

# DEAD MEN'S SECTION.

BY J. PERCY BARNITZ.  
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Section Four was the longest section on the Third Division of the C. and J. Railroad. It was so long and so many fatalities had occurred on that stretch of road, that the management decided to call it the Middle Division, thinking thereby to escape the odious name of "Dead Men's Section," which it was called by railroad men the country over. But call it what they would, the management could not free that particular portion of their line from the gruesome appellation.

The sections on the C. and J. are not eight or ten-mile stretches of track, as is the case on Eastern lines, but instead a hundred and fifty-mile stretch is the usual section on this important link in the "Great Trans-Continental Route," and which traverses the Lone Star State from the Red River to the Rio Grande.

Henry Fortune was made division superintendent at Folger, the terminus of Section Three, and the headquarters for the new Middle Division. And he said always, that it was anything but good fortune when he was promoted to that position, for until his appointment at Folger he had never known that the cup of life could be so full of trouble.

Freight brakemen only—with few exceptions—were the ones whom Death seemed to single out as his victims. And the majority of those who were killed met their deaths by falling beneath the cars while the trains were running eastward between Gregson's and Warm Springs.

Because of the "hoodoo," which railroad men said was on "Dead Men's Section," it was almost impossible to secure reputable employees for the freight service of the operating department of the Middle Division. As a consequence the personnel of the freight trainmen on that division was composed literally of the scum of the earth. And, therefore, it is not to be wondered at that the life of Henry Fortune, superintendent, was not a happy one. The difficulties he experienced in handling the polygenous freight crews were legion; but they were as nothing compared to the depressing fact that in spite of all precautions Death held the Middle Division in a firmer grasp than ever.

Although the Middle Division passed through a land of weary desolation, which, with its flint-like soil; its boundless, unbroken monotony of plains, was enough in itself to depress the spirits of almost any man, yet the superintendent never for a moment supposed that any of his men committed suicide.

There were but few men in his employ that did not use liquor. But liquor could hardly be held accountable for the strange fatalities on "Dead Men's Section." Other trainmen employed on the division besides freight brakemen drank just as hard, and yet there were no more accidents among them than usually occur on the ordinary railroad.

One night in early January the "Mexican Flyer" was wrecked between Warm Springs and Gregson's. The superintendent accompanied the wrecking train to the scene of the disaster. It was a wretched night. A heavy storm of sleet and rain beat down with chilling force on that barren waste of land, and Henry Fortune made it his first duty to see that the passengers were taken to Gregson's, and there made as comfortable as possible in the miserable adobe building bearing the name of "The Ranger's Rest."

The proprietor of this squalid hostelry of the Texas plains was a singular individual. He was a tall, lank, sinister-looking half-breed, whose beady eyes seemed to glow with a malignant passion. A semi-mute, he was unable to articulate intelligibly, but could understand perfectly all that was said to him. There was something about the man that fascinated Henry Fortune, as he watched his shifty, cat-like movements, while dispensing the vile, yellow-looking whisky over his bar to the motley crowd of cowboys gathered in the foul-smelling, earth-

proprietor of "The Ranger's Rest," was at the bottom of it.

The injured man was taken to the hospital at Templeton, where he was interviewed by Henry Fortune.

"Yes, Mr. Fortune," said the brakeman, "I did have a drink at Carlos' place just before we pulled out of Gregson's—the whole crew had a drink, for that matter. But I don't think it was the whisky that affected me—leastways it never did other times. It was just like this, near as I can remember. I was walking along the top of a lot of box cars towards the front of the train, when all at once everything seemed to shine like gold. Then it changed to white, and I felt that I must run—run as fast as I could. I felt frightened like. And then I couldn't help myself anymore, and ran till I fell from the train."

But Henry Fortune was obdurate in his belief that the sinister-looking mute was to blame for the mortality among his brakemen, despite the fact that he had not one scintilla of proof to that effect, and employed a private detective agency in Chicago to work on the case.

The detective sent by the agency to the Middle Division assumed the role of a freight brakeman. For two weeks he reported "no progress," and then one night he, too, fell a victim to the "Dead Men's Section," much to the



"I couldn't help myself, and ran."

disgust, mortification and disappointment of Henry Fortune.

When the detective agency was informed of the death of their operative, and learned that he had met the peculiar and mysterious fate of so many brakemen, they became more determined than ever to sift the occurrence to the bottom, and sent several of their best men to the section of the country between Gregson's and Warm Springs.

In the latter part of February a man claiming to be a buyer of cattle for a Chicago packing house, put up at "The Ranger's Rest," and, on the pretext of awaiting the arrival of important letters remained for several days at the little hotel. He saw that whenever a crew of freight trainmen patronized the bar, Carlos would invariably place two bottles of liquor upon the counter, pushing a square bottle in front of where one or more brakemen stood.

One day when the opportunity offered, the pseudo-stockman filled several flasks from the bottles of liquor standing on the shelves beneath the bar. These were sent to Chicago for analysis, and a few weeks later "Dummy Carlos" was awaiting trial in the jail at Templeton on a charge of poisoning, and the mystery of "Dead Men's Section" had been solved.

A curious story was brought out at the trial of the vindictive half-breed; a story too long to here tell in detail, but which was substantially as follows:

The analysis of the liquor in the several flasks showed that it was all of the same cheap brand of whisky, but the contents of one flask was found to have been heavily steeped with the woolly loco weed, commonly called crazy weed, a plant native to the Great Plains region, and which causes much damage to the stock of ranchmen. The action of this poison on man in small doses is to cause a short period of hallucination or mania, accompanied by defective eyesight, during which the affected person is seized with an irresistible desire to run. It was the administration of this decoction to the brakemen of the Middle Division that had caused them to run along the cars of their train and, being unable to see where they were stepping, invariably fall to their deaths.

Carlos admitted the fact that eight years back, when the C. and J. was first built through that region, he was beating his way on a freight train from Gregson's to Warm Springs, when he was discovered by two brakemen who threw him from the train. Until that time he had been possessed of his full powers of speech, but he was so severely injured about the head that the portion of the brain controlling the vocal cords became in time affected, and he finally lost the power to articulate plainly. The Indian in his nature became aroused, and after he opened "The Ranger's Rest" near the railway station at Gregson's, he determined to become revenged on all freight brakemen running eastward from that point. His devilish, savage cunning led him to use the loco weed as the best means to secure that revenge, as he was familiar with its effect upon the cattle and horses which roamed the plains of Texas. He was declared insane by the jury which tried him, and he was sent to the state asylum for insane criminals for life.



"Dummy Carlos."

doored barroom. Why it was the superintendent could never tell, but intuitively the conviction was suddenly forced upon him, that in some way this evidently treacherous man was connected with the mystery of "Dead Men's Section."

This opinion, once formed, grew stronger in the mind of the superintendent as time passed, and when, some weeks after the wreck of the "Mexican Flyer," a brakeman tumbled between the cars of his train a few miles east of Gregson's, and by good luck was but slightly hurt, he set about to investigate the accident, on the assumption that "Dummy Carlos," the

# NAPOLEONIC ROMANCE.

How St. Louis Planned to Rescue the Deposed Emperor.

Was an attempt ever made to spirit Napoleon away from his heartrending imprisonment on the island of St. Helena? What was there in the dim story which comes out of the romance of the Louisiana domain a century after; it passed into the possession of the United States that Monsieur Girod, a wealthy planter of New Orleans intrigued to rescue the incarcerated emperor?

These are the strange questions prompted by the story told by Mrs. Carrie Jenkins Harris. Mrs. Harris says that she discovered the basis for the belief that an expedition to rescue Napoleon was fitted out on the coast of Louisiana, near New Orleans, and was only abandoned when the news of the deposed monarch's death found its way to the vast Louisiana territory, which he had ceded to the United States nine years before.

From manuscript in the Congressional Library at Washington Mrs. Harris says she discovered indisputable evidence that Monsieur Girod, a rich planter at New Orleans, whose loyalty to the deposed emperor of the French amounted to a passionate devotion, built a mansion on the old St. Louis street in that city, fitted it up elegantly and kept it ready for the occupancy of a distinguished guest. To his most intimate friends it is said that he imparted the secret that a king was to dwell there.

At the same time that M. Girod commenced this house he bought a stanch ship, enlisted a number of soldiers and sailors and drilled them to scale rocky battlements. The object of the expedition was a secret one, but curious tales were related of it after the need for its mission had faded away. Everything was made ready for the sudden and swift sailing of the frigate, which had been manned with guns and other warlike equipment. Three days before the date set for the vessel to put to sea news of Napoleon's death was received in New Orleans. The expedition was, of course, forthwith abandoned, and a chronic melancholy took possession of his energetic and devoted champion in Louisiana.

Did the deposed emperor know of this effort to free him and bring him to this foremost city of the great domain his hand had signed away to the "Western Republic" is the question she asks. She concludes that it is reasonable to suppose that he was informed of this expedition and was prepared to co-operate with his American friends. He was a comparatively young man when he died, and it is suggested that if his life had been spared and he had landed in the Crescent City he might have made as many changes on the map of the Western Hemisphere as he did on that of Europe. The French Canadians, especially in Montreal, Quebec and Nova Scotia, would have rallied to his standard. Thousands of French citizens of the young Republic would have done the same. It is, according to Mrs. Harris' thinking, one of the "what might have been done" questions the world can ask.

## Britain's Financial Strength.

A good deal of misplaced sympathy is being wasted upon England in the belief, or, perhaps, hope, that the Boer war has brought the nation to financial ruin. Much more reasonable is the attitude of one of the leading German newspapers which congratulated Great Britain the other day upon the ease with which she is carrying on the South African war, with an expenditure that has already reached \$500,000,000. It said this war would have ruined Germany or any other European nation, and the German editor was right. The British people would have made short work of a less intractable enemy than the Boers, but what other European country could have manned and paid such armies and whose efforts would have been made on a rising scale all the time in spite of discouragement? John Bull has always been a staying fighter, and that he will continue fighting until, in Lord Milner's phrase, the Boer country is burned out, there is hardly any doubt.

M. Raffelovitch, the noted economist, says the Louisville Courier-Journal, touched upon Great Britain's finance in his annual publication recently issued in Paris, and warned the world that it was not likely to go to the second place or stay there. Germany was a country that thought it could supplant England in the markets of the world a couple or so of years ago, but though Germany has no war she is in far worse industrial and financial condition that the tight little island across the channel.

## Wedded Life in Sumatra.

The women of Sumatra have little to complain of. Before the nuptials are celebrated the husband is compelled to settle a marriage portion on his wife, and in case he is legally separated from her he can neither alienate this portion nor touch any of the property she may have brought into the marriage contract. Married people live in separate houses, the husband visiting the wife in the evening. The boys live with their mother until their fourth birthday, when they take up their residence with their father. Girls remain with their mother until they marry, which they do at an early age. When a woman becomes a widow she plants a flagstaff at her door, from which a flag flies. That flag is of importance to the widow's fate, for so long as it remains untopped by the winds, she is compelled by etiquette to remain unmarried. When the first little rent in the flag appears—and it may be the most minute—she is free to accept the first suitor who offers.—Detroit Free Press.

# ...Fine College Buildings...

Two new society halls have been added to the already long list at Yale. Both of the new halls, while built by Sheffield Scientific School societies, have followed out the plan of the academic department, and are tightly sealed and windowless structures, built of the most "secret" type. The more imposing of these two new buildings is that of Book and Snake, one of the leading Sheffield school fraternities. The other is known as the Tombs, and deserves its name. Both structures are a departure for the scientific school, that has up to now built its society halls after the Harvard model.

The building of these two society halls has raised much comment at Yale, where there has been lately a movement for club houses instead of the time honored secret society halls. Yale undergraduates, however, cling to the old style of society hall building, and the two latest additions to the list seems to show that the club-house idea has not yet become popular.

Vassar college has been enriched by two buildings, completed within the last year. The New England building is so called because it was contributed by the alumnae from the New England

rooms for the preparation of material. Over the amphitheater below is the physiological department. As the large two story windows throughout the building are nine feet wide, it will be seen that the north front contains, in a length of only eighty-four feet, forty-five feet of glass, an important feature in a building designed for this character of work.

The exterior of the structure is of Indiana limestone and red brick. The departments will begin their work in this building after Christmas.

A bronze tablet in the entrance hall will be surmounted by a hand holding



THE BOOK AND SNAKE HALL.

A new fraternity house at Yale.

planning to have roomy, open clubs rather than sealed up buildings. Both halls are among the finest and most remarkable at Yale, and have received much attention since they were erected this fall.

Book and Snake chose for their site the corner of Grove and High streets, on the square diagonally opposite the fine senior society building of Scroll and Key. It is an immense marble building, built closely on Greek lines, and is said to be the purest copy of the Greek that exists in this country today. It stands on the same block with the mammoth new dining hall, and its doors open on the entrance to the Grove Street Cemetery, which is itself a sample of pure Egyptian. The Book and Snake house is by all odds the handsomest and most costly of all Yale private structures. There is not a single slit or window in its massive white walls, and its roof is solid also, not a ray of sunlight entering through any part of the walls or roof. Yet during the daytime it is flooded with sunlight, by means of a unique arrangement. A marble shaft has been sunk in the yard which is open to the sunlight. At the bottom are fixed mirrors that reflect the sunlight into the building through the floor, filling the great structure with light all day. It is said to be the only contrivance of the kind in the country, and is attracting much notice from architects.

The Tombs stands in Temple street, south of Grove street, and is much

states, who desired to supply the college's need of greater space for the department of biology.

The building faces north, and contains on the first floor four large corner laboratories for mineralogy, geol-

a piece of Plymouth Rock, which has been given to the building.

The Swift Infirmary, given by Mrs. Atwater of Poughkeepsie, in memory of her father, Mr. Swift, besides containing wards both for general cases



NEW-ENGLAND BUILDING.

Built by New England Vassar College Alumnae.

ogy, zoology, and botany. In the rear is an amphitheatrical lecture room, not shown from the point of view of the photograph. In the center is a large stair hall, lighted overhead

and for isolation, provides a number of private bedrooms, and the parlors, dining rooms, etc., necessary in a temporary college hospital of this character. It is Colonial in style and, being situated in a retired part of the grounds among the trees, it offers an attractive retreat for convalescents.

The illustrations and descriptions are from the New York Tribune.

## Mrs. Li Officially Dead.

Very few people are aware that that most weird of oriental statesmen, who for so many years not only guided the destinies of China, but was, to all intents and purposes, the true ruler of that strange country, had, in his earlier life, a rather unenviable domestic experience of the Enoch Arden type, though it was one of his wives, and not himself, who played the part.

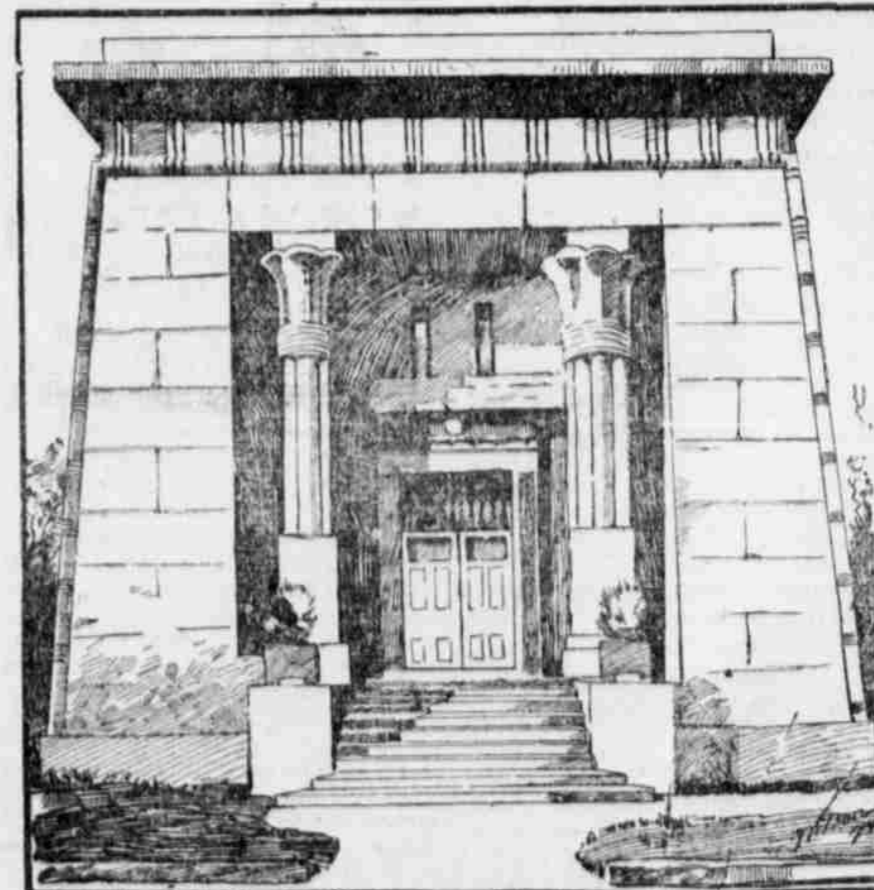
It seems that Mrs. Li Hung Chang, in some mysterious way, disappeared one fine day, and, after making all inquiries and allowing a reasonable time for her reappearance, without any result whatever, it was decided that she was officially defunct, and all went on as usual in the Li household until, without any warning, the missing lady suddenly turned up and presented herself at the front door of her husband's palace.

She reckoned without her host, however, as Li would have none of her; and, as officially dead she was, so officially dead she must continue to be.

Some churches make very successful burial clubs.

The Archbishop of Canterbury says that England is suffering from defective grammar.

A rag merchant, who works up every shred and art and end into new creations.—Emerson.



THE TOMBS.

A new fraternity house at Yale that deserves its name.

simpler in architecture its side walls are of brick, but the front is in the most ancient of Egyptian styles. The massiveness of the ornamentation on the front makes a striking appearance.

and lined with museum cases. The whole front of the second floor is occupied by a biological laboratory eighty feet long, and in connection with this are lecture rooms, offices and