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KILLING OF LINCOLN.

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Authentic Account of the Assassination.

The Graphic Story of an Eye-Witness.

Sufferings and Capture of the Murderer.

What Became of His Co-Conspirators.

A Singular Dream of the Martyr-President.

The death in New York last week of Maj. Edward P. Doherty has brought out in the daily newspapers a multitude of reminiscences of one of the most tragical events in American history, for it was he who, as a lieutenant in command of a detachment of the 16th New York cavalry, captured John Wilkes Booth, the assassin of Abraham Lincoln.

Lincoln was shot on the evening of April 14, 1865, and died the next morning; Booth was shot on the night of April 25-26, and succumbed to his wound soon after daybreak. That Maj. Doherty should die so near the anniversaries of these events seems a curious coincidence.



FORD'S THEATRE.

Some of the stories sent into print by Maj. Doherty's demise are by no means in accordance with the facts, and it is not strange that after a lapse of 32 years the memories of the narrators should be at fault. Of course, every schoolchild knows that Lincoln was assassinated while attending a theatrical performance, and that his murderer was captured and killed, but many persons in adult life would be puzzled if asked to give the details of the crime and its punishment. It appears, for example, that the impression prevails quite generally that Booth was in the company at Ford's Theatre, and shot the President from the stage; and there are other points on which the popular idea is wide of the truth.

For these reasons, and in view of the fact that next Wednesday evening is the anniversary of the tragedy, it seems not inappropriate to give an account, derived from sources of unquestioned authenticity, of the crime which turned to sorrow the rejoicings over the successful issue of the war for the preservation of the Union.

President Lincoln was fond of the theatre, which was one of his few means of recreation, and it was quite natural that on the 14th of April, when peace was so near at hand, when, after four years of trouble and trial, he was looking forward to a period of comparative quiet and normal work, he should take advantage of a few hours' relaxation to enjoy a comedy. He therefore accepted Manager John T. Ford's invitation to witness a performance by Laura Keene and her company of "Our American Cousin." Mrs. Lincoln asked Gen. and Mrs. Grant to accompany her, they accepted, and the papers announced that they would be present; but the general found it necessary to start North in the afternoon, and Mrs. Grant went with him. This journey undoubtedly saved the general's life, for, as will be seen later, Booth intended killing him as well as the President. Mrs. Lincoln thereupon invited Miss Clara W. Harris and Maj. H. R. Rathbone, the daughter and stepson of Senator Ira Harris.

For the accommodation of the Presidential party two proscenium boxes on the right side of the theatre had been thrown into one by the removal of a partition, and a comfortable, high-backed rocking chair was put in for Mr. Lincoln's use. This double box was entered from the dress circle, or first balcony, and was about nine feet above the level of the stage. The front was draped with American flags in honor of the occasion. An enormous audience filled the house, and the President's arrival was enthusiastically cheered.

The story of the evening may perhaps be best told in the words of the only member of Laura Keene's company who was on the stage when the assassination took place. This actor is Mr. Harry Hawk, one of the few survivors of that night's cast, who, after giving his testimony in Washington, resolutely declined for years to talk of the crime, out of respect for his friend, Edwin Booth, the brother of the assassin. Since the death of Mr. Booth Mr. Hawk has rarely alluded to the subject, but not long ago he consented to the publication of this narrative. It should be premised that he was playing the role of Asa Trenchard, which was created by Joseph Jefferson.



HARRY HAWK.

"We were giving a good performance that night," said Mr. Hawk, "and both the company and the audience seemed in the best of humor. President and Mrs. Lincoln and their party came in during the first act. Our Lord Dundreary had just asked one of his foolish conundrums, and then added in a lisping way, 'They don't thee it.' The people had turned about and were rising in their seats to greet the President. I put in a 'gag' line and said: 'No; but they see him!' The house laughed and cheered, the orchestra played 'Hail to the Chief,' and there was great enthusiasm when the President and his party came into the upper box at the right hand as you faced the stage. As I said before, the performance went smoothly.

"In the second scene of the third act there was a forest setting, with no furniture on the stage. I was on with Mrs. Muzzey, our 'old woman.' In the play it was supposed that I had lost my fortune, and so she refused to allow me, the American cousin, to marry her daughter. The dialogue was as follows, she speaking first:

" 'Sir, it is plain to be seen you are not accustomed to the manners of good society.'

"After speaking these lines, she left the stage, and I said:

" 'Not accustomed to the manners of good society, eh? Well, I guess I know enough to turn you inside out, old woman; you darned old sock-dolging man-trap!'

"Just as I finished these words, and was standing toward the front of the stage opposite the President's box, the shot was fired. The report startled me somewhat, but as the sound was muffled, I thought it came from the property room of the theatre. I did not recognize it as a pistol shot. Then I saw a man with a long dagger at the front of the President's box. He jumped to the stage, but before he jumped he shouted 'Sic semper tyrannis!' although I did not understand the words at the time. The spur on his boot caught in the draperies of the box, and he fell to the stage. He dragged himself upon one knee, and was slashing the long knife around him like one who was crazy and desperate. It was then, I am sure, I heard him say: 'The South shall be free!' I recognized Booth as he regained his feet and came toward me, waving his knife. I did not know what he had done or what his purpose might be. I did simply what any other man would have done—I ran. My dressing room was up a short flight of stairs, and I retreated to it. Booth followed me through the same exit, and reached the back stage door, where his horse was in waiting.

"When I realized that Booth was not after me, I ran back to the stage, and, as I came on, Col. Steward, who had been seated in a box opposite that of the President's party, jumped to the stage and grabbed me.

" 'Where is that man?' he demanded.

" 'What man?' I asked in turn, in bewilderment.

" 'The man that shot the President.'

" 'My God!' was all I could exclaim. Then I saw in the upper box the President leaning forward, unconscious, while Mrs. Lincoln supported his head. The members of the company surrounded me. 'Who did it?' they were asking.

" 'An actor,' said I.

" 'What's his name?'

" 'I won't tell,' I replied. 'There'll be a terrible uproar, and I want to keep out of any trouble.'

"H. P. Phillips, our 'old man,' turned to me and said: 'Don't be a fool! This man has shot the President, and you'll be hanged if you hesitate to give his name.'

" 'It was John Booth,' I said.

"They were amazed. It afterward developed that only myself and a man named Ferguson positively identified Booth that night. Ferguson saw him go into the passageway behind the President's box.

"Although the incidents connected with the tragedy followed one another with the greatest rapidity, every movement and the slightest action of those about me are stamped on my mind so that the picture stands before me as vividly as though I had seen it yesterday. I can see Lincoln unconscious in the box, the doctors being pushed up to him over the backs of two men, who had made a sort of bridge of their bodies, as it was impossible to reach the President by the passageway. I can see the look of madness on the face of Booth as he jumped to the stage, and that wild cry still rings in my ears. The excitement and uproar were followed by a sudden funereal hush, as the President was carried out of the theatre to a house on the opposite side of the street. It was truly a night never to be forgotten.

"I was immediately arrested as a witness, and taken before Mayor Wallach, who put me under $1000 bail. Dr. Brown, who afterward embalmed the body of the President, went my security. The doctor took me to his house, and at 2 o'clock in the morning four officers came and conducted me to Peterson's house, where the President had been car-

ried, and where the members of the cabinet had assembled. They led me to the door of the room where the President was lying unconscious.

"Mrs. Lincoln sat at the head of the bed, and Robert Lincoln sat on the bed near the footboard. I remember seeing the surgeon-general and the members of the cabinet there. I was asked if I recognized the President as the man who was shot by Booth, and I answered as correctly as I could.

"The feeling in Washington that night and the next morning was so intense that I began to fear for my safety. Because Booth escaped across the stage, there were some who darkly hinted that some members of the company were in the conspiracy. This made me mad, for I idolized the President and had cast a vote for him at the previous election. I decided to go to Philadelphia for my own safety. Early in the morning I went to the depot and heard that the running of all trains had been stopped. I walked back in Pennsylvania avenue, and presently I heard the bells tolling, and a man told me the President was dead. Evidently I was being watched, for the doctor cancelled the bail bond and I was imprisoned for two days and examined for the second time. Then I was released on two sureties and got permission to leave for Cincinnati, where our company was to play an engagement. At Harrisburg I had to wait over an hour, and just as I was about to leave I was arrested again by the provost-marshal and held for four days, being released only on an order from Secretary Stanton.

"Booth had not been acting for nearly a year before he killed Lincoln, but had been speculating in oil. He was a frequent visitor to the theatre, where he had free entree, and he knew every part of it well. About 2 o'clock on the afternoon of the 14th I met him in front of the theatre and spoke to him, asking him to have a drink with me. He was reading a letter, and as he put in back in his pocket I heard him say: 'The same d—— woman!' I saw nothing unusual in his actions during the few moments we were together. When I saw him jump on the stage that night he wore the same suit of clothes, and that helped me to readily recognize him.

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above the stage. There were really two boxes, but they had been thrown together for the President's party. Behind the boxes was a small passageway, from which a door opened to the dress circle. When Booth entered this passageway he set against the inside of the door opening to the circle one end of a wooden bar, the other end of which was placed in a notch in the wall, so that the door could not be opened from without. This bar had been put there in the afternoon. Between the passageway and the box in which the President sat was another door. A small hole had been bored through it, so that Booth could look and get the exact position of the President. Then, when he threw open the door, he was ready to shoot quickly and accurately. The plot was not fully carried out as arranged, for the gas was to have been turned off the moment the shot was fired, so that Booth could the better escape in the darkness and confusion."

Mr. Hawk's graphic narrative requires little supplementing as regards the scene in the theatre. The President scarcely moved after he was shot; his head dropped forward on his chest, and his eyes closed. The big bullet from Booth's derringer entered the back of his head on the left side, passed through the brain and lodged just behind the left eye. The murderer, dropping his pistol, shifted his knife to his right hand, and when Maj. Rathbone sprang to seize him struck savagely with it, inflicting a terrible gash in the major's left arm. Then he placed his left hand on the rail of the box and vaulted over it to the stage. He was accustomed to making sensational leaps in his performances (in "Macbeth" he jumped from a platform 12 feet high), and would have got away safely but for the spur on his cavalry boot catching in the flag on the front of the box. He fell on the stage with such force that one of the bones of his left leg was fractured near the ankle, but he immediately arose, as Mr. Hawk has described, and made his way out of the stage door. Maj. Rathbone shouted "Stop him! He has shot the President!" and several men jumped on the stage to pursue, but they were unable to catch him. Maj. Rathbone rushed to the door leading to the dress circle to summon aid, but was bothered for some moments by the bar. Then a young officer named Crawford entered, followed by two army surgeons, who examined the President's wound, and at once pronounced it mortal.

Many stories have been printed about Laura Keene leaving the stage and going into the box, where she knelt and supported the wounded President's head upon her shoulder; there are something like a dozen dresses in existence which are alleged to have been worn by her on this occasion, and become stained with Lincoln's blood. But there is little or no evidence to sustain these tales. To reach the box Miss Keene would have been obliged to go out into the auditorium, make her way to the front of the house through the dense, excited crowd filling the aisles, ascend to the balcony, press through another crowd there, and pass the guard, before reaching the President. The only other way would have been for her to get people on the stage to lift her into the box, in front of which, as Mr. Hawk has described, a group of men were passing up some surgeons. There is little, therefore, to warrant the belief that Miss Keene was in the box at all.



LAURA KEENE.

The President remained in the rocking chair, with Mrs. Lincoln bending over him, until he was taken out of the theatre, a short time after the shooting. If there was any blood on Miss Keene's dress it might have been Maj. Rathbone's, for Booth's big knife was dripping with it when he dashed across the stage, and at the time of his capture, 12 days afterward, it still bore the stains. Mrs. Kate Reignolds-Winslow, in her delightful book, "Yesterdays with Actors," says that Miss Keene "stood upon the stage beneath the box where the tragedy of Abraham Lincoln's assassination was enacted that Good Friday night of 1865, and her robes were brushed by John Wilkes Booth as he rushed away for his dismal flight." But Mr. Hawk, on the contrary, states that he was alone on the stage, and that his memory is not at fault is proved by a letter, still in existence, which he wrote to his parents in Chicago two days after the tragedy.