

# THE ASSASSINATION.

## Hanging of Mrs. Surratt, Payne, Harrold and Atzerodt.

### They are Executed Simultaneously.

### Attempt to Reprive Mrs. Surratt.

### The President Suspends the Writ of Habeas Corpus.

### LAST HOURS OF THE CONDEMNED

### SCENES AT THE SCAFFOLD.

Special Dispatch to The N. Y. Tribune.

WASHINGTON, Friday, July 7, 1865.

The curtain has fallen on the last act of the great conspiracy drama, and Mrs. Surratt, Payne, Harrold, and Atzerodt, the unfortunate victims of the arch assassin Booth, have gone to their reward. If even the most charitable concede to the authors of such heinous crimes the pardon of a forgiving Heaven.

General Hancock was hotly besieged last night and this forenoon for cards of admission, but adhered to his purpose to admit only those who desired to be present as a matter of business instead of curiosity. In consequence the assemblage inside the walls of the jail-yard was not large, being composed of a detachment of the 1st regiment of Hancock's Corps, selected to act as guard on the occasion, representatives of the press and a few other citizens to whom the privilege of being present had been specially accorded.

For a long time previous to the executions, sobbings and cries were heard issuing from the grated window fronting the jail yard to the south, which attracted a large group of the reportorial corps, who were assiduously engaged in noting down every trifling circumstance coming under their limited observation.

To the north of the corridor in a cell, Atzerodt in conversation with his former mistress, could be distinctly seen. He frequently used his handkerchief to remove the perspiration from his face, and occasionally sobbed quietly, as she addressed him, apparently in a feeling manner. None of the other prisoners were visible. In the main hall or corridor slowly strode a number of military officers, among whom the fine figure of Gen. Hancock appeared at intervals, going to and from the cells of the condemned, or giving necessary instructions to his officers.

The cries issuing from the cells were those of the sisters of Harrold and the daughter of Mrs. Surratt, whose grief was naturally enough affecting and uncontrollable.

Thus passed the interval from 10 till 2 p. m., the sentries in the meantime slowly pacing their beats in a thoughtful mood, as if they dreaded the awful scene soon to be enacted and would feel relieved as soon as it was over; the blue coats on the walls looking down silently upon the scaffold below and everyone exhibiting the greatest decorum and seeming to be duly impressed with the overawing solemnity of the occasion.

From the cupola of a detached building a large crowd looked down into the jail-yard, while Gardner, the photographer, with his instruments posted in the old shoe shop building, was industriously engaged in preparations for obtaining numerous views of the group about to appear on the scaffold.

At ten minutes to 1 o'clock Gen. Hancock personally posted the sentries around the scaffold, and the outer guard were ordered to come to "attention," preparatory to the appearance of the prisoners.

At precisely 1 o'clock, Gen. Hartranft and Staff emerged from the Prison, and in a moment after were followed by the condemned.

Mrs. Surratt came first, dressed in black, supported on either side by an officer, and followed by her spiritual advisers, Fathers Walter and Wiget of the Catholic Church. She wore a black bonnet and veil as on the trial, and had to be almost entirely supported by the officers attending her.

Next came Atzerodt, also necessarily supported by a soldier on either side, and dressed about as he was on the trial, and bare-headed. He was attended by his spiritual advisers, the Rev. Dr. Butler, of the Lutheran Church, and the Rev. Mr. Winchester, Chaplain of Douglas Hospital.

Then came Harrold, dressed in his ordinary prison clothes, with a slouch cloth hat on, the brim being turned down. He, too, was much prostrated and had to be supported by a soldier on either side. He was followed by the Rev. Dr. Olds of Christ Church, Navy-Yard, and the Rev. Mr. Vaux, Chaplain, United States Army.

Payne alone came bold and erect, without any support, a guard walking on either side of him. He was dressed in a blue shirt and pants, with a rather jaunty straw hat on, and was followed by his spiritual advisers, the Rev. Dr. Gillette of the Thirteenth-st. Baptist Church, and other attendants.

Payne alone of the prisoners ascended the scaffold without the support of his attendants. Four wooden arm-chairs had been placed there for the reception of the prisoners, and they were seated as follows, facing West: Mrs. Surratt, on the North next to the prison; Payne sat next; Harrold next, and Atzerodt next; Mrs. Surratt and Payne opposite one drop, and Harrold and Atzerodt opposite the other, the five-eighths manilla rope, with its ominous noose, dangling before each respectively, the nooses reaching to within an average of eighteen inches from the floor.

On the prisoners being seated, or rather sinking into their chairs, the finding and sentence of the Military Commission, as approved by the President and already published, was read in a clear, calm voice by Major Gen. Hartranft, standing in the middle of the platform.

The appearance of the prisoners as they sat there in a row facing the West, and the crowd and Gardner's photographic instruments peering from the upper windows of an opposite building, and the ropes swaying in the breeze immediately before them, was that of agony ineffable. The thought came rushing upon the mind of the spectator: "Oh! what would they not give if they could undo the fatal acts that have consigned them to this agony and infamy!"

Mrs. Surratt was very much prostrated, and seemed to be kept alive almost entirely by the spiritual consolations of her advisers, who were unremitting in their attentions until the end.

After the reading of the sentence by Gen. Hartranft, Rev. Dr. Gillette stepped forward in behalf of Payne, and stated that he had been requested by the prisoner, Lewis Thornton Powell, alias Payne, to publicly, on this occasion return his sincere thanks to Gen. Hartranft and the officers and men under his command for their uniform kindness toward him during his confinement. Not one unkind word, look or gesture had been given him by any one of them.

The Reverend Doctor then led in a fervent prayer in behalf of the prisoner, in which the latter followed, closing with a feeling Amen, his eyes at the same time filling with tears. Payne throughout wore an air of

fortitude as well as courage, and thereby excited the pity of the spectators fully as much as any of the other prisoners who were more unnerved.

The spiritual advisers of Harrold and Atzerodt also returned the thanks of their charges respectively to Gen. Hartranft and his officers and men, for their uniform kindness; and joined in prayer with the prisoners in succession. Dr. Butler preceding his in the case of Atzerodt with an impressive exhortation.

During all this time the advisers of Mrs. Surratt were assiduous in their attentions to her, and by their consolations kept her measurably nerved up for the terrible denouement. She appeared—bating her unavoidable prostration—passive in their hands and resigned to her fate.

On the conclusion of the prayer in the case of Atzerodt, which was the last, the prisoners were led forward, supported by their respective attendants, and the ropes adjusted around the neck by different persons. About the same time Mrs. Surratt seemed, by a desperate mental effort, to nerve herself up specially for this occasion, looking forward and around her, for the only time, with an air of mingled determination and resignation. Her bonnet and veil were removed previous to the putting of the noose upon her neck.

Payne held back his head and was particular about having the noose adjusted and secured by tightening above his "Adam's apple," as if it had been the adjustment of a cravat for a festive occasion.

Harrold and Atzerodt, during the process of adjusting the ropes, looked as if experiencing ineffable agony, as well as Mrs. Surratt, who was now bordering on a fainting condition and was kept conscious only by the assiduous fanning and other attentions of her attendants. Payne stood erect and unsupported, and he alone, it was said by one of the spiritual advisers, had come upon the scaffold without indulgence in stimulants, which he had steadily refused, saying that he wished to die with an unclouded mind.

At the conclusion of the address of Atzerodt's spiritual attendant and his deeply solemn and feeling petition to Heaven for Divine clemency, he was conducted to the drop by his attendants, and while the white cotton band were being tied about his legs and arms, exhibited great weakness and emotion, being scarcely able to remain in an erect position. The noose was then placed about his neck, and previous to its final adjustment he addressed a few inaudible words to his executioner, and the rope was removed. Gen. Hartranft then approached, when Atzerodt evidently repeated his request, and the noose was then drawn over his head, when he exclaimed in a terrified voice: "Gentlemen, take warn," probably intending to say, what his agonized feelings prevented him from expressing: "Gentlemen, take warning by my example."

A moment after and he tremulously ejaculated, "Good bye, gentlemen, who are before me now." And, after a short interval, added, "May we all meet in the other world."

As the rope was being adjusted to his neck, and just before the drop fell, he cried out in rather a loud voice, "Don't choke me." These were the last words he uttered, which were succeeded by several audible groans.

At this juncture the nooses and white caps having all been adjusted, Capt. Rath, Assistant Provost-Marshal, having immediate charge of the execution, stepped in front of the scaffold, on the ground, and motioned to all attendants on the scaffold to step back off the drops, which they did, the proper ones still reaching forward and supporting their charges respectively on the drops.

Immediately on this movement being accomplished, Capt. Rath also gave the signal for the props to be knocked from under, which was done by a swinging scantlin for each shoved longitudinally, and the four conspirators, having fallen about five feet each, were left dangling spasmodically in the air. The contortions of Payne were the greatest, attributable to his highest physical condition. Harrold died next hardest. The deaths of Mrs. Surratt and Atzerodt were comparatively easy. Mrs. Surratt



on falling, made a convulsive effort to bring her hands around her right side in front of her and they remained in such contorted position until she was cut down.

After the convulsions of all were over, Mrs. Surratt, Payne and Atzerodt hung with their heads bent forward, while that of Harrold inclined back, which latter was said by experts to be the only execution on correct principles.

To the Associated Press.

WASHINGTON, Friday, July 7, 1865.

This morning Judge Wylie granted an application of the counsel of Mrs. Surratt for a writ of habeas corpus commanding Major-Gen. Hancock to produce the body of Mrs. Surratt before the Court. The writ was returnable at 10 o'clock, but nearly two hours after that time Gen. Hancock entered the court accompanied by Attorney-General Speed, who apologized for the apparent delay in making a return on the part of the General, as it was unavoidable. He then proceeded to read the return, in which Gen. Hancock said the body of Mrs. Surratt was in his possession under and by virtue of an order from President Johnson for the purpose expressed, &c., which order is as follows:

EXECUTIVE OFFICE, July 7, 1865.

To Major-Gen. W. S. HANCOCK, Commanding, &c.,  
I, Andrew Johnson, President of the United States, do hereby declare that the writ of habeas corpus has been heretofore suspended in such cases as this; and I do hereby specially suspend this writ, and direct that you proceed to execute the order heretofore given upon the judgment of the Military Commission; and you will give this order in return to this writ.

ANDREW JOHNSON, President.

The Court remarked that no further steps would be taken in the matter. Attorney-Gen. Speed briefly rejoined, commenting upon the distinction between the civil and military jurisdiction, showing the utter impossibility of fighting battles, carrying on war, maintaining the Government in times of war, &c., by process of law.

Early to day guards were placed all round the arsenal grounds to prevent the intrusion of persons to the scene of execution, none being admitted excepting those previously supplied with tickets by Major-Gen. Hancock.

The relatives of Mrs. Surratt and Harrold spent several hours with them during the forenoon, and they were also attended by their spiritual advisers, as were also Payne and Atzerodt.

A few minutes after 1 o'clock the outer prison door was opened, and Mrs. Surratt was supported on her way to the gallows by two military officers. Next followed Atzerodt, Harrold and Payne, accompanied by a guard and their respective ministers of the gospel. Front seats were provided for them on the platform in the following order: Mrs. Surratt, Payne, Harrold and Atzerodt. The officers intrusted with the execution and the ministers occupied intermediate positions. Major-Gen. Hartranft, who has been, from the commencement, in charge of the prisoners, came forward and read an order from the War Department, a ready published, approving the sentences and ordering the penalty of the law to be inflicted.

A heavy guard was stationed on the walls surrounding the grounds, while below soldiers were formed on two sides of a square. Perhaps several hundred civilians were present anxious spectators of the solemn scene.

One of the priests attendant on Mrs. Surratt repeated a short prayer, to which Payne, who was seated next to her, attentively listened.

The minister who had been administering to Payne, expressed in the name of the latter his sincere thanks to Gen. Hartranft, and the officers and soldiers who had charge of him, for their personal kindness. They had not uttered an unkind word, nor given an unpleasant look or gesture, but seemed to compassionate his misfortune.

The minister then uttered a brief prayer, asking for

Payne the forgiveness of all his sins, and a passage out of this world into the joys of heaven.

The minister who attended Harrold also returned thanks for the kind treatment of the prisoners, and offered a prayer that God would receive his soul.

Harrold was affected to tears.

The minister who attended Atzerodt also returned for him thanks to Gen. Hartranft and other officers for kind attentions, and then invoked the mercy of God upon the prisoner.

The condemned were then required to rise from their seats, when the chairs were removed. They were now all on the drops. Their hands were fastened behind them, their legs bandaged both below and above the knees, and white caps placed over their heads.

Atzerodt, while being prepared for the execution, exclaimed:

"Gentlemen, farewell! Take care!" and, "Good-bye, gentlemen, now before me!"

One of the clergymen standing near exclaimed:

"May we all meet in the other world."

As soon as the noose was placed around each neck, Mrs. Surratt's being the last one adjusted, the section of the platform on which they had been standing suddenly fell, and the culprits were hanging several feet from the ground. Mrs. Surratt and Payne scarcely moved a muscle, Atzerodt exhibited some twitchings, but Harrold showed more nervous sensibility than any of the others. The bodies hung until life was extinct, and were afterward given over for burial, the rough coffins being already at hand for that purpose.

The arrangements for the execution were perfect. Major-Gen. Hancock was present throughout the proceedings.

It is said Payne last night made a statement in behalf of Mrs. Surratt, exonerating her from complicity, and that another person subscribed to an affidavit impeaching the testimony of an important witness against her.