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JOHN H. SURRATT'S FLIGHT.

ANOTHER CHAPTER IN THE STORY OF THE LINCOLN PLOT.

The Son of the Woman Who Was Hanged Tells How He Escaped After Lincoln's Assassination—His Motives for Flight —Secrets He Will Carry to His Grave.

BALTIMORE, Jan. 10.—Since the publication in THE SUN of the narrative of Samuel Bland Arnold concerning the Lincoln conspiracy, with which he was identified, many inquiries have been made regarding the only other survivor of the plotters, John H. Surratt.

As has been stated, Arnold is passing the remaining years of his life in quiet at an old homestead near Friendship, Anne Arundel county, Maryland, while Surratt is actively at work in the auditing department of the Old Bay Line of this city and lives with his family at 1016 West Lanvale street. These two men are the only survivors of those who were in the plot to kidnap President Lincoln which culminated in his assassination.

Arnold's story has been made public. Surratt's story of the part he played in the great conspiracy has yet to be unfolded by him, and the indications are that his secrets will be carried with him to the grave. In past years many interviews have been credited to John H. Surratt descriptive of his flight to Europe after the assassination of Lincoln, his final capture, return to this country, trial, acquittal, &c., but the truth of the matter is that Surratt granted none of these.

He has steadfastly refused to talk for newspaper publication, and it was only by a peculiar combination of circumstances that the following narrative from him was secured:

On the day that President Lincoln was assassinated by John Wilkes Booth in Ford's Theatre, in Washington, Surratt was in Elmira, N. Y., and, a few hours before the shooting of the President, he had a long conversation with an acquaintance who met him in that city. This friend returned to Baltimore some time ago for the express purpose of talking to Surratt about his memorable adventures, and thus speaks of the interview:

"I met John H. Surratt, casually, in Elmira N. Y., on April 14, 1865, just a few hours before Lincoln was assassinated. Surratt was a travelling salesman, or passing for such; he certainly had business with some Elmira merchants and it was in a store that I was introduced to him.

"He was a slender, well-dressed young man, and, if he had any leanings to the South, or felt any chagrin over the collapse of the Confederacy, he kept it to himself. The following day, Saturday, April 15, the country was shocked by the cruel murder of President Lincoln, and it was known throughout the land that Mrs. Surratt, had been arrested as one of the conspirators, and that a warrant was out for her son, John H.

"That the young man in Elmira had no direct connection with the murder of Mr. Lincoln and the attempted murder of the members of his Cabinet was very evident, yet that he associated with the conspirators became a certainty when he suddenly vanished, without leaving a trace behind him, so that for two years, while glimpses were had of him here and there, he remained undiscovered.

"Had he been captured at that time he would have been hanged with his mother, or neither would have been hanged. The people were so incensed at the time that it does not seem possible that he would have been cleared in 1865, when he came so near to conviction in 1867, after time had appeased the wrath of the people and an impartial trial was possible.

"It will be remembered by those who recall Surratt's trial before Judge Fisher in Washington that he confessed that, as soon as he had learned of what had been done in Washington by the conspirators, he fled to Canada, without a cent in his pocket, so that much of the journey had to be made on foot. From Canada he made his way to Europe, and succeeded in reaching Rome, where, being a Catholic, he enlisted in the corps known as the Papal Zouaves, and while in this service was discovered by a United States detective, extradited and brought home for trial.

"At the trial it was clearly shown that Surratt, if not a fellow conspirator, at least associated with Booth, Paine and others, and during the war he acted as a spy and a secret courier of the Confederacy, successfully carrying messages between Richmond and the South's commissioners in Canada, and his mercantile business was assumed as a blind to disguise his real purpose.

"This offence, like stealing among some of the ancient Greeks, was entirely legitimate so long as it remained undetected. These facts, together with his flight, told strongly against Surratt on his trial.

"It is very certain that the evidence would have convicted him two years before, while his flight, confirming his guilt at the time, really saved him, for, though the war scars were still unhealed, and the storms of years had not settled into a calm, men were in the position to be more influenced by evidence than prejudice.

"When I returned to Baltimore for the expressed purpose of again talking with Surratt I found him a well-preserved man in middle life with the ease of manner and courtesy which distinguished him as a man of 24 or 25. He did not remember me, neither did I expect him to.

"I introduced myself and explained why I was curious to see him again. Instead of avoiding the topic which I had a doubt about broaching, with a frank and open manner, he paved the way himself. But I felt sure that this quiet, pale man had much in reserve, which, with sealed lips, he will carry with him to the grave.

"Indeed, I still wonder that the man is alive and so active; one of weaker stuff would have gone down long since under the burden, of anxiety and mental torture which he bore so long with admirable nerve.

"'You want to know how I escaped from Elmira?' said Mr. Surratt in response to my query. 'Well, there is not much to tell. All the facts came out on the trial, and are, I think, in the main, accurate.'

"'Did you have much difficulty in getting away?'

"'Not so much difficulty, perhaps, as anxiety. It was not known at the time, is not known now, so I am sure it will never be known, what a great number of people there were in the North who either secretly or openly sympathized with the Confederacy. Long before the flight from Elmira I had discovered this and knew pretty well where to find friends.

"'While acting as an agent for the Confederacy I had no trouble in travelling through the North wherever and whenever I pleased. The greatest drawback to my flight was the want of means; this in itself should convince anyone that I was in no way prepared for the tragedy enacted in Washington on the very day I was in Elmira.'

"'Did you not have a companion in your flight from Elmira to Canada?'

"'Yes, for a part of the distance. The man has not been identified, and all I know about him is that he was as poor as myself. It matters not where I met him, but we reached Mount Albans, Vt., together, and walked to Franklin, on the other side of the line.

"'Once in Canada, I succeeded in getting funds; how, it is not necessary to describe, still you may remember that the Confederacy had its agents in that country with plenty of money.

"'It has been charged against me that I knew my mother was in serious danger, and that by returning to Washington I might have saved her. This I most solemnly deny. Knowing that she was entirely innocent of any connection with the so-called conspiracy though her sympathy was undeniably with the Confederacy, I could not imagine that she was in any danger.

"'I did not then dream of the intense bitterness and prejudice that were manifested at her trial, and I felt sure that if she were tried she would be acquitted. When I did hear of her sentence, I became almost insane, and would have gone to Washington at once if my friends in Montreal had not restrained me.

"'As I would have laid down my life to save my mother, and I do not think I am a coward, it is cruelly unjust to intimate that the fear of death kept me away.'

"'What induced you to fly to England?'

"'I felt that I had to move. I knew that the American detectives were swarming in Canada and I could not long remain secreted. It would have been sheer madness to retain my name, so I changed it, as you know, and took passage for England.

"'It has been said that on the voyage I became drunk and virtually gave myself away. Indeed, evidence to this effect was adduced at the trial. However, as I am a man of ordinary shrewdness and was not then, nor am I now, addicted to the use of liquor, you can see that there is no truth in that.

"'By the advice of friends I met in England I was induced to go to Rome, and, as I had no money and the position promised me protection, I enlisted in the Papal Zouaves. Being unable to speak the language I soon became a marked man.

"'Rome was crowded then, as now, with travellers from all over the world, and you may well imagine my awful anxiety when I was in the Papal Army. Still, although continually anxious, I was wholly unprepared for my arrest when it came.

"'When I was being taken from the barracks, with my mind in a whirl, for I felt that the end had come, I was seized with an awful impulse to fly and broke away from my guards. How I succeeded in eluding them I cannot tell, for all the incidents connected with my getting away are blank, but I know that I succeeded in reaching Naples, where my senses began to return.

"'At Naples I succeeded in shipping aboard a fishing sloop bound for Messina. From Messina I succeeded in reaching Alexandria. My purpose was, after reaching Cairo, to make my way to upper Egypt, where I would be away from civilization and the country I felt I had left forever.

"'But to my great disappointment, Mr. Hale, the American Consul at Cairo, was on the lookout for me and I was again arrested soon after my arrival. You know the rest. I was sent home on the United States steamship Swatara, returned to Washington, was tried and not convicted. That is all.'"