

Philadelphia, Friday, April 25, 1870.

The Attempt to Assassinate Booth.

CHICAGO, April 24.—Further particulars of the attempted assassination of Edwin Booth at McVicker's Theatre, last night, are given as follows:

The play was Richard II. Near the finish of the last act, Booth sat in the glare of a calcium light, with all the other lights turned down, and was engaged in the soliloquy. He sat a little to the right of the centre of the stage, with the prison on one side and the cottage on the other. The intending assassin sat nearly on a level with him in the first balcony, and some thirty feet distant, with the pistol concealed in his sleeve, and in his left hand holding a copy of the play, which he had evidently been following with the dire purpose of

firing only at the right time. When the first shot rang out there was a dead silence. Booth did not stir, but as a second ball came whizzing down and plowed its way through a piece of board in the cottage an inch in thickness, Booth quietly rose and went towards the wing. A rush was immediately made for Gray, and as there seemed to be some doubt which was the man Booth again stepped out, pointed directly at him, and saw him taken into custody. All this time there was a wild uproar in the house and shouts of "Throw him over," "Hang him," "Pitch him out of the window," and the like, were audible. He was, however, speedily hustled off to the station and locked up. On his person was found the following incoherent letter, which clearly indicates his premeditated purpose:

CHICAGO, April 22, 1870.—Dear Katie: Forgive these brief, but horrible lines. I left St. Louis on Monday evening. The firm I was with would not increase my salary, so I made up my mind to return to Keokuk; but, being a lover of fine acting, I came to Chicago to see Booth. But I was sadly mistaken. It would take Booth one year of constant acting to compete with Lawrence Barrett's Richellu. To-night he plays Richard I. Katie, if I go to-night, he will kill me or I him. In all Shakspeare's (sic) works I find but one man to compete with Booth, and that is Iago. My judgment ought to foretell me that since I call Booth Iago, he could no more play Richellu than the devil could be an angel. I don't know what to do. Every line I write I prance the flour has though I was playing Hamlet. I'm sorry I came here, for I think the hangman has a rope for me. Remember me to your mother and sister.

Yours, truly,
MARK GRAY.

Reading this note, the impression would remain that the writer was an incoherent lunatic, but conversing with him as he sat coolly in prison and talked collectedly about his deed, the almost irresistible conclusion drawn from his manner is that he is perfectly sane, and acted with full knowledge and a well considered purpose. His story is that he belongs in Keokuk, but has been travelling for a St. Louis dry goods house; that about three years ago Booth wronged a friend of his (whether lady or gentleman he does not state), and that, becoming cognizant of the wrong about two and a half years ago, he determined to avenge it. He has only met Booth once since that time, and that was on the streets in St. Louis, and was not prepared.

He says he fired directly at the tragedian, and wonders greatly that he missed him. He regrets his failure even more than he wonders at it. He says he has accomplices back of him and that Booth will yet suffer. He came here for the express purpose of killing Booth. Mr. Booth said last night that he never heard of this man. He was not aware that he had been fired at during the first excitement, and went behind the scenes to quiet his wife, who feared he had been injured. The opinion generally expressed by the attachés of the theatre and by others who saw him, is that Gray is crazy. He fired two shots, snapped his pistol again, and was cocking it for a fourth trial when he was seized.

Mark Gray was brought before Justice Summerfield this morning, on a charge of attempt to kill. After identification and a brief recital of the facts by Mr. Booth, Gray pleaded guilty. The magistrate remarked that it was lucky that the charge was not murder, whereupon Gray returned, "I wish it was." Bail was at first fixed at \$10,000, but, as Mr. Booth represented that Gray had expressed a determination to kill him when he was free again, it was made \$20,000 and the would-be assassin went to jail. The Grand Jury being now in session, an indictment and speedy trial are probable. The penalty for the crime is from one to 14 years in the penitentiary.

St. Louis, Mo., April 24.—Mark Gray, who attempted to assassinate Edwin Booth in Chicago, last night, was a clerk in the dry goods house of Scruggs, Vandervoort & Barney, of this city, until four days ago, when he left because he could not obtain an increase of salary. Mr. Barney, the junior member of the firm says he was a good salesman, and that he knew of nothing which would lead him to commit such an act.

Clerks in the store speak of him as a quiet, reserved young man who made few acquaintances, was somewhat infatuated with the stage, and frequently said he intended to become an actor. Mrs. Abeling, with whom Gray boarded, and Mrs. Billings, at whose house he lodged, say that he often did strange and foolish things. They thought he was half crazy. He said that all his relations were actors; that he came of a star actor family, and was going on the stage to do as his relations had done.

Mrs. Bruin, a cousin, who almost raised him, says: "None of his family were ever actors, but he had a passion for the stage, and is a great frequenter of theatres. His father died before he was born, but when he came here last autumn from Keokuk, he said: 'My father is not dead. I know he is alive, for I sat at the table with him some days ago, and he would not speak to me, d—him! But I will get even with him yet.'"

Mrs. Bruin thinks he has an idea that Booth was his father, and that he is not responsible for some of his acts. He once drank hard, but for some months past his conduct is said to have been exemplary. The Katie to whom the letter found is addressed, is a half sister of Gray.