

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 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 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 New Librarian

Edward J. Evans has been appointed librarian of the public library to succeed the present incumbent, Librarian Kelly. Mr. Evans is a native of Ireland and has been in the Northwest territory since 1880 and served under Gen Middleton in '85 during the Reil rebellion. He has been engaged in mining in this district since '88 and last summer fell down a shaft 4 feet in depth which has permanently injured one of his legs, leaving him incapable of performing manual labor.

It is expected by the board that the new librarian will fill the position with satisfaction to them and the general public as well.

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.

A Ticket of Leave.

A ticket of leave has been issued to Wm. M. Van Buskirk, which is the first document of the kind ever issued in the Yukon territory. Van Buskirk was convicted of theft and sentenced to six months imprisonment by Justice Dugas some three months since. He will be released at once.

Swore Falsely.

Godfrey Gustison accused of swearing falsely regarding the output of his claim was found guilty by the jury hearing the case, after failing to agree before this morning. He was sentenced to two months imprisonment by Justice Dugas this morning.

Concert at the Forks.

There was a grand concert given in the Presbyterian church at the Forks last night under the management of Rev. Cook, the pastor, assisted by Rev. Dr. Grant, of Dawson. Nearly all the talent represented on the excellent program was from this city. It was well attended by Dawsonites, from 60 to 75 from here being present. After the concert, a bountiful supper was served in another building.

The Dawson delegation with sleds, sleighs, bicycles and dog sleds, wandered into the city about 2:30 this morning.

THE YUKON COUNCIL MET Last Night and Transacted Much Business.

The Bank Account Is Exhausted and Authority to Overdraw Is Given the Commissioner.

Last night the Yukon council met in the upper room of the courthouse for the first time since there have been two courtrooms, the reason being that the jury sitting in the Gustison perjury case was occupying the lower room, as testified to by the sounds of laughter and funny (?) stories which percolated through the floor from below. That is, a quorum of the council met, Mr. Wilson being noticeable by his absence.

The oath of allegiance was the first thing to take up the attention of the council, and when it was time to administer it, it was found that the blanks for the purpose had been mislaid and Dr. Brown went after them which occasioned a most tedious stage wait which is always a bore, and in a council chamber which hasn't even the merit of being picturesque.

Dr. Brown finally returned with the blanks, and Councilmen Wood, Senkler and Prudhomme took the oath to sustain to their utmost the sovereignty of King Edward VII. Justice Dugas and the commissioner had already been sworn in, so that it was only necessary for them to take the oath.

After this matter had been disposed of the petitions and communications were presented, which, owing to the length of time which had elapsed since the last meeting of the council, formed a very voluminous bundle.

The first petition read was one from H. Te Roller, F. C. Wade, Robert Eilbeck and a number of other signers who want to become a body corporate and politic known as the Yukon General Trust Co., and to become such under an ordinance permitting them to carry on a general trust business. The ordinance draft accompanying the petition was referred to its proper committee with comment, and a petition signed by J. J. Delaney and others respecting the present royalty on quartz mines was read. This called for some little discussion. The petition sets forth the fact that a royalty is charged on the output of quartz mines, which royalty is very harmful to the development of quartz properties, acting as a preventative to their sale or development. It is asked by the petitioners that the council recommend to Ottawa the removal of the royalty from quartz productions.

Mr. Prudhomme thought it was a good thing and thought it should be sent to Ottawa.

Justice Dugas thought that in view of the minority report of Messrs. Wilson and Prudhomme that the petition was asking for more than would likely be granted, besides, the government knew what proportion of expenses this territory was expected to contribute, and the upshot of the matter was that the petition's fate was decided by an agreement to send it to Ottawa without action.

A petition was read from P. P. Curtis asking permission to cross the streets with wire for the fire alarm and messenger service which he is preparing to install. This was referred to a committee and a petition was received from the Dawson Water & Power Co. to be allowed to lay a temporary water pipe from its main at the corner of Secopd avenue and Third street to the Standard theater. This was granted, but the second petition asking for the passage of an ordinance which will relieve it of the necessity of applying to the council every time it is necessary to lay a water pipe in the streets, met a different fate. It was referred to the board of public works.

Christopher Ellis, an indigent with the peculiar attachments of a ten foot mining claim and a decided weakness for black jack, asked the council to provide him with fresh raiment. Ellis has been a government charge for some time, and has been kept at police barracks, and cleans the corrugations from the sidewalks before the houses of the officials, and does other odd jobs by way of paying his board bills.

He will be retired to the guard room now, there to bathe and otherwise indulge in more cleanly habits, and the question of fresh raiment has gone a glimmering.

E. M. Sullivan wants the council to regulate the price of fuel if it is going to take a hand in the regulation of

freight and passenger rates, and pointed out by means of a communication that the price of cordwood was steadily mounting upwards.

An application was made for permission to issue a city directory and while all thought such a thing was needed, no definite action was taken.

Perhaps the most important communication of the evening was the one received from Comptroller Lithgow, which set forth the melancholy fact that the Yukon council was without funds to its credit, and that it would be necessary to pass an immediate resolution if any money were to be drawn from the bank.

The resolution was therefore, moved and passed, authorizing the commissioner to draw upon the Canadian Bank of Commerce to the extent of \$30,000 for the purpose of constructing the new bridge across the Klondike, doing road work, making street improvements, and other necessary work.

Health Officer McArthur presented a woeful narration of shortcomings in the matter of his remuneration, setting forth that he received only \$2000 per year, and was allowed nothing whatever for expenses which might at any time exceed his salary. The matter was referred to the finance committee.

The question of public school fire escapes was raised, and the commissioner was given authority to place two, one on either side of the two story school house on Mission street.

Discussion of this matter brought about an agitation of the question of conditions existing in theaters regarding means of exit in case of fire, and it was decided to notify the chief of the fire department to enforce the provisions of the ordinance governing such matters.

Major Wood fathered a proposition to appoint the members of the executive committee of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals special constables to act in enforcing the law governing such matters and after some little debate it was decided upon.

Concerning the many petitions recently received by the council and the police department concerning the removal of women of a certain class from the vicinity of more respectable society, it was decided that a committee should select a site for their future residence, whereupon the women in question would be served with a notice to remove thereto within two months from date of notice.

An amendment to the ordinance respecting the dog pound was presented by Major Wood, and passed its first reading. This amendment is a most important one as it deals with the question of the canine nuisance in a direct way, and promises to solve the problem. It provides for the payment of a license by dog owners who will be provided with a metal tag bearing a date and license number. This is to be attached to a collar worn by the dog, who is thereby exempted from the pound, unless mad, or otherwise unfit to be at large. It provides also for the keeping of a description of each dog licensed and the owners name so that in case of the theft of the animal there will be less difficulty in tracing it and proving identity.

No ordinance of incorporation could be passed in the matter of the Hadley Stage Co., Ltd., or the Storage & Transfer Co., because the law provides that a certificate of deposit showing that to per cent of the capital stock had been paid, is required before such an ordinance can be passed, or that a like amount has been invested in real estate, the deeds held by trustees in trust for the company. As neither of these evidences were before the council nothing could be done.

At something after 11 o'clock the meeting adjourned.

Lively Wheeling.

Fred Warner and four others arrived last night on bicycles from Whitehorse, making an average of 60 miles each day traveled. They made the trip in from Selkirk in two days. The trail is now said to be in excellent shape for wheels.

Slaughter of Lions.

Meeker, Colo., Jan. 24.—News direct from the Keystone ranch, at which place the Roosevelt hunting party is stopping, shows that between the 12th and 22d of January 12 grown mountain lions, three kittens and eight lynx cats were killed. On Saturday last the party had quite an exciting adventure with one lion.

The lion was held captive by and was fighting with the whole pack of hounds. The hunters were trying to get near enough to the animal to kill it with their knives when it seized one of the dogs by the jaw. Gov. Roosevelt showed the breach of the gun into the lion's mouth, holding the gun by one hand, with the other striking the lion a death blow with his knife. His gun shows the marks of the lion's teeth. All the grown lions were killed with the knife.

The governor has decided to stay for another two weeks.