

A SLEEPING-CAR TRAGEDY.

BY W. L. ALDEN.

[FROM THE IDLER.]

THE through express, consisting almost entirely of sleeping-cars, had just passed through Jericho Station. The station master gazed after the rapidly receding train which, at a little distance, was nearly hidden by a following cloud of dust. Then turning to me, and dropping heavily into a chair, he remarked, "That's what people nowadays call 'comfort in travelling,' but gimme an old-fashion ordinary car every time."

"Then you don't like sleeping-cars?" said I.

"No, sir! I don't. When I'm travelling by night I want to be my own master. If I want to smoke, I want to be where I can smoke, and if I want to sit by the window and chew tobacco, I want a window accordingly. Now, when you travel in a sleeping-car at night, what happens? Why you have to turn into a berth whether you want to or not, and you have to give up your boots and you can't get 'em again till morning; and you can't smoke, and you haven't got any air to breathe, and some fellow is sure to snore so loud that the seven sleepers mentioned in Ephesians couldn't get a wink if they were there."

"Why, speaking of snoring, I've known lots of what you would call tragedies to happen in sleeping-cars on account of snoring. You don't hear of 'em in the papers, for the men that do these tragedies don't care to talk about 'em, and the company naturally wants the thing kept quiet. You read in the papers every little while about the mysterious disappearance of some man who started on a railway journey and was never heard of again. The next time you read anything like that you can just make up your mind that the missing man was a snorer, and that he was rash enough to take a sleeping-car where there were a lot of other travellers. Oh! I'm not trying to coax you. When you go back to Chicago you go to a public library, and you ask for a file of the Chicago Tribune for last year, and if you go through it carefully you will find that at least a dozen men who are missing were last seen entering a sleeping-car on such and such a road. You'll have to admit that if what I'm telling you isn't true, it is certainly a curious coincidence that the missing men were all travelling in sleeping-cars."

"The company put a sleeper on this line in the days when the Jericho mines were having their boom. It was the first sleeping-car ever seen in the North West, and for a time it was very popular; that is on the east-bound trip. You see, miners that had made their pile at the mines always took the sleeper when they started for the east, and sometimes we'd have every berth in the car engaged. They were that anxious to spend their money that they would have taken any sort of a car that we might have put on the line and charged an extra price for. I was brakeman of that sleeper, and I used to get a lot of amusement out of the miners, except when they happened to start a difficulty, and then I would bolt for the other end of the train till the shooting was over. It was curious to see how those miners that didn't care for any sort of law would knock under to the piggy porter, and obey his rules. I suppose it was because they didn't want anybody to think that they didn't know the ways and manners of sleeping-cars. The porter would come at nine o'clock, and say, 'Time to make up the beds, gentlemen, and they would stand around till the beds were made up as meek as if they were children. Then when the beds were made they had to turn in, for there wasn't any place for them to sit down, and they'd take off their boots and hand them over to the porter, without ever dreaming of telling him that they weren't in the habit of taking off their boots at night, and that if he wanted those boots he had better try and take them off himself. Take 'em by and large, those miners were generally better behaved on that sleeping-car than the average commercial traveller is now-a-days, for all that he gives himself such airs, and lets on to be at the top of Chicago society."

"There was one thing that the miners wouldn't stand, and that was snoring. They got the conductor to post up a notice in the sleeper, 'No Snoring Allowed,' and any man who wanted to snore after that was expected to do it so quiet that it wouldn't disturb anybody. If a man snored in a loud, tempestuous sort of way, he would be waked up and warned once. After that, if he began again, strong measures would be taken with him. I've seen a chap that persisted in snoring, dragged out of his berth and made to sit on the wood-box, with a man in front of him stirring him up with the poker every time he began to nod. The miners would take turns at this duty, and relieve each other every two hours, and the snorer wouldn't get a wink of sleep the whole night time he was on that train. I've known of a man being kept awake in this way on a Central Pacific train all the way from Frisco to Chicago, and that was five days and nights at the time I'm speaking of."

"But this was only mild treatment compared with some of the things that were done to passengers who would snore. I remember one chap who had a porous paster put all over his mouth and nose. He didn't snore any more, and in the morning he was found to be suffocated, and the boys just dropped his body off a bridge while the train was crossing the Missouri. There hadn't been any intention of suffocating him, you understand, but nobody was dissatisfied with the result, except perhaps the friends of the man who had so mysteriously disappeared. Lots of men were gagged for snoring, and when they showed fight, as they did for the most part, they were knocked on the head, and occasionally the knock was a trifle too hard, and then of course there was another mysterious disappearance."

"Did you ever notice the kind of men that snore? Perhaps you haven't had

the opportunity for studying the subject that I have had. Well, in the first place it's always a big man, put together kind of loose and careless, that snores. Your small, tight built nervous chap never snores. Now I'm a snorer myself, and I don't deny it. That's one of the reasons that I don't travel on a sleeping-car; but if I could reduce my weight by, say, eighty pounds, there wouldn't be any more snoring about me."

"Then a man's business, and his religion, and his politics, have a good deal to do with the snoring question. I'll back a Methodist to out-snore any two men of any other denomination, while it's mighty seldom that a Presbyterian can be heard to snore. Ministers of the Gospel are hard snorers as a rule, and next to them come professional musicians. If you look at a man's politics you'll find that a Democrat and a Republican are about equal when it comes to snoring, but that of a Prohibitionist will out-snore anybody that ever tried to compete with him. I don't understand why these things should be as they are, but there is no denying the facts."

"Do women ever snore?" I asked.

"Not often, that is to say in sleeping-cars. What they may do elsewhere, I can't say, not being myself a married man. Speaking of women, a curious circumstance happened in a sleeping-car about the time I was telling you of, when we used to carry the car full of miners that had made their pile. I suppose by this time you are getting middling tired of listening to my yarns, but its something I can't help. Telling anecdotes was always my strong suit, and I play it out whenever I get a chance. If anybody don't want to listen to me, it's always open to them to tell me so, and to get up and get out."

I assured the station-master that his anecdotes were the one thing that reconciled me to life in Jericho.

"That being the case," he replied, "I'll tell you about this yer circumstance. It's true, for I was brakeman on the sleeping-car at that time, and I saw the whole proceedings."

"We left Athensville 'one afternoon about four o'clock with the car chock-full. The whole lot were miners except a Jew pedlar—a chap who had come up from Chicago to assay silver—and a young woman. Naturally the young woman attracted a great deal of attention, women, old and young, being mighty scarce at the mines. It appeared that she had come to Athensville to prospect for a school, some of the leading residents having decided to start a school for the benefit of their children, and having applied to have a teacher sent down to take charge of it. When a handsome young woman turned up and said she had come to teach school, everybody felt that she wasn't it to grapple with Athensville boys, who required an able-bodied man who could handle three or four of them at once if the occasion should arise. At the same time nobody wanted to send the young woman away, and the upshot was that it was decided to start a Sunday school and to put her in charge of it, paying her the same that they would have paid her to run the regular school. Of course she didn't object, the berth being a mighty easy one, and when I met her on the sleeping-car she was on her way to Chicago to lay in a stock of Sunday school books, and a magic lantern."

"The miners treated her as if she was a genuine first class angel. Not a soul of them dared to speak to her, but they kept bringing her cakes and apples and candy and heaving them into her lap without speaking a word. When they wanted to smoke they went into the smoking-car instead of smoking in the sleeper, which had been their usual practice, though it was against the rules. When there was a nice bit of scenery to be seen, one of them would say something about it in a loud tone of voice, and they would all get up and go to the end of the car, so that the girl could look out of any window that she might select. There wasn't a single swear word spoken in that car, and, once, when two of the fellows showed an inclination to quarrel about something, the other chaps put them out of the car so quick and so quiet that you would hardly have noticed that there was any argument in progress."

"When night came, and the darkey porter started to make up the beds, the boys all went into another car, so as to give the girl a chance to go to bed in an unostentatious way. When they came back, which was about ten o'clock, everything was quiet, and there was no girl to be seen. The boys then turned in themselves, making no more noise than they could help, and mentioning to the Jew pedlar, who had the air of a snorer, that if he called to do any snoring that night, he might as well prepare to meet Moses and the Prophets at once."

"About an hour later as I was sitting just inside the door where I had made the whistle handy, and at the same time got a few winks myself, somebody began to snore. It was a very small and inoffensive snore at first, but it kept growing stronger and louder, and bimeby it settled into one of the loudest and the most stragulating snores that you ever heard. The boys stood it for a few minutes, and then two of them got up, and going to the berth where the Jew slept, which was a lower berth in about the middle of the car, they pulled the curtains open and gave him a good shaking, telling him that unless he stopped that snore, and snored more like a Christian and less like a pedlar, his days were numbered. The man was considerable frightened, and he allowed that he was very sorry and wouldn't do it again. But the boys hadn't left him alone more than ten minutes before the snoring broke out worse than."

"Thisyer insulting of innocent young women has got to be stopped," says one of the miners. "Get that cuss out of his berth, somebody, and set him up on the wood-box. I'll attend to him for the first two hours, and after that one of you fellows will relieve me." So saying the

miner gets on his legs, and two other miners having roused up the Jew and set him on the wood-box, the chap that took the first watch sat down in front of him with his pistol in his hand and told the Jew that if he snored a single snore he would find himself where the climate was too warm for the ready-made clothing trade."

"There had been considerable noise made in the process of waking the pedlar up and hauling him out of his berth, for it appears that he was dreaming at the time, and took a notion that the boys were attempting some kind of violent action. He was quiet enough when he saw the miner with the revolver sitting in front of him, and for a little while the car was as quiet as you please. It wasn't long before the miner who was on guard began to nod, and presently he was sound asleep. The Jew seeing this, leaned back against the side of the car, and settled himself for another nap; and to tell the truth, I dropped asleep myself."

"I was waked up by a scream from the Jew. The miner had him by the throat and was choking him pretty considerably. Feeling that it was my duty to protect passengers from harm, I asked the miner what the Jew had been doing. 'Snoring,' says he, 'and he knows very well that we ought to drop him off the train without any more words. Don't you know that, you ruffianly insulter of women?' he adds, letting go of the Jew's throat so that he could answer."

"Well! the Jew swore that he hadn't snored the least particle in the world; that is, since he had been sitting on the wood-box. 'I was wide awake all the time,' says he, 'knowing that the miner had been asleep and couldn't contradict him. It's somebody else that's doing the snoring and I was listening to him when you woke up and grabbed me.' 'This is worse and worse,' said the miner. 'Not content with snoring like a low beast, and keeping an innocent and beautiful young lady awake with your disgusting uproar, you are trying to lay it on to gentlemen. You'll now point out the man you charge with snoring, and I'll tell you right here, that unless you prove your accusation that there man will take you out on the platform and hang you without further nonsense.' 'I can't tell you the precise man who was snoring,' said the Jew, 'but I can show you the berth where the snoring came from. It's the berth just above mine, and if you gentlemen want to show fair play you'll wait a little while, and see if the snoring begins again. If it does you can catch the guilty man red-handed; and if it doesn't, all I can say is that I am ready to take an oath before any magistrate that I am not the man who has been snoring in thisyer car.'

"The boys considered over the matter for awhile, most of them being for hanging the Jew at once, and paying no attention to his charges. But the leader of the gang remarked that a grave charge, affecting their honor as gentlemen, had been made, and that although nobody had any doubt that it was a lie, it must be judicially investigated. So it was agreed that everybody should wait for half an hour, and if at the end of that time no snoring was heard, the Jew should be disposed of in any way that the majority might select."

"They hadn't very long to wait, for in about ten minutes the snoring began again. It came from the identical berth pointed out by the Jew, and you never saw a more disgustful-looking set of men than the dozen or so miners that sat and stood and listened to the sound. They were ashamed of having made a mistake in accusing the Jew, and they were still more sorry that any one of their own number should have been guilty of disturbing the whole car-load of passengers, and especially the young woman."

"Whose berth is that?" said the leader.

"Nobody knew, though it was generally thought that it was Old Pinkett's. Just at that minute, however, Old Pinkett turned out from a berth near the end of the car, so it was clear he wasn't the guilty man."

"It doesn't make any difference whose berth it is," said one of the men. "There is some heaven-forsaken vagabond who is snoring in that berth in the presence of a young lady, and if he was my own brother I'd be the first one to convince him of the error of his ways. I propose that we go to that berth, and catch the miscreant red-nosed, as our Jewish friend here remarks. Just take him by the feet and drag him out. We can then hold a little Lynch court in this end of the car, and settle the thing in decent order."

"This satisfied the views of the other miners, and the whole gang of them went softly to the berth. The snoring was worse than ever, for it got to be of the choking variety. You'd have sworn that the snorer was choking to death to hear the gaspings, and the stranglings, and the sighings that came from that berth. However, that kind of snoring is never directly fatal, though it is followed by fatal consequences on sleeping-cars, as I've already given you to understand."

"One of the miners was just going to give the word for hauling the snorer out of the berth, when all of a sudden the curtains opened, and a young woman looked out with a sort of scared expression on her face. If you believe what I say, that there snorer wasn't any miner whatsoever, nor yet any other sort of masculine miscreant, as you might say. The whole of that snoring had been done by that identical pretty young woman that the boys had been wanting to protect."

"She saw in a minute that something was up, but put on a stern sort of countenance, like a school-mistress addressing a lot of bad boys, and she said, 'G'way! or I'll call the conductor.' The boys didn't wait for any further orders, but they just bolted out of the car. The Jew went to his berth chuckling to himself, and remarking that he meant to sue the company for damages. As for me, I kept out of sight round the

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corner of the wash-room, for I didn't seem to care about being mixed up in the business. The girl sat up a little while, as if she was waiting for another interview with the boys, but as they didn't seem to have any further desire to cultivate her acquaintance, she drew the curtains together again, and the concert re-commenced. The Jew, and she, and I had the sleeping-car to ourselves for the rest of the night, and when we got to Chicago, the miners sneaked out of the smoking-car on to the platform as if they had been caught picking pockets, and were afraid of the police."

"This story that I have been telling you goes to show that women can snore even when they're young and good-looking. I wouldn't have believed it unless I had heard it with my own ears. In my opinion, however, it is a thing that young unmarried men ought to know. If it hadn't happened to have been aboard that sleeping-car on that identical night, I might perhaps have been a married man myself before now. What I say to you is, never despise any sort of knowledge. It's always liable to work in handy at some time, and protect you from one sort of harm or another."

A RAILWAY DISASTER.

A FAST EXPRESS AND AN EXCURSION TRAIN COLLIDE.

TERRIBLE LOSS OF LIFE—HARROWING SCENES—THE CORONER ORDERED THE ARREST OF THE PRINCIPAL OPERATOR.

A terrible railroad catastrophe took place about two miles out of Atlantic City, N. J., shortly after 6:30 p.m., on Thursday last, resulting in the death of 42 people and the wounding of 80 others. A train left here, consisting of seven cars, over the West Jersey Railroad, bearing a special excursion of Red Men and their friends, of Bridgeton, N. J., and Salem, and had reached the crossing of the Reading Railroad when it was struck by the 5:40 down express from Philadelphia, demolishing two cars and telescoping the two following. The engine of the Reading train became a total wreck, killing the engineer and fatally injuring the fireman. The car behind it also was thrown from the track and many of its occupants killed or injured. The responsibility for the collision has not yet been placed, but William Thurlow, the operator at the Block Tower, situated at the crossing, has been arrested by order of the coroner.

Leaving this city the tracks of the West Jersey road run parallel to those of the Camden & Atlantic City until they cross the drawbridge, when they switch off to the south, crossing the Reading Road at an obtuse angle. John Greigner, the engineer of the West Jersey train, saw the Reading train approaching the crossing at a swift speed, but as the signals were open for him to proceed on his way he continued. His engine had barely cleared the track of the Reading when the locomotive of the latter train, which left Philadelphia at 5:40 p.m., struck the first car full in the centre, throwing it far off the track into a nearby ditch and completely submerging it. The second car of the West Jersey train was also carried into the ditch, the third and fourth cars being telescoped. The engine of the Reading train was thrown to the other side of the track, carrying with it the first coach.

A few minutes after the collision, to add to the scene of horror, the boiler of the Reading locomotive exploded, scalding several to death and casting its boiling spray over many of the injured passengers. As soon as the news reached the city thousands of people flocked to the scene. The road leading to the scene of the collision was a constant procession of hacks, busses, bicycles and all kinds of vehicles, while thousands of pedestrians hurried along the path to render what assistance they could or to satisfy their curiosity. Darkness fell quickly and the work of rescuing the injured and the dead was carried out under the lurid glare of large bonfires.

It was a gruesome sight presented to onlookers as the mangled and burnt forms of the dead were carried from the wreckage which bound them and laid side by side on the gravel bank near the track, with no other pall than the few newspapers gathered from the passengers. The wounded were quickly gathered together and carried by train wagon to the Atlantic City Hospital, where six of them died shortly after their arrival. The old excursion house at the foot of Mississippi avenue was converted into a morgue and thither the dead were taken.

The city is greatly excited over the accident, the streets in the vicinity of the Excursion House and the City Hospital, as well as the road leading to the scene of the accident, being packed with people anxious to learn the latest news. The Bridgeton and Salem excursionists who escaped injury were brought back to this city and sent home on a special train several hours late in the evening.

upon learning of the extent of the catastrophe, telegraphed for the Philadelphia Medical Emergency Corps, fifteen of whom responded, and hurried to here on a special train. These surgeons masterfully aided the volunteer corps of this city. Many of the injured were taken to hotels, as the City Hospital soon became over-crowded. About thirty of the wounded had their injuries dressed and were able to proceed on their way. It is expected that fully a dozen of those now lying in the hospital will not survive. Mrs. Edward Farr, the wife of the Reading engineer, who met death while performing his duty, and was found with one hand on the throttle and the other on the brake, when informed of the accident and her husband's tragic death, was unable to withstand the shock, and fell to the floor dead.

The identified dead are: Mr. and Mrs. Trenchard, Bridgeton; Edward Farr, engineer of the Reading Railroad train, Atlantic City; Samuel Thorne, Baggage-master, Pennsylvania Railroad, Atlantic City; P. S. Murphy, Millville, N. J.; J. D. Johnston and D. Bonchas, Bridgeton; G. B. Taylor, no address; P. H. Goldsmith and wife, Bridgeton; Samuel Smith, Atlantic City; D. F. Wood, Shipping Clerk, Philadelphia; John Greigner, Bridgeton; Charles Ackler, Salem; Chas. McGear, Bridgeton; Franklin Duvoie, Woodruff, N. J.; Mrs. J. Earnest, Bridgeton; Mr. and Mrs. H. F. Bell, Bridgeton; W. H. Souder, member of the Board of Health of Bridgeton, and wife.

PRACTICAL SILVERISM.

It would appear that, already in the Presidential campaign, the practical operation and eventual outcome of the "Free Silver" theory are being brought home to some of the workmen in the Southern and Southwestern States, which, in this political struggle, appear to constitute the stronghold of the Populist party.

On the subject of the supposed popularity of silver dollars, an old dealer in Mexican and American coin—silver and gold—in response to an enquiry as to how the demand for coin rated recently said:—

"We have had many enquiries for 'Mexican' dollars, principally from the South and West. These dollars cost the purchasers only fifty-five cents each. Two Mexican dollars are paid to a workman for each American dollar due him. When, however, he comes to pay out a Mexican dollar, in trade, he is surprised to find that it is accepted for fifty cents, and no more, although it actually contains more silver than the American dollar."

Less than fifty years ago, in the city of New York, a Mexican silver dollar of that period could be sold, in ordinary trade, in any manufacturing jewelry store, in Maiden Lane—then the headquarters of that business—for a hundred and five cents of good American money. For, then, under the old American Democratic system, we had no paper money, except what was issued by the local banking institutions, among which the note issues of very few, outside of the New York city banks, were rated as at par—that is to say, that they could be calculated on to pay one hundred cents on the dollar, in solid cash, in a crisis.

The Mexican Government, at that time, did not allow the export of silver from that country, except of what had passed through the official mint, and had paid the assay-fee (about five per cent.) which was the principal cash revenue the Mexican government had at the conclusion of the war with the United States,—which had cost Mexico the loss of the golden regions of California, which the Mexicans were too indolent to develop to their, as yet, undiscovered capacity. So, in those days, it was cheaper, for the Maiden Lane silver manufacturing jewelers, to buy Mexican dollars,—which they knew had been assayed to the full bullion value—and five per cent. over,—at the market rate of silver, instead of risking the unstamped value of the silver bars put on the market,—handicapped as they were, in these days,—by the fancy stock issues of the San Francisco mining syndicates,—the representative of which is now taking the front rank in trying to subordinate our National policy to the level of the mere whirl of the Stock Exchange exigency of a half dozen California brokers in American National policies.

and, because he was not in touch with the genuine popular organization, collapsed, a defeated and disappointed politician.—Irish American.

A TEMPERANCE SONG.

Sing a song of penitence, a fellow full of rye; four and twenty serpents danced before his eye. When his eye was opened, he shouted for his life; wasn't he a pretty chump to go to his wife? His hat was in the gutter underneath a chair; his boots were in the hallway, his coat was on the stairs; his trousers in the kitchen, his collar in the shed; but he hadn't any notion where he was at himself. When the morn was breaking, some one heard him call; his head was in the ice box, and that was best of all.

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