

A Perilous Ride.

BY ARCHIE R. FOGLESON.

I remember a little incident that happened some three years ago, while I was acting as railway agent at Excelsior Springs, which I would never willingly pass through again.

Excelsior Springs is situated twenty miles north of Kansas City, and is "up grade" nearly all the way. I had been agent there over a year and was pretty well acquainted with most of the people in the city.

I had just seated myself at the desk one morning, and was busily engaged in writing, when Sambo, a fellow employed as drayman for White & Co., and who, by the way, was as "black as the ace of spades," came excitedly on the platform.

A car of lump coal billed to the company had been set out on the wrong side track and could not be unloaded. Sambo had come in the day before asking me to have it removed to another point, but as it was the end of the month and I was unusually busy his request was forgotten.

"Now I shall catch it," I thought, "and accordingly prepared for the blow.

"Why'n't you mind me, sah? I done tole you to hab dat car set so dis heah niggah could got at it. 'Pears to me you don't ker far de trouble you make oler people."

"Sam, I forgot all about it. I am sorry, but—"

"Sho now! Massa done gone and 'lectified the head oberseer of dese heah cars and I 'speck you'll be lokin' fur a job totin' coal along wid dis nigger."

I laughed at this and his anger grew warmer.

"Yaw haw-haw! I'se a mind to clamber tro' de winder and gib you a whalin'! White folks is good as niggers as long as day hab demselves, but when dey gits mulish, satan am to pay."

Remembering that the track was down grade, I felt sure that we two could open the switch and run the car on the main track, and from there to the other side.

"Sambo," said I, "if you help me, in a very few minutes you can handle your coal."

"Now, boss, you is talkin' sense. I 'clare to goo luess, I'se clean beat out dis mornin', an' I axes yer parding fur de talk that I sent."

"All right Sam," I answered, rising from my chair.

Leading the way out to where the car stood, I opened the switch. With the help of a pinch-bar we soon had the car rolling out on the main line, Sambo acting as brakeman.

I stopped to lock the first switch, thinking Sambo would slow the car down and give me a chance to open the next. To my amazement the car had already passed the second switch and was fast increasing in speed.

"Brake her down!" I yelled, at the same time setting out after the car at breakneck pace. "Set that brako, you black imp!" I panted as I clambered on behind.

But there he stood, his hands on the wheel and his eyes protruding from his head. He seemed paralyzed with terror.

By this time the speed of the car had in-

creased fifteen or twenty miles an hour. I crawled over the coal, and clutching the wheel, gave it a whirl. Horror! The chain was broken—it was useless.

I gave one glance at the ties as they flew past us. There was no chance to jump now. We were running wild at the rate of thirty-five miles an hour.

How long would it be before the car jumped the track? The thought drove me wild. As for Sambo, he had thrown himself flat down on the coal.

"Oh, for de good Lawd, I'se clean done for, I is! An' I done gone and stole dem chickens last night from de preacher! Oh, dem water-millions dis chile done borrowed from Deacon Sherman! I'se got to die easy. An' dat ham I toted away from dat meat bar'l of marsa a'n done forgot to tole him! 'Pears like dis nigger nebber had any mum'ry no how.

At any other time I should have laughed at this, but when one is facing death and realizes it everything speaks of tragedy.

The speed of the car was now over a mile a minute. The telegraph poles whizzed past so fast that I could not count them. The sensation was sickening. I clung convulsively to the brake-wheel, waiting every moment for the crisis to come.

We flew by the first station like lightning, leaving a crowd of people standing on the platform with their mouths open and doubtless wondering where the company had procured an engine that ran without smoke or steam.

My knees shook together so that I could scarcely stand, and had the brake been out of my hands I should certainly have been keeping Sambo company in the coal.

If the car kept the rails for five minutes more we might still escape, for at a short distance ahead there was a slight ascent and then a more abrupt incline.

As we neared this spot, the speed of the car perceptibly lessened. My heart bounded. I would jump for my life as soon as we reached the summit of the grade.

"Sambo," I said, "we shall yet be saved. Rise and stop your howling. Brace up and be a man. Now see here," I said, as he reluctantly obeyed. "Stand on this beam. When I tell you to jump, do so, if you wish to save your life."

The car was running quite steadily now. One hundred yards more would bring it to the top of the little hill. Stepping behind Sambo, I waited for the critical moment, determined to kick him from the car should he disobey me when I gave him the word to leap.

Nearer and nearer we came to the top, when at last we were running on a level.

"Go, Sam!" I yelled.

He made one attempt to jump, and then drew back. I was too quick for him, and sent him sprawling into the air. Scanning the ground for one brief moment, I sprang from the car. I struck on my feet, head and hands alternately, until I reached the bottom of a ditch. I was stunned for a moment only, and rising, looked around for Sambo.

He was already on his feet, and coming toward me. He had struck on his head and shoulders and came out without a scratch, but was badly frightened.

As for myself, one finger was broken and half the skin on my nose had been rubbed off and replaced with sand. My gold watch was crushed into a shapeless mass.

I looked at the car as it disappeared in the distance with a shudder. I was so glad to know I stood there alive that I could not control my feelings and madly shouted, "Let her go, Sam, let her go!" Not stopping to realize that the car would "go" in any case.

Five miles further it jumped the track and ran into a water-tight tank, flooding the track with 800 barrels full of water. The tank, in going down, crushed a neighboring windmill into fragments. I felt as Sambo did about the matter.

"Boss," he said, "if we'd been on dat 'ar car I speck we'd done gone to glory, shuah. Dis chile am mighty glal he had the presence of mine to jump at the right minit.

And I never disputed his great courage and "presence ob mine."

The next day I was summoned to the superintendent's office, where I was severely reprimanded, as I deserved to be, but not discharged, I have been very careful ever since and run no risks.

To this day Sambo never unloads a car without examining the brake chains to see that they are set and safe.

C. P. R. Land Sales.

The quantity of land disposed of by the C. P. R. Land Department during the month of November was 33,551 acres, which brought \$124,029, over one hundred per cent. more than the sale for the same month last year. From the first of January to the end of November, 378,537 acres were sold, yielding the sum of \$1,320,334, an increase over the same period of last year of \$971,563. The town site sales to the end of November aggregated \$103,603.

It will surprise most people to learn that the finest railway station in the world is in India, in Bombay, which cost \$1,500,000 and took ten years to build. The finest in Europe will be, when completed, the new central station at Frankfort-on-the-Maine. A very costly station is also to be erected by the North British company as its Edinburgh terminus.

A BULLETIN was issued last month by the Department of Agriculture of Ontario on the subject of "Bees in Relation to Fruit." This publication was the outcome of a discussion between the Bee Keepers and Fruit Growers of Ontario as to whether bees were an injury or a benefit to flowers and fruit trees. The bee-keepers have complained that the fruit growers by spraying their trees with solutions containing Paris Green for the purpose of preserving them from the ravages of insects and grubs, are killing off the bees. The fruit growers on the other hand contend that the bees while in search of nectar do serious injury to the maturing fruits. This bulletin conclusively shows as a result of practical experiments that bees aid materially in the fertilization of trees and flowers and are to be regarded as a benefit rather than an injury to the trees.