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DEVOTED TO LITERATURE, MORALITY AND GENERAL INTELLIGENCE.

The Escape of Gen. John M. Morgan from the Ohio Penitentiary.

This is certainly one of the most wonderful achievements recorded in history; and as doubt has frequently been expressed as to whether Morgan really did escape or got out by corrupting the officials, the following account will be read with interest. It may be relied on as strictly and accurately true, and is prepared from notes made by Col. Ashton at the time and published in the Richmond Enquirer. Capt. Hines not only was not killed, but lived to get back to the Confederacy, and was entrusted afterward by the government at Richmond with a very dangerous mission within the enemy's lines.

To appreciate the difficulties of this escape one must have seen the prison. It certainly required a boldness and desperation to undertake it, even if there had been no guards to elude; but with such vigilance as was exercised night and day by the officials, it was an undertaking that would have caused almost any other man than Morgan to shrink from attempting.

The cells of the prison in which they were confined, consisted of holes in a great thick wall, 3 1/2 feet wide, 6 1/2 feet high, and 6 feet long. They were secured, first, by a grated iron door, and then a sheet iron shutter, which when closed, excluded both light and air, and no person could survive more than a few days when this outside door was closed. Their beds consisted of iron bunks that were fastened by hinges to the wall, and could either be hooked up or allowed to stand on the floor, and to prevent any suspicion, for several days before any work was attempted they made it a habit to let them down and sit on their doors and read. Capt. Hines superintended the work, while General Morgan kept watch to divert the attention of the sentinels, whose duty it was to come around during the day and observe if anything was going on. One day this fellow came in while Hokersmith was down under the floor boring away, and missing him, said, "Where is Hokersmith?" The General replied, "He is in my room, sick," and immediately pulled a document out of his pocket and said to him: "Here is a memorial I have drawn up to forward to the Government at Washington—what do you think of it?" The fellow, who, perhaps, could not read, being highly flattered at the General's condescension, took it and very gravely looked at it for several moments before he vouchsafed any reply. Then he handed it back, he expressed himself highly pleased with it. In the meantime Hokersmith had been signalled, and came up, professing to feel very unwell. This sentinel was the most difficult and dangerous obstacle in their progress, because there was no telling at what time he would enter during the day, and at night he came regularly every two hours to each cell and inserted a light through the bars of their door to see that they were quietly sleeping, and frequently after he had completed his rounds, he would slip back in the dark with a pair of India rubber shoes on, to listen at their cells if anything was going on. The General says that he would almost invariably know of his presence by a certain magnetic shudder which it would produce; but for fear that this acute sensibility might sometimes fail him, he broke up small particles of coal every morning and sprinkled it before the cell door, which would always announce his coming.

Everything was now ready to begin the work. So about the latter part of October they commenced to bore. All were busy—one making a rope ladder by tearing and twisting up strips of bed-tick, another making bowie knives, and another twisting up towels. They labored perseveringly for several days, and after boring through nine inches of cement, and nine thicknesses of brick placed edgewise, they began to wonder when they should reach the soft earth. Suddenly a brick fell through. What could this mean? What infernal wharlock had they reached? It was immediately entered, and to their great astonishment and joy, it proved to be an air chamber extending the whole length of the row of cells. Here was an unexpected reprieve in their favor. Hitherto they had been obliged to conceal their rubbish in their bed-ticks, each day burning a proportionate quantity of straw; now they had room enough for all they could dig. They at once commenced to tunnel at right angles with this air chamber, to get through the foundation; and day after day they bored, and day after day the blocks of granite were removed, and still the work before them seemed interminable.

After twenty three days of unremitting labor, and getting through a granite wall of six feet in thickness, they reached the soil. They tunneled up for some distance, and light began to shine. How glorious was that light! It announced the fulfillment of their labors, and if Providence would only continue its favor, they would soon be free. This was the morning of the 26th day of November, 1863. The next night, at 12 o'clock, it was determined on as the hour at which they would attempt their liberty. Each moment that intervened was filled with dreadful anxiety and suspense, and each time the guard entered increased their apprehensions. The General says he had prayed for rain, but the morning of the 27th dawned bright and beautiful. The evening came, and clouds began to gather. How they prayed for them to increase! If rain should only begin, their chance of detection would be greatly lessened. While these thoughts were passing through their minds, the keeper entered with a letter for General Morgan. He opened it, and what was his surprise, and I may say wonder, to find it from a poor Irish woman of his acquaintance in Kentucky, commencing, "My dear General, I feel certain you are going to try to get

So, over he took them. "Where does Miss—live?" "Just a short distance from here." "Will you show me her house?" "Yes, sir." The house was reached, a fine breakfast was soon obtained, money and a horse furnished, a good woman's prayer bestowed, and off he went. From there forward through Kentucky everybody vied with each other as to who should show him the most attention, even to the negroes; and young ladies of refinement begged the honor to cook his meals. He remained in Kentucky some days, feeling perfectly safe, and sending into Louisville for many little things he wanted. Went to Bardonia, and found a Federal regiment had just arrived there looking for him. Remained here and about for three or four days, and then struck out for Dixie, sometimes disguising himself as a government cattle contractor, and buying a large lot of cattle; at other times a Quartermaster, until he got to the Tennessee river. Here he found all means of transportation destroyed, and the bank strongly guarded; but with the assistance of about thirty others, who had recognized him and joined him in spite of his remonstrances, he succeeded in making a raft, and he and Capt. Hines crossed over. His escort, with heroic self-sacrifice, refused to cross until he was safely over. He then hired a negro to get his horse over, paying him \$20 for it. The river was so high that the horse came near drowning, and after more than one hour's struggling with the stream was pulled out, so exhausted as scarcely to be able to stand. The General threw a blanket over him and commenced to walk him, when suddenly, he says, he was seized with a presentiment that he would be attacked, and remarking to Captain Hines, "We will be attacked in twenty minutes," commenced saddling his horse. He had hardly tied his girth when "bang, bang," went the minnie balls. He bounced his horse, and the noble animal appearing to be inspired with new vigor, bounded off like a deer up the mountain. The last he saw of his poor fellows on the opposite side, they were disappearing up the river bank, fired upon by a whole regiment of Yankees. By this time it was dark, and also raining. He knew that a perfect cordon of pickets would surround the foot of the mountain, and if he remained there until morning, he would be lost. So he determined to run the gauntlet at once and commenced to lead his horse, he came almost in personal contact with a picket. His first impulse was to kill him, but finding him a leap, he determined to let him sleep on. He made his way to the house of a Union man that he knew lived there, and went up and passed himself off as Captain Quartermaster of Hunt's Regiment, who was on his way to Athens, Tenn., to procure supplies of sugar and coffee for the Union people of the country. The lady, who appeared to be asleep while this interview was taking place, and sugar and coffee, jumped out of bed in her night clothes, and said, "Thank God for that, for we sit here in such a state of horror, and God knows how long!" She was so delighted at the prospect that she made up a fire and cooked them a good supper. Sapper being over, the General remarked that he understood some rebels had "tried to cross the river this afternoon." "Yes," said the woman, "but our men killed some on 'em, and driv the rest back." "Now," says the General, "I know that, but didn't some of them get over?" "Yes," was her reply, "but they are on the mountain, and can't get down without being killed, as every road is stopped up." He then said to her, "It is very important for me to get to Athens by to-morrow night, or I may lose that sugar and coffee, and I am afraid to go down any of these roads, for fear my own men will kill me." The fear of losing that sugar and coffee brought her again to an accommodating mood, and she replied: "Why, Paul, can't you show the Captain through our farm, that road down to the field?" The General says, "Of course, if you can do it, and as the night is very cold, I will give you \$10 (in gold) to help you along." The gold, and the prospect of sugar and coffee, was too much for any poor man's nerves, and he yielded, and getting on a horse, he took them seven miles to the big road.

From this time forward he had a series of adventures and escapes, all very wonderful, until he got near another river in Tennessee, when he resolved to go up to a house and find the way. Hines went to the house, while the General stood in the road. Hearing a body of cavalry come dashing on behind him, he quietly slipped to one side of the road, and it passed without observing him. They went traveling after Hines, and poor fellow, he has not been heard of since. How sad to think that he should either be captured or killed after so many brave efforts, not only in his own behalf, but also in that of the General, for the General says that it is owing chiefly to Hines' enterprise and skill that they made their escape.

When he arrived at the river referred to above, he tried to get over, intending to stop that night with a good Southern man on the other side. He could not get over, and had to remain at the house of a Union man. The next morning he went to the house that he had sought the night previous, and found the track of the Yankees scarcely cold. They had been there all night, expecting he would come there, and had murdered everybody who had attempted to reach the house without halting them. In pursuing this brutal course, they had killed three young men, neighbors of this gentleman, and went away leaving their dead bodies on the ground.

After he had crossed Obey's river, and got down into middle Tennessee, he found it almost impossible to avoid recognition. At one time he passed some

poor women, and one of them commenced clapping her hands and said, "Oh, I know who that is; I know who that is!" but catching herself, she stopped short and passed on with her companions.

The General says that his escape was made entirely without the assistance from any one on the outside, and so far as he knows, also without their knowledge of his intention; that the announcement of his arrival at Toronto was one of those fortuitous coincidences that cannot be accounted for; that it assisted him materially, no doubt. In fact, he says that his "wife's prayers" saved him; and, as this was the most agreeable way of explaining it, he was determined to believe it.

The above account may be relied on as correct; and, although much has been left out, yet enough is stated to stamp it as one of the most remarkable escapes in history.

ALBANY, GA., Nov. 13, 1869. I hereby certify that I have carefully surveyed a parcel of land pointed out to me by Capt. J. W. Allen, as that from which he has this year gathered 27,206 pounds seed cotton, and that I find the area of said parcel of land to be six and eighty-eight thousandths acres.

ALBANY, GA., Dec. 20, 1869. Dear Sir:—I had prepared and planted six acres of land in cotton this year, the result of which (twenty seven thousand two hundred and six pounds of seed cotton), was intended for the Georgia State Fair.

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