

his doom in a fearful manner in chapter 84, in which case it becomes a matter of imperative necessity to obtain the details of the tragedy.

This squandering of time and talent is lamentable. We have greater things to do than this. Our time is barely sufficient to prepare for our coming duties. Remember the advice of our beloved Prophet, "Get thee from the best books words of wisdom." We are a light to the world. We are progressive, or should be. Our motto is Excelsior. Let us then discard all that is frivolous and grasp the weightier things of the Kingdom, for therein lies all that is great and good.—*D. J. W., in Twentieth Ward Institute Index.*

A STAGE COACH JOURNEY.

Time has wrought a wonderful change in the modes of traveling in this western country. Before railroads were introduced among us, all overland travel was by stage-coach; and this very useful vehicle, now well-nigh relegated into oblivion, was the recipient of much more public attention and interest than the ordinary railroad train is of today. Even among us, the generation of today may be presumed to know little of the typical stage-coach. So a passing and brief description of it may not be amiss as a prelude to my narrative.

The old overland coach was quite a heavy vehicle, and was usually drawn by from two to four span of horses. The body of the coach was suspended upon heavy leathern bands, which, in some degree, allowed it to conform to the inequalities of the road; but even with this attempt at ease, it was seldom that the way-worn traveler reached his destination without bruised and aching bones. When taxed to the utmost, the interior would hold six persons, though only four could be comfortably seated. The capacity of the top was indefinite; for no matter how many its occupants, there was always room for "one more." The "boot," oftentimes swollen into unseemly proportions, was the receptacle of the mail-bags and whatever baggage passengers might possess. So, one might readily infer that a stage-coach, with its inside and outside passengers, drawn swiftly along by its three span of horses, was a thrilling sight; and, as I have stated, it was with feelings of no slight interest that its appearance was hailed by the people of the little towns along the route.

But to come to my story: It was

my fortune, some years ago, to make a trip of three hundred miles in a stage-coach. As fortune would have it, I was not the only passenger. An elderly gentleman with his two daughters sat opposite me; while a third lady, wrapped in sombre looking clothes, sat beside me; but she, however, did not remain long with us, for she got off at the next town.

The country for some miles was level, and the roads good. At intervals, the sharp crack of the whip broke upon the air, as the driver urged his horses to increased speed.

Soon, however, we came to a rough and broken region; and, as we rumbled along, the coach began to jolt and sway in a most menacing manner. Then it happened that several articles, strapped at the top of the coach, came rattling down about our heads. At this, the girls gave utterance to a little scream, while the lady, who had not yet left us, anxiously inquired, "Do you think we are going to upset?" I was about to answer her in a most reassuring manner, when I was cut short by a vigorous thump on the shin, and a cry of pain from the elderly gentleman, whose poor foot had been the unwilling recipient of a severe blow from a falling package. I feel morally certain that he had corns, for he seemed for a few moments as if he were going into convulsions, and it was some time before he sufficiently recovered to apologize. I accepted his apology as gracefully as I could, and then sought to condole with him in his own misfortunes. In this wise, the ice was soon broken between us; yet, his attention was pretty evenly divided between the conversation we now endeavored to keep up, and his injured foot. For this complaining member of his anatomy appeared to send periodical twitches of remembrance to his brain, and while these continued he would make grimaces that were amusing, not to say ludicrous.

A few moments conversation informed me that the girls were both amiable and intelligent; and, withal, more than commonly good-looking, which, of course, rendered them none the less engaging in my eyes. I soon learned that they lived in the town to which I was going; they had been visiting relatives in a distant city, and were now returning to their homes. After changing horses, which, you are aware, is a frequent occurrence on a stage route, we found on setting out from the next station, that our number had been increased by the accession of a

genial Dutchman. This good gentleman was uncommonly fat; and, as fat folks are, was intensely good-natured, meeting every sway and jolt of the coach with some humorous remark, which seemed to keep the company in excellent spirits, despite the roughness of the road, and our ever growing weariness. The country had now become wild and picturesque. In long and graceful curves the road wound the angles of the mountains, now by a long dugway cutting through the side of the hill, and now running off onto comparatively level ground. Many feet below, a mountain stream plunged along over its rocky bed; here it was lashed into spray by its impetuous haste, there soothed into rest as it reached some friendly haven where its loud complaint died into a gentle murmur. In places the mountains came together, apparently to form impassable barriers; at others they expanded into diminutive valleys, that might well be thought a remnant of Eden.

It was springtime, and the melting snow in the mountains had transformed usually small and quiet streams into large and dangerous ones. So it was not without trepidation that we approached the ford of one of these. The coach plunged into the stream. As it sank deeper and deeper the water rushed into the interior, through crevices of the doors. The young ladies began to scream, the old gentleman became almost frantic, and the representative of Holland, though badly frightened, was able to maintain a tolerable degree of serenity. To be candid, I must confess, as the water still rose, finally compelling us to stand upon the seats, that it really seemed we should be carried down the stream to find a watery grave in the dark and turbulent river. Meanwhile the girls were sobbing in their father's arms, and refused to be comforted. At last the water began to lower, and the coach once more reached *terra firma*; it was indeed with relief that we reached it. The short distance to the neighboring station was spent in mutual congratulations; and it was with no slight content that we alighted at the door of the snug little hotel, to whose generous larder we were disposed to do ample justice.

The next morning the coach started out bright and early. When about to take my seat, I learned from the old gentleman that, on account of the indisposition of his daughters, who had not fully recovered from the fright of the pre-