W I N G

On May 16, 1924, with Mrs. Sherman Hoyt, from South Norwalk to talk with Henry Wing.

She tells me of her connection, how Wing had been a Methodist minister - "best preacher they ever had at Darien" - had told them many Lincoln stories which she had tried forty years ago to persuade him to write out. He tells me later that he was too busy "saving souls" - by which he says he means doing good to people - to attempt to put down his reminiscences. But when age compelled him to leave the ministry he wrote down - fully, I should judge - what he remembered and sent the MS to Mrs. Hoyt. This must have been about 1917.

Mrs. Hoyt got in touch with Mary Shipman Andrews, hoping that she would find material for stories. After many months' delay Mrs. Shipman wrote that she had lost the MS. Mrs. Hoyt, who is a very conscientious woman, was horrified, but persuaded Wing to rewrite many of the incidents. These are what I have in the MS. I find in talking with her that it is the incident of the drummer boy that Mrs. A. has used. Mrs. Hoyt thinks that it is not a very successful treatment, but it got $2500 which she shared with Wing.

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The Wings live near W.Redding in a tiny house close to the road. Interesting to see the look of refinement about the little place. I am agreeably disappointed in the man. He is past 80 and deaf, but still youthful in spirit - quite simple and friendly. He launches at once into talk of Lincoln. I find that most of the stories in the MS have been printed in one form or another in the Christian Advocate, that under the title of "When Lincoln Kissed Me" they have a little book which still sells.

Mrs. John Sherman Hoyt of 900 Lexington Avenue calls my attention to the Lincoln reminiscences of Henry E. Wing, a reporter for the New York Tribune from '63 to '65. Sends MS "Lincoln as I Knew Him."

The first episode in the MS was Wing's exciting adventures in getting to Washington after the first Battle of the Wilderness, which left the Federal army practically defeated. He went for the Tribune but Grant gave him a special verbal message for Mr. Lincoln to the effect that there would be no turning back. I am inclined to think that the real hero of this story is Jess, the horse, that is, from the writer's point of view, and that if Wing can tell me enough of Jess that the Lincoln and Grant material would give the thing a freshness and a value which would be quite unique.

Jess was left by Wing in a thicket and Lincoln ordered an expedition fitted out to enable Wing to go back and get the horse. The expedition had to run through a Confederate camp at one point and had the glory of having Mr. Lincoln himself ride her. To

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and had the glory of having Mr. Lincoln himself ride her. To give more of the horse, its end, etc., would make, it seems to me, a capital tale.

The story of the drummer boy brought to Washington by Wing - Lincoln's interest - finally turned over to Senator Wilson of Mass. at Lincoln's request. Mary Shipman Andrews has taken something, I understand, from these reminiscences, I understand, for the Saturday Evening Post - it may have been this.

Story of Tad and the secret code between him and his father - three short and two long taps.

Affecting tale of Lincoln found asleep over a pardon that he had signed, by the woman who was seeking it for her boy, condemned to death. Light on Lincoln's feeling for the common soldiers, his desire that they back him up in '64, his fear that they might not.

Wing's reports to him of how they were feeling and an affecting incident of an interview between the two at City Point where Lincoln told Wing that he wanted the Army of the Potomac to secure Lee's surrender independently of Sherman's assistance. He said the Army of the Potomac deserved this honor.

"And so my coal is quenched - Mr. Lincoln's and mine" - Judge Harlan to Wing at the time that the news of the death of Robert Lincoln's son was received.

Puzzled to know how I can handle this material to Wing's advantage. A study of the Civil War Reporter using him as a type is possible. Much collateral material could be made important, I think. The episode of Jess is practical. The other materials are too slight in themselves to be made into stories unless the drummer boy could be unearthed. That might be done through Senator Wilson's family, - worth following up at least.

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