

that Dr. May evidently was not sure of his identification of Booth; see his own account, which was merely referred to by Mr. Black as having been printed earlier in The Independent.

As for Conger's testimony that he had seen Booth act, a careful reading shows that he was hazy on that point, referring also to his brother, Edwin Booth, who was the more prominent on the stage. While it may have been like Conger's impression left on the court, we must remember that the large rewards warped the testimony and recollections of many individuals. Also, while it was possible Jno. Wilkes Booth appeared without make-up on the stage, it is more likely that he was in costume and so disguised as to look little like the man killed at Garrett's barn.

Wm. G. Shepherd wrote a wonderfully interesting story on the mystery of St. Helen and George in the November, 1924, Harper's Magazine; he seemed to have it fairly well established to lay minds that Booth escaped and committed suicide at Enid in 1903, but he deftly turned the picture by saying that Booth and St. Helen-George could not be the same man because their hand-writings were different. This conclusion raises the question as to whether Mr. Shepherd is a hand-writing expert, concerning which he did not enlighten the public. Any lawyer would want to know that before accepting Mr. Shepherd's statement.

It seems that most writers are bent on proving that Booth escaped, or that he was killed as claimed, or that Mrs. Sarratt was an innocent woman; they do not give both sides so the reader can make up his own mind. Bare statements in this case (notably those proceeding from the smug satisfaction of the War Department) seem to have been swallowed eagerly by most persons, who would find serious discrepancies by checking up. The War Department displays some relics that were unquestio-

NATIONAL NEWS SERVICE
WASHINGTON, D. C.

1403 New York Ave., NW.
Aug. 19, 1925

Dear Mr. Creech:-

Referring to our conversation of Saturday, Aug. 8:

In the Independent of May 2, 1925, Page 27, Column 3, Par. 3, starting "Dr. J. Frederick May," etc.: according to May's account as printed in the Columbia Historical Society Records, he said the scar was "at the back of the neck, a little to the left." According to my researches on Barnes testimony, Barnes said the scar was on the left side of the neck three inches below the left ear. I have not been able to find anywhere that Dr. May mentioned three inches. I think you will find that Dr. Barnes testified or intimated that he had already examined the body before the arrival of Dr. May, instead of afterward. As I recall it, May volunteered to describe the scar before he (May) had seen Booth's corpse, and then and there Barnes stated that he had hit it exactly. It is reasonable to suppose, further, that Barnes examined the body carefully before the arrival of Dr. May, who disregarded two summons to the Montauk before he put in an appearance, and found quite a crowd gathered when he did appear.

I don't see why in the interest of truth and fairness Mr. Black did not add

nably Booth's; but it also claims possession of Booth's carbine and his saddle and bridle, whereas there is no certainty they were his. In fact, the horses of Booth and Herold were never found, but horses without riders were turned loose in the streets the night of the assassination, and at least one was captured. I have a newspaper account that reads as straight as a string from a man who knew Corbett in the west after the trial, and he says Corbett carried around with him the carbine with which he claimed Booth was killed. Yet the War Department exhibits another carbine it is asserted was Corbett's and used to blay Booth.

Osborn H. Oldroyd, who keeps the Lincoln relics here and some 20 years ago wrote a book on the assassination and pursuit, is pointed to here as an authority on the subject, but I found by talking to him five minutes that he knows little or nothing of some of the most elemental phases of it. I asked him concerning two important features that are of record, and he said he never heard of them. Of course he may be in his dotage, and in earlier years would have remembered.

John P. Simonton, for 43 years with the War Department, and for a long time custodian of the Booth records and relics, told me recently he had studied the case intently over many years, and he had never seen any evidence that would convince a jury that Booth was the man shot at the Garrett barn. My own opinion, as stated to you recently, is that the right man was despatched, but that it has never been proved, and that because of the destruction of records by Mr. Stanton and his myrmidons, it never will be. I am speaking to date without having concluded my researches and observations.

Very truly,

Geo. M. Battey, Jr.
Geo. M. Battey, jr.