

DARING AND SUFFERING.

A History of the Andrews Railroad Raid into Georgia in 1862.

The Most Noble and Brave Episode of the Civil War.

When Andrews and his men were in the trap door in order to bring Andrews up from below, then to pick their way through the door and walk above the ceiling, slowly and carefully, as usual to a great distance outside. Their garments had to be twisted into a rope to lift Andrews from below and the last of them to go to the ceiling, as well as to make a longer rope for the persons hanging from the ceiling out of the left to the ground outside.

When all was done they were just beginning to break faintly in the east. No time was to be lost. In half an hour it would be light and to render their escape impossible. They were all in the left and Andrews was given the first chance. Of course all letters had been removed. The rope was passed out, and Andrews crawled through, and in a moment was standing on the ceiling, but he had not time to push off a loose block, which fell to the ground and gave the alarm. The nearest guard rushed to the door and fired at the man hanging out of the hole, but missed him. Andrews had his boots in his hand, but in the excitement they fell and could not get up to pick them up. He afterwards wrote that he felt that his boots were not his own, but that he had taken them from the feet of some other man.

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ESCAPE OF ANDREWS AND WILLIAMS.

He spent the day in much anxiety and suspense, and when night came he cautiously left his hiding place and worked his way along the river, on the very front of Chattanooga. He came across a canoe which he borrowed for the occasion, and rowed down stream all night. This was a swift mode of progression, and he was able to make good time. He sought a retired place, sunk the canoe, and hid in the woods till night allowed him to proceed. This he did daily for a week. Twice he was saved if he had not been discovered by Gen. Mitchell, who constructed an extemporized gunboat with which to patrol the river, and twice William passed within half of it. But he had heard nothing of any such Union craft, and he knew that he was not to be seen by the Confederates, perhaps searching for him. In the dark it was not easy to see any indications of his character, but the poor boy crept continually forward, the water of the shore without being discovered.

But at last he made the mistake that Wood and Wilson had made long before. He imagined that he was safe, and went to sleep in the boat, and half that time put in on foot directly northward, would have carried him safely beyond the border. But as he was going forward, concentrating himself on having succeeded as well, a band of Confederate cavalry, who were making a raid into Mitchell's territory, saw him, and pursuing a boat with several pairs of oars, came out to meet him. William saw his danger, and there was no time to lose. He jumped out of the boat, and hid in the woods till night allowed him to proceed. This he did daily for a week. Twice he was saved if he had not been discovered by Gen. Mitchell, who constructed an extemporized gunboat with which to patrol the river, and twice William passed within half of it. But he had heard nothing of any such Union craft, and he knew that he was not to be seen by the Confederates, perhaps searching for him. In the dark it was not easy to see any indications of his character, but the poor boy crept continually forward, the water of the shore without being discovered.

When Andrews was brought back to Chattanooga a scene of much apparent barbarity followed. His escape had excited great anger, and produced much terrible conversation at Knoxville, which will be narrated hereafter. But they were now determined to give him no further opportunity of evading their cherished vengeance from their hands. He was put under guard, and all access to the yard was denied. Of course no other visitors could see them. The guard was stimulated to renewed diligence. But as chains and manacles had proved ineffective, something more secure was devised. From the shop of William Lewis, a colored blacksmith, a man was brought over and taken down into the dungeon, who riveted a pair of heavy iron fetters around his ankles. Dorsey and Wilson, who

money was afterwards squandered in a gluttonous and gave rise to vexatious law suits yet this secured the careful preservation of the letter. In all probability Andrews wrote first to his betrothed, giving those end remembrances and bequests which would not be repeated in a letter to another, and followed with the more general and business like communications to the other friends. The letter to his betrothed, far beyond the ordinary misapprehension of ignorant persons. This is probably intentional, as a few lines at the first have no errors.

CHAPTER XXIX. LAST DAYS. Andrews had now but four days more of dungeon life between himself and eternity. Escape was impossible unless there should be a rapid advance of the Federal forces, a possibility which did come very near being made a fact. He applied himself to the great business of preparing to die. Most unexpectedly a letter written at this time and in some way carried through the lines has come to hand, and throws great light upon his character and thoughts at this period. He managed in some unknown manner to get writing material and wrote two or three letters. One, no doubt, was written to his betrothed in Flemingsburg, but never received. Another was written to his mother in Missouri. The contents of the latter can only be given as they are remembered after an interval of many years by one who read the letter. He told his mother that he was to die, and that all he regretted was that he had been able to do so little for his country; that many other sons had left their bones bleaching on southern battle fields; that he had tried to do his duty, and was now seeking the pardon and favor of God. There were many other half remembered expressions similar to those which are given in the letter below.

The following communication addressed to a trusted friend in Flemingsburg, Ky., and which from some references to property in it contains has been called "the last letter," is a most touching and eloquent. The gift bestowed upon Miss Layton was of trifling value, though most pathetic a mere empty trunk. But the full significance of this was no doubt given, with probably more extensive bequests, in one or other of the missing letters. This letter, which reached Flemingsburg, Ky., in August, two months after it was written, being mailed at Louisville, is recorded in the Flemingsburg book of wills, while the original is most carefully preserved. Andrews had directed his friend to draw out his money in the Flemingsburg bank—some \$2,000, with good premium and interest—in case he never returned, giving him a check for that purpose, and to lend it on good security, paying the interest as a perpetual bequest to the town poor. The friend was faithful to his trust, and though the

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carried to Knoxville, where a Confederate court martial had convened, I have never learned. It may have been thought that this number was large enough for vengeance, or more probably it was intended that they were disposed of to bring the others also. Gen. E. Kirby Smith commanded the department, and all the proceedings were under his authority. What occurred to us very remarkably was that a single one of our number at a time was brought before the court, and all the proceedings in his case were gone through with before another was brought out. Thus each trial was but the copy of the one that went before, and short as they were, must soon have become very monotonous to the members of the court. We employed two eminent Union men of Knoxville as counsel—Judge O. P. Temple and Judge Baxter—but they were not allowed to hear the plea of the Judge advocate, the prosecutor against us. Neither had we that privilege, and can therefore give the points that were most relied on for our conviction. In fact, members of the court visited us and said that we would be acquitted of the charge against us, and that they were looking about for camps at Chattanooga, Dalton and Marietta as spies, and only held as prisoners of war. This inspired in us a strange and, as the issue proved, an unwarranted degree of hopefulness. Our own acknowledgment of what we did, which we linked with the statement that we had been detailed from our commands without our consent and with no knowledge of the nature of the expedition on which we were sent, and the evidence of some of those who had seen us on the train or aided in our capture, constituted the evidence in the case. But we have reason to think the whole result was predetermined. Our own attorneys were confident that we could not be convicted of being spies. The fact that we were not placed in irons here for the first time during the nearly two months of our imprisonment tended to increase our hope.

Another element of far greater importance than the mere machinery of the law, was the fact that the execution of our destiny. The trial of one of our men—there was no apparent order in the selection—was finished each day. The next day another was taken. I have never doubted that the executioner's intention was to go through the whole list in the same way, and we were not at all solicitous as to who should come first or last. But that did prove to be of tremendous importance, for a vigorous advance of the Federal armies upon both Knoxville and Chattanooga caused Gen. Smith to give up East Tennessee for lost, and to dissolve the court and send us all back to Atlanta, Ga. Seven had then been tried. A delay of five days in this advance would have finished the whole twelve—including the writer—at the rate they were proceeding. But the whole twelve were sent away together, having seen that the executioner showed a difference in the position of the five and the seven, and arriving in Atlanta just a week after the execution of Andrews. We had heard of that terrible event in Knoxville, and it was a relief to us to find that our own hopefulness either for the seven who had been tried or the five whose trial had been interrupted was not diminished, for Confederates had always been saying to us that his case was much more aggravated than ours.

In Atlanta we were placed in the upper room of a large brick building, surrounded by guards. The remainder of the party who were with Andrews were placed in another room of the same building, which was the city jail. Two great events of the most opposite character, upon which turned the fate of our band, are associated closely with this jail. They will now be narrated.

CHAPTER XXX. A DAY OF BLOOD. The 18th of June was a bright summer day. Our party in the jail were making merry with games and songs, utterly unsuspecting of immediate injury. But one of our number, looking out of the window, saw a squadron of cavalry approaching and called attention to it. There was nothing unusual about this, for we often noticed bands of troops on the streets; but they now halted at our gate and surrounded our prison. This was unusual and startling.

The doors down stairs opened. We heard the shuffle of feet in the hall and the clink of officers' sabres as they ascended the staircase. We held our breath in painful attention, while they passed at our door, unlooked and threw it open, and then one of the number, stepping before the others, read the names of the seven tried at Knoxville. They were ordered to respond and stand in a line before him, which they did. Robison was sick with fever, but a guard assisted him to rise, and he stood with the rest. Then they were all told to follow over into the opposite room, while the Tennesseans were there brought in return to us.

With throbbing hearts we asked one another the meaning of these strange proceedings. Some supposed our comrades were about to receive their acquittal; others, still more sanguine, that they would be paroled, preparatory to an exchange. But we had no confidence in these suggestions, even while we made them. It would not have been necessary to surround the prison for such purpose; and the faces of the officers who had entered our room were solemn and stern.

I was sick, too, having suffered a good deal recently with malarial fever, but rose to my feet oppressed with muttering fear—the most deadly I ever remember feeling. A half written fellow who had been put in with the Tennesseans came to me and wanted to play a game of cards. I had been fond of the game, but never played it after this day! Now I struck the greasy pack from his hand and bid him leave me.

From over the way we heard the sound of voices, muffled and indistinct because of the two iron doors between; and the opening and shutting of doors, the passage of several persons up and down the staircase, and last the sound of a solemn religious service.

A little while after—I cannot judge of the length of time spent in such fearful agony—the ministers in the other room think it must have been more than an hour—the door opened, and our comrades came back, one by one; but the change in them was fearful. My own friend, George D. Wilson, was leaning, his step firm, his form erect; but his hands firmly tied, and his face pale as death. "What is it?" some one asked in a whisper, for his appearance seemed very odd.

"We are to be executed immediately," was the appalling reply, given in a low tone, but with thrilling distinctness. The others followed him into the room, all tied ready for the scaffold. The officers were standing in the door, and barely moved their feet as the prisoners came one by one by the hand before death. Then came the farewells, hopeless in this world. It was a moment that seemed an age of measureless, heart-breaking sorrow. What had come in the other room while we were separated? The narrative of the ministers will make that plain.

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