

out to overhaul these. The task was a long one, and countless papers were sorted and destroyed, or classified and filed. When I was nearing the bottom, I picked up a letter which had a strip of paper fluttering from it. There had been humidity and the slip of paper had become attached to the gum of the envelop. I pulled off the strip of paper. It had evidently been torn from the margin of a newspaper and sent in that form. On it I read, written with a pencil:

*"Dear Mr. Grover, Tad and I will occupy the box to-night. A. LINCOLN."*

Because of its unique character, I had preserved it.

Then I opened the letter to which the strip had attached itself, and found that it was a letter from John Wilkes Booth applying for a starring engagement, written and sent by him from Cleveland.

Almost immediately afterward, I related the circumstance to Mr. Stoddard, who had had a clerical position in the White House, and was then connected with the New York "Evening Post," and he published the coincidence in that paper at the time.



## LINCOLN AND WILKES BOOTH AS SEEN ON THE DAY OF THE ASSASSINATION

BY M. HELEN PALMES MOSS

**M**Y first introduction into Washington life was in the autumn of 1864. While it was not an uncommon sight to see President Lincoln on the street or in a box at the theater, I had never met him face to face until, at the Inauguration Ball, March 4, 1865, passing in line with the multitude, I received a kindly grasp of the hand that I again held on the day of his tragic death.

The fall of Richmond, Virginia, on April 3, 1865, and the surrender of General Lee on April 9, virtually closed the War of the Rebellion. There was great rejoicing all over the land. Plans for the celebration of the event were being made in every city of the Union. As my home was then in Washington, I was naturally interested in the great celebration that was to be there on April 14. Business houses and government buildings, as well as most private residences, were gorgeously decorated with flags and bunting. The theaters were brilliantly draped, extra attractions were put on the boards, with flaming advertisements to at-

tract the multitude that would be abroad that night. The two principal theaters, the "National" (sometimes called "Grover's") and "Ford's," were vying with each other to secure the largest patronage, for they had always been great rivals. A private box had been specially decorated in each theater, with the hope of having the President and his family occupy it.

J. Wilkes Booth, an actor of little prominence except as the brother of the great tragedian, Edwin Booth, but who, having once been a member of the National Stock Company, was well-acquainted with the managers, Leonard Grover and C. Dwight Hess, having the night before called to see if an invitation was to be sent to the President to occupy their box, came the next morning to learn the answer.

If the President went to the National Theatre, he was to be shot while alighting from his carriage, as Booth had found no one connected with the theater to assist him; consequently, he was very anxious that morning to know which invitation

was accepted, Grover's or Ford's, and had early made his appearance at the office of the National to wait the return of the messenger who had been sent with the invitation.

Mr. C. D. Hess was my brother-in-law, and consequently I enjoyed great privileges at the theater and often attended.

Wallack and Davenport had been playing a series of Shaksperian plays that were a joy to the President, who dearly loved tragedy. Mr. Hess had counted on having him at the performance of "Aladdin," and naturally was as anxious as Booth to learn the result of his note. It was a glorious morning. Bands were playing all about; everything was in gala attire. Mrs. Hess and I decided to take a walk, the objective point being the theater office, for we, too, were curious to know whether "the boys," as we called them, would have the honors.

On entering, the first one we saw was J. Wilkes Booth. I can see him now, handsome, with piercing black eyes, rather long, wavy hair, as black as night, a fascinating theatrical air of self-consciousness, as if he were only to be seen to be admired, and wearing a long, light-colored overcoat which capped the climax of style. We were much flattered to take his hand in greeting. The messenger boy returned with a note written by Mrs. Lincoln, who usually responded to the President's personal notes. In effect it said: He sends his regrets that the invitation was not sent earlier, as he much preferred the Shaksperian play Wallack and Davenport were giving to the comedy of "Our American Cousin," which was being played by Laura Keane at Ford's; unfortunately he had accepted the invitation from Ford's. Another time he would be glad to avail himself of an opportunity to hear them; but his son Tad and his tutor would be glad to accept.

Of course this was a great disappointment to the management, but it was received with joy by Booth, who soon after left to complete his plans for the attack at Ford's Theatre. My sister-in-law and myself left soon after Booth, and finding ourselves in the neighborhood of the White House, it occurred to us that we had a standing invitation to visit its conservatory, and so decided to make our call then.

Stepping into the White House, we were not surprised to meet the President in the corridor, as we had noticed his carriage at the door. He courteously turned to us, shook hands, and asked our names. Recognizing that of Mrs. Hess, he again expressed regret at his inability to accept her husband's invitation. While talking, he had turned with us toward the conservatory, as we had explained our presence and destination. Asking us if we had seen his favorite lemon-tree, he conducted us to it. It was indeed a beauty, a perfect mass of fruit and flowers. In answer to the question whether he was not feeling very happy over the glorious news, he replied, "Yes, Madam; for the first time since this cruel war began, I can see my way clearly." Such a tender look was in his deep-set eyes as he uttered those words! Poor man! we little knew that a few minutes before we had shaken hands with his murderer. After requesting the gardener, our old Scotch friend whose invitation we had accepted, to gather us some flowers, and picking us a lemon from his favorite tree, the President left us. Those flowers we were wearing that night at the National Theatre when the dreadful news was announced. The lemons were kept for years. One was finally lost; but the other, shriveled like a nut, is still treasured.

Tad and his tutor were early on hand, and were seated well in front, as all the boxes had been sold.

Our seats were somewhat in the rear. After the play had fairly opened, during some scene-shifting, and while the stage was deserted, a messenger came to us from the management: "Leave your seats quietly, and stand back by the door. President Lincoln has been shot at Ford's Theatre. Mr. Hess is going before the curtain to announce it, and close the house at once. Stand back lest there be a rush for the door."

Shocked as we were, we managed to withdraw to the rear unobserved, while Tad and his tutor retired, they having been asked before the announcement was made to return home at once, as the President was ill.

Mr. Hess, after Tad's departure, stepped to the front of the stage and said he had a very grave announcement to make. "President Lincoln has been shot in his private box at Ford's Theatre. The

The mighty President Lincoln was  
 shot at Ford's Theatre,  
 with me at  
 "Ted" Lincoln with his Tutor was

**GROVER'S THEATRE.**

LEONARD GROVER, DIRECTOR  
 C. D. JESS, ACTING MANAGER



This Evening, Starting, April 14th, 1865,

The Great Original Spectacle of

**ALADDIN!**

**The Wonderful Lamp:**

**CANT IN THE FOLLOWING EXCELLENT MANNER:**

Aladdin..... Miss Ella Gorman (Ching Hi)..... Miss Laura Verney  
 Princess..... Miss Bianci Gray (Zolyad)..... M<sup>rs</sup> The Desjard  
 Abouassad..... Mr. J. W. Jennings (Zemora)..... M<sup>rs</sup> Nichols  
 Kasroo..... Mr. R. H. Verney (Genl of the Lamp)..... Mr. A. Green  
 Prince Amur..... Mr. W. Barron (Genl of the Ring)..... Miss Mary Place  
 Tahl Tonglue..... Mr. H. McDonald (Ahrou)..... Miss E. Hoban  
 Grand Vizier..... Mr. Geo. Wren (Widow Mustapha)..... M<sup>rs</sup> E. Place  
 Loo Choo..... Mr. C. H. Clark

**THE MAGNIFICENT SCENERY**

Of the Piece, by Mr. D. A. STRONG; the WONDERFUL MECHANICAL EFFECTS  
 by Messrs. KELLY & GROSS; PROPERTIES, by Mr. O. P. CLARK; all the  
 ORIGINAL MUSIC under the direction of Mr. C. KOPFIZ;  
 the GRAND BALLETS, BEAUTIFUL DANCES  
 and TABLEAU, arranged and directed  
 by M<sup>rs</sup> C. MATHIEU.

Between the 2d and 3d Act of the Play, a PATRIOTIC POEM  
 composed for this occasion by MAJ. E. D. FRENCH, entitled

**THE FLAG OF SUMMER**

WILL BE DELIVERED.

SATURDAY AFTERNOON NEXT,

**Second Grand Family Matinee of "Aladdin!"**

At 30 Cts. Admission to All Parts of the House.

Ledger Job Printing Establishment, Philadelphia.

BILL OF THE PLAY AT GROVER'S THEATRE, APRIL 14, 1865.

From the playbill owned by Leonard Grover, the director of the theatre. The print is on blue and red ink which, with the white paper and margins, were in harmony with the patriotic program and between the acts.

audience will be dismissed at once, and the house closed, but every one must move out quietly and orderly without excitement."

The house was as still as death. One could have heard a pin drop. The dazed look upon the faces! All were simply stunned for a moment. Then they rose as one body, and passed out toward the door, as if in the presence of death.

The doors were thrown open. Sentries were stationed there with crossed bayonets to prevent a rush, but there was no rush. We stood in awe and watched the people file out one by one into the full moonlight. Groups gathered at the corners of the streets, speaking in hushed breath of the terrible thing that had happened. Such a tenseness! There were no loud outcries or rough words, but only the tenderest expressions for our beloved martyr—the same stillness everywhere. Soon came the pounding of the hoofs of cavalry horses on the cobblestones, and the rattle of swords, for it had just dawned upon the awakening people that a foul deed had been done and the assassin was abroad.

Shall I ever forget that night! It was so light that one could see for blocks, the little groups becoming one line of march toward the house to which the President had been taken. Our escorts, wishing to join the throng, quickly took us home, leaving us frightened women to console each other.

The night was warm. In our eagerness to catch every sound, we huddled about the windows, not daring to have a light, lest we be made targets of by "the Rebels."

A horseman would go dashing past, and down our heads would duck until we thought the danger past. Then we leaned far out to catch the first sound of news from the passers-by. Some man of the household would come dashing in to add to our terror with "The Rebels are upon us." "They have surrounded the city." "They have begun their raid." "We are in danger of being shot or made prisoners." "The President shot, and all of his cabinet," until we were simply wild with fright. There was no sleep or rest until the men came home saying, "All is over."

Not until then did we seek our rooms after our all-night's vigil, for it was 7:22 A.M. when the beloved President breathed his last.

But sleep was of short duration, for soon the sound of the hammer was heard in all directions. Flags and bunting gave place to mournful black on all streets through which the procession would pass to the White House with that dear body, "going home." As they were to pass our door, we were up. Such a solemn sight! The funeral dirge of our President's own band, bells tolling mournfully, Lincoln's body-guard surrounding that form—a body-guard that could not shield him from the arm of the assassin, after all. Then the colored followers in line back of him, on the walks beside him, gathering in from all sides, until it was one black mass, weeping, wailing. Even the sun refused to shine. Clouds had gathered, and the rain came down, not in a rush or down-pour, but with a steady dropping, as if, as was said, "the very heavens were weeping."

After the body was laid "in state," at the White House, the next day, I with my friends stood in line from 10 A.M. until 2 P.M. that we might see his face once more.

The crowd was so great that one moved with the throng without an effort of his own, our escorts standing "akimbo" to keep off the crush. At the entrance to the grounds, we were met by soldiers who stood with fixed bayonets under which only a few were allowed to pass at a time. At the door other soldiers, with their muskets crossed, allowed half the number in the house, once in, around the catalque, and out at another door before others were let in; but in that brief moment I gazed into the face that had only the morning before shone with such happiness as he said he could see his way clearly. "Surely everything is clear to him now," I thought.

It is only of late that it has occurred to me that I stand in a unique position—the only living person, probably, who clasped hands on the day of the assassination with the assassin and his victim. My companion in that walk has long since passed away.

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