

Excerpt from ---

THE HOME LIFE OF LINCOLN  
Personal recollections of Colonel W H Crook  
Bodyguard of President Lincoln

#### A Premonition of Death

My chair stood in the corridor, within easy reach of the door opening into the President's room, and so situated that I could see every inch of the whole length of the corridor, which was lighted in such a way that no shadows could even partly conceal any one who might try to slip through the corridor. During most of the night I would rest comfortably in the chair, constantly looking this way and that, and listening intently for any unusual noise. Every once in a while, however, I would rise and quietly pace up and down to obtain rest of position. I never read a book or a newspaper, of course, for fear that my attention might become fixed so closely on the printed page that I might not hear or see the approach of assassins whom I always expected at any moment. Needless to say, I never even thought of resorting to any of the common means of keeping awake during those solitary vigils. The responsibility of guarding Lincoln was so great that dozing, or even drowsiness, was unthinkable. And when relieved by the day guard at eight o'clock in the morning, I was always as fresh and wide awake as when I had gone on duty twelve hours before.

The only time that President Lincoln failed to say good-night to me when we parted, after having been together for the day, was on the evening of the night he attended Ford's Theater, where he was murdered. As I mentioned on another occasion many years ago, Mr. Lincoln had told me that afternoon of a dream that he had had for three consecutive nights, of his assassination. Of course, the constant dread of such an event made me somewhat nervous, and I begged him to stay at the Executive Mansion and not to go to the theater that evening; but he would not disappoint Mrs. Lincoln or others who were to be present. Then I urged that he allow me to remain on duty and to accompany him; but he would not hear of this, either.

"No, Crook," he said kindly but firmly; "you have had a long, hard day's work already, and must go home to sleep and rest. I cannot afford to have you get all tired out and exhausted."

It was then that he neglected, for the first and only time, to say good-night to me. Instead of doing so he turned, with his kind, grave face, and said:

"Good-by, Crook," and went into his room.

This was the only time he ever said good-by to me. I thought of it at the moment; and a few hours later, when the awful news flashed over Washington that he had been shot, his last words were so burned into my being that they never have been forgotten, and never can be forgotten.

Editor's Note—This is the first of a series of articles by Colonel Crook on the Home Life of Our Presidents in the White House. The second will be published in an early number.

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