

one who feels it her privilege to address you in that character." And a few years later she wrote: "Can you really think I have forgotten you, or that time and distance have made me indifferent to your welfare? Do not you know, that in spite of all your faults, I loved you almost as well as if you had been my own son? I hardly know why, but so it was. Most sincerely do I rejoice in your brilliant success, and most earnestly do I pray that you may be a good and happy man. Do not let your prosperity make you unmindful of the Bountiful Giver. There is much in your situation unfavorable to serious thought; but you have a mind capable of judging whether something more than fame and riches be not necessary to your happiness. I cannot bear to think of your being devoted wholly to politics and money-making."

On the 2d of March, 1836, he left the paternal roof with a heavy heart, but with buoyant hopes, for "the far west." He came first to Alton, Illinois, and after visiting a few other places in that state, landed in Burlington, and though not yet twenty years of age, embarked in business as an attorney at law. A census taken the following summer returned a population of 10,531 souls in the "Black Hawk Purchase." Burlington was a frontier town. Fifty miles west was the Indian line.

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## A MYSTERIOUS DISAPPEARANCE AND TIMELY DISCOVERY

BY HAWKINS TAYLOR, WASHINGTON, D. C.

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PROBABLY no settlers in any new country in modern times ever saw such hard times as the early settlers of Iowa, summing up from 1835 to about 1848. In Keokuk, as in all parts of the territory, there was no such thing as getting money for any kind of labor. I laid brick at three

dollars per thousand, in anything that could be eaten or worn. In '43 or '44 I built the first Methodist church built in Keokuk, 42 by 60 feet, I think, (brick) for six hundred dollars, and took my pay in the subscription papers, part of which was never paid, and not fifty dollars in money. The best quality of fall wheat was hauled to Keokuk, more than one hundred miles, and sold for  $37\frac{1}{2}$  cents per bushel in store pay. Other products brought about the same rates; but these were good old times, notwithstanding the low prices and no money, and other hardships.

I had a carpenter shop in the middle of Main and Second streets, with neither door or lock, but had neither tools or plank stolen. We then slept in our houses without locking our doors, with neither fear nor loss; but there were no Grecian bends nor high-heeled boots then; it was before the era of civilization.

Among others of the citizens of Keokuk at that happy day was Melancthon Knight. Knight was a native of Cattaraugus county, N. Y., a hard working, sober, steady, quiet young man, a sort of Jack-of-all-trades, plasterer, stone mason, and carpenter, a sort of necessity of that day, when there was no steady employment at any one trade, and more or less of all required. About 1846, business being very dull, and Knight having nothing else to do, built a wharf-boat by piecemeal. When so far finished that it could be used, he sold one-half of the boat to a man by the name of Wallsworth, who lived at Montrose, at the head of the rapids, a small place at that time, and its business depending entirely on the low water of the river, requiring steamboats to stop at that place and lighten over the rapids, and stop there to re-ship the up freight that had to be sent over the rapids on lighters. It so happened that during the spring and summer after Knight & Wallsworth took their boat to Montrose, that the river remained so high that few boats stopped at Montrose, and but little business was done on the wharf-boat, the main profits being to sell whiskey to the steamboat hands. Knight left the management of the

boat entirely to his partner, Wallsworth, who employed an English Mormon, a rough laborer, and as hard a looking customer as could have been found in the Mormon Church, to run the whiskey shop.

In building the boat, Knight got in debt some forty dollars, on which a judgment was obtained, an execution issued and levied upon his half of the boat, which was advertised for sale. By this time the river had fallen so that boats had to stop at Montrose and lighten over the rapids, and there was every indication of a prosperous fall business on the wharf-boat. Knight had been sick with the chills and fever all the latter summer and early fall, but was then able to be around, and went up to Montrose to get the money to pay off the execution that had been levied on his part of the boat, but to his surprise Wallsworth refused to make any settlement or let him have any money. Knight went out that night to an old Cattaraugus friend who lived in Muddy Lane, about six miles from Montrose, hoping to be able to borrow the money, but he failed. The next morning he went back to Montrose, but Wallsworth still refused to settle with him, evidently intending to have the interest of Knight in the boat sold by the constable, and bought in for his own benefit. Forty dollars at that time was a large sum to raise, and Knight appeared to have no chance to raise it. That night Knight remained on the wharf-boat, and early in the evening he went to bed (the upper part of the boat was used for sleeping purposes). There were that night seven boats lighting up or down over the rapids. Two of them were fast to the wharf-boat, and work was kept up on some of the boats nearly all night. About two o'clock in the morning Knight got up and told his bedfellow that he could not sleep, and that he would go down and write a letter to his old home. In the morning when the Englishman opened the bar and the thirsty crowd rushed in, they found on the card table a half finished letter, written by Knight to his old school chum in N. Y., in a most lively and cheerful tone. On the letter were blood drops; there were blood

stains on the table, on the floor, and from the table to the door next the river was the mark in the dirt and dust, of some heavy substance having been dragged, that looked as if a man had been dragged to the door and dropped out on the guard of the boat into the river. On the floor was Knight's palm-leaf hat, with blood on it, and a hole cut that looked like it had been done by the corner of a hatchet, that appeared to have been stuck into the head just above and behind the ear. Near the hat on the floor was a lock of Knight's hair, that was bloody, that appeared to have been cut by the hatchet, when stuck into the head. Behind the counter a hatchet was found, the corner of which exactly fitted the place cut in the hat. On the hatchet were marks of blood, that appeared to have been wiped off carefully. The evening before there was fastened under the outside guard of the wharf-boat a little Indian canoe. In the morning that canoe was gone. There was but one conclusion, and that was that Knight had been murdered, and murdered by the Mormon; and that he had been instigated to the cruel act by Wallsworth. Knight was a young man, without an enemy, and the treatment of Wallsworth towards him had created quite an excitement in his favor and against Wallsworth, who was evidently wanting to rob him of his interest in the boat, and it was at a time when to be a Mormon was to be considered capable of any crime, and then this Mormon in appearance was the worst of his class.

Wallsworth and the Mormon were at once put under arrest, and the news of the murder spread in all directions, creating the most intense feeling. Montrose before night was full of people from all parts of the country. Most of them were in favor of at once lynching the murderers, as all believed the prisoners to be. A few citizens, opposed to lynching under any circumstances, went to save the prisoners to the action of the law. None however believed them innocent of the crime charged against them. Conspicuous among their number was Daniel F. Miller, then of Ft Madison, now mayor of Keokuk, who pleaded most earnestly

with the mob, to let the law have its course. Owing to the high esteem in which Miller was held by the people, they listened to him, but they were not convinced by his earnest eloquence. However, the time that his speech gave, saved the lives of the prisoners. When the mob would delay their work no longer, with a prepared rope and a boat ready, they were in the act of starting with the prisoners to the small island between Montrose and Nauvoo to hang them, when James Mackley, then of Keokuk, now dead, came dashing up, his horse in a foam of sweat, with the news that Knight had been found in a canoe near Quincy, Illinois, terribly cut about the head but still alive, and that he had been taken ashore at Quincy, and was being properly cared for. This put a sudden stop to the proceedings of the mob, and the prisoners were rapidly sent to Ft. Madison to jail, where they were safe from mob violence.

At that time there was living at Keokuk a family by the name of Jordon. Of the numerous children was a little fellow about ten or twelve years of age, whose name was Jim. Jim's face was the face of a saint, if you took it on credit, and he was a boy of activity and enterprise. His main business being to get into other people's skiffs and canoes and letting them float down the river to a market, Jim, with a partner about his own age, had been down the river on one of these commercial expeditions, and came up home on the packet the evening after Knight's supposed murder. Among the passengers that came up on the boat was a man who had been down to Quincy with a load of corn. Mackley enquired of this corn merchant if he had heard of Knight. The man answered that he had not, when Jim Jordon stepped up and said, "I saw Knight." "Where?" "A mile above Quincy; he was floating down in a canoe with his head cut to pieces, and he had bled nearly to death. We took him on board the steamboat, and took him to Quincy, when I went up beyond the Quincy House and got a surgeon, who came down to the boat and examined him and dressed his wound, and took him on

there; but he could not speak, and the Doctor thought that he would die." The corn man said he saw nothing of this, but Jim stood his ground, and asserted positively, looking the man straight in the face, that all that he said was true. The man enquired, "On what part of the flat-boat was the man put?" Jim said, "In the little bunk at the stern, while you were at the bow; and I went for the Doctor when you went down to the distillery." The boy was so positive and specific, with such an honest looking face, that the man said, "It may be so, but I saw nothing of it." Mackley believed the story, knowing that the boy knew Knight perfectly well; and knowing that a mob had gone to, and was then at, Montrose to hang the prisoners, he mounted a fast horse and went to Montrose under whip and spur, and got there just in time to save the lives of the prisoners.

Knight's brother went on the packet to Quincy the same night, but when he got there he found the whole Jordon story false—not a single word of truth in it. Fortunately the prisoners were safe in jail and beyond the reach of the mob at that time.

Mackley questioned the Jordon boy, but he stuck to his original story. Mackley then found the other boy who had gone down the river with Jim, and learned from him that the morning after the supposed murder, while the boys were getting their breakfast a few miles below Lagrange, in Missouri, a tall pale man came down the river in a small canoe, and appeared to be coming on shore, until he saw them, when he at once changed his course and paddled rapidly behind an island in the river. Mackley then in company with Knight's brother started down the river, to see if they could find the canoe. The universal theory was that Knight's body had been dropped into the canoe, and the canoe allowed to float off; or, that the canoe had been filled with sacks and sunk, with the body securely fastened to it. At Hanibal, Missouri, Mackley and Knight found the canoe, and learned that the man who came down in it had enlisted, not, however, in the name of Knight, in a regiment of

United States troops, going to Mexico, and had gone to Jefferson barracks, St. Louis. At St. Louis they found Knight, well and hearty, just in the act of embarking for New Orleans.

He admitted that he had planned the whole thing; that he had written the letter as he did, that he had bled himself to get the blood to sprinkle on the letter, table, floor, hair, and hatchet, that he cut the hole in the hat with the hatchet, cut a lock of his hair and put blood on it, dragged a sack of salt over the floor, got in the canoe and left, hoping and expecting that it would result in the hanging of Wallsworth. He said that all that he had on earth was in the wharf-boat, that he saw that Wallsworth was going to take his (Knight's) money to buy the boat in at the sale; that the boat was not of much value, but that it was impossible for him to raise the money to pay the execution and keep it from going into Wallsworth's hands; and that he determined that if he lost his half, it should never benefit Wallsworth.

Here were two men with not a single person who knew of the case, that believed them innocent of the crime charged against them; every circumstance was against them, every prejudice against them, perfectly helpless, and the people wildly mad for their destruction, yet a boy whose word would not have been taken in the simplest case, tells a lie that saves their lives—a lie that was not inspired by either of the prisoners nor any of their friends, but a pure Gulliver of the boy's own invention. He had doubtless heard on the boat of the murder, and when he heard Mackley enquire for Knight, he told his story, as he had told thousands of stories before, and that none had ever believed, nor would Mackley have paid any attention to this story but for the fact that the owner of the corn that the flat-boat was loaded with was present and disputed the story, but the boy faced him down in it until the man himself admitted that it might be true. Then again, Knight had no better friend than Mackley, who had no acquaintance or kindness for either of the prisoners, but he hated mob murder, and

until Knight's body was found and him dead, he did not want the prisoners hung, and at his own expense he hunted up Knight, when the prisoners were allowed to go free, thus vindicating entirely the work of strangers and believers in their guilt. What became of Knight I never knew.

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THE FLYING ARROW.

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INDIANS are strange people in many ways, and one of the strangest things about them is their power of following the slightest track left by man or beast, however lightly or carefully they may have trodden to avoid pursuit.

There is a story told about a hunter, who having killed a deer, cut off a joint of venison and hung it on the highest nail in his wigwam or hut—a kind of tent all covered with skins.

Then he went off to collect dry leaves and sticks with which to kindle a fire, for of course no such things as coals were known to the "Flying Arrow," as he was called, for these Indians have no real name.

Presently he came back with his well-filled arms; but lo, and behold! his fine joint had vanished. He looked carefully about, but no sign of the thief was there; at least, we should never have found any, had we looked ever so closely.

But our Indian caught up his club, and away he went straight through the forest. He had not gone long before he met a neighbor, who, seeing him go along with his eyes fixed on the ground, asked him what trail he was on.

"I seek," said "Flying Arrow," "a little old man carrying a short gun. He is followed by a little dog with a stumpy, bushy tail. This man is a thief; he has entered my wigwam and stolen my venison. I will crush both him and his dog."

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