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SAM DAVIS A SOUTHERN HERO.

SACRIFICED HIS LIFE RATHER THAN BETRAY HIS TRUST WHILE A SCOUT.

[Memphis (Tenn.) Commercial Appeal.]

In colonial days, when England turned tyrant, the colonists rose in revolt, and because they succeeded, the world wrote them down as patriots, as heroes, as martyrs. In subsequent era, when the North aped the Britons, the South imitated the thirteen tribes, and because she was beaten, her scions were branded as traitors, as bigots, as rebels. When Howe, with his red coats, invaded New York and hanged Nathan Hale as a spy, the victim was revered as a national idol, and honored with eternal renown; when Dodge, with his blue coats, patrolled Tennessee, and slaughtered Sam Davis as a scout, the youth, though lamented, was soon half forgotten, in spite of his noble sacrifice.

It is right that the nation rejoices to hallow the memory of Nathan Hale; it is just that his story is still related in the reference books of his land; it is well that his statue towers aloft in the midst of the city where he died; it is wise that his prowess is yet portrayed as the model for the patriots of the morrow.

But Davis, too, was a hero, the peer of Nathan Hale, for, while he was offered as a sacrifice on an altar that crumbled into dust, still he has left to the people of the South an example of courage and devotion to duty equal in splendor to any to be found in the records of the human race. Because he battled for the Stars and Bars, the makers of annals have omitted his name; but the children of his section have cherished his fame and have given their silver and in granite to hallow his ashes forever. Still, there are myriads, even in Dixie, unfamiliar with the story of his life, and thousands would, therefore, read with rapture the fullness of his thrilling career, the cardinal features of which, it is hoped, may be gleaned from the following facts:

Near the town of Smyrna, in Middle Tennessee, some twenty miles out from Nashville, Samuel Davis, the martyr of Pulaski, was born, far back in the forties. His father was Chas. L. Davis, a well-to-do farmer of the district, and his mother was a

matron of the Tennessee type—well worthy to have borne such a son. Of his childhood, little or nothing is told in the meager accounts of his life; but he seems to have been conspicuous for his honor, even from his earliest years. In the home he is said to have led such a life as the "Father of his Country" had lived; and among his companions he appears to have passed as a youth just as pure as a girl.

As a student, too, he enjoyed the esteem and the utmost respect of the school, not only because of his honest application, but also because of his upright bearing and his zealous devotion to truth. At "Old Jefferson," indeed, where he studied for a time, his word was regarded as good as his oath, and if ever he was guilty of anything base during his schoolboy days, those who have written his wonderful story have failed to record such a fact.

With an unswerving character, such as was his, and a predisposition to do honest work, the Tennessee lad might have hoped to attain to a lofty round in life; but just in the midst of his student days the nation leaped to arms, and the soul of a patriot woke in his breast at the first wild bugle blast. Because of his tender years, however, he could not respond to the earliest call, and yet when the armies of the United States turned their faces to the South, he flung by his books, in spite of his age, and shouldered his gun for the field.

Having said farewell to the loved ones at home, the stripling of nineteen summers entered the service as a private soldier in the Rutherford County Rifles. He served in the ranks under Capt. Ledbetter and proved himself worthy of the gray, for in every engagement in which he had a part he fought with the valor of a veteran, displaying both courage and skill. He was present at Shiloh and at Perryville and at many battles between; and although he was only a boy and a private, still he elicited hearty commendation from his officers high in command; yet his patriotism was unsatisfied, in spite of his splendid record, and he yearned for an ampler sphere of action to prove his devotion to his land.

Finally, in the autumn of 1863, the chance he had longed for came. Gen. G. M. Dodge, with a body of Federals, was stationed at Pulaski, Tenn., and in order to drive out the

Yankees from the State it became necessary for Gen. Bragg to procure information concerning the strength and the character of the Federal fortifications at Pulaski and Nashville. To obtain these data the Confederate commander was forced to dispatch some trusty spies far into the enemy's lines; so, aware of Davis's courage and capacity, he entrusted to him and six other worthies this perilous and important mission, sending the gallant gray coats forth, each armed with a pass like this: "Headquarters Gen. Bragg's Scouts, Middle Tennessee, September 25, 1863. Samuel Davis has permission to pass on scouting duty anywhere in Middle Tennessee or South of the Tennessee river he may think proper. By order Gen. Bragg. E. Coleman, Captain Commanding Scouts."

Conscious of the danger of such a venture, but bent on achieving their purpose, the resolute band of heroes set out on their appointed mission. On account of the nature of their undertaking, each went in a different direction, and after having baffled the watchmen of the enemy they finally succeeded in obtaining the facts for which they had entered the hostile lines. The most important of the documents were borne by Samuel Davis, who carried them hidden away in his boots and under the seat of his saddle. The papers he bore contained maps and descriptions of the fortifications of Pulaski and Nashville, and revealed the number and the strength of the foe in the State of Tennessee. How he secured this information the world may never know, but two of the most satisfactory explanations are certainly these, though neither of these is certain:

It is said that the Federal commander had made a pencil copy of his plans and defenses, which, after having corrected and copied, he had failed to conceal or destroy. A negro, it is stated, stole this document and conveyed it to Samuel Davis. It is likewise declared that a Northern officer in love with a Southern girl betrayed his country's secrets for the sake of the woman he loved. This latter version of his source of information has received considerable currency, but it is always easy to set a rumor going if it smacks of a romantic flavor.

Still it matters but little now who gave him the data he got. It is enough to know that he carried his point, and was well on his way back to Bragg when suddenly he was assaulted by a body of Federals a few miles out from Pulaski. Being all alone, he made no resistance, but he kept a clear head at the time, for, being near the river, he rose in his stirrups and hurled far off into the rushing waters a part of the papers which he bore. Enough remained, however, to prove him a Southern spy, so the blue coats bound him and led him away to the Federal camp at Pulaski.

Here he was taken before Gen. Dodge, who, fearing that one of his own commanders had sold the secrets to Davis, offered to release him and to restore him to his comrades if he would only reveal the name of the man who had given him the facts. The captive knew that nothing, besides could save him from the hangman's noose, but neither the logic

nor the threats of Dodge could force him to betray his trust. Again and again the general besought him to save his bright, young life, but the unshaken answer was always the same: "I had rather die a thousand times than betray a single trust."

Reluctant to sacrifice such a stout heart, and determined to discover the traitor in his camps, Gen. Dodge resorted to the last extremity and ordered a courtmartial forthwith to try Sam Davis as a spy. At the time appointed the judges assembled, and after a fruitless effort to bribe him, condemned the stripling to death, closing their inquisition with the following awful sentence: "The commission does therefore sentence him, the said Samuel Davis, of Coleman's Scouts, in the service of the so-called Southern States, to be hanged by the neck until he is dead, at such time and place as the commanding general shall direct, two-thirds of the commission concurring in the sentence. Finding the sentence of the commission approved the sentence shall be carried into effect on Friday, November 27, 1863, between the hours of 10 a. m. and 2 p. m."

Thus condemned, the Tennessee lad was remanded to prison in Pulaski, and during his confinement he was cheered and sustained by Chaplain Young, of the Federal army, and was kindly handled by every person detailed to guard and keep him. Among his watchers was a youth of his age from South Bend, Ind., who did everything in his power to persuade the captive to talk of those who had aided him in securing the secrets of the North. Young Davis deeply appreciated the interest young Vanpelt took in his fate, but he always returned the kind Indian his heroic and invincible answer: "I had rather be hanged a thousand times than prove untrue to my cause." Capt. Armstrong, too, the provost marshal, was a frequent

A Woman's Back

Has many aches and pains caused by weaknesses and falling, or other displacement, of the pelvic organs. Other symptoms of female weakness are frequent headache, dizziness, imaginary specks or dark spots floating before the eyes, gnawing sensation in stomach, dragging or bearing down in lower abdominal or pelvic region, disagreeable drains from pelvic organs, faint spells with general weakness.

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caller at his cell, for the big-hearted Federal hoped against hope that Davis might save his life.

Nothing could move him, however, but on the evening before he died his heart went back to his boyhood home and he wrote these lines to his mother:

"Pulaski, Giles County, Tenn., Nov. 26, 1863.—Dear Mother: Oh, how painful it is to write to you. I have got to die to-morrow morning—to be hanged by the Federals. Mother, do not grieve for me. I must bid you goodbye for evermore. Mother, I do not fear to die. Give my love to all. Your son,
"Samuel Davis."

"P. S.—Mother, tell the children all to be good. I wish I could see you all once more, but I never will any more. Mother and father, do not forget me. Think of me when I am dead, but do not grieve for me. It will not do any good. Father, you can send after my remains, if you want to do so. They will be at Pulaski, Tenn. I will leave some things, too, with the hotel-keeper for you. Pulaski is in Giles county, Tennessee, south of Columbia."

On the morning after he had written this letter the dauntless captive was taken from his cell, was placed in a wagon, containing his coffin, and guarded by a regiment of Northern foemen, was borne to a spot in the suburbs of Pulaski, where the gallows was waiting for him. The place was surrounded by a square of soldiers; but as the death-train slowly approached, the troops made way for the cavalcade to enter, and then took their places again. The coffin was placed at the foot of the scaffold, and the prisoner was stationed beside it. Turning to the provost-general, he asked how long he might live; and when told he had only fifteen minutes, he calmly began to prepare himself for mounting the steps to his doom. When the hour was at hand, he said to his captor, without a tremor in his voice, that he was ready to lay down his life on the sacred altar of his land. Having said farewell to those around him, he was just in the act of mounting the scaffold, when one of Gen. Dodge's officers dashed up with another message from the kind-hearted Federal, once more offering to liberate the prisoner if he would only surrender his secret and declare the source of his facts. With the black cap hovering over his head and the hemp there dangling at his side, young Davis deliberately elected death, closing his brief but glorious career with words like these on his lips: "Please say to General Dodge that I deeply appreciate what he has done to save me from the fate which awaits me, but bear to him my parting message that I had rather be hanged a thousand times than to live with the mark of a traitor to a trust forever branded on my soul."

The enemy had done everything that they could to avert his awful doom; but all of their efforts having proven unavailing, they were forced to abide by the sentence of the commission; and so on Friday, November 27, 1863, they hanged Samuel Davis, and buried his body in the place where he died like a god. When the work was done and the tragedy was ended, Pulaski was shrouded in sorrow and gloom; and even the Federals were melted to

tears as they thought of the havoc of war.

When news of his death at length found its way to his father's home near Smyrna, the grief-stricken parents sent to Pulaski for the body of their martyred son. Through the courtesy of the Blue Coats, they were allowed their request, and a few days after his death the lifeless form of the Tennessee hero was interred in the family grounds, and his memory as hallowed with a marble slab erected by the sire of the son.

But the nation was not satisfied with a simple shaft of stone; so a few years ago a Northern soldier who saw the stripling die suggested to a Southern veteran the erection of a monumental bust in honor of the gallant boy. When the matter was begun, Gen. Dodge himself sent a snug contribution to the fund, and both the North and the South are to-day united in sharing the sentiment of the following lines from the heart of Mrs. Wilcox:

"When the Lord calls up earth's heroes To stand before his face, O, many a name unknown to fame Shall ring from that high place! And out of a grave in the Southland, At the just God's call and beck, Shall one man rise with fearless eyes, And a rope about his neck.

"For men have swung from gallows Whose souls were white as snow, Not how they die, nor where, but why, Is what God's records show, And on that mighty ledger Is writ Sam Davis' name— For honor's sake he would not make A compromise with shame.

"And God, who loves the loyal Because they are like him, I doubt not yet that soul shall set Among his cherubim. O, Southland! bring your laurels, And add your wreath, O North! Let glory claim the hero's name, And tell the world his worth."



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