

Capturing a Mastodon

(By Al. Smith.)

PART III.

The reporter's first thought when he found himself sprawling upon the back of the mastodon was one of awful fright, because he thought his hour had come. He fully anticipated being thrown from his riding place to the ground, which would have been equal to falling from the top of a story and a half house, or being picked up by the animal's trunk, and the fate of the stage team was still fresh enough in his mind to make a similar fate horrible to contemplate.

This fright soon wore away, however, when he began to realize that the back was as broad and almost as level as the floor of a good-sized room, and for a beast of his size the mastodon seemed to have a very easy gait.

As for the other fear it was soon dispelled because he could see that the length of the beast's trunk would not permit of his taking off by that means, as it would not reach him. Besides the mastodon did not appear to mind his being there in the least, and after a little the reporter came to the conclusion that the animal was not aware of his presence, and he soliloquized: "I've felt small and generally insignificant before, but this takes the cake. Here I come out to get a story, and feeling of some importance, and now find myself riding the material for that story back to town, and he's so darned big that he don't even know I'm up here. Ouch!"

This exclamation was accompanied by a very sudden change of position, and a movement such as has been often seen and thought funny when an unsuspecting person has deposited his weight upon the treacherous bent pin or carpet tack.

"I hadn't any idea that this brute was an animated pin cushion," said the reporter as he rubbed the wounded part of his anatomy and began seeking for the cause.

Much to his surprise he found that he had been "stabbed," as he expressed it by the sharp edge of a small sea shell of which there were a great many sticking, with sand and pebbles, to the thick hide of the mastodon, evidently held there by frost.

For an explanation of this the reporter did not seek; it being a small matter anyway, as compared with his position and how he was going to get out of it; only he was careful to look about him before he again sat up, to make sure he found a clear place.

Meantime the mastodon was trotting along down the road, and the people who saw him coming were rushing to cover without unnecessary loss of time, and the reporter found himself smiling, notwithstanding the uncertainty of his lease of life, at some of their efforts to find places of safety.

One fear he had felt was that another team might be encountered, and the tragedy of less than a half an hour before be repeated. From his lofty seat he saw more than one team, but it always happened that they got sight of the strange animal in time to turn and gallop away to safety.

At one point, far down the road, he got sight of a military figure on horseback, whom he knew at first glance could be no other than the major. He was looking through a pair of field glasses, and the reporter felt instinctively that he, rather than the mastodon, was the object of examination, and knew that he must be recognized. Suddenly the major whipped a handkerchief from his pocket and riding to a raise in the ground began waving it furiously. While the reporter was trying to make out what this meant he was startled by the crack of the police cannon behind him, and as he turned his head a shot whistled by and tore up a cloud of snow on the hillside just ahead.

"Things were surely bad enough before," thought the unhappy man on the mastodon's back, "but I had as well make my peace with the powers of the next world (if I can), if I am now to be used as a target by the police force."

Impelled by some strange impulse he put his hand into the inside pocket of his vest, thinking to get his handkerchief as a sort of signal of distress, and drawing therefrom the first thing meeting his touch, in his excitement, he was at once struck with the idea which

occurred to him upon noting what it was he held in his hand.

It was a small United States flag in which were wrapped a few letters. Quickly tearing away the strings which bound the package together he waved the flag aloft in the hope that the artillery company behind him had not previously been aware of his presence, and upon seeing the flag would fire no more for fear of hitting him instead of the mastodon.

Meantime the major had after seeing that the shot had missed its mark, and noting through his glass the surprise displayed among the men with the gun at the display of the American flag upon the back of the mastodon, turned his horse's head toward town and galloped away at top speed, which left the reporter some hope that a successful plan for his rescue would be devised.

As to the mastodon, he paid no further attention to the cannon shot than to quicken his pace.

Little more of moment happened till a point just above the Klondike ferry was reached, when the excitement of the whole day was brought to a befitting climax in a way wholly unexpected.

By the time the mouth of the Bonanza canyon was reached the reporter had become sufficiently accustomed to mastodon riding to feel somewhat less uneasy concerning his position than he had at first experienced, and the only thing that bothered him was how he was going to get down from his high perch without being killed or crippled by the fall, or seen by the mastodon, about whose action, should he become aware that he had acted in the capacity of a transportation company for the press, the reporter had some very uncomfortable doubts.

From where he sat as the animal ambled along down the road, he could see the roadway along the bluff on the opposite side of the river, and the hill above it, upon which had congregated apparently nearly the entire population of the city.

Something was going on, upon the top of one of the cliffs commanding the roadway, for a considerable distance, which, at first he could not make out the nature of, and a little later when he discovered what was really being done it was far from reassuring.

He had hoped when the major galloped away towards the city that some plan would be devised looking to his safety as well as to the death of the mastodon, but he was not slow to realize that the battery of four cannon which was being placed in position on the cliff overlooking the road, was not likely to increase his chances for prolonged life.

"They will have to fire at the brute's head and chest," he thought, "as it will be a head-on shot, and the chances are that there won't be enough of me left to make an epitaph worth while."

Then it occurred to him that the river would have to be crossed before he would be in range, and it was quite possible that the ice would break beneath the great weight of the mastodon, in which case he might have a chance of escape. At all events if the worst came and he had to ride into the fire of that battery or fall, he could at least make a desperate leap towards the side hill along which the grade was cut and risk the fall.

Just as this plan had been formed and he had come to the foregoing resolve, he noticed that the mastodon was approaching the point where the telephone wires crossed the road and saw that by standing up as the animal passed under the wires he would be able to put his arms over them.

He was filled with elation in a moment as escape now seemed certain and comparatively easy. There was little doubt about the strength of the wires being great enough to hold his weight.

As the mastodon approached the wire the reporter rose to his feet, preparatory to catching the wire, but fate, which had played him so many queer pranks that day was destined to play the final card in the adventure and, fortunately for him, prevent his trusting himself to those innocent looking wires.

When the mastodon was almost beneath the wires he curled his monstrous trunk high in the air, as if moved by sudden impulse of wanton destructiveness and curled it about the wires,

There was a sudden pang to his great body, a sort of a rending and straining of those mighty muscles, a shivering of all the nerves, and with a deafening, screaming bellow, the mastodon staggered, tottered for an instant and sank to his knees, dragging with him the wire, and snapping the two poles between which he had crossed the line. There was a sizzling, frying sound from the mastodon's head, accompanied by the sickening stench of burning flesh, and as the reporter gathered himself up from the snow drift into which he had been unceremoniously pitched, he realized what had happened, and came nearer uttering a prayer of thanksgiving than he had ever done before in his life.

"Live wire!" he exclaimed and retired a few paces to watch the death struggle of the mastodon.

The fact was, the wire that had laid the large beast low, was the one used by the Electric Light & Power Company for the transmission of power to the creeks, and the mastodon had received through the head, by means of his trunk, a charge of two thousand volts of electricity.

A few minutes later when the major and a couple of officers galloped up they found the mastodon lying quite still upon his side, the deadly wire beneath his head and the reporter just in the act of laying a small American flag upon one of the great ears. To the flag he had pinned a notice setting forth the fact that he claimed the carcass of the dead mastodon by right of capture.

(The End.)

The Average Lawsuit.

There is nothing more ridiculous than the average lawsuit. Two men dispute over a few dollars and go to law. Both are sure to lose. Their neighbors are dragged in as witnesses, and the costs amount to 10 or 20 times the amount in dispute. Frequently these lawsuits ruin families and start quarrels that last for years. Some men claim it is "principle" that actuates them in these lawsuits. It is bullheadedness, pure and simple. It is nearly always easy to "split the difference."

Another bad feature about these lawsuits is that the county is put to considerable expense, and men willing to work are compelled to sit on the jury. Settle your disputes without going to law. If the man with whom you are disputing is not willing to "split the difference," he will probably accept a proposition to leave it to three neighbors.—Ex.

Advice From a Butcher.

"What the newspapers should do is to devote less space to describing what people should wear and more to what they should eat," remarked the butcher. "Fashionably dressed women come in here every day who don't know lamb from mutton or a hen from a rooster. No wonder men have dyspepsia! I find that men know more about the quality of food stuffs than women do. Many of the latter don't even know the few simple tests that might help them to distinguish an old fowl from a young one, and about meat they're greener yet. A young woman came in here the other day and asked for two pounds of veal cutlets. I showed her the loin I proposed to chop the cutlets from, and she remarked, 'Yes; that's very nice, but isn't it rather thick to fry?'—Ex.

The Early Rising Fad.

Early rising has been inculcated as a wholesome practice from time immemorial, and to those who can contrive to get to bed also in good time is unobjectionable in every way; but, on the other hand, if the employment is of such a nature as to prevent the occupation of the bed at a proportionately early hour it is absurd to recommend the one without the other. Some persons require six or seven, some eight or nine hours in the 24, but if we all made a practice of getting up as soon as we wake we should find that the sleep would be sounder and more wholesome and that it would be seldom extended beyond seven or eight hours.

The plan of rising a long time before breakfast and taking a walk on an empty stomach is undoubtedly a bad one, and though it may be adopted by some people without injury, yet if attempted by those of delicate constitution it will do a vast deal of harm. Half an hour or an hour before that meal may well be passed in a short walk, but beyond that time the stomach becomes weakened in tone, and the meal when taken is followed by a dull and heavy sensation of fatigue and listlessness instead of the sprightly readiness for the day's occupation, which it ought to be the ambition of every one to possess.—Health.

For Rent.

Office room in McLennan-McFeeley building. Heated with hot air. Apply McLennan-McFeeley store. —ert
Mum's, Pomerey or Ferinet champagne \$5 per bottle at the Regina Club hotel.

MANMOTH BONES IN DAWSON

Brought Down Yesterday From
Hunker Tributary.Now on Exhibition in Room Formerly
Occupied by Hoffman Grill on
Third Street.

Considerable curiosity was manifested on Third street yesterday afternoon when a double team and sleigh drew up before the building until recently occupied by the Hoffman grill, and began unloading about two tons of mammoth and mastodon remains.

The bones are those referred to in the Nugget columns some time since, and are said to be the largest and best preserved yet discovered.

They were taken from the claim at a above discovery on a tributary to Hunker creek known as Righty pup, and owned by Messrs. Valentine, Duffield and Melneus. The bones were found within a few feet of bedrock at a depth of 55 feet below the surface.

This is the same claim from which were taken the specimens of the same kind, afterwards taken out by Mr. Crane, and seems to be a prolific producer of such things, as other bones are still being excavated.

The mastodon, a part of whose bones now form an unsightly pile in the back room of the old grill room, must have been in life a monster of the most gigantic proportions. The front piece of the skull, with the sheaths in which were fastened the enormous tusks, is intact and in a splendid state of preservation, showing the process of contact with the trunk, the small eye sockets and the connection with the lower jaw. This bone is over three feet in length and weighs in the neighborhood of 400 pounds.

The tusks are of good color and perfectly preserved, being broken in no place, and were, in fact incased in their sheaths when uncovered, but on account of their great bulk and length had to be removed before they could be taken to the surface through the shaft. The tusks measure 11 feet 4 inches and

are curling in form after the fashion of a ram's horn.

Two teeth have been taken out thus far, the weight of which are 14 pounds each.

Some of the leg bones are also among the relics, and might easily be taken for the trunks of trees.

The bones will be placed upon exhibition here by W. G. Fee who is managing the business, and later they will be taken to the outside.

Brewitt makes fine pants. —ert

Round steak 30c at P. O. Market.

Robinson the well known merchant tailor of Vancouver is here now to take orders for gentlemen's spring clothing and ladies' tailor-made dresses. Mr. Robinson is stopping at the Hotel McDonald, room No. 10. —ert

Goetzman makes the crack-photos of dog teams.

Steel marten traps, just in—0, 1 and 1 1/2. Shindler's. —ert

Shoff, the Dawson Dog Doctor, Pioneer Drug Store.

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