WASHINGTON, D. C., SUNDAY MORNING, APRIL 12, 1914.

Recollections of Boston Corbett By an Eyewitness of the Booth Shooting

Member of 16th New York Cavalry When a Detachment From That Regiment Surrounded the Barn in Which the Slaver of Lincoln Was Shot Gives His Impressions of Corbett.

BY JOHN C. COLLINS.



HE 15th day of April, 1865, will always remain memorable day in American history. events which immediately followed it remain indelibly impressed although I was but a boy of twelve years at the Itime

and had been surfeited by the excitement of two years in the very thick of the war. During the last two years of the wa

had been a sort of "boy of the regiment with the famous old 16th New York Car alry, and was in camp with that regil ment at Vienna. Va., a short distance from Washington, on the day mentioned. It was a day of intense grief, for on that day the great President who had carried the nation safely through the war between the north and the south became the victim of an assassin's bullet, and sealed by his death, as a final sacrifice, his years of devotion and travail, of patient and wise struggle to save the

Some time between midnight and daylight, April 15, the buglers of our regiment sounded boots and saddies. In a few minutes the entire regiment of about a thousand men was in the saddle and, like a flash, had disappeared in the dark-

Flags at balf mast shortly after daylight, followed by rumors that President Lincoln, Gen. Grant and other heads of the government had been assassinated by rebel conspirators in Washington. Sgave the first suggestion to those re maining in camp that the cavalry scoul of the 16th New York had gone out in the night on more serious business than one more attempt to get Mosby. It was

the night on more serious business than one more attempt to get Mosby. It was soon learned that the President had been shot and killed, that J. Wilkes footh, or the clink well equipped by special knowledge of the country, were out in search of the murdlers.

Something more than a year previous; but this he took in good part. He was a brave fellow and was one of the part; but this he took in good part. He was a brave fellow and was one of the part; but this he took in good part. He was a brave fellow and was one of the part; but this he took in good part. He was a brave fellow and was one of the part; but this he took in good part. He was a brave fellow and was one of the part; but this he took in good part. He was a brave fellow and was one of the part; but this he took in good part. He was a brave fellow and was one of the fellow and was one of the part; but this he took in good part. He was a brave fellow and was one of the fellow and was

took me up and made me a sort of "boy of the regiment"-its mascot, perhaps we would now say, a little tow-headed boy. not looking much over ten years old. I was given a pony which had been condemned because too small for a cavalryman; a uniform was cut and made for me by some soldier who had been a me by some soldier who had been a tailor, and for nearly two years, extending to some months after the close of the war. I enjoyed all the privileges and shared in much of the life of the regiment, except picket duty and the long scouls after Mosby. I think it was even whispered that the little white-headed boy had some occult influence in the renown which came to the regiment as the captors of J. Wilkes Rooth and the great honor, as it was considered, that one of their number avenged the death of the martyr President with a bullet through the brain of his nurderer. For the next few days following April 15 all was turmoil and confusion with us who remained behind. The tents, camp paraphernalia and personal belongings of the men were packed in large covered camp wagons and we soon found ourselves in a rude camp on the edge of the settled part of Washington.

The thousand or more cavalry scouts of the 16th were broken up into squads of twenty to lifty, each of which was diligently; engaged, in searching over the country in Maryland and Virginia adjacent to the Potomac and Rappahannock rivers. tailor, and for nearly two years, extend-

. Finally one afternoon a detachment under command of Lieut. Dougherty returned, and the announcement; was made that they had at last been successful. Booth and Herold had dbeen trailed to their hiding place. Iterold was a prisoner and Booth had been shot and killed by Sergt. Boston Corbett.

The shooting of Booth by Corbett made the latter a conspicuous figure at the time. Very little is known about the early life, where he came from or in fact early life, where he came from or in fact what finally became of the man who was the executioner of J. Wilkes Booth. His first enlistment, it was said, was in Boston. His history previous to this enlistment is a blank. It was said the name Boston was given to him because of his culistment in Boston. As to what finally became of him I was recently told by good authority that some years after the war he became insane and was confined in Kansas insane asylum. Being mildly insane he was allowed certain outdoor privileges. He took a walk one day a short distance into the country. He did not reileges. He took a walk one day a short distance into the country. He did not re-turn, and beyond finding his coat half a

turn, and beyond finding his coat half a mile or thereabout from the asylum no trace of him whatever has since been found. He disappeared as if from the face of the earth, This partakes strongly of the mysterious. That nothing whatever should be known of the early or final days of the man, pepuliarly religious; claiming divine guldance, who was the instrument in carrying out the decree of punishment to a murderer, who of all murderers was the most despicable and inexcusable—this to some will seem to lie within the borderland of the mysteriom, and possibly the supernatural. I myself believe it quite possible that he was

finally killed by some one, who never forgave him for shooting Booth.

The forgave him for shooting Booth.

Corbett was are excentible. I do not recommend to excentible to the form of detectives, Col. Bake and Col. Concersporsabled more or less by the methods used one such eccusions. This ignified the hay and lighted up the form at Vienna, Vie. was onto five from the half for five form and many street. I recall him distinctly with hair parted in the middle, When I had for rich from the barn the middle. When I had for rich from the middle, when I had for rich from the middle when I had for rich from the many at Vienna, Vien

As soon as the barn was lighted by the fire Booth was seen walking up and down, his broken leg supported by a crutch. Suddenly the crack of a pistol shot was heard and Booth collapsed or the floor? At first it was thought that he had committed suicide. Corbett im mediately reported that seeing Booth mediately reported that seeling Booth raise his carbine and take aim at one of the soldiers exposed to view through one of the wide cracks in the barn, and knowing that delay meant death for the soldier, he had taken deliberate aim with his big cavalry revolver and shot Booth, the bullet striking him under the ear, going through the back of his head and coming out a little higher under the opposite ear. Corbett said he could have shot Booth much easier a few moments before he fired the fatal shot, for Booth was coming directly toward him and was very near to him, but he did not wish to shoot him, as he was not then attempting to kill some one else.

Booth was taken in a dying condition from the barn and placed on a straw tick on the veranda of the Garret house, where he died some three hours later, about 7-o'clock. Almost his last words were: "Tell my mother that I died for my country."

Then followed the trial by the military commission appointed by President Johnson of eight persons charged with conspiring with Booth to assassinate President Lincoln and other heads of the government. raise his carbine and take aim at one

The execution was to take place in a small prison courtyard of perhaps 250 feet square. This courtyard was inclosed on two sides by a brick wall about thirty feet high and two and a half feet wide. There were two entrances to this prison courtyard, one through the prison itself and the other through a large gateway in the brick wall. July 4, the day of the execution, was the day when it was feared the volcano would burst forth, and rebel conspirators and symforth, and rebel conspirators and sympathizers with Booth, or whom, without doubt, there were thousands in Washington, would do the worst deed of all the years of the war. If ever the government of the United States was on the alert and had left nothing undone in the way of military preparation and would show no mercy it was on this day. There were soldiers everywhere, and they were short and herce in their dealings with strangers.

Shortly before 2 o'clock the doors leading into the courtyard from the old penitentiary were opened and the procession slowly made its way to the scaffold and up the thirteen steps to seats on the platform. Mrs. Surratt came first, assisted by a guard. Others following were Payne, Herold and Atzerodt, in the order