

**BOOTH'S BULLET.**

**Chapters from the Unpublished History of Lincoln's Murder.**

**A VISIT TO THE GRAVE OF JOHN WILKES BOOTH—JOHN T. FORD'S STORY OF THE CRIME—BOOTH'S DEMONSTRATION ON THE DAY OF THE DEED—AN ACTOR'S STORY—HOW THE PRESIDENT WAS TO BE KILLED FOR IF CAPTURED—THE LETTER OF JUSTIFICATION ENTRUSTED TO HIS FRIEND JOHN MATTHEWS BY THE ASSASSIN A FEW HOURS BEFORE THE TRAGEDY—HOW IT WAS DESTROYED.**  
From the Philadelphia Press.

Chance found me in Baltimore a few days ago. I had just taken a quiet breakfast and walked out upon the street, when I came upon two gentlemen standing by the monument on Calvert street, near the public buildings. One of them was an ex-confederate general of distinction whom I knew. The other was a stranger whom he was evidently showing the interesting points in and about the Monumental City. I joined the couple just as the soldier was explaining to his friend that the monument commemorated the battle of North Point, fought during the war of 1812.

"You have been in Washington," said the ex-confederate soldier to me. "Did you attend the Guiteau trial?"

In reference to the absorbing topic of the day naturally turned the conversation upon it. The question of the assassin's sanity was discussed and some points of the crime, when the general remarked:

"John Wilkes Booth was born not far from this spot, and his body was buried in this city."

"Where?"

"In Greenmount cemetery, out on the York road, which is called Greenmount avenue until the cemetery is passed."

An hour later found me at the gate of Greenmount, so named for the very natural reason that it is literally a green mound, or rather mound. The growth of improvements is fast encroaching upon it, and in a short time it will be well within the closely built limits of the city, and surrounded by new dwellings, and possibly noisy factories, instead of the open fields and wooded spots which furnish the quiet seclusion one always associates with a home of the dead. Greenmount was once an ideal locality for a cemetery, and it is still beautiful. Rising in the center of what was not many years ago a lovely vale is the great mound which overlooks the whole city. Upon all its slopes, the rich white marble shafts gleam among the trees, and upon its apex a pinnacled chapel of carved brown stone is the crowning monument. A man was engaged, as I passed in, in cleaning the graves of the dead and the paths for the living of the graves which fell as monuments.

"Booth, actor?" and he pointed to that side of the slope which faces the busy city. Here, midway on the incline and in company with a number of polished shafts, urn and figure crowned, a white marble monument in obelisk form, could be seen, upon the front of which in bold relief is cut the word:

BOOTH.

**THE BOOTH MONUMENT.**

Three rough faced and massive blocks of granite sustain the shaft, around the base of which, almost hiding the stone foundation, a mass of creeping ivy springs up from a mound at the foot of the monument. A single rose-bush grows before this grave which marks the resting-place of the elder Booth. It had been nipped by the frost, and a solitary flower drooped as if just ready to fall from its stem. Upon the face of the marble, in base relief, is the medallion head of him to whose memory this stone was erected. Below is the inscription:

Behold the spot where genius lies,  
O, drop a tear when talent dies!  
Of Tragedy the mighty chief,  
Thy Power to please surpassed belief;  
His Jact, matchless Booth.

Further down, and near the granite base:

BOOTH.

Upon the face of the shaft, to the left are the words:

JUNIUS BRUTUS BOOTH,  
Born May 1st, 1838.

And upon the right face:

Died Nov. 30th,  
1865.

It took further search to find the grave of this gifted man's son, who inherited much of his father's genius. At the back of the lot, on the fourth side of the marble obelisk bearing the above inscriptions, is this simple announcement:

TO THE MEMORY OF  
the children of  
—Junius Brutus  
and Mary Ann  
Booth,  
John Wilkes,  
Frederick,  
Elizabeth,  
Mary Ann,  
Henry Byron.

At the foot of this side of the monument is a second ivy-covered mound. Upon it grows a rose-bush bearing a single flower—a counterpart of the grave already described. How singular that the graves of both father and son are so strikingly similar. Nature seems to have conspired with loving hands to show respect alike to the people's favorite actor and his assassin son. The single line

JOHN WILKES.

to the list of children is the only record telling that the man who aimed the fatal shot at Abraham Lincoln is buried here. There are no other words, not even the date of birth or death. There is no more recognition of him than of the other children whose names are cut upon the monument and who died in childhood.

The lot containing these graves is framed by a low stone coping with granite posts in each of the four corners. Close to each post grows a beautiful pine tree, nicely shaped and trimmed, showing evidence of careful attention. To the right of the monument, and within this same enclosure, are an old marble headstone and foot-stone showing the ravages of time. They mark the grave of the father of Junius Brutus Booth. The headstone bears the inscription:

SACRED TO THE MEMORY OF  
Richard Booth,  
who died  
December 20th, 1859,  
Aged 76 years and  
43 days.

**THE FIRST ASSASSINATION.**

A visit to this spot which contains the earth remains of the departed members of this fortunate and yet unfortunate family, naturally gives rise to a long train of thought, and the mind goes back thirteen years and more and rests upon the thrilling events which then startled the world, and with which the name of John Wilkes Booth is inseparably welded. From here the city of Baltimore stretches out to the waters of the river which joins the great Chesapeake Bay in carrying the commerce of a busy port out to the sea. It makes a broad panorama of busy life, and it was in the midst of this that John Wilkes Booth was born, about forty-two years ago. A look over the scene naturally recalls many of the striking points of his early life, and even a glance toward the water of the basin wherein the ships lie revives the story of the crime for which he died. There upon one of the wharves John H. Surratt, who joined Booth in his desperate scheme to kidnap President Lincoln, now earns a livelihood as a clerk for the Old Dominion line of steamships. He is the only survivor of the conspirators. I saw him but a short time since, busy with his duties. He is a rather tall, young-looking man for his years, and of slender, wiry build. He has not a particularly striking face, but looks like a stirring business man. He has a cold and firm expression of countenance, with strongly marked features. His face is rather thin, and his restless blue eyes seem to set far back under his heavy eyebrows. A rather prominent Roman nose does not add particularly to his appearance. His hair is quite red, and he wears a mustache and goatee, which gives him something of a military look. He is spoken of as a quiet man who rather shuns society, and never alludes to the conspiracy with which his name and that of his family is so closely connected. His sister Anne, the poor girl who suffered so terribly as to make her old white hair yet young, also lives in Baltimore. She is the wife of Professor Toary, its leading chemist.

While busy with the thoughts which a visit to the grave of Booth would naturally invite, a gentleman evidently familiar with Baltimore

and acquainted with the history of this family, approached. "This Booth Monument," said he, "formerly stood in the old Baltimore Cemetery, where it marked the resting-place of Junius Brutus Booth only. Toward the close of the war Edward Booth and his mother, who is still living, bought this lot and removed the remains and the monument to this spot. Later the remains of the children were brought from the old Booth homestead in Harford county. As soon after the assassination and the death of John Wilkes as the family could get permission from the government to remove the body, his remains were brought here and buried with the other children, and his name carved upon the marble."

**VISITORS TO BOOTH'S GRAVE.**

"Did his friends ever view his body after death?"

"Oh, yes, and quite a number of people have locks of his hair cut from the head after the body was taken to Baltimore. 'There was a great fuss made about the burial of the body here at the time it was brought over, but as this cemetery is free to any one who may purchase a lot here except colored people, his burial could not be prevented. The remains of Richard Booth, whose grave you see to the right, were also brought from Baltimore Cemetery. The elder Booth, that is Junius Brutus, moved into Harford county, a short distance below Baltimore, in the early part of the present century, and nearly all of the family were born there. The whole of them have had a queer and eventful history. The elder Booth, when at home, was in almost constant trouble with his neighbors. He was a most vindictive opponent of slavery, and was often accused of assisting runaway slaves and with advising the negroes to seek their freedom. He named the son who killed Lincoln, and who, by the way, was the only member of the family who sympathized with the southern cause, after John Wilkes, the great English agitator. Indeed the whole family, from Richard down, might be called man-worshippers. The tragic characters of Shakespeares were their idols. Their study, their habits of thought, and their ambitions sprung from dead heroes, and it is not at all surprising, considering the passions engendered by the war, that this young man took upon himself to enact the character of Brutus, whom he had been taught to revere."

The superintendent of the cemetery, Rev. Mr. Heffner, coming up at this moment, I inquired:

"Do many people visit Booth's grave?"

"Not many. Now and then some actors or theatrical people come."

"Do many ask for the grave of John Wilkes Booth?"

"Now and then people ask to see it out of mere curiosity. Edwin Booth comes sometimes—whenever he plays in this city I suppose. He was here with his wife once, as nice a little lady as you would want to see. I see she died recently. I like Mr. Booth very much, and do you know that if you did not know he was an actor you would take him to be a clergyman. He was here with his mother when they first bought the lot, and it was the first time I had ever seen him. I have known a good many actors, but old as I am I have never yet witnessed a theatrical performance. I am quite well acquainted with John E. Owens, who lives just out the road here."

I piled the old clergyman-superintendent with questions about Booth, but he had exhausted his information in the few lines given. I then turned from the grave and soon left Greenmount behind, and was again in the heart of the busy city. The visit to Booth's grave excited in me a great and renewed interest in the history of the great crime which fell like a pall upon the people of the north as they were preparing to celebrate in joyous festivities the coming of peace, and determined me to go over the old ground and rewrite the story. I have done so, and in a plain way now tell what I saw and heard.

**II.**

**John T. Ford's Recollections.**

Not far from the graveyard where the Booth family are buried, lives John T. Ford, the veteran theatrical manager, who for many years had close relations with all the Booths who were actors. Under his management Junius Brutus, Edwin and John Wilkes Booth played some of their most successful engagements. It was Mr. Ford who attended to the removal of the remains of John Wilkes from Washington to where they now lie, notwithstanding that the crime he committed in Mr. Ford's theater caused that gentleman great trouble and a vast amount of money. I met him the other day at his opera house in Baltimore and the assassination of Mr. Lincoln became the subject of conversation as in contrast with the assassination of Gen. Garfield, and the difference in the character of the men who committed these two great crimes.

"I was not in Washington when Mr. Lincoln was killed," said Mr. Ford. "I had lived in Richmond some years before the war, and had friends and relatives there. Fearing that they might be suffering for the necessities of life, immediately after the surrender I started for that city. Col. Forney also went down at the same time. I arrived the morning of the day the President was killed, and on the next morning started home. When on the way I first learned of the crime. When I reached home I was arrested and kept in prison for thirty-nine days."

"When do you think Booth first conceived the idea of killing the President?"

"It is morally certain that he never had such a thought until late in the day upon which he committed the assault. The facts in the case are that he never knew the President was to attend the theater until nearly noon of that day. He was always a late riser. He came down to breakfast about ten o'clock on that morning, and his fiancée, who also boarded at the National Hotel with her parents, met him. They had a short conversation, and after breakfast he walked up to the Surratt mansion, on H street, as is supposed from the direction in which he was first seen coming by the attaches of the theater that morning. He was walking down 10th street from toward H. He was faultlessly dressed in a full suit of dark clothes and tall silk hat. He wore a pair of kid gloves of a subdued color, had a light overcoat slung over his arm, and carried a cane. My brother Harry, who was standing in front of the theater with some other gentlemen, first saw him, and turning to his companions said:

**THE ADONIS OF THE STAGE.**

"Here comes the handsomest man in the United States."

"He came directly to the theater, went to the box office, got his mail, went out and sat down upon the front steps of the theater to read it. One of his letters was a very long one, so lengthy as to attract my brother's attention. When he had finished reading it he arose and approached Harry, and said:

"What's on to-night?"

"Our American Cousin, and we are going to have a big night," replied Harry. "The President and Gen. Grant are going to occupy the President's box and Gen. Lee is going to have the adjoining one," said he, by way of chaffing Booth.

"I hope they are not going to do like the Romans—parade their prisoner before the public to humiliate him?" bitterly responded Booth.

"Harry replied that he was jesting about Lee, but that Mr. Lincoln and General Grant would certainly attend the evening performance; that a note had been sent from the White House engaging the box. As Harry said this Booth was thoughtful a moment, and then turned and walked down the street toward Pennsylvania avenue. Just as he reached the Avenue he met Mr. John F. Coyle, then one of the editors of the *National Intelligencer*, and Booth's very warm friend. He shook hands with him and said:

"John, what would be the result if some one would put Lincoln and the Cabinet out of the way?"

"Coyle laughed and said:

"We don't have any Brutuses in these days." "Booth turned and walked down the street, and after that time, which certainly must have been nearly noon, the arrangements for the assassination were hurriedly made. I do not believe that any reasoning man longer doubts that there was no thought of killing Mr. Lincoln until the day upon which the crime was committed. Until Booth came to the theater that morning he had no knowledge that the President intended visiting the theater in the evening. That afternoon he wrote the letter justifying the assassination. This letter he gave to John Matthews, who now is engaged in New York. He was then playing at my theater. The letter was intended to be published in the *National Intelligencer*, and it was well on toward night when he gave it to Matthews. He was riding down Pennsylvania avenue toward the National Hotel when he met Matthews and handed him the letter. Matthews destroyed the paper immediately after the shooting, and no one ever saw it but he.

**BOOTH AS AN ACTOR.**

"Was Booth a great actor?"

"Yes, sir. Doubtless he would have made the greatest actor of his time had he lived. Besides being the handsomest man I ever saw, he was an athlete. He put into all his impersonations the vitality of perfect manhood. He added a fine physical organization to his marvelous mental powers. His Macheath and Richard were different from any other I ever witnessed. In the scene in Macheath where he enters the den of

the witches, Booth would not content himself with the usual steps to reach the stage, but had a ledge of rocks some ten or twelve feet high erected in their stead, down which he sprang upon the stage. His Richard was full of marvelous possibilities, and his fighting scene was simply terrific. I have paid him \$700 a week, and he could easily earn \$20,000 a year, and he was only twenty-six years old when he died. He was very fine in the Apostate, and his Raphael in the 'Marble Heart' was simply matchless. He was an ideal Raphael. When we were playing in Boston he doubtless made the greatest success of any actor of his day. People galled in crowds after the performance to catch a glimpse of him as he left the theater."

"Was he acting at all the winter he was in Washington?"

"No, sir; not at all. He had given out that he had made a great deal of money in oil speculations, and I suppose he had, for he showed me a pamphlet—a sort of prospectus of oil property for sale—in which it was mentioned that the land adjoined the very successful property of J. Wilkes Booth. He told my brother, Harry, that he was only going to act twice that winter—once in a performance for John McCullough's benefit, who had not then become famous as an actor, and once for Harry's benefit. McCullough and Booth were great friends, and Booth had played the Apostate, I think, for Mr. McCullough's benefit, when he told Harry he would play for him. I believe he was going to repeat the same play for my brother's benefit. Booth came to Washington evidently bent upon the single errand of capturing the President."

"Finding that all his plans for the abduction had failed, and the end of the war was growing nearer and nearer, he, at the very last moment, determined to take the desperate chance of assassination. Booth was a very gifted young man, and was a great favorite in society in Washington. He was engaged, it was said, to a young lady of high position and character. I understood that she wrote to Edwin Booth after the assassination telling him that she was his brother's betrothed, and would marry him, even at the foot of the scaffold."

**III.**

**A Thrilling Recital.**

"My God! My God! I have no longer a country. This is the end of constitutional liberty in America."

These were the words spoken with startling emphasis on the evening of the 14th of April, 1865, by John Wilkes Booth. He was passing down Pennsylvania avenue, in Washington, and near the corner of 13th street had met John Matthews, a fellow actor and a boyhood friend, whom he thus addressed:

"He was pale as a ghost when he uttered those words," said Mr. Matthews to me one day or two since, while relating the occurrence. "There were quite a number of confederate prisoners passing along the avenue as he spoke, and when he said, 'This is the end of constitutional liberty in America,' he pointed feelingly toward them. He looked at them a moment, after they had passed, and was thoughtful. He then turned to me quickly and said:

"I want you to do me a favor."

"Anything in my power, John," I replied. He thrust his hand into his pocket and drawing out a letter, said: 'Deliver this to Mr. Coyle of the *National Intelligencer*—to-night by eleven o'clock unless I see you before that. If I do I can attend to it myself.'

"I took the letter, saw that it was sealed, put it into my pocket and walked on. Booth, who was on horseback, rode rapidly down the street, and I never saw him again until he jumped from the box in Ford's Theater to the stage after shooting the President. I was then playing at Ford's the piece being 'Our American Cousin.' Laura Keane was the star. Booth almost ran against me as he leaped across the stage on his way to the door. There was, of course, a great commotion, and I at once went to my dressing-room and picked up my wardrobe, passed under the stage, out through the orchestra and the auditorium, and into the street to the audience. My room was directly opposite, at Mr. Peterson's, the house in which Mr. Lincoln died. I walked quickly across, locked the door of my room, and began at once to change my clothes. In picking up my coat the letter Booth had given me upon the street that evening before the theater opened dropped out of my pocket upon the floor. I had almost forgotten it in my excitement. I quickly picked it up, tore it open, and read it very carefully. 'My God,' thought I, 'this self-condemnation of my friend shall not be found in my possession,' and I threw it into the fire, watched it till it burned to cinders, and then mixed the atoms with the coal ashes. In the excitement and horror which followed the shooting (the Archangel could never have explained the possession of that letter. I did not then realize, however, by what a slender thread my life hung. My impulse when I burned my friend should not remain with me."

"Who else saw that letter besides yourself?"

"No other living man after it came into my possession. It was sealed and directed to Mr. John E. Coyle, one of the editors of the *National Intelligencer*."

"Do you recall its contents?"

"Almost as vividly as though I had just committed it to memory. It began:

**BOOTH'S LAST LETTER.**

WASHINGTON, D. C., April 14, 1865.

"To My Countrymen:

"For years I have devoted my time, my energies and every dollar I possessed in the world to the furtherance of an object. I have been hailed and disappointed. The hour has come when I must change my plan. Many, I know—the vulgar herd—will blame me for what I am about to do, but posterity, I am sure will justify me. Right or wrong, God judge me, not man. Be my motive good or bad, of one thing I am sure—the lasting condemnation of the North. I love peace more than life. Have loved the Union beyond expression. For four years have I waited, hoped and prayed for the dark clouds to break and for a restoration of our former sunshine. To wait longer would be a crime. My prayers have proved as idle as my hope. God's will be done. I go to see and share the bitter end. This war is at war with the Constitution and the reserved rights of the states. It is a war upon southern rights and institutions. The nomination of Abraham Lincoln four years ago bespoke war. His election forced it. I have ever held the south were right. In a foreign war I too could say 'such a right or wrong.' But in a struggle such as ours (where the brother tries to pierce the brother's heart) for God's sake choose the right. When a country like this spurns justice from her side she forfeits the allegiance of every honest freeman, and should leave him untrammelled by any fealty or loyalty to act as his conscience may approve."

"People of the north, to hate tyranny, to love liberty and justice, to strike at wrong and oppression was the teaching of our fathers. The study of our early history will not let me forget it, and may it never!

"I do not want to forget the heroic patriotism of our fathers who rebelled against the oppression of the mother country."

"This country was formed for the white, not the black man. And looking upon African slavery from the same standpoint held by the noble framers of our constitution, I, for one, have ever considered it one of the greatest blessings, both for themselves and us, that God ever bestowed upon a favored nation. Witness heretofore our wealth and power; witness their elevation and enlightenment above their race elsewhere. I have lived among it most of my life and have seen less harsh treatment from master to man than I have beheld in the north from father to son. Yet, Heaven knows no one would be willing to do more for the negro race than I, could I but see a way to still better their condition."

"But Lincoln's policy is only preparing the way for their total annihilation. The south are not, nor have they been, fighting for the continuance of slavery. The first battle of Bull Run did away with that idea. Their causes since for have been as noble and greater far than those that urged our fathers on. Even should we allow they were wrong at the beginning of this contest, cruelty and injustice have made the wrong become the right, and they stand now before the wonder and admiration of the world as a noble band of patriotic heroes. Hereafter, reading of their deeds, Thermopylae will be forgotten."

"When I aided in the capture and execution of John Brown (who was a murderer on our western border, and who was fairly tried and convicted before an impartial judge and jury of treason, and who, by the way, has since been made a god), I was proud of my little share in the transaction, for I deemed it my duty, and that I was helping our common country to perform an act of justice. But what was a crime in poor John Brown is now considered (by themselves) as the greatest and only virtue of the whole republican party."

"Strange transmigration! Vice to become a virtue, simply because more indulge in it. I thought then, as now, that the abolitionists were the only traitors in the land, and that the entire party deserved the same fate as poor old Brown. Not because they wished to abolish slavery, but on account of the means they have ever endeavored to use to effect that abolition. If Brown were living I doubt whether he himself would set slavery against the Union. Most, or nearly all the North, do openly curse the Union if the South are to return and retain a single right guaranteed to them by every tie which we once revered as sacred. The South can make no choice. It is either extermination or slavery for themselves (were that death) to

draw from. I know my choice and hasten to accept it. I have studied hard to discover upon what grounds the right of a state to secede has been denied, when our very name, 'United States, and the Declaration of Independence provide for secession. But there is now no time for words. I know how foolish I shall be deemed for undertaking such a step as this, whether, on the one side, I have many friends and everything to make me happy, where my profession alone has gained me an income of more than \$30,000 a year, and where my great personal-ambition in my profession has such a great field for labor. On the other hand, the south have never bestowed upon me one kind word; a place now where I have no friends, except beneath the sod; a place where I must either become a private soldier or a beggar. To give up all of the former for the latter, besides my mother and sister whom I love so dearly, (although they so widely differ from me in opinion), seems insane; but God is my judge. I love justice more than I do a country that allows it; more than fame and wealth; more (Heaven pardon me if wrong) more than a happy home. I have never been upon a battle-field, but oh! my countrymen, could you all but see the reality or effects of this horrid war, as I have seen them, in every state save Virginia, I know you would think like me, and pray the Almighty to create in the northern mind a sense of right and justice (even should it possess no seasoning of mercy) and He would dry up the sea of blood between us which is daily growing wider. Alas! I have no longer a country. She is fast approaching her threatened doom. Four years ago I would have given a thousand lives to see her remain (as I had always known her) powerful and unbroken, and now I would hold my life as naught to see her what she was. Oh! my friends, if the fearful scenes of the past four years had never been enacted, or if what has been had been a frightful dream, from which we could now awake, with what overflowing hearts could we bless our God and pray for His continued favor."

"How I have loved the old flag can never now be known. A few years since and the entire world could boast of none so pure and spotless. But I have of late been seeing and hearing of the bloody deeds of which she has been made the emblem, and shudder to think how changed she has grown. Oh! how I have longed to see her break from the mist of blood and death so circled, around her folds, spilling her beauty, and tarnishing her honor. But no; day by day has she been dragged deeper and deeper into cruelty and oppression, till now (in my eyes) her once bright red stripes look like bloody gashes on the face of heaven. I look now upon my early admiration of her glories as a dream. My love is now for the south alone, and to her side I go penniless. Her success has been near my heart, and I have labored faithfully to further an object which would have more than proved my unselfish devotion. Heart sick and disappointed I turn from the path which I had been following into a bolder and more perilous one. Without malice I make the change. I have nothing in my heart except a sense of duty to my choice. If the south is to be aided it must be done quickly. It may already be too late. When Caesar had conquered the enemies of Rome and the power that was his menaced the liberties of the people, Brutus arose and slew him. The stroke of his dagger was guided by his love for Rome. It was the spirit and ambition of Caesar that Brutus struck at."

"O then that we could come by Caesar's spirit, And not dismember Caesar! But alas! Caesar must bleed for it!"

I answer with Brutus.

He who loves his country better than gold or life,

JOHN W. BOOTH.

**STORY OF JOHN MATTHEWS, THE ACTOR.**

"Following Mr. Booth's signature," Mr. Matthews continued, "which was evidently written in great haste, were the names of Payne, Harold and Azerodt, all in Booth's own handwriting, given as the men who would stand by him in executing his changed plans. Booth wrote John S. Clarke, the actor, his brother-in-law, in the November preceding the assassination a letter identical in many respects with the one he left with me as a justification for his act. The arguments were all the same, the changes in the letter naturally follow the change of plan from kidnapping to assassination. The material alterations are in the first part of the letter, where he indicates the change in his purpose. The most striking difference between the letter he gave to me, and the one he wrote to Mr. Clarke is his reference to Brutus, and the quotation from 'Julius Caesar.' The body of the letters were identical. Of course there may be some immaterial omissions, but you may imagine how such a letter, carefully read under the circumstances which surrounded me when I perused it, would impress itself upon one's mind. My profession has, of course, trained my memory to retain a great deal of matter without much study, so that I feel justified in saying that the letter I have given you is practically a correct copy of the one poor John handed to me in the streets of Washington upon that fearful night. I am glad to say that it is positive evidence that the murder of the President was neither born of malice or even contemplated until within a very few hours of the time the fatal shot was fired."

"How did the fact that Booth left such a letter become known?"

"When John was killed a dairy was taken from his person containing the entry that he had left a letter to the *National Intelligencer*. About the time of the impeachment of President Johnson the other Washington papers made an assault upon the *National Intelligencer*, calling it the organ of John Wilkes Booth, and rather insinuated that President Johnson was in some way cognizant of the letter, if not of the killing before it occurred. I felt compelled then to speak out and announce that it was I who received the letter from Booth and destroyed it. I had at the time of its destruction, as a Catholic, told the Reverend Father Boyle, of Washington, all about the letter and the circumstances under which I received it."

"Were Booth and you often together during the winter preceding the murder?"

"A great deal. He and I were boys together, you know, having both been born and raised in Baltimore. Often during the winter he had talked to me of the feasibility of kidnapping the President, but never confided to me any of his plans. He often seemed to me to be brooding over the war, and seemed to have his heart set upon the relief and exchange of the confederate prisoners. He once told me, that if he could capture the President, carry him within the confederacy and hold him as a ransom, it would compel the exchange of prisoners, man for man. By that he meant white man for white man, not recognizing the negro as soldiers. That was his plan and aim until within a very few hours of the time he fired the fatal shot."

"Do you know when his plans for the abduction of the President were formed?"

**A REMARKABLE STORY.**

"Yes, sir, very well. The elder Wallace, the late E. L. Davenport and I, walked into my room one day, and found Booth lying upon my bed studying the part of Marc Antony in 'Julius Caesar.' By-the-by it was in the same room and on the same bed upon which Mr. Lincoln died. Mr. Davenport and Mr. Wallace began talking of the war. They had been to visit some of the hospitals about Washington, and both of them seemed very much affected by the scenes they had witnessed. Booth joined them in the talk about the conflict, and all of them expressed more or less feeling against the war. It was a feeling not of bitterness but of sorrow, that brothers should be engaged in killing each other. The pathos and power with which both Davenport and Wallace expressed their desire for peace is beyond description. It made a great impression upon my mind as I know it did upon Booth's. It had been arranged that Mr. Wallace, Mr. Davenport, myself and some others were to go out to the Soldiers' Home to be subject for the benefit of the soldiers, and this subject was discussed. Booth made his arrangements to go with us, and said he would be one of the audience. He knew Mr. Lincoln intended to be present, and at once set to work arranging his plans for to capture him after the play was over. The last moment 'Still Waters Run Deep.' At the last played Mr. Lincoln was detained by a pressure of business and did not attend the performance. Booth was very much disappointed, as I afterwards learned. The minuteness with which every detail of Mr. Lincoln's transportation within the confederate lines had been arranged and the care and attention which Booth intended to bestow upon him after his capture can be read from a transaction which unwittingly I had something to do. A few days before we played at the Soldiers' Home I was going over to Baltimore; Booth asked me to carry a trunk which he would have at the depot and deliver it to a gentleman living in Baltimore whom I knew. I took the trunk with me to Baltimore and delivered it to the gentleman named by Booth. I did not see him in person and left the following note:

"My DEAR MR. —

"Please deliver this trunk to Mr. —, who will see that it is delivered to Mr. —, who will have it safely shipped to its destination, of which he is informed. Be careful.

"Very truly,  
JOHN MATTHEWS."

I do not all the blanks in that note for the reason that the gentleman to whom it was addressed, as well as those who were to handle the trunk, are still living.

"This trunk was filled with dried meat, medicines, the most kind of crutches, some flasks of brandy and other contents, even down to