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We illustrated and described in the December number of "The Sunnyside" the Gleason Special and the Gleason Couch Board, also the STANDARD AND RELIABLE Gleason. For the New Gleason Couch we will say that it is built on the Gleason idea of **strength, neatness and durability**, and at the same time Sanitary conditions are taken into careful consideration. We firmly believe that no couch board built today equals the NEW GLEASON COUCH and in making this statement we do not forget that other good houses are turning out articles of merit. We ask that you **examine carefully** the Gleason Embalming Board and Couches before placing your order and if you will **examine carefully** we have no doubt as to the selection you will make. Ask your jobber or write the

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THE STORY OF A MUMMY WITH A HISTORY.

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

(Continued from our November issue.)

Removing from Hennessey to El Reno, in 1899, the subject of this article changed his name from George D. Ryan to David E. George, took up his residence at the Eustine Hotel, opened



MISS LAURA IDA BOOTH.

an account at the leading bank of the city and advertised himself as a house painter, although he took no contracts and did no painting. He drew a farm in

one of the land openings, but traded it for city property in El Reno with a man named Simmons and took part of the balance due him in board. At the Simmons home he met the lady who afterward became Mrs. E. C. Harper, by whose identification the world has learned to know him as John Wilkes Booth.

Among other things Mrs. Harper has this to say about him:

"He had always been well supplied with money, the origin and source of which no one knew, for from some mysterious source he received a regular remittance. My acquaintance with Mr. George led me to believe him to be a very different person from what he represented himself to be as David E. George, the painter. He was eccentric, and though he claimed to be a painter of houses, yet he did not work. He was possessed of a high degree of intelligence, had always the bearing of a gentleman of cultivation and refinement, and in conversation was fluent and captivating, while he discussed subjects of the greatest moment with learning, familiarity and ease. There were very few people with whom he cared to associate. Generally he was gloomy, though at times he would brighten up, sing snatches of stage songs and repeat Shakespeare's plays in an admirable manner. He was so well versed in these plays and other writings that he would often answer questions with a quotation. At one time the young people of El Reno had a play of some kind. One of the actors became ill and Mr. George filled the place to the great admiration and entertainment of those who saw him. When surprise was expressed at his ability as an actor, he replied that he had acted some when he was a young man. Never do I remember his mentioning the history of his past life or that he was

other than David E. George until the time he thought he was going to die—that was about the middle of April, 1902. He had gone up town and returning went to his room, and in about fifteen minutes called for us and said: 'I feel as if I was going to be very sick.' Mrs. Beers, who was with me, said she could see the pupils of his eyes dilate and believed he had taken morphine. Being uneasy, she got him a cup of coffee and insisted that he drink it. But when she suggested sending for a physician, he roused himself and in a peculiarly dramatic manner and voice, and while holding a mirror before his face, said:

"Stay; woman, stay. This messenger of death is my guest, and I desire to see the curtain of death fall upon the last tragic act of mine."

"He then asked me if it had ever occurred to me that he was anything but the painter of houses that he seemed to be, and added that he had killed the best man that ever lived. I asked him who it was and he answered: 'Abraham Lincoln.'"

"I could not believe it. I thought him out of his head and asked: 'Who was Abraham Lincoln?'"

"Is it possible you are so ignorant as not to know," he asked. He then took a pencil and paper and wrote in a peculiar but legible hand the name, 'Abraham Lincoln,' and said: 'Don't doubt it; it is true. I am John Wilkes Booth.'"

Upon the arrival of the physician he was successfully resuscitated and upon his recovery he mentioned the incident to Mrs. Harper, who told him he had told her nothing of importance during the time he lay so near the door of death, but she says he seemed to know better.

With reference to her statements in this regard Mrs. Harper went before a notary public and made affidavit to them and the original copy of this paper is now in possession of Mr. Bates.

George told the ladies some fantastic stories about his supposed wealth and at the time of his death, with these stories in their minds, Mr. Penniman was considerably put about to locate these properties. Among other things he said he had six hundred acres of Indian land

in the Territory, and the undertaker spent many days and considerable money in an effort to find it. In his effects was a life insurance policy for \$2,500, written in the New York Mutual Life Insurance Company. This, too, proved worthless. Upon investigation it developed that the first premium on this policy had been paid by note and the note had never been satisfied. No premium at all had ever been paid to the company on this contract, and it was, therefore, null and void.

There was also among the papers in his possession an insurance policy made in the Uniform Rank Knights of Pythias, and upon investigation this, too, proved spurious. The Chicago office of the Rank, where the name of every person who ever becomes a Knight of Pythias is kept on file, was searched and no name that could be associated as that of George could be found among the records.

After hearing all of these fantastic stories about the wealth of the man, Mr. Penniman had himself appointed the administrator of his estate, and upon being appraised it inventoried the magnificent total of \$12.

One of the most remarkable, as well as the most interesting incidents connected with the whole Booth story happened to come to light one day, as Mr. Penniman sat in his office working with some paper on his desk. A young man came in and in the most casual manner possible asked if he could see Booth and was told to help himself. This "help yourself" business has gotten to be a matter of habit in the Penniman establishment. And the young man did help himself. He stayed so long that Mr. Penniman forgot he was in the house. Eventually he returned to the front part of the building, where Mr. Penniman was still at his work, and, like many another, sat down to converse upon the matter that he had started out to investigate.

As the conversation progressed Mr. Penniman discovered that the young man was really worth while, and for a wonder began to warm up to the youth. Before long he asked the stranger how it happened that he knew so much about the Booth matter, and it was then that the boy's real identity was divulged. He

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handed Mr. Penniman a card, upon which was printed the name of "R. G. Neil, Representing the Benedict Paper Co., Kansas City, Mo." But there was surely nothing very significant about that, and Mr. Penniman let the conversation run on, meanwhile toying with the card in his hand.

A very interesting story developed from the interview. The "R. G." of the boy's name stands for Richard Garrett, and he is a grandson of the man upon whose plantation the alleged capture and killing of Booth is supposed to have occurred. The story he tells was obtained from his mother, who was, at the time of the assassination of the president, a young lady living at home. Compared with the story of the affair told by Mr. Bates it differs only in the minor details, and corroborates every fact set out by the Memphis lawyer in his works upon the subject. So near are the two alike that it is unnecessary for this paper to deal with Mr. Neil's version of the matter as it has already been told in these columns. Neil's story is important only as a matter of corroboration and in this nothing could be more perfect.

Early in the history of this case there came to light a young woman who claimed that she was the legitimate daughter of the arch-villain, Booth, and she at once took up a correspondence with Mr. Penniman on this subject. On the day this is written she writes to say she has the necessary proofs of her mother's marriage with Booth and that she has put them in the hands of a lawyer in the city of New York with instructions to push her claims in the matter. This young woman is Miss Laura Ida Booth, and she follows the stage. She is known as Mlle. Alma and at this date is playing in vaudeville in Sherman, Texas.

Her claim is to the effect that Booth left his home in Texas in 1872 or 1873 and married her mother in the mountain country of Tennessee, but deserted her before Miss Ida was born. She, therefore, never saw her perfidious father and is unable to identify him; but, nevertheless, has a longing to see his body and is at this time endeavoring to make an engagement with one of the vaudeville houses of Enid in order to be near the body and acquaint herself with the facts concerning his life before he came here and the manner and circumstances surrounding his death.

It is her opinion that he left a large amount of money or insurance and she has the suspicion that those in charge of the remittance are trying to keep the facts

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She expresses regret that her mother is not here and says that her mother could complete the identification.

Be these things as they may, the chain of evidence is tolerably well linked together. Still it is regrettable that the correspondence, pictures and marriage license are not at this time available for publication, for they would make a very strong assembling of documentary evidence in the effort that is being put forth to prove that this is the body of Booth. Taken together with the physical marks of identification they would tend materially to strengthen the theory and encourage official investigation.

This body has the broken leg, the V-shaped dental arch, the injured thumb, the arched brow over the right eye, the scar where an abscess was lanced on the back of the neck and the hand writing was similar to that of Booth. In addition to that we have the Booth characteristics, the magnetic personality, the habits and the Booth stature. These and the many identifications constitute a story that is replete with interest and extraordinary incident and embrace an experience that is not given to every one engaged in the undertaking business.

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from her knowledge. And in order to possess herself of his body and his effects she has engaged legal advice. She has interviewed Mr. Bates on this matter, but informs the writer of this, that her visit was far from satisfactory.

In all her communications Miss Booth

lays stress on the claim that there is property. She cannot understand why Mr. Penniman had himself appointed the administrator if there was no property to administer upon. She says she has direct claim upon the estate. Leon Laski, her New York lawyer, says she has her mother's marriage license and, in addition to this, Miss Booth claims the possession of letters from her deceased parent, which will establish his identity beyond reasonable doubt. Her last letter to the writer of this was written on November 19, 1909, and in it she asks: "What had I best do with this body? I have been told you intend to keep it." The idea that it is to remain permanently above ground does not seem at all satisfactory, and in another place she says, "Send me the bill and I will pay all the necessary expenses." It is her impression that a sealed package was left by the deceased which has not yet been opened and that this package purports to be the last will and testament in which she is bequeathed the fortune supposed to be long to him.

Fears that Bubonic Plague Will Spread.

That this country is in danger of the spread of bubonic plague is feared in Washington. Conferences have been held between officials of the Public Health and Marine Hospital Service and of the Biological Survey, looking to co-operation in stamping out the disease. The situation in California is most alarming. The disease, which is the bubonic plague of India, which sweeps off its thousands annually, was introduced into San Francisco by rats. These rats carried fleas bearing the germs. These soon infested the ground squirrels, of which there are millions in the state, and whose extermination has been the effort of every landowner, but with little or no success. It is now feared that the fleas will spread to other animals and thus obtain such a hold in this country as to be almost impossible of elimination.

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