

Why Lincoln was Assassinated.

HOW JOHN WILKES BOOTH AVENGED THE HANGING OF HIS FRIEND,
JOHN Y. BEAL. JWB

Among the chosen friends of John Wilkes Booth's boyhood was a dashing, chivalrous young man named John Y. Beal, whose home was in the beautiful Shenandeah Valley, not far from Winchester. Damon and Pithias were not more attached to each other than were Booth and Beal. Beal was Southern in his sympathies, and planned raids on Northern cities, and at last was captured at or near Buffalo, tried for piracy on the Northern lakes, and sentenced to be hanged on Bedloe's Island.

One afternoon, in the city of Washington, while Beal was under sentence of death, there alighted from a carriage two men, who walked into the room occupied by Washington McLean, of Cincinnati, who was at the time in Washington in the interest of his business. The men who called were Senator Hale, of New Hampshire, and John Wilkes Booth. Booth was anxious to save the life of Beal, his chum and confidential personal friend. He had interested Mr. Hale in his behalf.

They importuned McLean to go with them to the President, as a Democrat—as a friend of Booth—as a man who had much influence with Mr. Lincoln, and to vouch, with Mr. Hale, for any promises Booth might make in return for his great favor to him. After a protracted interview McLean accompanied Hale and Booth in a carriage to the residence of John W. Forney, who was then in bed, the hour being late. Forney was awakened from his sleep, and told the object of his call. His sympathies were enlisted, as he was always ready to serve his friends.

It was an hour or more past midnight when Hale, Forney, McLean and Booth were driven to the White House. The guards, at the request of Forney, admitted the carriage to the grounds. Mr. Lincoln was called from his sleep, and there, in the dead of night, he sat and listened to the prayers of Booth and the endorsement of those who came with him to ask the favor of Executive clemency.

This interview lasted till four in the morning. It was one of tears, prayers and petition. There was not a dry eye in the room as Booth knelt at the feet of Lincoln, clasped his knees with his hands, and begged him to spare the life of one man—a personal friend who, in serving the cause he loved, had come to the door of death.

Booth told all. He told how, long before, in a fit of passion to do some bold deed, he had joined in a conspiracy to abduct the President, and to hold him as a hostage for the release of certain military prisoners, who were Booth's friends, and who, it was thought, were to be shot. He told of the meetings they had held at the house of Mrs. Surratt, and that all of that plan had fallen to the ground.—He offered his services, at any time and in any place or capacity, free of cost, or fearless of consequences.—The eminent gentlemen who were there with him joined in the request

that the prayers of Booth be granted, and that Beal should be pardoned.

At last President Lincoln, with tears streaming down his face, took Booth by the hands, bade him rise and stand like a man, and gave him his promise that Beal should be pardoned. He asked the party to depart, that he might gain rest for the work of the morrow, and said that the official document that they asked for should be forwarded at once to United States Marshal Robert Murray, in New York, and through him to the officers charged with the execution of Beal.

After breakfast Lincoln informed Seward, Secretary of State, what he had done or promised to do. Seward said that it must not be; that public sentiment in the North demanded that Beal should hang. He declared that to pardon Beal would discourage enlistments, lengthen the war, and insult the sentiment that called for blood. He chided Lincoln for making such promises without asking the advice of his Cabinet, or advising with himself, Seward, on State policy. As the argument grew contentious, Seward declared that if the conduct of war was to be trifled with by appeals for humanity, he should go out of the Cabinet, and use his influence against the President, and should charge him with being in sympathy with the South. Lincoln yielded, and Beal was executed. The reaction to Lincoln's nervous system was such that for days he was far from well.

The effect on Booth was terrible. He raved like a madman, and in his frenzies swore that Lincoln and Seward should both pay for the grief and agony he had been put to. From the death of Beal, Booth brooded vengeance for that which he considered a personal affront. His rage took to Seward, and he engaged Harold, Atserodt, and others to avenge Beal's death by killing Seward, while he, Booth, wreaked human vengeance on the President.

At last came the hour. Booth killed Lincoln. His friends or the relatives, or the avengers of Beal, tried their best to kill Seward, and when they left him stabbed, bleeding, and limp as a cloth, as he rolled over behind the bed whereupon they found him, they supposed their work was completely done.

Our story is told. We have given the truth of history, and told exactly how Abraham Lincoln, the humane President of the United States, was killed.—*Pomeroy's Democrat.*