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ANCIENT HISTORY

Happening in McKean County in Days of Old, Taken from the Files.

The following statement of Captain The following statement of Captain Theodore McGowan, A. A. G., to Gen. Augur, may be implicity relied upon as correct version of the assassination of President Lincoln:

"On the night of Friday, April 14, 1865, in company with a friend, I went to Ford's threatre, arriving there just after the entrance of President Lincoln and his party accompanying him. My friend, Lieut. Crawford, and I, after viewing the Presidential party from the opposite side of the dress circle, went to the right side and took a seat in the cassage above the seats of the dress circle and about five feet from the door of the box occupied by President Lincoln. During the performance the at-tendant of the President came out and took the chair nearest the door. I sat and had been sitting about four feet to

his left and rear for some time.
"I remembered that a man, whose face I do not distinctly recollect, passed me and inquired of one sitting near who the President's messenger was and learning exhibited to him an envelope, apparently official, having a printed heading and superscribed in a bold hand. I could not read the address and did not try. I think now it was meant for Gen.

Grant. That man went away. Some time after I was disturbed in my seat by the approach of a man who desired to pass up the aisle in which I was sitting. Giving him room by bending my chair forward, he passed me and stepped on one step down upon the level floor below me. Standing there, he was almost in my line of sight and I saw him while watching the play. He stood, as I remember, one step above the messenger and remained perhaps one minute, apparently looking at the stage and orchestra below. Then he drew a number of visiting eards from his pocket from which, with some attention, he drew or selected one. These things I saw distinctly. I saw him stoop and, I think descend to the level with the mesenger and by his right side. He showed the card to the messenger and as my at-tention was then more closely fixed upon the play, I do not know whether the card was carried in by the messenger or his consent given the entrance of the man who presented it. I saw, a few moments later, the same man entering the door of the lobby leading to the box and the door closing behind him. This was seen because I could not fail from my position to observe it; the door side of the prosenium box and the stage were all within the direct and oblique lines of my sight. How long I watched the play after entering I do not know. It was, perhaps, two or three minutes, possibly four. The house was perfectly still, the large audience listened to the dialogue between 'Florence Trenchard' and 'May Meredith,' when the sharp re-port of a pistol rang through the house It was apparently fired behind the scenes on the right of the stage. Looking to-wards it and behind the Presidential box, while it startled all, it was evidently accepted by everyone in the theatre as an introduction to some new passage, several of which had been interpolated in the

explained fully to me the nature of the deed he had committed." The circumstances which led to the success of the present diabolical plot are mainly as follows: As is not uncommon. the general joy and hopefulness after the late brilliant victories, whereby the heart of the insurrection was finally and fatally pierced, the day of rejoicing was concluded by special rejoicing at the public thea-tres. It has not been the custom of the President habitually to attend these places of amusement, but as this seemed to be an occasion of general rejoicing, he had conserted to visit it in company with his wife for the purpose of lending his countenance and encouragement to the prevailing good feeling. Gen. Grant and his wife were expected to be present also, but afterwards changed their determination. The play for the evening was "Our American Cousin." The Presidential party, consisting of Mrs. Senator Harris

early part of the play. A moment after a man leaped from the front of the box

directly down nine feet on the stage and ran rapidly across it, bare-headed, holding

an unsheathed dagger in his right hand,

the blade of which flushed brightly in the gaslight as he came within 10 feet of

the opposite exit. I did not see his face as

he leaped or ran, but I am convinced that he was the man I saw enter. As he

leaped he cried distinctly the motto of

Virginia, 'sic semper tyrannis.' The hearing of this and the sight of the dagger

tion. The play for the evening was "Our American Cousin." The Presidential party, consisting of Mrs. Senator Harris and daughter and Major Henry J. Rathbun of Albany, arrived at the theatre about forty minutes after eight o'clock and were ushered by Col. Ford into the private box overlooking the stage.

The expected presence of the President and Gen. Grant drew out a crowded house. Booth was observed working his way through the crowd towards the box occupied by the Presidential party, but of course no suspicion was excited by the circumstance. When he reached the sentry at the door of the box he was refused admittance, but in a whisper he announced himself as a senator and said the President had sent for him. He was then allowed to pass in, when Major Rathbun with a knife, inflicting a severe but not dangerous wound. He stepped out of the box, passed on to the second door, which was closed, fired through it, stepped back again in the box at the first door and in an instant had

sprung out upon the stage with a cry of "sic semper tyrannis." The whole affair was the work of thirty seconds. Major Ratbbun made no outcry at first as did not wish to create an alarm. All in the boxes as well as the sentry outside, heard the shot, but at first supposed it fired in the course of the play. Mr. Lin-coln made no outcry when hit and Mrs. Lincoln only discovered it when she turned to him after Booth rushed past her

and jumped upon the stage.

There are but few brief details to be added to the scene in the actual moments in which the assassination took place. The President was sitting in a large easy chair which Mr. Ford had placed in the box specially for that evening. Mr. Lincoln was looking on the stage in the second scene of the third act of "Our American Cousin." Mrs. Mountchersington was just leaving the stage, saying to Mr. Hawk, who was playing Asa Trenchard, the words: "You don't understand the manners of good society; that alone excuse the impertinence of which you are guilty." Trenchard answers, "I guess I know enough to turn answers, "I guess I know enough to turn you inside out," and the audience clapped their hands and laughed in glee, in which the President joined with a smile and turned his head half way to the audience. At that instant Booth fired the pistol through one door of the box, at the time making his aim while looking through the other open door. The President threw his head slightly forward and seemed to crouch down in the chair. Booth leaped from the box to the stage, cutting Major Rathbun as he passed and shouting "sic semper tyrannis" as he dashed across the stage. It was but 64 feet from the President's box to where Booth left the house. After the shot was fired the occupants of the box seemed paralyzed. Miss Harris recovered first and called to Miss Laura Keene, the actress, for water. As the house was being emptied Miss Keene went around up into the dress circle and into the box. She immediately set to work, placed the bleeding head of the dying man on her lap and endeavored to get some water down his throut, but even then he was wholly unconscious and his breathing was rattlingly noisy. The brain was already commencing to ooze out and the blood bedaubed the robe of the actress. The self-possession of Miss Keene is commented on as the only exception to the general

fear that seized upon everyon That Booth meant to kill the President is clear enough, but that he did kill him, shooting through a door at an angle which he must have measured with his eye when he first looked into the box, is something almost remarkable. He must have framed his mind for just such emergencies as actually and finally came, or else the success of this shot was a mere stroke of luck for him. In any event, firing as he did, he could scarcely hope or such success once in twenty times. His intimate knowledge of the exits from the stage at Ford's, where he had often played—his last appearance being some six or eight weeks ago when he played Romeo to Mrs. Bowers' Juliet—assisted his escape to the alley, where he mounted his horse and rode away. The horse had been held by an employe of the theatre, who does not appear to have any

connection with the assassination.

The stable where Booth kept his horse temporarily was in an alley about one hundred yards in the rear of the theatre. This alley communicates at a right angle with another one leading out into street; so after committing the deed, he rushed out of the rear of the theatre, where he had left a small door open few moments before, and mounting the horse that he had previously brought there from the stable a few yards off, thus got fairly out into another street before any excitement could be created. personal inspection of this way of escape shows that it defied pursuit and those persons who declare they saw him ride away from the front of the theatre simply imagine it.

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