

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 galling 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 caller 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-repressed 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 whiz!" 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 fallen 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.)

SAYS HE IS INNOCENT

And That Now It Is Only a Question of Time Until He Will Prove It.

SLORAH WAS GREATLY AFFECTED

By the News Contained in the Telegram of Yesterday.

HE KNEW IT WAS COMING

Was What He Said to a Nugget Reporter Last Evening—Hopes of His Attorney.

Wm. Ogilvie, Commissioner Yukon Territory:
 I am commended to inform you that his excellency the governor general has thought fit to commute to life imprisonment the sentence of death passed upon James Slorah. I am at the same time to call your attention to section 18 of the Yukon territory act, chapter 6, 1898, and to request you to direct that Slorah shall be imprisoned in the guard room of the Northwest mounted police at Dawson. Please wire receipt of this telegram.
 JOSEPH POPE,
 Under Secretary of State.
 When the foregoing telegram was received late yesterday afternoon, just a month and a week intervened between James Slorah and the gallows, making the call of death—that kind of death at least—considerably nearer than would be relished by most men, and although Slorah has his full share of nerve and would convey the impression at all times that he is unmoved, still it could be seen from his manner of speaking of the subject and his general appearance that he was more deeply affected by the news than by anything that has happened since the tragedy on the morning of his arrest.
 When Sheriff Eilbeck received the telegram he went to the guard room of the prison where the cell for condemned prisoners is situated, and read the news to the man under sentence of death.
 Slorah took the matter in his usual cool and self-possessed manner, thanking the sheriff for his expedition in coming with the telegram. He was reading the Bible, and as will be noticed in reading the message, it does not at once state its import, so that when the sheriff began reading the prisoner could not tell whether it was something bringing him a new lease of life or a confirmation of the death sentence.
 Later, after a Nugget representative had been furnished very kindly with a pass into the domain of Sergeant Tweedy, who brought Slorah out into the guard room to be interviewed, he had had time to think the matter over, and the process of change from the evident mental training he has been subjected himself to in becoming accustomed to the thought of approaching death, had begun to tell, and for the first time since his arrest James Slorah gave visible evidence of emotion. His eyes were filled with tears and his voice, always low, sank until it was almost inaudible and trembled as he talked, although he bore up bravely, and strove to subdue his feelings, which, guilty or innocent, were quite natural to one in his position.
 "What do you think of the news, Slorah?" was asked, and in low tremulous tones he replied:
 "Oh, it's all right; but it don't surprise me any, as I have been expecting something of the sort for some time."
 "Had you any reason to expect anything of this nature otherwise than from what your attorney told you you might expect from his efforts?"
 "Yes, I had. I have friends here and on the outside who know that I am innocent of this thing, and they, as well as my attorney have been at work for me."
 "I am innocent, and sooner or later it must be proven and I will be free."
 "I don't know of anything I want to say through the papers; too much, I think, has been said already, although I thank you for giving me the opportunity. I have been well treated here and concerning the people who are do-

ing their duty in the matter I have nothing to complain of."
 Next to the prisoner himself perhaps there is no one better pleased at the news contained in the telegram than Sheriff Eilbeck, who is now released from the most unpleasant duty attached to his office.
 The commutation of sentence was generally received by all classes with satisfaction as there has prevailed a general feeling since the trial that guilty or not guilty the evidence was not conclusive enough and not of the right character to warrant his execution, and there has at all times been a feeling that there is evidence in the case which has never come out.
 This morning there was considerable comment on the matter, it being an idea somewhat prevalent that under Canadian law the term "life imprisonment" means 21 years, for which the credits allowed for good behavior amounting in that length of time to five years, so that many thought that under the sentence as commuted Slorah, provided he complied with the prison regulations, would be at liberty in 16 years.
 This impression is erroneous, however, as the law means exactly what it says—imprisonment for life.
 When asked for his views of the case under its changed appearance this morning Attorney Bleeker said:
 "It is pleasant, of course, to know that a man who has been condemned to die on the gallows has passed from its shadow."
 "The causes which led to the commutation I have no definite knowledge of, but presume that the evidence in the case, together with the recommendation to mercy had great weight in bringing the matter about, and my telegram containing the statement of application for new trial on grounds of important evidence, and citing the petition asking for mercy, may have had something to do with it."
 "I had asked for a respite, but this of course, is better. It will not in any way effect the efforts that are being made to secure a reopening of the case, which we have strong hopes of bringing about, and little doubt of obtaining an acquittal if we are successful in getting the matter once more into court."

Librarian Wanted

The Dawson Free Library is to have a new librarian, Mr. Kelly the present incumbent going down and out the middle of next month. Chas. Milne, the secretary of the new board of directors, is now receiving applications for the position. The salary is \$140 a month with a comfortable room in the library building. Applications for the position will be received up to noon of Wednesday next when the names will be read before the board of directors and action taken in choosing the new caretaker.
 The first public concert under the direction of the present management will be given a week from next Monday, after which another will follow in the middle of February, at which time some theater will be engaged, as this entertainment is to be exceptionally interesting.

Stonecutters Law.
 New York, Jan. 1.—By an opinion of the appellate division yesterday the act of 1885, generally known as the "Stonecutter'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 \$3218 as an installment on sewer work. Comptroller Coler 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.
 Salinas Valley potatoes for sale at Lancaster & Calderhead's.

RECEIVED BY WIRE. THE MOORE TOWNSITE CASE

All Skagway Owned Practically by one Family.

Chamber of Commerce Holds Condolence Meeting—Matter Will Probably Rest as It Is.

Skagway, Jan. 25.—A synopsis of the Skagway townsite decision by the secretary of the interior arrived yesterday. It corroborates the previous report that 60 acres, comprising practically all the business portion of the city has been awarded to the Moores. The decision says the tract awarded must be square, therefore, it comprises all that part of the city lying between Main street and the bluff east of town, and from the water front to Sixth avenue (Holly street). The principal point in the decision is that it is based on the general land laws governing Alaska.
 The fact that Ben Moore took up land as a trading post does not disqualify him from entering other land for his personal occupation. This point was the main contention of the citizens who were fighting the case and its decision seems to settle the whole case. As the written decision would be signed at Washington on the 22d, and as there will be 30 days in which to file a motion for an appeal, there will be ample time to act provided such course is decided upon.
 A meeting of the Chamber of Commerce was held last night for the purpose of discussing the matter. Attorneys Price and Jennings were present but could suggest no feasible way out of the difficulty. Price is the lawyer who has always led the fight against the Moores. He said last night that the secretary of the interior might be asked to reopen the case on the plea that new evidence could be introduced. Jennings said there would be little chance of success along that line and said there is no possibility of getting the case before the supreme court until it could be taken up regularly through the lower courts.
 A committee was appointed to consider further action in the matter.
 At a citizens' meeting held yesterday there was a general sentiment favoring moving all the buildings off the 60 acre tract; but this, of course, is almost a physical impossibility; however, it shows the highly excited state of the people.
 Many favor compromising with the Moores on the best possible terms. The present indications are that nothing will be done towards fighting the decision and that the Moores will take the whole business section of the town with all its improvements.