

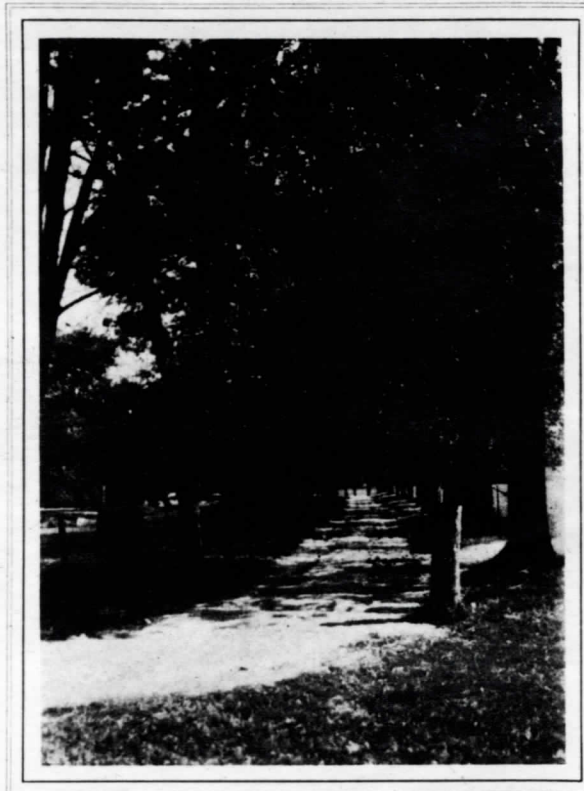
TUDOR HALL-HOUSE *of the* BOOTHS

It is of Early English Architecture and is Situated in the Beautiful Rolling Country of Eastern Maryland



I WENT slowly up the drive shaded on either side by a long avenue of maples. There was little in the beautiful summer morning to remind one of the unhappy associations connected with Tudor Hall.

Yet here was the house of tragedy. Here dwelt the family whose whole generation was clouded with sorrow and unhappiness. Here Junius Brutus Booth, great interpreter of Richard III, came between engagements to escape the temptations that beset him in



The Avenue of Maples, approaching the Southern homestead to which Junius Brutus Booth and his sons came for solace and rest between dramatic engagements

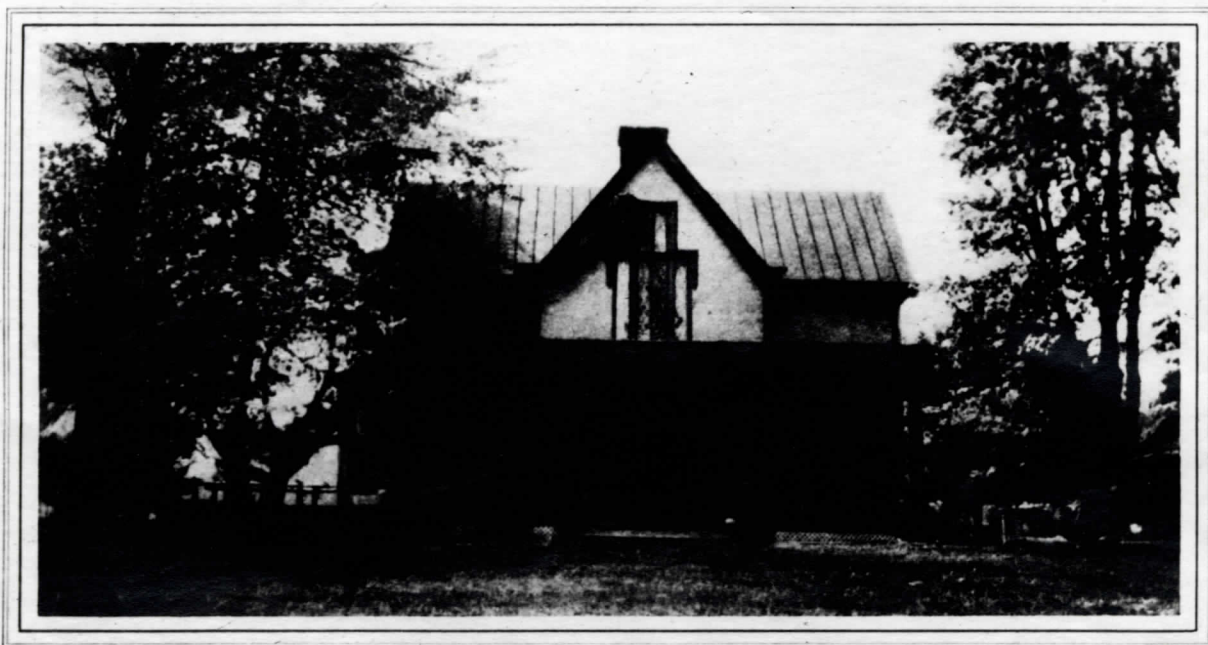
By
WILLARD H.
WRIGHT



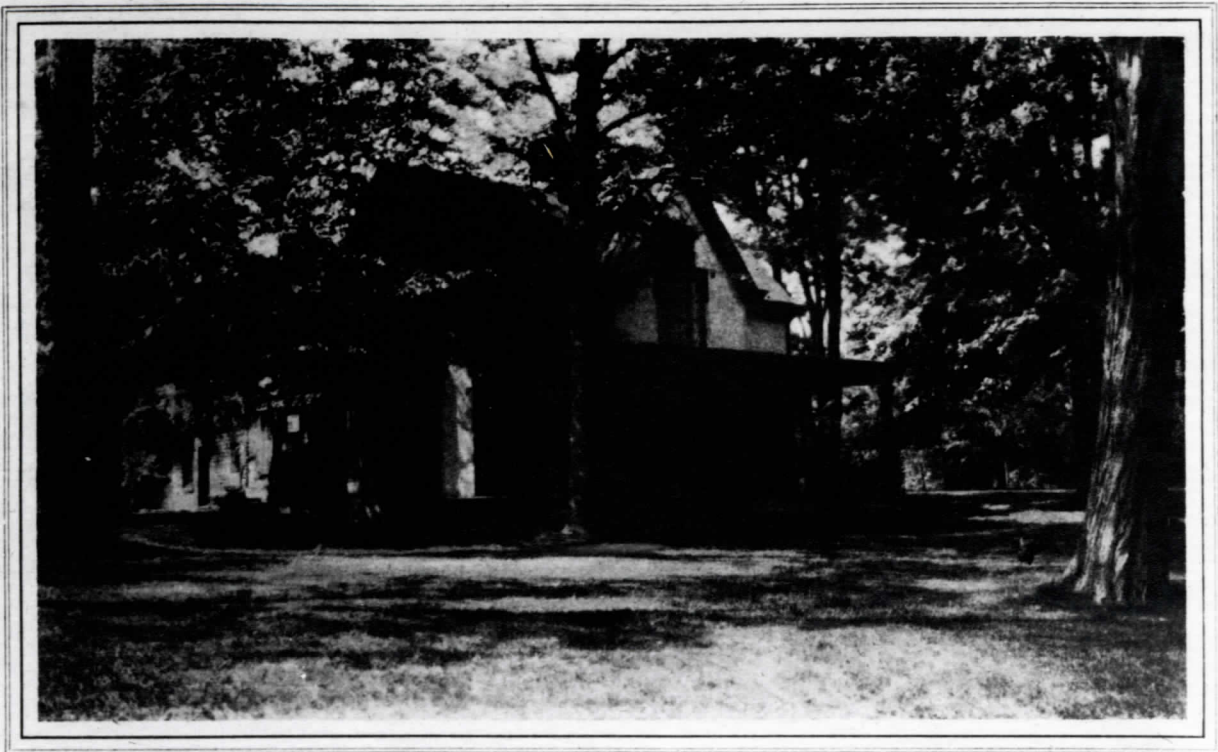
the outer world and to walk off his melancholy moods in the woods and fields of this retreat, which he had set up for himself soon after arriving in America. His children, too, following in the footsteps of their father, played at tragedy under the diamond-paned windows, and from this

house went out the youngest born to enact the greatest tragedy in American history.

Tudor Hall, the home of the Booths, is situated in the beautiful rolling country of eastern



The open vista in front of Tudor Hall, looking to the lake and the Avenue of Maples



Ancient trees cast their languorous shade over the gabled retreat established by the elder Booth soon after his arrival in America from his native England, in 1821

Maryland, about three miles from Belair, the county seat of Harford County. It is of early English architecture, built of solid brick in an L-shaped formation. A strictly native touch is added in the large porch which extends across the front of the house and continues on around to meet the bay windows on the right. The beauty of the place lies in the casement windows which are preserved in their original condition. These windows with their small diamond panes, their transoms and mullions are typically old English.

Junius Brutus Booth, the father of Edwin and John Wilkes, came to America with his young wife in the summer of 1821, and the following year purchased the estate of one hundred and fifty acres.

There were no buildings on the land, but Booth bought an old house from a neighbor and moved it to the premises. This house served the family

as a home until the present structure was erected.

Mary Anne Booth, wife of Junius, lived on the farm while Mr. Booth was away filling his engagements in the theater, and here were born the ten children that came to the couple.

Mr. Booth died in 1852, and after that the family became scattered, but still returned at intervals to live in the ancestral home. After the assassination of Lincoln, Mrs. Booth and her children were so crushed by the blow that they no longer came back to Tudor Hall. The property, however, remained in the possession of the Booth family until it was purchased in 1878 by Mrs. Ella V. Mahoney, the present owner.

Mrs. Mahoney, who was born and raised in the neighborhood, and whose father was a playmate of the Booth children, has maintained the estate as far as possible in its original condition and has collected



From "Troupers of the Coast"

Courtesy Harcourt Brace & Co.

Edwin Booth at eighteen years of age

and brought to the home many relics of the Booth family. She has also been active in compiling and recording many historical references. In her monograph, "Sketches of Tudor Hall and the Booth Family," she has set down intimate items of the associations surrounding the home of the Booths.

From the front door, one enters the reception hall with its fireplace facing the entrance. This room is devoted to the memory of Edwin Booth. Over the mantel hangs his portrait by Cummings. As one gazes into the countenance, which at first glance seems stern and unbending, one realizes that the eyes belie the rugged firmness of the mouth and chin, and that nothing but human kindness and tolerance dwelt here.

The sitting-room to the right is devoted to John Wilkes. As we entered this room, Mrs. Mahoney said, "I suppose you will want to see something of John Wilkes Booth. Most people seem to take more interest in the relics pertaining to him." We did not ask, but we wondered why this should be. Perhaps it was morbid curiosity that made people pass quickly through the room devoted to the great but fever-minded tragedian, and to devour with avid interest the mementoes of the perpetrator of one of the greatest crimes in history. The center of Mrs. Mahoney's interest was plainly evident when she turned again into the reception hall and resumed her recital of the interesting facts of Edwin's life and career.

To the left of the reception hall is the parlor, and to the rear of this, the dining-room with its bay window and cupboards built into the wall



The bay window in the dining-room and, above it, the bedroom window of John Wilkes Booth

at either end. A staircase ascends from a hall back of the reception-room. Toward the foot, a stained-glass window is set overhead while



Dim memories of childhood's happy days still linger over the quiet waters of the lake at Tudor Hall

above the landing a small cathedral window with leaded panes lets in light for the stairway. The front room upstairs was the bedroom of Mary Anne Booth, while Edwin's room opened off this to the left. Here the full-length casement window opens onto a small balcony with just enough space for two persons to stand. This is the "Romeo and Juliet balcony," which, according to accounts, the Booth children sometimes utilized in staging performances of the Shakespearean play. John Wilkes' room, shared with an older brother, is over the dining-room. The bay window extends upward to the roof, and English ivy has clambered up and covered the ancient walls between the diamond casements.

The chief charm of Tudor Hall today lies in the beauty of the grounds, which represent in miniature an old English manorial park. The smooth lawn stretches down on one side to the gate, where the drive enters and the avenue of maples commences. Straightway in front of the yard, is an old-fashioned flower garden with marigolds and iris. To the left is an ancient spring surmounted with a brick spring house, and near to this is the beech tree upon which is still legible the carved name of John Wilkes

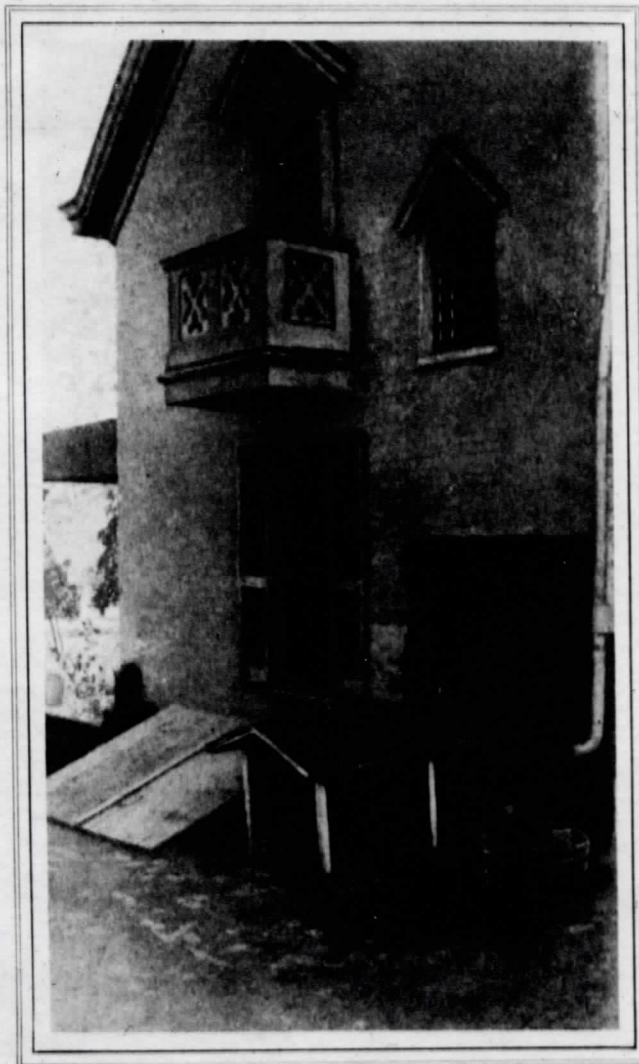
Booth and the date, 1852. Beyond the flower garden, and to the left of the avenue of trees, is an artificial lake with a tiny island in the center. Three or four large willow trees have roots on this islet and cast their languorous shade over the quiet water. The lawn is shaded by many splendid old trees, among which is an enormous sycamore, said to be the largest of its kind in Maryland. A Judas tree is in full bloom, its

lavender blossoms lending a brighter tint to the dark green of the grass and larger foliage. We pondered upon whether its presence in some way was not symbolic of the disastrous events that had their source here.

To this house came not only Junius Brutus Booth, but also his old father Richard Booth, who left England to make his home with his son. Here he was buried after his death in 1840, but later his remains were moved to the family burying plot in what is now Greenmount

Cemetery in Baltimore. It is perhaps a curious anomaly but history has it that Richard Booth left England with his cousin to fight with the Colonies in the Revolution. However, he was taken prisoner and sent back to England. The cousin managed to escape and reach America, where he served honorably with the Colonial army throughout the war. Thus did one generation of Booths fight for the freedom which a third insanely sought to break asunder. On the stone over the grave of Richard Booth is carved in Latin the beautiful and haunting inscription which, translated, means: "I give up this life in favor of the King. I am going unknown unto the stars."

A cloud of tragedy and sorrow ever hovered over this talented but unhappy family. The moody and dissipated father, the patient and long-suffering mother, the fanatical John Wilkes, and the gentle and illustrious but sorrowing Edwin. As we walked under the casements and through the halls of this historic home, we wondered why fate had laid such a cruel and heavy hand upon those that once dwelt in Tudor Hall.



The balcony used by the Booth children in staging juvenile performances of "Romeo and Juliet" and the cathedral window above the stairs