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LINCOLN'S ASSASSINATION.

An Ocean Grove Resident Witnesses the Dastardly Act.

The celebration of Lincoln's birthday yesterday recalls to mind the villainous act of John Wilkes Booth on that memorable night in April, 1865, when the life of Lincoln was ruthlessly and with out warning suddenly terminated.

Among many others who witnessed the deed of the assassin was Mr. H. W. Foster of Ocean Grove. Mr. Foster is well-known in the Grove and Park having resided in the former place for about eleven years. When the war broke out, Mr. Foster lived in Pennsylvania. He enlisted in Company E, Captain L. L. Greenawalt of Lebanon. The men were attached to the Twenty-seventh Pennsylvania Regiment, (composed of residents of Dauphin and Lebanon counties), and the regiment belonged to the Second Corps, Army of the Potomac.

Mr. Foster served eighteen months in the ranks as a private, and at the close of the war entered the Quartermaster's Department at Washington. Like many others, when it became known that Mr. Lincoln, his wife, and other notable persons were to occupy a box at Ford's Theatre on the night of April 15th, Mr. Foster desired to be present on such a notable occasion.

The play-house was crowded from pit to dome. The play was "Our American Cousin," with Miss Laura Keane as the leading lady of the company. Nothing occurred to mar the pleasure and enjoyment of the occasion until suddenly Mr. Foster heard the sharp report of a pistol, followed closely by the scream of Mrs. Lincoln. Then he saw Booth jump from the box in which he had shot Lincoln to the stage of the theatre, and at that moment the lights were suddenly extinguished, making further observations impossible.

A panic naturally ensued in the theatre, but the lights were quickly turned on again, and no serious results followed to any person in the audience.

Mr. Foster well remembers how all the troops were hastily put to work searching the city for the assassin. After the government secured possession and ownership of the theatre, Mr. Foster helped make the improvements to the building. Mr. Foster's particular work was assisting to place a sort of wire netting or lath on large iron supporting beams, in order that the latter might be plastered and hidden from view.

J. WILKES BOOTH.

Editor Chronicle:—The publication of Mr. Middleton's account of the capture of Booth, the slayer of Mr. Lincoln, has revived interest in the tragedy which shocked the world just at the close of the war between the states.

As there has been from time to time considerable controversy regarding the probable motive of Booth for committing the act, I hand you the accompanying, written for your paper years ago, as expressive of my own conception of the feeling that prompted the deed. In Mr. Middleton's story of Booth's death, which he received from persons who were present during his last moments, it is said that Booth charged Miss Halloway to tell his mother: "I died for my country. I did what I thought to be best." This would seem to confirm the view I took years since, and though we cannot condone Booth's act, it lifts him above the plane of the crazy anarchist Guiteau, with whom he has sometimes been classed. I subscribe myself as in the appended communication. SIGMA.

J. WILKES BOOTH.

Editors Chronicle and Constitutional-ist:—As you kindly invite discussion upon all questions of public interest, I respectfully submit a few remarks on your editorial of Sunday, headed "J. Wilkes Booth." There can, of course, be no difference of opinion between us as regards our abhorrence of murder in every possible form. I am certainly no apologist of crime in any of its phases; nor do I propose to take issue with you upon your characterization of the killing of Lincoln as an assassination. I will even go farther still, and agree with you, that the manner of Mr. Lincoln's death was not only unfortunate for the south, considered as to its political consequences, but that the deed itself was morally wrong. While I concur with you in the above general views, I am constrained to think that Booth was actuated by what he conceived to be patriotic motives in taking the life of Mr. Lincoln. However criminal the act, it was, in my opinion, prompted by a desire (mistaken though it was) to serve his country. So far as I have heard, it has never been intimated that Booth entertained any personal animosity toward his victim, nor, I

believe, has it ever been charged that he had any selfish end to accomplish by committing the act. What, then, could have been his object in thus destroying the life of a fellow-being and rushing to almost certain death himself? It is said (and I have never seen the statement contradicted) that as Booth leaped upon the stage after firing the fatal shot, he exclaimed, "Sic Semper Tyrannis!" The use of this phrase at this juncture would seem to indicate beyond all question the feeling that moved him to the act. It is evident, it seems to me, that he regarded Mr. Lincoln as not only the representative of, but perhaps the controlling spirit in the government that had crushed the effort of his people to secure their independence. This we know was only true in part. For myself I have no doubt Booth's stage education had much to do with the dramatic conception and accompaniments of the tragedy. His professional training had familiarized his mind with the representation of death; and to an enthusiastic, fine strung nature, there was but a short step between death for a sentiment on the mimic stage, and death for a sentiment on the broader field of human action.

For one, I have never sympathized with those conspirators who, rushing upon Caesar from behind and overcoming him by their numbers, struck him down with their cruel daggers. I have always regarded that as a cowardly assault, unworthy of the great Roman people and the cause of liberty, in whose name the deed was done. But history has handed down the example of Brutus and Cassius for the emulation of all ages, and the sentiment of liberty-loving people throughout the world, and especially in America, concurs in assigning them a lofty place among the heroes of the past. Perhaps Booth, recalling the familiar story of Caesar's death, and observing the sanctity with which posterity has clothed the memories of his slayers, aspired to enroll his name with theirs upon the pages of history.

Such, it appears to me, were probably some of the motives which led Booth to commit the deed which has given him a greater name his acting could ever have done, world-famed as it was. I will not occupy your space or weary your patience with my views upon Booth's courage or cowardice as displayed in the great tragedy. Suffice it to say that I cannot agree with you in your opinions upon this point. SIGMA.