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Rev. William E. Barton, LL.D.,
Lake Street & Kenilworth Ave.,
Oak Park, Illinois.

Dear Dr. Barton:

Your letter just received and I hasten to send you a first draft of my lecture notes on John Wilkes Booth. These notes are by no means complete as I have since written a volume of fifteen chapters not yet published and have greatly added to the information about this man, facts that add to the conclusiveness of the argument. But what I take it you want is to get an idea of what the contention is and upon what it is based and will not wish to wade through fifteen chapters unless you become deeply interested in the subject in which case I might send you my manuscript later and want to recommend a volume not out of print but procurable from the author and perhaps you can find it in your Public Library - "The Escape and Suicide of John Wilkes Booth" by Finis L. Bates, Attorney at Law, Memphis, Tennessee. Mr. Bates was for two or three terms Attorney General of the State of Tennessee, he is Legal Advisor now for Henry Ford's interests in the south, and he has the most amazing story to tell that the annals of crime can afford. He was the attorney for this man St. Helen stretching over a period of thirty-nine years. Upon the death of this suicide Bates was sent for and came to Emid, had the body embalmed or mummified so that it will be in a perpetual state of preservation for identification. You can see it now in your own city by going out to River View Park, Chicago. You will find a man there lecturing on the record, identification, etc., and he, by the way, has some copies of Bates' book and I think he would either sell it or lend it to you. As you have been for years interested in this Lincoln story, I think you would find it very interesting to look up the fate of his murderer although it leads you through some of the darkest mazes of deception and villiany and will lead you face to face with the fact that Andrew Johnson plotted the whole thing in order to get the Presidency.

I want you to keep this lecture until you have entirely satisfied yourself with it, but would appreciate it if at the end of that time you would return it to me.

With best wishes,

Ever sincerely yours,

[Signature]

CLARENCE TRUE WILSON
JOHN WILKES BOOTH.
THIRTY-EIGHT YEARS A FUGITIVE.

A MYSTERY STORY
of the
TRAGEDY, ESCAPE, LIFE IN EXILE, CONFESSIONS, IDENTIFICATION
AND SUICIDE OF
JOHN WILKES BOOTH,

BY
Clarence True Wilson.

Between the ages of ten and fourteen, I lived in the aristocratic old town of Princess Anne, Maryland, and before the end of that period I was honored by the friendship of a full grown man of forty, who had travelled widely through his youth in Central America, Mexico, and our Southern States. One day as I was sitting on his work-bench, studying one of my school books, he suddenly looked up, called me by my first name, and said, "I suppose you are studying American history and have read the tragedy of Lincoln's death?"

"Yes," I replied, "my book said that Lincoln was shot by John Wilkes Booth, who jumped from the box, breaking his leg in the fall, but rushed across the stage and down to the ground floor, mounted a horse that was in readiness for him, rode thru the city, gave the password, and was permitted to pass thru the Federal lines, and entering the counties of Southern Maryland was kept by friends and aided for fourteen days, getting safely across the river into Virginia, and finally in the dead of night was surrounded in a barn where he was sleeping; and on his refusal to surrender the soldiers set fire to the building and he was shot by Boston Corbett."

To this he said, "Yes, that is just the story," but replied, that the whole thing is false. Booth was miles away when his two companions were caught, one arrested, the other shot; and two full years after the tragedy I have slept thirty nights with Booth in Central America, tramped with him into Mexico, worked with him sixty
person for the day of ten, I turned to my mistake.

apologize for the delay of reference, your excellency, and permit me to state that during my stay in the country of your excellence, my obligingness has been a matter of personal affair and my visits in your territory have been to your benefit and mine.

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Chicago, Illinois
days on a rubber plantation, where we occupied the same tent. He was the most interesting man I ever saw. I was at times, but when in good spirits a battery of magnetism. We became such fast friends in that I wanted him to come north and go into business with me, and in stating why he could not again go into the statesm he gave me in strict confidence, his name and the story of his escape. When he spoke of it he said, "I killed the best man in the world and the best friend of the south, and now I am under an assumed name, a fugitive from justice hated by all the world, and of course, God could not forgive me since man despises me so much!" identified the body of the dead man as that of John. He then described the most terrible scene of mental agony and remorse under which John Wilkes Booth was overcome with grief, and appeared to be almost choking to death, his face breathing, and asthma-like attacks seemed to affect his heart, and brought on a spasm of gasping. This seemed to have characterized almost all of his later confessions. On St. Helen, the gentleman of leisure living in single Texas. I will not say that this conversation thirty-five years ago, in convinced me that Booth was at large, but I will say without hesitation that it placed the matter in my mind as an open question, and started thirty-five years of interest and led to perhaps that many conversations and investigations, and without doubt, the securing of that many volumes which I now own on the Lincoln tragedy and John Wilkes Booth's relation to it. I believed that some day I should know what became of the murderer of President Lincoln. But after all these years of interest in the matter I was still scarcely prepared for the sudden announcement that came to me recently, viz., Hudd of southern Maryland. It was Saturday night, January 29th, 1921, I stepped out of the train in Los Angeles, California, and was met by a campaign committee headed by Virgil G. Hinshaw of Chicago. When we had gotten into our
automobile and started for our hotel, Mr. Hinshaw said, "I was thinking of you the other day, Dr. Wilson. I have known of your interest in the John Brown episode and everything that pertained to the Lincoln administration and death, and I was down here a block and a half from your hotel and examined the body of John Wilkes Booth, the murderer of Abraham Lincoln. He had committed suicide in Enid, Oklahoma in 1903. After various confessions and an abundance of documentary evidence and photographs that proved his identity, he died. They sent for his attorney, Mr. Finis E. Bates, of Memphis, Tenn., and on his arrival he not only identified the body of the dead man as that of John Wilkes Booth, but showed that he had been his attorney for thirty-one years, had corresponded with him and had had his hand in the writing, his photographs, and his confessions; and taken all in all, it is the most tragic but interesting mystery story in American history to be. The truth about the tragedy of John Wilkes Booth may yet come out of the story of John St. Helen, the gentleman of leisure living in Texas towns, and Oklahoma cities under different names, a new name in each place, may account for the tragic scene enacted at the Ford's Theater, in the counties of lower Maryland and over the Garrett barn or tobacco house, better than the concocted stories of the fortune hunting detectives, who filled the public mind some fifty years ago with contradictory narratives, most of them without any suggestion of foundation in fact. At the time of the tragedy the whole country was filled with reports about the appearance of Booth in different localities. It is narrated that after he he had his leg set by Dr. Mudd of southern Maryland he got up in the doctor's absence and securing one of his razors, shaved off his mustache. Still, on the following days wherever he was seen, the same handsome mustache that had always character-
ized him on the stage and elsewhere, and even in the pictures of the fugitive up to the end in the burning barn.

Those who read the story of his capture are equally surprised to find the variegated falsehoods that have decorated the narrative of his death and burial. For instance, the body of this mysterious man mysteriously kept out on the Monitor in the center of the Potomac River and unidentified by any member of his family or by those who knew him best in his professional life, and mysteriously smuggled finally into the ground; all these historic tales are specifically told or vouched for by what ought to be authoritative sources.

When the public demanded to know what became of the body of Wilkes Booth they were gravely told that at midnight by order of the Secretary of War two men weighted the body with lead and tying a rock about its neck, dumped it into the midst of the Potomac River, never to be seen again. There were pictures of this scene in books and magazines circulated over the country, and American historians—some—have even told it gravely with illustrative pictures, the brothers had read. Another equally grave story was told of the body being taken at midnight, dumped into a trench dug out in front of the old penitentiary on the drill ground, and while the rain had been coming down for days, the artillery was ordered out to circle over the field fifty times so as to obliterate the last possible trace of the burial place of John Wilkes Booth; while the truth is that detective Baker, with one assistant, lifted a stone slab from the ground floor of one of the cells of the penitentiary and wrapping the body in an army blanket buried it there, filling the hole with earth, putting the stone back in place, then piling empty boxes into the vacant room as before, so as to obliterate all trace; and the secret was kept inviolate for seven years, when the government desired to remove the building and
erect the present War College on the site, in 1872 gave the body back to the friends, as they did those of the other conspirators Mrs. Surratt, Lewis Payne, Powell, David E. Herold, and George A. Atzerott, the four fellow conspirators, who were hanged to avenge Lincoln's death.

Amid such confusion anyone who thinks he has discovered the truth ought to have the right to tell his story. It might bring order out of chaos, and Finis L. Bates has a story of interest and a theory that is consistent and he has a record for reliability that makes his words worth while. I will let him tell his own story.

(At this point the author's manuscript is not included.)

Seven years after this date the government wanted to take down the penitentiary building and erect our present War College. It therefore offered the bodies of the culprits buried there to their respective families. When the Booth family was offered the body secretly buried as John Wilkes Booth, it was something of an embarrassment to them for the mother and at least one of the brothers had been making pilgrimages each year to the West in connection with their theatrical trips, to meet and stop at the same hotel for weeks with the poor to please and perhaps to kill this mysterious man of the plains.

However, they were game and sent an undertaker and some men down to Washington, and Edwin Booth came himself to the city but without appearing or looking at the body. They let the government exhume the remains and in the presence of an undertaker from Baltimore and one in Washington, with Mr. Ford of Ford's Theater fame, and his niece and three or four others, that the top of the box was removed and various men who had known Booth in life looked at the body, and some then and there, and others long after, declared that it in no way resembled John Wilkes Booth. Some one suggested that
it would be interesting to examine the broken leg. Then one took
hold of the boot of the right leg to pull it off and the leg came out
in the boot. They were both thrown back into the box together. They
all agree on this story, but they unwittingly prove by undebatable
evidence that this was not John Wilkes Booth, for in the house they were
pulling the right boot off and to this minute, the right boot of John
Wilkes Booth, which was on the broken leg and which had to be cut off
by Dr. Mudd and had been used as evidence in the trial of the con-
spirators, was and is still exhibited in the War Department at Wash-
ington and can be seen there today.

By order of the family, a barrel of quick lime was then poured
over the remains in this box, the box was sealed up and taken to Green
Mount Cemetery, Baltimore, and buried in a corner of the lot where the
Booth family monument stood. Though the name of John Wilkes Booth
has never appeared on this monument, there was a bronze medallion
attached to the monument with these striking lines, committed to
memory by Rev. Harry Dawson Mitchell, and since given to me.

"Behold the spot where genius lies,
O drop a tear when talent dies,
Of tragedy the Mightest Chief,
His power to please surpassed belief.
Hic Jacet, Watchless Booth."

But just about the time that John St. Helen departed this life
at Enid, Oklahoma, 1903, this bronze medallion was removed from the
monument at Baltimore and its sentiment and message would probably
never have been heard of but for the fact that one Methodist preacher
made a note of it and committed it to memory.

Another is impressed at the converging lines of evidence that
implies Andrew Haines in a guilty knowledge of the whole plot,
if not of being the master-mind, profitting to the extent of presi-
OLD THEORIES WON'T WORK.

We need a new theory if it can be found which will account for the facts of the abduction plot, for the particulars in which four people were hanged and four sent to penitentiary, the change of plan by which a man who was simply to capture Mr. Lincoln and take him to Richmond, where he was to be held as a hostage until exchanged for all southern prisoners, the strange account of how two men could safely ride through the city which was guarded by a military watch and whose bridges were under the charge of sentinels, and how the lower criminals, Booth and Herold, could induce the soldiers guarding them, bridge to call assistance and hoist up the gate, letting the murderers of Lincoln through to safety, but stopping five minutes later the owner of the horse in pursuit of Herold to recover his stolen animal. This one honest man was turned back. If one undertakes to wade through the maze of contradiction, cross purpose, and restriction of the professional detectives, fortune hunters and sensational story-mongers, who joined in the pursuit of Booth, and even followed through the volumes of scholarly historians who have used learning and literary skill to darken counsel by words without wisdom, he will feel that it is time for the facts to come out or to call for the invention of a more plausible story.

Almost all of these books are written for an ulterior purpose. One sifts the evidence, bent on the sentimental aim of exonerating Mrs. Surratt, the first woman hanged by a Federal Jury, so as to make her name and fame, and most facts can be warped or ignored toward this defense. Another is horrified at the converging lines of evidence that implicate Andrew Johnson in a guilty knowledge of the whole plot, if not of being the master-mind, profiting to the extent of presi-
dency through the death of Lincoln. Se Dewitt writes an elaborate
volume to try to give that friend of Booth and of all the other con-
spirators, who drank with Booth on the night of the tragedy, and had
him in his room at various times that day, and who badly needs to have
his reputation resuscitated, hence Dewitt writes a supposed history
to restore to that coarse and drunken hoodlum a good name. His talk
office seemed to require it.

The impossibility of this author's conceptions of things will be
indicated, when one finds that Dewitt accepts the story of the capture
in the burning barn and the death of the unidentified man in question,
but undertakes to deny to the bravest and the most unselfish soldier
that ever was assigned to the pursuit of Booth, the man begged his
commanding officer to let him go into the barn and bring the two cap-
tives out, and who thrice refused, stood exposed to the fire of the
culprits within until he saw this armed desperado in the act of re-
charging the door where he knew his commander would be killed, when
Boston Corbitt fired the fatal shot. But Dewitt elaborately writes
a volume to deprive this plain soldier who had the distinction of
fighting the whole war through as a volunteer, of any honor connected
with the affair, by trying to prove through a series of feverish
author's assumptions and frantic rhetorical flourishes that Booth
fired the shot himself and was a suicide, leaving Corbitt a pretender.

Boston Corbitt was the first man to volunteer from Boston for
the war. He was a religious fanatic, the kind that martyrs are made
of. Those who knew what he did and at what cost to maintain the
virtue of his life, would really know that Boston Corbitt would have
suffered his tongue to be pulled out by the roots or would have burned
at the stake before he would have deviated one hair-breadth from the
exact truth in the matter, and he said he shot the man in the burning
supposed to be John Wilkes Booth. As tribes until he finally became

Next to the unlimited misapprehensions and falsehoods that
attended the whole narrative of the pursuit of Lincoln's assassin,
is the persistent and well-night universal tradition that he never of to
was captured. Go anywhere in southern Maryland, to Surrattsville and
as I did last week, to T. B., where Booth made his second stop, talk
with the men now who live in the houses where he was cared for during
his flight and you will get the same story; a belief that some other
man was shot and not John Wilkes Booth, that he made his escape, image
over along his trail into Virginia, ask anybody what the belief is
and four out of five will express the faith that Booth escaped. My
then. Recently I met in New England a Bishop known for intellect,
penetration, and clear judgment, who has never been known to advocate
a vagary. He asked, "You were born and raised in West Virginia?"
"Yes, I spent my youth there," was the reply. "What was the tradition
in your state with reference to John Wilkes Booth?" I asked.
"It was very generally believed and asserted that he escaped and was
not the man shot in the barn or buried so mysteriously in Washington.
I replied, "When most criminals are shot and buried, they are through,
They stop making traditions and starting reports or rumors."
The reason the John Wilkes Booth tradition still persists in Virginia,
West Virginia and through the southwest to Mexico, is that he traveled
ed horse-back and afoot over that trail, stopping a week at a time
in West Virginia house and over night and for meals at fifty houses; he
and the people who entertained him would not let the tradition die.
There is no doubt about the facts of a mysterious character under
assumed names with a broken leg not yet healed, making his way in an
southwesterly direction through the various states, but especially that
country places, crossing the Missippi at Catfish Point and entering
Indian Territory, mingling with the tribes until he finally became associated with the Apache tribe, becoming the friend of its chief and a familiar among the bucks, whom he later accurately and vividly described. But although his safety was secured and the kindness of these children of the forest was marked, this high-spirited and petted Baltimore aristocrat and actor could not accustom himself to the haunts and habits of these rude people and longing for kindred companionship, drew back again to the home of civilized man.

He was found at Nebraska City, Nebraska, where he was entertained in the home of Mr. L. Treadwell who had a contract with the United States for hauling overland the supplies of the United States army then stationed at Salt Lake City, Utah. Here, in the fall of 1866, under the name of Jesse T. Smith, Booth is hired as a teamster.

In speaking of his distinguished driver, Mr. Treadwell afterward wrote, "There was always a strange thing about Jesse Smith, or Booth. While he was a good driver of mules four in hand, he did not have the slightest knowledge of how to harness his team or even how to hitch them to a wagon, but he was the life of the camp at night and rendered it so agreeable that I never thought of discharging him for ignorance in this respect, that he was never able to hitch up his own team. The other drivers were always gladly willing to do this service for him and I myself would much rather do this than to give him up, on account of his ignorance ability to entertain us all at night. He would recite Shakespeare's poems, plays, etc., and tell of his travels which seemed to be extensive. His recitations were grandly eloquent."

The day before reaching Salt Lake City, where they would see the army officers, this mysterious driver left his wagon and employer disappearing without notice or compensation. It has been proven that he avoided recognition by eluding the army, but continued his journey
to San Francisco, where he met his mother and Junius Brutus Booth, his brother, in the Palace Hotel, and remained there. This program was carried out.

It was only a few years after this episode that Mr. Treadkell purchased a book that told the story of the assassination of President Lincoln and contained a picture of John Wilkes Booth, the assassin.

At the first glance of this picture, Mr. Treadkell was surprised to recognize his mysterious teamate, Jesse Smith, as he thought it was best to keep his being in San Francisco and Fresno on that western trip.

Colonel Edward Levan of Monterey, Mexico, knew him intimately during the winter of 1868 in Lexington, Kentucky, going by the name of J. J. Marr, and playing the character of a lawyer. Upon Marr's return to Texas, he informed the Colonel and assumed the name of John St. Helen and purchased at the little store in that remost settlement, the liquor without a license, and had to employ a lawyer not only to get him out of the trouble but to manage the case so that he would not have to appear in the United States Court. He retained Mr. Finis L. Bates, and later confessed to him that his true name was John Wilkes Booth, the assassin of Abraham Lincoln, told how he escaped after the deed which robbed the world of Lincoln and inflicted the presidency of Andrew Johnson upon a helpless nation and made himself a fugitive, depriving the stage of the greatest actor that the American continent had produced.

In this confession he explained how he slept for a night at the Garrett residence, sending Robey and Herold back over the Rappahannock River to secure his papers which he had left in a wagon belonging to William Lucas, a colored man who had brought him concealed to the ferry. After procuring these, the two men were to go to Bowling
Green and secure him a pair of shoes, as the boot which he wore had to be cut off of his broken and swollen leg. This program was carried out. They remained at Bowling Green and the next day returned to the Garrett Farm, walking the sixteen miles and arriving at ten o'clock at night. Meantime Booth had been called for and furnished a horse by Majors Bainbridge and Ruggles of the Mosby command. The country was filling up with Federal soldiers and these men thought it was best to get Booth as far to the west as possible. They rode with him forty-five miles. That night Herold and Robery, finding their chief gone on, asked the privilege of sleeping at the Garrett's, but the southern hospitality of this honored family was reaching its limit, as they began to suspect their guests, but finally consented to allow the two men to sleep in the tobacco house, formerly a corn-crib, providing they would consent to be locked in for the night. As the two Garrett boys were possessed of fine horses which they had secured through the generosity of General Grant who allowed the Confederates to keep their horses, they became nervous lest these strangers might appropriate a riding horse apiece; they themselves went out heavily armed to sleep in the barn, so as to guard their prizes.

At three o'clock that night Colonel Baker and Condon with the soldiers had arrested Captain Jett at Bowling Green and arrived in search of the fugitives. They aroused the household and when old Mr. Garrett told them that the men had taken to the woods they flew at the old man in an abusive way, choking him and threatening to hang him if he did not tell them where the men were. Just then a son came forward from the barn and explained to them that the men had gone to the woods but two of them had come back at ten o'clock that night and were sleeping in the barn.

The story is very generally known that the soldiers promptly
surrounded this barn and demanded the surrender of its inmates. Then one willingly surrendered and the other showed fight. He refused to come out until the barn was fired. When he sprang full armed toward the door to fight his way out, it was Boston Corbett’s pistol that laid him low. They mysterious man of the plains states that this was not John Wilkes Booth, but Franklin Robey whose possession of the Booth diary, pictures, letter and check on a Canadian bank was the only means of identification as the assassin of the President.

When I got this story I determined, if possible, to locate the man who was killed through fifty-six years had passed. I had never heard the name of Robey and wanted to see if it was fictitious. Turning to the trial of the conspirators, I found four different Robeys summoned from that section as witnesses, so there was a Robey family there. Consulting with a Methodist Superintendent who travels that country, I learned there are several Robeys families in the countries traversed by Booth. Turning to the volume written by Jones who cared for Booth, fed him, wrapped him up, changed the splints on his broken leg, took him on his own horse to the Potomac River, put him in his own boat, and sent him across in the darkness, and who has written a perfectly truthful story of the whole transaction, I find that he refers to Franklin Robey as the foreman of his foster-brother, who cared for Booth the first night, and who left him on his hands so that he could go across the river and secure helpers who would see Booth through? This man who secured the aid of Captain Jett and officers Ruggles and Bainbridge, the three Confederates from Mosby’s command who would secure safety, disappeared from Southern Maryland and is never heard of again.

Every description of Franklin Robey that can be procured about him by those who knew him and his surviving relatives, exactly coin-
cide with the description of the man whom was killed by Boston Cor-
bett, who in no way ever resembled Booth.

Dr. H. W. Gay, who knew John Wilkes Booth as early as 1857
and had been captivated by him as one of the most hospitable and gen-
ral fellows he ever knew, says that in company he was always quoting
Shakespeare or some other poet and exclaims, "How often I have seen
him strike a tragic attitude and exclaim: xThaxaxsyixgxyxzkxkn
fimxhkhxxyxphesiamxmxmzq

"The aspiring youth who fires the Ephesian dome;
Outlives in fame the pious fools who reared it."

He read of his capture and death and never doubted it until
1869 when living in Tates County, Mississippi, one evening about dusk
a man claiming that he was one of the Ku Klux Klan run out of Arkansas
by Powell Clayton's militia. This man was an erratic fellow who
stopped at Dr. Gay's house and told him that John Wilkes Booth was
not killed but made his escape, spent a short while in Mexico with
Maximilian's army but got into trouble. His life was saved by
reason of the fact that he was a Catholic. The man stated that
during Booth's short stay in Mexico he had lived in disguise as an
itinerant Catholic Priest. He also told the story of how Booth
escaped after the assassination and the story coincided precisely
with Mr. Bates' narrative of John St. Helen's confession, even to
the crossing of the Mississippi at Catfish Point and going thence
up the Arkansas River to Indian Territory, and that Booth after-
ward met Junius Brutus Booth and his mother in San Francisco.

This meeting was probably arranged by correspondence while
John Wilkes Booth was in Indian Territory, and may explain his
employment as a team driver from Nebraska City to Salt Lake City
by Mr. Treadwell and his unceremonious desertion of his post just
before reaching his destination. So we trace him meeting his
oldest brother and mother in San Francisco in '67.

Again we locate him at Lexington, Kentucky, in company with Colonel Levan in '68 '69; he is seen by Dr. Gay in Tate County, Mississippi in '69; in 1872 he is intimately acquainted with Finis L. Bates at Glenrose, Texas; in '83 Mr. Connelly saw him at Village Mills, Texas; and again in '85 he is seen by numbers and recognized by General Pike, miles from Kentucky, boarding at the Anstein Hotel.

Colonel M. W. Connelly, a distinguished newspaper man, has written over his own signature an indentification of John Wilkes Booth as the man he saw in '83 at Village Mills, Texas. Some time later he tells of his being in the Pickwick Hotel bar-room at Fort Worth, Texas, talking with General Albert Pike, the famous mason, statesman, lawyer and poet; Tom Powell, the Mayor of Fort Worth, joined them, and Temple Houston, the youngest son of General Sam Houston of San Jacinto fame. When this Village Mills friend came in accompanied by Long Sherlock, editor of the Chronicle of Clayburn, Texas, General Pike suddenly threw up his hands, his face as white as his hair and beard, exclaiming, "My God! John Wilkes Booth!"

General Pike could not get over this excitement, and the four men talked long and earnestly about this mysterious man who appeared to them like an apparition, and was recognized as the assassin of President Lincoln, the dilution of his eyes...

It may be of interest to state that Fort Worth, Texas, was only about forty-five miles from Granbury, Texas, where St. Helen, or Booth, made his home and where he had made his full and complete confession to Bates, and employed him as his attorney, a relation that existed for thirty-one years... of the three and, when Mrs. Harper from this place St. Helen has drifted in 1878 to Leadville, Colorado, then to Fresno, California, is next identified
In 1885 in Fort Worth, Texas, by General Albert Pike in company with M. W. Connelly and other distinguished men.

From Fort Worth he changes his name to George D. Ryan, and took his residence to Guthrie, Oklahoma Territory; then he lives at Hennesy in the year 1898, playing the role of a gentleman. Here he remained until sometime in 1899 when he located at El Reno, Oklahoma, sixty-five miles from Hennesy, boarding at the Anstein Hotel.

Here he advertised himself as "David E. George, Housepainters", in the Daily Democrat, a newspaper published at El Reno. He opened a bank account in the State Bank of that place under the name of David E. George, made deposits of money, purchased a home for $3500 in the town, and seemed to have adequate means without work. Retiring from hotel life and owning his own cottage, he installed a family by the name of Simonds, who were to board him for the rent of the house.

They took as boarders also the Reverend E. C. Harper, a Congregational minister, and his wife, and for some months at this place they had the delightful association of living under the same roof, with the most dramatic and interesting personality they ever saw, until one day, having taken some strong drug, he thought himself dying.

This in the middle of April, 1902. Three women were in the house, and calling them he told of his illness. He held a mirror, looking at the dilation of his eyes. Mrs. Beara proposed to call a physician, believing he had taken an overdose of morphine. While holding the mirror, he exclaimed, "Stay woman. Stay. This messenger of death is my guest and I desire to see the curtain of death fall upon this last tragic act of mine," which passionate in the utterance brought tears to the eyes of the three; and, when Mrs. Harper turned to wipe her eyes, he called her to his side and said: "I have something to tell you. I am going to die in a few
minutes and I don't believe you would do anything to injure me.

Did it ever occur to you that I am anything but an ordinary painter? I killed the best man that ever lived. I am John Wilke Booth."

"Am I dying now?" he asked. "I am growing cold as if Death's icy hand was closing my life as the forfeit for my crime." He made a complete statement of the tragedy, his escape, and the remorse he had suffered ever since, until the arrival of Dr. Arnold broke off the conversation and began the successful efforts for his restoration.

Some days later Mrs. Harper was looking at a picture of Lincoln when Mr. George asked why she was looking at that. She replied, "I have always admired Lincoln." "Is that the only reason you have for looking at it?" he asked, regarding her with a fierce look. A peculiar expression came over his face, his eyes glared, he turned pale and walked out. Mrs. Harper still resides in Oklahoma with her husband who is the pastor of the Congregational Church at Oklahoma City, and often entertains her friends by telling of the mysterious man who confessed himself to be John Wilkes Booth, described him as having one eye-brow that was a little higher than the other, and the many physical marks that the Government has always recognized as descriptive of the murderer of the President.

It will be remembered that when he left Hennessey for El Reno, he changed his name from George D. Ryan to David F. George, and his occupation from that of a gentleman of leisure to that of a journeyman painter of houses. Although he painted but one house and did that in such a blundering way that it was never undertaken again, he continued to pay four dollars a month to keep the announcement in the papers. He played this part while living in El Reno.

He removed to Enid, Oklahoma, on the third day of December, 1902, and registered at the Grand Avenue Hotel under the name of
David E. George. In the meantime Rev. Mr. Harper and his wife had
removed from El Reno to Enid and upon the suicide of David E. George
at this Hotel, Mr. Harper went to the hotel and identified the man
as the resident of El Reno who had confessed to them that his true
name was John Wilkes Booth. There were nine people in the room
when he died and he repeated his confession to the hotel proprietors
and the others.

A striking proof of the "Truth is Stranger than Fiction":
is this: When the city of Enid was all excitement and people were
pouring in to see the mysterious man who confessed to being the
murderer of the President, among the interested spectators was a
citizen of that town well-known in church circles as a mission
worker, street preacher and evangelist, who had noticed this mysteri-
ous stranger standing on the edge of the crowds several evenings.
Who was this lay preacher but Boston Corbett, whose name had gone into
history in connection with the capture of the man in the barn.

When I told this story to Mr. Oldroyd, author of the best book
on the assassination, he said, "What will you do with the man that was
actually killed, held out here in the Potomac River on a Monitor, and
finally buried in the old penitentiary, and whose body lies in
Baltimore now?"

I responded, "What will you do with the man who escaped, trav-
eled thru all the states toward the south-west, lived there for thirty-
eight years, transacted business, left many thousands of people living,
who had known him as a mysterious stranger hiding from officers, cover-
ing up his identity and finally dying with the confession on his lips
that he was John Wilkes Booth, and whose body is still perfectly pre-
served for identification?" If that corpse now on indetification
in Chicago, is not John Wilkes Booth, who is it? I can tell you
who the man was who was shot by Corbett and who died on Garrett's porch — that was Franklin Robey. The man who escaped claimed consistently thru a period of thirty-eight years he was John Wilkes Booth.