

THE GAME WAS ALL HIS OWN

How Mr. Collins Lived by Working Expressmen

Would Steal His own Valise From Wagon and Then Put in Bill for Lost Bric-a-brac.

"There is no end of ways for beating the small expressman about town," said the man in the peaked cap, "I've had a good many clever tricks played on me in my 20 years' career as an expressman, but the smoothest chap that ever worked me for a snap was J. Collins. I saw Collins just three times in my life. The first time was when I moved him from Forty-fourth street up to Ninetieth street. I was employed then by an express company whose place of business was in Eighth avenue, and when Collins came around to the office and said he wanted us to move a trunk and a box of books I was sent out to do the job.

"Collins was a little man with bulging blue eyes, a sandy mustache and a mole on his chin. He watched me like a hawk while I was carrying his things down stairs and loading them in the wagon. When I got ready to drive off, he said: 'Oh, by the way, I have an extra valise here I wish you'd put in with the other things if it isn't too much trouble.' 'I carry it myself, but I'm not going straight up to the house, and I hate to be bothered with lugging it around all over town.'

"Now, it was against the rules of the company for the driver to haul anything for a customer not listed at the office. I told Collins so, but he didn't give a continental for laws and regulations.

"'Oh, pahaw!' he said. 'That'll be all right. Nobody need know anything about it but you and me. It'll be a great favor to me for you to take the grip, and I'll make it worth your while.'

"Clear up to the last minute my judgment argued that the course of wisdom was to persist in my refusal, but Collins' insistence finally won the day, and I consented to take the grip. Collins went down to the street with me, and just before I mounted to the seat he pressed a half dollar into my hand as a sedative for my uneasy conscience. I drove direct from Forty-fourth street to Collins' new boarding house, but when I got there the grip was gone. Collins raised a terrible row about it. He maintained that it contained odds and ends of valuable bric-a-brac, and he threatened to bring suit against the company for \$100. The company acted wonderfully white with me. Although they could be held in no wise guilty for a violation of their rules, they naturally disliked police court notoriety and finally compromised with Collins for \$50, of which they generously paid one-half, thus letting me off with a punishment fee of only \$25.

"Three months after that I left the Eighth street concern and went to work for a company up on Columbus avenue. One evening shortly after I was sent out to all several orders that had come in late in the afternoon. I was half dead that night with toothache, and my companion, a good natured sort of fellow, did most of the work and attended to all of the details of the moving. So intense was my pain that I gave scarcely a thought to where we were or what we were doing until I heard my man snoring around and swearing like all possessed. Then I got up snapp enough to ask what was the matter.

"'Holy smoke,' he said, 'that grip is gone! That fellow up on Seventy-fifth street insisted upon my bringing a valise along with his trunk and boxes, and now it's gone. I'm in a pretty fix, I am.'

"'Instantly my tooth ceased to jump and my heart took up the tempestuous refrain. Was the man's name Collins?' I asked.

"'Yes,' said he. 'Did you see him? He was monkeying around between the house and the wagon all the time, but it was kind of dark, and you had your face all bundled up and seemed to be more dead than alive, and I didn't think you took any notice of him.'

"'I didn't,' said I, 'but I know how he looks.' Then I described Collins to a T. Sure enough, it was my old friend J. C. who had met with the loss, and again he got damages for bric-a-brac which had been packed in his grip. At that I began to get suspicious, and when I went into business for myself a few weeks later I resolved to keep an eye open for J. Collins. I hadn't been on this corner two weeks before I fell foul of Collins. He wanted to be moved again, this time to the depot. I deputized one of my men to transact business with him, and that night when the driver went over after his trunks I hovered around in the background and watched his movements. His trick was simple. He swiped his own grip, which was comparatively easy to do, considering he always had the expressman call late in

the evening, I hurried over to the depot ahead of him to watch the entire proceeding. As usual he flew into a terrible rage when the driver reported that the grip was lost and demanded satisfaction then and there. Then I stepped up, and in less than five minutes J. Collins had become considerably wiser.

"'I ought to bring you into court,' said I, 'and make an example of you, for I don't doubt that there are other deadbeats working the express companies the same way, only they may not do it so frequently, but if you pay me what you soaked me and my friends or I'll let you off.'

"'J. Collins was inclined to show fight at first, but he soon weakened. 'I haven't got the money here with me,' he said.

"'Then get it,' said I. 'You won't leave this town till you do.'

"'He saw I was in earnest and dived down into his pockets and forked over the money.'—Ex.

THEY LIKE DAWSON

Miners on Miller and Glacier Want Trail From Here.

Another rich placer district is to be brought within reach of Dawson and the trade, naturally belonging to this city, but which heretofore has gone to Fortymile, will be diverted into its natural channel. A delegation of miners from Miller and Glacier creeks waited upon Commissioner Ross a few days ago and stated that the empty of which they were the representatives would be very happy to do their trading at this point providing some means were provided by which access could be had to the city. Miller and Glacier creeks are tributaries of Sixymile and are among the oldest producing creeks in the Yukon territory. At the time the discovery was made in '92 the attention of the few miners then in the country was about equally divided between the new strike and the bar diggings on Fortymile creek. The nearest port to the new discovery was at Fortymile and miners naturally went there for their supplies, a trail was soon blazed out and they have continued going there ever since. The route is only a pack trail and in addition to being a hard one to travel, there being several divides to cross, it runs for a short distance through American territory which makes it extremely inconvenient for miners taking in supplies. When gold was first struck in the Klondike Miller and Glacier creeks were at the height of their prosperity and yielded several good sized stakes. Pete Wyborg, well known by the old timers, arrived in San Francisco in the fall of '95 with 257 pounds of gold in an old battered tin trunk, all of which was taken from his claim on Miller creek within three years. At that time that was the greatest amount of gold ever brought out from the Yukon by any single individual, and quite a little furor was caused by his receipt in Frisco. Bob Inley is another who struck it rich on Glacier. He arrived in Janesville over the ice in February, '96, with \$15,000 to the good. When Carmack made his discovery on Bonanza the district was practically deserted by everyone and it is only within the last year or two that work has been resumed. The trade of that section is well worth fostering and it can be had by merely reaching out for it.

Commissioner Ross received the delegation with his usual urbanity and gave them his assurance that he would provide them an outlet from the mines

to the city. To a Nugget man the commissioner later said as soon as Engineer Thibedeau returned he intended sending him out to take reconnaissance and report upon the probable cost of constructing a trail. Its approximate length will be 50 miles and the government will be strongly urged to appropriate sufficient funds to build it at once.

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