

constant effort in that direction, I discover in it the only trace of a bad man that the figure presents.

My conversation with this somewhat remarkable man was not so full and free as I could have wished. He evidently was in no mood to talk on the topics that were most prominent in my own mind, and the witnesses to the interview precluded me from making any efforts to get his confidence. After a few commonplace remarks on the state of the weather and such generalities as usually open a conversation, I ventured to ask him a leading-question in regard to his escape to and concealment in Canada. Putting on one of his most offensive smiles, he replied, "I have nothing to say about that." His manner of reply, more than his words, conveyed to my mind the impression that he considered it "a good thing," something to boast of, a great secret that would tend to make him famous hereafter, a mystery for the world to ponder on and with which to associate his name. "But," he added, "there was no secrecy about my leaving Canada. I went on board a steamer at mid-day, wholly without disguise, and with hundreds of people on and about the wharf. The steamer had fully 200 passengers, with whom I associated freely during the voyage. Nobody recognized me, though there were those among the passengers that I recognized." He would not say what steamer this was, nor from what port it sailed, more than that it was one of a regular line leaving a large city.

He spoke of meeting Sr. MARIE in France. He claims that he recognized Sr. MARIE first, and that they traveled to Italy together. He manifests no vindictiveness toward this witness for having discovered him to the authorities, but considers him a "treacherous" fellow, and thinks he was mistaken in his character. SURREATT says that he had information of Sr. MARIE's "treachery" before it was fully accomplished, and was kept advised from time to time of the steps taken to secure his arrest. Had the actual arrest been delayed one day longer, as SURREATT had reason to expect it would be, he would have been beyond the reach of his pursuers, his arrangements for desertion and flight being nearly perfected at the time of his arrest. He is careful to abstain from saying what these arrangements were, who were his accomplices and informers, or where he was to find a place of refuge. All this he considers a part of the sacred mystery that is to enshrine his name in immortal fame. He tells it as an instance of cuteness deserving of great credit; one of the incidents in his career that is notable.

He has read, with great apparent interest, the published accounts of his capture and escape, and the official correspondence bearing on those points, and takes great pleasure in criticising them. The wonderful leap off the precipice in Italy, of which so much has been said and written, is a source of great amusement to him. The height which he jumped he describes as about equal to a second-story window, or say twelve feet. But he tells a story of descending more dangerous declivities than this in his flight; the accomplishment of which feats were unseen by other eyes than his own. In one instance his only available mode of descent was to lie upon his back and slide down a steep and rocky declivity, full a hundred feet in height. Of scarcity of food, ignorance of the country, and consequent danger of recapture in exposing himself by asking information by the way, of the constant alarm, and similar subjects, he is free and seemingly anxious to talk, and always in something of a boastful vein; but his lips are sealed in respect to all matters bearing in the remotest degree upon the great crime with which his name is associated, and of which he stands charged.

Many poor prisoners, whose crimes are scarcely worth mention in comparison with the great crime associated with SURREATT's name, would rejoice could their lifetime be spent as comfortably as are the prison hours of this universally accused assassin. An entire corridor, full thirty feet in length and eight in breadth, with three large cells, are placed entirely at his disposal. In this corridor he is excluded from the gaze of the common prisoners and the curious visitors by a tight door closing within the usual door of iron grating whenever it is not agreeable to him to seek the open air of the prison courtyard. At night only does he have occasion to feel at all the rigors of confinement, when he is locked in the central of the three cells, a commodious apartment at least ten feet square. True, the furniture is scant, consisting merely of a stool, and a mattress laid upon the stone floor, though amply provided with coverings. Such comfortable lodging would have been esteemed a luxury by our soldiers during the war. To while away the sometimes tedious hours of the day, he is provided with a plentiful assortment of books, embracing the field of literature from Divine truth to the silliest human trash. Comforts and even luxuries for the toilet are also abundant. His cuisine seems to be carefully looked after by outside friends, and no restriction is placed upon the amount or variety that is sent him. Instead of the brown loaf and boiled beef of ordinary prisoners, SURREATT has the choicest of domestic cookery, selected with the sole view of pleasing his palate.

Moreover, the comforts of a home are provided for him in the frequent and protracted visits of his sister, who calls at least each alternate day, and spends the time with him, cheering him by her presence and ministering to his comforts. True, on these occasions the veteran keeper, before alluded to, shares the apartments with the brother and sister, but the surveillance he exercises is merely a matter of form, and for any restraint it exerts upon the brother and sister might as well be dispensed with.

When to this prison life is contrasted that of the woman whom BUTLER accuses of having been innocently hung, and who might have been saved but for the inhuman cowardice and desertion of this, her son, the discovery is made of the difference between civil and military rule. Lucky indeed is it for this, the boon companion and alleged confidential confederate of J. WILKES BOOTH, that his capture occurred after the declaration of peace and the withdrawal of martial law. Indeed, it may be seriously questioned if his successful elusion of pursuit during two years has not resulted in saving his life—perhaps shielding him from all save a few paltry years of punishment. But whatever may be the judgment of the Courts upon him, and however solicitous for his comfort and welfare his friends may now be, it is sure that JOHN H. SURREATT is a marked man, and must forever content himself with being an outcast from society, wandering up and down the world with the brand of Cain upon his forehead. An over-lenient jury may fail to find his actual complicity with the awful crime of murder, so magnified in its heinousness by the subject of its malignity, but the world will ever hold him guilty in connection with the death of his mother; and were the prison doors to open to-day and cast him out a free man, those very people who now minister so watchfully to his every want and comfort would shun him as a plague upon society, and a libel upon his race.

A VISIT TO SURREATT.

From our Own Correspondent.

WASHINGTON, Tuesday, April 2.

The interest attaching to the prisoner, JOHN H. SURREATT, now in confinement in the Washington jail, charged with complicity in the assassination of President LINCOLN, induced your correspondent to seek and obtain an interview and conversation with him. It is unnecessary to dwell here upon the means used to obtain this interview, despite the stringent regulations, which forbid any intercourse with SURREATT by others than the officials of the jail and his sister when admitted under surveillance. Suffice it to say that in the case of my admission the officers of the jail in nowise exceeded their authority or instructions in the premises.

Contrary to the current reports of the close confinement and careful obscurity in which this important prisoner is held, I found him occupying temporarily the watchman's lodge in the jail yard, accompanied by a veteran keeper, who looked as if he might have seen half a century's service in his present vocation. The morning was beautifully clear and mild, one of those charming Spring mornings that make the open air so enticing to such as are compelled to submit to close confinement within doors. The little building, in which the veteran keeper and his charge were enjoying the charming, and refreshing, and invigorating air of an almost May morning, was a small octagonal structure of wood, with large, open windows on seven sides and a glass door on the eighth. The furniture consisted of a stove, a small deal table, two chairs, a bench, a water-bucket, and a variety of old rubbish. The yard in which this rather loose prison is situated is inclosed by a brick wall eighteen or twenty feet in height, having two gateways leading into other yards, surrounded by walls about ten or twelve feet high. I did not examine these gateways to ascertain if they could be easily opened; but they appeared to be fastened simply by a bar on the inside. If this was their only fastening, and they could be opened as easily as appearances indicated, the security for prisoners was not very great, as the outer yards were filled with rubbish that could quickly and readily be brought into requisition to aid one desirous of scaling the walls.

The prisoner was innocent of any entanglements for his security whatever. He sat in a chair by one of the open windows reading a small volume, the character of which I did not inquire. On my entrance he rose and advancing toward me with extended hand, acknowledged an introduction with a very friendly smile and a courteous shake of the hand. Not expecting to meet so distinguished a character in such a place, I was somewhat taken by surprise when the name was pronounced, and after shaking hands ventured to inquire once again the name. "SURREATT," replied my new acquaintance with a smile. "I think I have heard of you before," I remarked; to which he quietly responded, "very likely." He was dressed in a suit of dark mixed goods, cut in the prevailing fashion of a walking suit, evidently new. Upon his head he wore a black soft felt hat, also new. In stature I should judge him to be five feet nine or ten inches high, rather slender in form—almost delicate, perhaps—and apparently twenty-eight years of age. His hair is a very light auburn, nicely cut and trimmed, parted behind and combed forward. He wears a mustache and goatee, rather more positive in their color than the hair on his head. The rest of his face was carefully shaven. Altogether his appearance was that of a well-dressed and very presentable young man—and certainly the last one that would be selected from a crowd as a desperate character or a villain. He has a very pleasant voice, in conversation uses good language, understands himself perfectly, usually wears a smile upon his face, which, however, suggests unpleasant thoughts when one considers his desertion of the woman who gave him birth at the time of her sorest need. Indeed, considering the whole history of the man that stands before me, and taking no account of the question of his guilt or innocence of the crimes with which he stands charged, I am filled with amazement that he can smile. And looking at his