

### By the Midnight Train.

By Fidelity.

"You're not going out again to-night, Leonard?" It is too late! said his sister Olga.

"I must, but I won't be long. Don't sit up for me."

Several hours later she was rising to extinguish the lamp before retiring to her own room, when she heard the sound of a key being turned in the front door, and fearing lest Leonard should be angry if he found her still up, she slipped behind a curtain, that was drawn across the window, to wait until he had gone to his room. To her dismay, however, her brother was not alone.

His good friends Kroutabki and Schreiber were with him, and they began to speak it once, evidently continuing a conversation.

"You understand what you have to do," said Schreiber, addressing Leonard. "I will tell you once more, that you can make no mistake. The train bearing that infernal villain passes your station here at twelve forty o'clock and reaches Redville at one fifteen. You must get in here leave the train at Redville, and mind you select the carriage in front of the saloon, and leave your parcel under the seat as close to the partition as you can get it. If it is an empty compartment so much the better, but you must risk that."

"How long will it last as it is?" asked Leonard in faltering tones.

"For an hour and a half, it is set to go off at one twenty, and the train will be half way between Redville and Letterham then. That gives you plenty of time, moon and even allowing for delays."

Olga remembered that Captain Cunningham was quartered at Letterham, and that he was dining in London that night, and would almost certainly go back by the midnight train. With a tremendous effort she controlled the trembling which seized her, fearful of missing a word. But the conspirators left almost immediately, first carrying into the room a square package done up in brown paper, and placing it carefully on a chair.

As in a dream Olga watched Leonard through a rent in the curtain. Having drunk up some whiskey, he picked up his burden and set himself out at a door. Within five minutes a closely veiled figure was following him, and the brother and sister reached the station simultaneously. They took tickets for Redville and Letterham respectively. Olga getting into a compartment at the end of the train, and Leonard entering the one next the saloon carriage.

At Redville both got out, and Olga hid the satisfaction of seeing her brother hurry away while she speedily took his place, and perceived to her horror that a man in a fur coat was asleep in one corner.

She had learned from a porter that the train stopped once more halfway to Letterham and with all her heart she prayed that the awful thing might not go off until she could get out with it at the little roadside station. She sat trembling from head to foot.

At last came a shrill whistle, and with her heart beating in her throat, as it seemed to her, Olga began to grope under the seat.

The man in the fur-lined coat sat up.

"Can I help you to find anything?" he asked and Olga saw that one of her fears was realized, for it was Hugh Cunningham.

"No, please don't—don't touch it," she gasped, and, as the train stopped, she lifted the parcel and placed it on the seat.

It was very heavy and from it came a terrible ticking sound, which the noise of the train had prevented them from hearing before.

"Olga!" he exclaimed, "What is this?"

He got out quickly but in the delay caused by having to give up his ticket he lost sight of her, and she ran swiftly down the dark road away from the station.

She dared not go too far. A gate leading into a big field invited her to enter. She did so, and having set down the awful package, turned back again with long sobbing breaths. As she reached the gate an explosion rent the air, and with a wall of anguish mingled with relief Olga fell into Hugh's arms.

Perfect confidence reigned between Captain and Mrs. Cunningham, except on one point. He has never sought to learn how she became acquainted with the plot to assassinate the Russian minister, and when Olga receives her American letters he does not ask to see them. And each mail makes her happier, for it brings word of honest work, and true repentance, and a real gratitude to the brave little sister who saved Leonard Thurston from bearing the brand of Cain.

The possibility of one person's finger tip being identical with that of another in one chance in 64,000,000,000.

### PLAQUE OF CALCUTTA.

Little Green Insects a Plague of the Indian City.

One of the "evils" of Calcutta is the plague of green flies, from which the whole city suffers at certain times in the year, says Answers. The happy hunting time of these minute insects is during the late autumn and early winter. They are a serious nuisance both in and out of doors. They wing their way through all the open doors into the houses and into every room, making life unbearable.

Like most insects, the little green flies have a great affection for the flame. On occasions the inhabitants have found it necessary to put out all the gas lights—even at a public dinner—and to take their meals practically in deep gloom, illuminated only by flickering candles.

Naturally, it is not at all pleasant to go on getting with dense clouds of insects swarming overhead or roasting to death, falling about one in patterning showers.

They seem to spring into existence from nowhere; perhaps it is almost dusk when the lights of the street lamps are becoming visible. Then suddenly the air, which a moment before was quite clear, is full of myriads of green flies, drifting in misty patches, and obscuring the street lamps.

Often the number of insects which have been scorched to death is so great that little heaps of them collect inside the lamps while bucket loads have to be swept up from the roads next morning.

Not Courage, But Foolhardiness. Boys of a certain age of ten come under the influence of others naturally more headstrong and reckless and run away. Not one in a thousand escapes without a great deal of trouble. The cheap novels and newspaper accounts stimulate such escapades.

Last week a characteristic instance occurred. Five boys believed to have run away from their homes in Richmond, Va., got on the top of a Santa Fe express coach between Chicago and Joliet, Ill., one or two having "dared" the rest. The rest, many of them, when they were seized by the police was that almost from the first moment it was awful. We had to lie on our backs in order to hold on and the red hot cladders burned our faces. The Richmond boy, Bullcock, could not endure this, and he stood up. The next instant his head came in contact with a bridge and he was buried back on the roof. We managed to grab him before he rolled off and clung on until the first stop was made, which was at Joliet.

During every moment after that accident the five who escaped were in mortal terror lest they should be brushed off from their insecure perch and meet a worse fate. As for the boy whose head struck the bridge, it was believed that his skull was fractured and he is now in the hospital.

Might Have Hurt the Railroad. Will Irwin, the writer, tells this case on himself:

Riding recently in a parlor car I fell asleep and dreamed that I was being attacked by a band of train robbers. Springing to my feet, I leaped upon the nearest robber, grasped him around the neck and proceeded to pommel him. Suddenly awakening I was covered with confusion, a tangled mass. Men are running every way, wagons seem to be dumping their loads promiscuously, but every wagon is fettered by numbers, so is every box or trunk, and all have their proper places. This great jumble of wagons, groaning and creaking in the soft turf and men shouting and singing is all working as one great whole to an end.

But, although they all work together, each man is taught to think for himself, and when a man shows ability, he is soon noticed. One instance of this was afforded by a young man who was studying medicine in the winter, and thought a season in the fresh air would harden him for his next winter's work. The only job he could get was as a canvas man. But he was able to think for himself, and promotion soon came.

The circus child is not taught by blows, but by kindness and patience, and the circus management insists that every child shall go to school in winter.

Swadeshi. In the sense in which Sir William Harcourt remarked, "We are all socialists now," it may be said that Anglo-Indians are believers in Swadeshi. While all reasonable Anglo-Indians deprecate the senseless agitation and the unsound economics of the extremist advocates of Swadeshi principles, they are all anxious to assist that natural development of indigenous industries and the creation of new ones upon which the future prosperity of the country so largely depends.

American Disregard of Wealth. The American people are, on the whole and by average, less afraid in their pursuit of wealth and especially so in the relative importance which they ascribe to wealth, than other people on earth.

Another Objection. "There's one great objection to the flying machine," said Mr. Sirius Barker, "and that's the question of safety appliances."

"It can carry a parachute."

"Yes, but a parachute looks a much like an umbrella that every time you want to use it you're sure to find it has been borrowed."

### CAVE SNAKES OF BELANGOR.

Their Curious Coloration and How It is Suited to Their Habits.

About ten years ago H. N. Ridley made an exploration of the limestone caves at Belangor in the Malay peninsula with the object of ascertaining whether they contained any form of animals, especially adapted for life in complete darkness.

The results were disappointing. Neither blind, large eyed nor colorless animals such as inhabit caves in temperate regions were discovered. However, it was found that a snake, Culber tanularis, lives in the caves, where it feeds exclusively on the bats sheltering there in extreme abundance, and that these examples are much paler in color than the typical form of this widely distributed species, which inhabits eastern Asia from China to the Malay Archipelago, and attains a length of 7 1/2 feet.

Mr. Ridley thus describes the coloration of the cave specimens: The top of the head is bluish gray and there is a black line about an inch long through the eye toward the neck. The neck and back are of a pale ochraceous color, each scale being tipped with lamellinae, getting paler toward the tail; the centre of the back is yellowish, and the belly pale yellowish white along the sides runs a purplish gray bar, becoming darker or black toward the tail.

The coloration is remarkably suited to the habits of the snakes which frequent the darkest portion of the caves, living at a considerable distance from the mouth, but it may sometimes be met with at the mouth. It has a habit of resting on the ledges of rocks in the neighborhood of the exits of the caves, with the head hanging over the edge, so as to capture the bats as they fly in and out.

The walls of the caves, though of white crystalline limestone, are not pure white but of a pale ochraceous yellow, and here and there are black veins running usually vertically down the sides. The coloring of the snake is so exactly that of the walls, the black lines on the tail representing the shadow of a crack or projecting vein that the animal when at rest on the walls is often exceedingly difficult to see and readily escapes observation, even on the part of those on a careful lookout for them.

Messrs. Anandale and Robinson, who also observed the snake in the Belangor and Belangor caves, say it is usually found in the darkest part of the caves, but thought it seemed dazed and perturbed when suddenly brought out into a bright light it soon regains normal vision.

Circus Lessons. Discipline is one of the staples in the circus system, says a writer in the Cosmopolitan. In the modern circus no swearing is allowed, and women and children are heard to. Cards, dice and drink are prohibited. This is not the conception which the public holds concerning circus people, but strength and steady nerves are needed for circus feats, and discipline of any kind, would soon leave the performers without a profession.

When a big American circus was abroad, the German Emperor came one night to see it and watched them unload the fat cars. Their system so impressed him that he had some of the officers of the German army see it and adopt some of their methods.

In landing the circus child the first man there is the "sayer-out." He generally decides in about ten minutes where his tent is to be pitched. As the building of the walls of the city proceeds, everything seems to be confusion, a tangled mass. Men are running every way, wagons seem to be dumping their loads promiscuously, but every wagon is fettered by numbers, so is every box or trunk, and all have their proper places. This great jumble of wagons, groaning and creaking in the soft turf and men shouting and singing is all working as one great whole to an end.

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