

The Runaway Automobile

They were hopelessly stuck when I came along on my wheel. The country was a desolate waste around — the nearest town ten miles as the crow flies. The roads were — well, my probably tires would not recommend them.

"Broke down?" I asked, with that evident concern a man always feels for two helpless ladies stranded by the wayside in an automobile. Of course, I had anticipated my answer before the question was asked, for it was self-evident.

"Yes, the electricity — or something — has given out."

"It was a sweet, girlish voice, which I admired, and the face harmonized with it. The other occupant of the vehicle was the mother, and not quite so attractive.

"I had place to break down," I suggested, dismounting. "See what I can do for you."

"It's very kind of you."

"Would you like to detain you, though?" added the mother, looking at me as if she thought I was a high wayman.

"No particular hurry," I replied. "I was out for a pleasant spin, and got lost on this abominable road."

"And we, too, thought we would have a ride all alone. Papa never seems to have me go alone; but John was away, and I told mamma I knew how to run the machine. And I do!"

"Certainly! But repairing it is another thing."

"Yes, John had no business to let get out of order."

"If you will dismount," I said, "I might make an investigation."

I held out an arm to assist her, but her mother protested.

"Is it necessary? The roads are so rocky?"

"No, not necessary for both," I added, already holding the arm of her daughter.

She stood by my side and watched me open the box, giving advice and directions about the location of the tools, which I appreciated.

"The electricity has not given out," I announced later, "but there is something wrong with the battery. There's power enough in it to carry you fifty miles, or kill a dozen men."

"Merry, Stella! Is there any danger?" queried the woman in the automobile.

"No, mamma!"

"Not any, madam," I added, reassuringly. "However, I must get at the board under your feet. If you will kindly hold them up a moment—"

"But I will get out with this!"

"Not at all necessary."

But she climbed down in a hurry and I proceeded to lift the board. It was a common enough battery and motor, but a little kinky in its actions at times. Being somewhat of an electrician, I promised to repair the injury in a short time.

"It's fortunate we met you," said Stella, roughly, "or we might have had to walk back to town."

"Yes! It is very fortunate for me," I replied, without looking up, but through the machinery, I could see looks of disapproval on the mother's face. That provoked me to work in silence for some minutes. Then stepping into the automobile, I said:

"Now I think the thing will go. Which lever do you use?"

"This one."

She sprang lightly into the vehicle and touched the handle, giving it a sudden twist. Then the machinery did up and made a whirring and buzzing and made us turn in alarm. The wheel dug into the mud so fast that it flung a handful directly at the number, who stood directly back of us. The vehicle darted forward like a racehorse.

"Shut off the power!" I said quickly.

Stella looked at me with a peculiar smile and said:

"I can't."

"Why not? Let me try!"

I took the lever from her hand and turned it clear around, but there was no diminution in the speed of the automobile.

"Stop thief! Stop thief! I'll have you arrested!"

But I was helpless. We were running too fast to jump. It was sure death to attempt it. So I tried to collect myself and said:

"This is serious. We must keep our heads."

"Yes, very serious. But I'm not afraid — not yet."

"Nor am I, out here in the country. It's like a cross-country ride."

"Yes, but we can't tell where it will end."

We were making twenty miles an hour then, unless my calculations were wrong, and I had difficulty in holding the machine straight in its course.

"I've been in runaways before," I shouted as the wind nearly blew my hair away, "but never in an automobile."

"Nor have I," she answered, grasping her loosened hair, which streamed behind her; "but I've always wanted to be in one."

"Then you'll have all you want before we get through with this. I think we are increasing our speed."

We passed a team, which shied at our vehicle, and nearly upset the carriage in the gutter.

"We must be creating a sensation," I suggested grimly, trying again to shut off the power.

"Shouldn't wonder," she replied. Then eagerly, "but it's fun!"

"Yes, lots of fun," I assented not wishing to be beaten by a girl.

"I'm glad you're not afraid," she added, "for if you were I think I might be."

"Oh, I'm not a bit afraid," I replied, trying to keep a tremor from spoiling my voice. "So long as we keep the thing going we are all right."

We bumped over a cat that tried to run across our path, and scattered hairs and screeches around that vanished almost as soon as we noticed them.

"Are you going through the village?" she asked a moment later.

"I wouldn't if I could help it. I like the country much better. But there are no forks in the road, and at this speed I'm afraid I could not turn around gracefully on this narrow road."

She laughed softly and musically. "I should think not. We might be spilled out."

"Yes, spilled out," I shivered.

"What's the matter? Are you afraid now?"

"Not a bit," as I narrowly escaped knocking a man over, who shook his cane at us. "I'm just beginning to enjoy it."

"I suppose mamma will be worried about us."

"Yes, about you," I answered with difficulty. "But not about me. I think she would like to see me killed and mangled."

"She thought you were trying to steal the automobile—or me. Now she must be sure of it."

"I wouldn't steal this old—this machine for anything," I gasped. "But you—"

"Well, what were you going to say?" demurely.

"You are quite another story, as somebody has said."

"Kipling, you mean?"

"No; I mean you."

"Oh, I see; I meant the story, or the one who said that—"

"Here we come to the village," I interrupted desperately. "Are you afraid now?"

"No, not unless you are."

"Me afraid? Never! I don't know what fear is!"

"Neither do I—at least not when I'm with you."

"That's kind of you. But I wish that old haycart would get out of our way, and that hearse in front. Say! Can't you toot the horn?"

"Can I? Just listen."

"That's it, make them think Barnum's circus is coming, and they'll give us the right of way. Now again, for there's a whole menagerie of people and horses in front."

It was the main street of the village, and we were dodging and dashing through it at a pace that frightened everything that got in our way.

"See that fool ahead trying to stop us! He's the town officer!"

"Well, he's a brave man if he can stop us."

"Do you wish he would?"

"Yes! No, of course not!" I stammered. "This is too much fun with you—to wish anybody to stop us."

"There he goes now, shaking his stick at us! I'll toot the horn in his face. Isn't he mad now?"

"I suppose so," I replied. "But I can't look behind. This thing requires all of my attention."

"You look tired. Why, you're perspiring. Are you getting a little afraid now?—just a little bit?"

"Well, now, I may. No, no, of course not; not a single bit. It's jolly; it's a regular lark. And there's the country ahead!"

"Another cross-country ride! How many miles did you say the electricity would carry us?"

"Fifty!" I groaned.

"How lovely!"

"Yes! Lovely!"

Outside of the village the road forked. One went down into the lowlands where the roads were good. The other climbed a steep hill. I saw my hope, and towards the hill I steered.

"Why, the roads are better the other way," she said.

"I thought they were smoother up here," I lied.

"No; this road leads up the side of the mountain, and we can never get to the top without stopping. I'm sure of it."

"I thought the other one led up the

mountain. How provoking!"

"Yes; very provoking! It will spoil our ride!"

There was disappointment on the pretty face; but when we climbed the hill, and our vehicle panted and snorted under the exertion, my courage and spirits returned.

"Well, it can't be helped now. We've had a splendid ride together. I shall always remember it."

"Yes; splendid! I hope mamma won't worry!"

"She won't, I'm sure; but I think I'll leave you in the village, and not see her today."

Worn out with its exertions, the vehicle came to a sullen standstill near the summit. Stella dismounted, and I quietly disconnected the machinery.

"It's broken for good now," I said, examining it. "We will have to get a team to drag it back to the village."

"How mean! I thought we should have a good run down the hill! You wouldn't be afraid, would you?"

"Certainly not," I faltered, looking down the steep road; "but it's out of the question now."

"Then we'll have to walk it."

"Yes; but together, and that will be fun."

"Not half as much as if we were riding. That was such a lark! It was the best cross-country ride I ever had."

"Yes, the best I ever had."

Of course I escaped the irate mother's wrath; but I had to make a terrible detour to avoid it, and when I found my wheel I was thankful enough to get home without bodily harm.

—George E. Walsh, in New York Times.

A STORMY MEETING

Manitoba Prohibitonists Oppose Referendum

They Want the Sale of Intoxicants Prohibited Regardless of Peoples Desires.

Winnipeg, Jan. 27. — There were stormy scenes during the big mass meeting that marked the close of the Dominion Alliance Convention here last night. The church was crowded to the doors, and many were standing near the door. The Government, in a letter from Hon. Mr. Roblin, the Premier, definitely reiterated that the policy they would pursue was to submit the liquor act to a referendum and let the people decide the fate of the act. When this letter was read cries of derision resounded through the church; even hisses were heard. Mr. Mullock, the chairman, said that the Government were willing that Attorney-General Campbell and Mr. Aikins should address the meeting and explain further the policy of the Government. From all parts of the church cries of dissent were heard and finally a motion that the Attorney-General be heard was voted down, 600 to 7. Fiery speeches followed from leading delegates and Ministers, who charged the Roblin Government with insincerity and lack of courage to carry out laws they had placed on the statute books. A motion was finally passed as follows: "Whereas this convention has expressed itself already by unanimous resolution against the so-called referendum on the liquor act, and whereas such a referendum has been finally decided on by the Government, therefore be it resolved that the temperance people of this province ignore this referendum and abstain from polling their votes thereon." Another motion carried declared that the Dominion Alliance had lost all confidence in the sincerity of the Government to enforce the liquor act, and therefore declared against the referendum. A number of the delegates today expressed great dissatisfaction with the action of the meeting in deciding to take no part in the referendum. One city clergyman said today: "The result of last night's resolutions will be fatal to the present supremacy of prohibition if not repealed. We should fight to the last to carry the referendum, although we believe it was given to us in bad faith." Another member said: "If the temperance people ignore the referendum it will be defeated by a large majority. If defeated, neither political party will touch the prohibition issue for ten years in this province." Another prominent member of the alliance said that so strong was the feeling that the meeting last night had not altogether been judicious that it was likely that the Executive would consider calling another meeting or revising the former action. It is said to be the intention of the Government to take the referendum early in March next, and that the municipal lists will be used for this purpose, as there will not be time to prepare new voters' lists.

BENEFIT TO CUMMINGS

Packed House Greet the Popular Actor.

Excellent Program Rendered by His Friends in the Theatrical Profession.

The house that greeted Mr. Ralph Cummings at the Auditorium last night must have been extremely gratifying to that gentleman, as there was scarcely a vacant seat to be had anywhere in the building. The occasion was in the nature of a testimonial benefit given him at the conclusion of a lengthy theatrical engagement and just prior to his departure for the outside. Since last fall Mr. Cummings has been seen in many parts of widely varied character and has done not a little toward dispelling the otherwise monotonous existence of a winter in the Yukon. In his particular line he is easily the peer of any actor who has ever appeared in Dawson and his presence here for the past six months or so will always be remembered with pleasure. In his departure the Bittner Company loses a valuable man, one it is feared will not be easily replaced.

The performance last night was one of the best Sunday evening shows ever seen in the city. The program was neither too long nor too short and possessed the one thing so rarely considered in benefit performances, quality. Some of the benefits this winter would make angels weep. The opening number was a scene from the second act of that rollicking comedy "Our Boys," in which Miss Holden, Mr. Southard and Mr. Cummings appeared. Noel followed in female impersonation, and Billy Mullen gave a bright monologue, ending with "Kelly's Drama." Mrs. Leroy Tozier appeared for the first time in many weeks and from the applause with which she was greeted she has evidently lost none of her old time popularity. Mr. R. P. Wilson gave two readings, one being "Fuzzy-Wuzzy," in his own inimitable manner. Rooney & Forrester made things more than merry with a laughable sketch, Ray Southard was heard in several of his excellent songs and the program was ended with an act from "A Gilded Fool," the characters being taken by Miss Lovell, Miss Holden, Mr. Bittner and Mr. Cummings. The beneficiary appeared prior to the final scene and cordially thanked both the participants and patrons, expressing a warm word of approval for the efforts being made by Mr. Bittner to provide good, clean legitimate comedy and drama without the dance hall adjuncts. The orchestra present was under the direction of Al Walcott.

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ing, near Keller, fifteen miles north of Port Worth, W. L. Stillwell was instantly killed and his body burned in the wreck, and J. G. Adkins was fatally injured. They were in the caboose of the first section, which was wrecked.

The dead man and the injured man lived at Rosebud, and were the owners of the stock which they were taking to the St. Louis market. The wreck was caused by a dense fog, which prevented the danger signal from being seen by the second section.

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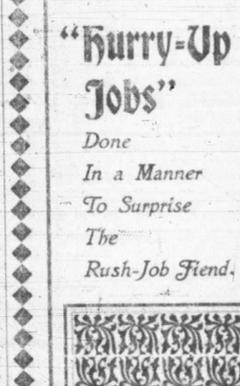
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Thought to Be Insane.

Parkersburg, W. Va., Jan. 26. — Thomas Tucker, a colored boy, cut the throat of Mary Beall, a white woman, in front of the negro Methodist church tonight. Finding that she was dead, he went home, told his mother what he had done, and then tried twice to shoot himself, but missed both times. Jealousy is supposed to have been the cause of the tragedy.

Tucker was arrested but will not talk. He is thought to be insane. After failing to shoot himself, Tucker cut his own throat with the same knife he had used on the woman. He will probably die.

Rear-End Collision.

Houston, Tex., Jan. 26. — In a rear-end collision between two sections of a stock train at 3 o'clock this morn-

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