

# The Great K. & A. Train Robbery

BY PAUL LEICESTER FORD

AUTHOR OF.....

"The Hon. Peter Stirling," &c.

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(Continued.)

## CHAPTER V.

### A TRIP TO THE GRAND CANYON.

I stood pondering, for no explanation that would fit the facts seemed possible. I should have considered the young fellow's story only an attempt to gain a little reputation for puck if in any way I could have accounted for the appearance and disappearance of the robbers. Yet to suppose—which seemed the only other horn to the dilemma—that the son and guests of the vice-president of the Missouri Western and one of our own directors would be concerned in train robbery was to believe something equally improbable. Indeed, I should have put the whole thing down as a practical joke of Mr. Cullen's party if it had not been for the loss of the registered letters. Even a practical joker would hardly care to go to the length of cutting open Government mail pouches, for Uncle Sam doesn't approve of such conduct.

Whatever the explanation, I had enough facts to prevent me from wasting more time on that alkali plain. Getting the men and horses back on the cars, I jumped up on the tailboard and ordered the runner to pull out for Flagstaff. It was a run of seven hours, getting us in a little after eight, and in those hours I had done a lot of thinking, which had all come to one result—that Mr. Cullen's party was concerned in the hold-up.

The two private cars were on a siding, but the Cullens had left for the Grand Canyon the moment they had arrived and were about reaching there by this time. I went to 218 and questioned the cook and waiter, but they either had seen nothing or else had been primed, for not a fact did I get from them. Going to my own car, I ordered a quick supper, and while I was eating I questioned my boy.

He told me that he had heard the shots and had bolted the front door of my car, as I had ordered when I went out; that as he turned to go to a safer place he had seen a man, revolver in hand, climb over the off-side gate of Mr. Cullen's car, and for a moment he had supposed it a road agent till he saw that it was Albert Cullen.

"That was just after I had got off," I asked.

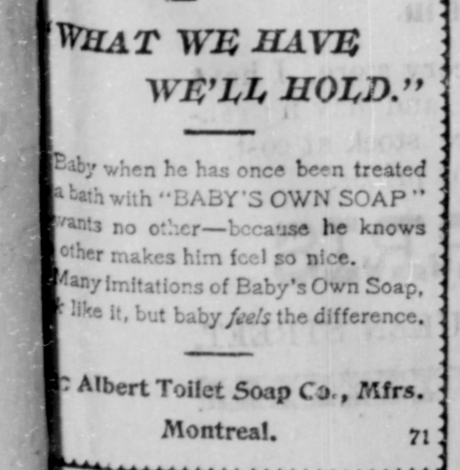
"Yes, sah."

"Then it couldn't have been Mr. Cullen, Jim," I declared, "for I found him up at the other end of the car."

"Tell you it wuz, Mr. Gordon," Jim insisted. "I done seen his face clear in de light, and the done go into Mr. Cullen's car, whar de old gentleman wuz sittin'."

That set me whistling to myself, and I began to think how near I had come to giving nitro-glycerine to a fellow who was only shamming heart-failure, for that it was Frederic Cullen who had climbed on the car I hadn't the slightest doubt, the resemblance between the two brothers being quite strong enough to deceive anyone who had never seen them together. I smiled a little and remarked to myself: "I think I can make good my boast that I would catch the robbers, but whether the Cullens will like my doing so I question. What is more, Lord Ralles will owe me a bottle." Then I thought of Madge and didn't feel so pleased over my success as I had felt a moment before.

By nine o'clock the posse and I were in the saddle and skirting the San Francisco peaks. There was no use of pressing the ponies, for our game wasn't trying to escape, and, for that matter, couldn't, as the Colorado river wasn't passable. It was a lovely moonlight night, and the side through the pines was as pretty a one as I remember ever to have made. It set me thinking of Madge and of our talk the evening before and of what a change twenty-four hours had brought. I was lucky I was riding an Indian pony, or I should probably have landed in a heap. I don't know that I should have cared particularly if a cat-dog burrow had made me dash my brains out, for I wasn't happy over the job that lay before me. We watered at Silver Spring at a quarter past twelve. From that point on we were clear of the pines and out on



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the plain, so we took no better pace. This brought us to the half-way ranch by two o'clock, where we gave the ponies a feed and an hour's rest. We reached the last relay station just as the moon set, about 3.40, and, as all the rest of the ride was through cocoon forest, we held up there for daylight, getting a little sleep meanwhile.

We rode into the camp at the Grand Canyon a little after eight o'clock, and the deserted look of the tents gave me a moment's fright, for I feared that the party had gone. Tollfree explained, however, that some had ridden out to Moran point and the rest had gone down Hanes' trail. So we breakfasted, and then took a look at Albert Cullen's Winchester. That it had been recently fired was plain as the Grand Canyon itself. Throwing back the bar, I found an empty cartridge shell, still oily from the discharge. That completed the tale of seven shots. I didn't feel absolutely safe till I had asked Tollfree if there had been any shooting of echoes by the party, but his denial rounded out my chain of evidence. Telling the sheriff to guard the bags of the party carefully, I took two of the posse and rode over to Moran's. Sure enough, there were Mr. Cullen, Albert, and Captain Ackert. They gave a shout at seeing me, and even before I had reached them they called to know how I could come so soon and if I had caught the robbers. Mr. Cullen started to tell this pleasure at my rejoining the party, but my expression made him pause, and it seemed to dawn on all three that the Winchester across my saddle and the cowboys' resting melancholy on the revolvers in their belts had a meaning.

"Mr. Cullen," I said, "I've got a very unpleasant job on hand, which I don't want to make any worse than it is. Every fact points to your party as guilty of holding up the train last night and stealing those letters. Probably you weren't all concerned, but I've got to go on the assumption that you are all guilty till you prove otherwise."

"Aw, you're joking," drawled Albert.

"I hope so," I said. "But for the present I've got to be English and treat the joke seriously."

"What do you want to do?" asked Mr. Cullen.

"I don't wish to arrest you gentlemen unless you force me to," I said, "for I don't see that it will do any good. But I want you to return to camp with us."

They assented to that, and, single file, we rode back. When there, I told each that he must be searched, to which they submitted at once. After that we went through their baggage, and I saw that the sheriff of cowboys turning over Miss Cullen's clothes, so I looked over her bag myself. The prettiness and daintiness of the various contents were a revelation to me, and I tried to put them back as neatly as I had found them. But I didn't know much about the articles, and it was a terrible job trying to fold up some of the things. Why, there was a big pink affair, lined with silk, with bits of ribbon and lace all over it, which nearly drove me out of my head, for I would have defied mortal man to pack it so that it shouldn't muss. I had a funny little feeling of tenderness for everything, which made flossing over it all a pleasure, even while I felt all the time that I was doing a sneak act and had really no right to touch her belongings. I didn't find anything incriminating, and the posse reported the same result with the other baggage. If the letters were still in existence, they were either concealed somewhere or were in the possession of the party in the canyon. Telling the sheriff to keep those in the camp under absolute surveillance, I took a single man, and, saddling a couple of mules, started down the trail.

We found Frederic and "Captain" Hance just dismounting at the Beck cabin, and I told the farmer he was in custody for the present, and asked him where Miss Cullen and Lord Ralles were. He told me they were just behind. But I wasn't going to take any risks, and, ordering the deputy to look after Cullen, I went on down the trail. I couldn't resist calling back: "How's your respiration, Mr. Cullen?"

He laughed and called, "Digitalis put me on my feet like a flash." I said to myself, "He's got the most brains of any man in this party."

The trail at this point is very winding, so that one can rarely see fifty feet in advance, and sometimes not ten. Owing to this, the first thing I knew I plumped round a curve on to a mule, which was patiently standing there. Just back of him was another, on which sat Miss Cullen, and, standing close beside her, was Lord Ralles. One of his hands held the mule's bridle, the other held Madge's arm, and he was saying, "You owe it to me, and I will have one, or if—"

I swore to myself and coughed aloud, which made Miss Cullen look up. The moment she saw me she cried, "Mr. Gordon! How delightful!" even while she grew as red as she had been pale the moment before. Lord Ralles grew red, too, but in a different way.

"Have you caught the robbers?" cried Miss Cullen.

"I'm afraid I have," I answered.

"What do you mean?" she asked.

I smiled at the absolute innocence and wonder with which she spoke, and replied, "I know now, Miss Cullen, why you said I was braver than the Brits."

"How do you know?"

"I couldn't resist getting in a side shot at Lord Ralles, who had mounted his mule and sat scowling. The train robbers were such thoroughgoing duffers at the trade," I said, "that if they had left their names and addresses they wouldn't have made it much easier. We Americans may not know enough to deal with real road agents, but we can do something with amateurs."

"What are we stopping here for?" snapped Lord Ralles.

"I'm sure I don't know," I responded. "Miss Cullen, if you will kindly pass us, and then if Lord Ralles will follow you, we will go on to the cabin. I must ask you to keep close together."

"Stay or go as I please, and not by your orders," said Lord Ralles.

"Out in this part of the country," I said, calmly, "it is not good form for an unarmed man to argue with one who carries a repeating rifle. Kindly follow Miss Cullen." And, leaning

over a street his horse with one foot and at my bridle, starting it up the trail.

When we reached the cabin, the deputy told me that he had made Frederic strip and had searched his clothing, finding nothing. I ordered Lord Ralles to dismount and go into the cabin.

"For what?" he demanded.

"We want to search you," I answered.

"I don't choose to be searched," he protested. "You have shown no warrant, nor—"

I wasn't in a good mood toward him to listen to his talk. I swung my Winchester into line and said:—"I was sworn in last night as a deputy sheriff, and am privileged to shoot a train robber on sight. Either dead or alive, I'm going to search your clothing inside of ten minutes, and if you have no preference as to which condition you are in when it's done, I certainly haven't."

That brought him down off his high horse—that is, mule—and I sent the deputy in with him, with directions to toss his clothes out to me, for I wanted to keep my eye on Miss Cullen and her brother, so as to prevent any legdemain on their part.

One by one the garments came flying through the door to me. As fast as I finished examining them I pitched them back, except—well, as I have thought it over since then, I have decided that I did a mean thing, and if his lordship followed the trail he could get round to them, but these would then be 100 feet of sheer rock between the trail and the trousers. "I hope it will teach him to study his Lord Chesterfield to better purpose, for, if politeness doesn't cost anything, rudeness can cost considerable," I chuckled to myself.

My amusement didn't last long, for my next thought was, "If those letters are concealed on anyone, they are on Miss Cullen." The thought made me lean up against my mule, and turn hot and cold by turns.

(To be Continued.)

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### CROWDED JAVA.

#### Twenty-four Million People on an Island the Size of New York State.

Eliza Ruhamah Seidmore, author of "Jinrikisha Days," writes a paper entitled "Prisoners of State at Boro Bodo," for The Century. It is an account of the visit of two American ladies to the vast Buddhist ruins in the middle of Java. Miss Seidmore says:

Every few miles there were open red tiled pavilions built over the highways as refuges for man and beast from the scorching sun of one season and the cloudburst showers of the rainy half of the year. Twice we found busy passers going on in groves beside these resthouses—picturesque gatherings of men, women and children and displays of fowls, fruits, nuts, vegetables, grain, sugar, spices, gums and flowers that tempted one to linger and enjoy and to photograph every foot of the passers' area. The main road was crowded all the way like a city street, and around these passers the highway hummed with voices.

One can believe in the density of the population—24,000,000 people on this island of 49,197 square miles, about the size of the state of New York—when he sees the people trooping along these country roads, and he can well understand why every foot of land is cultivated, how even in the benevolent land of the banana every one must produce something, must work or starve. Men and boys toiled to the passer, bent over with the weight of one or two monstrous jackfruits or durians on their backs. A woman with a baby swinging in the slanging over her shoulder had tied cackling chickens to the back of her belt and trudged on comfortably under her umbrella, and a boy swung a brace of ducks from each end of a shoulder pole and trotted gayly to the passer.

The kampongs, or villages, when not hidden in palm and plantain groves behind fancy bamboo fences, were rows of open houses on each side of the highway, and we reviewed native life at leisure while the ponies were changed. The friendly, gentle little brown people welcomed us with amused and embarrassed smiles when our curiosity as to sarong painting, lacquering and mat weaving carried us into the family circle. The dark, round eyed, star eyed babies and children showed no fear or shyness, and the tiniest ones—their soft, little, warm, brown bodies bare of ever a garment save the cotton slandering in which they cuddle so confidently under the mother's protecting arm—let us lift and carry and play with them at will.

### GIRL AS AN OFFICE BOY.

#### She Makes It Uncomfortable, It Seems, For Women Visitors.

Often times a representative of the gentler sex is placed in the position of door-keeper, and the uninitiated feels his heart grow glad when he gazes upon her face, for he is sure that he will receive gentle treatment at her hands. If he is young, good looking and well dressed, she cannot be affable enough, but let his hair be well frosted with the snows of Father Time and his trousers be somewhat "fringed," and she will be as indifferent to his appeals as the young man who formerly occupied her place. It is to one of her own sex, however, that she can best display her frigid manners. Let a woman, no matter whether she be old or young, rich or poor, enter the office, and the girl in charge stiffens immediately, while over the face of the caller comes a look of despair, for she knows what is coming.

"I wish to see Mr. —," ventures the caller.

Like icicles the words fall from the lips of the doorkeeper.

"He is busy."

"Please take my name in to him."

"He is busy, I tell you," returns the doorkeeper, investigating the contents of her purse or examining her nails very closely.

"I am sure he will see me if he knows I am here," continues the caller if she be very persistent.

The doorkeeper raises her eyebrows in the most exasperating manner, then with a sigh of utter weariness languidly rises from her seat, adjusts the plaits in her skirt, returns to her desk for her handkerchief, then remembers that some papers need attention, and finally, when the caller is almost reduced to tears, she leisurely makes a second attempt to follow out the request made, and when she returns and gives the requisite permission to enter it is with the air of a queen bestowing a royal favor.—Chicago Inter Ocean.

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