

DESCRIPTION OF JOHN WILKES BOOTH

PERLEY'S REMINISCENCES

BY

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It was known, beyond a doubt, before Mr. Lincoln breathed his last, that his assassin was John Wilkes Booth, a son of the great tragedian, then twenty-seven years of age. He had played stock parts at Washington and other Southern and Western cities, where he had given unmistakable evidence of genuine dramatic talent. He had, added to his native genius, the advantage of a voice musically full and rich; a face almost classic in outline; features highly intellectual; a piercing, black eye, capable of expressing the fiercest and the tenderest passion and emotion, and a commanding figure and impressive stage address. In his transitions from the quiet and reflective passages of a part to fierce and violent outbreaks of passion, his sudden and impetuous manner had in it something of that electrical force and power which made the elder Booth so celebrated, and called up afresh to the memory of men of the preceding generation the presence, voice, and manner of the father. Convivial in his habits, sprightly and genial in conversation, John Wilkes Booth made many friends among the young men of his own age, and he was a favorite among the ladies at the National Hotel, where he boarded.

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The male prisoners, heavily ironed, were seated side by side in a dock interspersed with officers. Sam Arnold was of respectable appearance, about thirty years of age, with dark hair and beard and

a good countenance. Spangler, the stage-carpenter, was a chunky, light-haired, rather bloated and whisky-soaked looking man. Atzerott had a decided lager beer look, with heavy blue eyes, light hair, and sallow complexion. O'Laughlin might have been taken for a native of Cuba, short and slender, with luxuriant black locks, a delicate moustache and whiskers, and vivacious black eyes. Payne was the incarnation of a Roman gladiator, tall, muscular, defiant, with a low forehead, large blue eyes, thin lips, and black, straight hair, with much of the animal and little of the intellectual. Dave Harold was what the ladies call a pretty little man, with cherry cheeks, pouting lips, an incipient beard, dark hazel eyes, and dark, long hair. Last on the bench was Dr. Mudd, whose ankles and wrists were joined by chains instead of the unyielding bars which joined the bracelets and anklets of the others. He was about sixty years of age, with a blonde complexion, reddish face, and blue eyes.