

# The Great K. & A. Train Robbery

BY PAUL LEICESTER FORD

AUTHOR OF.....

"The Hon. Peter Stirling," &c.

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(Continued.)

## CHAPTER IV. SOME RATHER QUEER ROAD AGENTS.

"You had better come back to the car, Miss Cullen," remarked Lord Ralles, after a pause.

But she declined to do so, saying she wanted to know what I was going to telegraph. And he left us, for which I wasn't sorry. I told her of the good news I had to send, and she wanted to know if now we would try to catch the road agents. I set her mind at rest on that score.

"I think they'll give us very little trouble to bag," I added, "for they are so green that it's almost pitiful."

"In not cutting the wires?" she asked.

"In everything," I replied. "But the worst botch is their waiting till we had just passed the Arizona line. If they had held us up an hour earlier, it would only have been State's prison."

"And what will it be now?"

"Hanging."

"What?" cried Miss Cullen.

"In New Mexico train robbery is not capital, but in Arizona it is," I told her.

"And if they catch them they'll be hung?" she asked.

"Yes."

"That seems very hard."

The first signs of dawn were beginning to show by this time, and as the sky brightened I told Miss Cullen that I was going to look for the trail of the fugitives. She said she would walk with me, if not in the way, and my assurance was very positive on that point. And here I want to remark that it's saying a good deal if a girl can be up all night in such excitement and still look fresh and pretty, and that she did.

I ordered the crew to look about, and then began a big circle around the train. Finding nothing, I swung a bigger one. That being equally unavailing, I did a larger third. Not a trace of foot or hoof within a half mile of the cars! I had heard of blankets laid down to conceal a trail of swathed feet, even of leather horse boots with cattle hoofs on the bottom, but none of these could have been used for such a distance, let alone the entire absence of any signs of a place where the horse had been hobbled. Returning to the train, the report of the men was the same.

"We've ghost road agents to deal with, Miss Cullen," I laughed. "They come from nowhere, bullets touch them not, their lead hurts nobody, they take nothing, and they disappear without touching the ground."

"How curious it is!" she exclaimed. "One would almost suppose it a dream."

"Hold on," I said. "We do have something tangible, for if they disappeared they left their shells behind them." And I pointed to some cartridge shells that lay on the ground beside the mail car. "My theory of aerial bullets won't do."

"The shells are as hollow as I feel," laughed Miss Cullen.

"Your suggestion reminds me that I am desperately hungry," I said. "Suppose we go back and end the famine."

Most of the passengers had long since returned to their seats or berths, and Mr. Cullen's party had apparently done the same, for 218 showed no signs of life. One of my darkies was awake, and he broiled a steak and made us some coffee in no time, and just as they were ready Albert Cullen appeared. So we made a very jolly little breakfast. He told me at length the part he and the Britishers had borne, and only made me marvel the more that any one of them was alive, for apparently they had jumped off the car without the slightest precaution, and had stood grouped together even after they had called attention to themselves by Lord Ralles' shots. Cullen had to confess that he heard the whistle of the four bullets unpleasantly close.

"You have a right to be proud, Mr. Cullen," I said. "You fellows did a tremendously plucky thing, and, thanks to you, we didn't lose anything."

"But you went to help, too, Mr. Gordon," said Miss Cullen.

"That made me colour up, and after a moment's hesitation, I said—

"I'm not going to sail under false colours, Miss Cullen. When I went forward, I didn't think I could do anything. I supposed whoever had pitched into the robbers was dead, and I expected to be the same inside of ten minutes."

"Then why did you risk your life," she asked, "if you thought it was useless?"

I laughed, and, though ashamed to tell it, said, "I didn't want you to think that the Britishers had more pluck than I had."

"She took my confession better than I hoped she would, laughing with me, and then said, 'Well, that was courageous, after all.'"

"Yes," I said. "I was frightened into bravery."

"Perhaps if they had known the danger as well as you, they would have been less courageous," she continued. "And I could have blessed her for the speech."

While we were still eating, the mail clerk came to my car and reported that the most careful search had failed to discover the three registered letters, and they had evidently been taken. This made me feel sober, slight as the probable loss was. He told me that his list showed they were all addressed to Ash Forks, A. T., making it improbable that their contents could be of any real value. If possible, I was more puzzled than ever.

At 4:30 the runner whistled to show he had steam up. I told one of the brakemen to stay behind, and then went into 218. Mr. Cullen was still dressing, and I expressed my regrets through the door that I could not go with his party to the Grand canyon:

told him that all the stage arrangements had been completed, and promised to join him there in case my luck was good. Then I saw Frederic for a moment to see how he was (for I had nearly forgotten him in the excitement), to find that he was gaining all the time and preparing even to get up. When I returned to the saloon, the rest of the party were there, and I said good-bye to the captain and Albert. Then I turned to Lord Ralles, and, holding out my hand, said:—

"Lord Ralles, I joked a little the other morning about the way you thought road agents ought to be treated. You have turned the joke very neatly and pluckily, and I want to apologize for myself and thank you for the railroad."

"Neither is necessary," he said, airily, pretending not to see my hand.

I never claimed to have a good temper, and it was all I could do to hold myself in. I turned to Miss Cullen to wish her a pleasant trip, and she thought that this might be our last meeting made me forget even Lord Ralles.

"I hope it isn't good-bye, but only a revoir," she said. "Whether or no, you must let us see you some time in Chicago, so that I may show you how grateful I am for all the pleasure you have added to our trip." Then, as I stepped down off my platform, she leaned over the rail of 218 and said in a low voice, "I thought you were just as brave as the rest, Mr. Gordon, and now I think you are braver."

I turned, impulsively, and said, "You would think so, Miss Cullen, if you knew the sacrifice I am making." Then, without looking at her, I gave the signal, the bell rang, and No. 3 pulled off. The last thing I saw was a handkerchief waving off the platform of 218.

When the train dropped out of sight over a grade, I swallowed the lump in my throat and went to the telegraph instrument. I wired Coolidge to give the alarm to Fort Wingate, Fort Apache, Fort Thomas, Fort Grant, Fort Bayard, and Fort Whipple, though I thought the precaution a mere waste of energy. Then I sent the brakeman up to connect the cut wire.

"Two of the bullets struck up here, Mr. Gordon," the man called from the top of the pole.

"Surely not!" I exclaimed.

"Yes, sir," he responded. "The bullet-holes are brand new."

I took in the lay of the land, the embers of the fire showing me how the train had lain. "I don't wonder nobody was hit," I exclaimed, "if that's

the edge of the roadbed for more snens; but, though I went beyond the point where the last car had stood, not one did I find. Any man who has fired a Winchester knows that it drops its empty shell in loading, and I could therefore draw only one conclusion—namely, that all seven discharges of the Winchesters had occurred up by the mail car. I had heard of men supposing they had fired their guns through hearing another go off, but with a repeating rifle one has to fire before one can reload. The fact was evident that Albert Cullen either had fired his Winchester up by the mail car or else had not fired it at all. In either case he had lied, and Lord Ralles and Captain Ackland had back-

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## A FREAK AMONG FLOWERS. The Venus Flytrap and Its Almost Human Action.

Now and again, in exploring American woods and swamps, botanists have come across floral curiosities that almost bridge over the great gulf that divides the animal and vegetable kingdoms. One of these, to be met with nowhere in the world save in North Carolina, is scientifically classified as *Dionaea muscipula*, but is colloquially known as "Venus" flytrap.

In appearance the extraordinary plant is pretty, but unassuming, the leafless flower stem running from six to eight inches in height and surmounted by a cluster of five petaled blossoms, rising erect like a rosettelike bed of leaves. It is in the edge of the leaves that the death dealing apparatus is set, for this modest little plant, which is so delicate that it dies of the slightest injury to root or stem, sustains its life by feeding upon the unwary insects that chance to alight upon its leaves, enticing them to their destruction by exuding from the edges of its fatal traps a viscous fluid, somewhat resembling honey.

The traps consist of two soft, velvety leaves, fringed with delicate bristles and hinged together on one side. The unsuspecting fly, lured by the honey, alights on these bristles in anticipation of a feast, but at the first touch of its feet the hinges close, the two leaves come together, the bristles interlock, and the hapless insect is imprisoned in a cell from which escape is impossible.

Under the stimulus of the victim's struggles the tiny glands with which the inner walls of the trap are furnished pour forth a secretion which Darwin analyzed as a vegetable gastric juice, resembling that which insures digestion in animal life. Under the influence of this curious fluid the fly is actually digested alive, and, its juices being extracted, the trapdoors are reopened and the skeleton is flung out.

The scientists declare that the plant unquestionably lives upon the juices of its victims, but one or two expert florists take exception to this statement. It is worthy of note that, although the habit of the plant is carnivorous, experiments have proved that it lives longer and thrives better when so inclosed that no insects can reach it, a superabundance of its favorite diet apparently rendering it even more delicate than it is by nature. The set of muscles controlling its leaves are said to resemble those of the human eyelids.—Designer.

**Megrin.**

Megrin, or migraine, is a species of nervous headache affecting only one side of or one defined spot on the head—the forehead and temple—and is generally the result of debility. It is a periodic disease, appearing and disappearing at irregular intervals, and may be induced by the same causes as give rise to hysteria and ague. The immediate attack of megrim headache may be relieved by the application of flannel or sponge, soaked in hot water, or by the continuous application of ice over the part. The affection, which is often a very painful one, is likely to be removed by the improvement of the general health and strength, by good diet, air and exercise, and by the use of bark iron and other tonics. A large dose of quinine—five or six grains—repeated two or three times in the course of 24 hours will generally cut short an attack of megrim.—New York Ledger.

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If any man who is weak, nervous and debilitated, or who is suffering from any of the various troubles resulting from youthful folly, excesses or overwork, will take heart and write to me, I will send him confidentially and free of charge the plan pursued by which I was completely restored to perfect health and manhood, after years of suffering from Nervous Debility, loss of Vigor and Organic Weakness.

I have nothing to sell, and therefore want no money, but as I know through my own experience how to sympathize with such sufferers, I am glad to be able to assist any fellow-beings to a cure. I am well aware of the prevalence of quackery, for I myself was deceived and imposed upon until I nearly lost faith in mankind but I rejoice to say that I am now perfectly well and happy once more and am desirous therefore to make this certain means of cure known to all. If you will write to me you can rely upon being cured and the proud satisfaction of having been of great service to one in need will be sufficient reward for my trouble. Absolute secrecy assured. Send 5c silver to cover postage and address Mr. G. Strong, North Rock and, Mich. 135 p.w.

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