

Blanche Chapman, leading lady of the "Why Smith Left Home" company, tells the following rather dramatic little scrap of American history as one of her earliest recollections:

"One morning in 1872, just after rehearsal, my godfather, Mr. John T. Ford, manager of the theatre, came to me and in a strangely serious tone for him to assume when addressing me, said:

"Blanche, keep your eyes and ears open and your mouth shut and follow me."

"I followed him out through the back door of the theatre and across the street to Mr. Weaver's undertaking establishment, which was just opposite. He led the way to a sort of private room at the back of the shop farthest from the street, and upon entering I saw a number of people seated or standing around a rough, earth-stained box which contained something that was wrapped in a muddy army blanket.

"Some of the people present I knew at the time, but there were some whom I saw then for the first time. Of course, I afterward learned the names of all present, and the company was made up as follows: John T. Ford, my godfather and manager of the theatre; C. B. Bishop, the comedian; Mrs. Jane Gernon, a notable actress and mother of Effie Gernon; Mrs. Booth, widow of the elder Booth and mother of Edwin Booth, Junius Brutus Booth and a still younger brother of Edwin Booth whose name I cannot for the moment recall; Miss Rosalie Booth, Miss Anna Ford, eldest daughter of Manager John T. Ford; Mr. Weaver, the undertaker, and my little sister Ella and myself.

"It was not long before I began to realize what this solemn little conclave meant. The muddy brown army blanket was partially removed from the object inside of it with a decorous solemnity that I could not misunderstand.

"Mr. Bishop approached the box, and turning to Junius Brutus Booth, said in a low tone: 'You are sure about that being the only tooth in his head that had been filled?'

"Yes."

"Mr. Bishop then gently pressed down the lower jaw of the body in the box, and with his thumb and finger withdrew the tooth indicated. It had been filled with gold, and the peculiar form of the filling was at once recognized by Junius Brutus Booth. Mr. Bishop then carefully drew on one of the long riding boots which were still on the feet and limbs of the body, which had evidently lain in

the earth for years, and as he did so, the foot and lower portion of the limb remained in the boot. An examination was then made, and it was plainly seen that the ankle had been fractured.

"By this time, of course, I realized from what I saw and heard that the remains in the box were those of John Wilkes Booth. They had been returned to the family by the government, and the friends of the family were taking these precautions to make sure of the absolute identification, as all sorts of wild stories had been in circulation, not only as to the disposition of the body, but as to the fate of John Wilkes Booth himself. Of course the family and their friends believed that the government was acting in absolutely

good faith as to the return of the remains, but they were taking these precautions for the purpose of at once and forever setting at rest all sensational rumors to the contrary. The identification was considered indisputable by the mother, sister and brothers of the deceased, and after being decently prepared for burial the body was interred in the family plot in the cemetery in Baltimore.

"If I should live for a thousand years I am sure I could never forget the intense sad solemnity of that short scene in which comedians and tragedians and managers and laymen all met upon a common ground of dire affliction, unrelieved by even one bright or redeeming feature. As soon as I had realized what it all meant, and that it was the body of John Wilkes Booth that lay in that earth-stained box, in tattered clothing and wrapped in a mud-bedraggled army blanket, my interest was well nigh limitless. I had no thought of shuddering at the touch of the crumbling, lifeless clay. While my elders were standing about the foot of the rude coffin, bowed in awesome affliction, I gradually sidled up toward the head of the coffin to touch the rags that inclosed the arms and shoulders. I can never forget the picture presented by that dead face. The flesh seemed to have disappeared or to have shrunken away to almost nothing, and yet the skin seemed to be perfect as far as texture was concerned, although it was a dark brown like time-stained parchment. What astonished me most at the time, however, was that the head was covered with an immense growth of luxuriant black hair, which fell in rich curling masses away down over his shoulders. Upon the whole, considering that the remains had lain in the earth fully seven years, the similitude was most striking. Mrs. Booth handed Miss Anna Ford a pair of scissors and requested her to cut off two or three of the long, black ringlets, and after she had done so I stood beside the coffin, passing my fingers through the soft, glossy locks that lay in thick masses about the dark, dead face, and as I did so Mrs. Booth, seeming to divine my wishes, asked me if I would not like to cut off one of those long, black ringlets. I said that I would, and she passed the scissors to me. I selected a long, curling lock that hung down from the centre of the forehead, and, raising it between the first two fingers of my left hand, I clipped it off with the scissors and handed it to Mrs. Booth, who, after smoothing it out between her fingers, carefully divided it and handed me one-half of it. I have that lock of hair still in my possession, and as long as I live it will bring back to me one of the most weirdly dramatic and withal solemn scenes I have ever witnessed."

Lottie Gilson is to appear in South America.

Sam Bernard may rejoin the Weber & Fields' forces next season.

Ada Behan did not act during Holy Week. Chauncey Olcott was also idle.

Augustus Thomas is writing the play in which Marie Burroughs will star next season.

Annie Yeans and her daughter, Jennie, will play a number of summer engagements in the vaudeville theatres this year.

Miss Ysobel Haskins, at present with William H. Crane, has been engaged by Nat Goodwin and Maxine Elliott to play the part of the frontier courtesan, Molly Larkins, in "The Cowboy and the Lady," in London this summer. The role was originated in the recent Philadelphia production by Miss Laura Burt.

The cast of the comedy farce, "The Cuckoo," to be produced at Wallack's, New York, to-morrow, will include Joseph Holland, Thomas Wise, James Lee Short, Byron Douglass, Harrison Armstrong, James McCartney, John Armstrong, John Gorman, Charles Bowser, Amelia Bing-

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