

**MEMOIR OF THE
ASSASSINATION OF
HENRY RIVES POLLARD**

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Memoir of the Assassination of Henry Rives Pollard by Edward A. Pollard

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EDWARD A. POLLARD

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OF
HENRY RIVES POLLARD.

PREPARED BY HIS BROTHER,
EDWARD A. POLLARD.

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NARRATIVE OF THE ASSASSINATION.

ON the 21st of November, 1868, there appeared in the *Southern Opinion*, a paper published weekly in Richmond, Virginia, and owned and edited by HENRY RIVES POLLARD, an account of the elopement of a daughter of William H. Grant, a tobacconist in that city. The article, divested of some playfulness and exuberance of style—the work of the reporter—made no imputation on the chastity of the person principally named in it, (at least not such as an ordinary reader could detect), but seemed to point to a clandestine marriage, and the elopement of a daughter from her parents' control, to pursue a fugitive or truant husband. It appears that the facts, as alleged in the article, had been communicated to Mr. Pollard by his reporter, and, also, by other parties. Says J. M. Hanna, the reporter: "I was at dinner at the Ballard House on a day of the week previous, when a gentleman who sat at the same table with me remarked: 'Did you hear of the elopement?' I had not, and asked of him to whom he referred. The gentleman then named the parties, and related all the facts within his knowledge. Dinner over, I returned to the office. Mr. Pollard was not there; he had gone to his residence on the Grove road, but a note from him lay on my desk. Its contents were an urgent request to visit him at his house that evening, as he had some important items for communication to me. I visited him. I met him alone in my own room, as he seemed anxious that the servants should not overhear anything that might pass between us. He had some notes in his hand, and when I spoke of the case I had heard at the Ballard House, he remarked quickly: 'Yes, I have heard all about it, too, and I want you to take the address of this gentleman; go to him, get all the facts, and prepare an article upon it—in the old style, remember.' This was a phrase of his, used when he wished anything written in a peculiarly witty or sar-

castic vein. He then gave me the notes he held in his hand. I suggested that possibly it would be best to suppress names, as the parties stood high, and trouble might ensue. He angered at once, and replied: 'The papers don't keep my name out when I get into a difficulty; why should I suppress the names of these persons?'

Previous to the publication of the article it appears (as given in evidence on the trial) that James Grant, brother of the person whom the article exposed and caricatured, while making preparations to bring back and reclaim his sister—who, it is not denied, had left Richmond and gone as far as Philadelphia, without the consent or knowledge of her parents—had sought a friend, a Mr. Stover, a clerk in a clothing store, and had besought him to see that the newspapers made no mention of the event in his family, his apprehensions having reference to *all* of them, and Stover replying that he thought he could prevent it in the case of the *Southern Opinion*. Two or three days, however, before the *Southern Opinion* of the date referred to was printed, mention was made in another Richmond paper of the disappearance of a female member of a family of some social pretensions; but no names were given.

Meanwhile to Mr. Stover's approaches, designed to suppress the narrative of the elopement as it had been prepared for the *Southern Opinion*, Mr. Pollard appears to have firmly asserted the truth of the article (once remarking as was testified on the trial, that if a poor girl had been the delinquent, a newspaper would not be asked to withhold her name, and that he would recognize no social distinctions in publishing what he believed to be true). Of the decisive interview of Mr. Stover and Mr. Pollard, Mr. Hanna, who attended it, and who was a party to it, has given the following account: "The conversation again, as before, hinged on the possibility of suppressing the publication. The intermediary at last, rising with impatience, said, with emphasis: 'Mr. Pollard, is there no way by which this can be prevented? I am a friend of the family, am acting as such, and do assure you, upon the honor of a gentleman, that the reports concerning its member are false—utterly false.' Mr. Pollard, rising, walked the floor of his *sanctum*, then resumed his seat and replied: 'As for any pecuniary considerations that may be offered me' [there had been a proposition in a previous conversation of buying up the edition of the paper] 'that is purely a matter of business. I publish my paper to sell. If Mr. Grant, or you, as his representative,

wish to purchase this edition of my paper I will sell it to you; or, I will sell a half interest in my paper, or I will sell it entire; for I have wished for some time to form another newspaper association in New York city. But as for selling my principle, that I never will do; there is not money enough to buy me.' The gentleman remained silent, and Mr. Pollard resumed: 'Or, if I publish this article, this I am willing to do: I will open my columns to Mr. Grant, and I will print line for line and word for word whatever he may write in contradiction of the article.' The gentleman asked, 'Mr. Pollard, can I see the article you have prepared for publication?' Mr. Pollard turned to me and said: 'Have you any objection to Mr. Stover reading it?' I replied, 'Not in the least,' and passed the proof-sheet to him. He read it over carefully, and, concluding, remarked: 'Well, that is not so bad as I expected it would be; nevertheless, there is not one word of truth in the whole of it.' Mr. Pollard demurred: 'How is it, Mr. Stover, then, that all these stories are going about? I myself have made inquiries, and feel justified in making them public through my paper.'"

On the day of the publication of the article Mr. Pollard remained in his office purposely, as he said, to receive any one who might call with reference to it, or have any demands to make upon him. Three entire days passed; and yet there was no intimation that any of the Grant family would seek any reparation in any manner, or avail themselves of the columns of the paper as a medium of correction, as Mr. Pollard had offered it to them.

On the Tuesday following the publication—the 24th of November—Mr. Pollard pursued the usual route to the office of his paper, going from his home in the country, on the road where for three days he had gone to and fro, exposing his person and not dreaming of danger. A companion on the fatal ride to the city has given a minute and graphic account of its incidents. He says:

"After breakfast Mr. Pollard spent, as was his custom, half an hour among the workmen who were putting some improvements upon his house and grounds. He was happiest at home, and to meet him there socially was to encounter him in his best moods, with all the geniality of his nature in play. Oftentimes have I heard him say, as he stood looking towards Richmond, or walking his grounds: 'I wish I never had to go into that town; I could be happy here, were I free from the troubles of my paper.'

"At about a quarter to 9 o'clock the vehicle was announced as ready to

carry us into the city and the office of the *Opinion*. The presentiment of trouble yet strong on my mind, I said to Mr. Pollard: 'Suppose you do not go to town to-day. I can supply the printers.' 'No,' he answered, 'I must go in; besides, I must see that man to-day.' If man hath each a good guardian angel to walk with him, protecting and defending from death that lurks unseen, and dangers that encompass mortals around, at that moment the good angel of H. Rives Pollard deserted him—turned away and resigned the victim to the fate that waited hidden before him. From that moment Death's seal was upon him. He had even then passed the boundary of life, and was entering the shadow of death, approaching the sunset of existence.

"That ride was not more eventful than many other rides we had taken together. Mr. Pollard sat on the front seat with Mr. Redford, the driver; I behind him. Of conversation, save casual remarks, there was none until the vehicle had passed into the city, on Main street. We passed the residence of Rev. Dr. Hoge, and I observed that there was crape on the door. 'Who is dead,' inquired Mr. Pollard. 'Not Dr. Hoge, I hope.' (He had been ill, but was then convalescent.) Mr. Redford said the party deceased was a female member of the family, which appeared to relieve greatly the sudden anxiety of Mr. Pollard. Among the few of those for whom he expressed admiration, he numbered Dr. Hoge, and his estimation of his personal character as a man and reputation as a minister was of the most exalted kind. He had preached the funeral sermon of the late John M. Daniel, editor of the *Richmond Examiner*, in 1865, and Mr. Pollard, seeming to recall this incident, said in tones more solemn than was his wont: 'I have always said that when I die—as I shall, probably, some day—I want Dr. Hoge to preach my funeral sermon. I think he is one of the best christians and most eloquent preachers that ever lived.' I had heard him express such sentiments before, and so made an affirmative answer to his remarks.

"On down Main street; past the Spotswood—we drew swiftly towards the spot where death lay in wait, watching for the coming of the victim.

"Sitting behind him, I noticed that Mr. Pollard bowed occasionally to persons on the street. Once after a salute he turned to me and said: 'There goes a man who I know hates me.'

"On we were driven—one of us to death. The assassin's eye, peering from the curtained window, is already fastened upon its mark, coming nigher and nigher, charmed within the circle of death. We alight—Mr. Pollard first; I after him.

"One eye of the garreted assassin is closing, the other glances along the charged barrel; his forefinger presses the deadly trigger. Providence separates us by a little time and space—a moment—a few feet. Another second, there is a flash, a crack sharp and sudden, a splash of buckshot against the brick wall, and H. Rives Pollard lies dead, stretched at my feet."

The body—and it was yet convulsively breathing—was lifted from the sidewalk by two policemen, carried into the office of the *Southern Opinion*, and laid on a mattress. Eleven *buckshot* had entered the back; two of these passing diagonally downwards from the shoulder had penetrated the lungs and heart, and lodging under the skin on the left side of the chest were cut out. Three other of the shot had entered the right shoulder blade and lodged in the chest.

A crowd soon collected in the street, and inquiries were made for the murderer, who, it was evident, must have been concealed in some elevated position, as the body of the deceased had been pierced from above. A few minutes elapsed, and a shout proclaimed that the assassin had been secured. In a room in the third story of the high building on the corner of Main and Fourteenth streets, diagonally opposite the entrance of the *Southern Opinion* office, was found James Grant; in the corner of it a double-barrel gun, one barrel loaded, the other empty; and on the table a Colt's revolver and two Derringers, all loaded. One of the windows of the room was hoisted a few inches, a shoe-brush supporting it, the shade drawn down to the aperture, and there was an appearance of burnt powder on the sill. When the policeman, Robert Craddock, knocked at the door of the room, Grant called out, "Is that you *Bob*?" and again "it is all right." When the door was broken open, and the officer of the law was seen, the first words of the discovered murderer were, "I surrender. Will you protect me?"

He was carried down stairs into the street. At his appearance the crowd *cheered*; a number of persons calling out "Hurrah for Jimmy Grant!"—and others remarking "Grant has killed Pollard!" He was taken to the police headquarters, but he was not committed to jail, remaining at the office of the chief of police; two days thereafter he was released on bail by the Mayor of the city (a man by the name of Chahoon, from Massachusetts, recently appointed to that office); and it was not until the February term of the Hustings Court of Richmond that he was brought to trial.