

John

Wilkes Booth's Recklessness.

From the Pittsburg Chronicle-Telegraph.

Robert E. Graham, the young comedian, began life as a call-boy. It was at Ford's Hoon Street Theatre in Washington, and it was in the final days of the war. It was at Ford's Theatre that Lincoln was assassinated and Graham was in the wings on that memorable night. Booth was a great favorite with the younger members of the company. With peculiarities that made him a distinct character apart from his confessedly great abilities as an actor, and actions that more frequently suggested insanity than intelligent comprehension of the life that surrounded him, he was nevertheless at all times and in all places the affable gentleman and the brilliant man of genius. He was not on the bill on the night of the assassination, but shortly after the opening of the first act of the "American Cousin" came into the wings and stood watching the play, apparently in the best of spirits. Turning, he caught the call-boy's eye.

"Ah, Bob, is that you," he said with a little laugh—"how are you fixed?"

"Oh, pretty good," faltered the boy. In his youthful imagination the mighty genius before him had not yet ceased to be an object of adoration. He trembled from very reverence.

Booth dived into his pocket and fished up his purse.

"Here's a present for you."
He threw a five-dollar piece into the call-boy's hand, and, before the astonished genius in embryo could remonstrate, had disappeared behind an interior.

Within twenty minutes John Wilkes Booth was an assassin and the President of the United States was lying on the carpeted floor of his box, bleeding to death.

June 1885

203707