IN THE TRACK OF
JOHN WILKES BOOTH

A "Press" Correspondent Rides on Horseback Over the Roads Taken by Lincoln's Assassin in His Fatal Flight Thirty-One Years Ago.

THROUGH MARYLAND AND VIRGINIA.

Places Where the Fugitive Stopped and People Who Saw and Aided and Talked with Him.

THE WOOD WHERE WILKES BOOTH LAY CONCEALED.

Pen Picture of the Country Through Which the Fleeing Murderer Passed While Suffering Agony from His Broken Leg—Stories Told by People Who Remember Those April Days—The Nemesis That Pursued Booth and Thwarted His Carefully Laid Plans, and the Efforts of People Anxious to Aid His Escape.

I.

THE PLOT AND THE ACTORS.

On Tuesday, April 14, thirty-one years will have passed since the assassination of Abraham Lincoln by John Wilkes Booth; the anniversary of the day on which the profound thanksgiving and solemn joy of the nation over peace restored was changed in one blinding moment by the nervous pressure of a pistol trigger into a date of awful significance, "to be claimed forever by a world-wide sorrow." Quick Death came on, the central figure in all the country's jubilation, the central figure of the great and good men of the century. He was "numbered with the ages," in his place among the Immortals just when the clouds were clearing from the black and stormy pathway, along which he had led his people with a God-given wisdom; a courage that knew not fear, and a vision which perceived always through thickest shadow and darkness the twin white lights of Right and Duty. And he who did the murder wandered with the curses of a world upon his name, with a price set upon his head, in frightful physical pain, blighting all upon whom his shadow fell, whether innocent or not, until he died the death of a dog in a burning barn on a Virginia farm.

The true history, which must be the whole history, of the assassination of President Lincoln, will never be written. Whether all of those whom martial law condemned to death or to imprisonment as fellow-conspirators with John Wilkes Booth were guilty as charged will not be revealed until the Last Trump. For a host of doubts that cannot be put aside have confronted the writers who have set forth the annals of those delirious days, when calm reasoning and cold logic were not always heard in the great cry for "Vengeance." The claim made by some of those who suffered for the crime that while they and many others knew of and were in active sympathy with the plot to abduct President Lincoln and hold him as a hostage in the Confederacy, only John Wilkes Booth and the little group of ignorant men about him, swayed by the force of a stronger mind, had knowledge of the fearful alteration of plan whose end was wholesale assassination—this claim has never been disproven. Yet, all fell in the crash of ruin made by the fanatical tragedian, crazed by a misguided sense of patriotism, and a desire for notoriety and hero-worship.

Last week a "Press" correspondent rode a horse over the route followed by Booth and his companion, Herold, in that awful flight through Maryland and Virginia. With blanket, saddlebags and camera strapped on his McClellan saddle, the writer rode for six days along the country roads that once thundered the echoes from the hoofs of the big roan and the fleet bay mare which carried Booth and Herold through the moonlit nights from Washington to the bank of the Potomac. On the maps the journey from Ford's Theatre to the Garrett farm, near Port Royal, in Virginia, is about sixty miles. Yet the wandering, aimless flight of the assassin and his wretched comrade, with the detours made to find the men and women who were witnesses of the events of those memorable April days, carried the correspondent more than 120 miles.

There is not a village of any size along the whole route, which passes through a rolling farming country, thinly settled, and half melancholy with the decaying tokens of ante-bellum prosperity in the crumbling, wide-porched, great-chimneyed plantation houses, and the broad acreage of "old fields." The stores and taverns at the crossroads are as they were thirty years ago and the farmers ride in from the country round to buy provisions, gossip, get the mail and talk politics, as they have always done. The flight and pursuit of Booth was the great, overwhelming excitement in the history of this somnolent country. Everyone past middle life remembers much about the tragedy, and they have never ceased to talk about it. Its baleful light eclipses all that has happened within the memory of living man in Charles County, Md., and in King George and Caroline Counties of Virginia. The houses at which the terror-haunted night riders drew rein; the swamps that hid the crippled, haggard Booth, and men and women who had known him before the assassination, still tell their stories. All these things make the journey one of the most vividly interesting that can be imagined, for it is simply a hundred miles of living history. And it is plain that it should be made only on horseback, as Booth rode it thirty-one years ago.

A hasty sketch of the plot and the actors should precede the track of the flight. John Wilkes Booth was the leader of the Lincoln abduction plot, the attempted instigator of a previous assassination, and at last the murderer. He was a fanatical secessionist, and after the re-election of Lincoln, he conceived a scheme to capture the President and take him to Richmond. He spent most of the Fall and Winter of 1864-65 inducing a number of Southern sympathizers to join him in this apparently fantastic enterprise. In October Booth visited Charles County, Md., arranging for the proposed abduction, studying the roads, and securing the active interest of many prominent Southern gentlemen in the scheme, with promise of their help, they considering it a legitimate undertaking.

The road to the South chosen was the "underground" route used by the Confederate secret service for sending the mails through from Richmond into the North and through to Canada. The route was roundabout, leaving the Potomac near Pope's Creek, and running to Washington through the villages of Bryantown, "T. B." and Suwattsville. Booth used this way in his flight because he had studied it, he knew people along the route and counted on help from the Southern sympathizers who were active in the Confederate secret service. It was from fifteen to twenty miles longer than the direct road from Washington to the Potomac, but Booth chose it for the reasons mentioned.

The abduction plot, fixed for the middle of March, was abandoned, because of the unsettled condition of the country roads and the failure of the President to ride out through a secluded part of Seventh Street, as was his daily custom, on the day set for the scheme. The band of conspirators consisted of John Wilkes Booth, the actor, of a famous family of players; Lewis Payne, a rebel soldier from Florida, a stalwart, courageous fellow, hardly more than a boy; George Atzerodt, a spy and blockade runner in the Potomac, who was a miserable, chicken-hearted actor in the great drama; David E. Herold, a Washington drug clerk, who was also of low caliber; Samuel Arnold and Michael O'Laughlin, Maryland secessionists; John H. Surratt and his mother, Mrs. Mary E. Surratt, who kept a boarding house in Washington. Booth was a young man of 26, of remarkable physical beauty, who had not met with great success on the stage.

After the surrender of Lee and the failure of the kidnaping conspiracy, Booth, in a frenzy of rage and disappointment akin to madness, called his band together and assigned each a part in the new crime which he had conceived—the murder of President Lincoln, Secretary Seward, Secretary Stanton and Vice-President Johnson. He reserved Herold to aid in his escape after he should have played the most conspicuous role in the tragedy. Herold, Atzerodt and Surratt had previously deposited for use in the abduction ropes, carbines and ammunition at a tavern in Surrattsville, Md., twelve miles from Washington. Mrs. Surratt owned the tavern, which was kept by a man named Lloyd.

At noon on April 14 Booth learned that the President was to go to Ford's Theatre that night to see a production of "Our American Cousin," with Laura Keene in the leading role. Booth at once made his plans, had a conference with Mrs. Surratt, who then started for Lloyd's tavern, and visited the theatre where he guarded against interference while in the President's box by an arrangement of a wooden bar which he could place in position to prevent entrance from without while doing the murder. He hired a horse from a livery stable, and had it waiting, held by a call boy, in the alley back of the theatre.

The story of the tragedy is familiar to everyone; how, a few minutes before 10 o'clock Booth went to a saloon near by, took a drink of brandy, and, entering the theatre, passed rapidly through the crowd and made his way to the passage leading to the President's box; how he entered without disturbing any of the inmates, and, holding a knife in one hand and a pistol in the other, put his Derringer to the President's head and fired. The victim was sitting with his beloved wife, Major Rathbone and Miss Harris, and as Major Rathbone leaped to seize the assassin Booth struck him with his knife wounding him in the arm. Booth rushed forward and vaulted from the railing of the box to the stage, twelve feet below. His spur caught in the folds of the Union flag draped in front of the box, and he fell heavily, fracturing his leg. Booth rose and turned to the audience, waving his bloody knife, and shouted, "Sic semper tyrannus," as he ran across into the wings and out in the alley. He leaped his horse, rewarded the boy who held it with a kick and a curse, and dashed into Ninth Street and on to Pennsylvania Avenue, only half a block away.

Payne was the only one of the other intended assassins who tried to do his assigned work. He turned the house of Secretary Seward into a shambles, wounding Mr. Frederick W. Seward, Colonel Augustus Seward, the Secretary, who was ill in bed, the male nurse and an attendant, none of them mortally. Payne escaped to the woods east of Washington, when he hid himself for two days and was then captured in the house of Mrs. Surratt in Washington where he went for shelter. The Florida boy, a man beside his fellows, Atzerodt and O'Laughlin, who had been sent to murder Vice-President Johnson and Secretary Stanton, and had not dared to make the attempt, never saw his master, Booth, again. He had obeyed orders with the blind recklessness of a savage, his big, muscular body working at the will of the man with the brains to sway his mind as though he had been hypnotized.

The flight of Booth began at a few minutes after 10 o'clock in the evening of April 14. It was not to end for eleven days of torture of mind and body, of the racking agony of a splintered leg, and the rage and grief of mind that he had not been hailed as a hero and another Brutus. For John Wilkes Booth had stopped to pose, even as he fled from the theatre; he was playing a part throughout, and even in the depths of the swamp, where he lay a week later, he wrote in his diary:—

"After being hunted like a dog through swamps, woods, and last night chased by gunboats till I was forced to return, wet, cold and starving, with every man's hand against me, I am here in despair. And why? For doing what Brutus was honored for—what made Tell a hero."

II.

THE FLIGHT TO DR. MUDD'S HOUSE.

The moon rose at 10 o'clock that night and the sky was clear. As Booth galloped into Pennsylvania Avenue he heard the clamor that swelled through the theatre and into the streets after the first paralyzed stillness of the tremendous shock. Herold had gone with Payne to the Seward house and held the horses outside, but, becoming panic-stricken at the cries of "murder" within, he fled toward the navy yard bridge across the Potomac, where the conspirators had arranged to foregather. Booth dashed toward the Capitol, whose dome was touched with the first light of the moon, rising red and big, and turned down the long hill that leads to the river. The mad intoxication of excitement was wearing off and with every jump of the galloping roan the broken bone of his leg ground and crunched in the long leather riding boot. The pale face of the rider grew whiter against the heavy black moustache and mass of raven hair that was blowing about his forehead. But there was no time now to stop for whisky or brandy, short of Surrattsville, twelve miles away.

It was in the early freshness of the Spring morning when the "Press" rider left Ford's Theatre, or what was the old theatre building before the catastrophe of the collapse which cost many lives. The structure has been rebuilt, and one can see the old historic place only in photographs. The long descent of the hill to the navy yard bridge is still steep for a fast gallop, although it has been graded and cut down since Booth clattered down with loose rein. A sentry was posted at the entrance to the bridge in war time, and as Booth came near he must have pulled his horse down to an easy pace that he might not be stopped on grounds of general suspicion. He was stopped and told the sentinel his name and that he was going to his home, near Beantown, in Charles County. He was allowed to pass, and a few minutes later, Herold, who had ridden by the theatre after Booth had left, was permitted to go by. Once across the bridge, Booth turned up the long, Good Hope Hill that led through the village of Anacostia, on the further bank of the Potomac. He met a teamster and asked him whether he had met a horseman, and Herold asked the same question when he rode up the hill. Good Hope Hill rises abruptly for a half mile, and the fugitives had to walk their horses if they hoped to get them through to the Potomac without breaking down.

The "Press" rider found material before reaching the top of the hill. Stopping at an ancient country tavern he fell to talking about Booth with the company sitting on the wide porch, and was introduced to Mr. James Hawley, as "the man who knows more about Booth than any man in the county." Now, it must be noted here that at every cross-road's store on the journey there was to be found a man who "knew more about Booth," etc. Mr. Hawley is gray-haired and weather beaten, and as he says, "he was no chicken" even in '65. He said: "I knew Augustus Howell and Mrs. Surratt very well. She was a fine woman, who had been rich before the war. Who was Howell? Why, he ran the 'underground' mail from the Maryland side of the Potomac through to Surrattsville, and then John Surratt ran it through to Canada. I used to ride with Howell often, and just before the assassination he got scared that he was going to be arrested by Federal officers for his work as a mail agent, and he hid his mail that he had just gotten from Richmond in the wall of the Surratt tavern. You'll see the hole in the wall when you go there, where the mail was hidden and the rifles and ammunition for Booth. When the house was searched after the President had been shot, Howell's last batch of mail was found in there. He was so afraid that he'd be mixed up in the conspiracy that he went through by the 'underground' to Canada. He and Surratt were great friends, and he would have been arrested sure."

Time was too pressing to hear more from Mr. Hawley, so the writer rode on a few doors along the village street until he reached the house of Dr. Thomas D. Mudd, the son of Dr. Samuel Mudd, who set Booth's leg and was sent to the Dry Tortugas Prison for life. The son has settled at Anacostia, but his mother stil lives at the old place, now famous, on the Bryantown Road. It will be easier to understand the references in the story which young Dr. Mudd told, in connection with the visit to his old home, thirty miles further along in the journey.

From the top of Good Hope Hill the fleeing assassin could see the lights of Washington almost at his feet, and the moonlight-silvered dome of the Capitol for the last time. His face was set toward the South and whatever Fate held in store for him. From the top of the hill the road to Surrattsville runs for nine miles through an open farming country, with easy hills and much level going. Many of the farmhouses of "befoh-the-wah" times stand far back in dignified seclusion from the road, and the log and clay-plastered huts of the negroes are scattered through the fields in picturesque stages of dilapidation. The first stages of the journey to Surrattsville gave a chance for fast riding, but Booth was suffering more and more from the broken leg, which probably prevented his easy escape into the South. Herold overtook him on this road, for Booth's big roan horse was not fast, while Herold's slim bay was built for speed. The two rode on together in the moonlight for an hour. There were gruesome things to talk about. Booth had to tell the details of his deed with the pride that had not yet been crushed by reading of the newspaper accounts, and Herold could tell his master of the probable success of Payne's attack upon Secretary Seward, as the shrieks of "murder" had startled the quiet street.

Had Booth not broken his leg he could have reached the Potomac shortly after daybreak and have been on the Virginia side an hour later, with a good chance of reaching Richmond in a day and a half. Had he taken the straight road from Washington to Port Tobacco, on the Potomac, there would have been about thirty-five miles to go. The writer rode from Pope's Creek, on the Potomac, to Washington, by the nearest route, on his return journey, and covered the distance between 6.30 o'clock in the morning and 1 o'clock in the afternoon, or forty miles in six and one-half hours, riding the same horse through and bringing him in in good condition. This shows that Booth could have reached Virginia, where he might have gotten among friends and beyond immediate pursuit by the Union cavalry, and that his plans of escape were feasible. But Fate or Justice ordered otherwise.

It was midnight when Booth and Herold rode into Surrattsville, and halted at the porch of the tavern. Booth feared to dismount, lest he could not get on his horse, and although he was suffering torture he waited in front, while Herold went in, shouting to the innkeeper, Lloyd, to give him "those things." Lloyd knew what was meant, and brought out the two bottles of whisky, the carbines and the field glass, which the Surratt had hidden in the wall. "We've killed the President," shouted Herold, as he mounted, and rode away. Booth refused to carry a carbine, as he needed his hands to keep himself in the saddle in his crippled condition.

Surrattsville to-day is a village of a dozen houses, with the nearest railroad

at Washington. No one now living there saw Booth on the night when he rode through the town. The Surratt house has not been altered since '65, except for the rebuilding of the porch. It has changed hands twice since Mrs. Surratt owned it, and is now the property of J. W. Wheatley. The writer slept for a night in the room which Mrs. Surratt used to occupy when she visited the place, and there was an unpleasant interest about this apartment once tenanted by the woman who died on the gallows in Washington. In a corner of the ceiling of the landing, half way up the stairs leading to the second floor, there is a piece of planking, about two feet long, set in the plaster. This trap door opens into an attic of considerable size, which was used as a secret hiding place for the Confederate mail over the "underground" route, and was where the articles called for by Booth were stowed by the Surratts.

The route from Surrattsville leads through the little village of "T. B.," five miles away, and then to Bryantown, eleven miles further on. "T. B." is so very small that it really ought not to have a name spelled out in full. Three roads cross here, and there are four houses and a store in sight. This place is unchanged. It cannot have grown and it could not have shrunk without disappearing entirely. Booth and Herold drank whisky very freely as they rode, for they were intoxicated most of the time when hiding in the days following. They were now on a sandy road free from steep hills, and should have been pushing their horses hard. The moon was bright, both Booth and Herold knew the country and were in no danger of being lost. They turned to the right at "T. B." and kept on toward Bryantown. The pace was getting slower all the time. It was all Booth could do to stay in his saddle, and Herold had to curb his spirited mare and fret at the dangerous delaying. No doubt they began to look back at the white stretches of road behind them and across the ploughed fields as the way wound through the hills. For, if by any chance the direction of the flight had been discovered an hour after the start a squad of hard-riding cavalrymen could now be hot on the trail and within a mile or two of the fugitives.

But the silent night was broken only by the curses and groans of Booth as every step of his horse wrenched the fractured limb that was now so swollen that the pressure of the bootleg was exquisite torture. When within four miles of Bryantown the road turned through a mile of dense woodland and swamps, and no doubt Booth thought more than once of turning in to find a hiding place where he might rest and find relief from his suffering. It was now nearly 4 o'clock and the gray dawn was glimmering low in the sky. Bryantown was three miles away, the Potomac River twenty miles distant, and Booth was unable to stay in the saddle longer. They had ridden only thirty miles in the night when every moment meant life and death. At this time a negro was met on the road, tramping to his work in a distant field, and he was asked the way to the house of the nearest physician. The negro said that the riders had passed the house of Dr. Samuel Mudd half a mile back.

Booth and Herold turned and rode back into the lane that led to the front yard and shouted to arouse the doctor. Dr. Mudd and his wife received the visitors, while Herold told them that his companion had fallen under his horse and broken his leg, and that he needed medical assistance very badly. Booth was helped into the house, the fracture was reduced and the sufferer was given a room. It was now Saturday morning, and the strangers remained at Dr. Mudd's house until 4 o'clock in the afternoon. They had ridden from Surrattsville to Dr. Mudd's, thirteen miles, in four hours, which indicates that the horses walked all the way. The writer covered this part of the journey in less than two hours, jogging along comfortably.

III.

THE STORY OF MRS. MUDD.

The story of the stay of Booth at the house of Dr. Mudd is not yet free from conflicting statements. Dr. Mudd had met Booth on two previous occasions, in Washington and at the Catholic church at Bryantown, and on the same day when Booth called at the house several months before the assassination. Although he attended to the injured man solely as a physician in the line of his professional duty, Dr. Mudd was sentenced to life imprisonment on the Dry Tortugas. He was released after six years on account of his heroic work in a yellow fever epidemic after the death of the resident surgeons. He returned to his home, where he resided until his death in 1882. He left a sworn statement of the facts of his connection with Booth, which was substantially the story told the writer by Mrs. Mudd, who still lives in the old home. The house is a comfortable old Southern plantation residence, but the outbuildings and the hundreds of acres of farm land tell dumbly of the ruin wrought by the catastrophe that broke up the family and brought ruin to its fortunes. It was noon when the "Press" correspondent rode up to Mrs. Mudd's and was cordially invited in the hospitable Southern fashion that has survived the wreck of fortune, to dine with the family, while two little negro boys scampered from a barn to look after the horse.

Mrs. Mudd is a Southern lady, who has "never been reconstructed," she says, "and never will be." When her husband was torn from her and carried to prison she was a girl of 27 with four children, the oldest only 7 years. She had never known what work was in the pleasant plantation life of ante-bellum days, and she suddenly found herself at the head of a large plantation, which she must manage, and with her lands devastated by the swarm of Union cavalry that encamped there during the pursuit of Booth.

"We were waked at 4 in the morning on that dreadful Saturday by the two men on horseback," said Mrs. Mudd. "One of them said that the other had broken his leg through the horse falling, that they were anxious to reach the Potomac and wanted the doctor to set the fracture. I saw a fresh scar on the horse's shoulder, and I am sure that it had fallen on the way. The doctor asked them in and attended to the injured man. He had met Booth on two occasions months before, and I had seen him once when he came to our house on the Sunday when he attended the Bryantown Church. But this man wore black whiskers and gave his name as Boyd, and neither of us recognized him. He had very little to say, while his companion, Herold, was cheerful and talkative and did not seem at all worried.

"Boyd, or Booth, stayed in his room all day, while Herold ate breakfast and dinner in the dining room and talked about the mishap and chatted with the doctor about people they both knew in Charles County, as Herold had passed some time at Port Tobacco. He asked the way to Parson Wilmer's, a Union man living about a mile back of us. The doctor saw Booth again in the morning to look after his injury, and lent him a razor with which he shaved off his mustache. One of the servants carried up his meals, but he ate nothing as I remember. I carried him up some wine and cake myself, but he refused them and asked for some brandy. We had some whisky, but he would not touch it. He told me at this time, the only time I talked to him, that his back had been injured in the fall from the horse and that it gave him much pain.

"Herold seemed anxious to get to the river that day, and as the doctor was going to Bryantown to mail some letters which he had received from the Confederacy by the 'underground' route, he offered to let Herold go along, and that he would try to get a buggy from his father, who lived on the Bryantown road. The doctor could not get the buggy, as the family wished to use it next day, and Herold came back to the house and told me that he was going to get his friend away on horseback. Herold had the horses brought out and helped Booth into his saddle. They set out toward Zekiah swamp, that lies a short distance from the house, as though going in the direction of Parson Wilmer's. This was the last we saw of the man who was to be the means of wrecking our home and shortening my husband's life.

"The doctor was stopped by a sentinel this side of Bryantown, as he went on after Herold had left him, and told that President Lincoln had been murdered by a man named Booze or Booth. No description of the man had been sent out there, and no one knew who was with him.

"Three days later a party of soldiers and detectives stopped at the house, and the doctor told them that two strangers had been here on Saturday, and that they had ridden off toward Zekiah swamp. The officers and soldiers overran the place for several days, and the doctor gave them the razor which Booth had used, and also showed them the riding boot which he had left behind because his leg was so badly swollen that he could not put it on. The initials 'J. W. B.' were found in the lining of the boot, and then we knew that Booth had imposed upon our kindness. The doctor was arrested, although he had acted purely as a physician was bound in honor to do. A stranger had asked him to attend to a fractured leg, and he could not have done otherwise than he did. No news of the assassination had reached us. The doctor did not even recognize Booth, whom he had met before, yet he was sentenced to imprisonment for life, and when he was released his health was so broken from the privations he had endured in the Dry Tortugas that he was not a well man to the day of his death. The soldiers destroyed all our crops, burned the fences, turned the live stock loose and ruined the place. And I was left here with my four babies."

Mrs. Mudd showed several specimens of inlaid work in rare woods, which the doctor had carved very skillfully while in prison on the lonely key in the Gulf of Mexico.

"I do not believe that I would have volunteered to take care of the yellow fever patients there if I had been the doctor," said she with flashing eyes. "It would be hard for me to do good to my enemies if they treated me as he was treated. Justice has overtaken some of those who wronged him, and the others will find their just reward in the next world if not in this. I shall ask for justice not for mercy at the bar of Heaven. Justice, not mercy."

It was not until after Dr. Mudd had returned from the Dry Tortugas that he talked freely of the incidents of the Booth flight, and made a full statement of his connection with the episode. There is small room for doubt that when he learned that he had harbored the assassin of President Lincoln, and saw how seriously he might be implicated, he lost his head and did just the wrong thing. Dr. Mudd, as brought out at the trial, at first denied that he knew anything of the conspirators, and when the boot of John Wilkes Booth was found in his house in the face of his denial, he was looked upon with suspicion, and was partly responsible for the case which the Government worked up against him. The testimony introduced to the effect that he had talked of the assassination of the President before it occurred had small weight in the trial. The main witness was Daniel Thomas, a shiftless, worthless member of the "Poor White Trash" kind, who is still living as a semi-idiotic vagrant. Forty residents of Charles County went to Washington and swore that they would not believe Thomas upon oath, and whenever the writer asked about Thomas through Maryland, the invariable response was: "He's no good. No one would take his word. He is just about as low as they make 'em and he's always been that way."

It was Dr. Mudd's denial, made when he was confused by the fearful possibilities of his hospitality, that was in the main responsible for his conviction. He knew of the plan for the abduction of the President, as did many of the leading citizens of Maryland, but he had no knowledge of the plot to assassinate. Dr. Thomas D. Mudd, his son who was interviewed at Anacostia, said: "My father was treated most outrageously and unjustly. He did what any physician would have done in his position. A bill was introduced in Congress some time ago asking the sum of $3000 to pay for the services of my father in the yellow fever work on the Dry Tortugas. It was not passed. I intend to have a bill put in Congress, claiming $150,000 or $200,000 damages for the harm done to my father through his unjust imprisonment and for the injury done to his family. There is a

journal written by him while in prison, describing the fever epidemic there. He refers only once to his outrageous and unjust treatment by the United States Government."

IV.

THE ROUTE TO CAPTAIN COX'S.

A ragged darky with teeth that shone like the white side of a domino blank against a black coat sleeve, brought the horse around to the front yard, and Mrs. Mudd and her lonely daughter said farewell with careful directions as to the Bryantown Road which led through the Zekiah swamp. This swamp extends for fifteen miles southward from the vicinity of Dr. Mudd's house toward the Potomac, and it was in the southern end of it that Booth and Herold were hid for a week before they were able to embark for the Virginia shore.

The road leads for three miles over the hills to Bryantown through broad fields that are now being ploughed for the tobacco planting. Booth did not pass through Bryantown village. He and Herold floundered through the swamp for some time, and then turned off to the left, seeking a secluded road, until they met a negro, Oswald Swan, who guided them to the house of Captain Samuel Cox, twelve miles away and four miles from the bank of the Potomac. Bryantown is an interesting place for the seeker after Booth reminiscences. The little town sleeps the deep slumber of a Rip Van Winkle community, and the air of the place is the essence of rest. At the village tavern "The Press" correspondent met John R. Nevitt, who was sleeping in Captain Cox's house on the night the owner was arrested by a squad of Union cavalry. He made his escape through a back door and escaped, being kept over night in the same tavern where he was found gossiping behind the stove by the writer. In this tavern Booth passed some time on one of his previous visits to Bryantown. Nevitt heard Booth pleading with Captain Cox to be taken in, but could not catch any of the conversation.

In Bryantown was also found Peter Trotter, a hale and hearty blacksmith, at the age of 64, who shod Booth's saddle horse some time before the assassination. Mr. Trotter stopped pounding a bar of glowing iron in his shop long enough to say:—

"Yes, I shod Booth's horse for him when he first came through here. He didn't have much to say to me, and stood around while I was at work. He was a dark, handsome man. I'll bet he was a great one with the women. When the soldiers came through here after him, they made me go out with them two nights beating up the country. But we didn't find any tracks of him, and they certainly did drink a sight of whisky. I was taken as a witness to Washington because I had heard Dr. George Mudd, a cousin of Dr. Sam Mudd, talking with Corporal Denny of the cavalry in the tavern yonder, and telling him that the men they wanted had been at Dr. Sam's house. Dr. George swore that he had never talked to Denny, so they held me there for three days to testify on this point."

The village store is owned by H. A. Turner, who was a clerk there thirty-one year ago. Booth bought a McClellan saddle of him on his tour through the country, and this was probably the saddle that the assassin rode in his flight to the Potomac. "I don't remember much about him. I was only a boy then," said Mr. Turner. "But I can remember Booth as a distinguished-looking young man, who didn't talk unless he had something to say. I've often wondered whether he rode my saddle when he came through here in such a hurry."

From Bryantown "The Press" writer rode to Hughesville, four miles away, in order to visit the site of Oswald Swan's house. Swan was a half-breed Indian and negro, who had a little farm a mile from the village. Booth and Herold met him on the road after they left Dr. Mudd's and pursuaded him to guide them to Captain Cox's. Swan had no knowledge of their identity, and was released after being a short time in confinement. But there seemed a strange, black fate over many who had to do with Booth's escape. Swan is dead, his family are scattered, and the plow has passed over the site of their humble log-house. The place is marked only by white patches in the furrowed field where the ash-heaps once were, and not a trace of the house is left. The field is surrounded with heavy forest through which Swan led the fugitives past his house and into the road that led to Cox's. At the Hughesville tavern the village worthies had many strange tales to tell of the excitement when Booth was being hunted. The best of the lot, which was vouched for by the whole company, runs like this:—

"Old Bill Ecklin was livin' in Bryantown then, an' he hadn't never been to Washington nor nowheres. He hadn't never seen a theatre in his life. Some days after the murder of Lincoln he says to his neighbor, Rober, 'Have you heard th' news? The President has done been assassinated. They tell me Booth was on the stage when he dun it. I didn't know whether it was Thompson's stage that totes the mail to Bryantown or not, but I reckoned it was.' You see, ol' Ecklin didn't know nothin' bout a theatre. 'An',' says Ecklin, 'they say Lincoln was in a box. I s'pose they mean on the box-seat, or in a dry goods box, tho' what he'd be doin', there I dunno. An Booth jumped off the stage, I reckon through the winder, and broke his leg. An' he yells, broken leg and all, he yells in Latin, "Stre, stri, stro, strategem." Moy God, what a man; what a man,' says Ecklin."

The company spat solemnly at the store in an accurate volley, and chorused "That's right, I reckon." It has been claimed that Booth stopped at a place between Swan's house and Captain Cox's but no one has ever discovered the location. These men who have lived in Hughesville all their lives are positive that Booth and Herold stopped at the residence of William E. Burtles, a mile from the village, and there procured a pair of blankets. The Burtles have removed to another part of the county, but Mr. Joy, the undertaker of Hughesville, told the writer that Mr. Burtles had stated to him the circumstances of Booth's call at his house which seems to clear up this doubtful incident of the journey.

V.

HIDING IN THE PINE WOODS.

The distance to Cox's is twelve miles, which "The Press" correspondent covered in two hours. But it was 4 o'clock Sunday morning when Booth and Herold rode up to the porch in the moonlight, and they had taken twelve hours to cover this part of the road. Captain Samuel Cox was one of the most prominent and active Southern men in Charles County. He was a wealthy plantation owner, and belonged to one of the best and oldest families in the community. He was an agent for the underground mail route, and knew of the plan to abduct the President. But he knew nothing of the assassination plot. His adopted son, Samuel Cox, Jr., was then a boy of 16, and his story, as one of the two survivors of the men who helped Booth in Maryland, tells the incidents better than they can be described. Mr. Cox is an educated man, a splendid specimen of the Southern gentleman, and he assisted "The Press" correspondent with every courtesy possible.

"My father and I were awakened about 1 o'clock Sunday morning by a knocking at the door. On opening it we saw a stranger standing there in the bright moonlight, while waiting at the gate was another stranger on horseback, with a negro whom we knew, Oswald Swan. My father came through a room on the first floor where two servants were sleeping, and it was the evidence of one of these girls that saved his life.

"Herold, who had come up to the house, knew my father by sight at least, and asked him to come out to the man on horseback. After some parleying, my father said: 'Who are you?' and they refused to tell him. My father knew that the country was overrun with soldiers looking for the assassin of Lincoln, and he said that he could not take strangers into his house. Herold did all the talking, until Booth rode farther in the yard, and told my father his name and what he had done, showing him his initials done in India ink upon his wrist. Booth said that he had been sent by Dr. Mudd, who was a great friend of my father's. This was a lie. He threw himself upon my father's mercy as one who had risked his life for the cause of the South, pleaded for mercy in his mother's name, and begged to be helped across the Potomac. My father was in a fearfully trying position, and he realized that his life was at stake. He told the men that they could not come into his house, but he sent his overseer, Franklin Rahy, to guide them to a thick grove of pine in a gully about a mile west of the house. Swan left them at the gate. He swore falsely that they had come into the house, and had drunk champagne with my father. But the testimony of the servant who had seen them ride up and leave after a few minutes' talk could not be shaken.

"I watched them ride down the lane until they were out of sight, fearing that they might try to take some of our horses for theirs. I saw Booth then in the moonlight. That was the only time I ever saw him. Sunday morning my father guided the men to a dense pine woods about half a mile south of the present village of Cox's Station, and left them in the place an old tobacco bed, near a spring of fine water. They were within half a mile of the main road to the Potomac, but so well hidden that the swarms of soldiers passed and repassed within hearing for nearly a week.

Captain Cox mounted his gray mare and guided "The Press" writer to the place where the conspirators lay hidden. The pine woods have been cut down, and the Baltimore & Potomac Railroad runs within twenty yards of the spot; but the spring still bubbles up, and is used by the families in the neighborhood. The nearest house at that time was scarcely a mile distant. Booth lay in this woodland through the damp and fog of a week, his broken leg paining him greatly, and with small hope of ever reaching the Virginia shore. The country was blue with the uniforms of 10,000 cavalry, and the fugitives feared discovery every instant of the day and night as they heard the clatter of galloping cavalry horses along the highway.

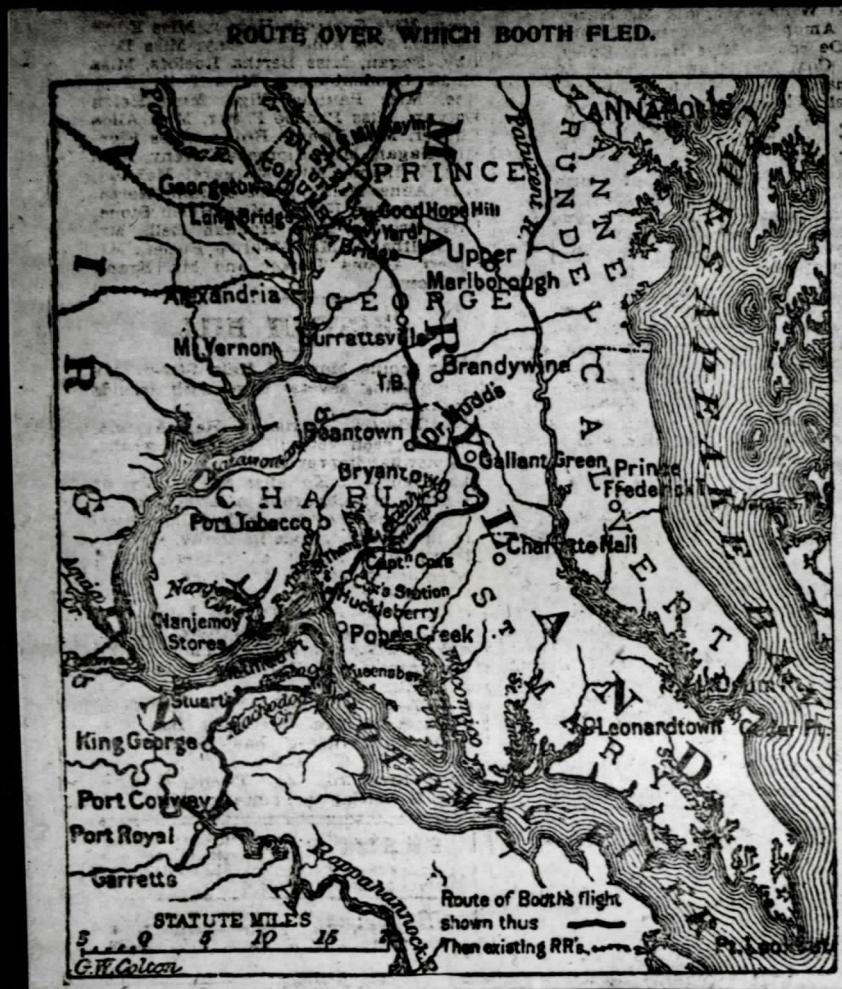
"I rode with my father to the place one day," said Mr. Cox, but he made me wait outside the woods while he went in to see Booth, so that I could say I had not seen the men in hiding. I remember the spot, because there was a fallen cedar stump here which was used as a post office for the 'underground' mail."

Thomas A. Jones, a foster brother of Captain Cox, Sr., was living on a place called "Huckleberry," about a mile from the Potomac. He was engaged in carrying spies and blockade runners across the river, and Captain Cox put the fugitives in his keeping with orders to get them across. Jones died a short time ago, but left an account of his experience with Booth. The low-roofed, whitewashed house at Huckleberry still stands, and the writer was shown the big cedar tree under which Booth ate his last meal—breakfast—before crossing the river. The horses of Booth and Herold were shot while in the woods and their bodies sunk in a quicksand mire, so that no trace of them has ever been discovered. The story of Jones' guardianship of Booth and Herold is thus told in his own words:—

VI.

CROSSING THE RIVER.

"As the days rolled away, Booth's impatience to cross the river became almost insufferable. His leg, from neglect and exposure, had become terribly swollen and inflamed, and the pain he had to bear was excruciating. To add to his further discomfiture—if that was possible—a cold, cloudy, damp spell of weather, such as we often have in Spring, set in and continued throughout the week. Fortunately, though, there was no rain. Trying as was the situation, it had to be endured. The time to move had not yet arrived. So through six long, wearisome days and five dark and restless nights Booth lay there in hiding. The only breaks in the monotony of that week were my daily visits, and the food and newspapers I carried him. He never tired of the newspapers. And there, surrounded by the sighing pines, he read



the world's just condemnation of his deed and the price that was offered for his life.

"On Friday evening, a week after the assassination, I determined that it must be now or never, as there were no soldiers in the neighborhood by chance. It had been cloudy and misty all day, and as night came on the clouds hung lower and blacker, while a gray fog rose from the meadows.

"It was dark by the time I reached the place. I had never before visited the fugitives at night; I therefore approached with more than usual caution and gave the signal. Herold answered me and led the way to Booth.

"'The coast seems to be clear,' I said, 'and the darkness favors us. Let us make the attempt.'

"I then told them the safest way to proceed was for Booth to ride my horse and Herold to walk beside him, while I would precede them by fifty or sixty yards. When I came to a convenient place, I would pause and listen, and if the way seemed clear would whistle. As soon as I gave the signal, but not before, they were to come forward till they reached the place where I was waiting, then stop there till I went forward again and gave the signal for their advance, and thus we would proceed to the river. If they did not hear my signal for their advance within a reasonable time after I went forward, I told them to get as noiselessly and as speedily as possible out of the road and wait till they heard from me.

"With difficulty Booth was raised by Herold and myself and placed upon his horse. Every movement, in spite of his stoicism, wrung a groan of anguish from his lips. The part of our journey which lay over the public road was most to be dreaded, and as we journeyed cautiously on my feelings were terribly wrought up. When I gave the low whistle agreed upon as the signal that the road was clear, it sounded in my ears loud as the blast of a trumpet. As I walked down the road I would listen intently, and if the coast was clear whistle for the horsemen to follow me. At last, after what seemed ages of time, we reached my place. It was then between 9 and 10 o'clock. 'Can't I go in and get some of your hot coffee,' said Booth. It cut me to the heart to refuse this piteous request, but I knew that it would not be safe. I went in the house and found my servant, Henry Woodland, and asked him if he had left my fishing boat at Dent's Meadow. He said 'yes,' and after supper we started again toward the open field toward the river. At last we reached the shore, and found the boat where Henry had been directed by me to leave it.

"It was a flat-bottomed boat about twelve feet long, of dark blue color. I had bought it in Baltimore the year before for $18. We placed Booth in the stern with an oar to steer; Herold took the bow seat to row. Then, lighting a candle which I had brought for the purpose—I had no lantern—and carefully shading it with an oilcloth coat belonging to one of the men, I pointed out, in the compass Booth had with him, the course to steer. 'Keep to that,' I said, 'and it will bring you into Machodoc Creek. Mrs. Quesenberry lives near the mouth of this creek. If you tell her you come from me I think she will take care of you.'

"I then cautioned them to keep the light hidden and said 'Good-bye.'

As I was in the act of shoving the boat off Booth exclaimed, 'Wait a minute, old fellow.' He then offered me some money. I took $18, the price of the boat I knew I would never see again. He wanted me to take more, but I said no, what I had done was not for money. In a voice choked with emotion he said, 'God bless you, my dear friend, for all you have done for me. Good-bye, old fellow.'

"I pushed the boat off and it glided out of sight into the darkness. I stood on the shore and listened till the sound of the oars died away in the distance and then climbed the hill and took my way home."

VII.

THE DEATH AT GARRETT'S.

"It is well known that Booth did not succeed in crossing the river that night. The strong flood tide, against which I had forgotten to caution him, swept the boat up the river, and some time during the night he and Herold landed at a place near Naugemoy stores, still in Maryland. They stayed hidden somewhere in the neighborhood during Saturday and at night succeeded in crossing to Virginia and reached Mrs. Quesenberry's Sunday morning. Here they were met by my brother-in-law, Thomas H. Harkin, and a man named Joseph Badden, of Prince George's County, Md., who did all they could to assist them, showed them a hiding place, carried them food from Mrs. Quesenberry's and finally put them in charge of an old man of King George's County named Bryan, who took them next day, which was Monday, on to Dr. Richard Stuart's Summer home, Cleydale.

"The course was soon ended. At Port Conway, on the Rappahannock, Booth and Herold met three young men in Confederate uniform. They were disbanded soldiers; but Herold, imagining that they were recruiting for the Southern army, told them his story with perfect frankness, and even pride, saying: 'We are the assassinators of the President,' and asked their company into the Confederate lines. He was disappointed at learning they were not going South, but his confidence was not misplaced. The soldiers took the fugitives to Port Royal and tried to get shelter for them, representing Booth as a wounded Confederate soldier. After one or two failures they found refuge on the farm of a man named Garrett, on the road to Bowling Green.

"On the night of the 25th of April a party under Lieutenant E. P. Doherty arrested, in his bed at Bowling Green, William Jett, one of the Confederate soldiers mentioned above, and forced him to guide them to Garrett's farm. Booth and Herold were sleeping in the barn. When called upon to surrender Booth refused and threatened to shoot young Garrett, who had gone in to get his arms. A parley took place, lasting some minutes. Booth offered to fight the party at 100 yards, and when this was refused cried out in a theatrical tone, 'Well, my brave boys, prepare a stretcher for me.' Doherty then told him he would fire the barn; upon this Herold came out and surrendered. The barn was fired, and while it was burning Booth, who was clearly visible by the flames through the cracks in the building, was shot by Boston Corbett, a sergeant of cavalry. Booth was hit in the back of the neck, not far from the place where he had shot the President. He lingered about three hours in great pain, conscious, but nearly inarticulate, and died at 7 in the morning.

The old Garrett farmhouse that overlooked the tragedy that ended miserably the misguided life of John Wilkes Booth, looks as it did on that April night when its window panes glared red with the flames of the barn in which Booth stood at bay, and when its solid walls reechoed the whip-like crack of Boston Corbett's revolver that rang down the curtain on one of the greatest and blackest tragedies that this world has ever known. Not a trace is left of the barn. For many years one blackened post stood as a somber monument, but it was chipped away by relic-hunters and crumbled under the weather's fierce assault. And it were better that every vestige of that building be blotted out, and that the soft grass smile over the spot where John Wilkes Booth died the death that he had dealt Abraham Lincoln.

It was not far from the village of Port Royal that Booth met his fate, about twenty miles from the Potomac River and across the Rappahannock. The Garrett house sets back a few yards from the gate and a narrow path leads up to the broad porch which runs along the entire front of the old building whose every timber from cellar to garret is inseparably linked with the history of the assassination. The ancient roof-tree is time-streaked and decaying. It was once painted white, but negligence and necessity have prevented the coating being renewed, and the elements have made deep furrows upon every shingle of the gable roof as well as upon the weather boarding. The glass panes in the windows are small and irregular, denoting years of service, and the two great brick chimneys, built broad upon each end of the house, tell of the ample fireplaces which heat its four large square rooms, two up and two down stairs. A slanting roof, like a Summer kitchen, slopes down from the end of the house nearest the road, otherwise the building is almost square. It sits upon a somewhat prominent knoll, which slopes down from the back of the house into a low gully clad with a wealth of scrub oaks and towering pines.

VIII.

VIVID STORY OF A WITNESS.

The members of the Garrett family have scattered since that awful night, and some are no longer living. Mr. Jack Garrett lives a few miles from his old home, but he was absent when "The Press" correspondent called. A number of years ago, when those events were much fresher in the memories of the witnesses than they are to-day, Mr. William Garrett, one of the sons of the house, told "The Press" writer the story of Booth's capture and death, and it is not probable that so vivid an account will ever again be given by an eyewitness. He said in part:—

"Between 2 and 3 o'clock in the afternoon of the 18th of April Captain Jett brought Booth to our place. He told father that Booth was a wounded Confederate soldier, that he had surrendered with Lee's army, and that he had gone to his home in Maryland, where they had demanded that he take the oath of allegiance; that he would not do this, and he was now making his way back to join Joe Johnston's army in North Carolina. Father said that he would, of course, do what he could for him, and he took him in. I came home shortly afterward, and was with Booth almost constantly until he was shot."

"He never alluded to the assassination of the President. He reiterated the story that Captain Jett had told my father, and he also said he had been engaged in the riots in Baltimore, when the Massachusetts troops were fired upon. Although he talked so much of the war I could not ascertain what regiment he belonged to.

"'Were you the one who brought the paper in announcing Lincoln's assassination?'

"'No, sir; that was my brother Jack. We were all at dinner when that occurred. Brother Jack said that the President had been shot, and that one hundred thousand dollars reward had been offered for the apprehension of his murderer. I said 'Gracious! don't I wish he would come this way and I could capture him.' Booth turned upon me, and said with great earnestness:—

"'Would you betray him for $100,000, if you could?'

"'I would, indeed,' I replied, '$100,000 is a great lot of money.'"

"Booth turned away, and became thoughtful, and had very little to say after that. Some time after Harold came from Bowling Green, and they went away to the woods together. Before they returned father had determined that they could not remain in the house over night. He had become convinced that they were some kind of suspicious characters. We imagined that they were members of Mosby's Gang, and might steal our horses. When he told them they could not sleep in the house they asked if they could not go under the house. Father said that would not do as the dogs would get after them."

"'Let us go out into one of the outbuildings,' said Booth. Father finally consented to this, and they went out into the barn, which was filled on one side with corn blade fodder, and on the other side with farming utensils and a lot of furniture belonging to refugees from Port Royal. After they got in the barn I went and locked the door with a padlock on the outside, so that they could not get out without making a noise. When I returned to the house I was not exactly satisfied with that precaution, and said to Brother Jack that we would take our pistols and go to sleep in the corn crib near the barn that we might more readily prevent any attempt on their part to steal the horses. About 2 o'clock in the morning we were awakened by a commotion at the house, and Jack and I both ran up as fast as possible, and found father in his night clothes in the custody of the soldiers, who were threatening to kill him if he did not reveal the whereabouts of the two men. When Brother Jack came up he said to the soldiers:—

"'I will show you where the men are,' and the officers released father and took Jack and me into custody.

"'The men are in the barn,' said Jack, and the officers ordered him to lead the way there.

A moment later the soldiers had surrounded it, and Jack and I were put under arrest. One of the detectives demanded Booth that he surrender, and then unlocked the door and pushed Brother Jack in with the command that he go and tell them to come out and give themselves up. My brother approached the point where Booth was lying on the corn blades, and said:—

"'The soldiers are here after you and they want you to surrender. If you don't come out they threaten to burn the barn and destroy all our property.'

"'Get out' of here, young man, whispered Booth, desperately, 'or I'll take your life. You have betrayed me.'

"Brother Jack tried to argue with him as to the uselessness of resistance and appealed to Booth to prevent the destruction of our property. Booth became very violent, and my brother came out and repeated to the officer that Booth's only reply had been a threat to kill him. The officer then took my brother and me and placed us a short distance from the barn, and set a light directly in front of us. Two men were placed to guard us with instructions that the first time Booth fired upon any of the party they should immediately shoot us. Booth, who had been watching the operation through a crack in the barn heard the order of the officer for our execution, shouted at the top of his voice:—

"'That is unfair; those men are innocent. These people do not know who I am.'

"The officer then revoked the order he had given, and Colonel Conger, one of the detectives, ordered me to pile dry brush against the corner of the barn so that it could be fired. I had piled but little when Booth called to me and said:—

"'Young man, you had better stop that. If you put any more against this place I will shoot you.'

"Colonel Conger then ordered me to stop, and Lieutenant Baker began a parley for the surrender of the fugitives. Booth was determined from the first that he would not be taken alive and he so informed Lieutenant Baker. Harold, however, wanted to give himself up, and Booth after calling him an arrant coward, virtually drove him out of the barn into the hands of the officers. There was quite an extended parley between Baker and Booth, during which Booth begged the officer to draw his men off fifty yards, then twenty-five yards, and then he came down to ten yards, and give him a chance for his life.

"'Be fair, Captain,' said Booth, 'and give me a show. I could have killed you a dozen times to-night, but I took you to be a brave man. Now give me a chance for my life.'

"'You must surrender,' replied Lieutenant Baker, 'we came to take you prisoner, not to kill you.'

"'I will never be taken alive,' retorted Booth, 'you may make up your mind I will fight to the death.'

"Hardly had the last word died upon his lips before a blaze shot up among the dry fodder. Colonel Conger had during the talk slipped around to the back of the barn, and lighting a handful of dry straw had passed it through a crack in the boards and fired the building. The combustible material inside the barn burned like tinder, and in a moment the whole inside of the building was a blaze of light, and in the middle Booth could be seen leaning upon his crutches with his carbine in his hand, trying to get a sight and a shot at his enemies. He could not see beyond the light which surrounded him, while those outside could see him plainly. At last, when the fire was fast aproaching him, he started for the door, as if about to take his last desperate chance for life. He had only advanced a step or two when the crack of a carbine was heard, and Booth fell, mortally wounded, shot through the neck by one of the soldiers who had been sent to capture him.

"Lieutenant Baker and myself were the first to reach him after he fell, and to carry him from the burning building. Both of us then thought that he had shot himself, and I am not yet convinced that he did not. He attempted several times to speak, but his words were incoherent, and as soon as possible we bore him to the house and laid him upon the porch and did everything possible to ease his dying moments. The story of the death scene is the same as that of thousands of other men who died in the war from gunshot wounds. He suffered a great deal. After his death he was sewed in a blanket, and they got Ned Freeman, an old colored man, to draw his body to Port Royal in his rickety old wagon. Brother Jack and myself were taken to Washington and kept in prison thirty-one days. We were never called to testify, although our written statements were taken to Colonel Baker, the chief detective."

"Tell mother I died for my country. I did what I thought was for the best." Then as he tried to lift his hands, he moaned, "Useless, useless." These were the last words of John Wilkes Booth, whose body now rests in Baltimore. This was the end of the flight of Booth from Ford's Theatre to Garrett's, one of the most harrowing journeys ever made by man. "The Press" writer felt as one coming into the pure air of heaven from the black depths of a fetid mine as he turned from Garrett's and left the track of John Wilkes Booth and the associations that had darkened every mile of it.

The fate of the other conspirators is well known. Mrs. Surratt, Payne, Herold and Atzerodt were hanged on July 7. Dr. Mudd, Arnold and O'Laughlin were sentenced to life imprisonment at the Dry Tortugas; Spangler, a scene-shifter in Ford's Theatre, who was accused of complicity, was sentenced to six years in jail, and John H. Surratt, captured in Egypt, got off through a disagreement of the jury.


"SWAMP WHERE BOOTH HID"
"HUCKLE BERRY"
RESIDENCE OF
THOS. A. JONES

WITH WILKES BOOTH IN MARYLAND

By EVERETT C. BUMPUS.

Washington, upon April 14, 1865, was seething with sensations and excitement, from the early salutes of the many thousand guns in the forts, in the Navy Yard, and elsewhere, until an enthusiastic crowd gathered at the White House to hear the President's last words before he went to Ford's Theatre to receive the greeting awaiting him there.

I had hoped to find a place at the theatre, but being one of the crowd turned away, rod off to my quarters upon Maryland Heights, stopping on the way at the Eastern branch bridge, by the Navy Yard, to speak to my sergeant having charge of the guard there, and then passed on. Within a few minutes after Booth and Harold crossed over the bridge, fleeing into the country. I had a slight acquaintance with both, and if they had overtaken me upon the road, I should have doubtless accosted them. And what an interview that would have been with a desperate man, half crazed by liquor, and the added danger of a broken leg, expecting every minute to hear the hue and cry of the town clamoring after him. This, however, belongs to the might have been. Instead of being waylaid, I reached my fort and was recounting to another officer the day's doings while the assassins were passing near my quarters, having no concern in them until a squad of cavalry dashed by the yard and an officer flung open the door, shouting, "Wake up and get your men to quarters, for a part of Lee's army has broken into Washington and taken it, killing the President and all of his cabinet."

"I guess you have been celebrating the day and think to play a joke upon us," he was laughingly answered.

"No, no, no," clamored the officer. "It is God's truth. I was passing Ford's Theatre when they brought the President out, and every one said he was dying. I have been sent over to have every precaution taken."

The scene was so startling I have never forgotten it, and it remains as vivid as if it occurred yesterday.

"Then the war must be fought all over again," bemoaned an officer whose empty sleeve testified what it meant to him. "And poor Lincoln! Think of poor Lincoln! How can we get along without him? O, well, well, it is fate. Meantime we have got a job on our hands, and I reckon that is the best way to work it off."

So we buckled on our swords, turned out the men and aided in establishing a cordon of sentinels to encircle the city, and did not know until the next day the extent of the calamity. It is said that Payne, after his desperate encounter at Secretary Seward's house, made his way through the fields near where we were stationed, and, seeing our sentinels, turned back to appear a day or two afterward at the house of Mrs. Surratt, where he was arrested.

The day after the assassination there began the keenest hunt through this country after every one in the slightest degree suspected. One would meet every little while some citizen being hurried off to the Old Capitol. Among them was a lawyer whom I knew intimately. He lived in the old family residence near my quarters, and he and his sisters were hospitality itself. His brother was a high official in the state department. His sisters solicited my aid to see if possible Mr. Brent could not be released. With that in view, I appeared at the Old Capitol, having every confidence in the success of the mission. The building was a three-story, rough looking affair, better fitted for a jail than its earlier use. Its many barred windows were filled with unhappy prisoners. It was guarded with the utmost care. The colonel in command soon appeared. I told him my story and appealed to his friendship for my father to induce kindly action.

"Lieutenant," he answered, "what right have you, a Union officer, to be questioning the action of the authorities in dealing with people they think should be investigated? You had better take yourself off and be thankful that your conduct is not inquired into for taking such action."

Muttering to myself something about the old bastile, I marched away, and my friend, after a month's incarceration, was discharged, and never knew the cause of his arrest.

Picking up not long since, in Washington, a printed copy of the record of the assassination trial, and having had the opportunity of hearing a small part of the evidence, I naturally reviewed it with much interest.

The military court was composed of Gen. Hunter, one of our unfortunate officers in the war, an intense partisan, and there were others upon the board who were strongly biased no doubt, but Gen. Lew Wallace, the eminent lawyer, general and author, was a conservative force thereon, and through his influence the tribunal was as fair as could be expected under the exciting conditions which obtained at Washington at that time. Let me illustrate, however, the attitude of some of its members, giving an instance or two.

Senator Reverdy Johnson of Maryland, who acted for Mrs. Surratt, must have been very much surprised at the objection raised to his appearing as counsel by Gen. Harris of the court, because it was claimed at one time he had advised his Maryland constituents to oppose certain action taken in the prosecution of the war. He hotly denied any intimation of disloyalty and during the discussion this colloquy took place:

Maj.-Gen. Hunter—Mr. Johnson has made an intimation as to holding members of the court personally responsible.

Mr. Johnson—I made no such intimation nor intended it.

Maj.-Gen. Hunter—I shall say no more than I was going to say. The time has passed when freemen from the North were to be bullied and insulted by the humbug chivalry of the South."

The court having reopened, Gen. Harris stated he desired to withdraw his objection, as he considered Mr. Johnson's explanation a satisfactory removal of the grounds on which the objection was founded. Later the record states that "the rebel Maj.-Gen. Edward Johnston was here called to the stand." Thereupon Gen. Howe felt called upon to make a speech, in which he denounced the general as being a graduate of West Point, saying he had forfeited his oath to the government, and "he comes here as a witness with his hands red with the blood of his loyal countrymen shot by him or by his associates."

This proposition Gen. Ekin enthusiastically seconded, to be met by Gen. Wallace, speaking more after the manner of today, saying, "I hope for the sake of the character of this investigation and for the sake of public justice, not for that of the person introduced as a witness, but that of the prisoners at the bar now on trial, the officer making the motion will withdraw it." And Judge Advocate-General Holt, who has been unduly criticised for his conduct on the board and afterward, taking the view of Gen. Wallace, the objection was withdrawn and the witness testified.

Through the kindness of an official, I caught a glimpse of the court and heard a little of the evidence. It was held in a room in the old arsenal, long since destroyed. The surroundings were gloomy and sombre and well fitted for the recital of the tragedy. The officers comprising the court, glittering in their uniforms, and the many distinguished counsel, made a vivid contrast with the wretched prisoners, who were lined up, heavily ironed, against the wall of the room, with a guard upon each side of them.

I can only touch upon some of the salient features of the record. There was no question but that the assassination of the President had been discussed, particularly by some of the agents of the confederacy located in Canada, and constantly engaged in schemes to create alarm and disturbances in the northern states. Booth himself had visited there, and after his death there was found upon him a draft for a considerable amount upon one of the Canadian banks. One of our detectives, however, testified that he conducted himself in such a reckless way in Canada his opinion was regarded as of but little value. So far as he was concerned, judging from the speech of people living in Prince George's county, some of whom knew a great deal more than they would admit, and the evidence in the record, I am satisfied that, until after Lee's army had surrendered, his purpose was abduction and not assassination.

One Samuel Knapp Chester, an actor upon intimate terms with Booth, was solicited by him as late as February, 1865, to enter into the conspiracy, in which Booth said there were 50 to 100 men engaged, to capture the heads of the government, including the President, and take them off to Richmond. Booth stating that if he, Chester, would do so he should receive from $2000 to $3000 for his family, which was in needy circumstances. Upon declining, Booth asserted that his party was sworn together, and that "if I attempted to betray them I would be hunted down through life." He testified that in the course of the conversation Booth said: "If I acted I was to open the back door of Ford's Theatre, where they expected to capture the President attending a play, which must be done by some one as familiar as myself with that theatre. He insisted that the thing was sure to succeed." Later he wrote to Chester, sending remittances of $50 at a time. "Booth afterward stated he had tried another man for the place he wanted me to take, who had become frightened, and would not join him. He would not have cared if he had sacrificed him. I told him I did not think it was right to speak in that manner. He said the man was a coward and not fit to live; urged me again to join; said I would not want for money as long as I lived. He stated he was near the President upon inauguration day, adding: 'What an excellent chance I had to kill the President if I wished then.'"

When, however, the war had virtually ended, Booth, seeing that the opportunity of taking the President and holding him as a prisoner at Richmond, and, perhaps, by this means enforce peace, had passed, had reached such a point in his desperate enterprise, he would not stay his hand, and went forward and consummated the fatal act.

No question has ever been raised as to the conviction of six of the prisoners, but so far as Mrs. Surratt and Dr. Mudd are concerned, it is claimed there was not sufficient evidence upon which to base a death sentence for the former and one of life imprisonment for the latter. Reading over the evidence after the lapse of 40 years, and seeking to eliminate any prejudice acquired by reason of being so close to the scene of action, I think an impartial jury would have pronounced Mrs. Surratt guilty, with the probability they would have acted otherwise in the case of Dr. Mudd.

The evidence against Mrs. Surratt, a large part of which at least appears to be reliable, was that her lodging house on H street was frequented by three of the principal conspirators, Booth, who called upon her on the afternoon of the day of the assassination, Payne, who had lived there for several days and whom she had met and knew, and Atzeroth, who was very familiar in the household: that her son John was also intimate with these parties; that she drove down to her tavern at Surrattville after seeing Booth upon the day of the assassination, and left a package containing a field glass at the tavern in the custody of one Floyd, her tenant, who testified she requested him to have the shooting irons which had been brought to the tavern some six weeks before by Surratt, Harold and Atzeroth ready, for they would be called for at midnight. Though Floyd's evidence was impeached to some extent from the fact that he was under the influence of liquor at the time, and there was qualifying testimony as to what took place, yet there is no question but that there was a conversation between him and Mrs. Surratt, not contradicted, in which Floyd claimed she gave him these directions; that Booth and Harold called and took away the weapons at the time indicated; and later, when Payne came to the Surratt house in the evening disguised as a workman, and was accosted by the officers, he claimed that he was simply a workman and did not know Mrs. Surratt. When she was called by the officers she swore she had never seen him before. While the defence claimed he was disguised in a measure, and that she was very nearsighted and incapable at times of distinguishing people, there was evidence going to show that her vision was better than claimed.

Some years afterwards, when her son was arrested and tried, he was acquitted or the jury disagreed. The evidence in the record against him is that he was on intimate terms with the conspirators, one of the party carrying the carbines to the tavern some weeks before, and fled upon the night of the assassination. That certainly would have been insufficient evidence to convict. If the President had seen fit to commute Mrs. Surratt's sentence, it is probable that much of the criticism bestowed upon the court would not have been forthcoming.

So far as Dr. Mudd is concerned, he knew Booth, not in an intimate way so far as it appeared, for several months before the assassination. There was no evidence of his being concerned in the conspiracy. Booth's broken leg carried him to the doctor's, where he remained the day after the murder. During this time Booth cut off his mustache, and although the doctor disclaimed at one time he knew the man was Booth, he could hardly have been under his charge as a patient for several hours without making the identification clear. If Dr. Mudd had stated freely to the officers when they called upon him that Booth and Harold had been there, there was no more evidence to connect him with the affair than Floyd, the tavern keeper, who was told by Harold, when he went there to get the weapons, they had assassinated the President. But the doctor was laboring under great difficulties. He was evidently a strong sympathizer with the South, and I have been told by people who knew him he was an extremely kind-hearted, self-sacrificing man. Booth may have so affected him that he felt justified, as a physician or for any reason, in concealing the knowledge from the authorities. It is true he evaded and falsified, but his action was limited to his medical duties and giving cover to the men for a day. Unless Booth confessed the murder to him, and it did not appear whether he did or not, the doctor could not have known, before the assassins left him, of the great crime. After he was sent to Dry Tortugas, another investigation took place, and in consequence he was released, but he had lost his health meantime, and died soon after.

Shortly after the tragedy I dined at a friend's house upon Maryland Heights with Capt. Jebb, who met Booth and Harold after they had been wandering about in the country below for a week or so. He told us the story, which follows his evidence given before the tribunal. He came upon them unexpectedly while crossing the river to return home, Harold claiming they belonged to the confederate army and he was taking care of his companion, who had been wounded. While crossing the river, Harold confessed the crime, and, as the captain states, "I was so shocked that I didn't know what to say and made no reply." Being joined by other confederates, they finally furnished Booth, who said he wanted to pass under the name of Boyd, a horse, and in that way he finally reached Mr. Garrett's house in Virginia, and was captured in his barn. I recall with what intense interest Gen. Ewing of Ohio, who was present at the dinner, listened to this story, the last I ever heard from any of the participants in this tragedy.

Whether Sergt. Boston Corbett, who was a member of the party which surprised Booth, shot him or he committed suicide is a debatable question. The general impression among us, however, at the time, gathered from soldiers who were present, was that he was killed by Corbett.

Although the record covers the evidence of hundreds of witnesses, from Gen. Grant down to "Lemon," a colored boy about Ford's Theatre, and opens up a multitude of questions, there is but little said as to any apprehension of the President as to being so taken off. Charles A. Dana, assistant secretary of war, testified he carried some suspicious letters to the President, whose only notice of them was to file them with others endorsed "Assassination." One Weickman, a clerk in the war department, who boarded with Mrs. Surratt and whose evidence was vital to her case, stated that he had observed the secret conferences at the house and had spoken to his chief as to what was intended by the same, but could come to no conclusion. The confederate records, also submitted to the court, contained offers of people to kill or capture the President, but they were filed in common with other papers and no action taken. Last act of all Col. Congers, who had command of the party capturing Booth, testified the last words the dying man uttered were, "Tell my mother that I died for my country," a pitiful ending to this frightful tragedy.

EVERETT C. BUMPUS.