

J. WILKES BOOTH'S DIARY.

The President Requests a Certified Copy.

Secretary Stanton Furnishes It.

Its Full Contents.

[Special Dispatch to the Cincinnati Enquirer.]

WASHINGTON, May 20, 1867.

So much has been said about the spoliation of the Booth diary since the charge was made by General Butler in Congress that now the people generally, and almost without an exception the leading journals, demand that the book be published, no matter whether its contents be important or unimportant. Upon representing to Mr. Johnson all the circumstances, and of the general demand that the diary be printed, in order that the people may for themselves judge of the facts and merits of the controversy about this book, the President gave his consent that a copy be published.

The President himself, never having seen the diary, had some days ago ordered a certified copy to be made, which was accordingly a few days ago furnished. I am permitted to send you a copy of the record, as certified to by the Judge Advocate:

[COPY.]

EXECUTIVE MANSION, WASHINGTON, D. C.,
May 9, 1867.

The Secretary of War will please furnish the President with a certified copy of the diary found on the body of J. Wilkes Booth, together with a succinct statement of all the facts connected with its capture and its possession by the War Department.

[Signed] ANDREW JOHNSON.
WAR DEPARTMENT, WASHINGTON, D. C.,
May 14, 1867.

SIR—I have the honor to submit herewith a copy of the entries contained in the memorandum-book found on the person of J. Wilkes Booth at the time of his capture, certified to by General Holt, Judge-Advocate General, who has possession of the book, together with his report in relation thereto. The memorandum-book was first seen by me about the 26th day of April, 1865, shortly after Booth's capture, and a few hours before his remains reached Washington city.

It was brought to my house by Provost Marshal Baker and another person, who was, I think, Lieutenant-Colonel Conger. The book was then examined by me in presence of General Eckert, Assistant Secretary of War, and was found to contain only the entries certified by General Holt; also some photographs of females. Immediately preceding the entries, some pages appeared to have been cut out, but there was nothing indicating what had been written thereon, or whether anything had been written, nor when or by whom they had been cut out.

Immediately after a careful examination of the book and its contents, it was placed in the hands of General Eckert, in the same condition as when I first saw it, to be delivered to the Judge-advocate

General, in whose possession, after its delivery to him by General Eckert, I am informed and believe, it has continued until the present time. The last time I saw the book was some time last winter. I was then before the Judiciary Committee of the House of Representatives, and it was, in all respects, in exactly the same condition as when I saw it first, without any change or alteration, so far as I could discover, in its contents.

General Eckert reported to me that upon receiving the memorandum book from me he sealed it up and locked it up in his safe, and it continued in his possession until he delivered it to the Judge Advocate-General, and that it was then in the same condition as when it was brought to my house by Baker.

Very respectfully your obedient servant,
EDWIN M. STANTON,
Secretary of War.

To the President:

The following is a copy of the writing, which was in pencil, found in the diary taken from the body of J. Wilkes Booth:

J. HOLT,
Judge Advocate General.

Ti Amo, April 13—14.—Friday the ides. Until to-day nothing was thought of sacrificing to our country's wrongs. For six months we have 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, and was 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 the pickets, rode sixty miles that night with the bone of my leg protruding through 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 (April 18th, 1865) 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. The 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 is the Government.

Friday, the 21st, after being hunted like a dog through swamps and woods, the 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 cut-throat. My action was purer than either one 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 that I left behind to clear my name, the Government 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 fam-

ily, and am sure there is no pardon in 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. To-night I will once more try the river with the intent to cross, though I had 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 regret the blow I struck. I swear before my God but not to man, I think I have done well, though I am abandoned with the curse of Cain upon me. If the world knew my heart, that one blow would have made me great, though I did desire no greatness. To-night I try to escape these bloodhounds once more. Who can read his fate? "God's will be done." I have too great a soul to die like a criminal.

O! may He spare me that, and let me die bravely. I bless the entire world. I have never hated or wronged any one. This last act was not a wrong, unless God decrees it so, and it is with Him to damn or bless me, and from this brave boy with me, who often prays; yes, before and since, with a true and sincere heart was it a crime in him? If not, 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.

Upon a piece of paper found in the diary, and supposed to have been torn from it, is written the following:

My dear—(piece torn out.) Forgive me; but I have some little pride. I can not blame you for want of hospitality; you know your affairs; I was sick, tired, with a broken limb, and in need of medical advice. I would not have turned a dog from my door in such a plight. However, you were kind enough to give us something to eat, for which I not only thank you, but on account of the rebuke and manner in which—(piece torn out.) It is not the substance, but the way in which kindness is extended that makes one happy in the acceptance thereof. The sauce to meet its ceremony; meeting were bare without it. Be kind to accept the enclosed \$5, although hard to spare, for what we have received.

Most respectfully, your obedient servant.

REPORT OF THE JUDGE ADVOCATE GENERAL,
BUREAU OF MILITARY JUSTICE,
May 14, 1867.

Respectfully returned with the copy asked for.

The diary purports to be one for 1864, and the leaves cut or torn from it probably contained entries of that year, and were thus destroyed by Booth himself. It is absolutely certain that the diary is in all respects as it was when it came into my hands; and Colonel Conger, who was prominent in the pursuit and capture of Booth, after having carefully examined it in my presence on yesterday, declared its condition to be now precisely the same as when he took it from Booth's body after he had been shot, the writing in it being the same and all which it contained.

Conger was examined before the Judiciary Committee of the House of Representatives.

J. HOLT,
Judge Advocate General.

Louisville Daily Journal
Louisville, Kentucky
Wednesday, May 22, 1867