CONSPIRACY OF NAUVOO.

THOSE who have read the life of Joseph Smith the Prophet, must be familiar with the fact that from his earliest boyhood he was ever the object of bitter persecution. Notwithstanding the numerous published accounts of mobings, drivings, bodily injuries, aggravating accusations, mob trials, and numerous attempts upon his life which he endured, and with which the people are familiar, there are, no doubt, many events and trials yet hidden from the world in the bosoms of his most familiar friends, which may have caused him far greater agony than many of those with which the public are acquainted. Among these the following narrative may be classed, as it has never before been published, and the facts it contains may have had an important influence in hastening, if not really accomplishing, the death of the Prophet.

Early in the spring of 1844 a very strong and bitter feeling was aroused against Joseph, among many of his brethren in and around Nauvoo; and some who held high positions in the Church and were supposed to be his best friends, turned against him and sought by various means in their power to do him injury. Many murmured and complained, and some of the more wicked, even watched their opportunity to take his life, and were continually plotting to accomplish that end. At length this wicked feeling became so strong and general, among a certain class, that it was resolved to form an organization, or secret combination that would better enable them to accomplish their wicked purposes.

Accordingly a secret meeting was appointed to take place in the new brick house of William Law, Joseph's first counselor, on a certain Sabbath, and invitations to attend were carefully extended to members of the Church whom it was thought were disaffected, or in sympathy with these wicked views and desires. Among those who received invitations to attend this meeting was Brother Denison L. Harris, now the Bishop of Monroe, Sevier County, Utah, then but a young man of seventeen years of age. Austin A. Cowles, at that time a member of the High Council, was one of the leaders in this wicked movement, and being a near neighbor and on intimate terms with Brother Harris, he had given young Denison an invitation to the secret meeting, and told him also to invite his father, but to be sure and not breathe a word about it to anyone else, as it was to be a profound secret. Denison was much perplexed over the invitation he had received, and certain things that Brother Cowles had told him; and while sitting on his father's woodsip, thinking them over and wondering what he had better do, another young man, named Robert Scott, who lived but a short distance away, came over, sat down on the log, and the two began to converse upon various subjects, such as generally engage the conversation of young men of their age. It seems they had been intimate companions for several years; and they had not conversed long before each discovered that the other had something on his mind which troubled him, but which he did not like to reveal. Finally, one proposed that, as they had always been confidants, they now exchange secrets, on condition that neither should reveal what the other told him. Both readily agreed to this, and when each had told the cause of his anxiety, it proved to be the same—both had received an invitation to the same secret meeting. Robert Scott, having been reared by William Law, seemed to be almost a member of his family, and on this account had been invited by him to attend the meeting.

"Well, Dan," said Robert, after a short pause, "are you going to attend the meeting?"

"I don't know," replied Denison, "are you?"

"I don't know whether to go or not," said Robert, "suppose we go in the
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house and tell your father of his invitation, and see what he says about it.”

They entered the house and consulted for some time with Denton’s father, Emrick Harris, who was a brother of Martin Harris, one of the three witnesses of the Book of Mormon. They informed him of his invitation to the same meeting and told him about other things that Brother Cowles had told Denton. He decided to go at once and lay the whole matter before the Prophet Joseph Smith, who was then in Nauvoo, and asked his advice. He immediately went to Joseph’s house, a distance of about two and a half miles, and informed him of the whole affair. Joseph listened with interest until he had finished, when he said: “Brother Harris, I would advise you not to attend these meetings, nor pay any attention to them. You may tell the boys, however, that I would like to have them go, but that I want them to be sure to come and see me before the meeting takes place. I wish to give them some counsel.”

Subsequent events showed the wisdom of Joseph in advising Brother Emrick Harris not to attend the meeting and selecting young men to do the work he wished to have accomplished. Brother Harris returned and told the boys what Joseph desired them to do, and they readily agreed to comply with his request. Accordingly, on the next Sunday before the secret meeting took place, Robert and Denton called at the house of Joseph to learn what he wished them to do. He told them he desired that they attend the meeting, pay strict attention, and report to him on the proceedings. The first favorable opportunity came next Sunday, when they reported on the proceedings, the first favorable opportunity they found, in a group of persons who had met in the presence of the Prophet. The leading members among the conspirators, for such they really were, were William and Wilson Law, Austin A. Cowles, Francis and Chamberly Egbert, Robert Foster and his brother, two Hicks brothers, and two merchants, Fincher and Rollins, who were enemies to the Church. After hearing their report and asking several questions, which they answered to the best of their knowledge, Joseph said: “Boys, I would like you to accept their invitation and attend the second meeting, and come to me again next Sunday, before their meeting convenes, as I may have something more to say to you before you go.”

At the expiration of a week, they again went to see Joseph, who gave them the necessary advice, after which they went to the meeting. This time the conspirators were still more united in their abusive remarks about Joseph. New crimes that he had committed had been discovered, and the old ones were much magnified. Their accusations were not only against him, but against his brother Hyrum and other prominent men in Nauvoo. There seemed to be no end to the wickedness of which these good men were accused, as most of the trials and late hours were spent by different ones in denouncing and accusing Joseph and his friends of the most heinous crimes. Before the meeting adjourned, however, it was agreed that they should all endeavor to work the matter up as much as possible during the week, that something definite might be accomplished towards effecting a more complete organization without further delay. The meeting was to convene on the following Sunday. As the boys kept quiet and said nothing against any of their proceedings, it was supposed, of course, that they were in sympathy with the movement, and an invitation was accordingly extended for them to attend the next meeting.

As on the previous occasion, the young men watched a fitting opportunity of reporting to Joseph without assuming the stigma of any that attended the meeting. He listened attentively to the recital of all that had taken place at the second meeting, after which he said: “Boys, come to me again next Sunday. I wish to give you the next meeting also.” The boys promised to do so, and left the room. They kept the meetings and their connection with them, however, a profound secret from the rest of their friends, and at the appointed time again went to the house of Joseph. This time he said to them, with a very serious countenance: “This will be your last meeting; this will be the last time that you will admit you into their councils. They will come to some determination. But be sure,” he continued, “that you make no covenants, nor enter into any obligations whatsoever with them. Be strictly reserved, and make no promise either to conspire against me or any portion of the community. Be silent, and do not take any part in their deliberations.” After a pause of some moments, he added: “Boys, this will be..."
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the guards and gaining admittance. From this it will be seen that great care was taken to prevent any person from entering, except those whom they knew to be of their party, and ready to adopt any measures that might be suggested against the Prophet Joseph. On entering they found considerable confusion and much counselling among the members of the conspiracy. All seemed determined that Joseph should die, and all objections were raised by some to each of the plans proposed.

The Prophet was accused of the most wicked acts, and all manner of evil was spoken of him. Some declared that he had sought to get their wives away from them, and had many times committed adultery. They said he was a fallen Prophet, and was leading the people to destruction. Joseph was not the only one against whom they lied. His brother Hyrum and many of the leading men in Nauvoo were accused of being in league with him and sharing his crimes. In these councils and meetings, considerable time was spent before the meeting was called to order, and anything definite commenced. The boys, however, followed Joseph's instructions, and remained quiet and reserved. This seemed to arouse the suspicions of some that they were not earnestly in favor of their wicked purposes, and some of the conspirators began to take special pains to explain to the people the reasons for the great desire to have Joseph committed, and the results that would follow if his wicked career were not checked, with a view to convinces them that their severe measures against Joseph were for the best good of the Church, and persuading them to take an active part with them in accomplishing this great good. The two boys, however, sat together quietly, and would simply answer their arguments by saying that they were only young boys, and did not understand such things, and would rather not take part in their proceedings.

As before stated, Brother Scott had been reared in the family of William Law, and the latter pretended great friendship for him on that account, and was very anxious to get him to be an object of the proposed organization, and induce him to join. He would come around and sit beside Robert, put his arm around his neck, and persuade him to join in their efforts to rid the Church of such a dangerous impostor. At the same time Brother Cowles would sit beside Brother Harris in the same attitude, and with him with equal earnestness. The boys, however, were not easily convinced. Still, in their replies and remarks, they carefully tried to avoid giving the least offense or arousing any suspicions regarding the true cause of their presence. They said they were too young to understand the "spiritual wife doctrine," of which Joseph was accused, and many of the other things that they condemned in the Prophet. Joseph had never done them any harm, and they did not like to join in a conspiracy against his life.

"But," would urge, "Joseph is a fallen Prophet; he receives revelations from the devil, and is deceiving the people, and if something decisive is not done at once to get rid of him, the whole Church will be led by him to destruction." These and many other arguments were vainly brought forth to induce the boys to join them, but they still pretended not to understand nor take much interest in such things. At length they consented to listen to the men, and things having developed sufficiently, they concluded to proceed with the intended organization.

An oath had been prepared which each member of the organization was now required to take. Francis Highes, a justice of the peace, sat at a table in one end of the room and administered the oath to each individual separately, in exactly the manner. The candidates would step forward to the table, take up a Bible, which had been prepared for the purpose, and raise it in his right hand, whereupon the justice would ask him in a solemn tone, "Are you ready?" And, receiving answer in the affirmative would continue in a tone and manner that struck awe to the minds of all who then listened: "You swear to keep, before God and all holy angels, and these your brethren by whom you are surrounded, that you will give your body, your liberty, your influence, your all, for the destruction of Joseph Smith and his party, so help you God!" The person being sworn would then say, "I do," after which he would sign his name to the oath as it was written in a copy of the oath in a book that was lying on the table, and it would be legally acknowledged by the justice of the peace.

The boys sat gazing upon this scene, wondering how intelligent beings who had once enjoyed the light of truth could have fallen into such depths of wickedness as to be anxious to take such an oath against the Prophet of God and his faithful followers. They also felt no little uneasiness concerning their own fate, and almost dreaded the moment when the last one should have taken the oath. At length that portion of the business was accomplished, and about two hundred persons were left in the room. Among that number were three women, who were ushered in, closely veiled to prevent being recognized, and required to take the same oath. Besides doing this, they also testified that Joseph and Hyrum Smith had endeavored to seduce them; had made the most importunate and wicked proposals to them, and wished them to become such. After making affidavits to a series of lies of this kind, they made their exit through a back door. One of the women, knowing the boys suspected as being William Law's wife, was crying, and seemed to dislike taking the oath, but did so as one who feared that the greatest bodily injury would surely follow a refusal.

After the oath had been administered to all but the two boys, Law, Cowles and others again commenced their labors to get them to take it, but met the same success as before. Arguments, persuasions, and threats were in turn used to accomplish their desire, but in vain. They exhausted their ingenuity in inventing arguments, lies, and inducements to get the boys to unite with their band. "Have you not heard," said they, the strong testimony of all persons against Joseph Smith? Can a man be true who would commit adultery? He is a fallen Prophet, and is teaching the people doctrines that his own imagination or lustful desires have invented, or else he received that revelation from the devil. He will surely lead the whole Church to destruction if his career is not stopped. We can do nothing with him by the law, and for the sake of the Church we deem it our solemn duty to accomplish his destruction and rescue the people from this peril. We are simply combining and conspiring to save the Church, and we wish you to join us in our efforts, and share the honors that will be ours. Come, take the oath and all will be well.”

"Oh, we are too young," they replied, "to understand or meddle with such things, and would rather let others who are older and know more do such work." This was not very well received. The boys were glad to pass out and escaped the trouble they saw brewing for them; but, as they feared, they were not allowed to depart so easily. One of the band exclaimed in a very determined voice: "No, not by a d—d sight! You know all our plans and arrangements, and we don't propose that you should leave in that style. You've got to take that oath, or you'll never leave here alive."
The attention of all was now directed to the two boys, and considerable confusion prevailed. A voice in the crowd shouted, “Dead men tell no tales!” Whereupon a general clamor arose for the boys to take the oath or be killed. Even their pretended friends, Cowies and Law, turned against them. “If you do not take that oath,” said one of the leading members, a blood-curdling tone, “they will cut out your throats.”

At this juncture, when it seemed that each moment would end the miserable existence of these two noble young men, a voice from some one in the crowd, as if by divine interposition, called out just in time to save their lives. “Hold on! Hold on there! Let’s talk this matter over before their blood is shed!” and with great difficulty some of the more cautious ones succeeded in quieting those whose anger and excitement prevented them from weighing well what they were on the verge of committing, and considering the consequences that would inevitably follow. Thus the instantaneous death of the boys was prevented, while the crowd retired to the further end of the room and consulted among themselves. However, that the boys could not hear what they said. It was evident, however, that they were nearly equally divided in their views of the feasibility of putting the boys to death. Some appeared to be enraged and fully determined to shed their blood, while others were equally resolved to prevent the cruel deed. During the discussion the boys distinctly heard one of them say “The boys’ parents very likely know where they are, and if they do not return home, somebody will be aroused, and they may institute a search that would be very dangerous to us. It is already late, and time that the boys were home.”

This was a very important consideration, as well as a very unexpected circumstance in favor of the boys. Hope rose high in their breasts as the discussion continued, and one by one of the more excited conspirators was silenced, if not convinced, until at length the tide turned in favor of the boys, and it was decided that they should not be attacked. So openly, and many in their feelings, opposed this resolution, as it considered it unsafe to liberate the boys to reckon all their plans, as to kill them and get them out of the way. A strong guard was provided to escort them to a proper distance lest some of the gang might kill them before they made their escape. They placed a strict injunction upon the boys not to reveal anything they had seen or heard in these meetings, and declared if they did not, no member of the conspiracy would know them.

This caution and threat were repeated several times in a way that gave the boys to understand that they meant all they said, and would just as easily slay them as not if they suspected anything that had been revealed by them.

Everything being ready, the boys started off in charge of the guard. Right glad were they to once more gain the open air with so good a prospect for their lives, and they breathed a sigh of relief and satisfaction when they were out of sight of the house in which they had endured such great peril. They took an unrecorded road down toward the Mississippi River which runs around one side of Nauvoo. Some of the guard were very much dissatisfied with the way the tables had turned, and, when they had got a safe distance from the house, they halted to consider if it would not be best to play the boys on their own responsibility. They would gladly have murdered them if they could have done so with any hope of saving the deed remained undiscovered; but, after some discussion, they contented themselves by retreating the cautious and threats that had been given to the boys before starting, and continued their march until within a few rods of the river, where they halted, and one of the guards said: “Well, I guess we have gone about as far as we need to go, and it is better turn back.”

Then turning to the boys, he continued, “Boys, if you ever open your mouths concerning anything you have seen or heard in any of our meetings, we will kill you by night or by day wherever we find you, and consider it our duty.”

“O, don’t fear on that account,” replied the boys, anxious to allay their uneasiness, lest they still might take a notion to slay them and cast their bodies into the river. “we can see that it is greatly to our advantage and necessary to our peace and safety to keep silent concerning the things.”

“I am glad you’ve got sense enough to see it in that light,” was the rejoinder in a tone that indicated his mind was somewhat relieved.

During this conversation, one of the boys looking towards the river, his great surprise, saw a boat rise into view from behind the bank and beckon for them to come that way. The guard, after admonishing them once more to be silent, and telling them their lives depended upon their keeping the secret, turned to remove their steps just as one of the boys, anxious to put them at ease as much as possible, said to his companion: “Let’s go down to the river.”

“Ye’s,” returned the guard, evidently pleased with that arrangement; “you had better go down to the river.”

The answer of the boys was in so low a tone as to make the meeting last until a late hour in the afternoon, and the conspirators had already detained the boys so long that they were afraid of their parents and friends, some of whom perhaps knew where the boys had gone, would become anxious and begin to suspect foul play, and possibly might institute a search which would prove exceedingly disadvantageous to the conspiracy. The boys therefore very reluctantly started to go to the river, so that if they were found there it would be supposed that they were on their long absence. The guards perceived this idea instantly, and it pleased them, for it indicated to them that the boys wished to keep the secret, and avoid being questioned too closely.

The boys started off on a run toward the river, but, lest the guards should watch them, and discover the presence of Joseph, whose hand it was they had seen above the bank, they directed their course to a point about a quarter of a mile beyond where Joseph was, knowing that he would follow and, on reaching the river, they stepped down the bank and there awaited the arrival of
doubts any more than the former one, but it was evident he intended to leave the people and keep hid more closely than he had done, or else, with prophetic vision, he discerned the final outcome of his enemies' efforts, and, through compassion, forebore to crush the spirits of his brethren by telling them plainly the whole truth.

Subsequent events left in doubt the true purport of his words. The dark clouds of persecution from enemies without, fearfully augmented by traitors from within, grew so threatening toward the close of the Prophet's life, that he saw something must be done for the safety of himself and the people. He therefore conceived the idea of moving the Saints once more, and this time far beyond the cruel blasts of persecution, and seek shelter behind the barriers of the Rocky Mountains. He called for a company of volunteers to explore the great West and find a most safe place for the Saints to settle. Quite a number volunteered and began to make preparations for the journey.

It is well known that just previous to surrendering himself to be taken to Carthage, Joseph got into a boat and started across the river, evidently to evade his enemies. He intended to keep out of their hands until this company had procured a suitable outfit for such an undertaking, when he would have accompanied them. Some of his brethren, however, begged him not to desert the people in such a time of trouble and danger, and at their importunity he returned to Nauvoo, and we all know the result. He was induced to surrender himself to the officers of the law, was cast into prison, and there cruelly murdered by a bloodthirsty mob.

Perhaps in reply to Brother Scott's question, Joseph was revolving these plans in his mind and looking forward to the time when he and the Saints would be beyond the reach of persecution; it is now impossible to tell, but the events which followed rather indicate that he foresaw his death. However, he continued in great earnestness:

"They accuse me of polygamy, and of being a false Prophet, and many other things which I now remember; but I am not false Prophet; I am no impostor; I have had no dark revelations; I have had no revelations from the devil; I have no nothing up of myself. The same God that has thus far dictated me and directed me and strengthened me in this work, gave me this revelation and commandment on celestial and plural marriage, and the same God commanded me to obey it. He said to me that unless I accepted it and introduced it, and practiced it, I, together with my people, would be damned and cut off from this time henceforth. And they say if I do so, they will kill me! Oh, what shall I do? If I do not practice it, I shall be damned with my people. If I do teach it, and practice it, and urge it, they say they will kill me, and I know they will. But," said he, then he paused, "it is a eternal principle and was given by way of commandment and not by way of instruction."

It will be seen from these outbursts of his soul what a conflict was going on in his mind, and the agony that he endured can only be imagined by those who knew his sensitive and generous spirit. Persecution and imprisonment from the hand of an enemy would be passed by almost unnoticed when compared with these murderous thrusts from the daggers of his own friends. Death, to a man who was so familiar with the unseen world and the happiness to be enjoyed there, was stripped of its terrors. His fear of simply losing his life caused him little anxiety. But his whole soul was in the work which the Lord had given him to do, and such bloodthirsty opposition to a commandment of God among his brethren caused the greatest anxiety and grief. His greatest trials are no doubt hid deepest from our view.

The consultation lasted for a long time before they separated to their homes, and impressions were made on the minds of our two young heroes that will last forever. They got an insight into the life of the Prophet and the na-
The muse of history, too often blind to true glory, has hinged down to posterity many a warrior, the destroyer of thousands of his fellowmen, and left us ignorant of the valorous deeds of real heroes, whose lot should have been more humble. But in that day, when all men's actions are revealed upon the house tops, we shall not doubt the names of Denison L. Harris and Robert Scott among the world's heroes as stars of so small magnitude.

"Fact is stranger than fiction," and in value they cannot be compared. I respectfully submit the above narrative, which is a true recital of events which actually transpired. The manuscript has been carefully scrutinized by proper authorities who are satisfied of its authenticity and have approved its publication, as an important and accurate item of history connected with the Church.

HORACE CUMMINGS

That which is elevating and ennobling in its tendency is necessarily true.

CROSSING THE MEDITERRANEAN.

"Travel much make one far more clear and excellent.
It dairns the grossness of the understanding.
And renders active and industrious spirits.
He knows men's manners, must of necessity.
Best know his own; and send him by example.
It's a dull thing to travel like a mill horse.
Still in the place he was born in."

AN intelligent American, finding himself in Europe, with time and money at his command, will possibly take the desert, the pyramids into his tour, and place them with permanent distinctness in the landscape of his memory. The shores of the Mediterranean were for thousands of years the home of civilization. Their annals compass the era of written history, and their prominence extends back into pre-historic ages. The Phoenicians, Egyptians, Greeks, Romans, Carthaginians and Saracens have flourished about this sea, and to-day every commanding position in and about the Mediterranean is anxiously coveted by nations that aspire to political preponderance.

The "Midland Sea" is over two thousand miles long; it is from four thousand five hundred feet deep, and is eighty to twelve hundred miles wide; the shallowest and narrowest place being between Africa and Sicily. To cross it, the tourist may start from Gibraltar in an English ship; or from Marseille by a French line, (the most frequent route); or from Naples in an Italian steamer; or, on the west side of Italy, from Venice; or from Brindisi, which is the shortest trip of all. The writer sailed from Naples to Alexandria.

We were crossing the Gulf which separates Europe from the land of the great Sahara. It was in the month of January, but we were literally sailing into summer. It is an interesting route to Egypt, from Naples; for thus we pass the volcanic islands that are clustered near the south of Italy; and we go through the celebrated strait between Italy and the Island of Sicily; and get a half day at the Sicilian City of Syracuse, with its picturesque mountaineous background.

The first object we came upon after leaving the beautiful bay of Naples and the classical lands of Hesperia, was a towering mountain, a complete island of itself, in shape a cone, with the steep sides as green as though they had been turfed to order, the base, twelve miles in circumference, and the mountain over three thousand feet high. It was grandly beautiful; moving and flaring at the top as Stromboli has never failed to do within the era of recorded history. Many have seen Vesuvius. Few have seen Stromboli, the most majestic light-house in the world. Soon after passing the volcano, we came upon a scene described in classic fable. Those who have read Homer and Virgil remember how the beautiful Scylla was banished by Neptune, to inhabit a cavernous cliff, and was made so frightfully homely as to appal those passing voyagers whom she did not destroy. And while the navigators went to the other side of the narrow Strait of Messina to escape her, they were in fatal danger of being drawn down into the unfathomable whirlpool of Charybdis. We were in that Strait of Messina. We saw an Italian village that still bears the name of Scylla. For us the sea was smooth. The whirlpool has disappeared in the course of the ages, through the agency, perchance, of earthquakes. Messina is a tempting port; a gateway into the most important island in the Mediterranean. Sicily is altogether about the size of Maryland. It is a gem among islands; teeming with classic associations, it figures prominently in ancient and medieval history, and has distinct architectural vestiges. Sicily is fascinatingly attractive to all, and to the classic student, deeply interesting. Few Americans go there. We steered directly away from the Sicilian coast southeast, bound for Egypt. As we came on, we vainly sought to catch a glimpse of the light-houses on the Calabrian mountains whose promontories reach out to the southernmost end of Italy. The next land we saw was the Island of Candia, called in the Bible, Crete; a long, winding outline that seemed to be altogether a rugged mountain with two or three islands near by. It continued in sight nearly a whole day. Then came time to read in the Testament how Paul sailed over the sea, and failed through tempestuous weather to land at the "haven of Crete, which lieth toward the southwest," but disembarked at one of the near islands where "the barbarous people showed no little kindness." It was here that out of the burning stills came a viper that fastened on his hand but did no harm. Paul said to Titus, "I left thee in Crete, that thou shouldest ordain elders in every city," from which it appears that Crete was then well populated. This Bible story learned at Sunday school, became very interesting, when read as we were sailing along near Crete. Crete, is the ancient name; Candia, the modern. It is about a hundred and fifty miles long, and six to thirty-five miles wide, and has a wonderful history.

Carrier pigeons flew from Candia to Venice with the news of the conquest of the island by the Venetians, several hundred years ago. The pet birds, lovely and tame, which to-day are fed by the municipal government in the principal square of Venice, are the direct descendants of those birds that bore the news to Venice. The post in ancient Candia was a head post, the headquarters of the courier service. To-day, which is the direct descendant of those birds that bore the news to Venice. The post in ancient Candia was a head post, the headquarters of the courier service. The races of the pigeons that carry the letters to Venice from Crete, are the direct descendants of those birds that bore the news to Venice. The post in ancient Candia was a head post, the headquarters of the courier service. To-day, which is the direct descendant of those birds that bore the news to Venice.