

This first action thereafter, was to consult his watch.  
 "We're approaching Grafton," he said to himself, and drew another cigar from his pocket for a quiet smoke.  
 A minute later the fragrance of a prime *for del fumar* filled the car, and the messenger was half enveloped in smoke.  
 Grafton was yet nineteen miles away.  
 All at once Gleason heard his name pronounced, and turned quickly in his chair.  
 He sprang to his feet the moment afterwards, and as the half-consumed cigar fell to the floor, his hand flew to the pocket that held the revolver.  
 For there stood before him two men whose dark masks hung far below their chins.  
 "Don't draw, Mr. Gleason," said one of the strangers, and the messenger saw a revolver covering his head. "We don't want to be so ungentlemanly as to slay you here. The road can't spare you, indeed it can't!"  
 Gleason's hand shrunk away from the pocket it had touched, and he looked at the men for a moment in silence.  
 "What do you want?" he asked.  
 "What most men earnestly desire—money!"  
 "I have none."  
 "But the safes have."  
 "Then open them if you can," said the messenger with a smile.  
 "With your assistance we will," answered one of the masked men, who until that moment, had not spoken. "Mr. Gleason, we didn't come here to parley, and, as we mean to do a business, we will proceed to it at once. You have the keys, and will oblige us by producing them."  
 The young messenger looked twice in the eyes of the men, and once into the muzzle of the revolver, before he displayed the keys.  
 "Here they are," he said, extending them.  
 "No, no, Gleason," was the response, and the twinkle of the dark eyes told our messenger that the face beneath the mask was smiling.  
 "It's a combination lock, you see, and we happen to be ignorant of the cabalistic word—your seamese. Open the doors for us if you please."  
 Gleason saw that pleading would avail him naught. There was stern determination in the robber's tone; death in the depths of the black eyes. He had often read of such burglaries; how cashiers were made to open the safes of their own banks and throw thousands at the feet of the robbers. He had never dreamed that such an event would happen in express car No. 56 much less that he would be compelled to assist in robbing the patronizing public.  
 But he was at the mercy of the villain, and his life was in startling jeopardy. He came forward with pale face, and stooped before the safes.  
 "Be lively about it," said one of the men. "You know the locks like a book, and we know how to treat a man who obeys our orders with alacrity. We give you two minutes grace in which to work. If at the end of that time the doors do not swing open, the P. C. and St. L. will lose her best messenger!"  
 The imperiled man did not reply, but fell to work on the locks. The combination was quite intricate, but Gleason was familiar therewith, and in less than a minute's time he opened the first door.  
 "Now for the packages," said one of the men.  
 The messenger put forth his hand, unlocked an inner door, and started back aghast.  
 The money pocket of the safe was empty.  
 "What's up, Gleason?" exclaimed a mask, looking at the messenger with astonishment.  
 Gleason pointed to the empty receptacle, almost too amazed to speak and the robbers exchanged strange glances.  
 "Upon the other safe!" commanded one.  
 The messenger obeyed. It, too was moneyless.  
 "George Gleason, we want no trifling. You know where the money is!"  
 "How should I know?" cried the messenger, mystified more than the robbers. "Did I know that you were coming, and secrete the matter? If so, who betrayed you? Here are my books, look at them for yourself. I swear to you that there was seventy thousand dollars worth of express matter in the safes when we left Coshocton. I haven't left the car for one moment, though I have dozed, but like the cat, a footstep, however soft, will rouse me. You ask me where the money is, I throw the question back at you. Upon pain of death I could not tell you!"  
 He ceased, and the foremost robber said:  
 "This beats me, I believe you, George Gleason. Somebody has robbed the safes before we struck. They did it while you slept. Will you slacken the speed of the train?"  
 The messenger seized the bell-ropes, and the speed of the train began to diminish.  
 He slept for half an hour longer, when he awoke and rubbed his eyes.

There are comparatively few persons who knew that George Gleason, the favorite express messenger of the P. C. and St. L. Road, was a somnabulist. His strange freaks performed during a somnabulistic trance were known to a small circle of friends and associates, who mentioned them not when our hero was appointed to the position he was destined to fill with honor.  
 For two years he ran his car without incident, no train robbers attacked it, and he became the favorite messenger of the road. Strange to say, that during the time, while he dozed often in his car, he did not once fall into the somnabulistic state, and he was congratulating himself that the singular trances had left him altogether, when occurred the incident I am about to relate.  
 His downward run on the night express extended from Coshocton to Springfield, a distance of one hundred and eighty miles. There were few stations of importance on the route, and the train made but three halts between the two cities. The officers of the road were, at the date of our story, and still are careful men of business, jealous of their patrons' interests, and gentlemen of integrity.  
 When robbers became common on other roads, the messengers of the P. C. and St. L. were sure to receive orders commanding extra precaution, and it was to the obedience of these orders that much of the popularity of the road was attributed.  
 "Hello!" exclaimed Messenger Gleason one evening while looking over the columns of the *Cleveland Herald*. "The express car of the C. C. and I. C. robbed of \$30,000! That's a good haul. Why don't the car thieves try my car? Here I've been on the road for two years, an never for a moment has the safety of a dollar in my safes been jeopardized."  
 He considered himself one of the luckiest messengers in the country, and with the paper in his hand, stepped into the express car, which a moment later moved out of Coshocton.  
 It was a beautiful Autumn evening, and the messenger sat at the open side door, enjoying a cigar, until the sun went down and darkness fell over the earth. Then he shut the door, lighted the lamps, and saw that everything was safe.  
 He knew the value of the contents of the company's safes, and he thought that a last thief would make if they would successfully burglarize his car on the present trip.  
 But he felt secure, for he dropped into his own chair and fell asleep.  
 The train had a run of forty-nine miles, before the messenger would again be called to service, and he thought of this perhaps when he settled into the chair, revolved upon a doze.  
 By-and-by he rose, and his eyelids parted. He walked directly to the safes which stood side by side, and opening the combination locks threw wide the burglar-proof doors. Then he took forth valuable package after package until he had emptied the strongholds of their treasures. It is safe to say that Messenger Gleason deprived the safes of the aggregate of seventy thousand dollars.  
 After doing this he closed the doors, and with the packages, walked out of the car to the tender.  
 It was filled with coal, black and grim, and the heavy smoke of the engine, the toy of the smart breeze blowing, beat against his face.  
 But he did not seem to heed it, for he climbed upon the tender with one hand and deliberately secrete the packages among the coal in one corner.  
 Having accomplished his singular task, he returned to the express car, washed his hands, which had been begrimed by the lumps of coal, and retired to his chair, where his eyes closed and he breathed like a sleeping man.  
 George Gleason had robbed the safes in a state of somnabulism, and their iron doors guarded the messenger's books and a few old papers of little value.  
 He slept for half an hour longer, when he awoke and rubbed his eyes.

"Now good night, Gleason," said the disappointed robbers, moving to the sliding door; "We hope the company won't discharge you for sleeping at your post. Of course we are disappointed—we expected to make a big haul to-night."  
 The next moment they sprang from the car, and the messenger heard a prolonged whistle.  
 Then he saw the bell-ropes moving, and the train fast returned to its speed.  
 He fell back into his chair completely mystified. He could not imagine who had robbed the safes, whose empty pockets stared at him from one corner of the car.  
 His thoughts were suddenly interrupted by the conductor, who bounded into his presence.  
 "They did, eh? Money all gone, Curse the fiends! They had a man on each platform, masked and armed. How much did they get? They came on board as passengers."  
 "Not a dollar!" said Gleason.  
 The conductor looked at the safes, and then at the man, whom he seemed to regard as mad.  
 "Where is the money then?"  
 "I don't know!"  
 The train was stopped, and as the messenger had told his story, search for the packages began.  
 It came to an abrupt and happy termination. The engineer placed the lost valuables into Gleason's hands.  
 "Bob, the fireman, saw you climb on to the coal in the tender, and then you stuffed all these envelopes into one corner. When you went back into your car we pulled 'em out, and intended to keep 'em for you till we got to Grafton. Why, you had your eyes open, but Bob and me knew you were in a walking trance."  
 Thus spoke the engineer, and the reader may imagine with what thankfulness the messenger received the envelopes, not one of whose original number was missing.  
 I do not know whether the robbers ever learned the story of the missing valuables, but I do know that since that night George Gleason has not been a somnabulist.

GOING COURTING.  
 One of the chief compensations of a woman's life is found in the fact that she didn't have to "go a courting." It must be confessed that in these days the modern belle does not have to dress up in a stiff collar and a pair of boots a size too small for her and walk up to the cannon's mouth of her innamorato's family, consisting of father, mother, grandmother, a maiden aunt, and perhaps a dozen brothers and sisters and inquire in a trembling voice: "Is Miss Arabella at home?"  
 Whenever a man goes a-courting, everybody seems to know all about it. His demeanor tells the observant spectator the business he is intent upon. He might as well placard himself, "I'm going courting." Everybody is cognizant of it and looks knowingly, and ask him if "the Northern lights were bright last night about one o'clock, and how the market is for kerosene at Daddy Brown's?" and a score of other questions out of place.  
 We know a young man who is deeply and we trust successfully engaged in going courting, and our warmest sympathies have been extended toward him. When Sunday afternoon arrives it is plain that something is about to happen. He is diletty and non-communicative and cannot sit in one place half a minute at a time; he is continually interviewing his watch and comparing it with the old eight-day, coffin-shaped clock in the corner. He looks in the glass frequently, and draws his forehead locks back and then forward, and puts them down, and is unsatisfied with the effect throughout.  
 The smell of lay rum and bergamot is painfully apparent. When he shakes his handkerchief, musk is perceptible. If he boots shine like mirrors, and there is a faint smell of fardamon seeds in his breath when he yawns. He smooths his forehead with affectionate pats and feels his invisible side whiskers continually to make sure they are there, a fact which is not established to outside observers by sense of sight. He tries on all his neckties without finding just the thing he wants. Then he has spasms of brushing his coat, that commence with violence and last until one grows nervous for fear the broadcloth will not be able to stand the friction.  
 If spoken to suddenly he starts, and blushes, and looks guilty as if he were stealing something, and directly if one does not speak to him he goes back to the delightful occupation of staring at nothing and waiting for the hour to peep around to seven.—Portland Press.

WHAT I HAVE SEEN.  
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 I have seen a farmer travel about so much that there was nothing at home worth looking at.

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