

A man named Foqué, living in Louisville, writes me a rather violent letter, saying, among other things, that I "murdered Edwin Booth," by printing, a while ago, the theretofore unpublished history of Junius Brutus Booth's extraordinary matrimonial career. Mr. Foqué, in addition to being hotheaded, does not know what he is talking about. It had been alleged in a newspaper that two gentlemen of some prominence, who were acquainted with the dark but secret page in the Booth family history, had tried to blackmail the actor. The DRAMATIC NEWS set out to investigate the story. Had it been true the perpetrators would have been exposed. It turned out of course, that neither Colonel Frank Burr nor Mr. Steele Mackaye, the gentlemen who were apparently referred to in the published inuendo, had ever undertaken or so much as thought of turning their knowledge of the Booth scandal to account. They were entitled to vindication. Great newspapers were striving to obtain the documents which were in Colonel Burr's possession. Dark hints that might mean much or little were finding their way into the public press. A council of gentlemen, in which friends of Mr. Booth were members, reached the conclusion that the best course to pursue was to make known the actual facts, without prejudice. The editor of the DRAMATIC NEWS was urged to personally search every avenue of real information. That course was followed. It was believed to be the best, under all the circumstances. There was no unkindness toward Edwin Booth. Nothing but sympathy for him was evoked. It was not known, up to that time, that Junius Brutus Booth had ever taken any steps whatever to set his children right. It was only known that he had deserted his first wife, a sweet and noble woman, and had permitted her and their first-born to almost starve. The DRAMATIC NEWS brought out all the facts and made it known that the elder Booth, when his wife secured from him a divorce, immediately married the mother of his later children, giving them the legitimate right to wear his name. Edwin Booth did not feel annoyed by this publication. His admirers have no right to be incensed.

The DRAMATIC NEWS is at no time gratuitously malicious. It has never sought to injure those who have not sought to injure it. It will never—while I am in control—stop at anything to resent an attack or break down an enemy. I do not believe a man who cannot be a good foe can be a good friend. Edwin Booth never had a more consistent or sincere friend than the DRAMATIC NEWS. The paper never gushed over him unreasoningly. It never sought a favor at his hands, and no member of its staff ever directly or indirectly partook of his bounty. There is in this town a weekly paper whose editor received a large sum of money from Mr. Booth, and afterward wrote, for one of the dailies, a most atrocious attack upon the actor—the more atrocious because it was to be published anonymously. The article never saw the light, but the original manuscript is still in existence, and Mr. Booth knew the facts. I repeat that Edwin Booth never had any but a friendly feeling for the DRAMATIC NEWS, which had taken nothing from him, and had rendered him nothing but the justice he craved.

LEANDER RICHARDSON.

## J. WILKES BOOTH'S TRUNKS

### Were Found on the Wrecked Schooner Marie Victoria.

**Antiquarian Snaith Has Conclusive Evidence in the Matter—Conspiracy to Assassinate President Lincoln Evidently Calculated Months Before It Occurred—Sale of Assassin's Effects.**

[SPECIAL DISPATCH TO THE SUNDAY HERALD.]

MONTREAL, Que., Nov. 14, 1891. Antiquarian W. W. Snaith has obtained conclusive evidence that the trunks found on the schooner Marie Victoria, which was wrecked at Bic in the autumn of 1864, were the property of J. Wilkes Booth, the assassin of President Lincoln.

During that autumn several trunks marked "J. W. B., New Providence," were shipped on board the schooner Marie Victoria at Quebec. How they reached Quebec, or by whom they were shipped, or where the vessel was bound for, or on what mission, is enveloped in mystery, but the Marie Victoria sailed from the port of Quebec without going through the usual formalities of clearing at the custom house, for her name does not appear among the shipping records at that port, thereby giving good grounds for the suspicion that the service she was engaged in demanded secrecy.

After events gave proof of this, and led to the belief that she intended to run the blockade of the South or make for the Bahamas. But the schooner was wrecked at Bic, about 150 miles below Quebec.

From the precautions it would appear that Booth, in anticipation of the murder of Lincoln, had secretly sent his theatrical wardrobe through Canada and had it shipped from a Canadian port in expectation of finding it to hand in one of the southern states when he had succeeded in the object which he had in view, and that a conspiracy to assassinate President Lincoln was calculated months before.

During the following summer (1865) there appeared in the Quebec Morning Chronicle of July 17, an advertisement stating that on the following day there would be sold at auction various effects landed from the Schooner Marie Victor, consisting of dry goods, theatrical costumes, swords, and various other articles.

Snaith was engaged in business in Quebec at the time, and, having a penchant for the collection of relics and other curios, attended the sale, and purchased part of the wardrobe. Geo. Rankin also purchased a variety of things from the stock of articles offered for sale, it was thought, at the time, for his brother, McKee Rankin, the actor.

The following notice of the sale appeared in the Chronicle of July 19, 1865:

"The theatrical wardrobe of the late John Wilkes Booth, recovered about a month ago from the wreck of the schooner Marie Victoria, at Bic, last autumn, was disposed of by decree of the vice-admiralty court by public auction yesterday forenoon. Among the wardrobe, which unfortunately has been injured by salt water, there was a splendid collection of theatrical clothes in fine silk velvets, silks, satins, ermine and crimson, and also hats, caps, plumes, boots, buskin shoes, etc. In swords and pistols there was a case or trunk packed with a large variety, and there were some very beautifully mounted ones among them. Competition, on the whole, was very spirited, and several articles were sold at high prices. The amount realized for the wardrobe in its damaged state was about \$500. The original cost cannot have been less than \$15,000."