The Assassination and Death of Abraham Lincoln, President of the United States

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Having been the first of our profession who arrived to the assistance of our late President, and having been requested by Mrs. Lincoln to do what I could for him, I assumed the charge until the Surgeon General and Dr. Stone, his family physician, arrived, which was about 20 minutes after we had placed him in bed in the house of Mr. Peterson opposite the theatre, and as I remained with him until his death, I humbly submit the following brief account.

I arrived at Ford's Theatre about 8 1/4 P.M., April 14th, and procured a seat in the dress circle about 40 feet from the President's Box.
The play was then progressing and in a few minutes I saw the President, Mr. Lincoln, Maj. Rathbone and Mr. Harris enter; while proceeding to the box they were met by the audience, which was received by the President and Mrs. Lincoln by a smile and a bow. The party was preceded by an attendant who after opening the door of the box and dressing it after they had all taken seats took a seat near by for himself. The theater was well filled "at the play." Our American cousin progressed very pleasantly until about half-past ten, when the report of a pistol was distinctly heard and about a minute after a man of low stature, with black hair and eyes, was seen leaping to the stage, holding in his hand a drawn dagger. While descending his heel got entangled in the American flag, which was waving in front of the box, causing him to stumble when he reached the stage, but with a single bound he regained
the use of his limbs to the side, turning to the opposite of the stage, flourishing his dagger and disappearing behind the scenes.

I then heard cries that the "President had been murdered", which were followed by those of "Kill the murderer, shoot him, etc., which came from different parts of the audience. I immediately ran to the President's box and as soon as the door was opened was admitted and introduced to Mrs. Lincoln, when she exclaimed several times: "O Doctor, do what you can for him, do what you can!" I told her we would do all we possibly could.

When I entered the box the ladies were very much excited. Mrs. Lincoln was seated in a high backed arm chair with his head leaning towards his right side supported by Mrs. Lincoln, who was weeping bitterly. Miss Harris was near her left and behind the President. While approaching the President I sent a gentleman for brandy and another for water.
When I reached the President, he was in a state of general paralytic, his eyes were closed, and he was in a profound comatose condition, while his breathing was intermittent and exceedingly laborious. I placed my fingers on his right radial pulse, but could perceive no movement of the artery.

As two gentlemen now arrived, I requested them to assist me to place him in a recumbent position, and as I held his head and shoulders, while doing this my hand came in contact with a clot of blood near his left shoulder. Supposing that he had been stabbed there, I asked a gentleman to cut his coat and shirt off from that part, to enable me if possible to check the haemorrhage, which I supposed took place from the subclavian artery or some of its branches.

Before they had proceeded as far as the elbow, I announced to examine his head (as no wound near the shoulder was found) and some placed my fingers over a large firm clot of blood,
situated about one inch below the superior curved line of the occipital bone and an inch and a half to the left of the median line of the same bone. The esculapian I easily removed and passed the little finger of my left hand through the perfectly smooth opening made by the blade and found that it had entered the encephalon. As soon as I removed my finger a slight oozing of blood followed and his breathing became more regular and less stertorous. The brandy & water now arrived and a small quantity was placed in his mouth, which passed into his stomach where it was retained. Dr. W. S. Taft and Dr. A. I. A. King now arrived and after a moment's consultation we agreed to have him removed to the nearest house, which we immediately did, the above named with other assisting. When we arrived at the door of the box, the passage was found to be densely crowded by those who were rushing towards that part of the...
theatre. I called out twice, "Guard the passage," which was so soon done that we proceeded without a moment's delay with the President and were not in the slightest interrupted until he was placed in bed in the house of Mr. Petersen opposite the theatre in less than 20 minutes from the time that he was assassinated. The street in front of the theatre before we had left it was filled with the excitement of the populace, a large number of whom followed us into the house. As soon as we arrived in the room offered to us, we placed the President on bed in a diagonal position as the bed was too short a part of the foot was removed to enable us to place him in a comfortable position. The windows were opened and at my request a Captain present made all have the room except the medical gentlemen and friends. As soon as we placed him in bed we removed his clothes and covered him with blankets. When covering him I found his lower extremities
very cold from his feet to a distance several inches above his knees. I then sent for bottles of hot water and hot blankets which we applied to his lower extremities and abdomen. Several other physicians and surgeons about this time arrived among whom was Dr. C. K. Stone who had been the President's Physician since the arrival of his family in the city. After having been introduced to Dr. Stone, I asked him if he would assume charge (telling him at the time all that had been done and describing the wound) he said that he would and approved of the treatment. The Surgeon General and Surgeon Crane in a few minutes arrived and made an examination of the wound. When the President was first laid in bed, a slight ecchymosis was noticed on his left eyelid and the pupil of that eye was slightly dilated, while the pupil of the right eye was contracted. About 11 P.M. the right eye began to protrude which was rapidly followed by an increase...
of the eyeball was until it reached the orb infected above the super orbital ridge and below the super orbital fossa.

The wound was kept open by the Surgeon General by means of clip wires, and as the President was placed diagonally on the bed, his head was supported in its position by Surgeon Evans and S. Taft.

About 2 A.M. the Hospital Steward, who had been sent for a Relations probe, arrived and an examination was made by the Surgeon General, who introduced it to a distance of about 1½ inches, when it came into contact with a foreign substance, which lacerated the back of the eye. This being easily removed, the probe was introduced several inches further, when it again touched a hard substance, which was at first supposed to be the ball, but as the bulb of the probe on its withdrawal did not indicate the mark of lead, it was generally thought to be another piece of bone. The probe was introduced a second time
intermission, when not the slightest movement of the artery could be felt. The inspiration now became very short and the expirations very prolonged and labored, accompanied by a guttural sound. 6.50 A.M. The respiration ceased for some time and all eagerly looked at their watches until the profound silence is disturbed by a prolonged inspiration which was soon followed by a survival expiration.

The Surgeon General now held his finger to the carotid artery, Col. Browne held his head, Dr. Stone who was sitting on the bed, held his left pulse, and his right pulse was held by myself. At 7.20 A.M. he breathed his last and the spirit fled to God who gave it.

During the course of the night the room was visited by many of his friends.

Mrs. Lincoln with Mrs. Senator Dixon came into the room three or four times during the night.

The President's son, Capt. T. Lincoln, remained with his father during the greater part of the night.

Immediately after death had taken place, we all bowed and the Rev. D. Gilley supplicated to God in behalf of the bereaved family and our afflicted country.
and the ball was supposed to be distinctly felt by the Surgeon-General, Surgeon Crane and Dr. Stone. After this second exploration nothing further was done with the wound except to keep the opening free from coagula, which if allowed to form would remain for a very short time, would produce signs of increased compression, the breathing becoming profoundly stertorous and the pulse to be more feeble and singular.

His pulse, which was several times counted by Dr. Jud and noted by Dr. Huys, ranged until 11 P.M. from between 40 to 60 beats per minute, and his respiration about 24 per minute, were loud and stertorous. At 1 A.M. his pulse suddenly increased in frequency to 100 per minute, but soon diminished gradually becoming less feeble until 5 A.M., when it was 140 and hardly perceptible. At 6:40 A.M. pulse could not be counted, it being very intermittent, two or three pulsations being felt and followed by an
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Report of the Assassination of Abraham Lincoln, President of the United States.

D. Slocum Report due to Secretary Lincoln, War Dept., July 11, '65
With a personal note by the Surgeon-General.

Enclosures

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