

The Daily Astorian

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ASTORIA, OREGON, SUNDAY, JANUARY 29, 1888.

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BEATS THEM ALL!
SAN FRANCISCO, October 24, 1887.
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Gentlemen:—I have made a very careful and thorough Bureau Test of your "EXTRA STAR KEROSENE, WATER WHITE, EXTRA PRESSURE FOR FAMILY USE," and find the Burning Test to be
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THE GAS MAN AT FORD'S THEATER

Some Interesting Facts Concerning The Assassination of President Lincoln.

There were many persons connected with the sorrowful conspiracy on the night when President Lincoln was assassinated by John Wilkes Booth, the actor at Ford's theater, Washington, during the performance of "Our American Cousin" who were never discovered. Some have died, others are doubtless alive to-day, but wisely keep their mouths closed as to their knowledge of the hideous plot. A few years ago one of these made a startling revelation upon his deathbed. It showed that the conspiracy, as first carefully planned, was defeated at the last moment by a mere trifle, and that, had the details of the first plot been carried out, the assassin could not have been known. This sounds strange now, but it is perfectly true. The story comes from actors, some of them well known in the theatrical world, but who do not wish their names mentioned. They knew the man who made the confession, himself as employe behind the scenes at Ford's and they have never doubted that he told the truth in his last moments.

The man referred to was the gas man of the theater. Such a person is an important factor behind the scenes. He has sole charge of the apparatus and at the signal of the stage manager lowers and raises the light, turns off and lights up the gas, etc. All this is done now-a-days by merely touching different electric buttons; but at Ford's the clumsy system of that day was in use. Turn-cocks were attached to the pipes in a chest set well back on the stage, out of sight. The gas man kept the key, and he alone had access to the chest.

It is a mistake to regard Booth as a desperado, bent on executing his devilish scheme even at the sacrifice of his own life. The public manner of the assassination, and his leap to the stage in full view of two thousand people, was an after thought, adopted on the pressure of the moment, when his own carefully matured scheme had been defeated. Much as he wanted to kill the president, he never wanted to be known as the assassin, and had his plan not miscarried he never would have been known in that character, save perhaps to a select circle of admiring confidants in Baltimore, Washington, Richmond, Charleston and New Orleans, who could have been safely trusted with the dreadful secret.

His plan was simple, and its simplicity seemed to insure its success. The president's party having been seated in their box, at a given signal the gas was to be turned off, leaving the whole house in darkness.

Booth having marked the exact position of his victim at the instant, and having access to the box would promptly do the murder in the dark. So great would be the confusion and uproar in the immense audience that packed the house, over the mere fact of total darkness, that the horrible tragedy just secretly and successfully accomplished could not be made known for some time so that it would be understood. The gas man would have locked the chest and quietly departed with the key in his pocket, it might be half an hour before the house could be relighted. In the meantime the commission of the crime had been perfectly hidden by the darkness. It would be a question in the case of the escape of the assassin; for although Booth had taken the precaution to have a saddle-horse ready in the alley outside, he deemed it a mere precaution. There would be no proof, nothing more than suspicion against him if his plot succeeded.

The signal for turning off the gas was thought to be a master-stroke of the plot. None but a man of strong dramatic instinct could have chosen it. Let the reader recall the time. The fall of Richmond and Petersburg, the pursuit and surrender of Lee had followed in quick succession, occurring but a few days before. The north was transported with joy; Washington was full of soldiers; a thousand of them would be at Ford's theater

that night, as it was known that the president would attend. The manager saw that something besides the rather tame play of "Our American Cousin" must be presented to satisfy the patriotic overflowing of men's hearts. So it was made part of the programme that when the president's party was seated, several male quartettes should take the stage and sing the national anthem, "My Country, 'Tis of Thee," the house naturally joining in. A designated line of this anthem was to furnish the signal to the gas man. With the last short line of the first stanza,

"Let freedom ring," the whole theater was to be plunged in darkness, and the murder would swiftly follow. Down to a time possibly not more than one minute preceding the singing of the fatal line, events seemed to march straight on to the consummation of the tragedy exactly as planned. The overture was done; the president, Mrs. Lincoln, Major Rathbone, Miss Harris had arrived and were seated, amid the plaudits of the house; the singing of "America" from the stage had commenced. Booth stood at the box-door, one hand on the knob, the other on his pistol; the gas man behind the scenes went to his chest. And then—

It was the great Talleyrand, I believe, who said that "from the sublime to the ridiculous is but a step." The truth of the saying was never proved as it was in that moment!

An actor of the company had for several days been on what in those days was called a "racket." He was lingering about the wings on this evening in a boozey condition, when the manager caught sight of him and proceeded to give him "a wiggling." To do so more at ease, he plumped the delinquent down on the gas chest and took a seat beside him. The gas man came up and saw at once the "cue" could not be given. He did not dare to draw attention to his proceedings by requesting the manager to move. To be watched was to insure him the scaffold!

The anthem went on; "Let freedom ring" was sonorously rolled through the house; the lights were dimmed; the piece was finished with wild applause; the play began.

And there in the lobby was Booth, raging with disappointment, striding up and down, now seen by half a dozen different persons, nerving his hand and his brain for the public assassination that occurred an hour later.

As a remedy for coughs and colds Ayer's Cherry Pectoral has never been equaled. Its name is household word.

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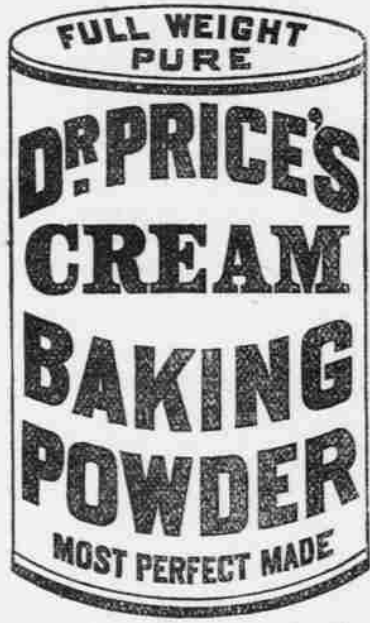
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Why will you cough when Shiloh's Cure will give immediate relief. Price 10 cts 50 cts and \$1. Sold by W. E. Dement.

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TUESDAY, JAN. 10th, 1888, I will commence selling the following six different lines in first class regular make of Knit Wool Undershirts and Drawers regardless of first cost, on account of my having the sole agency of Conger's Patent "Chest Shield" Undershirts and House's Patent "Double Seamed" Drawers. These lines I place on sale at \$1.25 each shirt or drawers, making \$2.50 per suit, most of which I formerly sold at \$3.50 per suit, viz:

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- Men's Fine Wool Backskin Tint Undershirts or Drawers.
- Men's Fancy Stripe Wool Gray and White Undershirts or Drawers.
- Men's Fancy Stripe Wool Scarlet and White Undershirts or Drawers.
- Men's Conde Wool Mottled Undershirts or Drawers.

These above lines of goods are all non-shrinking, and of uniform durability, finished seams, and general perfection of manufacture.

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Having closed out from the manufacturers at the closing of the year, entire lines in suits, pants, &c., which were made up for last fall's trade, and which I guarantee are first class as to make, fit, etc., and at figures which enables me to offer them at factory prices. These said lines are too numerous to mention in this space. Among said lines I have some boys' (13 to 17) all wool Cheviot Suits for \$5.50, which are cheap at even \$10.00; Men's all wool California Cassimere Suits for \$13.50 which are staple at \$17.50; Children's (4 to 9) Overcoats at \$4.00, formerly \$5.50, Boys' (5 to 10) Overcoats \$3.50, formerly \$4.50; Youth's (12 to 17) Overcoats \$4.50, formerly \$5.50; Men's fine Overcoats, etc.

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