

## THE CONSPIRATORS.

THEIR VOYAGE TO THE DRY TORTUGAS—THE PARTY SEA-SICK—SPANGLER PLAYING TRICKS—MUDD MELANCHOLY AND MEDITATING SUICIDE—THROWING WET BLANKETS OVER SPANGLER—THE WHOLE PARTY IN A BURST OF GRIEF, ETC.

Captain George W. Dutton, Company C, Tenth Regiment Veteran Reserve Corps, has just returned from the Dry Tortugas. We have obtained some interesting facts relative to the conspirators and their trip to the rock-bound fortress which is to be (for three of them) their last earthly home. Captain Dutton, with a sergeant, three corporals and twenty-six men, reported at the Washington Arsenal on the morning of Sunday, July 16, and taking charge of the prisoners, placed them on board the steamer *State of Maine*, bound for Fortress Monroe, which point they reached at 4 P. M. on the 17th. They were then transferred to the *Florida*, Captain Budd, all on board, with the exception of General Dodd, being entirely ignorant of the vessel's destination. At dark on the 19th the *Florida* reached Port Royal, S. C., where she discharged a cargo of cordage, &c., and coaled.

On the 21st she sailed for the Dry Tortugas, reaching that barren and inhospitable spot on the 24th, just one week after her departure from Fortress Monroe. During the voyage all the prisoners were more or less afflicted with seasickness, and at one time half of the guards were unfit for duty. Dr. Mudd and Arnold were particularly wretched. Spangler, although quite sick, was given to practical joking. Finding that while sick he could get from the surgeon, Dr. Porter, a modicum of French brandy, he concluded to make sick at various odd times, always for pains for which *vin gallie spiritus* is supposed to be a sovereign cure; but his sickness was discovered and he was, much to his chagrin, obliged to quaff Jamaica ginger in place of the more palatable beverage. He was generally quite talkative, and expressed himself as being satisfied with the action of the military commission, but continued to assert his innocence of participation in the crime of assassination. In a conversation with Captain Dutton, he remarked that he knew nothing of Booth's designs, and that even after the murder while Booth was passing through the theatre, he was unaware of the foul deed which had been committed. "The fact is, captain," said he, "Booth was a privileged character at Ford's."

He had the run of the house at all times, day and night; had access to the dressing-rooms, and frequently came to the rehearsals unannounced, and always by the rear entrance. He was a great favorite and spent money freely. Whenever he came with his horse he always called for me to groom the animal, and I have many a time blacked his boots and done other menial work for him. I did not close the door behind Booth. It was a spring door, which you can see when you get back to Washington, and closed of itself unless you held it open. There was nothing unusual in my holding Booth's horse on the night of the murder, for I had done it twenty times before. I don't see how the commission which tried me could have decided otherwise in my case, considering the evidence; but I am not guilty of having anything to do with the crime.

Spangler was very lively during the voyage and several times ran up the ladder from the hold, three steps at a time, heartily ironed as he was. He was quite jubilant over the idea that he would not be a prisoner for life. "I'll come out all right—six years is not such a long time after all," said he. "You need not felicitate yourself on having a short time to stay, Spangler," said Dr. Mudd. "I don't know where they are taking us, but if it is to the Dry Tortugas, there is no more chance for you than for me. None of us will live more than two years."

Up to this time not a word had been dropped in reference to the ultimate destination of the conspirators, but they had occupied themselves in discussing the probabilities of a residence at Albany, a trip to some port on the gulf, or a sudden death by drowning. O'Laughlin was very reticent, rarely entering into conversation even with his fellow-prisoners. Mudd carried with him a printed copy of the evidence introduced during his trial, and took great pleasure in picking it to pieces. He is described, by our informant, as a man of good education, considerable shrewdness, and strong Rebel proclivities. He was never off his guard, always pondered a question well before returning an answer, and invariably spoke of Mrs. Surratt as having been unjustly executed.

It will be remembered that, on his trial, Mudd denied all knowledge of Booth previous to the visit of the lame assassin to the doctor's house, but to Captain Dutton he confessed that he was acquainted with Booth for some time before the murder. In regard to that deplorable crime he asserted that he did not know of it until after Booth's departure. Mudd was very gloomy during the voyage, and fears were entertained by his guard that he contemplated suicide. He was accordingly closely watched, very much to his indignation.

"Why do you keep me so closely guarded?" said he to the officer in charge of him.

"Because," said Captain Dutton, "I am afraid I may lose you."

"How lose me? There is surely no chance for

me to escape here, and you do not suspect that I would kill myself?"

"That is just what I fear, and until I get my receipt for your body from the commandant of the post to which you are consigned, I deem it my duty to have your every step strictly watched."

"Well, captain, you need have no fear on my account. I would put an end to my miserable existence but for the thought of eternity. I am afraid to die, although I can bear this terrible life which is so much worse than death."

When off the coast of Florida, the weather being wind, the prisoners were allowed to sleep on deck, and during the day their irons were removed. They were very grateful for this unmerited kindness, and showed their appreciation by giving as little trouble as possible to those who charge of them. When the steamer came in sight of the Dry Tortugas, on the 24th, it was made known to the criminals that this treeless, lifeless place was to be their prison, their emotion could not be checked. They cried like children, Mudd and Arnold in particular, evincing the most poignant grief. The former paced the deck, wringing his hands and exclaiming, time and again, "There is no hope for me."

Arno'd bewailed his fate in piteous tones. He said, "I wish this were Albany, or any other place where my mother and sisters could sometimes see me, I might bear my imprisonment, but here I shall have no one to live for." Mudd declared, when his paroxysm of grief had subsided, that he should lose no opportunity to effect his escape. When asked where he would go if he succeeded in eluding the vigilance of the garrison, he cried out, "Home! Government would not touch me there. It could not hunt me down in the midst of my wife and children."

Shortly after the landing of the steamer, Col. Hamilton, One-hundred-and-tenth New York Volunteers, commanding the post, proposed to assign Dr. Mudd to duty as hospital steward, and Arnold as clerk, and provide the others with employment to which they were best adapted.

On the following day the *Florida* left for Key West to coal, Spangler sending to Mr. Ford, by Captain Dalton, a message to the effect that he (Spangler) was innocent.