

\$5,000 Reward.

I.
The railroad company will pay five thousand dollars for any information which will lead to the arrest of the person or persons, who held up the east bound midnight express, three miles west of _____, Iowa, on the night of the first of June, 1878.

This notice appeared in all the leading journals of the country shortly after the hold-up occurred.

The heat of a July day had become oppressive, and about the middle of the afternoon, after making a hurried inspection of the hoist to see that everything was in running order, I left the hot, close building with its smell of oil, and clank of machinery, and taking a narrow foot path which led around the base of a steep hill, soon lost myself in the deep, cool shadow of the tall pines. I chose a secluded spot at the foot of a great tree, and lay down on the new, sweet scented pine needles which strewed the ground, and gazed up into the clear blue sky, feeling at peace with all the world. Light fleecy clouds floated across the face of the sun, casting strange, fleeting shadows on the hill-side. Between the trunks of the great pines, I could catch a glimpse of the hill which rose directly opposite me in all the light and shadow of its gay summer attire. The light green of the ever-quaking aspen, which faded into the darker color of the wild-cherry, and hazel and which in turn was absorbed by the dark, heavy green of the pines.

The warning bell in the hoist clanged sharply and after a moment's pause, the sharp, clear cut puff of the exhaust could be heard through the still afternoon air. I heard the sound of footsteps and of some one whistling softly a popular air on the path behind me, and I turned about to see a well dressed man who had paused and was looking at me with a quizzical studying air as though he would read me through and through at first glance.

He was a tall man, wearing a smooth face. His features were clear and good, from the top of his stylish derby to the sole of his well-fitting Oxfords, he was well dressed, and my mind immediately pondered on the question of his being in this small, out of the way corner of the world, possibly in search of health from the pure exhilarating air. Surely his appearance was not averse to the solution, but in the meanwhile, here he was. So I broke the silence with a cheerful salutation. He answered me with alacrity and came forward.

"Beautiful little spot," he remarked, as he seated himself upon the ground at my invitation.

"Yes, rather," I responded, "but one grows weary of it; too monotonous."

"Monotonous," he exclaimed. "Why it seems to me to be constantly changing. First the delicate suggestion of the spring, then the full blown beauty of the summer, followed by the scarlet and yellow and brown extremes, and lastly the cold, still, whiteness of winter. One hardly sees enough of each season to be tiresome. Beautiful," he continued to himself, gazing around. "Beautiful."

I gazed at him in some astonishment. What was this that had so mysteriously come upon me to teach me the beauty of my already well appreciated surroundings?

"Been here long?" I asked, after a pause.

He gave me a quick, sharp look. "No," he answered, with some reserve, "I arrived yesterday."

Again a long pause, during which the warning bell in the hoist clanged sharply. He turned his head and listened a moment to the "puff," "puff," of the exhaust.

"Must be a mine near here," he said. "Yes," I answered, "the Holy Terror, just around the brow of the hill."

"You connected with it?" I asked, nodding in the direction of a cluster of small houses which bore the awe inspiring name of "Witch Hollow."

The hot afternoon had gradually worn away as we sat there, the sun had climbed higher and higher up the opposite hill and a cool breeze came down the narrow valley.

"You staying in town?" I asked, nodding in the direction of a cluster of small houses which bore the awe inspiring name of "Witch Hollow."

"Why, yes," he answered. "The name rather attracted me and I thought I might find a resting place here."

"Sure a good place to rest," I replied lightly, "if that is what you want."

I arose and began brushing the pine needles from my clothes as the hoist whistle screamed out the hour of six. I turned to my companion and held out my hand. "If we are to walk to town together we might as well know each other's names. Mine is Williams, Frank Williams."

His reply rather staggered me. "You look like one who tended his own business and let other people tend theirs. Mine is Wats, John Wats."

We shook hands in silence, thereby binding a friendship. The end and outcome of which we either of us little guessed.

II.
Summer had given place to bright, many colored autumn, which was beginning to lose its brilliancy and the first advances of rude winter were beginning to be noticeable, but still Wats remained in Witch Hollow.

Speculations as to his past and present life, his object in coming to such an out of the way mining camp had long since been abandoned as fruitless, for as one of the men about the mine had said:

"You might as well try to mine gold in a pine tree as to get any information out of Wats."

Despite his great reserve and mysterious past, for he certainly had one, this strange man and myself had become fast friends. I found him to be the possessor of no mean education. He had traveled far and seen and learned many things of the varied ways and habits of that most interesting animal, man. Upon his travels he talked with perfect freedom, and very entertainingly, but any attempt of mine to draw from him any history of his past life were repulsed with a kind firmness which showed them to be futile. The one day in the week which I had off duty we always spent together, sometimes wandering over the hills, sometimes reading together in a quiet spot, like children, laying on our backs in the soft pine needles, building great castles in the white clouds that floated over our heads.

We were returning one Sunday afternoon from one of these walks, when an incident occurred which though it may seem trifling, has been strongly impressed upon my memory, because in it I now see the beginning of a most mysterious ending. The track of the railroad which ran through the town made an abrupt turn around the brow of a hill, just before entering the Witch Hollow, leaving only a small stretch of track visible from the station to the turn. Wats and I descended the hill just below the curve and walked towards the track. I was a little in the lead, and had just placed a foot between the rails, when Wats seized me and jerked me back violently.

"Are you stone deaf?" he said, somewhat angrily, as I recovered myself.

"Not that I know of," I retorted. "Well you must be, if you didn't hear that train," he said smilingly.

By this time the train had had plenty of time to round the curve, but no train appeared.

"You must have been dreaming?" I said, laughing. "There was no train, and besides, it's not train time for two hours yet."

I glanced at Wats. He had grown pale and his eyes were riveted on the curve.

"Come old man," I said, lightly. "Wake up, Wake up!"

He turned quickly, and tried to smile. "I must have been mistaken," he said in a low voice. "But I certainly heard that train. I certainly heard it."

The following day the hoisting engine at the mine broke down, and I was kept very busy for the best part of the week, during which time I saw nothing of Wats. On Friday night he sent for me. I found him in his room, confined to his bed with an attack of mountain fever.

Now I had seen mountain fever before and knew what it meant, especially to a man like Wats, unused to the country, so, as things were running smoothly at the hoist, I determined to lay off for a few weeks, and nurse this case myself. The physician employed by the company for which I worked was a good one, and I hoped

(Continued on page 6.)

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