

THE FLIGHT

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Chapter 6

THE FLIGHT

"Vengeance!" was the cry of Washington and the North on Saturday, April 15, 1865, when the word spread abroad that President Lincoln was dead. Where had the assassins hidden? Who aided them? The terror-stricken Capitol city was made still gloomier by a heavy rain. Every face had the mournful aspect of inexpressible, bewildering horror and grief, and excitement became fearfully intense. (1)

Rejoicing and exultation over the downfall of the rebellion which for the past four days had been breaking forth in every city, village, and countryside of the North was succeeded with few exceptions by deep grief. Fantastic gaiety was turned into mourning. The firing of guns and the making of bonfires ceased. Streets and buildings which had been brilliantly decorated with flags and wreaths were draped in funeral black, <sup>while</sup> ~~and~~ Under a tall catafalque in the east room of the White House the body of the late President lay in the majesty of death. (2) At eleven o'clock on Saturday, Andrew Johnson the Vice-President, took the Presidential oath of office in the presence of Chief-Justice Chase and a few witnesses. (3)

In the meantime, where were the assassins? At the conspiracy trial, a witness testified that on the night of the fourteenth of April, he was on the Bryantown road, coming to Washington, and about 11 o'clock, when on Good Hope Hill, he met two horsemen, one about half a mile behind the other, and both riding very fast. The first, who was on a dark horse, asked if a horseman had passed ahead; he also asked the road to Marlborough, and <sup>whether</sup> ~~is~~ it did not turn to the right. The witness told him no, <sup>and advised him</sup> to keep the straight road. (4)

As the second horseman rode up, a number of teamsters were passing and the witness heard him ask them whether a horseman had passed ahead. He rode a light horse of a roan or an iron-gray color.

From the top of Good Hope Hill the road to Surrattville which Booth and Herold followed ran for nine miles through open farming country, with easy hills and much level going which gave a chance for fast riding. (5) Herold overtook Booth on this road, for Booth's broken leg prevented continuous riding at a rapid pace, and the two rode on together in the <sup>dimm</sup> moonlight, (6) probably comparing notes

on the evening's performances. At midnight, according to John Lloyd, keeper of Mrs. Surratt's Tavern, Booth and Herold rode up to the front door. Herold dismounted and asked Lloyd for the weapons which had been left by them at the Tavern five or six weeks before. Booth remained on his horse and refused to take his carbine, saying that he could not handle it due to the fact that his leg was broken. He then inquired if there were any doctors in the neighborhood. When Lloyd answered in the negative, Booth said he must try and find one somewhere. In addition to a carbine, Herold was given a field glass left by Mrs. Surratt that afternoon and a bottle of whisky from which he first drank then took it out to Booth. As they were leaving Herold boastingly claimed, "I am pretty certain we have assassinated the President and Secretary Seward." Then both were off on the road toward the village of "T.B." (7)

Booth's fractured leg began to pain severely. A doctor must be found. He was anxious to reach the Potomac and place its wide expanse between himself and possible pursuers, but suddenly remembering the rebel sympathizer, Dr. Samuel Mudd, whom he had met the previous autumn, he and Herold deviated from the chosen route to the house of the doctor, a short distance northeast of Bryantown <sup>and</sup> about sixteen miles south of Surrattville.

<sup>Change of route</sup>  
This was a fatal decision, for had Booth and Herold taken the straight road from Washington to Port Tobacco on the Potomac, a distance of thirty-five miles, they could have reached this point by daybreak, crossed the river in an hour, and a day or two later have been in the heart of the South. There they would have been safe from immediate pursuit and might have made their way to Mexico or the little-settled Southwest and evaded justice for some months or even years - "But Fate or Justice ordered otherwise" <sup>b</sup> and for ten days and nights the forests and swamps were Booth's home, with pain <sup>b</sup> and dread <sup>b</sup> and anguish.

Arriving at Doctor Mudd's about daybreak on Saturday, ~~reaching~~ Herold rapped at the <sup>front entrance</sup> ~~door~~ while Booth remained mounted, <sup>and</sup> when the Doctor opened the door, Herold told him that Booth's horse had fallen on its rider and broken his

leg and that they had come there to have it set. With the aid of Herold, <sup>Dr.</sup> Mudd helped Booth off his horse and into the house. Placing him on a sofa, the doctor, according to his own story, split the leg of Booth's boot down to the instep, slipped it off and the sock with it. He then felt carefully with both hands down along the leg, and found that it was fractured near the ankle. He improvised out of pasteboard a sort of boot that adhered close <sup>ly</sup> enough to the leg to keep it rigidly straight below the knee. A low-cut shoe was substituted for the leather boot. (8) Colonel H.H. Wells testified that, in an interview the week after the assassination, Doctor Mudd told him he had examined Booth's leg and found that the front bone was broken, nearly at right angles, about two inches above the instep. It seemed in his <sup>the doctor's</sup> ~~(Doctor Mudd's)~~ judgment, <sup>according to Col. Wells,</sup> as slight a breaking as it could possibly be. On the following Friday, <sup>April 21st,</sup> the boot removed from Booth's broken leg was given to Federal detectives and placed in evidence at the trial in July. Inside the leg of the boot were found the words, "J. Wilkes". It was a long riding boot, for the left foot, slit up the front for about eight inches, and can be found today in the secret archives of the War Department among other mementoes of the assassination.

(9)

Herold ate breakfast and dinner in the dining room of Dr. Mudd's home, chatting with the doctor and his family about people they both knew in the neighborhood while Booth, procuring the doctor's razor, shaved off his mustache and going upstairs stayed all day in his room. He and Herold remained until between <sup>three</sup> and <sup>four</sup> o'clock that afternoon, when the nearness of the evening made it seem safer to venture forth.

Dr. Mudd (10) had constructed a crutch for Booth and attempted during the afternoon to procure a carriage to take the two men to the river which they seemed so anxious to reach. The doctor failed in his efforts to borrow the conveyance, and Herold, who <sup>had</sup> accompanied him, returned with the announcement that they would get away on horseback. (11) The horses were brought out, Herold assisted Booth into the saddle and they set out toward the nearby Zekiah Swamps which extend for fifteen

miles southward toward the Potomac.

Booth and Herold soon lost their way near Brice Chapel and meeting a Negro, Oswald Swann, hired him to lead them to Rich Hill, the house of Samuel Cox, a prominent and wealthy southern sympathizer, where they arrived before daylight on Sunday morning. <sup>the sixteenth</sup> This was on the edge of the Zaskiah Swamp, twelve miles south of Doctor Mudd's.

Captain Samuel Cox is said to have known something of the abduction plans but nothing of the assassination plot. Booth identified himself to Cox by showing "his initials done in India ink upon his wrist" (12) and stated to the Captain that they had been directed to him by Doctor Mudd. In the name of the Southern cause, Booth pleaded for assistance from Cox to put Herold and himself across the Potomac which was now but four miles away. Cox well knew that the section was overrun with Federal soldiers searching for the assassin, and that he would be risking his life by giving Booth and Herold aid, but he was willing to take the chance.

Oswald Swan <sup>several weeks later</sup> told some government detectives who were hunting for <sup>us</sup> ~~claws~~ in lower Maryland <sup>that he had conducted</sup> ~~about guiding~~ the two men, one of whom had a broken leg, to the Cox home and had not Mary, ~~a colored girl~~, one of Captain Cox's <sup>Colored</sup> servants, testified that the men were sent away and not allowed to enter the house, Cox would at least have suffered imprisonment if not death for his rash act. <sup>12 1/2</sup> Although he would not let the pair enter the house, <sup>he</sup> ~~but~~ sent his overseer, Franklin Robey, "to guide them to a thick grove of pine in a gully about a mile west of the house." <sup>Sunday</sup> Later that morning the Captain changed them to another <sup>location in a</sup> dense pine woods near a spring of water about half a mile south of what is now Cox's station and "within half a mile of the mail road to the Potomac, but so well hidden that the swarms of soldiers passed and repassed within hearing for nearly a week."

Cox then sent for a foster brother, Thomas Al Jones, who lived about three miles nearer the Potomac on a place called "Huckleberry," and who had been engaged during the war in carrying confederate spies and blockade runners across the Potomac. Jones ~~has~~ put the events of the following cold, cloudy and damp week in a book, "John Wilkes Booth," from which we quote (13): "It was a little after nine o'clock when we

(14) reached Rich Hill. Cox met me at the gate and we walked off a short distance to an open space where there was nothing that might conceal a listener. At length he ~~said to me~~<sup>spoke</sup>: "Tom, I had visitors about 4 o'clock this morning." "Who were they, and what did they want?" I asked. "They want to get across the river," said Cox, answering my last question first; and then added in a whisper, "Have you heard that Lincoln was killed Friday night?" I said

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'Yes, I have heard it,' and then told him of my interview with the two soldiers the evening before. When I had finished there was silence between us for a minute, which was broken by Cox.



an early photograph.  
**HEROLD**

upon his mercy. He explained how he had broken his leg and thereby been prevented from reaching the river that fateful Friday night. All this Cox told me, speaking almost in a whisper, standing near his gate that bright Easter morn.

"Sam," I replied, 'I will see what I can do, but the odds are against me. I must see these men; where are they?'

"He then told me that he had sent them to a place in a thick piece of pine about one mile to the west of his house—his overseer, Franklin Robey, guided them to the spot, with the promise that he would send someone to them; and had advised them to remain perfectly quiet. He agreed with them upon a signal by which they might know the man who came to them was from him. This signal was a peculiar whistle which I do not remember now. He also provided them with food for the day, and I believe, though I am not sure, with a pair of blankets.

"Take care how you approach them, Tom,"

Cox said to me as I was leaving. 'They are fully armed and might shoot you through mistake.'

"I left Cox and rode toward the spot he had indicated. As I drew near the hiding place I saw a bay mare, with saddle and bridle on, grazing in a small open space where a clearing had been made for a tobacco bed. I at first thought that she belonged to someone in the neighborhood and had got away. I caught her and tied her to a tree. I then went on a little farther until I thought I was near the place indicated by Cox. I stopped and gave the whistle. Presently a young man—he looked scarcely more than a boy—came cautiously out of the thicket and stood before me. He carried a carbine ready cocked in his hands.

"Who are you, and what do you want?" he demanded. 'I come from Cox,' I replied; 'he told me I would find you here. I am a friend; you have nothing to fear from me.'

"He looked searchingly at me for a moment and then said, 'Follow me,' and led the way for about thirty yards into the thick undergrowth to where his companion was lying. 'This friend comes from Captain Cox,' he said; and that was my introduction to John Wilkes Booth. He was lying on the ground with his head supported on his hand. His carbine, pistols, and knife were close beside him. A blanket was drawn partly over him. His slouch hat and crutch were lying by him. He was dressed in dark—I think black—clothes; and though they were travel-stained, his appearance was respectable.

"I told Booth that I would do what I could to help him; but for the present he must remain where he was; that it would not do to stir during the hue and cry then being made in the neighborhood. I promised to bring him food every day, and to get him across the river, if possible, just as soon as it would not be suicidal to make the attempt.

"He held out his hand and thanked me. He told me, as he had told Cox, that he had killed President Lincoln. He said he knew the United States Government would use every means in its power to secure his capture. 'But,' he added, with a flash of determination lighting up his dark eye, 'John Wilkes Booth will never be taken alive'; and as I looked at him, I believed him.

"He seemed very desirous to know what the world thought of his deed, and asked me to bring him some



(14)

"I mentioned to Booth that I had seen a horse grazing near by, and he said it belonged to him. I told him and Herold that they would have to get rid of their horses or they would certainly betray them; besides, it would be impossible to feed them. (15)

"Before leaving, I pointed out to Herold a spring about thirty or forty yards distant, where he could procure water for himself and companion. I advised him to be very cautious in going to the spring, as there was a footpath running near it that was sometimes, though seldom, used. Then, promising to see them next day and bring food and newspapers, I mounted my horse and rode home."

From the newspapers furnished him by Jones, Booth learned that his act had not been received even in the South with the great acclaim which he had expected and "bitterer than death or wounds was the blow to his vanity."

*undoubtedly read*  
He learned of the reception of the news in Baltimore—his home city—

"Baltimore, Saturday, April 15, 1865.

"Today is truly the darkest of the war--the news of the assassination of the President has caused an impenetrable gloom over the city. Business, by common consent, has been entirely suspended. Stores are closed and in mourning—flags draped in crape and at half-mast--while the city bells are slowly tolling. The streets are thronged with people, and hundreds of men in little groups are talking of the sad event." (16)

A Baltimore dispatch four days later to the Associated Press, stated "The feeling here against Booth is greatly intensified by the fact that he is a Baltimorean."

(17)

*From*  
In Philadelphia, where the sister lived with whom he <sup>had</sup> left <sup>the</sup> his "Address" the previous November, came this dispatch on Saturday, April 15; "The most intense horror is excited by the lamentable fate of President Lincoln. The city was decorated with flags and streamers, and every house gave evidence of preparations for the illuminations fixed for Monday evening. The public joy gives place to mourning, and there is a deep feeling of rage. The State House bell has been tolling all the morning. The solemn



hue of mourning drapes all the telegraph and newspaper offices. Most of the stores are closed, and the tokens of grief are universal. The citizens generally are bowed down with grief. The doors and shutters of private dwellings are draped with the habiliments of woe." (18)

He may have read the dispatch that the actors of New York City, many of whom he knew, had met on Tuesday, the 13th, to express the sympathy and regret of the theatrical profession, and resolved, "That in the death of Abraham Lincoln, we not only mourn as citizens the loss of our revered Chief Magistrate, but also, as professionals, a patron and true friend of our calling and its professors," and, "That we recognize with horror and detestation the atrocious crime which has consigned the President of the United States to an untimely grave, and clothed the nation in robes of mourning, and that in view of the nation's bereavement, the members of the profession wear the usual badge of mourning for thirty days, for one who, in the language of the great master of our art,

Hath borne his faculties so meek, hath been  
So clear in his great office, that his virtues  
Will plead like angels, trumpet-tongued, against  
The deep damnation of his taking off."

(19)

Did he read <sup>the</sup> published ~~in the newspapers,~~ the letter of R.S. Ewell, Confederate States General, to General Grant, dated Sunday April 16th.

"General: You will appreciate, I am sure, the sentiment which prompts me to drop you these lines. Of all the misfortunes which could befall the Southern people or any Southern man, by far the greatest, in my judgment, would be the prevalence of the idea that they could entertain any other than feelings of unqualified abhorrence and indignation for the assassination of the President of the United States, and the attempt to assassinate the Secretary of State. No language can adequately express the shock produced upon myself, in common with all the other general officers confined here with me, by the occurrence of this appalling crime, and by the seeming tendency in the public mind to connect the South and Southern men with it. Need we say that we are not assassins, nor the allies of assassins, be they from the North or

from the South, and that coming as we do from most of the States of the South we would be ashamed of our own people, were we not assured that they will reprobate this crime. Under the circumstances I could not refrain from some expression of my feelings. I thus utter them to a soldier who will comprehend them. The following officers, Maj. Gens. Ed. Johnson, of Virginia, and Kershaw of South Carolina; Brigadier-Generals Barton, Corse, Hunton, and Jones, of Virginia, Du Bose, Simms, and H.R. Jackson, of Georgia; Frazer, of Alabama; Smith and Gordon, of Tennessee; Cabell, of Arkansas, and Marmaduke, of Missouri, and Commodore Tucker, of Virginia, all heartily concur with me in what I have said.

Respectfully, general,

R.S. Ewell,

Lieutenant-General, C.S. Army."

(20)

And if Jones furnished Booth a copy of The Richmond Whig of April 18th, he learned that the opinion of the erstwhile capital of the Confederacy on his bloody deed was: "The heaviest blow which has ever fallen upon the people of the South has descended. Abraham Lincoln, the President of the United States, has been assassinated. The decease of the Chief Magistrate of the nation at any period is an event which profoundly affects the public mind; but the time, manner, and circumstances of President Lincoln's death render it the most momentous, most appalling, most deplorable calamity which has ever befallen the people of the United States. The thoughtless and the vicious may affect to derive satisfaction from the sudden and tragic close of the President's career, but every reflecting person will deplore the awful event. Just as everything was happily conspiring to a restoration of tranquility under the benignant and magnanimous policy of Mr. Lincoln, comes this terrible blow. God grant that it may not rekindle excitement or inflame passion again. That a state of war should give rise to bitter feeling and bloody deeds in the field was to be expected, but that the assassin's knife and bullet should follow the great and best-loved of the nation in their daily walks and reach them when surrounded by their friends, is an

atrocities which will shock and appall every honorable man and woman in the land. The secrecy with which the assassin or assassins pursued their victims, indicated that there were but few accomplices of this inhuman crime. The abhorrence with which it is regarded on all sides, will, it is hoped, deter insane and malignant men from the emulation of the infamy which attaches to this infernal deed. We cannot pursue the subject further. We contemplate too deeply and painfully the horrible aspects of this calamity to comment upon it further." (21)

And how it must have seared the soul of John Wilkes if he read the following letter of his brother Edwin, dated Boston, April 15th, to the manager of the Boston Theatre: *and released to the newspapers.*

"My dear Sir:

"With deepest sorrow and great agitation I thank you for relieving me from engagement with yourself and the public. The news of the morning has made me wretched indeed, not only because I have received the unhappy tidings of the suspicions of a brother's crime, but because a good man and a most justly honored and patriotic ruler has fallen in an hour of National joy by the hand of an assassin. The memory of the thousands who have fallen on the field in our country's defense during the struggle cannot be forgotten by me even in this, the most distressing day of my life. And I most sincerely pray that the victories we have already won may stay the brand of war and the tide of loyal blood. While mourning in common with all other loyal hearts the death of the President, I am oppressed by a private woe not to be expressed in words. But whatever calamity may befall me or mine, my country, one and indivisible, has my warmest devotion." (22) *John Wilkes* Booth expressed his feelings of injury and self pity over the newspaper stories about his crime in penciled notes in his year-old pocket diary. The first entry obviously was back dated with the idea of following with a day-to-day notation. It begins:

"Te Amo."  
April 13-14, Friday, the Ides.

"Until today nothing was ever thought of sacrificing to our country's wrongs. For six months we had worked to capture. But our cause being almost lost, something

decisive and great must be done. But its failure was owing to others who did not strike for their country with a heart. I struck boldly, and not as the papers say. I walked with a firm step through a thousand of his friends; who stopped, but pushed on. A colonel was at his side. I shouted "sic semper" before I fired. In jumping I broke my leg. I passed all his pickets. Rode sixty miles that night, with the bone of my leg tearing the flesh at every jump.

"I can never repent it, though we hated to kill. Our country owed all her troubles to him, and God simply made me the instrument of his punishment.

"The country is not what it was. This forced union is not what I have loved. I care not what becomes of me. I have no desire to outlive my country. This night (before the deed) I wrote a long article and left it for one of the editors of the National Intelligencer, in which I fully set forth our reasons for our proceedings. He or the Gov't.----" Here the outburst was evidently interrupted, for the sentence was left unfinished and the diary not resumed until several days later.

Jones continues his story:

newspapers.

"Wednesday and Thursday passed uneventfully. The neighborhood was filled with cavalrymen and detectives. They visited my house several times during that week (as they did every house in Southern Maryland) and, upon one occasion, searched it. They also interviewed my colored man, Henry Woodland, and threatened him with dire penalties if he did not tell all he knew. Henry did not know anything because I had told him nothing. I took no one into my confidence.

"On Friday evening, one week after the assassination, I rode down to Allen's Fresh. I think I had been there every day Booth had been under my care, except the Tuesday I went to Port Tobacco.

"Allen's Fresh, about three miles east of my house, was and still is, a small village situated where Zakiah Swamp ends and the Wicomico River begins.

"I had not been long in the village when a body of cavalry, guided by a man from St. Mary's County, named John R. Walton, rode in and dismounted. Some of the soldiers entered Colton's store, where I was sitting, and called for something to drink. Soon afterward Walton came in and exclaimed, 'Boys, I have news that they have been seen in St. Mary's,' whereupon they all hastily remounted their horses and galloped off across the bridge in the direction of St. Mary's County. I was confident there were no other soldiers in the neighborhood. 'Now or never,' I thought, 'is my chance.' I waited a few minutes so as not to excite suspicion by leaving immediately after the soldiers, then mounted my horse and rode slowly out of the village.

"As soon as I was well out of the village, I put whip to my horse and rode rapidly toward the spot where the man who was that night to test his fate was lying. 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. I informed them of what had just occurred at Allen's

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

"With difficulty Booth was raised by Herold and myself and placed upon my horse. Every movement, in spite of his stoicism, wrung a groan of anguish from his lips. His arms were then given to him, the blankets rolled up and tied behind him on the horse, and we began the perilous journey.

"At last, after what seemed an interminable age, we reached my place. We stopped under a pear tree near the stable, about forty or fifty yards from my house. It was then between nine and ten o'clock. 'Wait here,' I said, 'while I go in and get you some supper which you can eat here while I get something for myself.'

"After supper we resumed our journey across the open field toward the longed-for river. Though there was now little danger of meeting any one, I walked ahead, taking the same precautions I had used during the more hazardous part of our journey. Presently we came to a fence that ran across the path, about three hundred yards from the river. It was difficult to take it down; so we left the horse there and Herold and myself assisted Booth to dismount and, supporting him between us, took our way carefully down the tortuous path that led to the shore.

"The path was steep and narrow and for three men to walk down it abreast, one of them being a cripple, to whom every step was torture, was not the least difficult part of that night's work. But the Potomac, that longed-for goal, at last was near.

"At length 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 a dark-lead color. I had bought it in Baltimore the year before for eighteen dollars.

"We placed Booth in the stern with an oar to steer; Herold took the bowseat 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 on 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 'Goodby.' 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."

Instead of crossing as they had planned, the assassins, due to "The intense darkness, Herold's inexperience as an oarsman, and a heavy flood-tide that night," were carried far out of their course, and the light of Saturday morning found them ten miles north of Machodoc Creek, and still on the Maryland side. Booth told Mrs. Quesenberry the next morning that twice that night they were within an oar's length of the Federal gunboats then patrolling the river, and that the voices of those on board were distinctly heard."

The fugitives landed near Nanjemoy Stores, in the cove of that name. During the day, Saturday the 22nd, Herold called at the home of Colonel John J. Hughes, and asked for food, which was given. Moreover he informed Colonel Hughes who he was and what they had done. (23)

Later during the day they were seen entering their boat by a Negro who, thinking they answered the description of Booth and Herold, reported it to the authorities, and was taken to Washington to be questioned by General <sup>L.C.</sup> Baker. Sometime <sup>he</sup> during <sup>that</sup> the day or late the night before, Booth resumed his diary appeal to posterity.

It is in the same strain as the letter he left at his sister's place in Philadelphia <sup>the previous fall</sup> and the note for the Intelligencer entrusted to John Matthews. <sup>on the afternoon of the assassination</sup>

"Friday, 21.

"After being hunted like a dog through swamps, woods, and last night being 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? And yet I for striking down a greater tyrant than they ever knew am looked upon as a common cutthroat. My action was purer than either of theirs. One hoped to be great. The other had not only his country's but his own wrongs to avenge. I hoped for no gain. I knew no private wrong. I struck for my country and that alone. A country that groaned beneath this tyranny and prayed for this end, and yet now behold the cold hand they extend to me. God cannot pardon me if I have done wrong.

"Yet I cannot see my wrong except in serving a degenerate people. The little the very little, I left behind to clear my name, the Gov't will not allow to be

printed. So ends all. For my country I have given up all that makes life sweet and holy, brought misery upon my family, and am sure there is no pardon in the Heaven for me since man condemns me so. I have only HEARD of what has been done (except what I did myself), and it fills me with horror. God, try and forgive me, and bless my mother. Tonight I will once more try the river with the intent to cross.

"Though I have a greater desire and almost a mind to return to Washington and in a measure clear my name--which I feel I can do--I do not repent the blow I struck. I may before my God, but not to man. I think I have done well. Though I am abandoned, with the curse of Cain upon me, when, if the world knew my heart, that one blow would have made me great, though I did desire no greatness."

"Tonight I try to escape these bloodhounds once more. Who, who can read his fate? God's will be done.

"I have too great a soul to die like a criminal. O, may He, may He spare me that, and let me die bravely.

"I bless the entire world. Have never hated or wronged any one. This last was not a wrong, unless God deems it so. And it's with him to damn or bless me. And for this brave boy with me, who often prays (yes, before and since) with a true and sincere heart, was it crime in him, if so, why can he pray the same?

"I do not wish to shed a drop of blood, but I must fight the course. 'Tis all that's left me." (24)

~~While Booth was writing this~~

~~7~~  
+

*the twenty-second,*

On Saturday night, the fugitives were more successful and reached Gambo Creek on the Virginia side. Sunday morning Herold called at Mrs. Quesenberry's, about a mile from where they had landed. He told her that he had been directed to her by Thomas Jones, and once more stated that he had with him the man who killed Abraham Lincoln. ~~Following Herold,~~ <sup>by Herold</sup> she was led to Booth's hiding place where she found him in great pain from his broken leg. He requested that he be taken to the nearest physician and stated that now being among friends he anticipated little danger. (25)

That afternoon, Sunday, Mrs. Quesenberry, with the aid of a neighbor, William Bryan, sent ~~them~~ <sup>the fugitives</sup> to "Claydale", the summer home of Dr. Richard Stewart, eight miles away, where they arrived about dark. Dr. Stewart, who had several times suffered ~~arrest~~ <sup>said to have been</sup> for aiding the rebellion, was one of the richest men in King George County, Virginia. He was entertaining friends just returned from the Confederate service and suspecting the identity of the two strangers, after giving them supper ~~he refused to care for Booth's leg or to allow them to remain longer in his home~~ <sup>him and Herold</sup> to endanger the lives of himself and his guests, ~~and they~~ <sup>Booth and Herold then left and during</sup> went about a quarter of a mile <sup>from the Stewart place</sup> to the hut of William Lucas, a free-born Negro, where they spent the night. While at the Negro's cabin Booth sat down moodily and wrote a note to Dr. Stewart in which he said he was enclosing five dollars. Upon reconsideration, however, he decided to reduce the amount to one-half the sum and rewrote the message. The second note was torn out <sup>of his diary</sup> and orders given to Lucas to take it to Dr. Stewart the next morning. (26)

It is signed "Stranger" and is in the same Wilkes Boothian style as are his other letters. (~~See Lc B.~~)

"Dear Sir: Forgive me, but I have some little pride. I hate to blame you for your want of hospitality; you know your own affairs. I was sick and tired, with a broken leg, in need of medical advice. I would not have turned a dog from my door in such a condition. However, you were kind enough to give us something to eat, for which I not only thank you, but on account of the reluctant manner in which it was bestowed,



I feel bound to pay for it. It is not the substance but the manner in which kindness is extended that makes one happy in the acceptance thereof. The sauce in meat is ceremony; meeting were bare without it. Be kind enough to accept the inclosed two dollars and a half (though hard to spare) for what we have received.

"Yours respectfully,

"Stranger."

April 24, 1865.  
To Dr. Stewart.

The fugitives had arrived at the Lucas' ~~cabin~~ about midnight, long after the negro and his family had gone to bed. Lucas' story told later to the officers and newspaper men was that Booth claimed that <sup>he and Herald</sup> they were wounded Confederate soldiers sent <sup>to his cabin</sup> by Dr. Stewart, <sup>He</sup> and demanded that <sup>Lucas</sup> he convey them to <sup>e</sup> Fredricksburg that night. After a somewhat heated debate, "the lame man", <sup>designated</sup> as Lucas ~~said~~, pulled back his coat, displaying his revolvers and knife, <sup>and</sup> threatened him with; "Fellow, do you know we are some of Mosby's men?" (27)

(17)  
~~Lucas said, pulled back his coat and displaying his revolvers and knife,~~  
~~threatened him with "Tally, do you know we are some of Mosby's men?"~~ We offer  
to pay you for your accommodation, and if you will not accept pay, we will take  
your horses, your wagon, and we will compel you to take us where we want to go."  
The terrified Negro then agreed to convey them as far as Port Royal for twenty-  
five dollars. They made the frightened colored wife get up and cook them some  
supper, then remained in the cabin until morning. Lucas and his wife sat up  
the <sup>rest</sup> ~~balance~~ of the night, being afraid to go back to sleep. Booth complained  
of his leg saying that his horse had fallen on him about ten days before. He  
and Herold represented themselves to Lucas as brothers, calling each other  
"Johnny" and "David".

Early the next morning, Charlie, Lucas' eighteen-year-old son, drove  
Booth and Herold to Port Royal, not by the direct road, but around by "Charles  
Mason's Grist Mill," for Booth wanted to avoid the main highways as much as  
possible. The colored boy said that during the trip he was frequently urged to  
"hurry up" and that Booth, who seemed much fatigued, laid down in the bottom of  
the wagon and slept at intervals. They arrived at Port Conway opposite Port  
Royal, on the Rappahannock River, sometime after noon of the 24th and Herold  
immediately hailed the ferryboat, which was on the opposite side of the river.  
(28)

By this time John Wilkes Booth must have fully realized that by the  
assassination of President Lincoln he had gained that immortality which he had  
so long coveted -- but an immortality that meant <sup>that</sup> his name would go down into  
history as much execrated as that of Judas Iscariot.

Did the lines which he had quoted, recur to him?

"The ambitious youth who fired the Ephesian dome

Outlives in fame the pious fool who reared it."

THE FLIGHT

Notes

- (1) "A heavy rain was falling and the sky was black." The Life of S P Chase by J. W. Schuckers, p. 518.
- (2) "Abraham Lincoln" by Nicolay & Hay, Vol. X, p. 314-316
- (3) "Abraham Lincoln" by Nicolay & Hay, Vol. X, p. 317.
- (4) Testimony of Polk Gardiner, C. T. p. 85.
- (5) "In the Track of John Wilkes Booth" - Philadelphia Press, April 12, 1896.
- (6) S. T. pp. 285, 1013, 1032-33.
- (7) "T. B." a vital name is one of the later Booth myths, was and still is a collection of four or five houses and a store located where three roads cross five miles south of Surrattville and sixteen miles south of Washington. Testimony of John Lloyd, C. T. pp. 85-87, S. T. pp. 276-287.
- (8) Clipping Lincoln Scrap Book, p. 104.
- (9) Testimony of Lieutenant Alexander Lovett. C. T. p. 87.
- (10) C. T. p. 208
- (11) Testimony of Col. H. H. Wells, C. T. pp. 169-170.
- (12) Story told by the son of Col. Cox - Philadelphia Press, April 12, 1896.
- (12 $\frac{1}{2}$ ) "John Wilkes Booth" by Thomas A Jones p. 120
- (13) "John Wilkes Booth" by Thomas A Jones published in 1893. pp. 70-71.
- (14) This overseer enters by way of the Booth myth makers of later years as the man who suffered death in place of Booth.
- (15) With reference to the disposal of the horses Jones later says, pp. 81-2, "I may as well insert here the sequel to my advice concerning Booth's and Herold's horses. During my weeks' attendance on the two men I never once saw Herold's horse, and saw Booth's only on the one occasion already referred to. I had no hand in the disposition of them; and do not remember, if I ever knew, the exact day that Herold removed them.

"After the fugitives crossed the river, and just before I was arrested, Cox told me that he stood on the hill near his house and saw Herold taking the two horses down toward Zaciah Swamp and heard the two reports of the pistol that killed them.

"It has been stated that Herold buried the horses after he shot them. I am sure that is a mistake. To have done so, he would have required assistance; and, besides, newly dug earth would scarcely have escaped detection during the scrutinizing search made from one end of Zaciah Swamp to the other.

"Cox said that sometime after the horses were killed he rode down to the spot where he had heard the pistol discharged and searched minutely in every thicket or brier-clump in the neighborhood, but could not discover a trace of them.

"In the dense growth that covers the swamp there is a large area of quicksand covered with water. It is my opinion that the horses were led into this quicksand and shot there, and that their own weight sunk them. Whether my opinion is correct or not, it is certain that not even a bone of them has ever been discovered to this day."

- (16) New York Tribune, April 19, 1865.
- (17) Detroit Free Press, April 19, 1865.
- (18) New York Tribune, April 19, 1865.
- (19) New York Tribune, April 19, Page 8, Col. 4
- (20) O. R. Series 1, Vol. 46, Part 111, p. 787. Published also in the newspapers of the period.
- (21) New York Tribune, April 19, 1865.
- (22) New York Tribune, Tuesday, April 18, 1865.
- (23) Victor Louis Mason, in The Century, April 1896.
- (24) This note book or diary is in possession of the War Department. It was read into the evidence at the Surratt trial and the handwriting identified as that of John Wilkes Booth. The original of Booth's Diary is among the exhibits

used at the Surratt Trial and Impeachment Investigation, ~~and the writing was identified as that of John Wilkes Booth~~ <sup>it is</sup> filed in the Secret Archives of the War Department. Adj. General's office, Washington, D.C., Quoted Imp. Inv. p. 287 - For a discussion of its contents see Imp. Inv. pp. 28, 32, 275, 280, 323, 324, 408, 450, 457, 483, 672.

(25) The wanderings of the next few days, beginning with April 21, are covered in interviews by W N Walton, in May, 1865, for Washington newspapers. He talked with Lucas the Negro, Dr Stewart, and Mrs Quesenberry. George Alfred Townsend who wrote voluminously of the assassination at the time, and in his historical novel, "Katy of Catoctin" and in the Century Magazine for April, 1884, describes how Booth and Herold crossed the Potomac and reached Port Conway. Victor Louis Mason retold the story more in detail in the Century for April, 1896, and in 1900, O. H. Oldroyd of the Oldroyd Lincoln Museum, interviewed people all along the route confirming the stories previously written.

(26) S. T. pp. 484-485 and 676-677

(27) Mosby's men had a reputation for ferocity that would strike terror to the average negro's heart.

(28) The story of Booth's and Herold's stay in the Lucas Cabin was obtained by the New York Herald correspondent, W. N. Walton and sent to the Herald in a despatch dated May 3, 1865. On the Saturday following Booth's capture, Lieutenant L. B. Baker, with another officer and a squad of twenty men were sent to the territory through which Booth and Herold had passed after crossing the Potomac, to ferret out all parties implicated in the escape of the assassins. Mr Walton accompanied this expedition. See Lincoln Scrap Book, p. 81-83 also compare with Testimony of L B Baker, S. T. pp 320-322.