

THE STORY OF A MUMMY WITH A HISTORY.

Wonderful Experience of an Undertaker in the Southwest Who Embalmed and Now Has the Body of a Man Who Claimed That he was John Wilkes Booth, Assassin of President Abraham Lincoln.

By W. B. Penniman. Copyright, 1909.

Following this Mr. Dana gives a lengthy account of his efforts to capture Booth and Herold.

A Bay State soldier corroborates in part the story of the General as well as that of St. Helen. This soldier was stationed at the bridge crossing the East Potomac river, on the road leading into Washington, which John Wilkes Booth crossed going into the city of Washington and again on his return after the assassination the evening of the same day. This man is A. F. Demond. He writes: "Mr. D. D. Dana.

"Dear Sir and Comrade:—I was very much interested in reading your account of how you tried to prevent the assassination of the late President Lincoln, as published in the Globe of yesterday. It brought back old memories to me of way back in '64, as I was a member of your old provost guard, with headquarters at Fort Baker.

"I was stationed at the Uniontown end of the bridge where the gates were hung to stop people from going to Washington. I was present the night Booth and Herold crossed after Booth had shot the President, but was not on post. I stood in the door of the block house when Booth rode up and heard him ask the guard if anyone had gone through lately. I heard the guard on the post answer him 'No,' and ask him what he was doing out there this time of night.

"He made some kind of answer about going to see some one who lived out on the T. B. road. I helped open the gate and he rode through. A short time after this Herold rode over the bridge and asked if there had been anyone through mounted on a bay horse. Upon being told there had he muttered something about being a pretty man not to wait for him. Well, we opened the gate and let him through and he rode off in a hurry. About twenty minutes later I should say, we heard a great uproar across the bridge, and in a short time got word of the assassination. If we had only known it sooner neither of them would have passed us, as I would have shot them as quickly as I would a mad dog."

According to Mr. Bates another man attempted to pass the guards a few moments after Herold had gone over the bridge, but he was stopped by the guards. This was the owner of the horse ridden by Herold. He, it seems, had been among the first to hear of the assassination of the President and had headed the pursuers, but not having the proper password was turned back. To Secretary John Hay is also credited the statement that the only honest man who attempted to cross the river after the assassination was stopped.

After reading Gen. Dana's letter in the Boston Globe, Mr. Bates wrote to him on the subject of his interview. In his letter he says he enclosed the tintype picture of Booth, given him in Texas when he thought he was dying. However, he did not tell Gen. Dana that the picture was that of Booth. On the contrary, he tried to leave the impression with Gen. Dana that it was one of the Herold family and he says he experienced no little surprise when he received the following reply from him, under date of Lubac, Me., January 17, 1898:

"Dear Sir:—Your favor of January 8th at hand and read. I must say I was somewhat surprised at the turn things took, for I expected the likeness of Herold, or that it would have some of the features in it of the man Herold you wrote me about, but it seems to be that of Booth instead. Can this be J. B. Booth, brother of John Wilkes Booth? Will it be asking too much of you to send me a copy of the confession which you have? I would like to have it for my own satisfaction. If I can be any help to you will gladly aid all I can."

Mr. Bates calls special attention in his writings to the fact of Gen. Dana's identification of the Booth tintype and his intimate knowledge of the Booth family, and states that Gen. Dana sent him the first picture of John Wilkes Booth and David E. Herold that he ever remembers

to have seen. These pictures, when compared with the tintype assisted in the identification of Booth.

Stirred by this incident to greater activity, Mr. Bates says he again wrote to Gen. Dana asking what evidence he had of the killing and capture of Booth. In reply to this inquiry Gen. Dana says, by letter of December 25, 1897:

"Booth, I personally knew; Herold I did not. After Booth was killed he was brought to the navy yard, and I went on the boat and identified him. But the body was very much thinner and features very much pinched up, as though he had suffered a great deal. He was buried near the old jail and a battery of artil-

lery drawn over his grave to obliterate all traces of it."

It seems advisable just here to quote ad libitum from Mr. Bates' book, in which he says:

"Thus we have Gen. Dana claiming to identify the body of John Wilkes Booth on the boat in April, 1865, with the reservation that the body was much thinner and features much more pinched up than usual for Booth, and on the 17th day of January, 1898, thirty-three years later we have Gen. Dana identifying John Wilkes Booth from a tintype picture of St. Helen, claiming to be Booth, taken twelve years after Dana is supposed to have identified the dead body of John Wilkes Booth on the boat. Which identification is correct?

"Was it Booth's body on the boat, or was it the living Booth sitting for the picture taken at Glen Rose Mills, in Western Texas, twelve years after his dead body is supposed to have lain on the boat at Washington? * * * Being advised that Gen. Lew Wallace was the only surviving

member of the court-martial which tried and convicted David E. Herold, Mrs. Surratt, and others, * * * I wrote under the date of January 25, 1898, calling on Gen. Wallace for the proof that was heard at that trial. I also asked for such evidences as was then and now in possession of the government of the United States showing that Booth had been captured and killed. The General replied as follows:

"Crawfordsville, Ind., Jan. 27, 1898.
"Dear Sir:—In reply to yours of the 25th inst., I beg to say that to my certain knowledge John Wilkes Booth was buried under a brick pavement in a room of the old penitentiary prison of Washington city; also, that after he had lain buried there for a while, at the request of his friends, his remains were taken up and transferred to Baltimore, where they now lie, under a very handsome marble monument erected to his memory by men of whom I have reason to think as little as I did of him.

"Respectfully yours,
"LEW WALLACE."
(To be continued in our next issue.)

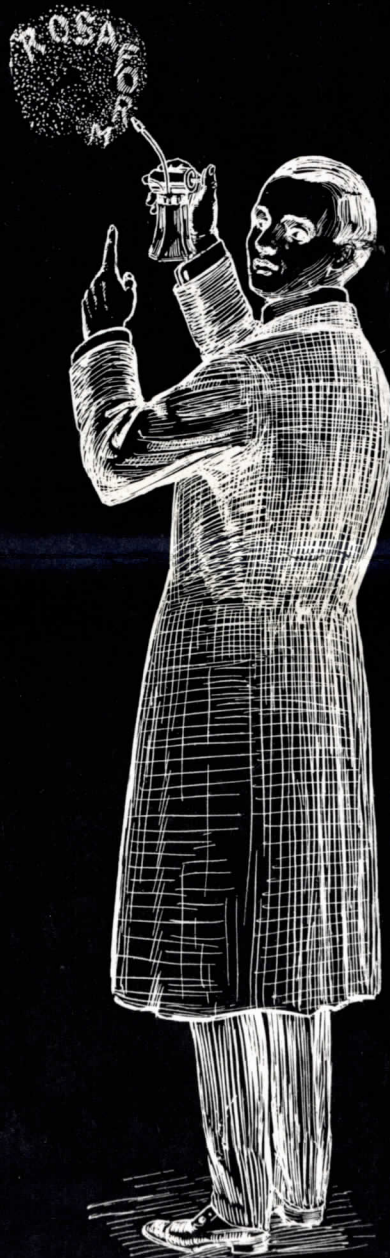
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