STEALING SLAVES FROM MASTERS

Interesting Reminiscences of the Days of the Underground Railroad—Many Negroes Were Protected in Boston During the Troublesome Anti-Slavery Times.

A recent Ohio suggestion that a reunion of the surviving operators, "station masters" and stockholders of the old before-the-war underground railroad would prove a most interesting occasion to all concerned, and that such a gathering might be the means of supplying some missing links in the history of a most exciting epoch in National annals, should meet with general favor in all parts of the country.

In Massachusetts alone, always an abiding place for the oppressed of all lands, there were many warm promoters of an enterprise that grew out of the conditions that existed for many years between the free and slave States, and the underground "station master" could be easily located in nearly every Bay State town.

"In regard to what was known as the underground railroad in the decade of exciting years that preceded the war," says Col. T. W. Higginson, one of the station masters, "it should be borne in mind that the term was more particularly a localism along the banks of the Ohio River, a stream that was the dividing line between between freedom and slavery, and along whose shores and on the surface of whose current were enacted some of the most tragic scenes of the days when human beings were brutalized by the poison of human slavery.

"Of course, there in Massachusetts," continued Col. Higginson, "the friends of the fugitive bondmen were very active, always alert, and ready to extend a helping hand to some poor negro who possessed sufficient enterprise of himself to place his purchased, hunted and bruised body upon the soil of a free commonwealth.

"For any man with half a soul of his own should have been ready to admit that the fleeing slave who had braved all the dangers of a 500-mile flight, and had won in his life-and-death race, had also won his permanent freedom from the galling chains of a cruel and needless domestic system of lifelong bondage.

"I was not a member of the Boston vigilants," said Col. Higginson, "being at that time of my life in the ministry and a settled pastor at Worcester. But I heartily concured in the purpose and transactions of the Boston vigilants, had frequently received at my home consignments of freight from the Boston terminus of the road, giving it proper care and forwarding my charge to the next station along the line, which was the home of Stephen and Abby Kelly Foster.

"In fact, there were Massachusetts stations of the 'underground' along the main highways of travel in all parts of Massachusetts, and with the aid of the telegraph, to say nothing of the facilities offered by the mails, there were easy and rapid methods of communication between the stations. I well remember one of my consignments for the reason of a peculiar physical malformation, the fugitive possessing a double thumb on his right hand, a quick and sure means of identification.

"Not many days after he was at my house I received a visit from some United States Marshals, accompanied by a Southern Sheriff, or Marshal, and the latter had a mass of papers in connection with the case, which not only included the 'double thumb' in the personal description, but also conclusively showed that the fellow was but a petty thief who had escaped the clutches of an avenging justice.

"The Fosters had forwarded the man in question to Portland, Me., where he was subsequently found by his pursuers, at the very respectable home to which he was sent, and the daughter of the house, a very accomplished young woman, was entertaining the fugitive with choice selections on the parlor piano.

"But this was an isolated case," said Col. Higginson. "The greater portion of fleeing slaves that found their way to Massachusetts, or that came under my observation, were in every way worthy of the aid and comfort they so freely received at the hands of the lovers of freedom throughout the State. Some of these fugitives were persons of more than average character and capacity, and this latter class only served to intensify the injustice of the whole system of keeping human beings in slavish subjection to those of their fellowmen who were more fortunate in their color and in their circumstances.

"For any reference to my connection with the Anthony Burns case, in 1853, in which I took more or less of a strenuous interest," said Col. Higginson, "I must refer you to the diary of Richard H. Dana.

"He was the counsel for Burns, also, and Mr. Dana's account of that somewhat remarkable episode in Boston's history is one of the best stories ever written of the exciting events of those days. For the man who wrote 'Two Years Before the Mast' was one of the most interesting of story tellers, embellishing his narrations with all the details necessary for a completed picture, and Mr. Dana would sit by the hour sometimes in rehearsing the features of some notable occurrence that came under his observation.

"Anthony Burns, as we all know, was the last Boston fugitive to be returned to slavery, and war or no war he would have been the last of his line in any event.

"The sentiment of Massachusetts of Boston would not have permitted another such act. There would have been another State street fight with armed soldiers, another Crispus Attucks affair—if a comparison with that event be permitted—and the streets of Boston might have again been stained with the blood of martyrs."

"Mr. Phillips," said Anthony Burns, 'has everything been done that can be done? Must I go back?'

"Said Wendell Phillips, in referring to this pitiful appeal:

"'I went over in my own mind the history of Massachusetts. I thought of her schools, her colleges of learning, her churches, her courts, her benevolent and philanthropic institutions, her great names, her puritans, her pilgrims, and I was obliged to say, "Burns, there isn't humanity, there isn't Christianity, there isn't justice enough here to save you! You must go back!"'

EDWARD ATKINSON A CONDUCTOR.

"The only known survivors of the Boston vigilance committee of 200, organized in 1850, soon after the passage in September of that year of the notorious fugitive slave act," says William I. Bowditch of Boston and Brookline, lawyer, humanitarian, philanthropist for half a century, one of the 'station masters' of the 'underground road,' are Edward Atkinson, the inventor of the aladdin oven, statistician and economist, and myself.

"Col. Higginson was then in Worcester and as a station master in that locality had charge of the Worcester affairs of the road, and both Mr. Atkinson and Col. Higginson, as well as myself, although octogenarians and veterans in the various walks of life in which we have been placed, are still actively engaged on the firing line.

"The Boston vigilance committee, instituted for the purpose of assisting all fugitive slaves in their flight from bondage to freedom, contained in its membership many of the representative men of Boston and vicinity, such names as that of John A. Andrew, A. Bronson Alcott, Anson Burlingame, A. A. Burrage, John S. Eldridge, Jonas Fitch, Timothy Gilbert, Samuel G. Howe, Jas. Russell Lowell and Theodore Parker being conspicuous in the record of the committee's transactions.

"My house in Linden pl., Brookline," continued Mr. Bowditch, "was one of the stations of the Underground. So also was the home of William Jackson of Newton, as well as the house of Mrs. George M. Brooks of Concord, while one of the most active members of the Boston operating force was Capt. Austin Bearse, a Barnstable product, skipper of the excursion schooner Moby Dick, and whose services as a foremast hand in Southern coasting waters had instilled into the nature of Capt. Bearse an intense hatred of African slavery in all its forms. So the Moby Dick and its valiant commander, while open at all times for general business, was also at the service of the Boston vigilants.

"It was on the morning of July 15, 1853," said Mr. Bowditch, "that word reached headquarters at the Melonian of the arrival of the brig Florence, Capt. Amos Hopkins of Hallowell, Maine, from Wilmington, N. C., with an escaped fugitive aboard.

"A rescue party consisting of Henry Kemp, John W. Browne and myself, members of the committee, and some negro volunteers, was soon formed, the Moby Dick was boarded and Capt. Bearse bore away for the Florence, which was lying off Fort Independence. We were soon alongside and Bearse, knowing the captain was not aboard, hailed the brig and asked for the master.

"'The captain's ashore, sir,' came back the reply.

"'Where's the mate?' asked Bearse.

"'I'm the mate, sir,' replied the man who answered the first hail.

"'All right,' replied Bearse; 'I want that nigger that you have got in the hold, and I want him quick.'

"Our entire force was mustered aft, and presented something of a formidable array to the surprised first officer of the Florence.

"'Have you got the proper papers?' asked the mate, as he turned toward the cabin, with Bearse close at his heels.

"'Got all the papers I want,' said the Moby Dick's captain as he entered the cabin and discovered the sought-for fugitive sitting in the captain's quarters. It was but a moment's work to remove the irons from the manacled hands of the man, who was simply seeking to be free, hustle him on deck and aboard the Moby Dick.

BOWDICH OF BROOKLINE, ANOTHER CONDUCTOR.

"It was all done so quickly the mate of the Florence had no time to ask questions or demand the 'papers' and landing our rescued party at City Point, a carriage was obtained and the fugitive taken to my house in Brookline, fed, clothed and forwarded to the next station at Framingham, from whence he made his way to the promised land in Canada.

"The direct line of the underground road from Boston to Canada," said Mr. Bowditch, "was through the State of Vermont by the way of St. Albans, and it is difficult to recall many of the stations and station masters in which the intervening country abounded.

"Rev. Joshua Young was receiving agent at Burlington, Joseph Poland was the Montpelier agent and a Mr. Robinson, at Perrisburg, was native in his vicinity. The father of Pres E. Benjamin Andrews, at Montague, in Massachusetts, was a station master; at Medway was M. M. Fisher, the stanch citizen of the old days; Nathaniel P. Borden was at Fall River, while Jethro and Ann Mitchell at Newport and Daniel Mitchell at Providence were Rhode Island patrons of the road, as was also Mrs. Elizabeth Buffam Chace of Valley Falls. Rev. J. May at Brooklyn, Conn., never permitted a 'train' to pass his house without stopping for wood and water. Bingham L. Capron, Uxbridge, Mass., was another such supporter and patron, as was the then Rev. T. W. Higginson of Worcester and Stephen and Abby Kelly Foster were naturally actively interested in an enterprise of this kind.

"Simeon Dodge of Marblehead was one of the marine contingent, James Furber of Canaan, N. H., looked after the road's interests in his particular neighborhood, while at Portland was Gen. Samuel Fessenden, Nathan Winslow and Mrs. Oliver Dennett.

"At Wilmington, Del., near the border line, was the faithful Quaker, Thomas Garrett, with a record of 700 'assists' and an aggregate of $8,000 fines for the privilege.

"In the neighborhood also was the 'Moses' of the underground flight of the persecuted Israelites from the Southland. Harriet Tubman, herself a fugitive, with 400 liberated slaves to the credit of her own unaided efforts, and who is still living at Auburn, N. Y. While Ohio had its Levi Coffin, another apostle of the faith that abhors war, Boston had its Lewis Hayden, also a fugitive, and whose escape from darkness into the sunlight on that September Sunday morning in 1844, crossing the Ohio River, the boatman's Rubicon, at Milliersburg, Ky., was attended with most disastrous consequences to the two white persons who thus defied the laws of Kentucky and aided in the flight.

"Mr. Hayden, in after years one of the most respected citizens of Boston, in slave life was the property of Baxter & Grant, the proprietors of the Brennan House in Lexington, Ky., and he was serving his masters in the capacity of waiter at the hotel when Rev. Calvin Fairbank, a Methodist preacher with a roving commission, who was a native of Wyoming County, New York, appeared on the scene. In Lexington, also in 1844, was Miss Delia A. Webster of Vergennes, Vt., the daughter of Benajah Webster, who was the principal of a private academy for young women.

"Chance threw Mr. Fairbank and Miss Webster together as fellow boarders at the same house, and in what way Mr. Fairbank became acquainted with Mr. Hayden, 'the boy Lewis,' is obvious from the character of Mr. Hayden's employment. 'Why do you wish to be free?' asked Mr. Fairbank of the Brennan House waiter. 'Because I am a man,' was the reply, a statement which Mr. Hayden afterwards fully substantiated.

NEGROES DISGUISED AS WHITE FOLKS.

"On Saturday, Sept. 28, at 8 o'clock in the morning, a hack containing Mr. Fairbank, Miss Webster and Lewis Hayden, with his wife and son, left Lexington for the Ohio country. Mr. Hayden and his wife were disguised as white people, cloaked and bundled so as to obscure their color, while the boy was stowed away as baggage beneath the rear seat of the carriage.

"The driver of the hack was a slave and while not apparently entrusted with the secret of the real purposes of the journey, could nevertheless be trusted.

"At Millersburg, twenty-four miles from Lexington, Miss Webster left the party and took lodgings for the night at a private house, while Fairbank and the Haydens, dodging detection at every turn, reached the river unmolested and the fleeing fugitives were landed on Ohio soil in safety.

"Mr. Fairbank then retraced his steps, took in Miss Webster at her stopping place, and together in the same hack they traveled back to Lexington. A sick, dying and dead horse, one of the pair that left Lexington, somewhat complicated matters at the outset, but the loss of the horse was not a circumstance to what followed. For both Mr. Fairbank and Miss Webster were arrested upon the serious charge of stealing negroes, thrust into jail, convicted, and sentenced to the Kentucky penitentiary, the man for seventeen and the woman for two years.

"Miss Webster was confined at the Frankport prison for a period of but five weeks, when Governor Owsley pardoned her conditionally upon leaving the State, and the unfortunate lady returned with her father to her home in Vergennes. Her companion in misfortune served four years of his sentence, when he also received executive clemency at the hands of Governor John J. Crittenden. But the experience did not cure Mr. Fairbank of his desire to assist the Kentucky slaves to cross the Ohio.

"Caught again in a kindred transaction in 1851, the hapless preacher was sentenced to Frankfort for another term of seventeen years, remaining in prison until 1863, when by the alleged instigation of President Lincoln, who is said to have called Governor Bramlette, an opponent of Fairbank's release, to Washington and telegraphed Acting Governor R. T. Jacob that it was a good time to extend an act of deserved mercy to Mr. Fairbank, and Kentucky's most noted prisoner again became a free man.

"While the statement seems incredible, Mr. Fairbank himself says in his published book that he received at Frankfort, as a result of the brutality of the keepers, an aggregate of 35,000 lashes, and this worst-whipped man in the United States, in 1890, was a resident of Angelica, N. Y.

"A singular sequel to this Lexington episode which ended so seriously to some of the participants was the death, a few years since, of the widow of Lewis Hayden, 'the boy Lewis,' and the bequest of this former Kentucky slave of the bulk of her little property to Harvard College for the benefit of needy students of African descent.

"It became well acquainted with William and Ellen Crafts," concluded Mr. Bowditch, "husband and wife, who left Macon, Ga., in 1848, and made their way to Boston in the disguise of an invalid planter and his faithful servant, who would not desert his master, Mrs. Crafts, being largely of Caucasian blood and nearly white, taking the part of the planter, while her husband was the ever attending servitor of the sick young Southerner who was journeying to Philadelphia for treatment.

"While illiterate, as all slaves were made so by statutory enactment, this remarkable couple were persons of more than average ability, character and natural accomplishments, and when Mrs. Crafts arrayed herself in the fashionable attire of the up-to-date young Georgian of that time, she presented a picturesque looking figure, while her blue glasses and bandaged arm detracted but little from her attractive appearance.

"Being unable to write, the right arm was put in a sling so as to show physical inability only, and the obliging clerks at the hotels and at the railway stations signed the young planter's name for him whenever it became necessary to have a signature.

"Reaching Philadelphia without molestation, the couple, in their proper characters, continued their journey to Boston, the land of promise, where for two years, or until the hideous spectre of the fugitive slave act showed itself, they lived in peace and comfort, studying the rudiments of the language like little children, and making rapid progress along the lines of self-support and good citizenship.

"But the law which President Fillmore signed, Daniel Webster approved and hosts of good Christian people North and South deemed necessary for the pacification of the country, drove William and Ellen Crafts from Boston to England—thus reversing that flight from persecution to liberty in 1620—where they continued to prosper, rearing a family of children, returning to the United States in 1865, and settling on their own property in Bryan County, Georgia.

"Here the former fugitives, remembering their own plight in their youth, established little Tuskegee institutes in various parts of Bryan County, letting in the light upon the darkness of illiteracy, and here William and Ellen Crafts lived and died, honored and respected by both whites and blacks."

Once again are the remarkable sequences of our modern American life illustrated in the fact that a daughter of William and Ellen Crafts, the fleeing fugitives of 1848, is now the wife of the Collector of the port of Charleston, S. C., the second Federal office of importance south of Washington, whose husband, Collector Crum, holds his place by virtue of the steadfast loyalty of President Roosevelt to his own appointment, and the Charleston Collector will undoubtedly remain at his post while the present administration continues in power.—Boston Globe.

A Better Record Book.

The shrewd comment of a Lancashire blacksmith, whose wits had not been dulled by over-education, is quoted by the Cornhill Magazine. It may be suggestive to students in our universities who spend the leisure hours in scribbling notes instead of listening and understanding.

The clerk in charge of a farriery class held by the County Council at Preston gave a stalwart blacksmith a notebook and pencil.

"Wot's this 'ere book for?" asked the man.

"To take notes," replied the clerk.

"Notes? Wot sort o' notes?"

"Why, anything that the lecturer says that you think important and want to remember you make a note of in the book."

The Lancashire man looked scornful.

"Oh!" said he, "anything I want to remember I must make a note of in this 'ere book, must I? Then wot do you think my bloomin' 'ed's for?"

THE GLOVE AND THE LIONS.

King Francis was a hearty King, and loved a royal sport,
And one day as his lions fought, sat looking on the court;
The nobles filled the benches round, the ladies by their side,
And 'mongst them Count de Lorge, with one he hoped to make his bride.
And truly 'twas a gallant thing to see that crowning show—
Valor and love, and a King above, and the royal beasts below.

Ramped and roared the lions, with horrid laughing jaws;
They bit, they glared, gave blows like beams, a wind went with their paws;
With wallowing might and stifled roar, they rolled on one another,
Till all the pit, with sand and mane, was in a thund'rous smother;
The bloody foam above the bars came whizzing through the air;
Said Francis then, "Faith, gentlemen, we're better here than there."

De Lorge's love overheard the King—a beauteous, lovely dame,
With smiling lips and sharp bright eyes, which always seemed the same.
She thought, "The count, my lover, is brave as brave can be;
He surely would do wondrous things to show his live for me.
King, ladies, lovers, all look on, the occasion is divine.
I'll drop my glove, to prove his love, great glory will be mine."

She dropped her glove to prove his love, then looked at him and smiled.
He bowed, and in a moment leaped among the lions wild.
The leap was quick; return was quick—he has regained his place;
Then threw the glove—but not with love—right in the lady's face.
"In truth," said Francis, "rightly done," and he rose from where he sat;
"No love," quoth he, "but vanity, sets love a task like that."

HUNT FOR HOES.

Bliffkin Seeks One at Department Store.

"John," remarked Mrs. Bliffkin to her husband, as they stood on the back porch, "do you see how the weeds are coming up all over this back yard? I wish you'd come out here when you get home tonight and hoe them up."

"All right," responded Bliffkin; "but I'll have to get a hoe first. We haven't any."

"Well," said Mrs. Bliffkin, "you'd better go into the cash department store when you go down this morning and get one. I saw some advertised for 23c in the paper this morning. Now, mind you don't forget it."

In spite of the numerous business matters on Bliffkin's mind he didn't forget about the hoe. He dropped off the car at the cash department store and hurried inside, remarking to himself: "I ought to be at the office right now; but it'll take only a minute to get that hoe."

A floorwalker stepped up as Bliffkin looked about. "What department are you looking for, sir?"

"I—ah—do you keep hoes?" asked Bliffkin, as he looked about vainly for a sight of the article.

"Hose? Yes, sir; this way; third aisle to the left. Miss Pillsen, will you please show this gentleman our latest styles of hose?"

Then the floorwalker hurried away, leaving Bliffkin standing before a pretty young woman, who said: "Something for your wife, I suppose?"

Bliffkin blushed. "I—ah—I—er—I am afraid the floorwalker doesn't understand what I——"

"Of course not! Those floorwalkers are such a stupid lot! Now, let me show you something real swell in lisle thread—linen heels, soles and toes—all the rage; and we've marked 'em down from a dollar to 75c. You know we sell more hose than all the rest of the stores in town put together."

"I beg your pardon," began Bliffkin; but I don't want——"

"Well, perhaps these ribbed varieties will suit your wife better. No? Well, then here's something swagger in polka dots—fast colors, and only 19 cents a pair."

Bliffkin's face grew redder. "Let me tell you——"

"Oh, yes, I suppose you do know what you want better than I do; I was merely suggesting. Well, I can give you the new styles in Richelieu ribbed, or cadet grounds in blue, pink, purple, cerise shades, every tan combination as well, and very taking. We sold a thousand pair of these——"

"Will you let me——"

"Certainly; now being the head clerk of this department, I thought I could give you some suggestions as to what your wife would like. Now, here is an imported hose—just in from Paris, but they are expensive, and I hardly think you would care for them. They come so high——"

"I don't care if they come four feet high!" exclaimed the exasperated Bliffkin. "If you will let me explain. I don't want this kind of hose at all, young woman, I——"

"Oh, you want men's hose, do you? Why didn't you say so in the first place, then? You know I meant high in price, you mean, hateful old——"

Bliffkin didn't wait to hear the rest of the sentence. He hurried down another aisle as if in a trance, until he found another floorwaker.

"Hoes!" he muttered hoarsely. "I'm after hoes! Have you got such a thing in this store? And tell me where I can find them. No monkey work, now, young man!"

"Hose? Why, yes, sir; of course we have hose—best in town, too. Right this way—down that aisle to the left, Simpson, you will show the gentleman the different kinds of hose we carry?"

Simpson runnen his hands and smiled affably. "Hose? All right, guess we can satisfy you. Suppose you want something pretty good; don't pay to get the cheap kind when you get hose. Now, here is an article we can guarantee; comes in 42-inch lengths, and is only 6 cents a foot, with a nozzle thrown in, and we make you a present of a full repair outfit as well."

"But, young man, I don't want that——"

"Well, then, here's something more expensive. Warranted genuine para rubber all through; won't crack, split, rot or dry out; give you a written guarantee for a year, too; and if it splits anywhere bring it back and get your money. Costs you 10 cents a foot," and Simpson paused to catch his breath.

"I am looking for a——"

"Bargain, eh? Well, here's another grade—biggest bargain in town; used to be 12 cents a foot; marked down to only 8 cents. Cost us more than that; but we bought pretty heavy on this grade and we're making a special drive in it."

Bliffkin has been trying vainly to get a hearing, and when Simpson paused, he thundered out: "See here, you young monkey! Who in Balak said I wanted to get a hose?"

"Why—ah—the floorwalker, sir."

"Yes, that floorwalker has about as many brains as the rest of your infernal idiots in here. You're all a lot of smart Alecks. If you would give me a chance to get in a word edgewise I would tell you the kind of goods I am looking for. I want a hoe, not hose; do you understand? Can you grasp the idea with its full meaning? Hoes, iron hoes, the kind you use for digging weeds out of a garden—got a long wooden handle on 'em that you work so-fashion—see?"

"Oh, a hoe, eh? Oh, I see now. Why didn't you say so in the first place, then?"

"Why didn't I say so? Wasn't I trying my best to tell you all the while you were working that mug and shooting off that jaw of yours? Now, if you have got such an article or implement, say so; and if you haven't got it I'll go where folks know what a man means without all this infernal nonsense!" and Bliffkin glared at the awed clerk like a caged hyena.

"The hardware department is down in the basement."

And as Bliffkin tramped heavily down the aisle, he growled to himself: "By thunder! some folks are the biggest fools on the face of the earth. Women's hose, rubber hose, men's hose. Huh!"—New York Tribune.

A HINDO PARADISE.

A Hindoo died—a happy thing to do
When twenty years united to a shrew.
Released, he hopefully for entrance sues
Before the gates of Brahma's Paradise.
"Hast thou been through Purgatory?" Brahma said.
"I have been married." And he hung his head.
"Come in, come in, and welcome, too, my son!
Marriage and Purgatory are as one."
In bliss extreme he entered Heaven's door,
And knew the pence he ne'er had known before.

He scarce had entered in the garden fair,
Another Hindoo asked admission there.
The self-same question Brahma asked again—
"Hast thou been through Purgatory?" "No, what then?"
"Thou canst not enter," did the god reply.
"He who went in was there no more than I."
"All that is true, but he has married been,
And so on earth has suffered for all sin."
"Married? 'Tis well, for I've been married twice!"
"Begone! We'll have no fools in Paradise."

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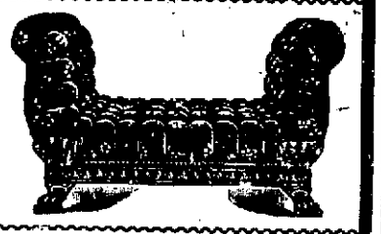

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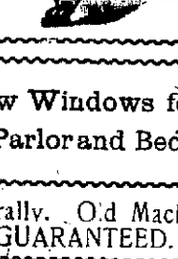
SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES.



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