

Edward Allen Winslow  
104 Mulberry St  
Pawtucket

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*[Extensive handwritten scribbles and notes covering the left page, including names like 'Mr. Thompson' and 'Ben', and various illegible markings.]*

A NIGHT IN THE WOODS.

"If any of the passengers would like to take a little walk, we are just going up a long, hard hill, and I shall be much obliged to them if they will cross the coach a little," said the driver as he stopped at the foot of a steep hill. "You can pass through the woods there, and it isn't more than half a mile."

"What do you say, stranger?" added the tall Kentuckian, who sat by the side.

I agreed to the proposition, though I had my doubts about the propriety of passing through the woods, as the darkness was gathering around us. The driver, however, assured us we could not possibly miss the path, and Ben Thompson and myself alighted. There were two elderly men, and two women in the stage, who did not accept the driver's polite invitation, which, by the way, was not less than the twentieth time he had been so polite that day.

It was a great relief to the tedium of the stage coach to walk an occasional mile, though, as a grumpy old fellow in the coach suggested, we had paid our fare, and were entitled to a ride.

My companion in these walks, was not less than six feet in height, and was a jolly, good-hearted fellow, who had seen a great deal of life in the woods, and had an unending fund of stories and descriptions wherewith to entertain me. Our route lay through the western part of Kentucky, and we took the path through the woods, which the driver had pointed out to us. Ben was in his liveliest mood, and immediately struck into the history of a bear hunt, so that we passed the greater portion of the distance before it occurred to me that we might possibly have taken the wrong direction, especially, as we had ceased to hear the roll of the stage wheels in the distance.

"Do you think we are going right, Mr. Thompson?" I asked, interrupting my companion.

"In course we are, stranger, don't call me Mr. Thompson. I ain't a parson. Call me Ben, or I don't answer."

"I will, if you say so; but do you think we are in the right path?"

"Sart in; didn't the driver say there was only one road?"

"As he spoke, we heard the report of a pistol.

"What's that stranger?"

The report was followed by another and another in quick succession.

"There is sharp work, somewhere," I added.

"It's them varmints of mail robbers," replied Ben. "The driver may thank himself for sending us away."

"And we may perhaps thank him that we are not shot."

"When there's any shootin' goin' on, I allows want to be thar," continued Ben, with emphasis. "Three weeks ago, I sent a letter with a fifty dollar bill in it, to Memphis. It never got there, I calculated them ou'ed mail robbers got it when they robbed the coach, three weeks ago. Stranger, have you got a shooter in your pocket?"

"No."

"Nary toothpick, nuther?"

"No."

"He kin fight, though?"

"Perhaps I could, if there was any need."

"Well, stranger there is need that Ben Thompson should fight; for I am bound to skin them ou'ed mail robbers afore mornin'."

"I will do the best I can for you, Ben, though I am not much in a muss."

"You've got the grit and that's all I want. Make one of my shooters, but don't shoot till you are sure of your man."

I promised to obey his instructions. It was now quite dark, and it was certain that the robbers would take to the woods on our side of the road, for it was a sharp hill upon the other side.

"Now stranger, we will roost in some of these trees till we get the bearing of the rascals, and then drop down upon them."

Agreeable to Ben's instructions, I climbed a tree, and perched myself upon a branch, while he did the same in another tree, close by my position.

I confess that I was highly excited by the prospect of an encounter with I knew not how many desperate characters; but Ben would not consider the number or the prowess of his enemies. The fifty dollars he had lost rankled in his heart, and he determined to avenge Uncle Sam and himself at the same time.

The rascals were considerate, and did not make us wait long for their appearance. There was just light enough left in the forest for us to make out the forms of four men, as they approached, each of them bent down by the weight of the mail bag upon his shoulder.

"Do as I do," whispered Ben.

"I will," and as I saw him take out his pistol and cock it, I did the same.

The spook beneath the trees in which we were concealed, was tolerable clear of underbrush, and when the robbers reached the spot, they threw down the bags and halted.

"Was any one killed?" asked one of the rascals.

"No, only frightened," replied another, as he drew a knife from his pocket and proceeded to cut open the bags.

This fellow was directly under the branch upon which Ben was perched; and I watched the dark outline of his form with intense solicitude, to obtain the earliest intimation of his movements. I trembled lest my nervousness should cause me to make a noise that would excite the attention of the robbers. But Ben did not permit me to get very uneasy before he brought the adventure to a close.

After he had sold upon the tree, he permitted his body to fall upon the man beneath him. I doubt not the fellow thought the devil had pounced down upon him, though it might have occurred to him that the rascals would come up and not shoot at him, as he was so well concealed.

I did not at all mind the example of my tall companion, though I was somewhat surprised by the suddenness of his fall. But the robbers quickly recovered from their confusion, and drawing their long knives, proceeded upon us. Ben fired at one and the other with his bullet through another.

"Fourth had been unable to rise, and the crushing weight of the Kentuckian came upon him."

"All right stranger," said he, as he looked at the man to the ground. "We have done it."

It was not in the habit of carrying ropes in my pocket, but with the strap of the mutilated mail bag, I tied the hands of the prisoner behind him, and fastened him to a tree. The groans of the two men who had been shot, assured us they were not in a position to run away, and the fourth proceeded to secure.

"Now, stranger, run up to the road and find the varmint company."

I complied, and Ben proceeded to load the pistols again. I was more than a mile after I reached the road, but the coach was not to be found, and it was ten miles to the nearest house. I returned to my companion, and we had no alternative but to remain in the woods all night. We examined the wounds of the robbers, and did what we could to make them comfortable. But it was a dreary night, in spite of the many entertaining stories of my companion. The groans of the suffering men were mingled with the screams of the night bird, and to my ear these sounds were far from agreeable. Ben was made of sterner stuff, and even the howls and pain which occasionally saluted us, did not cause him to suspend for an instant his exciting narration.

About four o'clock in the morning, the return stage would pass the place, and Ben sent me up to the road again to hail it. I came very near being shot, but happily I escaped such a calamity, and having procured assistance, the mails and the robbers were brought up to the coach. We proceeded.

SELLING SQUAWA.—A letter from Utah says a new trade is springing up between the Utes and the Pikes Indians—that of selling and buying squawa. As Harmony, some thirty miles from Washington, the Pikes have a younger husband, who signified her wish to have a younger husband, she had a fair prospect of having her desire gratified, and it is understood that a certain trader is negotiating a trade.

Another squawa, who has been sold to an Indian trader, has been seen by a party of the same name, who have been visiting the trader, and all the details of the transaction are being given.

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FUGITIVE SLAVES.—Two fugitive slaves, one from Louisiana, the other from Maryland, arrived in Providence last week on the underground railroad, and one of them has been forwarded to Canada via Worcester. The Louisiana fugitive made an attempt to escape two years ago, and reached Cincinnati, where he was captured by his pursuers and taken back, and afterwards cruelly treated. He determined, however, that he would escape from slavery, and the incidents of his escape are thus narrated in the Providence Transcript:—

He seized the first favorable opportunity, and fled, determined to die before he should be again taken back. Bloodhounds were put upon his track, but did not overtake him. He adopted a novel expedient to balk them and keep them back. He left cayenne pepper in his tracks, which, after being snuffed by the hounds, rendered their progress slow. He reached the Mississippi, committed himself to a leaky boat, lying close to the bottom of the boat to keep out of sight of his pursuers. He said when he entered the boat, he was resolved that he would find a grave in the waters of the river before he was captured. He got beyond the reach of his pursuers, and finally secreted himself on board a ship bound to the North. In a short time he was found; fearful that he should be returned, he begged if that was to be his fate, to be thrown overboard, preferring death to the horrors from which he had fled. The Captain told him to calm his fears, he should not be sent back. And, said the captain, "I wish I had a load just like you."

The captain brought him safely to New York, directed him to take the Fall River route, and named the boat. He directed him to come to Providence, where he would find friends to aid him in his flight.

THE COMING END OF THE INDIAN WAR.—We begin to see an end of the struggle. Oude and Shahab alone remain in the possession of the rebels. The Central India insurgents are fleeing from district to district, and town to town, careful not so much to recruit their exhausted forces as to preserve their ill-gotten wealth. They are endeavoring to find the limits of British power, a country where they may settle in peace and found a new dynasty. But the empire and the influence of the Indian government are no contracted limits. The offender cannot hope to escape beyond the confines of our rules. Sooner or later justice overtakes him; sooner or later he pays the penalty of his crimes, and only learns our power when he discovers that flight is impossible. North and south, east and west, there is nothing for the rebel but the sea, to him an object of superstitious dread, and tribes of whose hostility he is assured by the remembrance of bygone ages of conquest. Our confidence is not ill-founded. The steady rise in the value of the government, and promissory notes; the absence of all extensive local disturbances; the increased vigor of commercial enterprise, and the removal of martial law over districts at one time the centres of rebellion, all show that as no time since May, 1857, have we been more free from danger than at present.

Safety hid, he remained under the protection of the bushes for some time; and it may be imagined that his feelings toward the half-kind were not of the most friendly character, but ere long his feelings were softened, and he intrusted to her the custody of the mail bag, seeing his own still remained in the hands of the robbers.

He had not long done so, when the robbers were discovered, and he had left the house about three o'clock in the morning. But things did not look right; if he had gone why did he leave his horse? Suspicions were awakened. My son, the boy, who had been sent out to feed the calves, returned with the remnants of the identical white garments which adorned the lower limbs of their late visitor. They were mangled and torn to shreds. An inquest was immediately held over them. Some awful fate had befallen the young man. The neighbors were summoned to search for his corpse, and the posse with all speed set out with arms and dogs to the search. The pasture was most thoroughly scoured, and then the adjacent thickets, when I saw her driven from her lair by the keen scent of the dogs. All 250, alive and well, minus the limbs. An examination then ensued, at the expense of our horse, but he was successful in the end, and married the lady, and is now living comfortably in one of the little towns in