

A Runaway Stagecoach

By WALTON WILLIAMS

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"The stagecoach of the past," said one of a party discussing the comparative dangers of different methods of travel, "had its advantages. True, a reckless driver would once in awhile swing round a sharp curve on a mountain side and spill a load of passengers down a precipice a few thousand feet, but such occurrences were rare. I remember one close call I had out in Colorado half a century ago when I was a youngster that I wouldn't like to go through again. If an accident of equal importance should happen to a railroad train, even on comparatively level ground, it would be awful.

"On the particular occasion I'm going to tell you about we started from Georgetown, in the mountains, to go down to Denver. There's a loop railroad at Georgetown now, but at that time there was nothing but a turnpike. A green hand at driving, an Irishman, Mike Rourke, from the stables, had been put on the box, the regular driver, Dan Patterson, having been laid off for illness. Patterson was inside the coach, going down to Golden City, where he lived.

"It was a fine day, and we were regaled with many extensive views of the plains at the foot of the range, appearing for all the world like an ocean. Indeed, geologists say that it was once an ocean bottom. From the brow of an eminence where we were admiring one of these views we could see the road before us winding down a steep incline and at the bottom rising a shorter distance to another summit. A few moments after we started down we noticed that instead of going slow, as was necessary for safety on such inclines, we seemed to start off with a quickening pace and were soon rolling downward at a furious speed. Patterson thrust his head out of the window and drew it in again, white as a cloth.

"What is it?" we all asked breathlessly.

"Don't know, but we're all likely to be dashed to pieces."

"Coming from a trained stage driver, this set us all wild. Some of the women grasped frantically at the doors, but two of us men, one on each side, knowing that to jump would be certain death and remaining inside might mean life, held the doors shut. But the inside of that stagecoach was the wildest scene I ever witnessed—women shrieking and men (some of them) trying to reassure them, while others were holding on to something as if in that way they could hold the coach back.

"But looking outside was worse than the inside. The few scrub trees there were beside the road shot by like arrows. The coach swayed, and as every curve in the road we felt sure it would upset, and sometimes an upset meant a spill over the side of a precipice. We kept hoping that there would be some slackening of speed, but instead of slackening the pace was continually growing faster, and the quicker the pace the more the coach reeled.

"By this time the babel among the passengers was deafening. Some were praying, while others were shouting at us two men who kept a strong grip at the doors to let them out. One big strong man, maddened by terror, hammered me unmercifully to make me open the door. But I held on with a death grip. I think that having something to do helped me to retain my

own equanimity. If anything more was needed it was supplied by the sight of men crazed by fear ready to do any foolish or selfish act. Passing a house beside the road, I saw a man standing in the door looking at the coach with his eyes and mouth wide open. But I saw him only a moment, for he flew by like a cannon ball.

"Then the swaying of the coach grew less and the terrible speed at which we were going seemed to be lessening. I put my head out the window and, looking forward, saw that we were near the bottom of the incline and in a few moments would be rolling along a comparatively straight ascent. The sudden transition from almost certain death to sure safety produced a very singular effect on me. The blows of the big man who had tried to force me to open the door had produced no effect on me of any kind. Relieved from the strain, my first act was to stretch my arm and plant my fist against his eye and knock him sprawling on the seat behind him. Then I cried:

"Hurrah! We're safe!"

"From this moment our pace slackened, but we went far up the hill before it was reduced to anything like a quiet run. The coach was a long while coming to a full stop, seemingly as though it must do so of its own weight. When it did we all tumbled out. The driver, too, came down from the box and stood at the head of his trembling leaders.

"What was it?" we all cried in a breath.

"It wor that," replied Mike, pointing to the tongue that lay on the ground at the heels of the wheelers. Patterson, who in addition to being ill had been on a terrible strain, saw it and, realizing what we had escaped, had to hold on to a wheel to avoid dropping down. I went up to Mike and asked him what measures he had taken with the horses after the tongue dropped.

"I licked 'em all the way down, sor," he said.

RULES FOR WIVES.

To Which Is Added Some Feminine Advice to Husbands.

Some presumptuous Frenchmen published a list of commandments for wives, one of which ran: "Now and then acknowledged gracefully that thy husband knows more about some things than thou. After all, thou art not infallible." A second and still more daring rule for wives was, "Never be aggressive in thy arguments with thy husband, but always consider him as superior to thee." This was too much for French feminists, and no wonder. One lady answers the presumptuous man indignantly:

The weaker sex has not merely duties; it has also rights. Feminism is advancing, and nothing will stop it. The weaker sex is the equal of the sterner. Equality forever! Here are the commandments which women oppose to those of men.

The lady then gives her rules for husbands with more spirit than logic:

Woman has a right to have whims; it is a privilege of her sex. Never put her out. She might have hysterics, which would impair her health and cost the money in doctor's bills.

Another commandment runs:

Remember, good man, that thy wife is thy superior by her grace, her beauty and refinement. Therefore always worship at her feet.

Where, then good lady, does "equality forever" come in, if woman not only has privilege because she is a woman, but is decidedly superior to man? Surely, the strong minded suffragist would spurn privileges of sex. In another rule the lady seems to show some sly knowledge of her sisters.

If, good man, thou desirest mountain air ask thy wife to come to the sea-

side; she will immediately propose a holiday in Switzerland.

But this is a very mild gibe at her own sex compared with her final thrust at the other in her last rule for husbands:

Man was created before woman as a preliminary sketch for the masterpiece. Remember, then, O husband, that thou art but a rough draft.

This ought to shut any husband up finally.—Paris Cor. London Telegraph.

TRAVELERS' TALES.

Some That Were Discredited and Vindicated Long Afterward.

Travelers' tales have often been accused of being mere flights of imagination, and in the past stay at home people have sometimes erred in treating travelers' tales with scorn. There was, for instance, the description by James Bruce in 1770 of the barbarous Abyssinian custom of eating raw meat cut from the living animal, which was ridiculed by everybody. Yet Bruce has even recently been proved right. When Paul Du Chailu explored equatorial Africa in 1861 and described the wonderful gorillas and also the nation of dwarfs there he was discredited none too politely by the British Royal Geographical society. Yet subsequent explorers amply vindicated his veracity.

In the matter of discredited travelers' tales vindicated long afterward it will never be possible to beat the classic instance in Herodotus. He tells how King Neco of Egypt commissioned certain Phoenician mariners to circumnavigate Africa if they could. They did it, starting from the Red sea and returning by the straits of Gibraltar after very many months. And they reported, says Herodotus, that in rounding the southern end of Africa they had the sun on their right hand. "I, for my part," he says, "do not believe this, but perhaps others may."

In modern times that detail is precisely what proves that the Phoenicians did achieve the wonderful voyage. Such an "improbable" fact could never have been invented in an age which was not familiar with the equator.—Chicago News.

Two Cheerful Liars.

Two Americans were disputing as to which had experienced the greatest cold in winter. Said one: "In the part of Iceland where I was last summer the ground is frozen so hard all the year round that when they want to bury a man they just sharpen his feet and drive him in with a pile hammer."

The other replied: "Yes, I know that place. Didn't stay there long—found it not quite bracing enough for me. Went on to a small town farther north. The hotel where I was staying caught fire. My room was on the top story. No fire escapes or ladders in that primitive settlement. Staircases burnt away. Luckily, kept my presence of mind. Emptied my bath out of the window and slid down the icicle."—Truth.

Calais is rather an untidy place for a French town. The Place d'Armes, where the tower of the Hotel de Ville has remained since the fifteenth century, is the center spot. Here Calais meets its friends and has its cafe noir. In the square, towering out of the roofs of surrounding houses and dwarfing them, is the old watchtower. Since 1848 it has been superseded as a lighthouse by the magnificent one at present in use. Never shall I forget the effect of this lighthouse as I stood under it that night. The revolving spokes of light cast away into filmy space in all directions, looked like the ribs of a huge umbrella being turned by the white handle, which was the lighthouse tower. So tall is this that its revolving light can be seen from a distance of twenty miles at sea.—Wide World.

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THIS YEAR'S CONVENTIONS.

October 18, New York, N. Y., United Textile Workers of America.

October 18, Detroit, Mich., International Association of Car Workers.