

CHAPTER X

Additional Account of the Assassination—Two Shots in Quick Succession—Instant Lynching Threatened—Surgeons Summoned—Horror at the Dastardly Deed—The Nation Stunned by the Terrible News.

BOTH shots took effect on the President. One struck the sternum, deviated to the right and stopped beneath the skin at the point directly below the right nipple. It was a superficial wound and the bullet was removed immediately after the arrival of surgeons. The second bullet entered and passed through the stomach. An operation, which was performed within two hours after the shooting, failed to find the bullet and the incision was sewed up.

The President was removed to the home of John G. Milburn, President of the Pan-American Exposition, where, at midnight, he was resting comfortably. The physicians said they were hopeful and that the wound was not necessarily fatal.

The man who did the shooting gave his name as Fred Nieman, which was an assumed name. He said he was 28 years old, a blacksmith by occupation, born in Detroit and had come to Buffalo the preceding Saturday. When asked why he shot the President, he said: "I only done my duty."

He was asked if he was an Anarchist, and he said: "Yes, I am."

The assassination had apparently been planned with care. The assassin entered the Temple of Music in the long line of those waiting to shake hands with the President. Over his right hand he wore a white handkerchief, as if the hand were bandaged. Beneath this handkerchief he had concealed a short-barrelled 32-caliber Derringer revolver.

A little girl was immediately ahead of him in the line and the President, after patting her kindly on the head, turned with a

smile of welcome and extended his hand. The miscreant thrust out both his hands, brushed aside the President's right hand, with his left hand, lurched forward against the President, and thrusting his right hand close against his breast, pulled the trigger twice. The shots came in such quick succession as to be almost simultaneous.

At the first shot the President quivered and clutched at his chest. At the second shot he doubled slightly forward and sank back. It all happened in an instant. Quick as he was, the assassin was not quick enough to fire a third shot. Almost before the noise of the firing sounded, he was seized by S. R. Ireland, of the United States Secret Service, in charge of the New York district, who stood directly opposite the President. Ireland hurled him to the floor.

LEAPED ON HIM AS HE FELL.

A negro, named John Parker, leaped upon him as he fell, and they rolled over on the floor. Soldiers of the United States artillery, detailed at the reception, sprang upon the pair, and Exposition police and Secret Service detectives also rushed upon them. Detective Gallagher clutched the assassin's right hand, tore from it the handkerchief and seized the revolver. The artillerymen, seeing Gallagher with the revolver, grabbed him and held him poweriess, snatching the pistol from his grasp. Private Frank O'Brien, of the artillery, got the pistol. Gallagher held to the hankerchief.

Ireland and the negro held the anarchist, endeavoring, with the aid of Secret Service Detective Foster, to shield him from the attacks of the infuriated artillerymen and the policemen's clubs. Meanwhile the President, supported by Detective Geary and President Milburn, and surrounded by Secretary George B. Cortelyou and a number of Exposition officials, was aided to a chair.

His face was deathly white. He made no outcry, but sank back with one hand holding his abdomen, the other fumbling at his breast. His eyes were open and he was clearly conscious of all that transpired. He looked up into President Milburn's face

and gasped the name of his secretary, Cortelyou. Mr. Cortelyou bent over the President, who gasped brokenly :

"Be careful about my wife. Do not tell her, or, at least, do not exaggerate it."

Then, moved by a paroxysm of pain, he writhed to the left and his eyes fell upon the prostrate form of his would-be murderer lying on the floor, bloodstained and helpless, beneath the blows of the guard. The President raised his right hand, stained with his own blood, and placed it on the shoulder of his secretary. "Let no one hurt him," he gasped, and sank back, as his secretary ordered the guard to bear the culprit out of the President's sight.

SEARCHED BY THE POLICE.

They carried him into a side room at the northeast corner of the temple. There they searched him and found upon him a letter relating to lodgings. They washed the blood from his face and asked him who he was and why he had done the dreadful deed. He made no answer at once, but finally gave the name of Nieman. He was of medium height, smooth shaven, brown-haired, dressed as an ordinary mechanic. He offered no explanation of the bloody deed, except that he was an anarchist and had done his duty.

An ambulance from the Exposition Emergency Hospital was summoned immediately, and the President, still conscious, sank upon the stretchers and, accompanied by President Milburn and Secretary Cortelyou, was hurried to the hospital, where, in nine minutes after the shooting, he was awaiting the coming of surgeons who had been summoned instantly from all parts of the city and by special trains from near by. The President was entirely conscious as he lay on the stretcher in the hospital. He conversed with his Secretary and Mr. Milburn.

"I am sorry," he said "to have been the cause of trouble to this Exposition or inconvenience to its officials or the people." The three thoughts in his mind were : First, for his wife ; second, that the assassin should not be harmed : third, regret for any inconvenience occasioned.

The news of the shooting spread with great rapidity throughout the Exposition. People were dumbfounded and appalled. Women wept. Strong men asked where it had happened, and when they learned they turned with blanched faces and clenched hands toward the Temple of Music. The light of vengeance gleamed in their eyes as the throng grew into a multitude.

Inside the Temple, with the President gone and his assailant helpless in a side room, the problem arose of how to get the assassin away from the grounds and beyond the reach of the people. Some advised hurrying him out by a back way, but even the back ways were watched by the throng. Others advocated attempting the dash through the crowd with him, but this was abandoned when suggested. Guards were sent for and more details of soldiers. A carriage was called, a space had been roped off south of the Temple with a heavy rope. The crowd was soon dragging out the iron stanchions holding this rope and was measuring it near a tall flag pole.

CRIES OF "LYNCH HIM!"

"Lynch him!" cried a hundred voices, and a start was made for one of the entrances of the Temple of Music. The soldiers and police sprang outside and beat back the crowd. To and fro they fought. In the midst of the confusion the assassin, still bleeding from his blows and pale and silent, with his shirt torn, was led out quickly by Captain James E. Valleley, Chief of the Exposition Detectives, Assistant Commandant Robertson and detectives. They thrust him into the closed carriage. Three detectives leaped in with him, and Captain Valleley jumped upon the driver's seat, as they lashed the horses into a gallop.

A roar of rage burst from the crowd, "Murderer! Assassin! Lynch him!" yelled the crowd, and men, women and children tore at the guards, sprang at the horses, and clutched the whirling wheels of the carriage. The murderer huddled back in the corner, concealed by the bodies of two detectives. "The rope! the rope!" yelled the crowd, and they started forward, all in one great fight, the soldiery to save, the citizens to take, the man's

life. Soldiers fought a way clear at the heads of the horses, and, persued by infuriated thousands, the carriage whirled across the esplanade and vanished through Lincoln Parkway gate, going down Delaware Avenue to reach the police headquarters.

"Where have they taken him?" asked the crowd of the soldiers.

When the soldiers told them, hundreds hurried to the exits and started towards the city in search of the life of the assassin. They gathered at police headquarters, and as the evening wore away, their number grew. They waited as if for a signal. Again and again they would repeat the question, "Is the President still alive?" and when the answer came that there was hope, they turned again toward the building and waited in silence.

GROANS AND SOBS.

At the emergency hospital, while the throng was crying for the life of the villain, the Exposition officials and the railroad officials and the telegraph officials were searching the city and the adjacent country for the greatest surgeons. They learned that Dr. Roswell Park was at Niagara Falls and General Agent Harry Parry, of the New York Central Railroad, ordered a special train to hurry him to the President's side. Dr. E. W. Lee, of St. Louis, Dr. Storer, of Chicago, and other medical men were on the grounds, and they joined the hospital staff.

The President was borne out of the Temple of Music at 4.14 o'clock by Doctors Hall, Ellis and Mann, Jr., of the hospital, in charge of the ambulance. The crowd fell back when it saw the figure of the President. Groans and sobs were the only sounds heard. There was no need for the police to ask the crowd to move back. The crowd itself cleared a pathway along the course shouting ahead, "Keep back, keep back; make way, make way."

Colonel Chapin, of General Roe's staff, with the mounted escort which had accompanied President McKinley in his outdoor appearance since his arrival in Buffalo, surrounded the ambulance, and at full gallop they whirled to the hospital. With them went

President Milburn and Secretary Cortelyou. Six doctors were at the President's side within thirty seconds after his arrival. Miss Walters, the superintendent of the nurses of the hospital, immediately had all made ready for the task of the surgeons. Outside the police established safety lines and the crowd fell back, standing silent or moving softly.

The President was stripped and placed where the surgeons might see his wounds. Guarding the door was Detective Foster, of the Secret Service, and his assistants. In the room with the President besides the surgeons were Mr. Milburn and Secretary Cortelyou. In the hall of the hospital were Chairman Scatcherd and Secretary of Agriculture Wilson and other prominent men.

When a face appeared for a moment at the hospital door the crowd trembled as if expecting to hear that the President was dead. When the announcement came, the first announcement, that he was shot twice, but that there was hope of his life, people hugged each other and silently waved their hats in the air or clapped their hands and murmured gratefully with eyes closed.

ONE BULLET EXTRACTED.

At 4.45 o'clock the good word came that one of the bullets had been extracted, that his wound was superficial and had done no serious harm. It was joyous, but a moment later came the news of the second bullet and the second wound. The surgeons were in consultation before beginning an operation. At 5.07 a small gray-bearded man pushed his way through the crowd and approached the hospital. He was Dr. Matthew D. Mann and Mr. Scatcherd met him at the hospital door precisely one hour after the President had been shot. The surgeons were waiting for the coming of the President's physician, Dr. P. M. Rixey, and for Dr. Park.

At 5.52 o'clock Secretary W. V. Cox, of the Government Board of Exposition Managers, arrived with Dr. Rixey, Mrs. Rixey and Mrs. Cortelyou. They had come from the Milburn home, where Mrs. McKinley was sleeping, all unconscious of the calamity that had befallen the President. On the space before the

hospital officers of the army and navy, including Captain Hobson, and directors of the Exposition, bankers and diplomats, stood in silence awaiting the result of what the surgeons might decide.

The President of the Cuban Commission to the Exposition, Senor Edelberto Farres, appeared with his full commission and conveyed to those within the hospital the announcement that Cuba sorrowed with the American people and that whatever she could do would be a favor and an honor to the island. One by one the diplomats reiterated these sentiments. The Ambassadors and Ministers stood eagerly waiting for the slightest ray of hope. They heard in silence at 6 o'clock the announcement by Captain Valleley that he had delivered the prisoner safely at police headquarters in the custody of the detectives who had seized him.

THE THRONG KEEP SILENT.

The 6 o'clock whistles were blowing when Mr. Scatcherd and Mr. Hamlin emerged from the hospital and asked that the crowd move still further back and preserve quiet. Their request was obeyed instantly, even the small boys ceasing their shouts. It was announced that the President was about to undergo the operation to find the second bullet. Dr. Mann with Drs. Parmenter, Mynter and Rixey were to be in charge of the operating room with Dr. Mann. As already stated the second bullet was not found, and the hope was that it would become encysted and result in no harm.

It is impossible to describe the overwhelming shock to our whole country by the awful tragedy. Washington was simply stunned by the news that President McKinley had been shot. As the word spread through the streets like wildfire, men and women looked at each other and said: "I don't believe it." It was fully thirty minutes after the first bulletin was placarded before the awful truth was appreciated.

At all points where the slightest intelligence could be secured from Buffalo, people congregated in sad and sorrowful crowds. There were no demonstrations beyond muttered horror and low execrations of the dastardly deed. Thousands gazed in silence

at the bulletin boards, and as succeeding notices brought no assurance, tears were wiped from their eyes and suppressed sobs were heard throughout the throng.

Gradually the tone of the despatches changed and a reaction set in, until at last, when a bulletin was displayed announcing that the President would recover, a hearty cheer went up from thousands of throats and the tension was at an end. Then the people broke out in noisy discussion of the terrible event and if all the threats and suggestions of extermination against the Anarchists could have been put into active operation not one of the breed would have been alive in the United States at midnight.

OTHER ASSASSINATIONS.

It was only twenty years, two decades, since Washington was last startled by the report of the assassin's pistol, and President Garfield was shot down in the Pennsylvania railroad depot. Thirty-six years ago, only a little more than a generation, the greatest tragedy in the history of the nation was enacted when President Lincoln was murdered. Washington felt these tragic events in a peculiar manner. To the people of this city the President of the United States is a living, tangible personality, a part of the everyday life of the city, and any accident or disaster happening to him touches every one most closely and personally.

The news that President McKinley had been shot struck every one as though a close friend or member of his family had been the victim of the murderous assault. The news came shortly after the closing of the departments for the day, when thousands of Government employees, men and women, were on the streets homeward bound. As the word sped along that the President had been shot, ladies would rush toward any one who they thought could give information and demand: "Is it so? Is it so?" Strong men broke down and wept like children. Nowhere in the United States was President McKinley known so well as in Washington, where he first came as a young member of Congress some twenty-five years before.

It so happened that not a member of his Cabinet was present

in the city. Scattered all over the country, enjoying, as he had been, their annual vacation, his official family received the sad intelligence in widely separated localities. The assistant secretaries and chiefs of the bureaus in all the departments were speedily informed of the horrible event at Buffalo.

Some of these men, like Comptroller of the Currency Dawes, had not left their offices, and the shock to them was almost paralyzing. They rushed to the nearest telegraph and newspaper offices in the hope that the first report was untrue. When confirmation of the tidings was received, these men, many of them close, warm personal friends of the President, sank down and sobbed like children.

FELT IT AS A PERSONAL LOSS.

Each one felt that the death of the President would be a distinct personal blow to himself. They began to rehearse in broken voices the virtues and magnificent character of William McKinley. Then they would be shaken with a wave of horror that any creature of human semblance and possessed of thought and soul could take the life of such a man. At the War Department, General Gillespie, who is Acting Secretary of War, and Colonel Ward, who is Acting Adjutant General, were in their offices when the news came from Buffalo. Colonel Wiser, commandant of Fort Porter, at Buffalo, wired directly to the Department, giving official information of the shooting of the President and the arrest of the would-be assassin. The despatch follows:

“Adjutant General, U. S. A., Washington, D. C.:

“President shot at reception in Temple of Music about 4 P. M. Corporal Bertschey and detail of men of my company caught the assassin at once and held him down till the Secret Service men overpowered him and took the prisoner out of their hands, my men being unarmed. Condition of President not known. Revolver in my possession.

“Buffalo, September 6. “(Signed) WISER, Commanding.”

The War Department officials immediately communicated with Secretary Root and Assistant Secretary Sanger, who were at their homes in New York, and instructions were sent to Colonel Wiser, at Fort Porter, to detail men to act as a guard about the hospital where the President lay, and afterward about the house to which he was removed. At the White House there were none but the corps of clerks and telegraph operators present, but inquiries by the hundred were received over the telephone and the telegraph, asking for official news.

Colonel Montgomery, chief of the operators at the White House, gave out the bulletins as rapidly as they were received, but they were only a repetition of those coming in at the newspaper offices and over the regular telegraph wires. Hundreds of anxious citizens passed under the White House portals, or stopped to inquire the latest news, evidently attracted to the official home of the great man whom they believed to be dying in Buffalo.

At the Secret Service Bureau the officials in charge did not care to discuss the shooting, except to join in the general expressions of horror that an attempt should be made upon the life of the President. Chief Wilkie, of the bureau, was absent from the city, and none of his subordinates cared to discuss the precautions that had been taken to prevent just such a tragedy as had occurred.

OBJECTION TO BEING GUARDED.

The President always requested Chief Wilkie and his assistants to refrain from making public the arrangements for guarding him on his trips and at his receptions. The President, however, never moved out of Washington, nor did he appear at any public function without alert officers of the Secret Service Bureau being near to him. In most cases he did not know the men who were detailed to guard him, and was not consulted about the arrangements. He never had the slightest personal fear, and was averse to the detailing of men to guard him. In a general way he knew that the Secret Service officers were in attendance, but his movements were always unrestricted and made without any thought of possible danger to himself.

When he entered upon his first term as President he abolished some of the prominent guard provisions about the White House. The number of policemen was reduced and the little sentry box which had been erected on the front lawn during President Cleveland's second administration and from which an officer could keep an eye on all the approaches to the front of the Executive Mansion was removed by Mr. McKinley's direction.

When a member of Congress, Mr. McKinley had formed the habit of taking long walks through the streets, and when he returned to Washington as President he resumed the practice as far as time would permit. He walked frequently in the north-western section of the city and often was seen taking his constitutional along Pennsylvania avenue and other business streets.

"HAVE NEVER DONE ANY MAN A WRONG."

In this he followed the example of President Grant and President Harrison, both of whom were familiar figures on the streets of the Capital. If any one suggested to President McKinley that he should exercise precaution he invariably answered:—

"I have never done any man a wrong and believe no man will ever do me one." The idea that his life might be at the mercy of a murderous crank never entered his head. When it was suggested to him he merely laughed and said he was not afraid to trust the people.

Of late years President McKinley had not walked so much, but it was principally because of lack of time. During the Spanish war he was kept so closely to his office that he had to give up the long, pleasant strolls he formerly had taken in the residence portion of the city. With his private secretary he would repair to the grounds in the rear of the White House and walk rapidly to and fro for a few moments to get the physical exercise he needed. During those troublous times the watchmen were doubled about the White House grounds, but not at the suggestion of the President. Secret Service men were stationed near the Mansion or within its doors, but without the knowledge or consent of the Chief Executive.

Officials of the Secret Service Bureau believe that the tragedy was unavoidable. They say it could have occurred at any of the President's receptions in the White House. At these public functions, where the President shakes hands with two or three thousand people, any one can pass scrutiny who bears a decent exterior and has the appearance of a respectable citizen. This was the apparent character of the man who did the shooting at Buffalo.

If the will of the people of Washington could have been executed, the anarchist who fired the murderous bullets into the President's body would have had short shift. In the crowds that surrounded the bulletin boards were many grave and dignified citizens who did not hesitate to express a desire to hold the rope that would swing the wretch into eternity. With the hope of the President's recovery, the utterly inadequate punishment that could be administered to the anarchist impressed itself upon the people. Had Mr. McKinley recovered from the wound, the charge to be brought against the man who shot him would have been "assault with intent to kill."

MAXIMUM PUNISHMENT.

Under the laws of the State of New York this crime entails a maximum punishment of only ten years imprisonment. Had the attempt been made in the District of Columbia it would have been possible to imprison the criminal for twenty years. There have been, at various times, bills before Congress prescribing punishment for the crime of attempt upon the life of the Chief Executive. Nothing was ever done, however, and now every lawmaker regrets that a Federal statute has not been enacted providing adequate punishment for the attempted murder of the President. As death has resulted from the assassin's bullet, the punishment is, of course, death.

In the diplomatic quarters of the city the news of the assassination of President McKinley came as a tremendous shock. Nearly all of the Ambassadors and Ministers were absent from Washington, but the Charges d'Affaires and secretaries who

were left on duty, expressed the keenest regrets and displayed the deepest sympathy over the tragedy.

Among the representatives of all foreign powers, President McKinley was very popular. They not only entertained the respect which is due a ruling magistrate but they had a deeper and more personal feeling toward the President. His exemplary life at the Capital, his tender solicitude for his wife and his many charming personal attributes placed him high in the estimation of all the diplomats. He was as punctilious in his observance of diplomatic forms and ceremony as the most exacting could require and at the same time exhibited a courtesy that was most charming. He was able to steer a judicious course in all the petty controversies regarding public functions that have arisen in the diplomatic corps where the most intense jealousy exists regarding precedence and other rights.

SYMPATHY FOR MRS. M'KINLEY.

In the tragic occurrence the people of Washington had their sympathies most deeply stirred when they considered the terrible ordeal to which Mrs. McKinley was subjected. The greatest concern was felt regarding her, and those who best know her absolute reliance upon her husband felt that the death of the latter would be fatal to his wife. Her friends here were fearful that her recent illness had weakened her so that she might not survive the shock. Mrs. McKinley always relied upon her husband with implicit trust. It is known that her life has been saved in times past by the exercise of his strong vitality and masterful will.

The influence he had over her was almost hypnotic. On more than one occasion the physicians in attendance testified that Mrs. McKinley has been drawn from the verge of the grave by her husband's wonderful, magnetic powers. His devotion to his wife was beautiful. Probably no other part of his character earned him so completely the love of the whole people. The perfect sympathy between Mr. and Mrs. McKinley touched the entire nation and was best known in Washington. Their married life covered some thirty years, and the union was ideal. It

is recalled that a short time before the President and Mrs. McKinley went to Canton, the mistress of the White House said that she would rejoice most heartily when the public life of the President would be ended and they could go back to their quiet home in Ohio.

"It is a great honor for my husband to be President of the United States, and I appreciate it fully, but it means much privation and self-sacrifice for us both," was the wistful declaration of the gentle invalid.

When the news of the shooting of President McKinley reached Washington, the telephone system of the city was simply paralyzed for a time and so many were the calls upon the news offices and upon the officials who might be supposed to have knowledge of the details of the shooting, that the operators were overwhelmed. A reporter for the Associated Press carried to the White House the first bulletin announcing the shooting of the President. The executive mansion was reached about 4.24, and at that time all its few inmates were in total ignorance of the tragedy in which their chief had just played so serious a part.

ALL QUIET AT THE WHITE HOUSE.

A policeman paced up and down under the portico as usual, but his serene countenance intimated that he was totally ignorant of the affair. Inside there were few to receive the news, the most prominent personage there being a telegraph operator, Secretary Pruden, who was in charge of the White House, having left his office for the day, as had his subordinates.

The force at the White House after the President's departure was in constant communication with him, and while he conducted most of the business of his office at his home in Canton, the majority of the papers with which he had to deal were prepared in Washington and forwarded through the White House clerical force. All reports received from him by officials were cheerful and high spirited.

General Gillespie, Acting Secretary of War, got into communication with Secretary Root and Assistant Secretary Sanger,