

Capturing a Mastadon

(By Al. Smith.)

"Hello, central!"

"Hello."

"Say, for the love of heaven, central, hurry up and give me 42, the barracks."

"Line's busy just now."

"That don't matter. I tell you, choke 'em off and let me talk to the getting gun—I mean the officer of the day. This is serious. Hurry now, I hear him coming!"

There was a general jingling of bells, the telephone operator at central realizing that something serious was happening and the call from the Forks was connected with the barracks in Dawson, with the result that in less than a minute's time two or three orders were getting over the drill ground at a lively pace, and within twenty minutes after an indignant and non-plussed reporter had been unceremoniously cut short in his telephone conversation with "the barracks," a span of horses went swiftly up the road towards the Forks, dragging after them a piece of artillery and followed by half a dozen men on horseback, each armed with a rifle and a look of determination. In the meantime the reporter was thinking of the unceremonious way in which he had been "switched" by central, and the more he thought the more keen became his desire to know something, till at last he threw down his pencil and pulling on his overcoat repaired to the central telephone office, where he inquired why he had been shut off when he was talking with "the barracks" a few minutes before. The young lady told him something of what had happened, but rude as it certainly is to leave a lady while she is speaking, the reporter had departed on a run for the barracks before she had said a dozen words, nor did he slacken his pace till he reached the office door at the rear of the police court, where he met the officer in charge, who said:

"Hello, how did you hear about it so soon?"

"Oh, picked it up." Then noticing that the officer wore spurs, he asked: "How far are you going, major?"

"I am going till I meet it, or the gun coming back. The gun, with a squad of men has just gone. Are you going?"

"I should think I was," said the reporter, "just as soon as I can find something to ride. Which road will you take?"

"The creek road," was the reply, and the reporter began a run toward the office. In passing the Yukon hotel his foot slipped and he fell against Fred Payne's bicycle which stood against the front of the house, and as he gathered himself together the idea occurred to him that there was a better mount than a horse, he opened the door and shouted, "Fred, I'm going to take your wheel, and from the looks of things you'll be lucky if you get it back."

"Hold—" shouted Payne in an agonized tone of voice, but the only answer he got was the slamming of the door and a sight of the reporter making a flying mount in the street.

"Some of these reporters have got a gall," he said going back to the stove, and the assembly there agreed with him to a man.

There is no need to follow the details of that rapid ride through the cold, frosty morning; nearly every one knows what the road is and its landmarks. The reporter knew the trail and paid little heed to surrounding objects which he passed rapidly enough, although, notwithstanding the speed at which he traveled owing to the splendid condition of the road and of Payne's wheel, it seemed to him that he moved at a snail's pace. He labored incessantly to increase his speed, and at the same time kept up a mental process of theorizing as to what could possibly have broken loose at the Forks, or on the trail, to call for the use of a piece of artillery. It must be a riot of some sort, he thought, but in that case why did they only send out a handful of men?

He could arrive at no satisfactory explanation of the matter, and indeed might as well have spared himself the trouble, because all his conjectures were wide enough of the mark and anyway he was destined to know soon enough all about the matter, and the way of his enlightenment was to be

somewhat more startling than he would have chosen had he had any say in the matter. He was just rounding the bend in the trail which first lays the little town of Grand Forks open to the view of the approaching traveler, when he heard the boom of a cannon, followed by the rapidly approaching scream of a plunging shot. He backed peddled furiously, feeling instinctively that he was in the line of fire and that it would be well to change his course. As the wheel slackened speed enough to admit of dismounting, something struck the front wheel and the ground at the same instant, and the reporter pitched forward amid a cloud of flying snow and ice and a tangle of steel spokes and torn pneumatic tire.

"I like that," he said, as he got upon his feet and looked regretfully at the bent and twisted wreck of Payne's wheel. "Payne will have a fit."

It was a projectile from the police cannon which had struck the wheel and caused the wreckage, and if it had been a few inches higher this story might have been different.

From the survey of the wrecked wheel the reporter turned ruefully towards the Forks, where something out of the ordinary was evidently going on. People could be seen swarming up the hill behind the town, and the shouting of many voices could be plainly heard. Even as he looked the Dewey hotel, which was a conspicuous building at the lower end of town, tottered and swayed as if shaken by an earthquake for a few seconds, and then, amid a great racket of breaking timber and tearing fabrics, the big building lurched and fell, a ruined heap, towards the creek, a great cloud of dust and smoke marking the place where it had stood.

Then there came from the ruins a strange, wild bellowing sound as if all the steers ever slaughtered for beef in the Klondike were under that pile of wreckage, and bellowing with one voice.

The reporter snatched the ruined wheel from where it lay in the road, and tossing it to one side, started toward the Forks.

"I don't know what they've got, but from the noise it makes I guess one gun ain't any more than they need," he muttered, and then he stopped short and listened. The bellowing had stopped and the cries of the people had ceased, but from the town came a strange panting, wheezing sound, somewhat resembling that made by the air brake on a large freight locomotive, only louder and of much more volume. This was accompanied by the sound of heavy tramping, and the noise made by heavy timbers breaking and being tossed about like matches.

A glance at the hill behind the town showed the people silently hurrying toward the summit, where the ridge road crosses the hill.

Something was seen rising out of the ruins of the wrecked hotel, which at first looked like the house itself rearing itself towards an upright position once more, except that there was no log ends or windows to be seen, and the whole surface seemed to be covered with some sort of a glistening substance not unlike fish scales.

"Gee whizz!" ejaculated the reporter as the truth began to dawn upon him. "He's a peach."

In the center of the main street, opposite the farther end of the Gold Hill house, stood the brass cannon, and about it at their stations stood the policemen, a sergeant standing to the left of the breach, the firing lanyard in his hand.

"Guess I'll get out of range," said the reporter, moving forward and to one side, "they might not shoot as low this time," but he had not gone far when he heard the voice of the sergeant shouting the order to fire.

The huge beast, whose gigantic proportions could now be plainly seen, was charging up the street at the gun, seeming to realize in it his most formidable foe.

With the roar and flash of the gun there came a pause in the lumbering trot of the great mastadon (for such it was), and then it settled slowly back upon its haunches, and a great gasping roar came from its huge throat, and the multitude hurrying towards the hilltop, turned and looked at what was happening in the street below, and the sight of the tall beast drew from it a hearty cheer.

The people began moving back towards the town where pandemonium seemed to have taken full control of affairs. The police began giving some attention to restoring order, and putting the chemical fire engine to work on the wreck of the Dewey, which was breaking into flame, and it appeared to the reporter that now was the time for him to get control of the telephone line. He started forward with pleasurable thoughts in his mind concerning the great scoop he had made, and had almost gotten within speaking distance of the sergeant, who was silently contemplating the great beast, when the whole aspect of affairs changed.

It appeared that the mastadon had only been stunned, as an examination of his monstrous skull, made at a later and more convenient time, showed that the shot had landed fairly between the eyes and above them, towards the top of the skull, from which it had glanced doing no further harm than has been stated.

He got clumsily upon his legs, though quickly, for a beast so large, and faced about, tipping over a couple of small cabins in the process. Why another shot was not fired into the body while it was thus at the mercy of the gunners has been asked before, and the sergeant has since explained to the reporter that he did not want to injure the body more than necessary, thinking it would be of great value to the public museum.

However that may be, the brute seemed to have had all the fight with the gun he wanted, and made off down the trail, straight through the debris of the Dewey ruins, tossing the great burning logs from his path with his feet and legs as if they had been fence poles, and shaking his huge trunk high in the air.

"Hello," said the reporter, "things are coming my way again, and as there don't seem to be room on this trail for us to pass without crowding, I'll just get back towards town." Whereupon he ran down the trail ahead of the mastadon, who made the earth tremble at every step, which added speed to the reporter's gait.

(To Be Continued.)

Stonemasons Law.

New York, Jan. 1.—By an opinion of the appellate division yesterday the act of 1885, generally known as the "Stonemason's Law," is made imperative. The statute enacted five years ago required that all stone used in municipal work in this state, except paving blocks and crushed stones, should be worked, dressed and carved within the boundaries of the state.

The opinion was based upon an action brought in the supreme court by Ralph J. Treat, a contractor, to obtain \$2218 as an installment on sewer work. Comptroller Cole declined to pay on the ground that Treat was not using stone cut in this state, and he was sustained by the lower court.

The relator contended that "the stone law" was in contravention of the interstate-commerce laws of the constitution of the United States and void. He also alleged that the clause in the contract inserted in pursuance of the statute to carry out the provision was in conflict with the act of congress of July 2, 1900, declaring illegal various contracts, combinations or conspiracies in restraint of trade or commerce among the several states. He made the further claim that the statute is in conflict with the state constitution and the fourteenth amendment of the United States constitution.

Municipal Government Bill.

Manila, Dec. 31.—The Philippine commission has completed the preparation of a general municipal government bill. The provisions, in many respects, are similar to Gen. MacArthur's order regarding municipal government and authorizing elections, but there are much more elaborate, covering all details. The most notable new feature is the establishment of land taxation and the doing away with the sedula (or head tax) and taxation on people's occupations. A feature new to the Philippines is that the revenue from land taxes is to be expended where it is collected. The manner of holding elections and the duties of officers are prescribed. A decision in the San Jose medical college case has been deferred until Saturday.

PERSONALITIES.

Henry Miller, who died at Chappaqua, N. Y., the other day, was the inventor of the steam and air brake in 1855.

Benjamin D. Stillman, the oldest living Yale graduate is also probably the oldest practicing lawyer in the country. He is 95 and lives in Brooklyn.

Li Hung Chang, the Chinese statesman, is of humble origin. His father was an ignorant woodchopper, and his mother spent her girlhood as a servant.

Alfred L. Jones, the Liverpool shipbuilder, has offered £1000 a year for five years toward a fund for establishing a comprehensive system of technical education in Wales.

Maurice Thompson, the novelist, was a successful lawyer before he became a writer. He left the law, however, to become one of the editors of the New York Independent.

Lord Salisbury, in speaking of the social side of English political life the other day, said that there is really very little of it. He has never so much as spoken to John Morley and never even saw Mr. Parnell.

Rev. F. S. Hatch, pastor of the Congregational church of Monson, Mass., has resigned in order to become the general secretary of the Christian Endeavor union of India, Burma and Ceylon, with residence at Calcutta.

Dr. Edward Everett Hale, in spite of his years, continues to be active in the work of the Boston Associated Charities and himself does much of the necessary personal investigation and visiting among the poor of the city.

The late Henry Villard gave away a great deal of money during his lifetime. In addition to numerous benefactions bestowed on European charitable and educational institutions, he contributed liberally to the American objects.

Every second Tuesday is a reception day of the king of Sweden. If his subjects may call upon his majesty on that day. The only formality required is to send in one's card, the visitors being received when their turn comes in the order of arrival.

The salaries paid to the Prince of Wales out of the British treasury add up \$680,000 a year, and he has a private income besides. Nevertheless Andrew Carnegie, the laird of Skibo castle, could buy him out several times over and still have enough left to give away a library of two when he felt like it.

Henrique Amal, 14 years old, a native of Pecos, Tex., has a business that is in itself unique and that is certainly practiced by nobody else of his age. The lad acts as interpreter and guide for parties of emigrants from Europe. He has crossed the ocean several times and always brings a large colony of French settlers with him.

Draining Zuyder Zee.

From time immemorial the Dutch have had to struggle with the ocean. Inch by inch they have fought the advance of the waves, and with each victory they have added fertile meadows to their little kingdom. Now the cabinet has submitted to the ministry a plan to drain the entire Zuyder Zee. This is a tremendous undertaking, and it is estimated that it will cost no less than \$100,000,000. For the last half century there have been many plans of this kind. What is known as the gulf of the Zuyder Zee was once a thickly populated district. It was in 1287 that a great storm from the north swept away the protecting dikes, the water was literally piled up in the inlet, and the gulf as it now exists was formed. It is a body of water 60 miles long and 212 miles in circumference.

Until recently the plans laid before the royal commission were only in favor of a partial drainage.

The main idea was to construct an embankment, or sea wall, 25 miles long, running across the mouth of the gulf, and then four enormous "polders," which would drain and utilize what were the best parts of the Zuyder Zee, from an agricultural point of view, and still leave the deep water channels as at present, while the Yssel and some smaller river would be free to run into a lake to be known as the Ysselmeer, an outlet therefrom being provided by

locks and sluices at one of the ends of the embankment.

It was thought that the work would not take much more than 30 years, and that it could be completed within the reign of the young queen. According to the recent dispatches, however, the new scheme of draining the entire Zuyder Zee seems to have completely taken the place of the others plans.—Hx.

Candies for the Millions.

I have enough candies, nuts, and toys to supply the whole population of the Yukon country. My stock is complete. Plenty of Lowney's chocolate and Gunther's bon bons in any quantity; cigars by the box. Bring your friends and as I am a Missourian, I will show you the finest store in the Yukon territory. **GANDOLFO.**
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