

## THE GENERAL MANAGER.

By Clarence Herbert New.

THE strike of the freight handlers on the Midland Railroad had been in operation less than a week, when it became evident that in General Manager Lambourne the strikers had met their match.

Lambourne's railroad experience dated from his early apprenticeship in the car shops, and extended subsequently through twenty years of steady upward progress as engineer, foreman of machine shop, master mechanic, and superintendent of machinery, until at last his executive ability and his familiarity with every detail of railroad life and management were recognized by his appointment as manager of the great system of railways operated by the Midland.

As one after another of the schemes for compelling the company to come to terms with its striking employees were defeated by Mr. Lambourne's tireless activity and able generalship, their feeling against him grew more bitter. From mere mutterings of discomfiture, it had become a sullen, vindictive hatred by the end of the fifth week, when, in spite of their attacks upon the road and its rolling stock, every passenger train had come in on schedule time and the freight kept moving.

It was after the force of loyal men, organized from among his mates of former years by the general manager himself, had foiled an attempt to destroy one of the largest round houses, that he began to receive anonymous letters of a threatening character. Without acquainting his family with the real gravity of the situation, Lambourne suggested to his wife that a visit to the country would do both herself and the children good. Then, feeling that they were safe, and that there were now no personal worries to distract his attention from the task in hand, he devoted all his energies to de-

feating the enemies of the road and stamping out the dangers which menaced its passengers and property.

He used his city home as a basis of operations. The house, which he had recently purchased, was one in a new block on West Eighty First Street, near the river. As much of the surrounding property was unimproved, the only barrier between the rear of the building and the vacant lots on Eightieth Street was the ordinary seven foot wooden fence inclosing the back yard.

His household, in the absence of the family, consisted of Nora Murphy, the cook, and John Brady, the butler. Neither of these could be considered in the light of a bodyguard; but, as he was in instantaneous communication with the telephone and district telegraph offices, in addition to the connection with the railroad station by his own private wire, the idea of being attacked at home did not, at first, occur to him. In a few days, however, when communications of the most ominous kind were shoved under the front door, and finally when they mysteriously appeared by his plate at breakfast, he made a point of testing the burglar alarm every night; making sure that both doors and windows were securely bolted before retiring.

Then came the report that the locomotive engineers had been called out to aid the strikers. In the excitement of hastily assembling a reserve force of old and trusted non union men to supply their places, if necessary, his personal danger was entirely forgotten. To the surprise of the company's officials, however, the engineers announced their intention of remaining in their old places, being unwilling to countenance the lawless acts of the mob.

That evening Mr. Lambourne reached home later than usual. After a hasty dinner, he sat down at his desk in the second story front room to write a batch of special orders. When these were finished, and ready to be telegraphed to the office, he opened one of the front windows to let in a little fresh air; turning, as he did so, to the burglar alarm switch board, in order to cut out the front room and prevent the bell from ringing. His mind was so occupied with business that he crossed the room before noticing that the opening of the window had produced no response from the bell. Then, with a suspicion of something decidedly wrong, he carefully examined the alarm.

A thin piece of cork had been jammed between the armature and the magnet in such a way that it would escape casual observation, but would, none the less, prevent the bell hammer from making even a vibratory sound.

It was but a second's work for him to extricate the cork; and when, after being put in order, the bell still refused to make a sound, the conviction flashed across his mind that some other window or door must have been opened for a sufficient length of time, after Nora and Brady had locked up at ten o'clock, to run all the strength out of the open circuit battery while the bell was prevented from giving the alarm.

Lambourne was one of those men whom it is difficult to catch. Being an expert electrician as well as a mechanic, he had several contrivances about the house, especially in his working and sleeping rooms, which even his family knew little about.

With every sense keenly on the alert, he now hastily unlocked and opened the large bottom drawer of his roll top desk. Attaching two pieces of wire to the fourteen cells of auxiliary battery in it, he connected them with the burglar circuit, cutting out the bell, as he did so, in order to prevent it from giving an alarm and possibly precipitating matters.

The kitchen switch showed that the rear door, opening into the exposed back yard, was open. Lambourne concluded that he must be the object of an

attack from the strikers; and that whoever had succeeded in effecting an entrance below would probably wait until the neighborhood had quieted down for the night before coming up stairs after their intended victim.

His first impulse was to slip quietly out of the front door and go straight to the nearest police station. Looking out of the front window, he saw two men standing under the lamp on the corner, and he realized that he was trapped. The solitary policeman on the beat was nowhere in sight; and the two mounted patrols on Riverside Drive might have been anywhere between Seventy Second Street and Grant's tomb.

The long distance telephone transmitter was fixed to a movable standard on his desk, and Lambourne gave the magneto bell a sharp ring, thinking to call assistance by that means. When he put the receiver to his ear there was a total absence of the faint rustling noise of the current on the wire, and the snatches of conversation, which are so familiar when the line is in working order. Knowing that the wires must have been cut, he next turned to the district telegraph box. Here, although the spring forced the crank around, he found, upon testing the wires with a little pocket galvanometer, that they also had been tampered with.

In one of the pigeon holes of Lambourne's desk there was a relay attached to the private wire running to the station. Grasping the key on the desk, he sent repeated calls for the night operator; but the relay armature refused to vibrate, though he loosened the spring to the least possible resistance. Then he sat thinking for a second or two.

The railroad wire running north of the house went in plain sight over the roofs to a pole on Columbus Avenue, so that it was an easy matter to disable it. South, between the house and the station, it was a leased wire in the telephone company's conduit, and had been laid along Eighty First Street from the main under Amsterdam Avenue, in a tube of his own, to his cellar wall. Thence it was brought up to the second floor between the bricks and the plaster.

ing, so that it was scarcely possible for any one not familiar with the house connections to have disturbed it.

Acting upon this supposition, Lambourne scraped the insulation from a portion of the broken north wire, and wound it tightly around the gas fixture for a ground connection. Then, disconnecting the wires of the auxiliary battery in the drawer from the burglar circuit, he spliced them in the key and relay, and again called the night operator at the station. As the answer came promptly back, he felt considerably relieved.

"That you, Mr. Lambourne?—anything wrong?—line dead for two hours—couldn't get you—tried telephone—girl said 'line in trouble'—Bart wants to report—important information."

"All right, Harry—take this, first—strikers have just broken in my back door—more outside—don't know how many—possibly dozen—call up the police station at once—send squad quick—will try to delay them here—stand by to receive any message, instantly."

"O.K."

Mr. Lambourne now hoped not only to save himself, but to manage, by careless remarks or exasperating taunts, to surprise the strikers into ungardedly blurring out important information regarding their intentions, considering him, as they would, absolutely in their power.

Knowing that it would be impossible for him to send a message openly after they entered the room, he hastily put things in order. He closed the drawer containing the extra battery; concealed the temporary wires behind the desk and the edge of the window curtain; and, after a moment's thought, hit upon a plan which would enable him to send a message without attracting attention.

Every long distance telephone cabinet is provided with a little black push button, set flush with the level of the writing shelf, which is used to cut out the induction coil while listening. As Lambourne's telephone was fitted to his desk, the button had in this case

been made of oak, like the desk itself; and it was set in the level surface, just at the right of the blotting pad, so that, unless subjected to careful scrutiny, it was unnoticeable.

Disconnecting the wires from the telegraph key, which he covered with a few order blanks, he attached them to the invisible push button instead. Next he placed a nickel plated paper weight, in the form of a railroad spike, upon the button, to keep it depressed and the circuit closed while the messages were coming from the other instrument. He then tightened the adjustment screws of the relay until it gave a sound so faint as to be scarcely perceptible at a distance of six feet—and yet, to his trained ear, distinct enough for him to read the signals easily.

It took but a few minutes to make all these preparations. He had barely finished when the call again came from the station.

"Squad, with sergeant, now on the way—Bart reports purchase, by strikers, of three powerful blasting batteries and quantity of dynamite at Binghamton—line well patrolled along there—can't find where attack is liable to occur—stuff carted off in country wagons—wagons answering description seen on road hundred miles west, today—wire instructions."

A slight sound, just then, caused Mr. Lambourne to turn quickly around. As he did so, seven men, with arctic overshoes on their feet, entered the room. The first was a well dressed man of perhaps forty, with a strong, clean shaven face, upon which were marked clear cut lines of bulldog determination. The others were of the rougher sort, with nothing sufficiently marked about their appearance to attract attention. These unceremoniously bestowed themselves about the room; some upon chairs, some on the bed in the alcove. Two stood by the door, while the leader, with a conventional "Good evening," took a chair in the center of the room opposite Mr. Lambourne, who simply turned around in his revolving seat and faced them.

"I suppose it isn't necessary for us

to explain our presence here, Mr. Lambourne?" said the well dressed man, as he coolly removed his gloves and placed them in his stylish derby hat.

"Well, no, Jenkins," said the general manager, looking him straight in the eye. "The recent communications your party have favored me with have made me anticipate a visit from you, sooner or later."

At the mention of his name, both the leader and the rest of the gang started in surprise. A dangerous look came into their eyes, and Jenkins' delicate right hand went stealthily into his overcoat pocket as he said:

"You know me, do you? It was a mistake to show it, Mr. Lambourne."

"Oh, I don't think so, Jenkins. I always like to deal with principals. Our previous acquaintance may assist us in coming to an understanding. Let's see; I believe we haven't met since you were train despatcher in Detroit—back in '85, wasn't it? I always thought you had ability, but you never would obey orders. I see Ryan is with you also. Ryan was braking on the Buffalo Express when I used to pull it with old 98. Well, suppose we get down to business. What can I do for you?"

The visitors were evidently rather nonplussed by Lambourne's cool behavior, but Jenkins knew the man, and took it as a matter of course.

"Well," he said, "we are thinking of having you take a little trip with us. We have a schooner anchored in the river here, and as soon as you can pack a change of clothes in your bag—for you may be away some time—we will escort you to a boat by the bank and ask you to take a voyage down the coast. The road will be paralyzed by tomorrow morning, anyhow, but a few autograph letters from you afterwards may help us to secure some concessions. If they don't, it will go pretty hard with you."

"Suppose I refuse to go with you?"

"You can't help yourself. If necessary, we will bundle you up and carry you down. Being a sensible man, I should think you would prefer to go quietly."

"Jenkins, you said just now that the road would be paralyzed by morning. What are you going to do with that dynamite you got in Binghamton?"

"How the devil did you know that? Say, Lambourne, you must be a prestidigitator! Never mind! you'll hear from that dynamite very shortly!"

"Oh, I don't believe you can do much harm with it. The only place on the line you could approach at present is the tunnel beyond Ellenton, and I've wired instructions to look after that, to-night."

"The deuce you have! Well, you're mighty smart, Lambourne, but I reckon we've got you beat, this time. You may look after that tunnel as much as you like, but we've got the piers of the bridge this side of it fixed with forcite. You can't send any of your confounded special orders now, to block us, and we'll blow the whole thing into the gorge before three o'clock!"

"My God, Jenkins, do you know the limited is due there at three thirty? You wouldn't kill a lot of innocent people just to spite the road, would you?"

"Well, no, you haven't forced us to that extremity yet; though unless the company yields before long I won't answer for some of the boys. They're getting pretty desperate. We'll hold up the train with a red lantern somewhere between the tunnel and the bridge, but the fellows may go through the passengers sufficiently to discourage them from traveling over your road for some time to come. It's no use, Lambourne! We've got you this time!"

Mr. Lambourne was thinking rapidly. As he sat easily in his chair at the desk, the fingers of his right hand were carelessly playing with one end of the nickel plated spike. There must be no mistake about the wording of the message, and he must not be prevented from sending it immediately. The leader of the gang—himself a telegraph operator—was sitting a little too near the desk.

"Look here, Jenkins," said Lambourne. "I've been brought up with this road, and I don't want to see it

hurt. It's the best road in the country, today. I don't care so much about myself; you don't scare me worth a cent. You and your mates here are in this thing for what you can get out of it, of course; that's natural enough. Now I've got some money; not millions, but enough to make it worth your while to think the matter over. You have yet four hours; time enough to stop your men out there, if you work quick. It will be easy enough to trump up some excuse to your party for letting the thing drop for the present. Say that the company is considering favorable concessions, if you like. There are only about a dozen of you here to divide up whatever you conclude to take, and the rest need know nothing about it. Suppose you talk it over among yourselves, and tell me what you are willing to compromise on."

Jenkins shook his head decidedly.

"If the rest should ever get on to it, our lives wouldn't be worth a coupling iron. No; we've talked too long already. Get your clothes and we'll get out of this! We've no time for fooling."

But the other men had been whispering among themselves in the alcove, and one of them interposed:

"Hold up, Jenkins; you come here and let us talk a bit. Money's a good thing to have when ye kin git it easy."

Jenkins made an angry gesture, but got up and joined them.

"I tell you it's no use thinking of such a thing, Ryan!" he said as he stepped away from the desk.

Lambourne sat calmly looking at them, and apparently waiting for the result of their somewhat heated argument; but the drumming fingers were busy enough. A startling message—checkmating this last attack upon the road, whether the police arrived in time to rescue him or not—was flashing along under the city pavements.

"Attack threatened tonight—dynamite, piers of Ellenton bridge—wire instantly, track gangs and division superintendent—search banks both sides for wires from battery to explosive charges—flag "limited" at Smithboro—put fifty Pinkertons on board—

gang strikers waiting between tunnel and bridge; arrest every one on charge of train wrecking—search neighboring buildings for exploding batteries; explosion before three o'clock—work quick—Lambourne, G. M."

Just as he heard the answering "O. K.," he saw, through the open hall door, the blue helmets of several policemen, coming quietly up stairs. An instant later he heard a startled exclamation from one of the gang. Then, as the thoroughly cowed men fell back before the police, Jenkins, with his hand again in his overcoat pocket, whirled around and said, between his teeth, "I'll kill you anyhow, Lambourne!"

The general manager leaned back in his chair and looked straight in the fellow's face without flinching, as he answered:

"Just as you please, Jenkins; you will get about ten years for this. If you kill me, you will die in the electric chair instead."

With a muttered curse, Jenkins submitted to being handcuffed and led away with the rest, while the sergeant shook hands with Mr. Lambourne and congratulated him on his escape.

"You need have no fear of a repetition of this thing, sir," he said. "I will keep four patrolmen on this beat as long as you think necessary."

"Thank you, sergeant," Lambourne replied, handing him the box of cigars and leisurely lighting one himself. "I am not alarmed about myself, but, in the interests of the company, I think it might be as well to watch the neighborhood, until the strike is over, at least. Cutting my wires left me in rather a helpless position. Another time they might do their work a little less carelessly." Then, with a "Good night" to the police, he stepped to the foot of the stairs and called the butler, who came down looking badly frightened.

"Are they all gone, sir? Oi'm glad ye're not hurted, sir."

"Brady, get out the large black portmanteau and pack everything you think you will need for a long trip. Better take everything you've got, valuables and all, if you have any. Hurry now."



"Yessir;" and the man trotted up stairs, wondering to what part of the country his master was going this time.

In a short while he came down, carrying the portmanteau. As he entered the room, he asked, "Shall I get out your flat travelin' case for ye, sir, or the russet bag?"

"No, Brady; you are going alone, this time. You've been with me, now, for four years. I've always treated you well, taken care of you when you were sick, and paid you liberally; yet you doctored that burglar alarm so that those men could take me by surprise, and must have told them where to cut the wires. You swore to me only a week ago that you were not a member of any union. How much money did they give you, Judas?"

"Och, Mr. Lambourne, ye're wrong! Upon me sowl, ye're mistaken! Faith, it must ha' been Nora that did it! Nora did it; I know she did! Phwat makes ye say 'twas me, sorr? And me wurkin' for ye so long!"

"That will do, you scoundrel! Nora would cut her head off before she would do such a thing. Ever since she got a shock from one of the wires, St. Patrick himself couldn't make her touch any kind of electric apparatus. I saw you put that champagne cork into your

pocket last Wednesday evening. Why, you fool, you even left the brand on the slice you cut from it. After the many times I have cautioned you about letting the strength of the batteries run down by grounding, no one but you would ever have thought of fixing that bell so as to allow the current to run through a closed circuit until the battery was powerless, and yet not ring. Get out of the house; don't ever let me see your face again! I might have had you sent to Sing Sing with the rest, but thought you might have been intimidated; so I give you the benefit of the doubt."

When the front door closed upon Brady, Mr. Lambourne sat down at the desk again and called up the station.

"Harry, take this telegram—rush it off, Western Union, at once—'Mrs. J. K. Lambourne, care F. L. Medford, Keene, N.H.'—got that?—'decisive conference with the strikers this evening—strike probably broken—feeling first rate—pay no attention to sensational accounts in morning papers—such reports always exaggerated—will run up in a few days—J.K.L.'—O.K., Harry; thanks for your promptness—G.P.M.'"

Then, with a sigh of comfort and relief, he undressed and went to bed.

#### THE FISHERMEN: PUGET SOUND.

TODAY my inland, fir enshadowed sea  
 In such untroubled slumber lies below  
 The fire filled dome of azure, that her slow  
 Soft breathing scarce breaks the tranquillity  
 Of her broad, burnished breast. There comes to me,  
 From where the beach gleams like a drift of snow  
 High flung against a wall of green, the low  
 Caressing tongue of far off Italy;  
 And through dark boughs I see strong fishermen,  
 Black browed and swarthy, toiling with all might  
 At dripping net. I see the flash of oar,  
 That silvered mass imprisoned there, and then  
 A sudden flood of vivid, burning light  
 Poured out upon the slanting, sandy shore.

*Herbert Bashford.*