

"I'll 'scort yer a bit," he said, and made toward a raw-boned pony standing harnessed.

Locking my legs to my animal I struck it a clip over the ears with the reins—a trick taught me by Professor — in our riding school in the far east. My steed gave a startled shiver of astonishment, then gathering himself, leaped out beyond the stable door, and we were off. A wild whoop reached me, and looking back I beheld Lantern Jaw in pursuit. I returned the salute, and for half a mile led him an exciting race. Seeing, however, that he rode the better beast, I checked my speed and, turning, drew my horse on its haunches in the middle of the road. With a sudden, graceful whirl my cowboy brought his mount to the same position.

I have since thought that the scene would have been an attraction to any circus ring. Lantern Jaw was visibly surprised.

"Chaw?" he said, hesitatingly. Our horses were now standing easy, and the man was holding a huge piece of tobacco toward me.

"No, thank you," I answered. Then wishing to further surprise him I passed my flask half full of antidote for snake bite, with the inquiry—

"Drink?"

Lantern Jaw drank generously, then exclaimed, in a tone expressing apology—

"We make mistakes sometimes, sir!"

"Sir!" That was good. Wishing to further humiliate him, I inquired if he knew who I was.

"Mabbee yer the gov'nor of Oregon!" he returned, with a grin, which denoted considerable indecision.

"No, indeed," I answered; "no such honor. I am the president of the Union Pacific system."

The expression this information drew forth was forcible and ingenuously profane. Knowing that the whole affair would be repeated with exaggerations at the stable, I begged the matter would be considered strictly confidential, adding—

"I am looking over the property incognito."

"Incog—" the man stuttered helplessly; then wheeling about, "Incog—Hell"—and started away in the direction whence we had come.

After explaining the little deception to my horse, whom, by the way, I found I had slandered in my thoughts, we struck into a sharp trot, and in half an hour brought up on one of the curious, rock-formed palisades which overlook the city of The Dalles. A six-horse team was slowly wending down the bluff into town. Overtaking it, I learned from the loquacious driver that the huge bales of wool with which the wagons were loaded had rested in their present form for sixteen days, or during the trip from Dayville, on the John Day river, 150 miles from The Dalles. To a man who had lived in a railway-gridironed country

this was somewhat astonishing. Further questioning revealed the fact that The Dalles is the metropolis of a section of more than 200 miles, and that all freight is brought in by teams. In the two weeks this teamster had been on the road he had passed but one night under a roof, camping out the remainder of the time. His freight of 1,000 pounds would give him cartage of two cents per pound. The wool, he said, brought seventeen to nineteen cents at the warehouse; buyers were more plenty of late and nineteen cents was the ruling figure. On reaching the warehouse I saw that hides, pelts in the wool—taken from the sheep that had starved during the last unusually severe winter—and wheat were piled up. The teamster informed me that the merchandise had all been carted from 100 to 250 miles east of the Cascade range.

A mile below the warehouse, on the O. R. & N. is a peculiarity in modern railroading wholly unknown in the east. From the bed of the Columbia river there is an unlimited, always shifting body of land, beautiful, clear sand but of such quality and weight that, as it packs in on the railroad to the depth of from three inches to two feet, it is more of an obstruction than could arise from the worst snow storm any part of the country has ever seen. All of my eastern readers know of the enormous outlays that railroads must undergo to keep a clear rail in winter; consequently, they will in a measure understand the great task of the O. R. & N. in keeping clear this section of track, when I tell them that five horse shovels are always at work, beside twenty or more Chinamen moving out the sand that will in the next instance shift in again. It reminded me of Mrs. Partington's task of bailing out the sea. Farther east there are many miles of this same obstruction. It is a weird sight. The section hands, or sand cleaners, live in huts against which the sand is drifted to the eaves. The entire section is one bleak sand storm. Abrupt cliffs rising on the one side, the blue Columbia flowing on the other, and between, sand lying in drifts and whirling through the air. In this dreary waste are employed a hundred men and probably half as many horses. Surveys have been made whereby this great inconvenience to railroading may be obviated, but years and much money must be expended before the sand shovellers on the banks of the Columbia will be abolished.

Two miles east of the first sand flat are the great canneries and fish wheels. These can not fail to be a source of much interest to the tourist. Fifty-three tons of salmon in one hour is the greatest catch yet recorded in these wheels. Forty tons per day is good work. At other times a school of fish will play about the nets and still the catch will be small. During the past few weeks the fish have been so plentiful as to overrun the canneries, and magnificent salmon three