

THE CONDUCTOR'S STORY.

WHEN I was on the old W. and V. line in Missouri, I ran what was known as the Drivers' Express, going West, but which had the name, I suppose, in contradiction to that title—of the gentleman's wagon, coming East. The drovers, when coming to market with their cattle, always went with the beasts on the freight train, but going home westward they went with me.

One night I had an unusually rough crowd aboard. They were generally rough enough, but this time they were worse than usual. I had their car (for I kept them to themselves) placed in the rear of the train, and to prevent their trespassing into the other cars of my train, or stepping off the platforms, I had them locked in.

We started about 9 o'clock in the night, and as I went through the drovers' car for my tickets, I found mischief brewing already. Each man had provided himself with a bottle or two of whisky, and the carousal had begun in real earnest, but few if any of the drovers being sober.

One or two small fights had been begun, one in particular between a tall Kentuckian and a short, thick-set Missourian, having threatened to lead to serious consequences, both men having drawn their knives. Their friends had, however, separated them, and had placed them in different parts of the car, the Kentuckian sitting in the first seat near the door, in the front of the car, and the Missourian far back in the rear. The latter, when they were being parted, had vowed that he would yet kill the former, but as both were in hot blood, the words were not much thought of, though they helped to sentence him to be hung afterward.

As I took up the Missourian's ticket, he repeated to me his threats against the life of his opponent, and proposed a duel with bowies in the baggage-car. I managed, however, to silence the half-maddened man, and a friend sitting in the seat with him, and nearest the aisle of the car, promised to see that he should not leave his seat and attack the Kentuckian. I looked in upon them about 2 o'clock, A. M., and found them all asleep in drunken slumber. The Kentuckian sat in the front seat as I had left him, and the Missourian away in the rear, and also in his previous position.

There being no more stops to make, I curled myself up in a chair in the baggage car for a nap and dozed comfortably till awakened by the rattle of the bell-rope overhead, and the whistle of the engine calling for the brakes to be put down. Catching up my lantern I opened the car door and looked out, but found nothing but darkness the most intense. The train having stopped I got off and ran to the engine, asking the engineer in a half-asleep manner where we were and why he had stopped? "We're in the Grover Tunnel," he replied, "and I stopped because the bell-rope was pulled."

The Grover Tunnel was about a mile in length, through which we passed nearly all the way on half-speed and with the steam shut off from the cylinders, there being a down-grade at the entrance, which was sufficient to nearly give us headway to carry us through. When the engineer saw the light at the other end of the tunnel, however he was accustomed to put on steam, and it was just at that time, he told me the bell was pulled, being the signal for him to stop.

By the time my brakeman had been around the outside of the train, and finding all the couplings right, and not discovering anything wrong externally, I gave the signal to go ahead, as it was dangerous to stay in the tunnel. As we came out the daylight was just breaking, and, with a brakeman, I started through the train to find out if possible, who pulled the bell-rope.

Most of the passengers were asleep in the forward cars as we passed through, but some few were awake, who told me that the pulling of the bell came from behind, from some of the rear cars. I made the trip through the entire train with the exception of the drovers' car, and yet the account said the bell was pulled from still further in the rear. It was daylight as the brakeman and myself crossed on to the platform of the last car. After unlocking the door, we essayed to push it open, but some weight against it prevented us. With our united strength, however, we pushed it open, and found the cause of the obstruction.

Against the bottom of the door lay the Kentuckian, his body twisted and rolled up into a distorted heap, as if he had been overtaken by a fit. Supposing him to be in a drunken stupor, I raised him to his seat, and then began to loose his collar and neck-tie. As I did so I noticed a livid blue line running exactly around his throat, and cutting deeply into the flesh; his face also was of a deadly hue; and frightened at I knew not what, I sent the brakeman for a physician whom I knew was on the train. As soon as he came and had handled the Kentuckian, he exclaimed, "the man's dead—his neck is broken—the man has been murdered!"

Immediately I remembered the fight of the preceding evening between the now dead man and the Missourian, and telling the doctor of my fears that the latter had kept his word and murdered

the Kentuckian, we agreed to make some movement toward the detention of the murderer. Going to the rear, we found the Missourian curled up in his seat, his friend also being in the outside seat, and both being apparently asleep.

As we looked upon the Missourian we heard him mutter, "I'll kill him, I'll kill him," as if half asleep and awake. We were turning away when the doctor's quick eye caught a glimpse of something the man had in his hand, and reaching over gently drew it from his fingers exclaiming, "and this is what the dead was done with," holding up to me a thin leather strap, about the size of a small whip-lash, and used by drovers as a belt around their waist, and also to hopple an unruly ox, or to tie the legs of a calf.

As we left the drunken man, the doctor said, "That brute has crept up behind the Kentuckian, when in the darkness of the tunnel, and throwing his strap around his throat, has jerked his head back and broken his neck at once. The body had then fallen forward against the door while the murderer had groped his way back to his seat, and had accidentally caught the bell-rope in his drunken grasp and so pulled it."

As we passed the next station, I threw off a telegram to our headquarters, asking for some police to be on hand on my arrival, and as we came into the depot, a force of men surrounded the cars, while we went into it and made the arrest. The drovers were still sleeping their orgies off when we entered, the dead Kentuckian lying in the corner just as we had left him. We arrested the Missourian on a charge of murder, and also his friend who sat by him, as an accomplice, as it did not seem probable that the drunken fellow could have passed out of his seat and into it again without awakening his companion.

The rest of the drovers were examined and testified strongly against the prisoner as to the quarrel and the threats he had used, and the doctor swore that the neck of the murdered man had been broken by a sudden jerk, and the mark made on his throat by just such a strap or thong as was found in the grasp of the Missourian.

The prisoner produced good testimony as to his character, and his counsel fought bravely for him. He showed that the thong was in use by every drover, and that each man in the car had one or more on his person. The words we heard, "I'll kill him," from the murderer he argued, meant what he would do and not what he had done. He showed the Missourian to be wealthy, of good character and of a peaceable disposition except when in his cups, but it was of no avail, and the wretched man was sentenced to be hung in six weeks from the time of his trial.

I went to visit him several times in his condemned cell, and somehow or another the declaration of innocence the fellow made to me shook my belief in his guilt, although I had witnessed strongly against him in his trial, and at last I found myself fully confirmed in my new belief of his entire innocence. I could see no way to save him however, and five weeks of his time on earth had rolled by, and yet the mystery was as great a one as ever.

One morning about that time I was running the same train, only as it happened, we had no particular drovers' car. In the last car was our superintendent, a tall, lean Yankee, fully six feet two inches in height, and of about the same height as the murdered Kentuckian.

It so happened that he occupied the same seat as the Kentuckian had done, and I was also in my old place in the baggage-car. When exactly in the same place in the tunnel, just when the engineer had put on steam to carry us through, the bell-rope again rattled, and the engineer whistled for the brakes. Springing to my feet I ran to the rear car, firmly persuaded that now I could solve this mystery. Reaching it I found the superintendent sitting back in his seat, and holding his hand to his throat while he gasped for breath. One or two passengers were attempting to be of some use to him; but he could only moan and hold tightly to his throat.

At last he recovered sufficiently to take his hand away, and then I saw the slight, livid blue mark which I had seen before, in a most exact similar position on the neck of the Kentuckian. As the superintendent got over the shock, he proceeded to tell us how he received the mark and its fearful effects. He had been asleep, and was awakened by the train entering the tunnel. Half asleep he stepped to the car door and stood looking, or trying to look through the door window.

Suddenly, and without any warning, he felt a rope slipped under his throat, and at that moment the engine giving a jerk, he was thrown violently into a corner of the car.

The mystery was solved at last. The train, as I have said, entered the tunnel at a slow rate of speed and without the use of steam, the grade at the entrance forcing the cars together and giving them sufficient headway. At this time the bell-rope, which of course has to be much longer than the length of the train when the cars are close together, to allow of sufficient length when they are drawn out to the full extent of the car-couplings, hung loosely and in festoons through the car, and both the Kentuckian and our

superintendent being a tall man and standing just where the longest festoon would be, near the forward door, the rope slipped under their chins, and the engineer suddenly putting on steam, the jerk threw them from their feet, and as in the case of the drunken Kentuckian, who must in his drunkenness have gone to the door for some purpose, was sufficient to break his neck and cause death.

I carried myself to the doomed Missourian the news of his pardon for a crime, by the way, he had never committed. But such is the justice of our laws, and he joyfully accepted that solution of the mystery.

Each Christmas I received from him the best and fattest of his drove, and he writes me frequently congratulating himself on his escape from the gallows.

Reminiscences of Old Bob Carson.

THE celebrated mountaineer and trapper yet lives on the Missouri river, near the town of Arrow Rock; is hale, stout and hearty, able and willing to make many more like trips. He is full of anecdotes, and gives us many hair-breadth escapes from mountain storms and Indian fights.

He says the last tight place he got into was in the year 1846, during the Mexican war. The Mexicans were committing depredations of all kinds, and had stolen some of the government horses and mules. Captain Price—afterwards Captain Sterling Price—was in command of a company of United States volunteers, who were ever ready for a scout or a fight. He was ordered to make a detail of twelve of his best men, and send them in search of the stolen property. Twelve choice well-trying men were chosen. Then came the query, who is able and willing to take command of this squad? It must be some man who can talk with the different Indian tribes through which they may have to pass in pursuit of the Mexicans.

Luckily for the squad, at this moment Bob Carson rode up, well mounted on his favorite hunting horse Leo. A shout from the twelve brave men bid him welcome; their object stated, and requested him to take command. Nothing suited Carson better than this.

He told Captain Price that he could follow a coal train as fast as any living man could, and to give him self no uneasiness, that he would bring his twelve men back and not lose a scalp.

The sequel shows how he succeeded. The second day out they struck the trail; late in the evening they saw in the distance a large party of Indians, and as they were on friendly terms with the different tribes, Carson and his band hurried to overtake them, hoping to gain some information concerning the stock.

The Indians saw them approaching, and halting for them to come up. As Carson and his men came nigher, his keen eye discovered that they were on the war-path, knowing no fear, he rode up, and the Indians, 1,400 strong, closed wings and completely surrounded them. Sandivere, the chief, rode up to Carson, exclaiming: "Peds todoly—you are my prisoner!"

Carson after questioning the chief a short time, found that they were also in pursuits of lost stock, stolen, as they considered, by United States troops.

The Mexicans had told him this tale to screen themselves. But all his intrigue could not induce Sandivere to release him and his twelve men.

The next morning, the old chief commenced making preparations to shoot and scalp his prisoners. Carson called him aside for a talk, and finally persuaded him to send one of his best runners to Captain Price's camp, and if things were not found just as represented, that on the fourth day from the departure of said runner, at twelve o'clock, he might do with his prisoners as he pleased. The runner started. Carson and his men, sanguine that everything would prove satisfactory to the chief, remained their prisoners, cheerful and happy.

On the morning of the fourth day all were momentarily expecting the runner to appear. Ten o'clock came, and no runner in sight; 11, and no runner in sight. Everything in camp was excitement and commotion. Sandivere was certain his runner had been foully dealt with, and in his anger made preparations for summary vengeance. Twelve o'clock and no runner in sight as far as the eye could reach.

Carson thought his hour had come, as preparations were being made; and, well knowing the terms would be complied with, he called Sandivere and told him that he would like to have a talk with him before he and his men were shot. Carson in the meantime walking slowly and leisurely from the camp, telling the chief that the horses, saddles, blankets, etc., were all donated or willed to him, the great chief, and that he was not compelled, on account of this donation, to divide them among his warriors.

The chief was much interested and pleased with this donation, and by this time they were eighty to one hundred yards from the Indian camp, when Carson, with the dexterity of an old mountaineer, pulled from his boot-leg an ugly-looking bolster pistol, cocked and presented directly in the face of the old chief, exclaiming: "Stand sir! you are my prisoner."

"What do you mean?" asked Sandivere.

"I mean just what I say—if you move one inch you are a dead man."

The Indians, seeing their chief in danger, started to his rescue, but Carson told him to motion his men back, or he would shoot him on the spot. The old chief, well knowing the man he had to deal with, instantly complied and motioned his men back. Carson then told him to order up his twelve men with their horses just as he had received them, and Leo with them. This was instantly complied with.

Carson then mounted the old chief behind one of his men and started for Capt. Price's camp, where Sandivere found things as represented by Carson. The runner had been there, but had lost the trail, which had caused the delay. Capt. Price gave the chief my presents, and escorted him to his tribe. He ever afterwards was a true friend to the whites, and in many instances did very valuable service. Thus, by the coolness, cunning and downright bravery of Bob Carson, this devoted band of twelve brave men were rescued from certain death. Parties who were with Carson at that time can vouch for the truth of the above statement.

A Jumping Match.

A young man—who relates the story himself—who fought but did not die, at both Antietam and Gettysburg, went into Providence on foot, with some small articles for sale. One night, just before the sable curtains of evening were being lowered upon him, he applied at a very respectable looking house for entertainment. He was very kindly received by a young lady, who happened to be the only one of the family at home, with whom he partook of the evening meal, and to our hero everything seemed to be going "merry as a marriage bell." It seems however, that the young lady began to suspect that in "entertaining a stranger," she had not entertained "an angel." But how to get rid of him was the trouble! At length she asked him if he could jump well, saying she could jump further than any Yankee living.

This was a "stump" which the hero of a dozen cattle fields was not disposed to take, and they arrayed for a trial of leap frog.—The young lady placing herself against the wall, at three jumps reached the door. Our Yankee then took his station for trial. At two bounds he nearly reached the door, when Miss Bluenose, with all feminine fascination imaginable, said she would open the door for him, so that he might have a chance to see how much he excelled her, and took the third leap which landed him outside of the house.

The young lady instantly closed and fastened the door, took hat, mittens, overcoat and valise of merchandise into the chamber, threw them out of the window to him, and told him there was a tavern about seven miles below, where, no doubt, he could be entertained. He went on his way meditating on the mysteries of women.

A Question.

A teacher in a western county in Canada, while making his first visit to his "constituents," came in for conversation with an eminent Vermont lady, who had taken up her residence in the "backwoods." Of course the school and former teacher came up for criticism, and the old lady, in speaking of his predecessor, asked:

"Wa'al master, what do you think he learned the scholars?"

"I couldn't say, ma'am. Pray what did he teach?"

"Wa'al, he told 'em this ere arth was round; what do you think of such stuff?"

Unwilling to come under the category of the ignorami, the teacher evasively remarked:

"It does seem strange, but still there are many learned men who teach these things."

"Wa'al," says she, "if the arth is round, and goes round, what holds it up?"

"O, these learned men say that it goes round the sun, and the sun holds it up by virtue of attraction."

The old lady lowered her specs, and by way of climax responded:

"Wa'al, if these high-larnt men sez the sun holds up the arth, I should like to know what holds the earth up when the sun goes down?"

Greely on Cattle.

An Elmira farmer wrote to Mr. Greely for his advice as to the relative merits of longhorn or short horn cattle, for the farm. Horace said that his experience convinced him that the short-horned cattle were the best, as he had a cow that had both horns broken off jumping a rail fence, and since that time she had given more milk and cheese than two yoke of long-horned oxen, and on the same feed too. That poor deluded Elmira farmer has gone to knocking the horns off of all his cattle.

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