

ST. JOHN, N. B., SATURDAY, DECEMBER 29, 1900.

Romance of the Railroad.

A veteran civil engineer remarked the other day that his profession had been rather neglected in stories of the winning of the West. Much has been said of trappers, scouts, Indians fighters and cowboys but very little of the engineer. Yet he was and is in the very forefront of progress, not only in the West, but also in Central and South America, South Africa, India, China and wherever else civilization is advancing.

"Often the camp life of the engineer was rough enough, heaven knows," said the veteran. "I remember on one of the great railroads of the Far West at one time the locating party at the front was in charge of a man who had lived in camp, slept on the ground, used tin cups and tin plates, for twenty-five years. Naturally he had lost sight of a great many of the amenities of civilized life. To him was sent a young man just graduated from a large Eastern college who has since risen to a very high position, but who, at that time, still retained the customs of the effete East. Meeting the captain at the breakfast table the morning after his arrival the young fellow said, 'Good morning, captain,' and the captain gruffly replied, 'G'mornin'.' The second morning the same thing occurred, save that the reply was gruffer. But when the third day came, bringing the same polite salutation, the captain could stand it no longer, but bellowed out:

'Look here, young feller, what the blank do I care if it is a good mornin'?'

'I have been out in the Wyoming hills in the dead of winter, with the mercury 34 degrees belows, and when we ate our noon lunch out in the line, we had to build a sage-bush fire and thaw out the solidly frozen food. But it tasted good despite the sage-bush flavor. Yet at camp, we were not very uncomfortable. A tent is about the hottest place on earth when you have a roaring fire, especially if the snow is barked around it a foot or so deep, thus preventing ventilation. At this same camp we had alkali water that was entirely undrinkable; all our water was prepared by melting snow, of which there was no lack.

'This alkali water, by the way, was one of the hardest propositions we had in the opening of the west. At one point on the line of the Southern Pacific we had to have water hauled forty-four miles. In a temperature which was often 110 degrees at midnight you can imagine what kind of water it was by the time it arrived. You could make watch chains of it, it seemed so valuable.

'It was on this survey, by the way, that one of the men, a Chinaman, stopped perspiring about 2 P. M. and was dead at 5. He was laid out that night as decently as possible and buried in the sand in the morning and a holiday was declared. The party sat around all the forenoon looking very glum; by the middle of the afternoon a few of the most cheerful started a little game of cards, in the evening card playing and singing became general and the next morning on the way out to work some one said, looking over the crowd: 'Well, I wonder which one of you will give me the next holiday?' Nor was this remark so heartless as it sounds. It was prompted by the daredevil spirit that opened the West. Only a man capable of saying such a thing would have faced the blazing sun and burning sands of the Colorado desert in southern California in July.

'As a general thing, except in the swamps, the health of an engineering party is good. They get plenty of exercise, and they have a wise chief engineer he will see to it that his parties are well supplied in the commissary line. Our great trouble, and a very prevalent and painful one in the winter, is snow blindness. It is temporary, to be sure, but it is frightful to bear. One of the favorite precautions against it is to blacken the face with a piece of burnt cork. It is a grotesque spectacle to see what is apparently a company of negro minstrels engaged in laying out curves on a location. Still more grotesque, though pitiful, was a sight I saw one day after a heavy snowfall in Utah. Five of our men were stone blind, and I went over to their tent to see what I could do for them and to console with them. The sight that met my gaze was comical. The

five men were huddled close around the stove, on which each had placed his pet curative decoction; tea leaves, a cracker poultice or whatever else he believed in, and they were squabbling like so many Kilkenny cats over the contents of the kettles; what place each should have on the stove; the merits of each remedy, and besides were quarrelling on general principles.

'Singing in camp is a great boon to men shut away for a time from the world, and many enjoyable choruses I have listened to. Strangely enough, solos are not popular. One young level-headed fellow had a beautiful voice, and was fond of using it. One night he had been rather monopolizing things, and wound up by warbling 'Then You'll Remember Me.' He sang it well, very well. But a certain old veteran teamster, a dry old chap, who did not like the young man, quietly rolled over finally and remarked: 'Say, Jim, them's beautiful words. What a darned shame they never was set to music!' The criticism was absolutely crushing.

'That same teamster was quite a character. He was well to do, and did not have to work, but as he could not read or write and did not drink, he had very few resources to make the time pass, so he followed the only life which suited him. He had a young daughter whom he idolized, and whom he had placed at an expensive girls' school. She wrote to him every week and each Sunday he procured the assistance of one of the party to write the reply. This went on for quite a while, until one Sunday his amanuensis was impelled by the evil spirit to couch the entire letter in sonorous polysyllables. When it was complete he read it over to the old man with some trepidation. As the reading progressed it was seen that he had made no mistake. When he was about half through the old man was thoroughly enthusiastic and could hold out no longer. Slapping his thigh, he almost shouted: 'That's right, young feller! Give her blank! Blank, blank her, she's educated!'

'Out on the Nebraska prairies thirty years ago it was customary to dig rifle pits and to take turns at standing guard. It was all an Indian country then, and we all went out to work carrying rifles with us. One whole party of twenty four men was never heard of after reaching the Republican River. The Indians of that region were the Sioux, Cheyennes and Arapahoes, than whom no tribe was fiercer or more warlike, save perhaps the detested Apache.

'And to be snowed in up in the mountains; to be in doubt whether your supplies will reach you in time; to work in snow four feet deep, and in water to your arm pits; to ford streams so rapid that your feet are carried from under you; to make your way along cliffs where no one but eagles have preceded you; to wade through noisome swamps; to fight snakes, tarantulas, scorpions, gila monsters, mosquitoes, sand bees, black flies—these make up the reverse side of the shield, and are experiences lovely only in retrospect.

'When it comes to construction, all depends on what kind of a residence you get. If the work is heavy, with rock work, bridges, retaining walls, &c., you are fortunate, for the work must be slow; but if it is flat held work in the open country you will have to hustle for all you're worth to keep out of the way of your contractors. There were plenty of contractors on the great plains of the West in early days, whose forces were large enough to build a mile of light work in a day, and that with the old-fashioned slusher scraper. In these days of wheel scrapers and grading machines the bustle is still greater, for it you happen to have two or three outfits of this capacity they will keep you on the jump for the first little while.

'Much, too, depends on the character of your contractors. Nowadays very little trouble, except on purely technical points, is experienced in this regard, but the time was in the west and south when it took all of an engineer's nerve, at times, to enforce his specifications. There have been a good many instances of fist fighting, much revolver and Winchester work, and not a few murders committed on this score in

the wild and woolly west.

'One of the pleasant episodes of an engineer's experience is to locate a line in a well-settled and wealthy farming country, where all hands are anxious for the road to be built. Then, indeed, he is in clover, nothing is too good for him.

EXPERTS AS TO A BOYS AGE.

Doctor and a Barber Disagree and the Court Sides With the Barber.

A youth clad in the shabbiest garments imaginable, but wearing a one karat diamond ring, furnished a problem in the criminal court that required the wit and ingenuity of experts to solve. It was necessary to ascertain the lad's age and before a satisfactory estimate was made several attorneys, a barber, a veterinary surgeon and a judge had passed judgement unsuccessfully. The boy is known to the police as "Doc" Silcote. He was before Judge Baker on the charge of having stolen 284 pounds of bullion from a freight car on a Union Pacific sidetrack near the smelter.

When arraigned Silcote entered a plea of not guilty. His attorney informed the court that he desired to withdraw the plea and admit his guilt. If he were of legal age, as alleged in the complaint, the admission of guilt would send him to the penitentiary; otherwise he would escape with the reform school.

'Doctor, come here,' commanded the court. 'How old are you?'

'I never knew,' replied the lad.

'It's going to be hard work to tell this boy's age,' observed the Court. 'Do any of the complainants know anything about him?'

Detective Vizzard of the Union Pacific Railroad company attempted to prove that Silcote has been stealing so long he must be more than 16, but the court would not accept deductions for evidence. One of the attorneys then jokingly made a remark that was taken seriously.

'There is a man skilled in horsecraft,' he said pointing to a veterinary surgeon among the spectators.

'Bring him up,' instructed the Judge, 'and let's see if he can give us a clue.'

The veterinary expressed the opinion that Silcote is more than 16 as he had several teeth youngsters do not enumerate among their molars.

As a precedent for expert testimony had been established, an attorney for the defense asked leave to call a barber from the crowd to express an expert opinion on Silcote's beard. The barber thought he must be younger than 16.

The court ruled finally that Silcote is under legal age and cannot be sent to the penitentiary. He will be sentenced to a term in the reform school.

Exciting Chase.

A young man had taken his wheel, in making a journey of several hundred miles to inspect some Western land. In the course of his trip he crossed a large prairie field, broken in the middle by a high transverse ridge. Says Rev. C. T. Brady, who tells the story:

When he had climbed the ridge and mounted his wheel to proceed, he noticed what the rise of ground had obscured; that the field was filled with Texas cattle, grazing in little bunches of ten to fifty. Just as he started one of the 'long-horns' caught sight of him, and the bunch followed its leader to investigate. The young man naturally quickened his pace, and the cattle took after him.

Presently other bunches caught the contagion of pursuit, and all the cattle started upon a grand man-hunt.

The trail was straight and level, leading to a big gate. The boy bent over his wheel and pedaled for his life. He could hear the bellowing of the cattle and the pounding of their feet behind him; but he looked neither to right nor left. What should he do when he reached the gate?

No matter. All his mind was fixed upon the necessity of keeping ahead. He neared the gate, and it was open. He dashed through like a flash of lightning, lost his pedals, struck a rock, was pitched off and lay senseless on the ground.

It had happened that the man who owned the range was visiting it at that moment. He had seen the boy in his race for life, and had opened the gate to let him pass through. Then, with two or three attendants, he rode in and headed off the herd.

The Alternative.

'Well, Daisy, shall we pay the house or give a dinner?'

'Why, give the dinner, of course. What good will paid up house rent do us if we lose our social position?'

A Criminal With a History.

'I have paid out more than \$50,000 in lawyers' fees and more than \$75,000 to detectives. Now I am broken down and haven't a cent. I have a sister who tells me that she has a burial lot for me beside my mother and that I shall be decently buried. The world is against me. But I am about at the end of my story. If the world had been half as kind to me when I was free as Warden Shideler has been since I've been a convict, I wouldn't be here now. I've wanted to reform but couldn't. If someone would just take charge of me and give me light work, I would never betray the trust.'

The man who said this is known at the Indiana Northern prison as convict 1163, and he was convicted of forgery at Terre Haute three years ago and sentenced to three years confinement. He is in feeble health and his thirty-six years of crime have told heavily upon him. When arrested he gave his name as John Doe and was sent to prison under that cognomen. His real name is Albert V. Ward, and it is his boast that, though his frauds have netted him more than \$500,000, he never swindled a man who was not able to lose the money of which he was robbed. As an illustration of this he points to the fact that just before his conviction at Terre Haute, he returned \$800 worth of diamonds to a Chicago jeweller when he learned that his victim was heavily in debt, and the loss of the gems would ruin him.

Ward will not discuss his career prior to the time he first came into prominence in 1863. He came of good family, however, and was well educated. He enlisted in the Union Army in 1862 and was at Washington on a furlough in 1863. There he had a quarrel with Orderly Sergeant Matthews and, taking Matthews' pistol from him, shot him dead. He escaped to Baltimore, where he made arrangements for his defence and then returned and surrendered to the Washington officers. His trial was a noted one. Daniel W. Voorhees, Henry S. Lane and Albert G. Porter, all of New York, defended him. The first trial resulted in the death penalty, but a new trial was granted and he was sentenced to eight years at hard labor. Ward was highly connected in New York and his friends secured a pardon from President Lincoln. The killing of Matthews is believed to have been his first step in crime, but when he left prison he found that his old friends had turned against him. Embittered against them he went South and enlisted in the Confederate Army, receiving a commission as Captain and serving in the Twelfth Mississippi and on the staff of Gen. Breckinridge.

Soon after his enlistment he was detached from staff duty and sent to Canada to bring home some Confederate prisoners who had escaped from the North and were then in British territory. When he had gathered thirty six men together he concluded to go into the bounty-jumping business. The men met him at Augusta, Me., and each received \$200 bounty. The thirty-six men deserted at once and met Ward in Boston and again enlisted. Again they deserted and went to New London, Conn., where they enlisted again. This was reported at Trenton, N. J., and then the Confederates went South. Ward says that he made \$24,850 out of his bounty-jumping operations. Then he went to New York city to have a good time. It was there that he met the conspirators who were arranging to burn the city. Ward declares that he knew nothing of the conspiracy until afterward and, though he came within an ace of being hanged, he protests that it was the merest coincidence that entangled him in the web.

About the time he reached New York a number of agents of the Confederate Government assembled there for the purpose of destroying the city. At Fort Lafayette Ward found Capt. Allison of Henderson, Ky., and put forward the claim that Allison was a British subject, thus securing his release. Ward then went with Allison to search for Capt. Kennedy, a Confederate, who was in the plot to burn the city, and was located at the Metropolitan Hotel. He was out, however, when Ward and Allison called, but Allison wrote Ward's name on a card and left it for him with a

request that he call at the St. Nicholas. Ward was in company with a Sheridan Shook, a man named Herron and Newton, a gold pen maker, when Kennedy arrived, and upon the latter's request for money Ward gave him \$100 in a single bill and Shook changed it for him. Ward then went to a resort where he gave a wine supper and while thus engaged the hotels were fired by the conspirators. Ward was arrested and when taken to the police station learned that Kennedy had engaged rooms at a number of hotels and at each had placed a stick of phosphorus in the bedding. In one of the rooms was found the card with Ward's name on it. Kennedy escaped to Vermont but was arrested and returned to New York. Col. Beal and a sixteen-year-old boy named Anderson were arrested at Suspension Bridge. Kennedy declared that Ward was the authorized agent of the Confederacy.

Ward says that the boy Anderson gave away the conspiracy to Gen. Dix to wreck trains on the Erie and to capture the steamer Philo Parsons on Lake Erie among many others. He exonerated Ward, but persons had seen the latter give Kennedy the one hundred dollar bill and Shook had changed it for him. John F. Brady and Charles O'Connor defended Ward after a trial of seventeen days he was found guilty by the court-martial, sentenced to death and sent to Fort Lafayette to be executed. Kennedy was executed in February 1865, and Ward was doomed to die in March. It was here that Ward's Indianapolis friends proved valuable to him again. The Rev. Dr. Gurley was pastor of the First Presbyterian church of that city at the time. Ward's mother came here and through the minister secured a stay of execution from President Lincoln. The latter gave assurances of ultimate pardon to Ward, and after the president's death the prisoner was taken to the Dry Tortugas where he was afterwards released on the order of President Johnson.

Ward returned to Indiana after his release, but his relatives turned the cold shoulder upon him. It was evident that they interceded for his life more to avoid the disgrace of having a relative hanged than because they cared anything for him. Leaving here he went into all kinds of excesses of crime and became a confidence man, gambler and all around sport. With forged letters of introduction he went to Boston and was for a time something of a social lion. He does not know how much money he secured through forged credentials, for he spent it as fast as he got it, but he remembers very well that his life in Boston cost him thirty months in the penitentiary. When he got out he went to New York, bought a hotel and paid for it with forged paper and served two years in Sing Sing for the act. He next floated a huge swindling scheme in Kansas City and was sent to the Missouri Penitentiary for three years. Ward talks of his episodes in his career with relish. One of these was when he disguised himself as a countryman and permitted himself to be tailed into a gambling place at Long Branch, where he played laro and the bank was forced to close when he was \$31,000 winner. Another episode of which he talks was when he went to Cincinnati and struck up a deal with Washington McLean for the latter's country residence. The purchase price was fixed at \$160,000 and Ward handed over \$165,000 in forged drafts, got \$5,000 in change and skipped the town.

It is a matter of chagrin, that he should now be serving a term of seven years for the magnificent crime of trying to raise \$100 by forgery. He found himself at Terre Haute and got \$100 from Charles Baues on a forged draft, but the police nabbed him before he could shake the dust of the town of his feet and he is now serving the State with little hope of living out the term for which he was sentenced. He says his record is against him and he has no hope of parole or pardon.

She—I do believe you forgot that this was our wedding day's third anniversary.

He—Indeed I didn't. I just met the second of the notes I negotiated to buy the furniture when we were married.