

# On the 7:45 Express Train

Two men were sitting in the smoking room of a London club. One, a tall, athletic looking fellow with black hair and clean-cut features, was slowly blowing rings of smoke in the air as he lay back in the big armchair. The other man, slight and clean-shaven, with a singularly mobile face and twinkling gray eyes, was looking over a daily paper. Between them was a small table furnished with a couple of stands of club soda and a decanter of brandy which gave signs of having been well used.

"Gerald," said the small man all at once, dropping the paper into his lap, "what do you think of train robbers?"

The tall man looked up in lazy surprise.

"Topsy Russel," he drawled "now what in the name of all that's wonderful ever put such a question as that into your head?"

"The paper," explained the other, "and seriously I ask you, what do you think of train robbers?"

"And just as seriously I reply," returned the tall man, "that I think the fellows who strip you of your watch and valuables, and depart with your Gladstone or portmanteau are clumsy rogues at the best. And the people they rob—well, they are a shade less admirable; for in every case I have heard of they appear to have acted like cowards or fools, and a rogue's always preferable to either of these, to my mind. And now that you have my candid and, doubtless, authoritative opinion on train robbers, please finish that B. and S. and try one of these cigars; they are worth trying, if I say it myself."

"Only one more question," said Russel, as he took the proffered weed. "You laugh at the way railway travelers act in these little affairs. Now, how would you act? Suppose a fellow were suddenly to put a pistol to your cheek and insinuate a desire for your watch? No one is near. You are alone in the carriage. What would you do?"

"I'd knock the pistol out of his hand, while pretending to comply with his demand, and throw him out the window after it."

Caruthers said this quietly and determinedly, and Russel knew him too well to suspect braggadocio, so he only laughed lightly at his companion's emphatic reply and proceeded to envelop himself in clouds of smoke.

"Well," said the tall man, looking at his watch, and starting up, "I must be going. The express starts at seven-forty-five, and I've to stop at a couple of places before making the station." And he rang for his bag and overcoat.

"Now, Gerald Caruthers," said his companion, as Gerald was being helped into his coat, "remember what you have told me. If I hear of any attempt at train robbery on the seven-forty-five express I shall not write to you, but shall at once have the track examined, and the body of the robber discovered and interred. I suppose you will be willing to do that much for your victim, won't you?"

"Oh, certainly," laughed Caruthers and the next moment he had wrung Russel's hand and had gone.

At the station he secured a first-class ticket, and then set about to find an empty compartment if possible. As luck would have it, the second coach he looked into was unoccupied, and he quickly stowed his portmanteau away and, settling himself luxuriously in the corner, uttered a silent prayer that no one would come in to interrupt, with the usual traveler's commonplaces and platitudes, the nap he had in prospect. He looked at his watch; only one minute remaining until train time, and already he heard the doors being banged to as the guard went his rounds.

And then—then, just as he was putting his watch back into his pocket with a breath of relief, the door of the compartment suddenly was jerked open and, framed in the narrow opening, appeared the figure of a man of slight stature, with gray hair and bent shoulders. He peered curiously into the coach, and his eyes traveled quickly and with apparent indifference over the big frame of Caruthers. Then he stepped in and, with a slight nod to Caruthers, dropped a small handbag on the cushioned seat, pulled his soft wool hat over his eyes, sunk down in one corner of the compartment, and thrust his hands deep into his trouser pockets.

Caruthers witnessed these movements with some satisfaction, and after a glance or two at his companion, and an instant's look outside at the yellow lights which were flying by as the express gathered speed, he

spread out his legs, pulled his coat up about his ears, and proceeded to make himself comfortable for the hundred and twenty mile ride before him. Five minutes later he was sound asleep and making that fact unmistakable by the most tremendous snores.

But if Caruthers snored loudly, his brain was fully as active as were his lungs, and, for a time, he passed through a series of adventures in dreamland, which were anything but unpleasant. Then, suddenly, he was transported from a delightful fantasy into what seemed to him to be an immense haberdasher's shop, where he found himself unceremoniously set down before a little old man, who insisted upon fitting around his neck a most prodigiously high and stiff collar.

Now, if there was anything against which Caruthers was for all time and most vehemently opposed, it was high collars, therefore he struggled hard to push away his tormentor and remove the objectionable neckpiece.

But all to no purpose. To his surprise he found his arms weighted down as if with lead. His persecutor coolly continued to fit on the collar, and finally, having done this to his satisfaction, pushed over his head until the top edge of the collar cut into his neck and was choking him.

Caruthers used every endeavor to raise his arms, but in vain: Great drops of sweat seemed to drain down his face as he tugged at his invisible bonds, and all the time he felt the little old man passing his hands, which were plump and smooth over his body, thrusting them now into his pockets, now inside his vest, and again pulling at his fingers.

All at once, however, even the desire for resistance left the dreamer, his sensations became dull, and he fell again into an unbroken sleep.

His next sensation was when his eyes began to feel the light, and he slowly became aware of a dull, dead feeling in his arms, a fullness of the head, and a dry contraction of the throat. After a while he was sensible of the motion of his resting place, and at last his eyes took in enough of what was about him to show him that this was no haberdasher's shop, but the inside of a railway carriage traveling at high speed, that there was no high collar about his neck, and that no little old man stood opposite him. But it was some time, nevertheless, before his brain became clear enough to appreciate that all he seemed to have gone through with lately was only a dream, and that he now was in the seven-forty-five express from London, and probably—how many hours on his journey?

He slipped his fingers into his waistcoat pocket for his watch. Then, with an exclamation of surprise, he raised himself weakly stood there, feeling for the handsome hunting case which he could find nowhere. It took him but a minute to realize this, and also that the gold cuff-buttons he had worn and his diamond scarf-pin were gone, and that a curious stone-studded ring had disappeared from the little finger of his left hand.

They all had gone; but where? A sudden recollection of the old, bent man who had been his traveling companion made him peer closely into the corner in which that figure had been curled when he last saw him. But the corner was empty now.

As Caruthers' glance moved quickly over the opposite seat, however, one object caught his eye. He picked it up. It was a handkerchief, innocent of any markings, but smelling strongly, as he instantly noticed, of chloroform. The pungent odor told Caruthers all he needed. It was a complete confirmation of the theory which had flashed upon him at the first. He had been robbed, and in all likelihood by the little old man who had been his companion.

Caruthers pressed his face against the window. He was familiar with the country through which the train was passing, and he soon saw where he was. The express was fifty miles out of the metropolis, and by schedule must have made a stop at R—, about ten miles back. It was there, he decided, that the thief had got out. The next stop would be made some twenty-five miles farther on, and he would have to wait until then to communicate the knowledge of his loss. So he arranged himself as comfortably as possible and began to consider how he could most quickly recover the articles which had been taken by the robber he had not thrown out of the window, and whether he could prevent the news of the robbery from spreading so that he should not receive the taunts of Topsy Russel, by telegraph or

otherwise, upon this doubly trying experience.

As soon as the guard had opened the door of his carriage at the next station, half an hour later, Caruthers jumped down, and, dashing into the telegraph office, quickly despatched a statement of the facts to the chief of police at R—. His message offered a generous reward for the apprehension of the rascal and the recovery of the stolen articles, with the least possible publicity.

Two hours later, arrived at his destination, he left the train, took a hansom to police headquarters, and notified them that a despatch addressed in his name might be received there from R—. If such a despatch did come it was to be sent to the B— hotel, he ordered. Then he was driven to the hotel and, having engaged a room, turned in and quickly fell asleep.

It was seven o'clock in the morning when he was awakened by a knock on the door of his room, and a telegram was handed him. It was from the police at R—, and ran as follows:

"Have got thief, and recovered all articles. Thief disguised. Young man. Think he is old hand at business. Communicate at once."

Caruthers sent the servant double quick for a morning paper, and, having satisfied himself that the news of the robbery and of the capture of the thief had at least not gained circulation outside of R—, he dressed himself leisurely. Then he ate a comfortable breakfast, lit a cigar with the utmost satisfaction, and strolled down to police headquarters.

To his surprise he found another despatch from R— awaiting him there. He read:

"Come and get me out of this. I was the old man who traveled with you and stole your things. I wanted to see you throw me out of the window. I acknowledge the corn. Come quickly. This confounded place is damp, and they won't believe my story."

In amazement, which rapidly gave way to laughter he could not restrain, Caruthers read the message a second time, and then he telegraphed to the chief of police at R—:

"Hold thief. Dangerous man. Pay no attention to his story. Be with you tomorrow."

"G. Caruthers."

It was a weebegone and irate specimen which Caruthers saw when the "dangerous man" was led forth from a cell at the police station at R— next day. But Caruthers smothered his laughter at the sight, smoothed Russel's wrath as far as possible by apologies, and, having paid the costs and fines which the police demanded that someone should pay, after his explanations, walked out of the station with his friend.

To this day, however, Topsy Russel has serious doubts as to Caruthers' statement that he "believed Russel's telegram a forgery"; and he awaits a chance to turn the tables on the man he "robbed."

### Young M. D.'s First Call.

Dr. Boone, whose reminiscences of the Lost Cause interest many listeners at several New York clubs where he is a frequent visitor, told a good one about his first patient. His shingle had been a target for the elements for six months.

"It was not because the town of Fayette, Mo., was so distressingly healthy," he said. "All my professional brethren were doing well while I waited."

"My office was on the second floor of a shop, and I could hear what was going on below. One night a man galloped his horse in front of the house and hallooed to the shopman. When the shopman answered, the man on horseback asked him 'if he thought 'Doc Boone' was in his office."

"The shopman assured him that I was upstairs. The horseman dismounted and hitched his nag. 'At last!' I mused, as most any young doctor would have done under the circumstances.

"Then I began thinking of all the ailments which human flesh is heir to and as each recurred to me I thought of what I would prescribe for it. I never thought so rapidly as I did between the time of that man's dismount and his knock at my door. As soon as he came in I recognized him."

"Hello, Doc," was his salutation. The abbreviation was common in those days. 'All alone?' he asked.

"Obstetrics," I said to myself. I said to him that I had been alone until he appeared.

"I was just on the way to a dance down the road," he went on to explain, "and just before I got here I discovered that I had changed my trousers. Loan me a dollar, Doc."

"And that was the result of a six months' wait for my first patient! My visions vanished."

"Well, I had a dollar and I let him have it. I didn't see him for several months; the next time he showed up he had a load of wood to sell. I bought it. After the fuel was delivered I asked him what I owed him."

"Oh," he replied, "just call it even, Doc, on that dollar you loaned me."

"I congratulated myself until I found that the wood was green elm, and if you know anything about wood you might as well try to fire asbestos as to fire green elm. Oh, yes, I remember my first call."—New York Sun.

### Do Not Fear Carlism

London, April 4.—A correspondent of the London Standard, during the course of a long review yesterday of the situation in Spain, said the Carlism and Republicans had so far shown no disposition to disturb the accession of the young king, Alfonso, to the throne, though some rumors had lately come from Barcelona concerning the restlessness of the Carlism in their old haunts, in the Catalonian mountains. But, the correspondent pointed out, Carlism, after all, in the opinion of the majority of Spaniards, cannot amount to much so long as no revolutions occur at Madrid and in the great towns. The

correspondent further says the Carlism lists have been seriously weakened by the secession of the Ultra-montane one of their next important groups.

### Escape of John Dunn

Wichita, Kan., April 4.—Until midnight Gov. Stanley and Assistant Attorney General Hamilton continued investigating John P. Dunn's escape from the St. Francis hospital. They found that Dunn was aided in his escape by people within the hospital, but no official connected with it.

### Passed the Senate

Des. Moines, Ia., April 4.—The senate passed the house Bill emergency bill with but five dissenting votes. It authorizes Iowa railroads to extend their lines into all other states, and to buy, own and control stock and securities of other roads in other states. An amendment was added prohibiting them from acquiring stock or property of competing lines in such other states.

A bathroom window of our hotel, an objectionable outlook, was made opaque at little cost. A pint of stale ale add a handful of epsom salts. Mix well and apply with a brush. This makes a finish that will remain indefinitely if desired may be removed by scrubbing at any time.

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