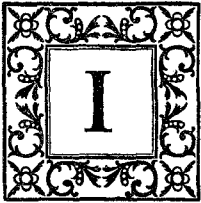


A Little Gall

BY THOMAS BOYD

Author of "Rintintin," "Unadorned," etc.

ILLUSTRATIONS BY C. LE ROY BALDRIDGE



It was late November. But whether the hour was morning, noon, or nearly night could not have been told without a watch. This, for the vicinity of the port of Saint Nazaire, was not unusual. In the absence of a discouraged sun the shorn trees were sweating coldly on the hillside. The rain was seeping through the gray, heavy sky; and in a long, curving line a company of soldiers, too chilled to remove their mustard-colored tunics, bent their backs over the soggy earth. There was the subdued scrape of the shovel, the dull sound of the pick striking a stone as the men, with stiff, hampered movements, grubbed up the damp sod, making a wide, deepening path of frosty earth on which their greased cowhide shoes moved as slowly as the tedious hours.

Corporal Lewis, whose industry had taken him a little in advance of the bowed line, once more raised his pick and brought it heavily down into the moist, clammy earth. He was tired, but not with a physical fatigue; it was because his efforts had brought him nothing. Nausea was there too, and a nostalgia for either of two poles: home (which was northern Illinois), where the bands were blaring stirring music for the men who were beginning to be drafted and where young women laid their bodies on the altar of patriotism and prospective life insurance; and the front, where the goaded snort of the enemy guns, yet unheard by him, was the daily diet. But this existence in continuous dampness, of chain-gang labor—the antithesis of heroism—was difficult for him to accept. Without raising his pick he gazed toward the lank, freckled lieutenant in charge of the working party, and saw that officer attempting

to warm his feet and yet to appear stoical besides. As if, in addition to the other desirable perquisites of junior office, second lieutenants never got cold! The reflection was irritating, forming a base for a pyramid of minor troubles. . . . He hadn't enlisted to dig ditches. He had left a damn sight better job than this to come over here and fight. And as he leaned his sturdy shoulders above the wooden handle and stared at the freckled lieutenant he grew rebellious. Hell! there was no use standing there and shivering to death. He straightened, turned, and walked away.

Saint Nazaire was a few miles distant, but half-way on the road which led to it (a road which winds slowly among pale houses and is scantily covered by frayed trees as it twists downward to the sea)—half-way to Saint Nazaire is a buvette, and many soldiers, upon seeing it, decide to go no farther. Corporal Lewis was one of the many in that he found the buvette a pleasant place to stop. It had benches with roughly made tables before them along the walls; the walls themselves were unassuming except for the one to the left of the entrance, where a few sticks of wood blazing in the fireplace drew one's attention. And then there were the shelves of bottles on the walls: four-star Boules-tin, Saint James rum, Amer Picon, vermouth, Benedictine, cherry rocher, cointreau, and a great many others which Yvonne, whose large hands, broiled to pinkness, did not reach for as often as she reached for the cognac. As Corporal Lewis opened the door and stood for a moment on the sill he would have had to search long to find another interior so companionable.

"Ullo corps!" A voice from the shaded part of the room informed Corporal Lewis that he was not the only soldier who had left the working party for

Yvonne's buvette. Nor was he pleased with the knowledge, for the absence of too many men would be observed by the freckled lieutenant. Then, too, some one was always fool enough to get drunk and cause trouble. "Only thing I ever found that'd take this cold outa your bones," said the voice, pointing a grubby finger at an emptied cognac glass which stood before him on the table. "Corps, have a little drink." The voice was timid, anxious.

"Yeh, have a shot on me, corpril."

"Lord!" said Corporal Lewis, sliding his body between the bench and table, "it wouldn't take many more for the whole company to be down here."

"Yvonne!" called the first voice, straightening, "aincha got 'ny respect for a corporal? Give the man a drink."

Yvonne in her bedroom slippers, which she wore six days out of the week, trotted into the room from the kitchen, tying the strings of her apron around her concave waist. She smiled.

"Caporal, beaucoup coniac," explained the second voice, subsiding.

It was just what he needed, Corporal Lewis knew after the first glass. But as the drinks were small the liquor seemed to lose much of its warming quality before it reached the proper place in his anatomy. Lewis could feel the untouched spot, just above the webbed belt that tightly girded his solid middle, cold and grasping. This gnawing sensation quickened him to remark, "The next round's on me; fill 'em up again, Yvonne." He translated his English by describing a circle with his long index finger, a circle on the inside of which were the three empty glasses.

After a while Yvonne set the bottle of Boulestin in the middle of the table and departed with the purchase-price in her pocket.

"Now," said the first voice, "if the corps don't mind we'll settle down to a little steady drinking."

"I know what you fellows thought. You thought I came in here to run you into the brig." Corporal Lewis traced a spiral course with the stem of his glass on the wet top of the table.

"You're a corporal, aren't you?" the first voice significantly inquired.

Lewis leaned forward, resting both forearms on the table. He had never

wanted to be a corporal, but he could not avoid the warrant. He was too self-reliant, too physically fine to be permitted to remain a private. "They wished the job on me; I didn't want to take it," he said without the note of apology which usually accompanies such talk.

"I guess I was wrong," admitted the first voice; "I thought old Bran Face had sent ya down after us."

"You know," said the second voice, suddenly grown warlike, "I'd like to see that big stiff"—the big stiff was Bran Face and Bran Face was the freckled-faced lieutenant in charge of the working party—"come down here and try to run me in. I'd knock him for the longest row you ever seen."

"nd so would I," Corporal Lewis assented grimly, lowering the neck of the bottle to the brim of his glass. Saffron from a black mouth dribbling in a water-white glass. It was the cognac that was grim.

"Oh, no, you wouldn't," the first soldier grinned wisely.

"Why the hell wouldn't I?" Corporal Lewis spoke so fiercely that the eyes of the first soldier were covered with a film. Nevertheless he answered:

"You got those two stripes on your arm, that's the reason."

"Let 'im live, corpril, let 'im live. He don't know what he's saying," put in the second soldier with high contemptuousness.

"You think so, do you?" asked Lewis, speaking thickly and leaning across the table toward the first soldier. "You think these stripes would make any difference in what I said if that shavetail came in here? Listen!" his voice rose, "I'd jist as soon take a poke at him as take another drink."

"You cert'n'y would," declared the first soldier in admiration. "Here, 'y God, I'll buy another drink."

Half an hour later the buvette door opened and the three men, their arms about one another's necks in friendly fashion, tried to reach the road at the same time. And as they precariously, but happily, made their way in the light that was neither of morning, noon, nor night toward the grounds where the company still worked they sang, to the tune



He hadn't enlisted to dig ditches.—Page 133.

of "What a Friend We Have in Jesus"
the following lines:

"When this bloody war is over
No more soldiering for me;
No more dress parades on Sunday;
No more taps or reveille.

"#\$/-&'(*)('&-/%\$#''???#\$/
)(&-/%\$#''@1/2?"/#\$/-)&'()
I'll be damned if I can soldier
With a shovel, pick and hoe."

Nearer the place where they should
have been working, where their rifles were
senselessly stacked in four short rows,
their approach was more sober. But
pretense was useless now, for they had
been observed. And as they came nearer
a half-covert whisper fluttered along the
line of working soldiers. One straight-
ened and frankly stared, another furiously
flayed the ground with his pick, as if he

himself feared punishment for the devilry of the three intransigents, and still another muttered ominously that "They'd get theirs," but the lieutenant had not moved; even when he summoned a duty sergeant his words were scarcely heard.

For no reason at all, unless the lieutenant's folded arms could be called a reason, Corporal Lewis found himself walking over the moist ground past the gaping men toward the waiting officer. So the duty sergeant who had come to fetch him drew back uncertainly as he marched unsteadily by. Arm's length from the lieutenant Lewis stopped and saluted, an exaggerated, slashing movement of his right arm.

"Corporal, you are under arrest." The officer drummed with his fingers on his upper arm. "You two other men go back to work, but you, Lewis—why for two cents I'd knock——"

Suddenly Lewis stopped swaying. "Hell," he said, and tried to spit contemptuously. "Why, I'd give a dollar jist to take one good poke at you."

The lieutenant's eyelids flashed upward, like unexpectedly released window-shades. From set lips he said, "Sergeant, march this man into the guard-house."

All the way back to camp, over the dreary roads, scarred by the wheels of the camions, Corporal Lewis walked beside his armed escort. A grin widened his mouth and his broad nose turned up more than ever. Altogether he appeared so blissful that one of the guards completely forgot the importance of his duty and smiled with friendliness. Momentarily, Lewis chuckled; the smiling guard grew apprehensive, and the expression on his face was that of a nice mouse who, miraculously enough, was guiding the steps of a lion. The stocky shoulders of Corporal Lewis were impressive.

They came into sight of the long, low-lying buildings of the camp, and the guards straightened their rifles on their shoulders. But the prisoner continued to grin, and once, as they marched up the gravel road to the guard-house, he said in defense of his integrity, "I gave him as good as he sent, and anybody that says I didn't is a dam', dirty liar."

No one denied his claim. Not even the sergeant of the guard, who took his car-

tridge belt from him and went through the formality of searching his pockets. Doubtless, he would not have heard if they had, for his head was going round in a buzzing haze and his spirit was amicable. What had he done? Nothing. All of this searching of pockets seemed as much by-play as a kangaroo court. It was only after the barred door of his cell in the guard-house had been closed and locked that he began to remember. Then slowly, as he looked out over the dirt floor where the second relief was sleeping on soiled mattresses and saw the sergeant of the guard making out the evening report, the scene came back to him. But what had he said? Distinctly enough he saw himself standing before the lieutenant, but the rest of the picture was a blot. What of it? What difference did it make? He laughed to prove that it made none, then because his befuddled mind perceived the sound to be mirthless he laughed again. One of the guards walked uneasily to the cell door to quiet the disturbance, but Lewis had stretched out on his mattress and at once had fallen asleep.

Inmates of the guard-house were spared the before breakfast exercises in the cold morning air. As Lewis awoke in his cell he could hear alongside the building the Seventy-fourth Company's drill sergeant calling out "Hands on hips, place!" and fancied the men in unison bending their knees, thrusting out their arms and thumping their chests in the routine manner of working the stiffness from their bodies. He looked out into the darkened room and seeing the first relief of the camp guard sleeping, waiting for breakfast, he thought, with gloomy pleasure, "Thank God, I'm spared that, anyway." He had in mind both the guard duty and the setting up exercises. After a while breakfast was brought, and Lewis's cell door was opened by a taciturn guard who set a canteen cup of coffee and a mess kit of mush on the floor. Metalically, the door slammed, leaving Lewis to his silent meal. Life in a cell, Lewis considered, had not been so depressing when he had been a member of the guard. He had talked to the prisoners. But these fellows, why, they treated you like you were a criminal!

At ten o'clock a scared sentry in front of the building bawled, "Turn out the

guard, officer of the day." But he permitted the officer to approach him too closely for the first and third reliefs to put on their belts, button their overcoats, and rush out the door before the officer came

"Nothing new turned up?" the O. D. asked the sergeant. "Got a new man in the lockup, lieutenant." "Drunk or A. W. O. L.?" "No charges yet, sir." Lewis looked up startled. That he had



. . . the lank, freckled lieutenant in charge of the working party.—Page 133.

into the guard-house. "Ten-shun," angrily commanded the sergeant of the guard, suspecting a reprimand and eager to pass it on before he had received it. "Carry on, carry on," sourly ordered the officer of the day, glaring at the ensemble. Lewis could sympathize with him. When he had been acting sergeant of the guard he had always got his men out on time for inspection by the O. D., the commanding officer or any one else whose rank required the courtesy of the guard.

VOL. LXXVII.—II

not yet been charged with a particular misdemeanor increased the uncertainty of the nature of his punishment. He tried to placate his mood by telling himself that at most he would be fined a month's pay. The lieutenant was speaking again.

"What's the man's name?"

"Corporal Lewis, sir."

The lieutenant seemed surprised. "Lewis, what's he in here for?" he asked the question of himself and Lewis saw him walking toward his cell. The lieu-

tenant had small hands and a small nervous face. His step, his gestures, every movement was hurriedly made, not as if he were important with many missions to perform, but as if he were impatient to finish his duties. "What are you here for, Lewis?" he asked sharply. "I don't know," answered Lewis, grinning. The lieutenant frowned in a preoccupied manner. "You better hurry up and get out. I want you in the intelligence section." He walked abruptly away. And after he had gone Lewis called:

"Sarge, can you come over here a minute?"

The sergeant walked to the cell door, into the iron lattice work of which he twined his gnarled fingers. "What is it, Lewis? I can't let you smoke if that's what you want."

"No, I don't want to smoke now. But sarge, I tell you: If you want to git your guard out pronto next time, just have your corporal in front of the guard-house kick his heel against the door as soon as he catches sight of the O. D. Then by the time the sentry sings out, the men'll be ready to fall in out in front."

"By gosh, that is a good stunt. . . . I never thought of that. . . . Say, Lewis, if you want to smoke, go ahead."

Lewis looked hurt. "I told you I didn't want to smoke."

On the third morning of his stay in the guard-house Corporal Lewis was given a suit of dungarees, pale blue and sloppy. And with them covering his uniform and a sentry behind him with fixed bayonet, he was marched into the company street, past the men who were forming for drill. The men stared as he passed and he wrenched a grin into his face as he went by his own company. But later, as he was digging up ground for a new latrine, his hands and dungarees caked with reddish clay, and the sentry was standing over him, when his platoon marched past he looked steadily down at the earth, and the veins, from mortification, stood out on his solid neck.

It was only the beginning. That, Corporal Lewis discovered a week afterward at Divisional Headquarters standing with his counsel, before the solemn, important court-martial officers. For, unable to make up their minds as to what action

to take, these officers sent him back to the guard-house, finding him guilty but withholding sentence. He had learned that he was charged with offering violence to an officer and he began to worry about the approaching Christmas. For, obviously, with neither money nor freedom, he would be unable to send any presents back to the States. A special court-martial meant that he would lose at least the month's pay. He could, of course, write home, but it would be difficult to explain, the folks would not understand; they always believed conditions worse than they actually were. Grimly, he went through the dreary days. One evening, less than a week before Christmas, he sat in his cell until long past midnight, his hands feverishly grasped and his eyes staring sightlessly through the iron lattice work of the door.

On the morning of the third day before Christmas the officer of the day (he was second in command of the Ninety-fifth Company and the embodiment of everything that was swashbuckling) stormed into the guard-house with a heavy frown. "Dammit," Lewis heard him say to the sergeant, "bang goes Christmas. Just as I had a party all fixed up at Saint Nazaire we get orders to break camp." He pulled vexedly at his black mustache, which was like two turned-up sabres. "Hell," said the sergeant, "we're outa luck, too; jist had a table put up in our bunk-house and ordered two cases of champagne." After a while the sergeant inquired, "Where we goin'?" "Oh," the officer carelessly replied, "somewhere up near the front. Better sharpen up your teeth. We may have to eat cannon-balls for our Christmas dinner." Move, thought Corporal Lewis. The battalion was going to move, and his heart behaved much as if he had been pitched from a ten-story window. What would happen to him? Would he be left here, separated from the men whom he had enlisted with? Violently, he shook the door of the cell.

The sergeant of the guard noticed him sufficiently to command, "Stop that racket and sit down."

But Lewis had to find out. "Sergeant, may I speak to the officer of the day?" he called so loudly that the officer walked over to his cell.

"Lieutenant, are they goin' to leave me here or what?" the question choked him.

"Oh," said the officer of the day tolerantly, "they'll take you along all right. You needn't worry about that."

After riding in box cars for several hun-

dred miles through Souilly to Somme Dieu. At the lagging tail of the battalion was Corporal Lewis, the only man without a gun. But on either side of him a guard was equipped not only with a rifle, but with a pistol as well. The slow pace irritated him, for he



... he could only sit and stare at his strong hands with which he had once done so many things.—Page 140.

dred miles, from the southwestern part of Brittany to a town a few miles from Verdun, the battalion stiffly got out of the train and tried to walk on legs which had been sat on, lain on, twisted and crushed for so long a time they had got entirely out of their owners' control. In this part of the country the trees grew more erect, more militant. It was easy to fancy that soldiers' bodies, feeding the roots, had severely fashioned the trunks after ramrods. In this country were hills, pastoral hills half covered with snow, and the battalion wound among them on its way

was less tired than the rest of the men. He had ridden in a caboose of which the only other passengers had been his guards, while the rest of the men had been herded in groups of forty into the absurdly small box cars. But his restlessness passed when the moving troops came abreast of a French hospital and some inspired young officer, though he had never before seen or heard of the place, pointed it out as the subject of the Germans' latest bombing atrocity. "The dirty dogs," thought Corporal Lewis, as he surveyed the long, white, wooden building. "Any

one could see the big red crosses on the roof of the building." There was no excuse for it, the Germans had deliberately bombed a hospital! "That was a lousy trick, wasn't it?" he appealed to the guard on his left. But it was no use; the guard refused to talk to him.

Toward noon they crossed a slender river, clear as a mirror, and plodded up a slope to the battered, uninhabited town of Somme Dieu. There was a long, cobblestone street which bent sharply in the middle. On either side was a row of those soft stone houses which take their color from the weather. As the sky was a sheet of slate, the houses were ashen. From the roofs of some of the houses it was plain that Somme Dieu was familiar with the brunt of the enemy guns.

The battalion stopped, then moved forward jerkily, and Corporal Lewis discovered that the men were being billeted in the houses. As he stood there waiting, the advance officer marched down the line, slushing through the street drain with an air of looking for some one. "Oh, there you are," he said to Lewis's escort, "follow me and I'll show you the guard-house."

Sentries had already been established (one was standing before the door) and as Lewis walked inside followed by the two guards he saw that even a cell had been prepared for him. It was a larger cell than the one at the camp at Saint Nazaire. It had stone walls and a stone floor like the house of which it was a part. But the door was of wood, secured by a large padlock. Corporal Lewis went inside. As the door closed after him the lock snapped fast.

Sometimes, in those long days that followed, Lewis had the strangling fear that he would never be released. And terrifying suggestions of madness would come to his mind. The guards never took him out any more. Apparently there were no more latrines to be dug. How he wished there were! If only he could feel the touch of friendly earth. But now through the days he could only sit and stare at his strong hands with which he once had done so many things but which had become good for nothing.

Everything imaginable seemed to be happening outside the guard-house. In

his mind the dreary street was like a stage set and reset for a musical comedy. He fancied girls and soldiers strolling together, men drinking in plush cafés where the orchestra played under swaying palms. But once he looked outside the door of the guard-house and saw the forlorn street he feared the battalion had moved to another town. Or probably to the front! But this last he could not bear to believe. They could not go there without him. Once he pretended sickness. It got him a dose of calomel. A few mornings later he heard the officer of the day speak his name to the sergeant of the guard and saw the latter pick up the key to the cell door. Fascinated, he watched the key in the sergeant's hand. As the key slipped into the padlock, Lewis stepped forward, ready to leave with the outward swing of the door. The lock snapped and the officer of the day stepped into the room.

"What is it, another trial, sir?" he asked the officer of the day.

"Not that I know of. I got orders for you to be turned loose and to see that you report back to your company."

Lewis laughed foolishly. "Gosh! are you sure? I mean— Well, what d'ya know about that! Report back? I guess I will." He ran back into the cell and came out with his blanket, his mess equipment, and his other belongings which he was allowed to keep with him. "Yes, sir!" he said emphatically, "I'll find the top sergeant right away."

That night there was much laughter in the house where Lewis had been billeted. All of the men were of his own platoon, and though he had no money himself Jack Pugh had plenty and some of it was used to buy wine, biscuits, and canned preserves from the French canteen. Pugh made a show of reluctance at parting with the money, but finally said, "Heeah, spend iss hunnerd francs and lemme alone. But done ask me to tote nuthin." They sat about the bright fireplace and drank and slapped Lewis on the back and one of the men said, "Why, man, it was a blessing for you to be in the lock-up. Nothing to do and just think, you must have about four months' pay coming." They did not go to bed until the sentry threatened to call the corporal of the guard.



They sat about the bright fireplace and drank and slapped Lewis on the back. . . .—Page 140.

Four months' pay coming! Nearly one hundred and fifty bucks. Lewis could not sleep for thinking of it. At the lowest rate of exchange that was six hundred francs and with that amount he could buy almost anything he chose. Green jade beads, wrist watches, bottles of champagne, women's legs, all ran helter-skelter

through his brain. In this muddle of things he had not dared dream of for week after week, and somewhat dizzy from too much wine in a warm room, he fell asleep.

But in the morning his eyes were bright when reveille was blown; he was the first man dressed and out on the company street for setting-up exercises. After

breakfast and morning inspection it was very pleasant as the battalion was given "Squads right" and the men swung from the cobblestone street to the fields for drill. Lewis liked the feel of the muscles as his legs stretched out; it was like getting off a boat which one had been on for several weeks.

"Hup, two, three, four; hup, two, three, four," Sergeant Ryan called in his low contralto. Then "Squads left . . . company, halt." And they were out on the drill grounds, making ready for practice with hand grenades.

The drill grounds were in a wide valley, spacious enough for a battalion to march and countermarch. At the farther end, where the valley stopped and a hill began over which could be heard the boom of guns, was the bombing pit with white targets rising out of a wide, deep trench. The company was split up into platoons and the platoons into sections. Then the day's training began, with Lewis's section the third to practise.

"You go through it by counts: first pull out the pin; then draw your arm back, shift your weight to your right foot and let it go with your arm kinda stiff," Sergeant Ryan counselled him. "Remember, with your arm stiff. If you try to throw it like a baseball you'll break your elbow."

Lewis's turn came and he grasped the heavy, corrugated grenade in his right hand. Now he was good for something, he exultantly thought. At the count of two he withdrew the pin, dropped his right foot back, and held the grenade far behind him. Three, the count sounded, and sighting, with his left arm outstretched, he threw. The grenade struck the target fairly, followed by a drumfire explosion as the grenade went off.

"Good work, corporal," said the instructor to Lewis. "Now let's try it from the fifty-yard range."

But Lewis was equally successful there. His grenade struck the target from every range. His blood was singing and he felt that he could have hurled one of the grenades over the top of the hill.

On the way back to camp Lieutenant Bedford, his platoon commander, told him in a low voice, "Lewis, that was pretty good. I think I'll put you in charge of the bombing section. It'll mean a sergeantcy."

One morning a few days later as the battalion was closing ranks after inspection, ready to march off down the Rue de Dieu to the drill-grounds, an officer arrived from headquarters in an automobile which stopped at the near end of the line of men. The officer, with his glistening Sam Browne belt and polished, spurred boots, got out and walked toward the major, holding up a warning hand. The two men met, saluted, and after talking a moment the major called:

"Corporal Lewis . . . front and centre."

From the first sight of the officer Lewis had been suspicious. Hearing his name was none the less such a shock that his rifle slipped from his cold fingers and banged against the cobblestones. Without picking it up he stepped backward and, going in rear of the second company, walked toward the major and visiting officer. Halting, he saluted.

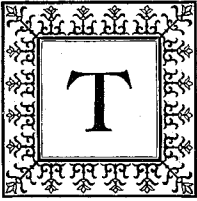
"Attention to orders," began the officer in a loud voice, loud enough for all to hear. ". . . Corporal Lewis did, on or about the 20th day of November, strike or attempt to strike . . . officer . . . found guilty . . . that he be sentenced to five years in Federal prison. . . ."



Portrait of Edwin Booth

BY GAMALIEL BRADFORD

ILLUSTRATIONS FROM THE COLLECTION OF ROBERT GOULD SHAW, WIDENER LIBRARY, HARVARD



THE most real of all human figures are the creations of the imagination. The nearest approach to earthly immortality, to an existence that is not shattered or imperiled by failure or decay, belongs to spirits that have never lived in the flesh, but have been embodied by great artists in dream shapes that have taken an enduring hold upon the fancy and the memory of humanity. Helen, Hector, and Achilles, Dido and Æneas, Hamlet, Lear, Rosalind, and Portia live, and will live when millions who have known and loved them have been buried and forgotten. To have attached your name to such a figure, as creator, or even as impersonator, is to attach something of its permanence to the fragile nonentity of a trivial creature of clay.

Naturally the actor's name does not live like the author's. Yet a great actor is long identified with the parts he most loved to represent, and few actors have been so completely identified with their stage counterparts as Edwin Booth with Hamlet. Those who remember Booth will always think of him as the Prince of Denmark, and the two names will long be linked together in the history of the American stage. Indeed, Booth's life was essentially that of the actor and the artist. Born on a lonely Maryland farm in 1833, he was educated partly by solitude and partly by the erratic genius of his father, who was in some respects a greater actor than he. He began early to act himself, led for a number of years the vagrant, Bohemian life which seems appropriate to the profession, married first one actress, then another, interpreted Shakespeare to America and Germany, and appeared for the last time as Hamlet in 1891, two years before his death.

But, though an actor, Booth was eminently and thoroughly a man and not a

stage puppet. He was full of human sensibility, passion, and thought, and was as interesting and lovable in private life as upon the stage. He did not indeed have much concern with the current movement of the world outside of his art. His most acute connection with politics was through his younger brother's mad assassination of Lincoln, which for a time threatened to blight Edwin's future altogether. But, though no politician, he himself was a loyal American, a lover of the Union, and above all a democrat in theory and practice.

To be sure, he did not mix easily with his fellow men at large. He had no gift of light, gay cordiality with strangers; on the contrary, when he came into the company of such, he shrank into himself and would neither make advances nor receive them. This is emphasized by those who knew him best. "He had stage fright everywhere but on the stage," says Mr. Royle. . . . "He was abnormally shy, detested social gatherings, positively suffered under scrutiny, and the few who casually met him got the impression that he was uncommonly inept. This impression he never took the slightest pains to correct." "In the world he had a way of shrinking into himself that gave him a reputation for shyness and reserve," says Sullivan. And Winter speaks of "Edwin Booth, who became like a marble statue upon the advent of a stranger."

Booth's own testimony as to this shyness and social shrinking is even more interesting. How vivid in its careless revelation is his account of a meeting with a former acquaintance: "He spoke to me the first day out; has his wife with him—pleasant sort of body. Says he has lived all these years in England. Asked after you, and there our conversation dropped—my fault, I suppose." Whosever the fault, the social failure was there, haunting, insistent, wearisome. Booth himself attributed it partly to his bringing up. His father liked solitude and sought it.