

WHEN THE MOUNTAIN WINKED

By ROY NORTON

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OMEHOW I never fancied there was much money in the stage-robbing business. True I never tried it, but once or twice when the game went against me pretty hard I rather envied the fellow who was then collecting a pretty good share of everything that was being cleaned up on the Big Divide.

You guessed his name the first time. It was Black Bart. He held up? Yes, once, and that was when he was having things pretty much his own way up here. In fact, he had kind of a monopoly in sticking up folks on these higher trails.

Forest Hill was a camp then, all right. Everybody coming in and nobody going out. Everybody getting a little gold, a dozen games ready to take it away from them, and dance-halls a-plenty. Snow on the ground of course, but not very cold.

It wasn't because I wanted to get away from Forest Hill that I went down to Auburn. I would rather have stayed here; but I had to go to meet the owner of the Fan Tan, of which I was superintendent that year. It was such an unusual thing for me to leave the camp, something I hadn't done in a year, that it actually attracted some attention. I well recall how Bill Pape spoke about it on the day before I started.

"You a-goin' to Auburn?" he said. "Why, I never heard of such doin's! You ain't been down there since you landed on the divide. Stay at home, Hank, stay at home," as if the trip was a thousand-mile one and dangerous all the way. Then as an afterthought he added: "If I'd known you was goin' I wouldn't have sent that hundred ounces out by the express folks. I could trust you to bank 'em for me and I ain't sure I can depend on any of these big companies."

I can see him yet as he squatted down on the snow, poked his arms through the shoulder-ropes of his pack, gave it a final lurch to settle it into place and then went swinging away toward the woods shaking his head and waving "Good-by" to me. Poor chap! He had reason to fear companies. Less than two months before one of them had jumped his claim, the Golden Annie, on a technicality, thrown him off because they had money to hire a little army of men, and then carried it to the courts. The law was just then being recognized as a means of settling disputes in this part of California, but the lower court gave a decision against him. Naturally, Bill was a little bitter and so were the boys. They offered to help him get his claim back by the use of a few rifles, but he stuck to the law and appealed the case.

Bill was a homely sort, long and lean, but unafraid. He never had taken water before that time, so all the boys pitied him and were surprised. The only thing he ever complained of was that the men who grabbed the Golden Annie kept right on mining it while it was in litigation. He certainly did talk some about that and so did all of us. It wasn't a square play. The ground's a pretty safe place to keep gold when it's in dispute.

However, about this trip and the hold-up!

I got up pretty early on the morning I was to go. Had to because the stage left behind sunup. It was before the camp was awake, or the dance-halls swept out. Away out in the west the air looked muggy and cold, while in the east, high up over Baldy, the stars that had been up all night were just going to bed. In all the little clearing where the snow was tracked with trails there wasn't a sign of any one moving. Even the trees that stood around the edge, loaded with snow above and black beneath, were quiet as if still asleep.

Yawning and shivering, I liked it down to the stage-station just as she pulled up. Jim Tipton was on the box and had about all he could do to hold in the four horses that were dancing around on their hind legs and trying to throw themselves out of the harness. A stableman came hanging to the leaders' heads and buck-jumping to keep away from the sparring hoofs.

A shotgun messenger that I had never seen before helped the agent hoist the strong-box aboard, and by that I knew there was just being shipped out. The agent was a new arrival in camp, too.

"Got much in it?" I asked him, and he nearly swelled up with his own importance as he answered: "Oh, not much. Golden Annie clean-up. That's all."

I thought of poor old Bill being robbed every day of his life, and even at that minute swore I wouldn't give a case if Black Bart showed up and took the whole poke!

A woman came out with a small shaver of a boy and a tiny little girl, and several bundles such as women usually carry. Being some polite I helped the agent get her aboard. One bag she hung to like glue. We were the only passengers, and it didn't make me very happy, you can bet. I'm not much used to women and babies. Like them all right, but they don't understand me much.

It wasn't till after we were all together in the stage that I noticed she was young and mighty pretty, although a little sad looking. For an hour or so we pulled alongside the American canon and could see the smoke from the camps away over across it, and the boys coming out to work down below, and here and there some others chopping kindling around in front of their cabins, and by and by we got to talking. The sun got behind clouds and it grew warmer, and then little flakes of snow began to fall and that started us on snowstorms. She said when she came from the snow was very deep, and then for a little while nothing was said. I didn't notice it at first, but all of a sudden saw she was crying.

Now, I'm a sympathetic sort of a cuss and so asked her what the row was about, and pretty soon she told me that away up on the divide near Secret Canon she had buried her husband but a little while before. It was a right pitiful story the way she told it to me after she got to feeling better. They had come out there across the plains and taken their chance along with the others, and he had all ways been good to her and the little chaps, although I guess he wasn't a strong sort of man. Had something the matter with his lungs.

Well they pulled along together in Sacramento and worked hard and saved all they could till they got enough to buy a prospecting outfit and then came to the divide. Luck against some folks, and it wasn't very kind to them. They got the worst of it for a long time, and then it seemed to come their way for a spell. They staked a good piece of ground and struck pay, and were beginning to feel happy when this lung business got the best of him, throttled him as a wolf does a sheep, and he cashed in. Yes, sir, died just when everything began to come all right, after all the years he'd worked, and suffered, and saved.

Somehow I understood just how lonely she felt, and how it all hurt, as she sat there in that bumping old Concord and told me about it. The little boy cried some, too, and being as I had a lump in my throat so big I couldn't say anything, I gathered him into my arms and tried to comfort him as best I could. That kind of let me down easy. I always did hate to see a woman suffer.

The snow kept coming harder and it gave the air that peculiar kind of stillness which comes in a windless storm. I was trying to think of something consoling to say when there comes a quick jerk as the brakes banged against the tires, a yell outside, and then, almost with the driver's "Whoa," the bang of a gun.

"Hold up, sure as the devil!" I said to myself, trying to get the boy off my lap; but he was frightened and held on with his little arms so tightly clutched round my neck that I couldn't get loose for a minute without hurting him, and that was enough to put us all to the bad. In the meantime the woman had sat with her eyes opened wide, and her tongue speeched.

"What is it?" she asked tremblingly while I was trying to put the boy down. And then, as if answering her own question: "Black Bart?"

"It's him, I guess, madam," I answered, still trying to quiet the lad. All this time my mind was working like a ten stamp mill. It dawned on me that probably every ounce of gold she had was in the bag which she had held with such anxious care. Then came the thought that it would probably be safer there than in the express-box, which would go for a certainty, if she would only hide it and do a little fancy lying when the time came. All this unless we could pot the robber; but even then I hesitated, because with women and children aboard a stage, it's bad policy to do much gunning. It's a heap sight better to give up and take no chance of stray bullets.

Before I had time to think any further, smash went the window and the glass came tinkling down over the cushions. The hold-up, who had stowed it in with one quick blow of his pistol barrel, was stilling but a few feet outside where he could hear us as well as the men on the box covered. He looked a sinister figure out there on the white snow whose companion flares were settling down in a little bank on his black hat, sitting in the wrinkles of the black handkerchief he used for a mask, and falling lazily off his broad black shoulders. It was Black Bart to all appearances. No mistake about that part of it.

"All out, and be quick about it," came the sharp order from outside.

The widow started to go before I could advise her to hide her little fortune, although I tried to attract her attention. She was too frightened to hear me. I followed and as I did so wondered whether it would be best to make a quick jump around the lower side of the stage the minute my feet hit the ground and make a fight for it, or by taking it easy run the chance of the woman's getting away scot-free. The only thing I was afraid of all the time was the danger that might come to the children. No sooner had the snow crunched under my heels than I got it again:

"Here, you! Get your hands up fast or I'll drill a hole in you!" I let go the butt of my gun with which I had been toying, shot my fist into the air, and took a look around. It was as I expected. Black Bart always played a lone hand, and was the only man there. He took a couple of swift steps behind me, jerked my pistol from its holster, and threw it over the edge of the gulch, after which he started around front once more. It was all done so fast that I had a quick picture and nothing more of what was happening.

There was Tipton with his hands up, still holding the reins, braced back with his foot against the brake and calmly smoking his cigarette. He'd been there before and knew exactly what the etiquette of the road called for. Beside him sat the express-messenger, just as motionless, and with his arms stretched up to the cool gray skies from which the snow was falling. The horses were glad to rest and stood with hanging heads and steaming flanks, showing no sign of curiosity, save a long-drawn snort.

But it wasn't over with yet. Black Bart had barely got clear of the widow and me when the shotgun messenger came to and made a convulsive reach for his gun. Now a road-agent can't take any chances, and this one didn't. Quick as the messenger reached, he was too slow. The snap of the outlaw's gun sounded spitefully, the man on the box gave a sharp jerk and then held his hands up again. Only this time the right one was quivering and shattered where a bullet had torn its way through.

"Another move and you get it through the heart," was all the consolation he got, and then, obeying the

dropped her hands together, wringing them appealingly, and tried to speak but couldn't, because of the sobs or "right. It made me hot, so I clipped in.

"Look here, Bart," I said, "you don't want to take everything she's got, do you? She's a widow and—"

"Oh, shut up, or I'll fill you full of lead," was all the satisfaction I got, and I studied whether I had any chance to reach him before he could shoot.

It was no use. I had waited too long. There he was at least twenty feet away from me and he had thrown my gun where it couldn't be had, and even the messenger's shotgun had slid over the edge of the gulch. I hadn't a chance on earth. I knew him well enough by reputation, so I could see this wasn't my time to fight.

My only hope for the woman was that she would lie to him and tell him she had nothing but some loose dust. She should have sense enough for that, I thought, so I shut my teeth tight and swore inside while he made her go to the stage where the two little kids were sobbing in fright and wondering what it was all about. I watched her as she turned and gave a breath of relief when she came bringing nothing but a small reticule.

"Is that all you've got?" he asked, giving it a contemptuous shake when she put it in his hand.

I caught my wind and waited. It was very quiet. One of the horses more he had marched the woman and me back into the stage and ordered Tipton to drive on. Away we went in a whirl of snow and soon we were well down the road. The last I saw of him he was still standing there in the falling whiteness watching us.

puzzled, and might relent at the last minute. I felt hopeful.

"Got any gold pieces in there?" he asked, giving her bag a kick with his foot.

"Yes."

"Open it."

She did so with trembling fingers and he gave a look at it. I thought this was to be my chance and gathered myself for a spring, but his gun swung around like lightning.

"Don't do that again," he growled, "unless you want to be put out of the game for good."

I cursed a little more, but he didn't seem to mind and just stood there looking now at the kneeling woman and then at the open bag, and all the time glancing at me with swift darting eyes which would play around in their sweep to the two men on the stage.

"You can take eight of those signs out of there," he said. "That'll get you to your brother."

"You hound! Aren't you going to leave her more than four hundred dollars out of her wad?" I yelled, and again he held the muzzle of his Colt's in a square bead on my eye for an instant.

"My friend," he drawled, "son-a-day you'll talk too much."

That was enough. There was something about the way his finger played up and down the trigger-guard that made me believe it best to say no more. I quit. In about a half-minute more he had marched the woman and me back into the stage and ordered Tipton to drive on. Away we went in a whirl of snow and soon we were well down the road. The last I saw of him he was still standing there in the falling whiteness watching us.

Just as Christmas came on top of us we did get one good piece of news. Bill Pape got a decision from the higher court giving him back the Gentle Annie, and the fellows who had jumped it, with all their men, were marched out of the camp without a friend. We all stood around not saying much when they went, trudging down the road in sullenness, knowing we had gained nothing for all their effort. They had even lost what they'd cleaned up, and the road-agent was the richer. Bill's Christmas-eve celebration was a howler that went down into camp history, and we let him know how glad we were that it had come his way at last.

But now here's the funny part about all this. On Christmas day I got my oke back, unopened, and this note:

For certain reasons which aren't any of your business, I don't want your money. So I'm sending it back. BLACK BART.

It was sent from Sacramento. I had to go down there about New Year's to meet my Fan Tan owner, who sold me a partnership and gave me a good time. We tried to get a clue to Black Bart, but couldn't. It was in the express office that I went digging through my pockets and happened to run across the widow's address, and it being the holidays, and I feeling kind of holidayish, thought I'd call on her.

I found her all right and almost the first thing she said to me was: "Look here, I want to show you something I got a few days ago."

And then she fished out a note and I read:

Dear Madam: I don't rob widows when I can help it. The Gentle Annie clean-up was good enough for me. I'm sending back all I took from you, but don't tell anybody. BLACK BART.

Say, you could have knocked me down with a pin-needle. The handwriting was the same sent me, and her money had been delivered by a messenger. I tried again to find this philanthropic stage-robber, but wasted my time.

When I got back to Forest Hill I told Bill Pape, and he said he guessed he'd take a try as he wanted that Gentle Annie dust if it could be found, so away he went. Well, he kept going to Sacramento all winter and up to the time when the spring came and the snow melted.

Early in the summer I went to San Francisco for some things I couldn't get in Sacramento, and while there got a letter from Bill asking me to bring some supplies up for him. I did, and on the day I landed in Forest Hill went out on the sunlit trail through the trees to Bill's cabin and called him outside with a "Hello-in-there!"

"Bill," I said, "there's something mighty singular about this note you sent me."

I took it and the one signed "Black Bart" from my pocket, unfolded them, and handed them to him.

"Seems to me these were written by the same man. Doesn't it look that way to you?"

He calmly tore them into small pieces, laid them on the palm of his hand, and gave a mighty blow that sent the little strips of paper fluttering off in the air toward where Mount Baldy, snow-capped and serene, looked down at us from across the Big Divide. Then he grinned and gave a great slow wink.

"Hank" he said, "there's a hell of a lot of things in this world that it doesn't do us any good to know too much about. But since you're here I want you to come in and see my wife I was married two days ago to a woman who doesn't know how to lie."

And I'll swear as I looked back, half dazed, before going through the cabin door, it seemed to me old Baldy's snowy face took on a look like a great big smile and did just as Bill had— gave me a slow, sly wink.

steam pipes," he explained to the usher. "You see, it's fly paper, and the directions say to keep in a cool place."

"I got it to take with me to Mexico. I wasn't sure I could get any there, and I wanted to be prepared. It's better me and I like to have my share of them."—Kansas City Star.

BETTER TEETH FEWER DENTIST'S BILLS

Your teeth decay because particles of food get into crevices between and around the teeth and create germs of decay. Ordinary tooth powders and washes are entirely inadequate to prevent it.

Try Paxtine Toilet Antiseptic, a delicious, harmless germicide. Just a little in a glass of water, and rinse the mouth and brush the teeth thoroughly. It will whiten the teeth, prevent and remove tartar, destroy all germs of decay and save you dentist's bills.

Paxtine thoroughly cleanses, deodorizes and keeps pure and odorless the teeth and bridgework. Paxtine is far superior to liquid antiseptics and peroxide for all toilet and hygienic uses. At Drugists 25 and 50c, or sent postpaid upon receipt of price by The Paxtine Toilet Co., Boston, Mass. Send for a free sample.

A POLITICAL TALK.



"We've scoured the town for voters." "And now I suppose you expect a clean election."

SCALES ALL OVER HER BODY

"About three years ago I was affected by white scales on my knees and elbows. I consulted a doctor who treated me for ringworm. I saw no change and consulted a specialist and he claimed I had psoriasis. I continued treatments under him for about six months until I saw scales breaking out all over my body save my face. My scalp was affected, and my hair began to fall. I then changed doctors to no avail. I went to two hospitals and each wanted to make a study of the case and seemed unable to cure it or assure me of a cure. I tried several patent medicines and was finally advised by a friend who has used Cuticura on her children since their birth, to purchase the Cuticura Remedies. I purchased a cake of Soap, the Ointment and the Resolvent. After the first application the itching was allayed.

"I am still using the Soap and Ointment and now feel that none other is good enough for my skin. The psoriasis has disappeared and I everywhere feel better. My hands were so disfigured before using the Cuticura Remedies that I had to wear gloves all the time. Now my body and hands are looking fine." (Signed) Miss Sara Burnett, 2135 Pittwater St., Philadelphia, Pa., Sept. 30, 1910.

Cuticura Soap (25c) and Cuticura Ointment (50c) are sold throughout the world. Send to Potter Drug & Chem. Corp., sole agents, 135 Columbus Ave., Boston, for free book on affections of the skin and scalp.

His Interest.

"You are going to interest yourself in this reform enterprise?" "Certainly," replied Senator Sorghum.

"But I thought it was unfavorable to your friends."

"It is. And I'm going to interest myself in it far enough to let me offer suggestions that will render it impractical."

Important to Mothers

Examine carefully every bottle of CASTORIA, a safe and sure remedy for infants and children, and see that it bears the Signature of *Dr. J. C. Watson*. In Use For Over 80 Years. The Kind You Have Always Bought.

Rightly employed, the reason is not a check to piety, but its regulator. It chastens and refines the flames of devotion in the human heart, but does not put it out.—C. W. Wendte.

It has always appeared to me that good manners are almost as valuable an asset in commercial as in diplomatic affairs.—Lord Cromer.

Constipation causes and seriously aggravates many diseases. It is thoroughly cured by Dr. Pierce's Peppermint. Tiny sugar-coated granules.

Every church preaches louder by its square dealing than by its high shouting.

To Get Its Beneficial Effects Always Buy the Genuine SYRUP OF FIGS and ELIXIR OF SENNA manufactured by the CALIFORNIA FIG SYRUP CO. Sold by all leading Druggists One Size Only, 50¢ a Bottle.



DROPPED HER HANDS TOGETHER, WRINGING THEM APPEALINGLY.

bandit's advice, he kicked his shotgun off the boot and sat very quietly, except as he writhed a bit with the pain in his fingers.

"Throw that strong-box off, driver," was the next command, and Tipton, whose cigarette had never stopped smoking, leaned over and did so. It "kerching" into the soft snow, and the off-wheeler, striding, and "jessie a nervous kick at it, and stood quietly while Tip again gathered up his mind that the widow and I were to get off easy; but now the robber turned to us, comes behind me, and his poke from my hip-pocket, runs investigating fingers around my body to see if I have a belt, and gives a little chuckle. I didn't say anything because to tell the truth it wasn't of my own loss I was thinking but of what it would mean to the woman if she were to lose all she had in the world. Not even she was to get off.

He stepped in front of her and said very proudly: "I am sorry, madam, but your contribution will do me just as much good as any other. Dig up! What have you to offer?"

The way in which he said it assured me that it was Black Bart, as the racial rather prided himself on courtesy. The widow was terrified. I don't suppose she had ever seen a gun-play before, and the sight of the man sitting on the box holding his bleeding hand up to the falling snow wasn't calculated to soothe weak nerves. She

his feet everything that stood between her, her children, and poverty.

It was too much for me. I'm not very profane as a rule, but I stood there and let the gates down, I thought of and used every cuss word I could handle. I called him all the names I had ever heard, swore that my day would come and when it did I'd put a rope around his neck whether he was dead or alive; dared him to lay his gun down between us and take a chance; called him a cowardly robber of women and a few other things, and all this time he stood there quietly and never made a move. When he dropped the heavy bag he gave the first sign of having heard me, by addressing her.

"When your voluble friend gets through," he said, "I'd like to ask you a question."

I stopped and listened. He looked at me through the holes of his black handkerchief and had the impudence to grin. I could see that from the way his teeth shone through the air-slit over his mouth. Then he went on talking to her.

"Where are you going?" She told him to Sacramento, to meet her brother. He stood for an instant looking first at me, then at the two on the box, and finally gave a quick sidelong glance to where the two children were huddled in each other's arms, and whispering. Something about him, I can't tell what, made me think he was

Soon I could see him but dimly and then he was out of sight.

We drove for a mile without a let up, stopped, tied up the messenger's hand, put him in the stage, and then Jim and me mounted the box.

By the time we reached the wire-bridge station at the forks I was about insane. All I wanted was a chance to put a ball into the heart of Black Bart, who would take the last ounce from a widow; I didn't care a continental cuss about what I had lost, what the express company might lose, or what the messenger suffered; but I wished I had fought for the woman. When we pulled up at the station it looked as if luck was with us, because right there at the time were the sheriff and several good game men. Before I had blurted the story out old Charley Crane, the agent, had saddled horses for us.

Well-mounted and well-armed we turned back into the sheet of snow and off up the divide.

After what seemed hours we came to the place which I could recognize by a big jutting rock. Even then the trail was nearly lost in the snow. We took it up like a lot of wolves hunting down a stag. Away it led us, up to the wind-swept peaks, and there, in a cove, we found the box blown open and empty save for papers that were of no value to Black Bart.

The sheriff ran his eye over them and said: "Only two shipments. One from Bill Pape of a hundred ounces,

WASHINGTON'S TENT FLAG

His Headquarters' Colors Are Now in the National Museum at Valley Forge.

A valuable relic of Washington has been recently added to the Valley Forge Museum of American History. This is Washington's headquarters flag. His marquee was purchased by the museum last fall at a cost of \$5,000, after having been exhibited for years in the National museum at Wash-

ington. Now, through the courtesy of Miss Frances B. Lovell, a descendant of Betty Lewis, the sister of Washington, the flag of the commander-in-chief of the armies of the patriots is exhibited with the famous war tent.

For years the flag has been a treasured heirloom in Miss Lovell's family, and few have known of its existence. Upon her father's death she became its owner. It was known to the family as "Washington's headquarters flag."

"That it is the unidentified flag of Peale's portraits there can be no doubt," says Rev. W. Herbert Burk,

founder of the museum, who obtained the treasured relic. "The flag of one picture is a blue jack with 13 stars. The flag now in the museum here is a light blue silk with 13 stars, the blue faded and the stars yellow with age."

The flag is 36 inches long and 23 inches wide. The heading is of homespun linen, with three eyelets worked with thread. The stars are six-pointed, double stitched, and the silk back of them has been cut out to show the stars on both sides. The stars are not arranged in a circle, but in lines following the crosses of the British flag,

which, Mr. Burk says, seems to have been the earlier arrangement.

Mr. Burk, in speaking of the way in which he came into possession of the flag, said: "A few weeks ago I was telling some visitors to the Valley Forge Museum of American History the interesting narrative of Washington's marquee, when one of the number said she had recently seen the flag that belonged to the tent. The clue thus given was quickly followed. The owner, Miss Lovell, recognized the advantage of exhibiting the flag with the tent, especially when so carefully

guarded as at the museum. She readily agreed to loan the flag, and for this purpose had it framed."—Philadelphia Bulletin.

Carrying His Own Fly Paper.

A seat near the radiator was the only one vacant in the waiting room of the Union depot when an old man came in carrying several packages. He laid all his bundles beside the seat, then he picked up one, a long square package, and looked about in perplexity.

"I don't dare get this near those