

Abolitionists of Ontario



Fugitives and Freemen

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by William Still

An Attempted Escape.

MR. EDITOR: Dear friend, -- As your interesting paper, I trust, has a wide circulation among the fugitives, as well as their friends, in Canada, it may not be uninteresting to all concerned to see a letter occasionally from this region, relating to "escapes," "arrests," etc.; Hence you are at liberty, if you see proper, to appropriate this letter to your readers.

Yesterday another poor escaping fugitive was found secreted on board the *Pennsylvania*, near Newcastle, Delaware, within sight of the land of liberty--of the place where he had doubtless so earnestly prayed that he might reach and be free.

This unfortunate man, evidently, through great peril, had succeeded in getting on board of the *Pennsylvania*, at Richmond, with high hopes of being able to escape his tormentors and oppressors, thereby winning for himself the inestimable prize which he had been so long robbed of--liberty. But how horrible and hopeless must he have felt when he heard the sound of infuriated voices of men armed with crow bars, clubs and other deadly weapons, searching in every corner of the boat for him, as they would have done for a mad dog. A lady who witnessed, with weeping, on board of the boat, the terrible scene connected with the arrest, described the savages who made the arrest, as being armed as above alluded to, and the poor heart-broken hero, as looking of course very dejected and

friendless. I can hardly conceive how he restrained himself from utter desperation; from taking the life of his captors, or his own. Certainly it must be beyond the conception of the human mind to fathom the bitter anguish which must pervade the bosom of any one placed in the situation he was found.

The telegraph was used in betraying him. A week ago four others were taken from a boat, near Richmond, who they were or what disposition was afterwards made of them I am unable to say, having heard nothing further of them than the simple fact of their having been arrested.

These tidings I am aware will fill the heart of not a few anxious fugitives amongst you with great madness. Will it not revive in the minds of many most keenly the situation of dear friends left in bondage? The inquiring thought will go to many hearts doubtless, exciting their apprehension that the captured fugitives were the very ones they had been looking and praying for--their own blood kin!

Well, notwithstanding these brutal arrests and the ever vigilance of the slaveholder and slave-hunter, the number of fugitives escaping, and of those who are ready and willing to aid them to Canada are daily increasing, and there is not the least room to doubt but that the underground Railroad will do this year, according to what has already been done since the year set in, just double the amount of business that was done last year. In this respect that mischievous book *Uncle*

"Self-reliance is the True Road to Independence"

Tom's Cabin may be charged with helping the underground largely; for but few of the intelligent "articles" there are in the south, who have not read, or heard it read, and consequently have at once "fired up" to strike for Canada. By the way, quite recently I had the pleasure of an interview with a very intelligent "piece" of property from far South, who had *Uncle Tom* with him, thinking as much of the old fellow probably as any other friend living.

Since writing the above, four hearty and "likely" looking young men and women have arrived; and will soon I hope swell the goodly number who are already counted amongst her Majesty's subjects.

You are already aware that Davis the "Salt water" fugitive has been sent back to Georgia. That does not end the matter, however, for the friends. And there is some reason to hope that their efforts will not be unavailing. That Davis will stand as good a chance on trial for his freedom in Georgia, amongst the rankest slaveholders, as he would be likely to do in Delaware, where they think themselves quite well northernized, cannot for a moment be doubted, since it is now a fact that he was sent back by them notwithstanding the most unqualified proof of his freedom; and that he had been illegally deprived of his liberty, by going into Maryland.

But I wish again to call your attention to "old Virginia." For some time past she has been letting off no small amount of fury on account of the "frequent escapes," from her dominion.

According to an account from the Richmond paper, the "widow lady," "Mrs. Louisa White," "has been left penniless" by the "rascality" of a "nest of Abolition scoundrels or by the uncommonly intelligent negroes," who had been raised with the greatest indulgence! Poor soul she is to be pitied, truly!!

The writer in the Richmond paper neglected or omitted to tell his readers, however, that a very indulgent Mrs. Louisa White had once been in the possession of some thirty or more of the well "raised," etc., but had sold one after another until the number had been reduced to these two "uncommonly intelligent \$1200 negroes," and that a mortgage of \$700 was at the time of escape hanging over the head of one of them. Of course, being so "uncommonly intelligent" it was not a very hard matter for them to calculate how long it would be before their change would arrive.

Now it may be that they have been foolish enough after all, to make away to Canada, on the under-ground railroad; if so, they should see this and learn the "penniless condition of their indulgent Mistress." Will they not be moved to return, think you?

Your paper is read here with lively interest, so far as I know, and I have seen and conversed with quite a number on the subject.

Yours truly, WM. STILL.

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