

A "Panic" in the Local Gold Market.

Attempt to "Bear" Greenbacks—Successful Confidence Game—Harriet Tubman Made a Fool Pigeon—Shimer \$2,000 out—A Decided "Plant"—A Nigger in the Fence.

For some days past there has existed in certain quarters a deal of speculation, created by the report that a former slave from South Carolina was tarrying just outside the southern limits of the city, endeavoring to effect the exchange of two thousand dollars in gold which he had become possessed of during the war, and had brought here with the desire of turning it into greenbacks.

The fortunate ex-slave used a go-between, Johnson by name, who had formerly known Harriet Tubman, the celebrated colored champion of fugitives, previous to and during the war, having had business transactions with her in those days. Coming to her residence near the South street or Fleming toll-gate a few days ago, Johnson related to her the facts of his friend possessing the gold, and offered her a liberal commission for her services in securing a customer to exchange greenbacks for the yellow metal.

Harriet was greatly elated at the prospect of securing a round sum of money, having a desire to use it in visiting her old home in the South. Consequently, putting her whole faith in the statements and promises of Johnson, she interviewed several capitalists in the city, at various times, and endeavored to excite their interest in the desirable transaction by which \$2,000 gold could be secured for greenbacks, without premium, which at twelve per cent., would nett \$240 to the negotiator—not to mention her own promised reward for securing the customer.

The honest old woman, fully impressed with her important mission, in which she said that she had always stood up for her race, and was "not going to go back on them now"—interviewed Chas. P. Wood, of the Auburn Savings Bank; ex-Sheriff James Mead, of Fleming; Chas. A. Myers, Cashier of the Exchange Bank, and Dr. E. P. K. Smith, without success, although the latter gentleman did go so far as to take \$500 in currency, and visit Harriet's residence Tuesday evening; but failing to find her at home, he declined, yesterday, to have anything more to do with the subject.

But finally, the right party was reached, in the person of Mr. Anthony Shimer, who, with an eye to business, is always on hand for a safe speculation. The story was told to him by Harriet, in whom he had reason to rely, from her long and well tried reputation for honesty—and from his own guileless confidence in the disinterestedness of people who are bothered with a good deal of gold or other property in general.

Anthony needed just \$240, to eke out what little change his business allows him to enjoy, and his interview with Harriet convinced him that he had struck a prolific source of gain that could be turned to better account than any investment in second-hand cellars or post holes that might turn up for years to come.

No amount of dissuasion from some of his cool headed advisers could turn him from the certainty of making a good thing, and finally he drew \$2,000 in currency from the City Bank, obtained a horse and wagon, with which to drive to the mysterious rendezvous with the holder of the gold. He told Mr. Charles O'Brien, Cashier, that Harriet came to him with her brother, James Stuart, and had informed him that the gold man was so shy of white folks, and fearful of being beaten out of his money, that he kept himself aloof from all persons except his "agent," Johnson, and was only to be personally "seen" by said Johnson or Harriet, in which latter personage he could trust implicit confidence.

Consequently, he must be approached in his rural retirement, with a delicacy so openly suggestive of entire good faith as to convince him that no fraud was intended.

Previous to taking his departure from the bank, Mr. Shimer engaged Cashier O'Brien to accompany him, partly for protection in case of danger from the strange gentleman from Carolina, and partly to test the genuineness of "that gold"—for which latter purpose a vial of muriatic acid was provided.

At about 4 o'clock P. M. the party started out, comprising Messrs. Shimer and O'Brien, Harriet, her husband, her brother James Stuart, and the man Johnson. They drove to Grover Hill, and not finding their man, (unless he was present in the form of Johnson, the agent, who is now suspected of being the boss of the whole job), they drove on until

after dark and to Smith's Corners, where they alighted and put up at the hotel.

Here Harriet was appointed to become the bearer of the \$2,000 in greenbacks, which she was to take to the gold man—he being supposed to be so near at hand, in a convenient concealment, that she could meet him and receive the gold, and return to the hotel within half an hour.

She took the money, and, accompanied by Johnson, proceeded on her errand, leaving the rest of the party behind, anxiously awaiting the golden result.

Time passed slowly, until half an hour had elapsed, and all were in momentary expectation of her reappearance. Half an hour, three-quarters; an hour passed, and no signs of Harriet. Half an hour more, and Mr. Shimer's nervousness had increased to a serious degree. He began to regret that Mr. O'Brien had not accepted his proposition to "go snax" on the proceeds.

Then they sallied out into the air, and walked a few rods. A peculiar sound was heard, which they at first ascribed to the voice of some animal. Again it was heard with more distinctness, when they recognized a human wail of distress.

Proceeding to the spot from whence the sounds came, a prostrate figure, scarce discernible in the darkness, was seen laboriously crawling on the ground. On approaching it, Mr. Shimer exclaimed—"For God's sake, Harriet! Is this you?" The only answer was a groan from the figure, which was found to be that of the unfortunate Harriet.

Further examination disclosed the fact that she was gagged by a large handkerchief, stuffed into her mouth and fastened securely by being tied around her head. To take her into the house and relieve her of the gag was the first act, when it was found that she was wounded by a blow on the side of her face, suffering from almost complete exhaustion, and nearly speechless, while her clothing was torn and her general appearance indicative of a desperate struggle.

As she is a powerful woman, courageous and active, and a stranger to fear, it was evident that she had been knocked senseless, gagged and bound, and after lying in such condition for some time, had recovered sufficiently to unbind her hands and crawl to the spot where she was found.

After administering to her sufferings and vainly endeavoring to obtain some coherent explanation from the unfortunate woman, she was left in comfortable quarters at the hotel, in charge of her husband, while the rest of the party, minus the suspected villain, Johnson, returned—Stuart being directed to procure clothing and other necessities for the sufferer.

All the information that could be gleaned from Harriet was that her hands had been tied behind her back, and that she had managed to crawl from the scene of the foul and villainously planned robbery.

The greenbacks were, of course, missing, and no gold was in her possession in exchange therefor. Johnson failed to turn up, also, and here the subject rests for the present.

A visit to the house of Mrs. Tubman this morning, failed to elicit any further information, excepting that she had left in the morning, returned at noon, and after again leaving, with her companions, yesterday had not since returned.

An old "auntie" at the wash-tub, lame and blind, but fat, jolly and shrewd, replied, in answer to questions—

"I 'clare to goodness, sir, don't 'pear to know nuffin' 'bout it, more'n Milkizzidick, nor nobody else!"

And that is more than is yet known as to where the "gold" and the greenbacks may chance to be just at present—except that they have, figuratively, gone up the spout.

Gold is quoted at a premium today, and currency is scarcer.