

## CHAPTER XXIX.

In which certain Incidents are told which are never met with except on Railroads in the United States.

That evening the train proceeded without interruption; passed Fort Saunders, crossed Cheyenne Pass, and arrived at Evans' Pass. Here the railroad reached its greatest elevation, eight thousand and ninety-one feet above the sea. The track was now downhill all the way to the Atlantic, across naturally level plains. From here the Grand Trunk Line led to Denver, the capital of Colorado State, rich in gold and silver mines, and boasting more than fifty thousand inhabitants.

Three days and three nights had now been passed in accomplishing one thousand three hundred and eighty-two miles; four days and four nights more would suffice to reach New York, and Phileas Fogg had not lost time.

During the night they had passed Camp Walbach, and entered Nebraska at eleven, passing Julesburg on the south branch of the Platte river. It was here that General Dodge inaugurated the Union Pacific road on the 23rd of October, 1867. Here two powerful locomotives with nine carriages full of guests stopped, three cheers were given, the Sioux and Pawnee Indians had a sham fight, fireworks were let off, and the

first number of a paper called *The Railway Pioneer* was printed in a press carried in the train.

Fort MacPherson was passed at eight in the morning; they had still three hundred and fifty-seven miles to go to Omaha. At nine o'clock the train stopped at North Platte, a town built between the two arms of the river.

The hundred-and-first meridian was now passed.

Mr. Fogg and his partner had resumed their whist; none of them, not even the dummy, complained of the length of the journey. Fix had at first won several guineas which he now seemed about to lose, but he was not a less passionate player than Fogg. Fortune distinctly favoured that gentleman, and showered trumps and honours upon him.

On one occasion he was on the point of playing a spade, when a voice behind him said, "I should play a diamond."

The players all looked up, and beheld Colonel Proctor. He and Fogg recognised each other at the same moment.

"Oh, you are that Britisher, are you?" exclaimed the Colonel. "So you are going to play a spade?"

"Yes, and I play it too," replied Fogg coldly, as he threw down the

ten.

"Well, I choose to have diamonds," said Proctor insolently. He made a movement as if to seize the card just played, adding, "You know nothing about whist."

"Perhaps I do, as well as other people," said Fogg, rising.

"You have only got to try, you son of a John Bull," said the stout man.

Mrs. Aouda now turned very pale; she seized Fogg by the arm, and pulled him back. Passe-partout was quite ready to throw himself upon the American, who continued to regard his adversary with an insolent stare, but Fix rose and said, "You forget that this is my business, sir; I was not only insulted, but struck."

"Mr. Fix, excuse me," said Fogg; "this is entirely my business. By pretending that I did not know how to play, the Colonel has insulted me, and shall give me satisfaction."

"When and where you please," said the American; "name your weapons."

Aouda tried to keep Mr. Fogg back; the detective also tried to make the quarrel his own; Passe-partout wanted to throw the Colonel out of the window, but a sign from his master checked him. Mr. Fogg left the

car, and the American followed him to the platform.

"Sir," said Fogg, "I am in a great hurry to return to Europe; any delay will be very prejudicial to my interest."

"What is all that to me?" said the Colonel.

"Sir," continued Fogg, very politely, "after our dispute at San Francisco, I had promised myself to return to America and find you out, when I had finished my business in England."

"Really!"

"Will you meet me six months hence?"

"Why don't you say six years?"

"I said six months," said Fogg, "and I shall not fail to be at the rendezvous."

"This is all humbug," cried Proctor; "it must be now or never."

"Very well," said Mr. Fogg; "are you going to New York?"

"No."

"To Chicago?"

"No."

"To Omaha?"

"It can't matter to you. Do you know Plum Creek?"

"No," replied Mr. Fogg.

"It is the next station. We shall stop there ten minutes; we shall have lots of time to exchange shots."

"All right," replied Mr. Fogg; "I will stop at Plum Creek."

"I guess you will stay there altogether," replied the American, with unparalleled insolence.

"Who knows?" replied Mr. Fogg, entering the car as coolly as ever, and commenced to reassure Mrs. Aouda, by telling her that braggarts need never be feared. He then asked Fix to be his second in the approaching duel, which Fix could not well refuse to be; and then Phileas Fogg sat down quietly and resumed his whist, without betraying the least emotion.

At eleven o'clock the whistle of the engine announced their approach

to Plum Creek. Mr. Fogg got up, and followed by Fix and Passe-partout, carrying a brace of revolvers, went out upon the platform. Mrs. Aouda remained in the car, as pale as death.

At that moment the door of the next car opened, and Colonel Proctor appeared, followed by his second, a Yankee of the same stamp as himself. They were about to descend when the guard ran up and said, "You cannot get out, gentlemen."

"Why not?" demanded the Colonel.

"We are twenty minutes late, and cannot stop."

"But I am going to fight a duel with this gentleman."

"I am very sorry," said the guard, "but we must be off at once; there is the bell ringing."

As he was speaking the train started.

"I am really extremely grieved, gentlemen," said the guard, "and under any other circumstances I should have been able to have obliged you. But though you cannot stop to fight, there is nothing to prevent your doing so as you go along."

"Perhaps that would not suit that gentleman," said the Colonel in a

jeering tone.

"It will suit me quite well," replied Phileas Fogg.

"Well, we are actually in America, I see," thought Passe-partout; "and the guard is a gentleman of the highest standing."

The two adversaries, their seconds, and the guard passed down to the rear of the train. The last car had only about a dozen passengers in it, and the conductor asked them if they would mind moving, as the two gentlemen had a little affair of honour to settle.

The passengers were very glad to oblige the gentlemen, and they retired accordingly.

The car, about fifty feet long, was very suitable for the purpose. The combatants could advance towards one another between the seats, and fire at their leisure. Never had there been a duel more easy to arrange. Mr. Fogg and Colonel Proctor, each carrying a six-barrelled revolver, entered the car. Their seconds, having locked them in, withdrew to the platform. The duellists were to begin to fire at the first whistle of the engine, then, after a lapse of two minutes, what remained of the two gentlemen would be taken from the car.

Nothing could be easier. It was even so simple, that Fix and Passe-partout could hear their hearts beating as they listened.

Everyone was on the qui vive for the first whistle, when suddenly savage cries resounded, accompanied by shots, which certainly did not come from the duellists. On the contrary, the reports rose all along the train; cries of terror were heard inside the cars.

Colonel Proctor and Mr. Fogg, revolvers in hand, were hastily released, and rushed forward into the thick of the struggle, when they perceived that the train had been attacked by a band of Sioux. This was not the first time that this hardy tribe had attacked the train. According to custom, they leaped on the footboards as the train proceeded, as easy as a circus-rider would mount a horse at full gallop. The Sioux were armed with guns, to which the passengers replied with revolvers. The Indians had first mounted the engine, and stunned the engine-driver and firemen with blows on the head. A chief wished to stop the train, but not knowing how to do so had opened instead of closing the regulator, and the train was now proceeding at tremendous speed. Others of the tribe had entered the cars as actively as apes, and were now engaged in a hand-to-hand fight with the passengers. They pillaged the baggage-waggon, and were all the time fighting incessantly.

The travellers defended themselves courageously; they barricaded some of the cars which were besieged like forts, carried along at the rate of forty or fifty miles an hour. Mrs. Aouda had been most courageous. Revolver in hand, she defended herself heroically, firing through the



broken windows whenever she caught sight of a savage. As many as twenty Sioux had fallen, and lay crushed by the wheels; and many passengers, grievously wounded, lay stretched upon the seats.

But it was necessary to put an end to the fight, which had lasted for ten minutes, and would result in a victory for the Indians if the train were not stopped. Fort Kearney Station, where there was a guard, was only a couple of miles farther on, and if that were passed, the Indians would be masters of the train till the next station was reached. The guard was fighting bravely by the side of Mr. Fogg, when he was shot down. As he fell he cried, "If the train is not stopped in less than five minutes, we are all lost!"

"It shall be stopped," said Fogg, who was about to rush out.

"Stay where you are, sir," said Passe-partout, "this is my business."

His master had not time to stop the brave fellow, who, unseen by the Indians, managed to creep along beneath the carriages, and then calling all his agility to his aid, with marvellous dexterity he managed to reach the fore part of the train without being seen. There, suspended by one hand between the baggage-waggon and the tender, with the other hand he unfastened the coupling-chains; but owing to the great tension, he was not able to loose the draw-bar, but it was fortunately jerked out as the train jolted. The locomotive, thus detached, sped along at a tremendous pace in front, while the train

gradually slackened speed, and the breaks assisting it, it was pulled up within a hundred feet of Fort Kearney. The soldiers, attracted by the sound of firing, hastily turned out; but the Indians did not wait for them. They all disappeared before the train stopped.

But when the travellers came to count the passengers, they found that several were missing, and amongst the absentees was the brave Frenchman who had devoted himself to save them.