

STORY OF LINCOLN'S DEATH

The Last Scenes Vividly Described by Thomas Proctor.

HE WAS AN EYE WITNESS

The Brooklyn Lawyer Lived at the
Time in the House Where the
President Breathed His Last.

"Yes," said Thomas Proctor, the Brooklyn lawyer and naturalist, "anything that has any reference to Lincoln always brings to my mind the night he was shot and his death, of which I was one of the few eye witnesses. There are some few things about that time which I should like to see straightened out, especially many misstatements that have been made.

"I recall that night and everything that happened with perfect distinctness. I was a young man living in Washington and connected with the War Department, and when I found that a great tragedy had been brought right to my door I knew that I was in the centre of a big historical event. If I should get out my notebook of that time I could tell you everything that occurred in detail, and almost to the minute.

"I was attending a meeting of an organization known as the 'Mosaic' that evening. It was literary in its nature, and was started by a number of Southern women, most of whom had members of their families in the Southern army. Such men as belonged to the families who were in Washington attended, and there were a few outsiders who were invited. I was one of the two or three Northern men.

"The meeting of the Mosaic that Good Friday night in 1865 was at the house of Philip Y. Fendall in Judiciary Square. At the close of the evening usually a Virginia reel was danced. There was always some discussion about this. The women with interests in the South were not in a mood for festivities in those days; they did not go to the theatre, they did not give entertainments, they dressed chiefly in black, and they did not like even the mild festivity of a Virginia reel. But the dancers usually carried the day, as they had that evening.

"I was talking with Miss Mary Fendall, the eldest daughter of the house. Her father was an invalid, and she devoted herself to him, and that was the first time I had met her. It was reported among her friends that Thackeray had said of her, when he was in this country, that she was the wittiest woman he had met in America; so I was delighted to have the opportunity of talking with her. We were standing near the door of the parlor leading into the front hall when her brother, Reginald Fendall, entered the house, and said to me, as the first person he met, in a low, excited tone: 'The President is shot.'

"How much shot?' I asked. I remember the quick, awkward expression I used.

"Killed probably," he answered.

He did not intend to be overheard, but those near caught his words, there was much excitement, and the company broke up immediately, and I started for home. The streets were filled with people, some talking in loud tones and others whispering together.

"When I came to my street at the corner of the block below the house where I lived I found a cordon of soldiers, and it was with some difficulty that I obtained permission to pass. When I came to the house, which was just opposite Ford's Theatre, I found the stoop in possession of an officer and a guard of soldiers, who refused to allow me to pass. I was endeavoring to make them understand that I lived there when Henry S. Safford, who occupied a suite of rooms with me in the house, came to the door and told me to be quiet, as the President was inside. That was the first I knew of it. That also established my identity, and I was allowed to enter.

"The President was on the bed in a small room on the first floor at the end of the hall. I went down through the basement and through a back door into the yard and up a pair of rear stairs and through a small room in the back of the house over the extension, and entered by the rear door the room in which the President was lying.

"It was a small bed, too short for so tall a man, and he was lying crosswise, with his head at the front toward the door. He was lying on his right side, with the wound in his head in full view, and the surgeon was probing it with his finger when I entered. The room was almost, if not entirely, filled with prominent men of the Nation. Charles Sumner stood at the head of the bed with Robert Lincoln leaning on his shoulder weeping. Mr. Welles, the Secretary of the Navy, sat in a rocking chair, and when I came in he was asleep. He was an old man, there had been a great deal of excitement, and I suppose he was worn out. There were Safford, the Ulker brothers, and other inmates of the house standing in the doorway.

Mr. Stanton, who came into the room at intervals during the night, was busy in the back parlor receiving dispatches and dictating answers to a stenographer. That stenographer was the man since so well known as Corporal Turner. He then lived next door, and Safford, who knew every one, had recommended him as a stenographer.

"Mrs. Lincoln, laboring under great stress of emotion, was brought in two or three times after I came in by two ladies who were with her. She remained only a short time, calling to her husband to speak to her, and then was taken away up stairs again. The ladies spent the night in the suite of rooms belonging to Safford and myself.

"There was a large front parlor or library with sleeping rooms at the rear. I have heard a great many different versions of the story, but it was due to Safford that the President was brought into the house. He was sitting at the window of the parlor when he saw the excitement outside. They were taking the President to the nearest place that seemed open, a lager beer saloon next door, when he called to them to bring him into the house.

"With the exception of a short time when I went into a rear room and lay down for half an hour, I was in the room with the President all night. I was there when the breathing which had been so labored that it could be heard through the house gradually modulated, and in the morning when the physician, who had his finger on the pulse, said: 'The pulse has ceased to beat.'

"An interesting but untrue story about the gold pieces that were placed on the President's eyes and afterward stolen has been written by a prominent man. I know the story of those 'gold pieces.' After the President had ceased to breathe the doctor put his hand in his pocket and brought out four new, shiny two-cent pieces. Two of these he put on each of the eyes to close them. Every one left the room then except two attendants, and after a time the coins were removed and placed carelessly on a table near the hair which had been cut from the President's head around the wound.

"After the body had been taken away I took the four coins, which were blood stained from the fingers of the physician; the hair, which gathered together made a good-sized lock, and one of the blood-stained pillow slips from the bed. One of the coins I gave to Safford, another to William T. Clark, another occupant of the house, in whose room and on whose bed the President died. He had chanced to be absent that night. The other two coins, the most stained, I kept myself.

"That disposes of the question of the stolen gold pieces. The story was nonsensical on its face, for every one who knew the times knows that the doctor would not be likely to carry gold pieces around in his pockets, that they were only to be seen as curiosities in brokers' windows. My two coins were eventually lost, I don't know how. The stains wore off, and they may have been spent or I may have thrown them at something. I did use coins that way frequently. We didn't think much of fractional copper currency in those days. You could almost pick it up on the streets.

"It was a prominent official in Washington who, writing of Lincoln's death, said: 'He died in the house of a sordid rebel, who stole the gold pieces from his eyes.' I must have been that sordid rebel who took the two-cent pieces.

"The politics of poor old Mr. Peterson, who owned the house, consisted in an intense admiration for Andrew Johnson. Peterson was a merchant tailor, and Johnson used to drop into his place to see the men work and tell about his own experiences as a tailor. Because he had been a tailor and had risen to a high position, Peterson considered him a great man. That was about all the politics he had.

"There have been various stories told also to the effect that the room in which Mr. Lincoln died had been occupied by his slayer, John Wilkes Booth, for some time prior to the act. The room had been occupied by Mr. Clark for many months. I know him well, and he was a friend of Mr. Safford's. Before that the room had been occupied by an actor named Matthews, and it is possible that Booth might have visited him, though I think I should have heard of it if it had been so.

"The pillow slip, which was very much

stained, I have now or a great portion of it. The lock of hair I thought I had until at one time I visited Peoria, Ill., where I met a bright woman, Mrs. Brotherson, the wife of an ex-Mayor of the city and a poet who wrote the poems for the city celebrations. Peoria was the seat of the great Lincoln and Douglas debates, and Mrs. Brotherson was an ardent admirer of Lincoln. I promised to send her the hair. But when I went to get it I found that all but a few hairs had been destroyed by insects, and nothing but the blue ribbon with which I had tied it was left.

"There was only one reliable picture of the scene of Lincoln's death made. That was made by a Mr. Berghaus of New York for an illustrated weekly of this city. He went to the room and made a very accurate sketch of it, even to Clark's pictures on the wall, and we gave him a careful description of everything that took place and the people present. I know that was the only picture, for though Safford and Clark left the house and city not very long after, I remained for more than a year, and no one else came to see the room or to ask particulars. We gave Berghaus a certificate as to the correctness of his picture."

HEATER MAKERS' TRUST.

The American Radiator Company Organized, with a Capital of
\$10,000,000.

A far-reaching combination of the manufacturers of boilers for heating purposes and of radiators and other heating apparatus assumed definite form late yesterday afternoon, when the certificate of incorporation of the American Radiator Company, with a capital of \$10,000,000, was filed by James B. Dill of New York City, as counsel of the company, in the office of the Secretary of State at Trenton, N. J.

The incorporators are James B. Dill, Louis Bruch of Chicago, and Howard K. Wood of East Orange, N. J. The new company is registered with the New Jersey Registration and Trust Company, at East Orange, and the filing of this certificate of incorporation was followed by the withdrawal of the American Radiator Company, which was an Illinois concern registered under New Jersey laws.

Of the \$10,000,000 of authorized capital stock, one-half is to be preferred and the other half common stock. The preferred stock is entitled to receive a fixed cumulative preferential dividend not to exceed 7 per cent. per annum. This new corporation has a very comprehensive charter. It is authorized to buy, sell, deal in, import, and export radiators, boilers, and other heating apparatus and such other appliances the object of which may be to vary temperatures. Its corporate powers also include the acquisition by purchase, manufacture, or otherwise of all materials, supplies, and machinery in this particular line.

The new company furthermore has unlimited power to purchase, mortgage, and convey real estate in all of the States and Territories of this country, and in any and all foreign countries.