. Stone's account of Payne will not be doubted by any one who saw him at his trial; but the correctness of the ruffian's statement about Surratt, &c., may be questioned.