

# The Great K. & A. Train Robbery

BY PAUL LEICESTER FORD

AUTHOR OF.....

"The Hon. Peter Stirling," &c.

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## CHAPTER VI

### THE HAPPENINGS DOWN HANCE'S TRAIL.

Miss Cullen was sitting on a rock apart from her brother and Hance, as I had asked her to do when I helped her dismount. I went over there and said, boldly:

"Miss Cullen, I want those letters." "What letters?" she asked, looking me in the eyes with the most innocent of expressions. She made a mistake to do that, for I knew her innocence was feigned, and so didn't put much faith in her face for the rest of the interview.

"And what is more," I said, with a firmness of manner about as genuine as her innocence, "unless you will produce them I shall have to search you."

"Mr. Gordon!" she exclaimed. But she put such surprise, and grief, and disbelief into the four syllables that I wanted the earth to swallow me then and there.

"Why, Miss Cullen," I cried, "look at my position. I'm being paid to do certain things, and—"

"But that needn't prevent your being a gentleman," she interrupted.

"That made me almost desperate," Miss Cullen, I said, hurriedly, "I'd rather be buried alive than do what I've got to do, but if you won't give me those letters, search you I must."

"But how can I give you what I haven't?" she cried, indignantly, assuming again her innocent expression.

"Will you give me your word of honour that those letters are not concealed in your clothes?"

"I will," she said.

I was very much taken aback, for it would have been so easy for Miss Cullen to have said that before that I had become convinced she must have them.

"And do you give me your word?" "I do," she affirmed. But she didn't look me in the face as she said it.

I ought to have been satisfied, but I wasn't, for in spite of her denial something forced me still to believe she had them, and, looking back now,



Miss Cullen was sitting on a rock.

I think it was her manner. I stood reflecting for a minute, and then said, "Please stay where you are for a moment." Leaving her, I went over to Fred.

"Mr. Cullen," I said, "Miss Cullen, rather than be searched, has acknowledged that she has the letters, and says that if we men will go into the hut she'll get them for me."

He rose at once. "I told my father not to drag her in," he muttered, sadly. "I don't care about myself, Mr. Gordon, but can't you keep her out of it? She's as innocent of any real wrong as the day she was born."

"I'll do everything in my power," I promised. Then he and Hance went into the cabin, and I walked back to the culprit.

"Miss Cullen," I said, gravely, "you have those letters and must give them to me."

"But I told you"—she began.

"To spare her a second untruth I interrupted her by saying, 'I trapped your brother into acknowledging that you have them.'"

"You must have misunderstood him," she said, calmly, "or else he didn't know that the arrangement was changed."

Her steadiness rather shook my conviction, but I said, "You must give me those letters or I must search you."

"You never would!" she cried, rising and looking me in the face.

On impulse I tried a big bluff. I took hold of the lapel of her waist, intending to undo one button. I let go in fright when I found there was no button—only an awful complication of hooks or some other feminine method for keeping things together—and I grew red and trembled, thinking what might have happened had I, by bad luck, made anything come undone. If Miss Cullen had been noticing me, she would have seen a terribly scared man.

But she wasn't, luckily, for the moment my hand touched her, and before she could realize that I snatched it away, she collapsed on the rock and burst into tears. "Oh, oh!" she sobbed. "I begged papa not to, but he insisted they were safest with me. I'll give them to you if you'll only go away and not— Her tears made her inarticulate, and, without waiting for more, I ran into the hut, feeling as near like a murderer as a guiltless man could.

Lord Ralles was swearing over his trousers by this time, and was offer-

ing the cowboy and rance money to recover them. When they told him this was impossible, he tried to get them to sell or hire a pair, but they didn't like the idea of riding into camp minus those essentials any better than he did. While I waited, they settled the difficulty by strapping a blanket round him, and by splitting it up the middle and using plenty of cord, they rigged him out after a fashion, but I think if he could have seen himself he would have waited till it was dark enough to creep into camp unnoted.

Before long Miss Cullen called, and when I went to her she handed me, without a word, three letters. As she did so she crimsoned violently, and looked down in her mortification. I was so sorry for her that, though a moment before I had been judging her harshly, I now couldn't help saying:

"Our positions have been so difficult, Miss Cullen, that I don't think we, either of us, are quite responsible for our actions."

She said nothing, and, after a pause, I continued:—

"I hope you'll think as leniently of my conduct as you can, for I can't tell you how grieved I am to have pained you."

Cullen joined us at this point, and, knowing that every moment we remained would be distressing to his sister, I said we would start up the trail. I hadn't the heart to offer to help her mount, and after Frederic had put her up, we fell into single file behind Hance, Lord Ralles coming last.

As soon as we were started I took a look at the three letters. They were all addressed to Theodore E. Camp, Esq., Ash Forks, A.T., one of the directors of the K. and A., and also of the Great Southern. For the first time things began to clear up to me. When the trail broadened enough to permit it, I pushed my mule up alongside of Cullen and asked:

"The letters contain proxies for the K. and A. election next Friday?"

He nodded his head. "The Missouri Western and the Great Southern are fighting for control," he explained, "and we should have won but for three blocks of eastern stock that had promised their proxies to the G. S. Rather than lose the fight, we arranged to learn when those proxies were mailed—that was what kept me behind—and then to hold up the train that carried them."

"Was it worth the risk?" I asked.

"If we had succeeded, yes. My father had put more than was safe into Missouri Western and into California Central. The G. S. wants control to end the traffic agreements, and that means bankruptcy to my father."

I nodded, seeing it all as clear as day, and hardly blaming the Cullens for what they had done, for anyone who has had dealings with the G. S. is driven to pretty desperate methods to keep from being crushed. And when one is fighting an antagonist that won't regard the law or rather one that through control of legislatures and judges, makes the law to suit its needs, the temptation is strong to use the same weapons oneself.

"The toughest part of it is," Fred went on, "that we thought we had the whole thing 'hands down,' and that was what made my father go in so deep. Only the death of one of the M. W. directors, who held 8,000 shares of K. and A., got us in this hole, for the G. S. put up a relative to contest the will, and so delayed the obtaining of letters of administration, blocking his executors from giving a proxy. It was as mean a trick as ever was played."

"The G. S. is a tough customer to fight," I said, and I asked, "Why didn't you burn the letters?" really wishing they had done so.

"We feared duplicate proxies might get through in time and thought that by keeping these we might cook up a question as to which were legal, and then by injunction prevent the use of either."

"And those Englishmen?" I asked, "are they real?"

"Oh, certainly," he said. "They were visiting my brother and thought the whole thing great larks." Then he told me how the thing had been done. They had sent Miss Cullen to my car so as to get me out of the way, though she hadn't known it. Then he and his brother got off the train at the last stop, with the guns and masks, and concealed themselves on the platform of the mail car. Here they had been joined by the Britishers at the right moment, the disguises assumed, and the train held up, as already told. Of course, the dynamite

carriage was only a bluff, and the letters had been thrown about the car merely to confuse the clerk. Then, while Frederic Cullen, with the letters, had stolen back to the car, the two Englishmen had crept back to where they had stood. Here, as had been arranged, they opened fire, which Albert Cullen duly returned, and then joined them. "I don't see now how you snotted us," Frederic ended.

I told him, and his disgust was amusing to see. "Going to Oxford may be all right for the classics," he growled, "but it's destructive to gumption."

We rode into camp a pretty gloomy crowd, and those of the party waiting for us there were not much better. But when Lord Ralles dismounted and showed up in his substitute for trousers there was a general shout of laughter. Even Miss Cullen had to laugh for a moment. And as his lordship bolted for his tent I said to myself, "Honours are even."

I told the sheriff that I had recovered the lost property, but did not think any arrests necessary as yet. And, as he was the agent of the K. and

A., at Flagstaff, he didn't question my opinion. I ordered the stage out, and told Tolfree to give us a feed before we started. But a more silent meal I never sat down to, and I noticed that Miss Cullen didn't eat anything, while the tragic look on her face was so pathetic as nearly to drive me frantic.

We started a little after five and were clear of the timber before it was too dark to see. At the relay station we waited an hour for the moon, after which it was a clear track. We reached the half-way ranch about eleven, and while changing the stage horses I roused Mrs. Klostermeyer, and succeeded in getting enough cold mutton and bread to make two rather decent-looking sandwiches. With these and a glass of whiskey and water, I went to the stage, to find Miss Cullen curled up on the seat asleep, her head resting in her brother's arms.

"She has nearly worried herself to death ever since you told her that road agents were hung," Frederic whispered, "and she's been crying tonight over that lie she told you, and, altogether, she's worn out with travel and excitement."

I screwed the cover on the travelling glass and put it with the sandwiches in the bottom of the stage. "It's a long and a rough ride," I said, "and if she wakes up they may give her a little strength. I only wish I could have spared her the fatigue and anxiety."

"She thought she had to lie for father's sake, but she's nearly broken-hearted over it," he continued.

I looked Frederic in the face and said, "I honour her for it," and in that moment he and I became friends. "Just see how pretty she is!" he said, with evident affection and pride, turning back the flap of the rug in which she was wrapped.

She was breathing gently, and there was just a touch of weariness and sadness in her face that would appeal to any man. It made me gulp, I'm proud to say. And when I was back on my pony, I said to myself, "For her sake, I'll pull the Cullens out of this scrape if it costs me my position."

(To be Continued.)



I told the sheriff that I had recovered the lost property.

## ROYALIST DEMONSTRATIONS.

Count de Chambord Never Permitted Himself to Be Called a Kingly Title.

Baron Pierre de Coubertin, a leading French statesman, has written an article entitled "Royalists and Republicans," giving his impressions of political society in Paris, and this appears in The Century. M. de Coubertin says:

The master of Frohsdorf, since he could not be king of France, was content to be Count de Chambord. He judged the title to be worthy of him. The magnificent chateau of Chambord had been offered to him by national subscription the year of his birth, and he could not have borne a name more truly French. In speaking to him one addressed him simply as monsieur. He did not like to be designated as Henry V, albeit he had been proclaimed king in 1830, and several acts had even been executed under his authority. He never permitted in speaking or writing the words "sire" or "your majesty." In all such matters he showed tact as well as wisdom, but his followers would have preferred a bolder and less scrupulous chief. They sought perpetually to push him beyond legal limits.

For a long time they talked much of a coup d'etat, of an appeal to the army, of a sudden appearance in Paris. Later, when the pretender's age had rendered all such designs more than ever unrealizable, the royalists took refuge in exuberant and sterile manifestations. They congregated on fixed dates—on July 15, the prince's fête day, and on Sept. 29, his birthday. Royalty was proclaimed on all these occasions, not only as a right, but as a fact. Declarations were made that it was close at hand. The opportunity was improved to draw up violent indictments against the republic. To monarchy was attributed the power of healing all social ills, even as a mere touch of the king's hand had once, in the popular superstition, had the power to cure all persons afflicted with the "king's evil."

The functions of July 15 were more particularly of a religious nature. On Sept. 29 there were banquets, to which a democratic character was given. They took place at Paris in some cheap restaurant in the workmen's quarter. In the provinces the fête was celebrated in some grand, festooned with greens and with white sheets covered with the flower de luce cut out of gold paper. The notabilities of the royalist party were present and presided with a sort of smiling condescension. Landed proprietors hired big carriages and appeared with their farmer tenants and the servants of their household. A royalist journalist, who had come from Paris, addressed the assemblage over the dessert, and the joviality of the repast aiding, his burning peroration was followed by cries of "Vive le roi!" Many of those indulging in the cries did not fall to vote, all the same, for the republican candidates at the next elections. Finally an "address to the king" was proposed and enthusiastically approved.

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Lord Ralles was swearing over his trousers by this time, and was offer-