GIRL LED WEST IN TRANCE

Miss Coffin of New Jersey Follows Strang Couple to Iowa.

AWAKES AND PREVENTS HER ABDUCTION

Telegraphs to Omaha to Postmaster Crow, Her Cousin, with Whom She Now is Stopping.

Clara Josephine Coffin, who has been missing from her wealthy parents' home in East Orange, N. J., since last Tuesday and for whom detectives have been scouring the country, is lying prostrate at the home of her cousin, Postmaster Joseph Crow in Omaha, the result of a strange journey westward at the command of a strange man and woman, who she believes sought to kidnap and hold her for ransom.

Miss Coffin's story is strange and weird, but she vouches for the correctness of every detail. She declares that she was lured west by these two strange persons, whose sinister powers she tried, but was unable to resist. She declares she was stupified throughout the journey by some strange magic which worked like hypnotism on her.

Miss Coffin is the 17-year-old daughter of Edward W. Coffin, a member of the banking firm of Harkness Bros., New York, and also a confidential clerk of the Rockefellers, with offices at 26 Broadway, New York. Mrs. Coffin is an aunt of Mrs. Joseph Crow of Omaha. The young woman is certain the man and woman intended to kidnap her and hold her for a ransom, but is unable to tell why they did not perfect their scheme without coming so far west, or why they finally allowed her to escape after keeping her under their influence so long.

A report was circulated last night to the effect that Miss Coffin was not in Omaha, but this was emphatically denied by Mr. Crow, who when asked, said:

"The young woman is at my house right now. She is confined to bed, but is getting along nicely."

The story which Miss Coffin told her relatives when she arrived was in substance this:

Story as Girl Tells It.

She had been attending the high school in East Orange and last Tuesday, there being no school, she made a trip to the gymnasium to take her usual exercises. For the last month she had been passing a strange woman just near the school building, who always had a strange effect upon her. The woman had piercing black eyes and the girl says they cut her like a knife. Tuesday the strange woman approached her and told her, in a very commanding way, to pack her clothes and follow her, as duty commanded her to do so. In a half dazed state, and acting under the hypnotic spell, the girl made the trip back to her home, and without seeing any of the family, packed her telescope and did as the woman had bid. She had arranged to meet the girl at a certain place, and when Miss Coffin arrived on her return there was a strange man in company with the woman.

Taken to New York.

The girl was placed in a carriage and after the man and woman had entered they were driven at a rapid rate, finally landing in Newark, N. J. From there they were taken to the railroad station and, boarding a train, they soon landed in New York City, but at just what hour and over what railroad the girl cannot remember. She was still under the spell of this strange woman and did not seem to have energy enough to arouse herself.

Miss Coffin cannot tell how long they remained in the metropolis, but she does not believe it was for more than a few hours, as the party was soon aboard another train and on its way to Chicago. When this city was reached the girl was becoming weak and sick, the effects of the spell seeming to be working off. She was driven from one railroad station to another and when they got on this train the woman remained with her and the man occupied a seat in the coach next to the rear. Occasionally he would make trips into the car and talk with the woman in a low voice, always speaking in French.

When the train reached Cedar Rapids Miss Coffin had recovered her senses and slipped out and sent a telegram to Postmaster Joseph Crow, whose wife is a niece of the girl's father. It asked Mr. Crow to meet her at Omaha sometime during the night.

In the meantime after the girl had returned to the seat occupied by herself and the woman the latter excused herself and apparently went to the rear coach to talk with the man. At this opportunity, Miss Coffin being sufficiently possessed of her senses, grabbed her telescope and rushed for the front end of the car. Once out of the coach she began to revive after a little fresh air, and prepared to step off the train at the next station This she did, but does not remember what the name of the town was nor on what railroad it was located. However, Mr. Crow went to the depot and met the girl as she dismounted from the 11 o'clock train on the Northwestern Thursday evening. As soon as Miss Coffin saw Mr. Crow she recognized him and fell into his arms, prostrated. He assisted her to a carriage and soon had the girl, who is almost a complete nervous wreck, under the care of a physician at his home.

Miss Coffin is confined to her bed, and, being in so weak a condition, is not able to tell much of the thrilling story, which, she says, seems like a horrible dream.

No trace has been found of the mysterious man or woman and the only supposed motive is that they expected to abduct the girl and hold her for ransom.

WENTZ HELD FOR RANSOM

Philadelphia Millionaire in Hands of Men Who Demand Large Sum of Money.

BRISTOL, Va., Nov. 6.—Congressman Slemp in Bristol tonight confirmed the rumor that Edward L. Wentz, the young Philadelphia millionaire who disappeared, is in the hands of abductors in the mountains of southwest Virginia, and that a ransom of $100,000 is demanded for his release.

SHERIFFS ASSIST ROBBERS

Such is Allegation Made by Officers of United States.

ARREST MAN THOUGHT TO HEAD GANG

F. W. Whiting, Captured in Kansas, Said to Be Leader of Party Which Has Robbed Many Post-Offices and Banks.

JUNCTION CITY, Kan., Nov. 6.—F. W. Whiting was today bound over to the United States grand jury on the charge of complicity in the recent postoffice robbery at Morrill, Kan. Whiting is chaarged by officers with being the active officer of the gang of robbers which has been making things interesting for the banks of the smaller towns in Kansas and Nebraska for some years past.

Evidence is alleged to be in the hands of the United States district attorney to the effect that proceeds of the robberies were turned over to Whiting, who divided the money among the members of the gang.

A number of the members are in the penitentiaries in Kansas, Colorado and Nebraska and it is charged that they received their regular share of the stolen money by means of postoffice money orders sent to them by Whiting.

Several sheriffs are said to be implicated in helping the gang along, according to disclosures made by the United States authorities.

Moving Into New Quarters.

The Chicago Great Western is moving its headquarters from the Omaha National bank to the Merchants hotel building on Farnam street. The room will not be ready for six weeks, but while work is going on the company will occupy a small portion of the front. No officials for the city ticket office have been announced yet, and, in fact, not one of the office force has been selected.

WEBSTER AND HENRY CLAY

Dr. George L. Miller Hears Mr. Webster and Calls on Mr. Clay.

OMAHA, Nov. 5.—To the Editor of The Bee: I read, a day or two ago, of a gentleman who, at the age of 90, said he had lived to see Daniel Webster and Henry Clay.

"Me, too;" so have I. And I lack more than several months of being 90.

I saw, heard and stood very near to the Demosthenes of the United States fifty-three years ago at a public reception that he received in Syracuse, N. Y., as he was returning to the midst of those, to him, once dear "solid men of Boston," from a tour of the west. He made a brief speech, in which he said, among other things, that "the fugitive slave law must be ex-e-cu-ted. (I am trying to write the sentence as Mr. Webster spoke it.) He was then an old, disappointed and broken man. Seward and Weed never intended that so great a man should be president of the United States.

The highest tribute in my estimation that was ever paid to Daniel Webster came from the powerful pen and brilliant mind of James G. Blaine when he said that Webster's "Reply to Hayne" was "equal to a constitutional amendment."

I once asked Mr. Tilden his estimate of Mr. Webster. His answer was, "Mr. Webster was a rhetorician."

Charles A. Dana once said in the Sun that nobody had ever succeeded very well in answering Jefferson Davis.

I saw Henry Clay in 1850 in Syracuse, and squeezed his already lame hand until he jerked it away from me. But that was not satisfactory for a boy of 13 who didn't know any better. Following the illustrious Kentuckian, "Harry of the west," "The Mill Boy of the Slashes," to the Empire house, in which he was entertained in the good company and care of the famous Joshua A. Spencer of Utica, the eminent advocate and whig of that day in New York, I took it into my head to call upon Mr. Clay at his apartments. A fine, warm-hearted Irishman, "John" by name, stood guard at the door. "John" and I were fast friends, perhaps because I could play the Irish game of "forty-five," and could also swear a little—"ton a mon de'el," for instance—and talk a little more Irish. It is enough to say that I coaxed "John" to step around the corner of a turn in the hall, and I rapped on the door that hid so much greatness from view. The tall form and sallow, broad face of Mr. Spencer answered the call. I came near falling over myself at the presence. I said: "Mr. Spencer, will you please let me see Mr. Clay?"

Mr. Spencer smiled a kindly smile of surprise at such a performance, and, turning to Mr. Clay, said: "Mr. Clay, a young lad says he wants to see you."

In a soft, mellow voice, the great Kentuckian replied: "Let him come in, Mr. Spencer, let him come in, by all means."

As I entered the large parlor Mr. Clay rose from the sofa upon which he was reclining to his full height, and, stepping forward, bowed gracefully, and said: "How do you do, my young friend; I am glad to see you. Sit down, sir," waving me to a seat by his side on the sofa. And down I sat. Remembering the manners that I had been taught by my mother not to stay too long when calling upon neighbors, and being as anxious to flee from that presence as I was to get into it, I made my way to the door, to which I was accompanied by Mr. Clay, who said: "I wish you well, sir." G. L. M.

Excavating for School.

Excavating for the foundations of the new Monmouth Park school at Thirty-third street and Meredith avenue has been started by Contractor Thomas Herd. The Board of Education will insist that the building be constructed as rapidly as possible, as it is needed for the accommodation of children of the district.

POSTPONE MEETING OF BOARD

Lady Managers of Exposition Defer Conference Called for Next Week.

LITTLE ROCK, Ark., Nov. 6.—Mrs. Frederick Hanger of this city, secretary of the board of lady managers of the Louisiana Purchase exposition, has received a telegram from Mrs. James L. Blair of St. Louis, president of the board, notifying her of the postponement of the meeting called for next week until December 15.

The postponement was decided on at the suggestion of President Francis of the exposition and President Carter of the national commission.