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## HOW MIKE SAVED THE LIMITED EXPRESS

MIKE had been sitting on the pile of ties near the water tank ever since the fast mail shot by in the early morning. Twice he had tried to slip under a car of one of the many passenger trains which pulled up at the tank. He was an adept at riding on the trucks, and in his two years as a tramp had traveled thousands of miles, curled up over the spinning wheels or stretched out on the platform between the engine tender and the mail car. Mike was only 15 years old, but he had seen nearly every State in the country, and knew all of the large cities intimately.

This morning Mike felt that he had encountered a streak of bad luck. Every time he slipped under a car the brakeman or conductor caught him and hauled him out with rough hands and rougher language. But Mike was used to this sort of treatment, and took it as a matter of course.

The afternoon was well along toward evening when the west-bound limited express came around the curve, and the engine stopped under the huge goose-neck pipe which served to pass the water from the reservoir to the tank of the tender. Mike's keen, bright eyes watched every movement of the train crew, although he appeared to have no interest in the train, its crew or passengers. Luck was with him this time. As soon as the hissing cylinders sent the first jets of white steam over the ditches Mike sprang from the ties, and in a second was flattened out on the platform between the mail car and the engine. There he was safe until the next stop, unless the freeman saw him, for there was no door to the platform from the car.

For an hour the train sped over the smooth rails, through farm lands and past towns and villages, rounding curves and coasting down grades. Mike sat at ease on the steps, caring nothing for the hot cladders which rained down when the freeman fed his hungry charge with coal. Just as the train passed through a deep cut the engine whistle gave two sharp blasts, and the grinding of the brake shoes on the wheels told Mike that the engineer had applied the air brakes.

"Something's wrong," said Mike to himself, when he felt the car shiver and jump under the pressure of the powerful brakes. "He's givin' her all the air she'll stand." He did not dare to swing out and look ahead, for he knew that the conductor and every brakeman on the train were doing that, and he would be seen. He was well acquainted with the country, and knew that there was no town, side track, water tank or stopping place within ten miles of the cut. The train slowed up with jerks, and just as it came to a standstill, Mike jumped from the steps and dove into a clump of bushes.

He glanced toward the engine and saw on the track, not fifty feet from the pilot, a pile of ties on the rails. At the same instant he heard a pistol shot, and then from the bushes on both sides of the track a score of men rushed toward the train. Two of them, with revolvers in their hands, sprang into the engine cab.

The engineer seized a long-handled monkey wrench and the freeman grasped an iron bar, but before they could use them they were shot down and thrown from the cab. Hoarse shouts and pistol shots mingled with the screams of women and the yells of men. Half a dozen of the train robbers attacked the heavy side doors of the express car, and others entered the passenger cars and sleepers with revolvers in their hands.

The men who were trying to break down the door of the express car with a sledge hammer called to the messenger inside to open the door, but they received a shot from a rifle which sent a bullet through the heavy oak. It struck one of the robbers, and he fell to the ground.

"Bring that dynamite," shouted one of the men.

Mike's heart seemed to rise in his throat, but he did not dare leave the bushes. In a few minutes there was a loud report, and Mike saw that the door was shattered. The messenger was struck down, and in a short time the train robbers had rolled the express safe out of the car and carried it into the woods.

All of this time the two men who shot the engineer and freeman remained in the engine cab. The engineer had fallen near Mike's hiding place. He was groaning with pain, and Mike crept to him.

"Are you killed?" asked Mike. "I ain't no robber. I am a tramp and was riding on the platform."

"No," said the engineer. "I am not killed. I am shot through the arm, and I guess my leg is broken."

Just then one of the robbers, who

seemed to be the leader, cried out: "Here, some of you fellows. Throw those ties off the track."

"Get a good look at that fellow," whispered the engineer to Mike. "Look at him good, so you will know him again. Look at all of them. They flagged me in the cut, and I had to stop."

Mike singled out the leader and mentally photographed every feature of his face, his clothing and hat.

"I'll know him again," he said. By this time the ties were thrown into the ditch, and the leader, giving a shrill whistle, yelled to the two men in the cab:

"Give her steam and jump."

The engineer's pale face grew chalky white. He struggled to rise to his feet, but his leg bent under him. Falling with a groan, he whispered to Mike:

"Do you know anything about an engine?"

Mike nodded. "I know how to fire and I know how to use the air," said he.

"Get on that train. Get on the front platform. Hurry, the train is moving. Climb aboard and over the tender, shut off steam, and give her every bit of air."

Mike darted from the bushes, and, catching hold of the railing, swung himself to the lower step of the front platform. As he did this the two men sprang to the ground. One of them saw Mike.

"Come out of that," he cried, and with a quick motion he leveled his revolver and fired.

Mike felt something hot across his cheek, and then his face felt as though some one had drawn a red hot iron across his skin. He put his hand to the place, and when he drew it away it was covered with blood. The engine puffs were coming faster and faster, and the train was gathering speed rapidly. Mike swung himself



TAKEN TO THE GENERAL MANAGER.

out from the steps and looked back, and saw the two men disappearing in the woods. Then he clambered over the tender, and in a few minutes was in the cab.

The train was rushing along at full speed, and the locomotive rocked and swayed like a boat in a storm. Mike had spent the fifteen years of his life around railroad yards. All of the railroad men at the junction had come to his father's funeral, for Mike's father had been one of the best known section bosses on the line. That was two years back, and Mike had been gathering railroad knowledge ever since. So he looked at the steam gauge as soon as he reached the cab. It showed 125 pounds of steam. Next he looked at the water glass and saw that there was plenty of water in the boiler.

He seated himself on the green cushion which spread over the engineer's bench. The throttle valve was wide open, and he pushed in the lever until the locomotive sensibly lost speed. Then he pulled the reversing lever back a few notches and the huge machine was under control.

He made up his mind to run to the next town, and after a twenty-minute ride he could just see the smoke of a factory in the place. A shout behind him caused him to look back. He involuntarily lowered his head, for on the roof of the mail car were two mail clerks, a brakeman and the conductor of the train, each pointing a revolver toward his head.

"Don't shoot!" he cried. "I am no train robber. I am only doing what the engineer told me to do," and he reached for the whistle cord and sounded the station whistle.

In a few minutes all of the men were in the cab, and Mike began setting the air brakes. He did it so well that the long train came to a full stop at the platform, and the passengers flocked out of the cars and surrounded the engine. The mail clerks told them about Mike, and a passenger took up a contribution for him.

In the meantime the conductor had telegraphed the story of the hold-up to

the train dispatcher, and in ten minutes after a freight locomotive, which stood on the siding, steamed toward the place where the robbers had stopped the train.

The engineer and fireman were brought back to the town, where the doctor said neither was badly injured, and the next day Mike was taken to the office of the general manager of the road by the conductor of the train.

Most of the train robbers were arrested, and when they were brought into court Mike was able to identify the leader and the two men who had captured the engine. Soon after he was sent to school, and the railroad company paid all bills.—San Francisco Post.

### Driver Was Literal.

The manager of one of the Chicago express companies tells a good story.

"We have a big, strong Irishman driving one of our teams. Yesterday he was sent with a barrel of flour to the home of a woman on the South Side. Arrived there, the driver took the barrel on his back and started up the stairs, his express book in his coat pocket.

"Half way up the second flight of stairs the Irishman came upon a woman, scrubbing.

"'Will ye be after tellin' me where Mrs. McGowan lives?' he asked.

"'I am Mrs. McGowan,' said the scrubber—a statement which was irrelevant—and I live upstairs."

"'Where will I have this barrel of flour?' asked the driver.

"'Take it up as far as you can, and then put it down. I'll attend to it,' replied Mrs. McGowan.

So he went on up, and when there were no more stairways to conquer he looked about and saw a ladder leading through an open scuttle to the roof. Up this ladder he climbed, out on the roof he stepped and then, finding he could go no higher without a balloon, he deposited the barrel and came down.

"On the stairway—though nearly at the foot—he found the woman again, and she signed the delivery book, but before he got to the office Mrs. McGowan was there demanding an explanation. The driver was called in as soon as he returned.

"'Where did you put that barrel of flour?' demanded the official.

"'Where she told me'.

"'Where did you tell him to put it, madam?"

"'I told him to take it up as far as he could, an'—"

"'An' O' did,' interrupted the honest driver. 'If she'll look on the roof she'll find it.'"

### Do Horses Weep?

Do horses weep? Is a question discussed by the Admiralty and Horse Guards Gazette. It tells us that it is a well-authenticated case of a horse's weeping during the Crimean war. On the advance to the heights of Alma a battery of artillery became exposed to the fire of a concealed Russian battery, and in the course of a few minutes it was nearly destroyed, men and horses killed and wounded, guns dismounted and limbers broken.

A solitary horse, which had apparently escaped unhurt, was observed, standing with fixed gaze upon an object close beside him. This turned out to be his late master, quite dead.

The poor animal, when a trooper was dispatched to recover him, was found with copious tears flowing from his eyes; and it was only by main force that he could be dragged away from the spot, and his unearthly cries to get back to his master were heartrending.

Apropos of the intense love that cavalry horses have for music, a correspondent of the Gazette writes that when the Sixth Dragoons recently changed their quarters a mare belonging to one of the troopers was taken so ill as to be unable to proceed on the journey the following morning. Two days later another detachment of the same regiment, accompanied by the band, arrived. The sick mare was in a loose box, but bearing the martial strains, kicked a hole through the side of her box, and making her way through the shop of a tradesman, took her place in the troop before she was secured and brought back to the stable. But the excitement had proved too great, and the subsequent exhaustion proved fatal.—Philadelphia Times.

### Maj. Shirts, of Course.

Famous old Gov. Henry A. Wise of Virginia was directly or indirectly the source of many a good story. Here is one that I do not think has found its way into print: One day at a political gathering he was approached by a well-dressed individual who shook hands warmly with him. The Governor was a bit bothered and confessed he could not recall the handshaker's name.

"Why, you must remember me, Governor," said the latter. "I'm from Richmond. I made your shirts."

"Why, of course," said the Governor, with all a politician's tact. "Gentlemen, this is my very excellent neighbor, Maj. Shirts."—Washington Post.

### Trout Over Two Feet Long.

A trout of the Lochleven species weighing 11½ pounds and measuring 2 feet 7 inches in length and 10½ inches in girth, was recently taken in Kinghorn Loch.

As soon as any one commences taking a prominent part in anything, people commence picking at him.



### Honest, Would You?

Were you about to settle down And build yourself a cozy nest, You would not have it in a town Whose streets are always mud-dirtressed.

### Economy in Good Roads.

The advantages of good roads are pretty generally conceded now, but the practical work of making them is not progressing as it should. The fear of tremendous expense and bonded indebtedness still abides with the rural population, with which the responsibility for the roads rests. This fear has led to the defeat of road legislation in the past, and will continue to oppose such legislation in the future, until it has been allayed, as it may be when the farmers are educated to understand that a really good road is a cheap and not a dear highway.

### French Roads.

The excellence of French roads is well known. The materials are brought from the nearest quarries and placed at the side of the route surveyed. In order that the full amount contracted for may be delivered, the stone must be heaped in angular piles of prismatic shape and fixed dimensions. These heaps, placed at a given distance from one another, are afterward visited by an official inspector, and must, in all instances, fit exactly beneath a skeleton frame carried by him. The material is usually marble, flint stone or gravel, and whatever is used must be the best quality and cleansed from all foreign substances. The stone must be broken so that each piece may pass through a ring 2½ inches in diameter.

It is then spread evenly over the road, the interstices being carefully filled in with small pieces, so that the whole is smooth and free from abrupt eminences and depressions. A steam roller then crushes and further evens the whole, after which a superficial layer of clay and earth completes the work. Roads are classed as national roads which are the main arteries of the system connecting most distant parts of the country and are constructed and maintained by the department; highway and public roads which are the property of the commune through which they run, but are in practice made and repaired by the department from taxes levied on the commune, supplemented by a department subsidy; cross roads which are maintained by sums derived from the ordinary revenue of the commune, occasionally supplemented by additional taxation; and country roads which are kept in order by the commune, except they are injured by unusual traffic, when an indemnity may be claimed by the communal administration. For the purpose of maintaining the common roads the inhabitants living in the districts are obliged to work three days in each year or pay an amount equivalent to the compensation of the laborer for three days.

The United States Consul at Havre says that French pavements increase in excellence with age. In France, he says, all roads have perpetual attention. If from weight, rain or other causes a hollow rut or sink is formed, it is repaired at once. Where the space to be repaired is of limited area the rolling of the new coating is left to the wide tires of the heavy carts, but in the case of extended areas a steam roller is brought into use. Every carrying and market cart in France is a road-maker instead of a rut-maker, for it has three usually from four inches to six inches in width. It is customary to use tires for heavy teaming six inches wide, and the forward axles of four-wheeled wagons are made shorter than the hind axles, so that the four wheels roll a portion of the road two feet wide at each passage. Such wagons improve rather than injure the condition of the road, and are easier for the horses, the usual load for each horse in France being two to three tons on hard roads.

### Most Important.

An instance of the ruling passion strong even under the prospect of death, comes from H. L. Clinton's legal reminiscences, entitled "Extraordinary Cases." In 1846 Mrs. Bodine was tried in the State of New York, on the charge of murder. She was about thirty-six years old, a handsome woman, attractive in manner and sparkling in conversation. Mr. Barnum had placed in his New York museum a figure which he declared to be a correct likeness of her, but it represented her as old—seventy or over—bent with age, shriveled and haggard.

Mrs. Bodine did not appear to be in the least disturbed as to the result of her trial, but the existence of the wax figure gave her the most harrowing anxiety. She could calmly face the prospect of an ignominious death on the scaffold, but she could not imperil her reputation for beauty by suffering the existence of that wax figure.

She asked her lawyer if there were

no possible redress, if she could not prosecute Barnum for libel; and as he did not wish to say anything to disappoint her, and thus shake her self-control on the eve of the trial, he told her that it would be unwise then to prosecute the showman, but that after the verdict in her case had been given, her counsel would consider the matter.

The last day of the trial was an impressive one. The court room was packed, and the interest of the spectators seemed to grow every minute more intense. The court solemnly charged the jury, amid the breathless attention of those who were present. Mrs. Bodine, whose nerves had for a fortnight been strung to their utmost tension, and who had yet preserved her calmness throughout, broke down and wept.

At the close of the charge the jury retired, and it was announced that, when they agreed, the court would again convene, on the ringing of the court house bell.

This was about the middle of the afternoon, and in the evening the bell rang. In an instant almost, the court room was filled. The prisoner was brought in, ghastly pale and trembling with excitement. She was told to stand up.

"Gentlemen of the jury," said the clerk, "have you agreed upon your verdict?"

"We have," said the foreman.

"Prisoner, look upon the jury. The jury will look upon the prisoner. What say you, gentlemen? Do you find the prisoner guilty or not guilty?"

"Not guilty."

Mrs. Bodine dropped into her seat, and burst into a flood of tears. Instantly she leaned over and said to her lawyer:

"Can't I sue Barnum now?"

Fore the Wrong Coat.

Royalty dearly loves its fun, and nowhere are practical jokes more in vogue than in the palaces of Old World monarchs, says the New York Journal. No one, it is said, is fonder of practical joking than the Prince of Wales. His private secretary, Sir Francis Knollys, has, in times gone by, been called upon to endure with good humor and serenity many a trying experience. One day not long ago, Sir Francis got the laugh on the would-be joker and gave him a taste of his own medicine.

Among the prince's friends was a famous sportsman, Capt. "Bay" Middleton, whose favorite trick used to be to approach from behind some unsuspecting man and seize his coat tails, which he would wrench apart in such a manner as to split the garment up to the back.

At Sandringham Sir Francis took pains to offer himself as the victim and butt for the gallant "Bay." When the men retired to the smoking room after the princess and ladies were gone, he took up his place in front of the fire, bent his head, and appeared entirely lost in thought.

His attitude was too inviting not to appear to the jocular instincts of Capt. Middleton, who, after asking the prince's permission to leave the card table for a moment, crept up softly to Sir Francis, suddenly seized hold of the tails of his dress coat, and with a jerk tore it apart from waist to collar.

Unlike most of Bay's victims, Sir Francis took the matter in exceedingly good spirits. Indeed, he laughed, and appeared greatly to enjoy the fun. Somewhat astonished the prince and the men present inquired how it was that Sir Francis had treated the matter with such indifference.

"That is very easy to explain, sir," was the reply. "The coat is not mine. I had heard of Middleton's fondness for this particular form of amusement, and, accordingly, when I came down stairs just now to the smoking room, I took the precaution of going into his room and putting on one of his dress coats, which was lying on his bed."

There was a hurricane of irrepressible laughter as he uttered these words, and the merriment was intensified by the disconcerted appearance of Capt. Middleton, who was bitterly annoyed to have thus destroyed one of his best evening coats.

How Many Pounds?

A correspondent sends to the Youth's companion a "true story," which could only be true, perhaps, in this age of college athletics.

A group of people were discussing a recent novel. Some liked it, some thought it trashy or worse.

"For my part," said a lady, "I found it highly interesting. I especially liked John, the brother of the heroine, you remember. Not a very amiable character; a little coarse, no doubt, but well sketched in, and decidedly strong."

At this point a young collegian, who had taken no part in the conversation, suddenly found his voice.

"How much can he lift?" he asked, in all soberness.

Illinois as a Coal Producing State.

Illinois is the next State to Pennsylvania in the production of coal. The mines are in the southern part of the State and employ 35,000 men. New labor-saving methods are constantly being introduced, one of the latest being the cutting machine, with which one man can do the work of fifteen.

It is a matter of regret that so many people who make fools of themselves, are of age.

### EGYPTIAN SNAKE-CHARMER.

Fascinating and Possibly True Story of Eastern Cunning.

The following story of a "snake charmer" is borrowed from the New York Sun, which in turn borrows it from a Paris paper. The reader is expected to use his own discretion as to believing or explaining it. The incident is said to have taken place in Cairo, where the narrator, Monsieur Vigouroux, while walking the streets with a friend, fell in with a "mild-looking young man" who professed to be a snake charmer. The two visitors engaged him to come to their hotel the next day, and give them an exhibition of his powers.

Guards were stationed around the building to prevent the charmer from getting into it before the appointed time. When he arrived he was led into the first courtyard. He was asked if there were any snakes there.

"Yes," he replied, "a great many."

As a precautionary measure he was conducted into an interior court in the center of the palace. There he was asked if he could catch a snake. The charmer whistled for a few seconds, and then listened attentively.

"Yes," said he, "there is a snake on this side," pointing to the wall. A bargain was then made with him, the rate being a shilling a snake. He immediately went to work with the air of a man who understood his business and was perfectly sure of the result.

Standing in the center of the court, gazing at the wall where he said the reptile was concealed, he began to recite a prayer or conjuration in Arabic, in which he addressed the serpent, saying in substance that everything and every creature must yield to the power of God. He also invoked Solomon and some celebrated Mussulman personages.

While he was reciting this formula he sometimes stood perfectly straight, sometimes he leaned forward, and lastly he fell on his knees. When he had finished he picked up a little rod that lay beside him, and scratched the wall with it, advancing toward the door of the building leading to the court. At the door he stopped and said:

"Here he is; come and look at him."

The party advanced, and on a line with his arm at the place where he had directed the rod, they distinctly saw the head of a snake protruding from a hole in the wall. The snake charmer grabbed the head and pulled out a long, thin and wriggling reptile. He made it fasten its fangs in his garment. Then he pulled violently and showed the snake's teeth in the stuff.

At last he threw the reptile on the ground, excited it, and tossed it into his leather bag.

"How did you know," he was asked, "that there was a snake in that wall?"

"I smelt him," was the answer.

And certainly there seemed to be no room to suspect a trick. One of the party remarked that the charmer might possibly have snakes concealed in his clothes. The fellow immediately threw off his blue blouse, which was his only covering, and shook it in the presence of the assemblage. He was asked if there were any more snakes in that court. After a moment's inspection he replied:

"In this wall there is a big one and a little one."

He was told to catch the little one first. He recited his prayer, and added to it a command to the big snake to lie still while he captured the little one. Then he proceeded with his wand along the wall, as before. When he reached the door he called us, saying, "Here he is!"

The head was sticking out of the hole. He grabbed it, pulled out the snake, and broke its fangs in the manner described above. But the reptile bit him in the arm and drew blood. The bite didn't bother him. He threw the snake on the ground among the spectators, who stood in utter amazement. Then he went at work again.

It was the big snake's turn now. He was yanked out like the other two. Notwithstanding the apparent impossibility of fraud, the thing was so surprising that doubts were still expressed.

"Let him come into the garden," said one of the spectators, "and catch snakes there; then we will be convinced."

The charmer was led out into the garden. Near a heap of rubbish and weeds he began to whistle; then he announced a snake.

"Yes, there are two," said he. Then stooping down he pulled one out, and, as he had left his leather bag in the courtyard, he put the head of the reptile into his mouth and held it there while he secured the second.

### The Date Harvest.

Egypt is the favored country of the date, and it is said that more than two millions and a half of palms are there registered as fruit-bearing trees, and as a single tree will sometimes bear as much as four hundred weight of dates—quoted last year at \$12.50 in London, but this year, from over-abundant supplies, not worth half—it may be seen what an important matter to the Egyptian fellah is his date harvest.

### Safe Love Letter Ink.

"Ink suitable for love letters" is advertised by a Parisian stationer. It is made of a solution of iodide of starch, and characters written with it entirely fade in four weeks.