

An Express Messenger's Story.

ABOUT eight years ago, when I had not railroaded it as long as I have now, I was employed as a messenger on a Western railway. I don't know as it is necessary for me to say just what line it was, but I will call it the B. T. & G. R. R., just to save myself the trouble of pronouncing the whole name.

I had been on the run more than a month previous to the date of the occurrence of which I am going to tell you. I had been running on a branch route for more than a year, and I might have staid there a good deal longer, if I had not been chosen to take Paxon's place when he went off. You see two or three attempts had been made to rob the express car, and at last, at the end of a long run Paxon was found dead in the car with a bullet hole in his head. But the safe was closed tight and secure, though an attempt had been made to blow it open, which proved ineffectual. But the strangest part of it was that the key was missing from Paxon's pocket, and was not found till a good six weeks afterward. Then it was discovered at the side of the track, with a card tied to it, on which it was written that robbers were in the car, and he expected they would murder him if he refused to give up the key. He was true to the last. Well, you may suppose that I felt just the least bit squeamish about accepting such an uninviting berth; but the superintendent gave me orders, and I meant to do my duty, however disagreeable it might be. Then the pay was larger than I had ever received before; and as I was acquainted with a good girl, who was ready to help me inhabit a house whenever I should be able to own one, that was quite an object to me, I can assure you.

Well, everything passed off smoothly enough for several weeks, and I had become accustomed to the route, and made a dozen or more very pleasant acquaintances, and was growing to be pretty well contented with my life. I had almost begun to think the robbers, whoever they might be, had given up all thought of ever making anything out of my car, and had sought another field of operations.

One day I was informed by the agent at R—that sometime within a week I would have to take charge of about \$80,000 in specie in its transit over our road, on its way from Washington to San Francisco. The officers of the express company had been advised of this intended important shipment in order that they might exercise redoubled vigilance in view of the great risk incurred in the transportation of such a valuable consignment.

The evening after my conversation with the agent he called me into the office, and told me the specie was to go over the road the next day but one. He produced an envelope, and handed it to me, saying as he did so:

"There, Bill, are your orders, direct from the superintendent, with his own signature attached. Read them carefully, and obey them to the letter, for a little mismove might cause a great loss to the company, and cost you your position."

"I shall do my duty to the very letter," I replied.

"I am sure you mean to do so," returned the agent, "but you can't be too careful. Some of the members of the light fingered profession are as quick as lightning. The plans they can't devise ain't worth thinking of, and they are as fertile in expedient as the evil one himself. I thought I'd just put you on your guard in a friendly way, and—"

There was a slight sound at the door. If the depot hadn't been deserted by every one except us two, and the switch-engine hadn't been up at the yard, where we couldn't hear its incessant puffing, I don't believe we would have heard the sound at all. But we both noticed it at once, and as I looked out of the office into the large room beyond, I saw a man standing just inside the outer door, with his head inclined towards us as if he was trying to overhear our conversation. He saw me about the time I first noticed him. I knew it from the little start of surprise he gave me as his eyes met mine.

He was all over his awkwardness in a minute, for he drew his face down to an expression of the utmost unconcern, and came boldly forward to the window of the office, through which the agent transacted any business he might have with persons without.

He was a very fair appearing man, apparently about 40, though he might have been a little older. He was dressed in black, and wearing a high hat, he might have passed very well for one of the cloth, if his nose hadn't been just a trifle luminous. The other peculiarity I noticed about the man was that he had a queer sort of a red-looking eye. It appeared fixed and staring, and, as he came nearer, I concluded it was glass. It was so strange and unnatural in its expression that I should know it if I

should see it peering at me over the great wall of China.

"Is there a small package here for Isaac G. Van Scooter," he asked in a business-like way, in answer to the inquiring glance of the agent.

The agent referred to one of the big registers on the desk, and answered in the negative.

"Queer," said the man with the red eye. "It ought to have come yesterday. Have you read the 'Evening Chronicle'?"

And after this abrupt interrogation the stranger stood quite motionless, eyeing the agent intently for as much as a minute.

We both answered "No."

The man took a paper out of his pocket, and spreading it open before us put one of his slender forefingers on the following paragraph:

"FATAL ACCIDENT.—This afternoon as two men, named respectively Henry Van Scooter and C. H. Griggs, were at work chopping timber in the pines near Seanton, a tree fell upon them, killing Van Scooter instantly, and inflicting injuries upon the person of Griggs from which he died in less than an hour. They are residents of G—, and it is understood that their remains will be sent to that place for burial."

"Henry Van Scooter was my only brother—my twin brother—who resembled me very much, and Charley Griggs was my sister's husband. It's a sad blow! a sad blow! I don't know how my poor sister will bear it."

It's about this sad affair that I came here chiefly. I want to send the two bodies through to G— by express, Thursday, by the 11.40 train. What will be the charges?"

"The charges will be \$25," answered the agent.

The stranger only bowed solemnly in recognition of the reply. Then he was silent for a minute or two, during which time he appeared to be struggling with his grief.

"The bodies will be here Thursday morning," he said. "I hope you will make all arrangements to prevent delay, I guess my package went come this week."

The agent assured him that there would be no delay, and he might depend on having the bodies go through to G— with the greatest possible expedition.

The man bowed again politely, then he said:

"Is the telegraph office near? I must break the sorrowful news to my poor sister, I suppose, though it's anything but a pleasant duty."

I told him how to reach the place he sought, and with a polite "thank you," the sad man with the red eye walked out of the office, and in a couple of minutes the sound of his foot-steps died away in the distance.

"A queer sort of a chap," said I. "A little odd," answered the agent. "I wonder if he heard us talking about the specie?" I queried.

"He seems honest enough."

"Yes," said I; "but I am sure he was listening to our talk when I first saw him."

"Are you certain of it?" the agent asked eagerly.

"Well—no, not altogether certain, beyond all mistake, but it looked mightily like it, I can tell you."

"Suppose you go to the telegraph office, and as I went in the man came out. He did not seem to recognize me—at least, he did not look at me—and I thought it prudent to appear not to notice him."

"Did that preacher-looking fellow send a message to G—?" I asked of the operator, when I had gone in and closed the door after me.

"Yes. Why do you ask?"

"Oh, only out of curiosity," I replied. "Was it anything of importance? The man said that his brother and brother-in-law were both killed this afternoon."

The operator took the copy of the message from a file on the table and laid it before me. It was addressed to Mrs. C. H. Griggs, G—, and signed Isaac Van Scooter. It said:

"Henry and Charles are both dead.—They will be sent home Thursday."

Everything seemed consistent, and any doubts which I had entertained of the good intentions of the stranger were speedily dispelled. I didn't go back to the office, but turned my steps towards my boarding place, thinking, as I walked along, that Thursday would be an uncommon one for me with two corpses and \$80,000 in my car.

The money was safely deposited in the car an hour before the time for the train to leave, Thursday morning. It was securely locked in two strong iron-bound chests, and when they were stowed away in the large safe and the heavy doors made fast, I thought everything was pretty well fixed. A few minutes before we pulled out two wagons passed by the car, one of them containing two coffins and the other six men, who were evidently acting as pall-bearers. I looked around for the bereaved brother with the peculiar eye, but he was nowhere to be seen. I thought it a little strange that

he should be absent at such a time, but I forgot all about it in a moment.

The coffins were placed in one end of the car, and after it had been arranged that one of the men should come into the car and take a look at the bodies when we arrived at Redwood, he shook hands with the others and entered one of the coaches. As the door closed on him, the bell rang and we went steaming away.

I was pretty busy for an hour or more, and we had passed three or four stations before I had time to cast more than a casual glance toward the quiet passengers at the end of the car. But after a little, when I had more leisure, an uncontrollable wish took possession of me to look at the faces of the two dead men. It wasn't mere morbid curiosity, and I can't describe it in any way better than to say it was a sort of vague desire which I could not quiet without satisfying it.

I noticed that the lids were not fastened down. My next discovery was that the screws were gone. This struck me as strange, for I was sure I had noticed them when the coffins were lifted into the car. I remembered that I had given the attendants permission to arrange the caskets to their own satisfaction, and that they had been a long time doing it. If they had removed the screws unobserved at that time, what possible object could they have had in doing so?

With this question in my mind I raised the upper portion of the lid of the coffin nearest me and took a look at the face of the occupant. He was a young man with a full face and square features. His cheeks were not sunken, and he had a decidedly fresh appearance for a young man who had been dead nearly two days I thought.

Replacing the lid, I passed away to the other coffin. Here a new and startling surprise met me. The man in the coffin was the man whom I had seen in the express office! The red eye was staring straight at me, and I was not mistaken. For a moment my consternation was too great for words. I could not have uttered a sound had my life depended on it.

This man who was alive after the accident which the paper said caused the death of Van Scooter and Griggs, and who had made arrangements for the transportation of their remains, was now here in this coffin, to all appearance dead! Then I remembered that the bereaved stranger had said that his dead brother resembled him very closely. But two brothers are not apt to have red glass eyes! Such a coincidence as this was beyond the pale of reasonable probability.

While yet I gazed at the supposed corpse, the other eye opened a little and I was sure that it was looking at me. I was convinced that there was fraud here, but to show that I had discovered it might cost me my life. So I very quietly replaced the lid of the coffin and took a moment's time to think the matter over.

I remembered my conversation with the express agent, which he feared had been overheard by the clerical appearing stranger, and could only come to the conclusion that the whole thing was a deliberate plan to murder me and gain possession of the \$80,000 in my charge. There was no denying that the man with the red eye was alive, and I had no doubt that the other man was also. Kneeling down I placed my ear close to the side of the coffin and could hear him breathe quite distinctly.

I remembered that it was the intention of the attendant who had boarded the train to enter the car at Redwood, ostensibly for the purpose of seeing to the bodies, and I could not doubt that the three men intended to attack me after the train pulled out from the station, and the rob the car before our arrival at the next stopping place. There was but one station between us and Redwood, and I knew we would be there in ten minutes more.

I had no time for hesitation. Instant action was my only chance for safety. If I could secure myself against an attack until we reached the next station, I felt that all would be well. In one instant I had decided upon a plan of action. As quietly as possible I piled several heavy boxes of merchandise on top of the two coffins, and then I knew I was safe. Scarcely was this accomplished when we ran into the station.

I immediately found two or three officers. First the man in the coach was secured. He was highly indignant that he should be disturbed on such a solemn mission. But it was no go. He was handcuffed in less than two minutes and marched out on the platform.

It was an easy matter to secure the two quondam dead men. They were taken greatly at a disadvantage, and were deprived of all power to resist almost before they became aware how their nice little scheme had terminated. All three had been well armed.

Bound and guarded the three miscreants were taken to Redwood and lodged in the county jail.

Before I left I took a look at them through the grated doors of their cells.

When I paid my respects to the man with the red eye, he smiled a little and remarked patronizingly:

"You're a pretty sharp young man. It takes a middling keen boy to outwit us."

"Permit me to sympathize with you in your sorrow at the loss of your dear brother, just a little," I said, "and more at your failure to get the \$80,000."

They all broke jail in less than a week, but not before one of them, the youngest corpse, was recognized as the notorious Jesse James.

There is no doubt that it was the James boys or some of their crew who killed poor, honest, brave Paxon.

The Women Clerks at Washington.

AMONG the clerkships at Washington, the poorly paid drudging places are filled by women, the lighter, better-paid offices by men. That is because the women can not vote. Copying and figuring is the work mostly done by the women. In the Department of the Interior 500 girls and women are employed. Their wages range from \$50 a month to \$1,400 a year. Few get the latter price. One young lady, Miss Cook, a stenographer in the Indian office, gets \$1,600 a year, the highest price paid to a woman official in Washington. But lest all the bright young lady short-hand writers who read this should at once start off in a body to get \$1,600 a year at the Capital, it may be as well to state that there are only places for about six stenographers in the whole Interior Department. These six places are filled, and the occupants are healthy. They do not intend to marry. They are afraid every man wouldn't be worth \$1,600 a year to them. Women clerks are more troublesome to manage than men. This is the verdict in most of the departments. They are more regular and faithful in their duties than the men; at the same time they are more quarrelsome among one another. A standing cause of war among them, ridiculous enough, is the opening and shutting of windows. This one wants ventilation, while the one next to her is dead sure to be afraid of a draft. This one slaps the window up, and that one runs after her and slams it down, and so the game goes on slap, slam, while the ladies' eyes dart fire, and their little throats choke up too full for speech. This catfish quarrelling went so far in the Post Office Department that at last the United States authorities had to interfere, and make the rule that windows should not be raised till a certain time of day, so that the windows of the United States General Post Office are now opened and shut according to Government orders. A more contemptible thing about womankind it has never been my painful duty to record. Many unjust stories have been circulated in the newspapers about the women clerks at Washington by correspondents who were not half or quarter as good as they. The simple fact is that the great majority of them are modest, faithful, hard-working women. They are quite as good and intelligent as the same number of women anywhere else in the world. Most of them have families or relatives to support. The stories that have been told about them are not only wicked lies, but under the circumstances they are extremely cruel. At the same time the conduct of a few incompetent women, who get their places through political favoritism, really has been such as to give color to the newspaper stories. They do their work indifferently or not at all, come together and gossip by the hour in the dressing-rooms, squabble and raise petty rows in the departments, until it is even wished that they were dead. Such women are kept in their places because they have masculine relations at home that can vote, and the men who keep them there are honorable Senators and Representatives who declare that civil-service reform is a humbug.

Intelligence of Animals.

A famous naturalist has decided that animals have much more capacity to understand human speech than is generally supposed. The Hindoos invariably talk to their elephants, and it is amazing how much the latter comprehends. The Arabs, he says, govern their camels with a few cries, and my associates in the African desert were always amused whenever I addressed a remark to the big dromedary who was my property for two months; yet at the end of that time the beast evidently knew the meaning of a number of simple sentences. Some years ago, seeing the hippopotamus in a menagerie looking very stolid and dejected, I spoke to him in English, but he did not even open his eyes. Then I went to the opposite corner of the cage, and said in Arabic:

"I know you; come here to me." He instantly turned his head towards me; I repeated the words, and thereupon he came to the corner where I was standing, pressed his huge, ungainly head against the bars of the cage, and looked in my face with a touch of de-

light while I stroked his muzzle. I have two or three times found a lion who recognized the same language, and the expression of his eyes, for an instant, seemed positively human. All animals seemed to have the home instinct implanted in them, and languish in captivity.

VEGETINE
Purifies the Blood & Gives Strength.

DU QUOIN, Ill. Jan. 21, 1878.
Mr. H. R. STEVENS.—Dear Sir—Your Vegetine has been doing wonders for me. Have been having the Chills and Fever, contracted in the swamps of the South, nothing giving me relief until I began to use your Vegetine, it giving me immediate relief, toning up my system, purifying my blood, giving strength; whereas all other medicines weakened me, and filled my system with poison; and I am satisfied that if all families that live in the agricultural districts of the South and West would take Vegetine two or three times a week, they would not be troubled with the Chills or the malignant fevers that prevail at certain times of the year, save doctors' bills, and live to a good old age.

Respectfully yours,
J. E. MITCHELL,
Agent Henderson's Looms, St. Louis, Mo.
ALL DISEASES OF THE BLOOD. If Vegetine will relieve pain, cleanse, purify, and cure such diseases, restoring the patient to perfect health, after trying different physicians, many remedies, suffering for years, is it not conclusive proof, if you are a sufferer, you can be cured? Why is this medicine performing such great cures? It works in the blood, in the circulating fluid. It can truly be called the Great Blood Purifier. The great source of disease originates in the blood; and no medicine that does not act directly upon it, to purify and renovate, has and just claim upon public attention.

VEGETINE

Has Entirely Cured Me of Vertigo.

CAIRO, Ill., Jan. 23, 1878.
Mr. H. R. STEVENS.—Dear Sir—I have used several bottles of Vegetine; it has entirely cured me of Vertigo. I have also used it for Kidney Complaint. It is the best medicine for Kidney Complaint. I would recommend it as a good blood purifier.
N. YOUNG.

PAIN AND DISEASE. Can you expect to enjoy good health when bad or corrupt humors circulate with the blood, causing pain and disease; and these humors, being deposited through the entire body, produce pimples, eruptions, ulcers, indigestion, costiveness, headaches, neuralgia, rheumatism, and numerous other complaints? Remove the cause by taking Vegetine, the most reliable remedy for cleansing and purifying blood.

VEGETINE.

I Believe it to be a Good Medicine.

KENIA, O., March 1, 1877.
Mr. H. R. STEVENS.—Dear Sir—I wish to inform you what your Vegetine has done for me. I have been afflicted with Neuralgia, and after using three bottles of the Vegetine was entirely relieved. I also found my general health much improved. I believe it to be a good medicine.
Yours truly, FRED. HARVESTICK.

VEGETINE thoroughly eradicates every kind of humor, and restores the entire system to a healthy condition.

VEGETINE.

Druggist's Report.

H. R. STEVENS.—Dear Sir—We have been selling your Vegetine for the past eighteen months, and we take pleasure in stating that in every case, to our knowledge, it has given great satisfaction.
Respectfully,
BUCK & COWGILL, Druggists,
Hickman, Ky.

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IS THE BEST

SPRING MEDICINE.

VEGETINE

Prepared

H. R. STEVENS, Boston, Mass.

Vegetine is Sold by all Druggists.

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Machines.

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CHEAP AS THE CHEAPEST,

IS TO CALL AND EXAMINE STOCK.

No trouble to show goods.

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CENTRAL STORE,

Newport, Perry County, Pa.

ESTATE NOTICE.—Notice is hereby given that letters testamentary on the estate of Lydia A. Mader, late of Penn. twp., Perry county, Pa., dec'd., have been granted to the undersigned, residing in same township. All persons indebted to said estate are requested to make immediate payment and those having claims to present them duly authenticated for settlement to
I. J. HOLLAND,
Executor.
July 16, 1878—64pd.