

Assassination of Lincoln.

WHEN the closing operations against Richmond were being arranged, President Lincoln went down to General Grant's head-quarters at City Point. He remained there till Lee's surrender. He visited Richmond on the day it was taken, and walked through the streets holding his little boy by his hand. The freed slaves crowded to welcome their deliverer. They expressed in a thousand grotesque ways their gratitude to the good "Father Abraham." There had been dark hints for some time that there were those among the Confederates who would avenge their defeat by the murder of the President. Mr. Lincoln was urged to be on his guard, and his friends were unwilling that he should visit Richmond. He himself cared little, now that the national cause had triumphed.

He returned unharmed to Washington on the evening of Lee's surrender. The next few days were perhaps the brightest in his whole life. He had guided the nation through the heaviest trial which had ever assailed it. On every side were joy and gladness. Flags waved, bells rang, guns were fired, houses were illuminated; the thanks of innumerable grateful hearts went up to God for this great deliverance. No heart in all the country was more joyful and more thankful than Mr. Lincoln's. He occupied himself with plans for healing the wounds of his bleeding country, and bringing back the revolted States to a contented occupa-

Assassination of Lincoln.

tion of their appointed places in the Union. No thought of severity was in his mind. Now that armed resistance to the government was crushed, the gentlest measures which would give security in the future were those most agreeable to the good President.

On the 14th he held a meeting of his Cabinet, at which General Grant was present. The quiet cheerfulness and hopefulness of the President imparted to the proceedings of the council a tone long remembered by those who were present. After the meeting he drove out with Mrs. Lincoln, to whom he talked of the good days in store. They had had a hard time, he said, since they came to Washington ; but now, by God's blessing, they might hope for quieter and happier years.

In the evening he drove, with Mrs. Lincoln and two or three friends, to a theatre where he knew the people expected his coming. As the play went on, the audience were startled by a pistol-shot in the President's box. A man brandishing a dagger was seen to leap from the box on to the stage, and with a wild cry, "The South is avenged!" he disappeared behind the scenes. The President sat motionless, his head sunk down upon his breast. He was evidently unconscious. When the surgeon came, it was found that a bullet had pierced the brain, inflicting a deadly wound. He was carried to a house close by. His family and the great officers of State, by whom he was dearly loved, sat around the bed of the dying President. He lingered till morning, breathing heavily, but in entire unconsciousness, and then he passed away.

At the same hour the President was murdered, a ruffian broke into the sick-room of Mr. Seward, who was suffering from a recent accident, and stabbed him as he lay in bed. His bloody work was happily interrupted, and Mr. Seward recovered.

Assassination of Lincoln.

The assassin of Mr. Lincoln was an actor called Booth, a fanatical adherent of the fallen Confederacy. His leg was broken in the leap on to the stage, but he was able to reach a horse which stood ready at the theatre door. He rode through the city, crossed the Potomac by a bridge, in the



ASSASSINATION OF LINCOLN.

face of the sentinels posted there, and passed safely beyond present pursuit. A week later he was found hid in a barn, and well armed. He refused to surrender, and was preparing to fire, when a soldier ended his miserable existence by a bullet.

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The grief of the American people for their murdered President was beyond example deep and bitter. Perhaps for no man were there ever shed so profusely the tears of sorrow. Not in America alone, but in England too, where President Lincoln was at length understood and honored, his loss was deeply mourned. It was resolved that he should be buried beside his old home in Illinois. The embalmed remains were to be conveyed to their distant resting-place by a route which would give to the people of the chief Northern cities a last opportunity to look upon the features of the man they loved so well. The sad procession moved on its long journey of nearly two thousand miles, traversing the States of Maryland, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois. Everywhere, as the funeral train passed, the weeping people sought to give expression to their reverential sorrow. At the great cities the body lay in state, and all business was suspended.

At length Springfield was reached. The body was taken to the State House. His neighbors looked once more upon that well-remembered face, wasted, indeed, by years of anxious toil, but wearing still, as of old, its kind and placid expression.

Four years ago Lincoln said to his neighbors, when he was leaving them, "I know not how soon I shall see you again. I go to assume a task more difficult than that which has devolved upon any other man since the days of Washington." He had nobly accomplished his task; and this was the manner of his home-coming.

A week before the assassination, the bells of almost every village in the North and West had rung for joy over the fall of Richmond; now they were heard tolling in every place, and half-mast flags were seen on every public square and village green where yesterday they were waving in victory. Those were days ever to be remembered, when strong men stood dumb in their fields and wept.