

AT BRISTOW STATION

BY SCOTT CHALMERS

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Bristow Station was in the Panhandle section of Texas, and a more lonely and dreary place it would be hard to find. There was but one building, which served for freighthouse, passenger depot and ticket and telegraph office. Bert Brown, the K. and M. agent, had to do all the business and cook his own meals over an oil stove. There were four trains daily over the road; but, unless flagged, the two passenger trains went through Bristow at a fifty mile clip. To the west of the station was a long siding with cattle pens, then a straight track for thirty miles over the prairie.

Bert could always count on a visit from three or four tramps a day, and, though the instructions from the division superintendent were to "discourage" them, he took his own course in the matter. To "discourage" them meant to threaten them with pains and penalties and refuse them even a drink of water. To Bert it looked too much like childish spite, and, though he may have done some growling now and then, he always had a bite to eat and a bit of tobacco for the "tourist" whose language was respectful. As a matter of fact, there were times when he could sit down with one of them for an hour and be interested in the tramp's adventures by flood and field.

If Bert did not obey his instructions to the letter, the section boss on that section did. He was a burly big fellow, regarded by his employers as a bully and a coward. Knowing that he had the law on his side, he fairly went hunting for tramps. If one was found track walking, he received such a thumping that he could hardly crawl off to a highway, and no freight train with a hobo on the bumpers could pass the boss that his sharp eyes would not detect the culprit.

Perhaps it was this man's fierce enmity toward tramps that softened Bert's heart.

Agent and boss had never had a word on the subject, however, until one summer afternoon he happened along with his car and his gang just as a tramp had reached the station and was resting in the shade. Bert had not seen the fellow as yet when he heard a row outside. The section boss had spied the hobo and stopped to give him a drubbing. The tramp was a man about thirty, and it needed



A SURPRISE AWAITED HIM AS HE OPENED THE DOOR.

only one glance at his face to prove that he was not born to the road. He had an intelligent eye, and his speech was that of an educated man.

The section boss was already slaming him around when Bert interfered. As the big brute let go of his victim he gave him a whirl and brought him down on the iron rail. The hobo lay there until Bert assisted him to rise. He complained of a pain in his side, but after resting for awhile it seemed to pass off. The story he told was not new to the agent. Born of good parents and with a good start in life, drink and a spirit of adventure had been his bane. He did not mention what occupation he had followed, and Bert, in his genial, thoughtful way, refrained from exhibiting too much curiosity. After accepting lunch, a brazer of whisky and a few coins he left the station and continued westward. This was toward sundown.

The tramp had been gone about an hour when a thunderstorm came up, and for an hour it rained furiously. A mile to the east of Bristow they were putting in a new bridge over a small creek, with the rails laid on a temporary track. It was not Bert's business to worry about that bridge, and he hadn't given it a thought when he received a message from Clairville, nine miles to the west, that the section gang had been dumped into the ditch and all badly hurt. Then arose the question whether it was his duty to remain at the station and be ready for a call or to make a trip to the new bridge and see that all was safe.

He knew that the creek would be bank full from the downpour, and as

it was in the dry season, when no rain was expected, the temporary tracks might be swept away. After fifteen minutes of doubt and worry he telegraphed Clairville that he was going to the creek and at once set out on a run. He had scarcely started when a gale sprang up in his very teeth, and within ten minutes it was all he could do to make way against it at a walk. Darkness had fallen before he reached the culvert. The bridge was gone!

The first train due was a freight at 9 o'clock. This train would sidetrack at Bristow for the express bound east. He had brought a red lantern, and this he managed to secure to a pole suspended over the track. That would stop the freight, and he would get back to the station in time to flag the express.

The wind was howling along at the rate of sixty miles an hour, and a dozen different times in returning over that mile of track Bert was blown flat or clear off the track into the ditch. Even with the gale at his back it took him as long to go as it had to come, and he was thoroughly played out when he reached the station. Even before he mounted the platform he heard the instrument calling him and realized that something was up.

A surprise awaited him as he opened the door. Sitting at the table, with his head on his arms and apparently asleep, was the tramp of the afternoon. The instrument was calling "B. B." as if lives depended on an instant answer, and Bert had to reach over the sleeping man's shoulder to reply. In a minute came this message from Clairville:

"What the dickens is the matter with you? Are there any more empties on the way?"

"What do you mean?" Bert asked.

"I mean that I have ditched the seven cattle cars and want to know if any others got away."

It took some time to make matters plain. Several times Bert shook the sleeper and called to him to vacate the chair, but he did not move. The 4 o'clock freight had brought down sixteen cattle cars and after backing them in on the siding had pulled out and left the switch wide open. The section gang had passed the spot without noticing the switch, and when the gale came up seven of the cars had been blown out on the main track and started down the road at thirty miles an hour. The other nine would have followed had not one of them jumped the track and held the rest. Clairville had received word of the runaway and ditched them to prevent a smash-up with the express.

It was no ghostly telegram that had been sent in Bert's absence. The injured tramp who had left him that afternoon had for some reason returned to the track later on. He must have seen the open switch and sighted the runaway empties. He had made his way down to the station to give Bert the information and, finding him gone, had sat down on the instrument and warned Clairville. He had given Bert no hint that he was an operator, but such was the case. He had sent the message through in good shape and saved the road a big smash-up.

"Here, wake up, wake up and shake hands and let me thank you," Bert shouted as the mystery was solved and he felt his heart growing big.

No reply broke the silence which suddenly and strangely impressed Bert. The hands he touched were cold.

The inquest was held at Clairville, and the verdict was "heart disease aggravated by a recent injury." The "recent injury" consisted of three broken ribs. The fact that this was received at the hands of the section boss was not stated. That the poor chap had ever managed to walk a hundred rods the doctors declared a wonderful thing. He was nameless, homeless and friendless, and the railroad company had no sentiment and no gratitude. The poor bruised body was laid in a pauper's grave, unmarked and uncared for, and only Bert Brown stood beside the last resting place of Bristow Station's hero.

Two Badly Puzzled Ladies.
Vernet, the French painter, was once traveling from Versailles to Paris in the same compartment with two ladies whom he had never seen before, but who were evidently acquainted with him. They examined him very minutely and commented upon him quite freely. The painter was annoyed and determined to put an end to the persecution. As the train passed through the tunnel of St. Cloud the three travelers were wrapped in complete darkness. Vernet raised the back of his hand to his mouth and kissed it twice violently. On emerging from the obscurity he found that the ladies had withdrawn their attention from him and were glaring contemptuously at each other. Presently they arrived at Paris, and Vernet, on leaving them, said, "Ladies, I shall be puzzled all my life by the inquiry, Which of these two ladies was it that kissed me?"

In a Japanese Hospital.
A lady who was for a time in a Japanese fever hospital says, describing her experience: "The patients, according to their condition, were put on one of four diets—first, for the very sick, rice water and milk; second, 'majiri,' rice water containing a small portion of rice and milk; third, 'O ka,' very soft rice with two eggs and milk, and, fourth, ordinary diet, which was rice (cold or hot), vegetables and occasionally fish. They were never fed except at their meal-times—7 a. m., noon and evening—but those who were very ill were ordered weak wine and water frequently. No one seemed anxious when a delirious patient walked along the veranda, but a nurse said, 'Oh, it can't be helped!' a speech the Japanese are very fond of, and assisted him back to bed."

Why Americans Drink.

"Pleasurable emotional excitement is a great relaxer," says a writer in *Alcohol's*. "Every kind of work is liable to leave the muscles and nerves tense and overdrawn. We often see muscle tonus corrugating the brow, rigidifying the face or attitudes and showing that innervation impulses continue to flow out from the nerve centers after toll is over. We Americans lack the very words gemuth and esprit, and it is very hard for us to entirely forget the struggle for existence in social intercourse. The careful studies of Partridge and others show that the desire for this kind of unending is one of the chief causes that lead Americans to drink, because they have lost the power to feel the normal exhilaration which inebriation stimulates. Instinct points to this as a great boon, and so it is sought over cups and glasses in the conviviality that comes from artificial stimulation. A little more rollicking jollity, with jest and quip with congenial friends, the tale, the song, perhaps the quiet, harmless game that does not overtax the system—of all this we have too little in our stern American life, with its tendencies to overtonicity and cramps of will and attention."

Rats and Mice and Large Animals.

How many people are there who know that elephants, rhinoceroses and other large thick skinned animals have formidable enemies in rats and mice? These small, rascally rodents have found that the feet of the elephant are excellent eating and have no hesitation in gnawing at them when the animal lies down, when, owing to its confined condition, it is not very well able to defend itself against its puny enemies. To protect these vast creatures it is found necessary in most menageries to keep terriers about the cages. These little fellows very soon dispose of the pachyderm's tiny adversaries. It was recently discovered in a well known menagerie that the mice and rats had been very busy with the hide of a rhinoceros. A Scotch terrier, Fanny, was put into the cage of the huge beast, and in the first night she had killed no fewer than twenty-seven rats. In a few days there were no rats left to nibble the hide of the poor rhinoceros.

The Arabs of Syria.

Among the Arabs of Syria a man changes his name after the birth of his eldest son, assuming the name which has been bestowed upon the heir, with the prefix Abu, meaning "father of." Thus, if the son is called Fudle Allah, "God's Bounty," the father will be henceforth known as Abu Fudle Allah, "Father of God's Bounty." In like manner the mother would become known as Em Fudle Allah, "Mother of God's Bounty." This custom is not merely one of common speech, but extends to all occasions and even to legal documents. Still more strangely, even when a man though married has no son the courtesy of oriental society demands that he should be addressed as Abu Salim or Abu Mahmud, after an imaginary son whom politeness confers upon him.

Necklace of Ants.

A necklace made of black ants is an article of adornment of New Guinea. The Anglican mission there gives particulars of one which measured over eleven feet long and was composed of as many as 1,800 bodies of ants. Three little pieces of shell and a dozen English beads were incorporated into it, and there was a native string holding it together, yet its weight only reached 2 drams 2 scruples 13 grains. These large black ants make big nests in the native gardens, and the native women and girls catch them, pull off their heads, bite off and swallow the other end and thread the thorax.

A Very Queer Custom.

A curious custom takes place in villages of the Luxembourg district, Belgium, in May. After Sunday service numbers of lads cluster round the church entrance and as the girls come out seize them one by one, one lad grasping a girl by the shoulders and the other by the heels, the two lifting her up while a third bumpkin passes under the human bridge thus formed. This is done in the presence of the parents, who themselves have passed through the same ordeal.

The Way He Came.

At the finish of a football match a youngster in his hurry to get out scrambled over the paling that surrounds the ground.

A burly policeman standing by shouted to him as he was about to drop outside, "You young rascal, why don't you go out the way you came in?"

"So I am!" shouted the boy as he vanished into the crowd.

The policeman also vanished, amid the laughter of the bystanders.

Profitable Walnut Trees.

The English walnut is said to be the most profitable of all nut bearing trees. When in full vigor, they will yield about 300 pounds of nuts to the tree. The nuts sell on an average at about fourpence per pound. If only twenty-seven trees are planted on an acre, the income would be about £135 per acre.—*London Answers.*

Two Sad Things.

I have just fallen upon the two saddest secrets of the disease which troubles the age we live in—the envious hatred of him who suffers want and the selfish forgetfulness of him who lives in affluence.—*Journal of a Happy Man.*

A Matchless Face.

Ida—She thinks she has a matchless face.
May—I agree with her. She will never make a match as long as she has it.—*Chicago News.*

FACT AND RUMOR.

The Story of One Postponed Cabinet Council in England.

Cabinet councils give rise at times to rumors that dodge fact and mislead public expectancy. One of Lord Beaconsfield's supplies a case in point. Queen Victoria, so runs the tale, was anxious about the state of wind and wave in the mid-Atlantic, which the Princess Louise happened then to be crossing. A lord in waiting knew a professor who was a weather diviner, and to him he went with a message from her majesty, who sent also a message to Lord Beaconsfield. The lord in waiting was sent to a theatrical supper—it was Sunday night—in search of the professor. Him he found in this lively company and was himself constrained to listen to the game of words that was passing round. Which would they choose if they had to marry, Gladstone or Disraeli? All said "Disraeli," except one, and she said "Gladstone, so that I might elope with Disraeli and break his heart."

The lord in waiting, much diverted, went forth and, finding Disraeli in rather low spirits, told him this tale as an instance of his great popularity with all classes of the queen's subjects. The whimsicality of the thing was congenial to Disraeli, who was kept waiting next day at a cabinet council for the arrival of an important colleague. To pass the time he told the assembled ministers the story of the theatrical supper. Lord Cairns (abstinent), hearing, did not smile, and his solemnity put out of countenance the prime minister, who at once made the nonarrival of the colleague an excuse for postponing the council for a couple of hours. The "balance of power" was then unstable, and that afternoon the papers had headlines: "War Imminent. A Second Cabinet Council Summoned." For once the ladies of the stage made history and staggered the Stock Exchange.—*London Chronicle.*

TOWN HAD OFFSETS.

So His Claim For Damages Brought In Only \$110.34.

"I had been knocking about a Kansas town in the evening," said a drummer with a limp, "and in heading for my hotel I walked plump into an open sewer which had no red light of warning."

"I had a bad fall and broke my hip, and I wasn't yet out of the sewer when I made up my mind to sue for \$20,000 damages. I was taken to the hospital, and next day the city attorney called on me to know what I was going to do."

"I am going to sue the town, of course," I replied.

"But what for?" he asked.

"For personal damages. There should have been a railing or a light, but there was neither, and my injury will lay me up for weeks."

"But don't you know what you escaped by falling into the sewer?" he asked.

"No."

"Then let me tell you that the roof of the hotel fell in last night and killed three men, and if you had been in your bed you would have been crushed to pulp. You really owe this town something instead of talking about damages."

"When able to get out," continued the drummer, "I found that public opinion was against me and the people ready to stand a suit, and by advice of a lawyer I settled the case for \$125."

"I didn't even get all that. In tumbling into the sewer I broke two planks and brought on a cavern, and the damages were assessed at \$5.00 and taken out of the money."—*Dallas News.*

Resourcefulness of Chinese Cooks.

If there is one sphere of European domestic life in which more than another, says a traveler, the Chinaman finds scope for the exercise of his own peculiar ingenuity, without doubt it is in the regions dedicated to the pursuit of a Good Guesser.

An elderly woman with an impediment in her speech had troubles of her own at the corner of Twelfth and Walnut streets the other day. As each car came out Walnut street she would stop it and say to the conductor, "Dud-dud-dud-dud—this kuk-kuk-car gug-gug-go"—At this juncture, and sometimes before, the conductor would impatiently exclaim, "No; take the next car." Then he would pull the strap, and the car would go ahead, leaving the woman at the crossing.

There are five different lines passing out Walnut street at this point, and if the woman could read the signs she disregarded them. Finally a conductor more considerate than the others helped her aboard and allowed her to explain afterward. After three blocks had been traversed he found that she wanted to go to Darby, and his was a Darby car. When she learned this, she beamed her joy. "Yuh-yuh-young man," she said, "yuh-yuh-you're a gug-gug-gug-gug-gug-guesser."—*Philadelphia Record.*

Turning a Sharp Corner.

On one occasion a great public dinner was given to Isaac Hull by the town of Boston, and he was asked to sit for his picture to Gilbert Stuart, the celebrated artist, who was a great braggart. When Hull visited his studio, Stuart took great delight in entertaining him with anecdotes of his English success, stories of the Marquis of This and the Baroness of That which showed how elegant was the society to which he had been accustomed.

Unfortunately in the midst of this grandeur Mrs. Stuart, who did not know that there was a sitter, came in with her apron on and her head tied up with handkerchiefs from the kitchen and cried out, "Did you mean to have that leg of mutton boiled or roasted?"

To which Stuart replied, with great presence of mind, "Ask your mistress."

An Uncrowned King of England.

Writing of Prince Albert in an article in the Century on "The Royal Family of England," Professor Oscar Browning says:

From the first the prince identified himself with the queen in all her labors. They had one mind and one soul. Rising every morning with the dawn, the prince went into his work-room, where their two tables stood side by side, and read all their correspondence, arranging everything for the queen's convenience when she should arrive. He knew all her thoughts and assisted all her actions, yet so adroit and self sacrificing was his conduct that all the merit and popularity came to her. The people had no idea that he interfered with public affairs, yet had they reflected they must have known that it was inevitable. Once during the Crimean war, when the notion got abroad that the prince had intervened, there were tales of treason and of sending him to the tower. Yet on the day of the prince's death, on that cold, icebound Saturday, Charles Kingsley said to the present writer, "He was king of England for twenty years, and no one knew it."

Druggists' Colored Bottles.

Those huge glass bulbs of red and yellow and blue water which are called show bottles are gradually ceasing to be a feature of the decoration of druggists' windows. In the past they were as necessary to every druggist as a red and white pole is to a barber shop, but they have not, as the pole has, a well defined history. All that druggists know of them is that they have been always used as window ornaments. The brilliant liquids that they contain are made cheaply and plainly of chemicals and water. Thus a solution of copper and ammonia makes blue. Bichromate of potash makes orange. Aniline dyes have of late been used in the chemicals' place, but the liquids fade in a strong sunlight and have frequently to be renewed. The liquids colored chemically, on the other hand, last well high forever.—*Philadelphia Record.*

He Ran.

Sol Smith Russell had three young nieces living in the west, of whom he was very fond. On one occasion, so the story goes, he took the youngest of them for a walk and bought her some candy on the agreement that it was not to be eaten until they reached her home. They started, but before they had gone far the little girl proposed, "Let's wun!" Her uncle declined, and there was no pleading, all to no purpose. Finally the little girl stopped, knelt down on the pavement and offered up the petition, "Dod, please make Uncle Sol wun."

"It was simply a question of my losing my dignity or her losing her faith in God," said Mr. Russell in relating the incident, "so we ran as fast as we could for home."

How Convicts Kill Time.

It is an interesting and pathetic to go through the cells of the eastern penitentiary and to note the objects which, with tedious pains, the prisoners have made to while the time away. Here a mantle will be hung with a lambrquin elaborately fringed, the fine knots and delicate patterns of the threads comparing with the work of the French lacemakers. The lambrquin is of an odd blue hue, and the visitor is told that it is made of an old pair of prison trousers.

On a little gilt bracket is a small stuffed animal. The bracket, so delicately turned, is of newspapers pasted together and gilded, and the animal is a rat, caught in a homemade trap, stuffed with rags and with pieces of chewing gum colored with shoeblackening for its eyes.

A wall is completely covered with a really artistic decoration of reeds, on which are perched at least 200 birds, each accurately colored and drawn. There are also numberless checkerboards and sets of chessmen that in the delicacy of their inlay work and in the intricacy of their carving would do honor to the craftsmen of the orient.—*Philadelphia Record.*

A Rare Drug.

The price of many drugs used in medicine is astonishing to those who are not acquainted with the subject," remarked a druggist to a Philadelphia Times representative. "There are several that are worth their weight in gold (about \$20 an ounce), while \$2, \$3 and \$5 an ounce are quite common prices in pharmacy. But there is one drug that I can recall which is worth more than its weight in gold. This is pseudo physostigmine. I don't think that it has a popular name. It is too rich for that. In the pharmacists' list it is quoted at \$1 a grain, or \$437.50 an ounce. The seed from which the drug is made grows in India and Brazil, as well as in parts of South Africa. This seed, tradition says, was once used by native chiefs as an ordeal. The ordeal generally resulted in the death of the man upon whom it was tried and so it was considered as a great truth finder. The prepared drug is sometimes used now in prescriptions for the treatment of heart disease."

Swindled Again.

"Ah," exclaimed Mrs. Oldcastle as she took a book from the table in the magnificent library of the new neighbors, "hand laid paper, isn't it?"

"Is it?" her hostess asked, looking at it doubtfully. "I told Josiah when I bought them books that that's one of the set of that he was payin' a whole lot too much. I'm glad it wasn't me. If I'd of went and give such a price for something that was hand laid, I'd never hear the last of it from him. But he wouldn't believe it when I told him he was cheated, because I seen the same set with nearly three times more gilt on the binding's for a lower price. Josiah's awful headstrong in some ways."—*Chicago Record-Herald.*

HARDY SUWAROFF.

Pecculiarities of One of Russia's Great Military Commanders.

Suwaroff, Russia's great military commander, was a little man, insignificant in everything but that intangible power of mind and character with which physical strength is never to be compared. He had been sickly in his youth, but became hardy under the stimulus of cold bathing and the benefits of a plain diet. Buckets of cold water were thrown over him in the morning, and his table was served with fare which guests would fain have refused, but dared not lest he should think them effeminate. He despised dress and delighted in drilling his men in shirt sleeves, sometimes with his stockings literally "down at the heel."

But his hardihood of life and action had its effect on the men he commanded. He was often up and about by midnight and would salute the first soldier whom he saw moving with a piercing cockerow in commendation of his early rising. During the first Polish war he had given orders for an attack at cockerow, and a spy in the camp carried the news to the enemy. The attack, however, really took place at 9 o'clock in the evening, when the arrangement had been made, for Suwaroff, suspecting treachery, had then turned out his troops by his well known crowing. The enemy, expecting the event in the morning, were entirely unprepared and fell easy victims to his forethought.

"Tomorrow morning," said he to his troops on the evening before the storming of Ismail, "an hour before day-break I mean to get up. I shall wash and dress myself, say my prayers, give one good cockerow and then capture Ismail."

Society and Companionship.

The privilege of having some one with whom we may exchange a few rational words every day, as Emerson phrases it, is the choicest gift in life. We are rich in society and yet poor in companionship. In the overflow of chatter we are starved for conversation. Social life is so largely an affair of representation, it inclines so largely to the spectacular and to what its chroniclers designate as "social functions," that the element of conversational intercourse is almost eliminated. Yet, primarily, is not that the supreme object of all friendly meeting? When we reduce to first principles this complex thing called living, do we not go to our friend solely to talk with him? Do we not invite him solely that we may exchange ideas and compare views on subjects of mutual interest? Still, as things go, people meet all through a season in the midst of groups and throngs—at dinners, receptions, entertainments of all kinds—without exchanging one word in the way of true intercourse.—*Exchange.*

Swift Was a Dunce at School.

Not only philosophers and divines, but some of the most trenchant satirists and brilliant humorists were dull enough as boys. It has been said of Swift in his best days that "he displayed either the blasting lightning of satire or the lambent and meteorlike caricatures of frolicsome humor." And yet this vigorous disputant was considered a fit subject for a fool's cap at school. Afterward at the Dublin university "he was by scholars esteemed a blockhead," who was denied his degree on his first application and obtained it with great difficulty on the second.—*London Standard.*

A Large Department.

Mr. McBride was showing his wife the workings of our national congress. The Detroit Free Press represents her as putting to her spouse this intelligent question: "But where is the framing department?"

"The what?"

"I read in the papers that laws were framed in Washington," she explained.

The Real Test.

Hardup—I tried to sell those diamonds I bought of you and was told they were not genuine.

Jeweler—Did you sell them?

Hardup—Yes, for almost nothing.

Jeweler—Well, you go back and try to buy them, and you will find out that they are genuine.—*New York Weekly.*

Somali Life.

The camel yields them milk, frequently the only food of the natives, gives them meat and hides, facilitates transport from one place to another and forms the means of exchange, which at any moment it is possible to barter for other articles, thus taking the place of money.

The Somalis also accommodate their existence to the wants of the camels. They go with the herd wherever pasture is best or where rain has recently fallen, and on this account one may frequently not find the trace of a village where yesterday a place was full of life and people. The camels, in fact, carry away the village on their backs miles distant.

Such are the chief events in the life of a Somali. Everything is governed according to some ancient unwritten law, not contained in any code, not dictated by any tribunal, but still sacredly observed and carried out for centuries throughout the whole region inhabited by the Somalis.—*Sport in Somaliland,* by Count Potocki.

His Bill.

"Your young nephew William appears to think he knows much more than he really does know."

"Yes, he is a Bill that is stuck up, but not a Bill that is posted."—*Boston Transcript.*

The productiveness of Formosa is so great that it is believed that the present population of 2,500,000 could be raised to 10,000,000 without exhausting the fertility of the soil.