

THE IVORY PASS.

CHAPTER I.

In the year to which this narrative refers there was no more popular passenger guard on the Great South-Northern railway than David Finch. Not only was he liked by his fellow-passengers, he had also the good fortune to stand high in the esteem of the chief officers of his department, while the number of tips of which he was the recipient might be taken as a fair indication of his popularity with the travelling public.

David's duties lay chiefly in connection with one or other of the mail or express trains, one of them, which was worked by him every third week, being known as "the 5.15 p. m. fast." By the train in question, Mr. Greening, the cashier at head quarters, was in the habit once a month of forwarding to the cashier at Lowcastle a sum of money wherewith to pay the salaries of the staff, not merely at Lowcastle itself, but at a number of minor stations farther down the line. The amount thus forwarded averaged little short of a thousand pounds, and, with the exception of twenty pounds worth of silver, consisted wholly of sovereigns and half-sovereigns. It was locked up in a strong box clamped with iron, of which Mr. Greening held one key and the Lowcastle cashier another.

On a certain autumn afternoon, as daylight was fading into dusk and the terminus lamps were being lighted, two porters brought the box containing the monthly salaries out of Mr. Greening's office and deposited it in David Finch's van, which was in the rear of the 5.15 train, and in accordance with their instructions, did not lose sight of the van till the train was fairly under way. Besides the box the van contained a considerable quantity of passengers' luggage, together with quite a heap of official correspondence and documents of various kinds, which it was a part of David's duty to sort in readiness for distribution at the different stations down the line to which they were addressed.

Bunningfield, twelve miles away, and the first stopping-place, was reached in due course. Here David quitted his van as usual, in order to attend his passengers, in conjunction with his fellow-guard, whose van was next to the engine. As he stepped on the platform he did not neglect to shut his van door behind him.

For the ensuing three minutes all was hurry and apparent confusion, then the watchful driver got his signal, and a couple of seconds later the wheels of the engine began to revolve.

David, who had been having a last word with the station master swung himself on to the footboard of his van as it was passing him, and on opening the door, was on the point of stepping inside, when he was startled as he had rarely been startled before, by finding two men there, both of whom were utter strangers to him. He paused, with one foot on the step and the door in his hand, and then, involuntarily, his glance went past the men to the cash-box in the corner, which, however, was there, to all appearance just as he had left it.

Then he said, sternly: "Gentlemen, you ought to know that you have no business here—in fact, nobody has any right here but myself. I must stop the train and you must at once change into an ordinary compartment." As he spoke he put up an arm and laid his hand on the cord of communication between his van and the engine. By time it was quite dark outside, and the only light was that shed by the lamp in the roof of the van.

"Stop, stop, my good man," said the elder of the two strangers, as he laid a restraining hand on David's arm. "Not quite so fast, if you please. I suppose you don't know who I am? I thought not. Well, I am, Mr. Medwin, the recently elected director, and here is my authority for travelling by any train and in any vehicle which may suit my convenience."

As he spoke he extracted from his waistcoat pocket an ivory disc, about the size of a two-shilling piece, stamped on one side with the bearer's name, and on the other with that of the particular railway for which it was available, the whole forming a special kind of pass, common to most of the leading lines, but the use of which is restricted to the directors and chief officials of the service.

"My purpose this evening," resumed Mr. Medwin, "is to travel in your van as far as Lowcastle. I am projecting certain reforms in various departments, and am desirous of obtaining as much information at first hand as I possibly can, so that I shall probably have a few questions to put to you by-and-by. This gentleman is my amanuensis."

Evidently there was nothing left for David to say or do. The situation was not of his choosing; he could only submit and make the best of it.

Both the strangers were gentlemanly-looking, well-dressed men, and there was nothing about them calculated to create the slightest suspicion in David's mind that they were others than what Mr. Medwin asserted them to be. The younger of the two now proceeded to light a cigarette, while Medwin, standing under the lamp, with his legs a little way apart, employed himself in making entries in his note-book, as well as the jotting of the train would allow of his doing. David turned his back on them, and began the sorting of his papers.

A crashing blow on the head, darkness and insensibility.

A couple of minutes passed after David recovered consciousness before he could call to mind what had happened to him. Then it all came back to him in a flash. He was seated on the floor of the van, his back supported by a pile of luggage, and still feeling strangely sick and dizzy. A little distance away were the two men—the sham director and his so-called amanuensis—who were bending over the cash-box and trying to force it open by means of a small "jimmy" which the younger of the two had produced from the black leather-bag he had brought with him into the van.

Everything was clear to David now. The whole affair was nothing less than a skilfully-planned and daringly-executed scheme of robbery, and although the thieves had not yet succeeded in getting away with their booty, there seemed to be nothing to hinder them from doing so when the proper moment should arrive. There was a long down-grade tunnel into Lowcastle station through which the trains always ran at a greatly reduced speed, a fact of which the rogues would doubtless

take advantage to risk a leap from the van and so get clear away with their spoil. It made his blood boil to realize how helpless he was, for during the time he had been unconscious they had bound his wrists and ankles with some pieces of stout cord which it was not unlikely they had brought with them for that purpose.

Presently the efforts of the men proved successful. The lid of the box was pried open and the contents, in little bags of fifty sovereigns each, lay exposed to their greedy eye. But before touching the money they turned and confronted their prisoner.

"Look here, my friend," said the self-styled director, "no harm shall happen to you as long as you keep quiet and take matters as you find them. Neither can your employers in fairness hold you responsible for—"

He was interrupted by the other man. "The train is slackening speed!" he exclaimed. "What's the meaning of it? We are timed not to stop till we reach Lowcastle." The question was pointedly addressed to Finch.

"We are going up Shanbrook Down," answered the latter, "which is always a heavy pull for the engine. We shall be at the summit in five or six minutes, after which we shall go ahead again at full speed."

The men looked at each other and seemed satisfied. Then the first one spoke again. "As I was saying, the company can't in common fairness hold you responsible for this night's work. Any other guard in your place would have acted as you did. Remember, we are desperate men running a desperate risk, so do you take my advice and make the best of circumstances as they are; otherwise, I've a little article here which I shall not hesitate to use should you put me under the painful necessity of doing so."

As he spoke he drew from his hip-pocket a small revolver, and for a couple of seconds David felt its cold barrel pressed against his forehead. Then, with a meaning nod, the fellow turned away and together the two began to transfer the bags of sovereigns from the box to the black bag.

CHAPTER II.

Now, just on the brow of the Shanbrook incline there was a signal-box, and David felt nearly sure that from the top of the short flight of steps which gave access to it a certain face would be peering into the darkness with the sole object of obtaining a momentary glimpse of him as the train forged past at half speed—which fact was to him the dearest in the world.

The fact was that David's sweetheart, Lucy Ford, who was in a situation at Lowcastle, happened just then to be at home for her holidays. Lucy's parents lived in the village of Shanbrook, and her brother Ned was one of the two men who turn and turn about, had charge of the incline signal-box. Lucy, knowing that this was David's week for working the "5.15 fast," made a point of carrying her brother's supper to him, and of so timing matters as to reach the box about five minutes before the train in question was due, after which she would station herself on the little platform outside in readiness. Then would David's head, and half his body to boot, be protruded from the van window, and a wave of the hand and a cheery "good-night" would be exchanged between the lovers as the train sped on its way. Would Lucy be on the look-out for him to-night? Was the anxious query David now put to himself.

Lucy was on the look-out. But scarcely had the train passed before she burst into the signal-box, turning on her brother a frightened face from which every vestige of color had fled.

"Oh! Ned, Ned," she cried, "something has happened to Dave—I'm sure there has! He wasn't looking out for me as usual, so as the van passed I could see right into it, and there he was, sitting on the floor, with a patch of blood on the right side of his head, his eyes staring as white as catch sight of me, and his face as white as a sheet. And there were two men at the back of the van, bending over something, whose faces I couldn't see. There's been foul play, I'm sure there has," added the girl with a sudden break in her voice.

"Ned, Ned, what's to be done?"

Ned stared at his sister like one who feared she had taken leave of her senses. He was a well-meaning but somewhat stolid and slow-witted young fellow. He had been appointed to his present position only a few weeks before and was still somewhat puzzled by a sense of his own importance. Although startled and vaguely alarmed by Lucy's statement, couched as it was in such positive terms, he did not in the least doubt that her eyes had played her false, and so he proceeded to give her plainly to understand.

But the bare possibility of such a thing was indignantly scouted by Lucy. The scene inside the van had impressed itself on her brain with the vividness of an instantaneous photograph. All she could do was to urge her brother to at once telegraph a warning message to Claypool, the next station, whence it would be passed on to Lowcastle. But this Ned positively refused to do. He was naturally of a timid disposition, and was by no means minded to take upon himself so great a responsibility on what seemed to him such insufficient grounds. As likely as not, as he said a little sulkily, his doing so might result in his dismissal from the service. The express goods was due, he had his signals to attend to and she mustn't bother him any longer. Lucy made one last appeal to him, but to no purpose. He bade her a curt good-night and turned his back on her. The girl wrung her hands in despair as she went slowly down the steps that led from the box.

Three minutes later the express goods panted slowly up and then came to a stand at a score yards from the box. Ned Ford had not yet received the notification from Claypool that the 5.15 fast had passed that station, and till he should receive it the goods train could not proceed on its way.

Lucy, scarcely knowing what she was about, such was the conflict of emotions at work within her, had mechanically taken the footway which led from the signal-box by the side of the hedge that skirted the line in the direction of Shanbrook village, but when the goods train came to a stand she too, for no conscious reason, did the same.

At the point where she was standing she faced the guard's van in the rear of the train. She knew that in the course of a minute or two, it might be in the course of a few seconds, her brother would receive

the signal "line clear," and the goods-train would then be allowed to go on its way. Then all at once, where but a moment before there had been a great darkness, she saw her way clear before her. A low cry broke from her lips. Hastily parting the prickly branches of the hedge, she contrived to squeeze her way through, and then ran swiftly down the embankment and so round the rear of the train to the opposite side.

Scarcely had she achieved this before the engine gave vent to a shrill whistle as a notice to the guard to take off the brake. The wished-for signal had been given them; they were at liberty to proceed on their journey. Lucy had barely time to spring on to the footboard of the van and grasp with both hands the bar which ran along its side before there came a preliminary jerk at the leading truck which was repeated from one to another along the length of the train till, last of all, it reached the van and all but shook poor Lucy off her perch. Then the train began to gather way, and a few seconds later the signal-box was left behind, the guard, all unconscious of Lucy's presence on the other side, calling out from his van a gruff "good-night" to Ned Ford as he passed.

The train, now it had crossed the brow of the down, gathered momentum second by second, and was soon speeding through the darkness at the rate of forty miles an hour. Lucy, half kneeling, half crouching on the footboard, had wound her left arm tightly around the bar, while the fingers of her right hand clung to it with grim tenacity. It was a frightfully insecure position for one who was certainly not intended by nature to be the heroine of any such adventure. But what cannot love accomplish! Presently her sailor-hat blew off and was lost forever. Then the wind caught her hair in its unseen fingers, and tearing it from its fastenings, sent it streaming out in a wild tangle behind her. But Lucy only set her little white teeth harder than before, seeing in her mind's eye nothing save her lover's gaily face and staining eyes and the splash of blood just above his right temple.

The distance from Shanbrook signal-box to Claypool station is four miles and a half. The express goods was not booked to stop at the latter place, and unless it should be blocked by signal owing to its following so close on the heels of the passenger-train, Lucy would be compelled to go on with it to West Overton, six miles further. Fortunately for her the Claypool signals were set against it as it rounded the last curve before the steam-thrust of the train, causing the driver to bring his train up with a jolt and a jerk as though enraged at his enforced detention. With a heart breathing thanksgiving Lucy slipped off her perch, but not till two or three minutes had gone by could her cramped limbs be persuaded into doing her bidding.

A little later she was telling her story to Mr. Twyford, the Claypool station-master, a prompt and energetic official, who was inclined to take a very different view of the affair from that taking by Mr. Ned Ford.

"Look out for rear van 5.15 fast. Thieves supposed to be at work." Such was the message telegraphed to Lowcastle by Mr. Twyford within five minutes of his setting eyes on Lucy Ford.

Meanwhile, however, matters inside the van had taken an unexpected turn.

CHAPTER III.

Having transferred the whole of the cash from the box to their bag, our two rogues, finding themselves with some attention to the passengers' luggage, among which was a Saratoga trunk bearing the superscription of "Lady Silverdale." Surely among the belongings of so notable a personage there ought to be some little knick-knacks worth appropriating! Accordingly the "sweet persuasion" of the jenny was presently brought to bear on our ladyship's trunk.

It was while they were thus engaged that David Finch became aware of the presence of some hard substance interposed between his right leg and the floor of the van. Then he called to mind that at the moment he was struck down he was in the act of cutting the string he had just tied round a packet or documents to be left by him at Lowcastle Station. The substance in question, he was now convinced, must be his pocket knife which had dropped from his fingers when he was attacked. But how? He did not wait to answer the question, but there and then began to wriggle the lower part of his body with an almost perceptible movement, and at the same time to dilate and contract the muscles of his leg. Two minutes later the half of the knife had worked itself into view.

While thus employed, David, as a matter of course, kept a wary eye on the thieves, but so convinced were they of his helplessness, and so intent were they on what they were about, that several minutes passed without their bestowing as much as a glance on him. Although David was tightly bound at the wrists and ankles in other respects he was free. Watching his opportunity, he succeeded, by extending his arms and bending forward the upper part of his body, in gaining possession of the knife.

"But now I've got it, what better off am I?" he asked himself a moment later. He was powerless to use it. His wrists were so tied that it was out of the question he could himself cut the cord that bound them, and although, had he been alone, he might perhaps have contrived to sever the cord that held his ankles, placed as he was it would have been impossible to do so without attracting attention to what he was about. For a few moments his heart felt as heavy as lead—heavier than before his discovery of the knife. His chin dropped forward on his breast and hope died within him.

Then, all in a moment, a flash of inspiration—for nothing less did it seem—came to him. Bending forward as before, with the knife grasped by the fingers of his right hand, he succeeded in wedging the haft of it into the interstice formed by the hollows of his ankles, the cord with which his ankles were bound holding them firmly together. The knife, as already stated, was open, and the protruding blade was nearly as sharp as a razor. A quarter of a mile sufficed to sever the ligature that held David's wrists, after which it was the work of only a few more seconds to cut the cord which confined his lower limbs. Once more he was a free man.

Not for his life, however, durst he just then have made any further movement, not till he should have more fully recovered the use of his hands and feet, numbed and deadened by the tightness of his bonds.

General Agency

BOARD OF TRADE BUILDING, CANTERBURY STREET,

ST. JOHN, N. B.

Controlling the largest line of

BICYCLES REPRESENTED IN THE DOMINION.

Send Your Address for our

1896 Catalogue

Which we will forward as soon as published.

General Agent for the Maritime Provinces for

The Yost Writing Machine Co.,

American Typewriter Co.,

The Blickensderfer Typewriter Co.,

The Edison Mimeograph Typewriter

The Edison Automatic Mimeograph,

The Edison Hand Mimeograph,

The Duplograph Manufacturing Co.,

The Electric Heat Alarm Co., &c., &c

All kinds of bicycles, Typewriters and other intricate machines carefully repaired

Typewriter and Mimeograph

Supplies of all Kinds.

IRA CORNWALL, General Agent,

I. E. CORNWALL, Special Agent.

Once the younger of the two men glanced around, but seeing no change in David's position, and failing to notice that his cords were cut, he turned again to what he was engaged upon and concerned himself no further about his prisoner. By this time the lid of Lady Silverdale's trunk had been forced and inside it had been found an article which bore a suspicious resemblance to a jewel case. The men, as they bent over it, were agog with expectation. The revolver with which the elder man had threatened David had been placed by him on another trunk, ready to his hand in case of need.

For months he suffered from the baneful after effects of the trouble, and although he still endeavored to take his share of the farm work he found that it was very trying; he had become greatly weakened, had lost both appetite and ambition, and was tried both with the least exertion. He tried several remedies without deriving any benefit, and as one after the other had failed, he determined to give Dr. Williams' Pink Pills a trial.



The moment for action had come. Silent as a shadow David rose to his feet. It was the work of a second to grip each of the men firmly by the neck, send them crashing head foremost into the Saratoga trunk and jam the lid down on them. When, startled nearly out of their wits, they contrived to extricate themselves, it was to find themselves confronted by a stern-eyed man, grasping a revolver which was pointed full at them.

"Come one step nearer, and the first who does so is a dead man!" exclaimed David. "Back you go into that corner, and stir from there at your peril."

With ashen faces and trembling limbs, they did as they were ordered. There was that in Finch's bearing which convinced them he was not to be trifled with, and that if they wished to keep a whole skin they had better do as they were told. Besides which, they were craven at heart, as such rascals nearly always are.

"Well, of all things!" exclaimed Mr. Philbeach, the Lowcastle station-master as he read the message which had been telegraphed from Claypool. "That's the train the salaries come by. Our best plan will be to take time by the forelock and go and meet it."

Before ten minutes had gone by the yard shunting engine was carrying Mr. Philbeach and some half-dozen of his staff through the tunnel. At the further end they alighted and the engine was sent back. Before leaving the station orders had been given the signalman to block the down line, by which means the 5.15 would be pulled up just before entering the tunnel. Then Mr. Philbeach so disposed his men that they would be able to take possession of the rear van almost before the train should have come to a stand.

Great, however, was the surprise of that official when, on boarding the van, which he was first to do, he found David Finch guarding with a revolver over two cowering wretches, whose bravado, now that the tables had been so completely turned on them, had given place to the most abject fear. A pair of handcuffs for each of them was quickly forthcoming.

The elder of the two rascals proved to be a notorious *chevalier d'industrie* who had plied his calling, in one or other of his branches, for a number of years, and was well acquainted with the interior of more than one of her Majesty's prisons. The ivory pass put by him to such an ingenious, if nefarious, use proved to be a genuine one. About a week previously Mr. Medwin's bedroom in a certain London hotel had been surreptitiously entered in the middle of the night, and the ivory pass had been one of the articles stolen on that occasion.

The marriage of David Finch and Lucy Ford took place some three months after the events herein narrated. The grant of fifty guineas awarded Lucy by the directors of the company enabled the young couple to set up housekeeping in comfortable style.—Argosy.

LIFE ON A FARM.

ONE OF HARDSHIP AND CONSTANT EXPOSURE.

Frequently the Most Rugged Constitutions are Broken Down—A Prominent Farmer Tells of the Wonderful Recuperative Powers of a Famous Medicine.

From the Assiniboian, Saltcoats, N. W. T.

Everyone around Yorkton knows Mr. Dan Garry, and what a pushing active business farmer, he was until a gripple took hold of him, and when that enemy left him, how listless and unfitted for hard toil he became.

a certain cloudy night, but before his arrangements were completed the moon shone out and discovered his approach to the besieged citizens, who accordingly marched out and repulsed his forces—something which would have been impossible in the darkness. After that event all Byzantine coins bore the symbol of the crescent moon, which was always alluded to as the "Savior of Byzantium."

After many years the horde under Mohammed II. captured Constantinople. At that time the crescent was used everywhere and upon everything. Supposing that there must be magical power in the emblem the Mohammedans appropriated it and have since used it as their official decoration.

SCIENCE MAKES ANOTHER GIANT STRIDE.

And Gives to the World an Absolute Cure for Heart Disease and Dropsy—The Disease Can Now be Controlled in Thirty Minutes.

"For ten years I have suffered greatly from heart disease. Fluttering of the heart, palpitations and smothering spells have my life miserable. Everything was tried and done, as I thought. A short time ago the crisis came, and I was confined to my bed. As dropsy had set in, my physician said I must prepare my family for the worst. All this time I had seen Dr. Agnew's Cure for the Heart advertised, but did not think it could help me. As a last resort I tried it, and think of my joy when I received great relief from one dose. One bottle cured my dropsy, and brought me out of my bed; and five bottles have completely cured my heart. If you are troubled with any heart affection, and are in despair, as I was, use this remedy, for I know it will cure you." Mrs. James Adams, Syracuse, N. Y.

His Last Resource.

Crawling Christy—I'm going to South Africa.

Sitting Sammy—What for?

Crawling Christy—All the money what's been gathered this Lent for de poor is been sent down there to help the inhabitants.

A Cool Caress.

Girls and billard balls kiss each other with just about the same amount of real feeling.

VERY PLAIN WORDS.

The Claim of a Great Treatment—"For Kidney Disease Only."

Ninety Per Cent. of all Sickness Due to Faulty Kidney Work—If Uncertain as to an Ailment—Use Dodd's Kidney Pills.

The truth in a few words is always easily understood. The natural, the most effective kidney treatment ever known is Dodd's Kidney Pills.

"For kidney disease only" is very plain and to the point. This has been our motto from the first line ever printed concerning Dodd's Kidney Pills.

But where do kidney diseases begin on the list?

What proportion of the diseases that kill adult persons are really kidney diseases?

One of the most eminent and well-known doctors in the world answers this question and says: "Ninety per cent of all serious diseases arises from imperfect kidney work."

Then, if this be true, a good way to decide an uncertain ailment would be to take Dodd's Kidney Pills.

For, you see, that nineteen times out of twenty, you would be cured, while you were deciding what it was that ailed you. In this way a great many people have been cured and only know their trouble to be kidney disease by being cured by Dodd's Kidney Pills.