

“ I didn’t—” but a muffler of coarse cloth drawn tightly over his mouth prevented his finishing the reply.

The night was dark and cold, and to add to the solemnness of the midnight hour came the roar of the river, a short distance away, which drowned their racket. There was no hope of rescue.

Only a few hundred yards of double track were visible in each direction, for they were on a curve. The inner track was a siding, and their plan was to tie Stanford on the spur and leave him there to be nearly frightened to death by the express when it came whizzing by on the main track, for in his position it would seem to him to be on the spur.

Until now Stanford had kept cool. He had not resisted strongly or cried out; but now, thoroughly frightened, he exerted all his strength. Wheeling quickly about, he dealt the nearest man a blow that sent him reeling to the ground, and then made a desperate effort to escape, but was roughly overpowered and soon found himself bound hand and foot. He was then laid upon the track, his head resting upon one rail in such a position that he could see the approaching train. Nearly every man took a turn at tying the cords, until they had him bound so snugly that he could scarcely move a muscle.

Oh, what wild thoughts surged through his brain! Could this be true, or was it only another of those wild, unearthly dreams which had lately haunted him so often? No, it must be real, for just then the shriek of the locomotive came to his ears and brought back his startled senses. In the distance he saw the gleaming headlight growing brighter and brighter. The men who, to his bewildered senses, seemed a pack of demons, danced and leaped about him and sang weird death songs.

Nearer and nearer came that ball of fire; again the monster shrieked exultingly and seemed to mock him in his agony. The dull, deafening roar nearly burst his throbbing temples. On, on came the monster, until he could almost feel its hot breath in his face. He called loudly for help and struggled fiercely to free himself, but the cords only cut deeper into his flesh, while the howling devils about him laughed and jeered at his terror. The lights swam before his eyes, he felt his senses leaving him. Then with one low cry of anguish he closed his eyes to meet the shock, but was startled again by a sudden change. Those demons who had been dancing about him in ghoulish glee were now bending