

A Memorable Day. The trouble came just with the end of the racket...

HELD BY THE HEEL

An Awful Night's Adventure on a Railroad Track.

'Twas a few years ago on a dark summer night that the adventure I am about to relate befell me.

There had been a tragedy at L—, the circumstances of which were so horrible and cruel that when the particulars were given to the public all New England was aroused to indignant excitement.

It is unnecessary to enter into any details of the murder here. Suffice it to say that, after some trouble and more delay, I secured a very successful report, and at eleven o'clock it had begun spinning over the wires.

L— was a small country place where the midnight trains did not stop; but before leaving the telegraph office I learned from the operator, who was a genial fellow—do not stare—that by hiring a horse at the village, which was a mile from the station and reached in the day time by stage, I could be driven to— Junction, eight miles beyond, board the train there, and be in the city at daylight.

I determined to act on this suggestion, and after a few further inquiries set off toward the village. The moon had gone down, and thick clouds covered the sky. It was as dark as pitch. Not a leaf stirred. It seemed as though the night were holding its breath, premonitory symptoms of a lachrymal outburst of rain. I did not mind the gloom, however, and whistled along merrily enough.

The highway ran along the east side of the track for nearly half a mile, ascending a hill, then descending abruptly to the right, crossing the track at a sharp curve, whence it bore off toward the few glimmering lights of the village, situated on a hill half a mile west of the railroad. I walked rapidly along; and descended the hill to cross the track. Hardly had I taken the first step on the plank crossing, when the heel of my shoe, by some unlucky chance, sank tightly into the space between rail and timber, and I was thrown heavily to the ground.

Although shaken up considerably, I was not badly hurt, and attempted to rise at once; but my foot was firmly held, and I only partially succeeded in doing so. I now turned my attention to freeing myself from my uncomfortable position, thinking it an easy matter that could be accomplished by a simple turn of the foot. To my consternation I found it absolutely impossible to draw my foot away, so securely was it wedged between the rail and plank.

I began to grow excited, and twisted and pulled my foot recklessly and violently until nearly exhausted. There was no result, except that my ankle began to pain me from the rough treatment, and I felt that it was beginning to swell.

To escape from this trap, I found I must take the matter more coolly. By a strong effort at self-command I became calm again, and began to consider the best way out of the fix. Consulting my watch, which had an illuminated dial, I found it was twenty minutes past eleven. No train would pass till after one, and this was the one I wanted to catch at the Junction. Therefore I need not worry lest I should be run over; I had plenty of time. Yet from the pain in my ankle I feared I could not reach home as early as I had intended.

I went systematically to work, and tried to pull my foot out of the shoe. Failure. Again and again I endeavored. Dead failure. My foot was badly swollen.

A happy thought flashed through my mind, and I almost shouted with joy. Jubilant at the prospect of deliverance I felt for my pocket-knife. Horrors! it was gone. But no. Almost miraculously, it seemed to me, my hand at that instant touched it lying on the ground, where it had slipped when I fell. With a thankful heart I opened its only blade.

of the knife, and before I had taken off a shaving, to my infinite dismay and alarm, the blade snapped off short, leaving the useless handle clutched in my grasp.

I now became thoroughly desperate, I reproached myself again and again for not having been wise enough to cut off the shoe. But it was too late now for the broken blade, even if I could have used that, was away, down in a crevice where my fingers could not reach it.

I called wildly for help. 'You can't get out, you can't get out!' said a commiserating voice. I started up. Bah! it was only a frog.

'You can't get out, you can't get out, you can't!' croaked the sympathetic creature. This was depressing. 'Fool, fool, fool, fool!' hooted an owl from the wooded hill behind. And the frog subsided.

Again and again my agonized voice rent the dark with screams for help. No one came or answered, and at last, horse and exhausted, I sank down in despair.

All became still again, save for the thrumming of the telegraph wires overhead, which to my startled imagination seemed like the sound of spirit voices warning me of doom. For some time I lay there in a sort of stupor when— 'Bo-loom!

I roused up again. 'Bo loom!' It was striking twelve from the clock in the tower. Then for the first time the full terror of my situation impressed itself full upon me, and I chilled with fear. Each stroke sounding out with relentless precision seemed to even hasten the time when the fast express would sweep round that curve, rush past and away, and leave me there maimed and bleeding, to die, no doubt, alone before the dawn.

Despair gave me mightier strength than hope, but unguided by reason. Again I put forth almost superhuman efforts to escape. My foot was badly sprained, but I felt no pain. I was frantic with fear, and writhed in the dust like a demented creature.

Oh, it was dreadful to be held there without any hope of rescue, fancying I heard the horrible crunching of the iron wheels passing over my ankle! My brain was on fire. I uttered shriek after shriek. Would no one come? Only the echoes answered. A terrible calm came over me, and I burst into a paroxysm of uncontrollable, mirthless laughter.

I was going mad. I lay prostrate and closed my eyes. A mild and pleasant intoxication seemed to take possession of me, much like that procured like morphine. Pleasing fancies flitted before me, and I thought them real. In the midst of all was present to my disordered brain an indescribable feeling of relief. What an awful nightmare I had had, but it was all over now; a fearfully realistic dream, but only an illusion. And I slept there as sweetly as I ever did on my own bed at home.

I slept thus, it seemed, a long time, when I was awakened by a clear, long drawn sound. I sat up, hardly realizing where I was, and listened. It was the shrill warning of a locomotive. Then it all came back to me. I was not safe in bed at home, but was crouching on a railway track, my foot held as in a vise, waiting to be crushed by the train whose whistle I now heard echoing and re-echoing far away among the hills.

I tried once more to release myself, but my foot was held fast as ever. I was convinced that further efforts was useless. So, having laid my body as far as possible from the rails, I abandoned myself to a dogged despair.

Again the shrill whistle sounded out upon the midnight air, this time nearer and more distinct. They were whistling for the station, and in a hundred seconds would be upon me. Nearer and nearer flew the train. I heard the singing of the rails, and shuddered. The sound of the monster's approach was swelling from a growl to a mad roar. Had I been on a straight line of track, the powerful headlight might have revealed me to the engineer, and been the instrument of my rescue. But I was pinned to the track just around a sharp curve, a hill between me and the train, and, if seen at all, it would be too late to stop.

The ground began to tremble. Then a deafening, soul-piercing shriek seemed to freeze my very blood in its veins. I became as one paralyzed. I tried to raise my hand to my brow, but could not move it. The strain was terrible. It was agony. It seemed that I must die even before the express dashed upon me.

foot was hurt by the train. At this there was a general smile. 'Speak out, said I, didn't the train run over me?' 'I'll tell you all about it,' said the conductor, who had just come in. 'When our engineer got a little past L—, he saw a man lying close to the crossing, and thinking he must be either killed or injured, we ran back the train to pick him up. As to running over you, we couldn't have done that without some inconsequence. You were not on the main line at all, but on a side-track close beside it. We cut off your book in a second, or two, took you along with us, and here you are.'

I understood at once. I had had all my excitement and mental suffering for nothing. There was nothing to do but to put a short face on the matter, and laugh with the rest. I thanked them all warmly, you may be sure, for their kindness. Then followed many reminiscences of adventures on the rail, some similar to what had befallen me, in which the poor fellows had not got off so easily. I reached home early in the morning. My sprained ankle laid me by for a month, after which I took up my daily duties as usual.

And now when I cross railway tracks I cannot help but recall with a shudder that dark, starless night when reason tattered on its throne, when, with the full expectation of being crushed beneath the fast express, I lay prostrate and helpless, firmly held by the heel.—S. S. Cairns, in Yankee Blade.

The Abuse of Tobacco. The Society Against the Abuse of Tobacco—to give it its proper style, and title—is just now distinguishing itself by an unusual display of energy. It is about to present a petition to the chamber of deputies asking that a law shall be passed forbidding boys—and it is to be presumed girls as well—under 16 years of age to smoke. It has also sent a deputation to the minister of war begging him not to permit soldiers to indulge in the fragrant weed in their own rooms. Not content with this the society has also requested M. de Freycinet to instruct the commanders of regiments to see that tobacco rations be not distributed to non-smokers as well as to lovers of the pipe, the cigar or the cigarette—as is said to be the case in certain corps—in order that temptation may be not thrown in the way of men who have not already taken kindly to the luxury.

It might have been assumed that if young people under the age of 16 were not able to look after themselves their seniors, who have donned the red breeches, the kepi or the helmet, might at least be supposed to have arrived at years of discretion. The society, however, entertains a different opinion. Like most enthusiasts, the anti-tobaccoists have overshot the mark, yet, as a matter of fact, there is no doubt the weed is becoming daily more popular with juveniles, who, although they can scarcely be described as babes and sucklings, have barely entered into the stage of boyhood and girlhood. Children of tender years are frequently to be seen investing in cigarettes, and even in cigars, at the different shops where tobacco and postage stamps are sold under the auspices of the authorities, and it is by no means unusual—especially in the districts inhabited mainly by the working classes—to see youngsters of 7 or 8 trying to keep a cigarette alight—a series of rapid puffs being varied with a vast amount of expectation.—Paris Cor. London Telegraph.

Counterfeit Thousand Dollar Bills. The secret service is considerably annoyed just at present regarding a new counterfeit \$1,000 bill, which is so admirably executed that half a dozen specimens have actually been passed on one bank. It turned up for the first time only the other day in Boston, where a woman went into the shop of Jordan, Marsh & Co. and purchased a valuable shawl, tendering in payment a United States treasury note for \$1,000. The clerk took the bill and kept the customer waiting several minutes for her change. When he returned with it she expressed anger, and demanded to know what the matter had been. The clerk owned that he had stepped over to a bank near by to have the bill tested, whereat the woman declared that she would not take the shawl and flounced out. Subsequently she came back, said she had thought better of it, took the shawl, paid for it with a \$1,000 note and went away with her purchase and her change.

All this was a very clever performance, for, as a matter of fact, the first bill offered was a perfectly good one, while the note actually given in payment on the second occasion was not the same at all, as the clerk was intended to suppose, but a forged imitation of like issue. Not only is an unknown number of these dangerous counterfeits now in circulation, but the plates are in existence somewhere, all ready to strike off millions in currency of large denomination.—Cor. St. Louis Globe-Democrat.

Specimen Cases. S. H. Clifford, New Cassel, Wis., was troubled with neuralgia and rheumatism, his stomach was disordered, his liver was affected to an alarming degree, appetite fell away, and he was terribly reduced in flesh and strength. Three bottles of Electric Bitters cured him.

Edward Shepherd, Harrisburg, Ill., had a running sore on his leg of eight years' standing. Used three bottles of Electric Bitters and seven boxes of Bucklen's Arnica Salve, and his leg is sound and well. John Speaker, Catego, O., had five large fever sores on his face, his doctors said he was incurable. One bottle Electric Bitters and one box Bucklen's Arnica Salve cured him entirely. Sold by D. J. Humphrey.

Occultist—"Yes, yes. You have a bad case of strabismus." Rural Patient—"Is that so? Then the fellows down to our town was all wrong. They insisted they wasn't nothing the matter with me exceptin' bein' cross-eyed."—Chicago America.

The Telephone in Washington. Mr. Blaine's experience with the telephone has made the life of one of the employees of the state department a hollow mockery for more than a week. He lives in constant terror of the wrath to come. Mr. Blaine, it appears, was anxious to communicate with the department from a distant part of the city. He, therefore called up his office over the telephone wire. Owing to some electrical defect, due doubtless to the weather, he was unable to make himself thoroughly understood. As so infrequently happens, he could hear with perfect distinctness all that the man at the other end of the wire was saying, while the clerk struggled vainly to distinguish a single syllable of what the secretary was trying to pour into his ear. Finally the clerk, annoyed by the trouble and delay, said in an angry tone: "Well, who are you, anyhow?"

Perhaps Mr. Blaine spoke with more emphasis or with greater attention to articulation when he replied. Whatever the cause, the first intelligible words which found their way to the ear of the angry clerk were those which said in reply to his question: "My name is Blaine, and I happen to be the secretary of state."

The shock which the clerk experienced was severe, but it was nothing to the lingering agony of doubt which followed it, and which even now is harassing his anxious mind. Mr. Blaine has shown no disposition to resent the unintentional familiarity, and the incident will probably drop into oblivion in a week or two.—Cor. New York Tribune.

Claims are laid to the discovery of the method of raising sugar cane from seed instead of from cuttings. The seeds were discovered by means of a microscope in the flowery head of the cane.

Maryland's new cigarette law requires the seller to pay an extra tax of \$50, and to make affidavit that the cigarettes he sells contain no injurious drug.

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Jerry—"I wish you would come to the ball game this afternoon, Jack. Can't you tell the boss that your aunt is dead?" Jack—"I daren't try it again. I only have one aunt, and I've had to attend her funeral four times this summer already."—Bostonian.

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