

I cannot take leave of the Hondo without referring to the occasion of our dining for the last time on board, which was made an opportunity for the saloon passengers to express their thanks to her commander for the attention received from himself and officers during the voyage, in a neatly worded address signed by them all. After which the Honorary Commissioner for Canada, with his usual felicity of expression, proposed in glowing terms of appreciation the health of Captain David Pearson, who had brought us safely and happily to our destination. Other speakers followed equally sincere, if not equally eloquent, with, at intervals, an accompaniment of hearty British cheers.

That each should possess a memento of the voyage and its pleasant associations, it was unanimously resolved that the Hondo, with all its bunting flying, be photographed when in port on the following morning. This was accordingly done, much to the gratification of its gallant commander.

On a later occasion a number of us again found ourselves on board the Hondo to luncheon, as the invited guests of Captain Pearson and the Agents of the line, who, steam being raised, took us on an excursion in the harbour, which, in extent and for safety, secured by its long, natural breakwater, is one of the finest in the world—and, with its panoramic display of green plains and lofty mountain peaks, one of the most picturesque.

S.

I have just read a very delightful book on the old days before we had trains to carry our letters. The book is about England, where of course they had good roads long before we had in Canada. Her Majesty's mail, or rather, His Majesty's mail, as it was before our own good Queen, was carried from place to place in coaches, great strong, heavy lumbering things, drawn by four good horses, with the mail strapped on behind, and a good company of passengers inside. Even between the most distant places this was the regular lightning express royal mail of the period, and day and night, rain or shine, they galloped all over the country, the rosy, cheery face of the driver, or "post-boy," as he was called, becoming as familiar on the route as the crack of his whip to the ears of his horses.

Many a funny experience, and many a sad one too, was known in those old coaching days in rain and snow, up hill and down dale, through glens and over bridges, week in and week out, with all sorts of passengers from all sorts of places. On they went, changing horses at wayside inns, and overcoming all obstacles as best they might.

One funny scene I must tell you of to-day, leaving some of the sad ones for another opportunity.

Of course on these long journeys the passengers got very hungry, and when the supplies of food they carried with them were quickly diminishing, a halt was sometimes called at the changing of horses. Everything was hurry and bustle, and much had to be done in a short time. The great point with the mail was speed, and the halt for fresh horses was only for a few moments.

Scarcely had the hungry and cold passengers commenced to enjoy a snack at the wayside inn, when the guard called out to take their seats, and much as they may have been inclined to grumble, there was little help for it. Off they must go. One cold, hungry night, however, a passenger was equal to the occasion. He was half-perished with cold, and more than half-starved with hunger. He was not going to be done for. He simply should have his supper. While the others hurried, he

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lingered. They went aboard in answer to the call of the guard. He sat sipping his warm tea, and munching his toast. Everything was waiting for the start. He budged not. The guard mildly suggested his being left. He cared not. The tea was fragrant. The toast was crisp. The night was cold. The journey was long. Possession was nine-tenths of the law. At length he yielded enough to say he would go as soon as he got a spoon to eat his egg—his one solitary egg. That shouldn't take long. The guard might take pity for once.

Upon this the landlord of the inn went, with some amusement, to fetch the hungry man his spoon. To his surprise there was none on the table. He searched. Not one was to be found. He hunted. All in vain. The servants were called. It was no use. The spoons were all gone. What must be done? Who could have taken them? Mail or no mail, he must get his spoons. Speed or no speed, he could not be expected to lose his silver-plate—to sacrifice his household goods on the altar of public spirit.

With all the fuss of which a landlord can be capable, mine host ran out, raised the hue and cry, stopped the guard, and flatly declared that not a horse should stir till he recovered his spoons. We can imagine the scene. The indignant passengers! The opening and closing of satchels! The impatience of the guard! The scolding of the crusty old gentleman who is always in a hurry when his companions are in none, and who never has so much leisure as when every one is crazy to start.

But a fruitless search it was. Not a spoon was forthcoming. And—worse—not the vestige of a suspicion.

Meantime our passenger—he of the cold and hunger, the tea and the toast—quietly walked out of the breakfast-room, and made for his seat in the coach.

"My good friend," said he, gently and soothingly tapping the exasperated landlord on the shoulder, "you will find all your spoons in the teapot. Meantime I have enjoyed my supper immensely. Thank you very much. Good-night."

EDITOR.