LIFE

OF

ABRAHAM LINCOLN,

PRESENTING

HIS EARLY HISTORY, POLITICAL CAREER, AND SPEECHES IN AND OUT OF CONGRESS; ALSO, A GENERAL VIEW OF HIS POLICY AS

President of the United States

WITH HIS

MESSAGES, PROCLAMATIONS, LETTERS, ETC.,

AND A

HISTORY OF HIS EVENTFUL ADMINISTRATION, AND OF THE SCENES ATTENDANT UPON HIS TRAGIC AND LAMENTED DEMISE.

BY

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CHAPTER XI.

Last Days of Mr. Lincoln.—His Assassination.—Attack on Mr. Seward.—Remains of Mr. Lincoln lying in State.—Obsequies at Washington.—Removal of the Remains to Springfield, Illinois.—Demonstration along the route.—Obsequies at Springfield.—The Great Crime, its authors and abettors.—The Assassin's End.—The Conspiracy.—Complicity of Jefferson Davis.—How assassins were trained to their work.—Tributes and Testimonials.—Mr. Lincoln as a Lawyer.—Incidents and Reminiscences.—Additional Speeches.—Letter to Gov. Hahn, on Negro Suffrage.—Letter to Mrs. Gurney.—Letter to a Widow who had lost five Sons in the War.—Letter to a Centenarian.—A letter written in early life.—A speech made in 1839.—Letter to Mr. Choate, on the Pilgrim Fathers.—Letter to Dr. Maclean, on receiving the Degree of LL. D.—Letter to Gov. Fletcher, of Missouri, on the restoration of order.—A message to the Miners.—Speech at Independence Hall in 1861.—Concluding remarks.

AFTER years of weary toil, Mr. Lincoln seemed now to be entering on a period of comparative repose. The first step had been taken for putting the army on a peace footing. A policy had been matured for the re-establishment of loyal local governments in the insurgent States. Forbearance, clemency, charity were to control the executive action in dealing with the difficult problems still awaiting practical solution. After the Cabinet meeting on the 14th of April,* the President was in unusually buoyant spirits. His remaining tasks evidently seemed lighter than ever before. His gladsome humor was noticed by his friends.

As he went on an afternoon drive with Mrs. Lincoln, she could not forbear an expression of slight foreboding, suggested

*At a Cabinet meeting at which General Grant was present to-day, the subject of the state of the country and the prospects of speedy peace was discussed. The President was very cheerful and hopeful, spoke very kindly of General Lee, and others of the Confederacy, and the establishment of Government in Virginia.—*Secretary Stanton's Dispatch, April 14th.*

by this change of manner: "It was thus with you," she said, "just before our dear Willie's death." The allusion to this event, the depressing effects of which, during more than three years, had never been effaced, cast a shadow on his heart. But in a moment he replied, speaking of the impossibility of accounting for such transitions of mood. The passing thought was quickly gone, to be recalled only by subsequent realities. Mr. Lincoln talked of the future, and of the hopes he indulged of happier hours during his second term than he had been permitted to enjoy during that which was passed—an expectation reasonably founded on the altered condition of national affairs, and on the assured confidence and love of the people, which would lighten the burdens undertaken on their behalf.

Gen. Grant had arrived in Washington in time to witness the grand illumination of the previous evening. There was a general desire to see the great commander, to whom, during the war, three Rebel armies had successively surrendered, and whose leadership had at length brought the military power of the rebellion to utter ruin. This desire had not been gratified. On the evening of the 14th, the places of public amusement were to be specially decorated in honor of the great victories achieved, and of the raising over Fort Sumter of the identical flag pulled down on that day four years before, at the opening of the war. Mr. Lincoln, who had been wont occasionally, though seldom, to seek a brief respite from his heavy cares by attending on a play, or an opera, thought proper to engage a private box at Ford's Theater, for this evening, intending that Gen. Grant should accompany him on the occasion. A messenger was accordingly sent on Friday morning to secure the upper double box, on the right hand side of the audience, before occupied by him, and the announcement was made in the evening papers, by the business manager of the theater, that the President and Gen. Grant would be present to witness the performance of "The American Cousin." Gen. Grant, however, had felt compelled to leave the city that evening, going north with his family, and he was accordingly excused

There were visitors at the White House that night as usual, and it was somewhat late when Mr. Lincoln was ready to leave.

Mrs. Lincoln, as if some persentiment restrained her, seemed reluctant to go, but the President was unwilling that those who had seen the announcement should be totally disappointed by seeing neither himself nor the Lieutenant-General. Speaker Colfax, who was the last person received by Mr. Lincoln, walked with him and Mrs. Lincoln from the parlor to the carriage. Mr. Ashmun, who had nearly five years before presided over the National Convention, which first nominated Mr. Lincoln for the Presidency, came up at this moment, having hoped to obtain an interview. After salutations, a card was handed to Mr. Ashmun, written by the President as he sat in his carriage, directing the usher to admit that gentleman to the Executive room on the following morning. The carriage drove away, stopping to take up two young friends on the way—Maj. Rathbone and Miss Harris. It was not yet past nine when the party reached the theater, which was densely thronged. As President Lincoln entered and passed to his box he was greeted with enthusiastic cheering.

Mr. Lincoln occupied a chair on the side of the box nearest the audience, Mrs. Lincoln sitting next him. Their guests were seated beyond, in a portion of the box usually separated by a partition, which had been removed for this occasion. Each part was ordinarily entered by its own door, opening from a narrow passage, to which, near the outer wall, a door gives access from the dress circle. The last named door and the further one inside were closed, the other, through which the whole party passed, remaining open. Any intrusion upon this privacy, in the presence of so many spectators, was hardly to be thought of as possible. Every day of his life in Washington, the President had been in positions far more inviting to murderous malice or Rebel conspiracy.

During the hour that followed Mr. Lincoln's entrance into the theater, his attention seemed to be unusually absorbed in the scenes before him. His countenance indicated an appreciation of the lively caricature in which the good-humored audience manifested a high degree of delight. Yet it may safely be affirmed that there was, in his mind, a strong undercurrent of quite other thoughts and emotions than those which had to do with this mock presentation of human life and man-



FORD'S THEATER and



THE HOUSE (opposite) WHERE MR. LINCOLN DIED.

ners. One can not doubt, knowing his mental characteristics, that while partly enjoying this light diversion, his mind was active with more substantial realities, and actually most occupied with these, when apparently most intent in observing what passed on the stage.

In the midst of a scene of the third act, when but one actor was before the curtain, the sound of a pistol-shot was heard, and a man leaped from the President's box and disappeared behind the scenes. So sudden was all this, that only the screams of Mrs. Lincoln, a moment later, revealed its meaning. The President had been shot. His assassin had escaped. One of the audience promptly sprang upon the stage, following the fugitive, but was only in time to see him mount a horse at the rear of the theater, and ride away at a flying speed. Wild excitement swayed the audience now toward the stage, many leaping over the foot-lights, and now toward the door. Attention was earnestly directed, on the next instant, to the condition of Mr. Lincoln. He was found to be insensble, having fallen slightly forward, where he sat. Presently surgeons were admitted to the box, and soon after it was discovered that he had been shot in the back of the neck, just beneath the base of the brain, in which the ball was still lodged—a hopeless wound. In a few minutes more he was borne from the theater to a private house on the opposite side of the street.

The terrible news quickly spread through the city, and the streets near the theater were thronged with distressed and indignant thousands, anxious for a word as to the President's condition, that would give encouragement to hope—eager to know who was the author of this monstrous crime. Almost simultaneously came the intelligence that Secretary Seward, who had been lying seriously ill for many days past, had been brutally stabbed in his bed by a ruffian, who had wounded several others in making his escape from the house. It soon became known, also, that Frederick W. Seward, Assistant Secretary of State, had been so wounded, by the same hand, that his recovery was very doubtful.

In the room to which Mr. Lincoln had been removed, he remained, still breathing, but unconscious, surrounded by his

distracted family—who sometimes retired together to an adjoining room—by his Cabinet, by surgeons, and by a few others, until twenty-three minutes past seven o'clock, on the morning of April 15th, when his great heart ceased to beat.

Never before was rejoicing turned into such sudden and overwhelming sorrow. A demon studying how most deeply to wound the greatest number of hearts, could have devised no act for his purpose like that which sent ABRAHAM LINCOLN to his grave. No man's loss could have been so universally felt as that of a father, brother, friend. Many a fireside was made doubly lonely by this bereavement. "Sadness to despondency has seized on all"—says a private letter from a resident of one of our largest cities, written on the fatal day. "Men have ceased business, and workmen are turning home with their dinner buckets unopened. The merchants are leaving their counting-rooms for the privacy of their dwellings. A gloom, intensified by the transition from the pomp and rejoicing of yesterday, settles impenetrably on every mind." And this was but a picture of the grief everywhere felt. Bells sadly tolled in all parts of the land. Mourning drapery was quickly seen from house to house on every square of the national capital; and all the chief places of the country witnessed, by spontaneous demonstrations, their participation in the general sorrow. In every loyal pulpit, and at every true altar throughout the nation, the great public grief was the theme of earnest prayer and discourse, on the day following. One needs not to dwell on what no pen can describe, and on what no adult living on that day can ever forget.

During the night of Friday, diligent efforts were made to discover the assassin, and to secure his arrest. It was early ascertained that J. W. Booth, an actor, was the perpetrator of the crime, and that he had probably escaped across the East Branch, into a portion of Maryland in warm sympathy with the rebellion. The circumstances attending the deed were eagerly inquired into, and testimony taken, from which it was learned that the assassination of Mr. Lincoln and the attempted murder of Mr. Seward, had their source in a conspiracy, of which Vice-President Johnson was also an intended victim

The statements of Major Rathbone, who was in the President's box, and of the actor (Mr. Hawk) who was alone on the stage, at the time of the murder, have a special value in relation to the circumstances attending its consummation. Maj. Rathbone, in an affidavit made on the 17th of April, said:

The distance between the President, as he sat, and the door was about four or five feet. The door, according to the recollection of this deponent, was not closed during the evening. When the second scene of the third act was being performed, and while this deponent was intently observing the proceedings upon the stage, with his back toward the door, he heard the discharge of a pistol behind him, and looking around, saw, through the smoke, a man between the door and the President. At the same moment deponent heard him shout some word which deponent thinks was "freedom!" This deponent instantly sprang toward him and seized him; he wrested himself from the grasp and made a violent thrust at the breast of deponent with a large knife. Deponent parried the blow by striking it up, and received a wound several inches deep in his left arm, between the elbow and the shoulder. The orifice of the wound is about an inch and a half in length, and extends upward toward the shoulder several inches. The man rushed to the front of the box, and deponent endeavored to seize him again, but only caught his clothes as he was leaping over the railing of the box. The clothes, as deponent believes, were torn in this attempt to seize him. As he went over upon the stage, deponent cried out with a loud voice, "Stop that man!" Deponent then turned to the President; his position was not changed; his head was slightly bent forward, and his eyes were closed. Deponent saw that he was unconscious, and supposing him mortally wounded, rushed to the door for the purpose of calling medical aid. On reaching the outer door of the passage way as above described, deponent found it barred by a heavy piece of plank, one end of which was secured in the wall, and the other resting against the door. It had been so securely fastened that it required considerable force to remove it. This wedge or bar was about four feet from the floor. Persons upon the outside were beating against the door for the purpose of entering. Deponent removed the bar, and the door was opened.

The actor who was at the moment on the stage, gave the following particulars in a letter to his father, written on the 16th of April:

I was playing *Asa Trenchard*, in the "American Cousin." The "old lady" of the theater had just gone off the stage, and I was answering her exit speech when I heard the shot fired. I turned, looked up at the President's box, heard the man exclaim, "*Sic semper tyrannis!*" saw him jump from the box, seize the flag on the staff and drop to the stage; he slipped when he gained the stage, but he got upon his feet in a moment, brandished a large knife, saying, "The South shall be free!" turned his face in the direction I stood, and I recognized him as John Wilkes Booth. He ran toward me, and I, seeing the knife, thought I was the one he was after, ran off the stage and up a flight of stairs. He made his escape out of a door directly in the rear of the theater, mounted a horse and rode off.

The above all occurred in the space of a quarter of a minute, and at the time I did not know that the President was shot, although, if I had tried to stop him he would have stabbed me.

I am now under one thousand dollars bail to appear as a witness when Booth is tried, if caught.

All the above I have sworn to. You may imagine the excitement in the theater, which was crowded, with cries of "Hang him!" "Who was he?" etc., from every one present.

On the morning of his death, Mr. Lincoln's remains were taken to the White House, embalmed, and on Tuesday laid in state in the East Room, where they were visited by many thousands during the day. On Wednesday, funeral services were held in the same room. An impressive discourse was preached by Rev. Dr. Gurley, pastor of the Presbyterian church which the late President attended; the main portion of the Episcopal service for the burial of the dead was read by Rev. Dr. Hall (Episcopalian), and prayers were offered by Bishop Simpson (Methodist) and Rev. Dr. Gray (Baptist). The funeral procession and pageant, as the body was removed to the rotunda of the capitol, were of grand and solemn character, beyond description. The whole length of the Avenue, from the Executive Mansion to the capital, was crowded with the thousands of the army, navy, civil officers, and citizens, marching to the music of solemn dirges. From window and roof, and from side-walks densely crowded, tens of thousands along the whole route witnessed the spectacle. The remains again lay in state, in the Rotunda, and were visited by many thousands during

the following day. On Friday morning the remains were borne to the rich funeral car, in which, accompanied by an escort of distinguished officers and citizens, they were to be borne on their journey of nearly two thousand miles to their last rest in the silence of the Western prairie. The funeral cortege left Washington on the 21st of April, going by way of Baltimore and Harrisburg to Philadelphia, where the body lay in state in Independence Hall, from Saturday evening, the 22d, until Monday morning. On the afternoon of the 24th, the train reached New York. All along the route, thus far, the demonstrations of the people were of the most earnest character, and at Philadelphia the ceremonies were imposing, profound grief and sympathy being universally manifested. At New York, on the 25th, a funeral procession, unprecedented in numbers, marched through the streets, while mottoes and emblems of woe were seen on every hand—touching devices, yet altogether vain to express the reality of the general sorrow. The train reached Albany the same night, remaining there part of the day on the 26th, while the same overflowing popular manifestations were witnessed as at previous places along the route. These were continued at all the principal points on the way from that city to Buffalo, where there were special demonstrations, on the 27th, as again at Cleveland on the 28th, at Columbus on the 29th, and at Indianapolis on the 30th. Wherever the funeral car and cortege passed through the State of Ohio, as through Indiana and Illinois, the people thronged to pay their sad greeting to the dead, and tokens of public mourning and private sadness were seen. At Chicago, where the train arrived on the 1st of May, the demonstrations were specially impressive, and the mournful gatherings of the people were such as could have happened on no other occasion. It was the honored patriot of Illinois, who had been stricken down in the midst of his glorious work, and whose lifeless remains were now brought back to the city which he had chosen to be his future home.

From Chicago to Springfield, the great ovation of sorrow was unparalleled, through all the distance. The remains of the martyred statesman were passing over ground familiar to his

sight for long years, and filled with personal friends who had known him from early life. Yet even here, where all were deeply moved, there could scarcely be a more heartfelt tribute, a more universal impulse to render homage to the memory of the immortal martyr for liberty, than in every city and State through which the funeral car and its cortege had passed.

The final obsequies took place at Springfield, on Thursday, the 4th day of May, when the remains of Abraham Lincoln, in the presence of many thousands, were placed in a vault in Oak Ridge Cemetery. With the body of the late President, the disinterred remains of his son Willie, who died in February, 1862, had been borne to Illinois, and were now placed beside those of the father by whom he had been so tenderly loved. The ceremonies were grandly impressive. Mr. Lincoln's last inaugural address was read, the Dead March in Saul, and other dirges and hymns were sung, accompanied by an instrumental band, and an eloquent discourse was preached by Bishop Simpson. Rev. Dr. Gurley, of Washington, and other clergymen, participated in the religious exercises. In every part of the nation, the day was observed, and business suspended. Never, probably, was the memory of any man before so honored in his death, or any obsequies participated in by so many hundreds of thousands of sincere mourners.

The assassination of Abraham Lincoln was the culmination of a series of fiendish schemes undertaken in aid of an infamous rebellion. It was the deadly flower of the rank and poisonous weed of treason. The guiding and impelling spirit of Secessionism nerved and aimed the blow struck by the barbarous and cowardly assassin, who stole up from behind to surprise his victim, and brutally murdered him in the privacy of his box, and in the presence of his wife.

Large rewards were speedily offered for the capture of the chief assassin and of his principal known accomplices, Atzerodt and Herold. The villain who attempted the murder of Mr. Seward was first arrested—giving his name as Payne. Booth and his companion Herold were traced through the counties of Prince George, Charles, and St. Mary, in Maryland, and finally across the Potomac into King George and Caroline counties in

Virginia. They had crossed the Rappahannock at Port Conway, and had advanced some distance toward Bowling Green. By the aid of information obtained from negroes, and from a Rebel paroled prisoner, they were finally found in a barn, on a Mr. Garrett's place, early on the morning of the 26th of April, when Herold surrendered. Booth, defiant to the last, was shot by Sergeant Corbett, of the cavalry force in pursuit of the fugitives, and lived but a few hours, ending his life in miserable agony. In leaping from the box of the theater, he had broken a bone of his leg, impeding his flight and producing intense suffering during the eleven days of his wanderings. A swift and terrible retribution had overtaken the reckless criminal—perhaps the most fitting expiation of his deed.*

In addition to the arrests of Payne and Herold, were those of Atzerodt, O'Laughlin, Spangler, an employee at Ford's Theater; Dr. Mudd, who harbored Booth the day after the assassination, set the broken bone of his leg, and helped him on his way; Arnold, whose letter to Booth, found in the latter's trunk, signed "Sam," showed his connection with the conspiracy, and Mrs. Surratt, at whose house some of the conspirators were wont to meet, and who was charged with aiding the plans and the escape of Booth.

But the conspiracy was clearly traceable to a higher source than Booth and these wretched accomplices. Mr. Johnson, who had been inaugurated as President on the morning of Mr. Lincoln's death, issued, after the plot had become more fully unraveled, the following

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* The wretched miscreant whose hand has spread mourning over a continent, and turned even hostility into sympathy for his victim, has perished in a manner that is perhaps the fittest penalty for his crime. Other assassins have invested their deed with a glow of heroism, by setting their own lives frankly against the life they smote, and daring vengeance in the name of justice. But Wilkes Booth was a cowardly villain, who crept secretly to strike his enemy in the back, and who thought to secure his own safety by a prepared flight. So it is best that he should not even have the dignity of dying by the hands of justice, but hunted like vermin to his lair, be put out of life by the pistol of a common soldier. It is best for the world that as speedily as possible it should be enabled to cease thinking of a nature so deformed, which had drawn to itself notoriety by a crime so inhuman.—*London Daily News.*

PROCLAMATION:

WHEREAS, It appears from evidence in the Bureau of Military Justice that the atrocious murder of the late President, Abraham Lincoln, and the attempted assassination of the Hon. W. H. Seward, Secretary of State, were incited, concerted and procured by and between Jefferson Davis, late of Richmond, Virginia, and Jacob Thompson, Clement C. Clay, Beverley Tucker, George N. Sanders, W. C. Cleary, and other Rebels and traitors against the Government of the United States, harbored in Canada; now, therefore, to the end that justice may be done, I, Andrew Johnson, President of the United States, do offer and promise for the arrest of said persons, or either of them, within the limits of the United States, so that they can be brought to trial, the following rewards: One hundred thousand dollars for the arrest of Jefferson Davis; twenty five thousand dollars for the arrest of Clement C. Clay; twenty-five thousand dollars for the arrest of Jacob Thompson, late of Mississippi; twenty-five thousand dollars for the arrest of George N. Sanders; twenty-five thousand dollars for the arrest of Beverley Tucker, and ten thousand dollars for the arrest of William C. Cleary, late clerk of Clement C. Clay.

The Provost-Marshal-General of the United States is directed to cause a description of said persons, with notice of the above rewards, to be published.

In testimony whereof, I have hereunto set my hand, and caused the seal of the United States to be affixed.

Done at the city of Washington, the second day of May, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and [L. S.] sixty-five, and of the independence of the United States of America the eighty-ninth.

ANDREW JOHNSON.

By the President: W. HUNTER, Acting Secretary of State.

A Military Commission was convened to meet on the 8th of May, for the trial of the parties arrested on the charge of "maliciously, unlawfully, and traitorously, and in aid of the present armed Rebellion against the United States of America, on or before the 6th day of March, A. D. 1865, combining, confederating and conspiring together, with one John H. Surratt, John Wilkes Booth, Jefferson Davis, George N. Sanders, Beverley Tucker, Jacob Thompson, William C. Cleary, Clement C. Clay, George Harper, George Young, and others unknown, to kill and murder, within the Military Department of Washington,

and within the fortified and intrenched lines thereof, ABRAHAM LINCOLN, and at the time of said combining, confederating and conspiring, President of the United States and Commander-in-Chief the Army and Navy thereof; Andrew Johnson, then Vice President of the United States aforesaid, Wm. H. Seward, Secretary of State of the United States aforesaid, and Ulysses S. Grant, Lieutenant-General of the Army of the United States aforesaid, then in command of the armies of the United States, under the direction of the said Abraham Lincoln; and in pursuance of and in prosecuting said malicious, unlawful and traitorous conspiracy aforesaid, and in aid of said Rebellion, afterward, to-wit, on the 14th day of April, 1865, within the Military Department of Washington aforesaid, and within the fortified and intrenched lines of said Military Department, together with said John Wilkes Booth and John H. Surratt, maliciously, unlawfully and traitorously murdering the said Abraham Lincoln, then President of the United States and Commander-in-Chief of the Army and Navy of the United States as aforesaid, and maliciously, unlawfully and traitorously assaulting, with intent to kill and murder, the said Wm. H. Seward, then Secretary of State of the United States as aforesaid, and lying in wait with intent, maliciously, unlawfully and traitorously, to kill and murder the said Andrew Johnson, then being Vice President of the United States, and the said Ulysses S. Grant, then being Lieutenant-General and in command of the Armies of the United States as aforesaid."

In the course of the trial, positive evidence was furnished, connecting Jacob Thompson, Jefferson Davis, and their associates named above, with President Lincoln's assassination. This direct evidence is only the key-stone of an arch of circumstances, strong as adamant. We have already seen the avowal, in the Greeley-Sanders peace correspondence, that several of these men were in Canada, in the "confidential employment" of Davis. This employment, after the failure of their busy intrigues with Northern sympathizers, to defeat Mr. Lincoln's re-election, and the liberal waste of funds in sustaining Northern Rebel journalism, had taken a form congenial to their "chivalrous" instincts, in instigating and aiding piratical seiz-

ures on Lake Erie, robbery at St. Albans, hotel-burning and wholesale murder at New York, and in a broad-cast diffusion of pestilence and death through the northern cities, by the efforts of the "philanthropic" Dr. Blackburn, who labored assiduously in his purpose of spreading malignant disease by means of infected clothing. What farther depth of iniquity needed these men to sound before organizing a conspiracy—at first for the avowed purpose of abducting, then of murdering outright, the President whom they so maliciously hated? That they did enter this scheme, is proved beyond doubt. That Jefferson Davis, in whose "confidential employment" all this while they were, was consulted as to the plan of assassination, and gave it his approval, is shown by positive testimony. And this suits the temper he had shown in his readiness to entertain McCullough's infamous plan for introducing into the "confidential" service a combustible which would obviate the "difficulties heretofore encountered" in burning hotels. It is strikingly confirmed by his language on hearing, at Charlotte, North Carolina, that Mr. Lincoln had been assassinated. Lewis F. Bates, of that town, in whose house Davis was then staying, gives the following testimony on this point, after stating that the latter received a dispatch from Breckinridge announcing the assassination:

Q.—Look at this (exhibiting to witness a telegram) and see whether it is the same dispatch?

A.—I should say that it was.

The dispatch was then read, as follows:

"GREENSBORO, April 19, 1865.—His Excellency, President Davis: President Lincoln was assassinated in the theater in Washington, on the night of the 14th inst. Seward's house was entered on the same night, and he was repeatedly stabbed, and is probably mortally wounded.

(Signed,) "JOHN C. BRECKINRIDGE."

Q.—State what Jefferson Davis said after reading this dispatch to the crowd. Endeavor to recollect his precise language?

A.—At the conclusion of his speech to the people, he read this dispatch aloud, and made this remark: "If it were to be done, it were better that it were done well."

Q.—You are sure these are the words?

A.—These are the words.

Q.—State whether or not, in a day or two afterward, Jefferson Davis, John C. Breckinridge, and others, were present in your house in Charlotte?

A.—They were.

Q.—And the assassination of the President was the subject of conversation?

A.—A day or two afterward that was the subject of their conversation.

Q.—Can you remember what John C. Breckinridge said?

A.—In speaking of the assassination of President Lincoln, he remarked to Davis that he regretted it very much; that it was unfortunate for the people of the South at that time. Davis replied: "*Well, General, I don't know; if it were to be done at all, it were better it were well done; and if the same were done to Andrew Johnson, the beast, and to Secretary Stanton, the job would then be complete.*"

Q.—You feel confident that you recollect the words?

A.—These are the words used.

The expedient of assassinating Mr. Lincoln had long been a favorite one, beyond doubt, with many of the Southern traitors. It was no less unlawful, they might naturally reason, than levying war against the Government. That it was less manly, that it was infamous in the eyes of all nations, weighed little with many who had so long brazenly defied the sentiment of the civilized world. Mr. Lincoln, during the canvass of 1860, received letters threatening his life—in themselves of no consequence, but showing how easily Rebel notions even then took such a direction, and might sooner or later mature into act. It can not reasonably be doubted that there was a definite plan for assassinating Mr. Lincoln at Baltimore, in February, 1861. Northern Copperheads and Southern traitors kept the propensity alive by constant denunciations of the President as a tyrant, and by historic allusions, hightened in effect by poetic citations in praise of tyrannicide. These doctrines were fostered by the Copperhead secret orders—undoubtedly in affiliation with Thompson, Clay and Tucker, and receiving from them pecuniary aid. This spirit was rampan at the Chicago Democratic National Convention, as shown ir

previous pages, and during the subsequent canvass. All these ideas apparently originated in the South, and were propagated from thence. It was under such training that the assassin was prepared for the conception, and nerved to the execution of his monstrous crime.

When the youthful Col. Dahlgren fell a victim to Southern hate, in Kilpatrick's unsuccessful raid for the rescue of prisoners at Richmond, on the 4th of March, 1864, there was pretended to have been found on Dahlgren's person an order in his name, directing that the city be destroyed, "and Jeff. Davis and Cabinet killed." This "order," of which much was made in the Rebel States and abroad, has been satisfactorily shown to be a forgery, and it now but serves to reveal the dark undercurrent in the Southern mind, setting in the direction of a crime ultimately consummated.

There is positive proof, developed on the trial of the assassination conspirators, that, at the time of this raid of Kilpatrick, preparations were made for a wholesale massacre of several thousand Union prisoners, in case he had taken the city, by means of mines filled with gunpowder under the Libby prison. This fact has been officially conceded and justified in the report of a Rebel committee, which has recently come to light.

A lawyer of Alabama, named Gayle, perhaps quite as respectable as "philanthropist" Blackburn, published a notice (the authorship and genuineness of which are proved), on the 1st of December, 1864, in the *Selma Dispatch*, in these words:

ONE MILLION DOLLARS WANTED TO HAVE PEACE BY THE 1ST OF MARCH.—If the citizens of the Southern Confederacy will furnish me with the cash, or good securities, for the sum of one million dollars, I will cause the lives of Abraham Lincoln, William H. Seward and Andrew Johnson to be taken by the 1st of March next. This will give us peace, and satisfy the world that cruel tyrants can not live in a "land of liberty." If this is not accomplished, nothing will be claimed beyond the sum of fifty thousand dollars, in advance, which is supposed to be necessary to reach and slaughter the three villains.

I will give, myself, one thousand dollars toward this patriotic purpose. Every one wishing to contribute will address Box X, Cahaba, Alabama.

DECEMBER 1, 1864.

During the same winter there were intimations in Southern quarters, and in sympathetic circles abroad, as indicated through the public prints, that some great event was about to happen, which would startle the world. The spirit of assassination had been carefully nursed. The crime itself had been repeatedly meditated and plotted. This fact was known to Davis. Men in his "confidential employment," constantly at work, with his knowledge, on schemes the most infamous, were instigating and aiding the crime of Booth. Davis knew this crime to be intended, gave it his sanction, and rejoiced with no regret except that the plot was not more completely carried into effect. The assassination was not the mere freak of a madcap or fanatic. It was the natural outgrowth of the spirit which led the Rebellion, and which advanced on the same line to the vilest works of desperation. The barbarous oligarch and upstart autocrat who had deliberately starved thousands of Union prisoners, could have no compunction at seeing a chosen emissary stealthily murder the ruler to whose authority he must otherwise soon be forced to succumb.

Never, perhaps, has the death of any man called forth so many expressions of sorrow and respect, or inspired so many exalted tributes from orators, poets and authors, as well as from the people of every class. In British America, the shock seemed almost as universal as in the States. From all parts of Great Britain, from Germany, France, Italy, and the countries beyond, as from the diplomatic representatives of all nations at the National Capital, have come unaffected utterances of sympathy and high recognitions of the goodness and greatness of the departed. Letters of condolence were addressed to Mrs. Lincoln by Queen Victoria and the Empress Eugenie, with their own hands. Numerous public bodies and popular meetings—parliaments, associations, and gatherings of the people—throughout Europe as well as this country, have sent similar tokens. From the multitude of the higher tributes to the character of Mr. Lincoln, only a few brief extracts can be given here.

In the course of his oration, delivered in New York on the

occasion of Mr. Lincoln's death, our great historian, George Bancroft, said:

Those who come after us will decide how much of the wonderful results of his public career is due to his own good common sense, his shrewd sagacity, readiness of wit, quick interpretation of the public mind, his rare combination of fixedness and pliancy, his steady tendency of purpose; how much to the American people, who, as he walked with them side by side, inspired him with their own wisdom and energy; and how much to the overruling laws of the moral world, by which the selfishness of evil is made to defeat itself. But after every allowance, it will remain that members of the government which preceded his administration opened the gates of treason, and he closed them; that when he went to Washington the ground on which he trod shook under his feet, and he left the republic on a solid foundation; that traitors had seized public forts and arsenals, and he recovered them for the United States, to whom they belonged; that the capital, which he found the abode of slaves, is now the home only of the free; that the boundless public domain which was grasped at, and, in a great measure, held for the diffusion of slavery, is now irrevocably devoted to freedom; that then men talked a jargon of a balance of power in a republic between slave States and free States, and now the foolish words are blown away forever by the breath of Maryland, Missouri and Tennessee; that a terrible cloud of political heresy rose from the abyss threatening to hide the light of the sun, and under its darkness a rebellion was rising into indefinable proportions; now the atmosphere is purer than ever before, and the insurrection is vanishing away; the country is cast into another mold, and the gigantic system of wrong, which had been the work of more than two centuries, is dashed down, we hope forever. And as to himself personally, he was then scoffed at by the proud as unfit for his station, and now, against the usage of later years, and in spite of numerous competitors, he was the unbiassed and the undoubted choice of the American people for a second term of service. Through all the mad business of treason he retained the sweetness of a most placable disposition; and the slaughter of myriads of the best on the battle-field, and the more terrible destruction of our men in captivity by the slow torture of exposure and starvation, had never been able to provoke him into harboring one vengeful feeling or one purpose of cruelty.

How shall the nation most completely show its sorrow at Mr. Lincoln's death? How shall it best honor his memory? There can be but one answer. He was struck down when he was

highest in its service, and in strict conformity with duty was engaged in carrying out, principles affecting its life, its good name, and its relations to the cause of freedom and the progress of mankind. Grief must take the character of action, and breathe itself forth in the assertion of the policy to which he fell a sacrifice. The standard which he held in his hand must be uplifted again, higher and more firmly than before, and must be carried on to triumph. Above everything else, his proclamation of the first day of January, 1863, declaring throughout the parts of the country in rebellion the freedom of all persons who have been held as slaves, must be affirmed and maintained.

Referring to the deed of the assassin, and to the attempt to sever the Union, Mr. Bancroft said:

To that Union Abraham Lincoln has fallen a martyr. His death, which was meant to sever it beyond repair, binds it more closely and more firmly than ever. The death blow aimed at him was aimed not at the native of Kentucky, not at the citizen of Illinois, but at the man who, as President, in the executive branch of the government, stood as the representative of every man in the United States. The object of the crime was the life of the whole people; and it wounds the affections of the whole people. From Maine to the South west boundary on the Pacific, it makes us one. The country may have needed an imperishable grief to touch its inmost feeling. The grave that receives the remains of Lincoln, receives the martyr to the Union; the monument which will rise over his body will bear witness to the Union; his enduring memory will assist during countless ages to bind the States together, and to incite to the love of our one, undivided, indivisible country. Peace to the ashes of our departed friend, the friend of his country and his race. Happy was his life, for he was the restorer of the republic; he was happy in his death, for the manner of his end will plead forever for the Union of the States and the freedom of man.

The venerable Lewis Cass, a life-long political opponent, after excusing himself from taking an active part in the great demonstration at Detroit, on account of infirm health, wrote as follows:

But in the numerous assemblages, which the impressive ceremonies will call together, there will not be one who will mourn more sincerely than I do the deplorable event which has