

Chapter 13 A Quarrel in San Francisco

Eleven days later, on 3rd December, the *General Grant* reached San Francisco. Mr Fogg was neither a day too late nor a day too early.

As soon as he got on shore he asked what time the first train left for New York. The answer was: 'At six o'clock this evening.' Mr Fogg had, then, a whole day to spend in San Francisco. He called a carriage and he and his friends drove to the International Hotel.

After a good meal, Mr Fogg went with Aouda to the British consul to show his passport and have it signed.

When they came out, Mr Fogg found his servant waiting.

'As we are going to travel through a wild part of the country where we might be attacked by Indians or train robbers, would it not be wise to buy a few revolvers with which to protect ourselves?' asked Passepartout.

Mr Fogg answered that he thought that was not at all necessary, but Passepartout could go and buy some if he liked.

Phileas Fogg had hardly walked a hundred steps when he met Fix. The detective seemed to be most surprised at this meeting.

'What a strange thing!' he said, 'that we should meet by chance like this. To think that we both travelled on the *General Grant* without once seeing each other.'

Fix was most pleased, he said, to meet again the gentleman to whom he owed so much. He was forced to go back to Europe

on business, and it would be very pleasant if they could travel together.

Mr Fogg answered that the honour would be his. Fix, who did not wish to lose sight of the man he was following, asked to be allowed to join him in a walk around the city.

So Aouda, Phileas Fogg and Fix walked through the streets. Before long they saw crowds of excited people. Some were shouting, 'Long live Kamerfield!' and others, 'Mandiboy for ever!'

'This seems to be an election,' said Fix to Mr Fogg. 'Perhaps it would be a good idea to keep away from the crowd, or we might get hurt.' Fix was now very anxious that nothing should happen to Mr Fogg. It was in his interest to take care of him and protect him from harm, so that he could arrest him when they reached England.

'You are right,' answered Phileas Fogg and he, Aouda and Fix went and stood at the top of some stone steps where they could see what was going on below.

At that moment the crowd became very excited. People rushed here and there, shouting loudly. Fix was just going to ask somebody what all this meant, when a general fight broke out. Stones and bottles were thrown, and sticks were used freely. A group of people moved onto the steps below, shouting loudly.

'I think we had better leave,' said Fix.

'They cannot hurt us; we are English—' Mr Fogg began to say, but before he could finish, another noisy group came up behind them. They were caught between the two groups, which became increasingly violent. No escape was possible. Phileas Fogg and Fix, in protecting the young lady, were knocked this way and that. Mr Fogg, as calm as ever, tried to defend himself, but a big man with red hair raised his hand over Mr Fogg to strike a violent blow. Mr Fogg would have suffered serious damage if Fix had not received the blow in Mr Fogg's place.

'Fool of an American!' said Mr Fogg, looking at his attacker.

'Fool of an Englishman!' answered the other.

'We shall meet again!'

'When you like. Your name?'

'Phileas Fogg. Your name?'

'Stamp W. Proctor.'

At that moment the crowd moved on. Fix stood up slowly; his clothes were torn, but he was not seriously hurt.

'Thank you,' said Mr Fogg to the detective, as soon as they were out of the crowd.

'Do not thank me,' answered Fix, 'but come with me.'

'Where?'

'To a shop where we can buy some new clothes.'

It was in fact quite necessary to do this; as a result of the fight, the clothes of both men had been torn to pieces. An hour later, wearing new hats and coats, they returned to the hotel.

Passepartout was waiting for his master. He was holding the revolvers that he had been buying. He looked anxious when he saw Fix with his master, but when Aouda explained to him what had happened, he became more cheerful. It was clear that Fix was keeping his promise and was no longer an enemy.

When dinner was over, Mr Fogg sent for a carriage to take the travellers and their luggage to the station. Mr Fogg said to Fix: 'Do you know anything about this Stamp W. Proctor?'

'No,' answered Fix.

'I shall come back from England to find him again,' said Phileas Fogg. 'It is not right that an Englishman should be treated as he treated me.'

At a quarter to six the travellers reached the station and found the train ready to start.

The railway on which they were travelling runs from San Francisco to New York, a distance of 3,786 miles. As the journey took seven days, Mr Fogg would reach New York just in time to take the steamer that left for Liverpool on 11th December.

The travellers left Oakland Station at six o'clock. It was already dark, and the sky was covered with black clouds. The train did not move with any great speed; perhaps twenty miles an hour, with many stops.

Nobody talked much. Passepartout found himself sitting next to the detective, but he did not speak to him. There was a certain coldness between the two – and this was only natural.

An hour later it began to snow.

At eight o'clock the travellers were told that it was time to get the beds ready for the night, and in a few minutes their carriage looked more like a bedroom. There was only one thing to do, and that was to sleep. And while the travellers were sleeping, the train steamed across California.

It took six hours for the train to reach the city of Sacramento. From San Francisco the country had been fairly flat, but now the train began to climb into the mountains of Nevada. At seven o'clock the train passed through Cisco.

An hour later the beds were packed away, and the travellers looked out of the windows and were able to see the mountainous country through which they were passing. There were few or no bridges. The train ran up and round the sides of the mountains or passed along the bottom of the narrow valleys.

At Reno the travellers stopped for twenty minutes, during which time they were able to have breakfast. Then they took their places again in their carriages and looked at the scenery through which they were passing. At times they saw large numbers of buffaloes. By crossing the railway line in their thousands, these animals often force the trains to stop and wait until they have passed and this, in fact, is what soon happened. At about twelve o'clock the train came to a place where ten or twelve thousand buffaloes were walking slowly across the line. It was impossible to move them or go through this solid body of animals. The only thing to do was to wait until the line was clear.

The travellers watched this strange sight with interest. Phileas Fogg stayed in his seat and waited patiently. But Passepartout was terribly angry, and very much wanted to start shooting them with his revolvers.

‘What a terrible country!’ he cried. ‘A country where animals like these are allowed to get in the way of trains! I wonder whether Mr Fogg expected this sort of thing when he planned his journey. And here is the engine driver afraid of running his engine through them.’

The engine driver, of course, was wise enough not even to consider such an action. It would have been useless. He could no doubt have crushed the first buffaloes, but the engine would soon have been stopped and probably thrown off the line.

It was three hours before the last of the animals crossed the railway, and it was dark before the train could go on again.

By 7th December they had gone a long way. On this day they stopped for a quarter of an hour at Green River Station. It had been snowing and raining during the night, but as the snow had half melted it gave no trouble. The bad weather worried Passepartout, though.

‘What a foolish idea it was to go travelling during the winter,’ he said to himself. ‘If my master had waited for better weather, he would have had a better chance of winning his bet.’

But while Passepartout was worrying about the weather, Aouda began to be frightened about something much more serious. Looking out of the window, she saw among the group of travellers Stamp W. Proctor, the man who had behaved so roughly in the election fight at San Francisco. It was only by accident that he was travelling on the same train, but there he was. ‘He must be prevented,’ she thought, ‘from meeting Mr Fogg.’

When the train was on its way again, and Mr Fogg had fallen asleep, Aouda told Fix and Passepartout whom she had seen.

‘Proctor on this train!’ cried Fix. ‘Have no fear; it is my business

rather than Mr Fogg's. After all, I am the one who suffered most.'

'And I shall have something to say to him, too,' added Passepartout.

'Mr Fix,' said Aouda, 'you may be certain that Mr Fogg will let nobody take his place in this matter. He said he would even come back to America to meet this man again. If he sees Mr Proctor, we cannot prevent them from fighting, and this might not end well. They must not meet each other.'

'You are right,' said Fix. 'A fight might ruin everything. Whether he won or lost, Mr Fogg would be delayed, and—'

'And that would suit the gentlemen of the Reform Club,' added Passepartout. 'In four days we shall be in New York! Well, if during those four days Mr Fogg does not leave his carriage, we may hope that he will not meet this man.'

At this moment Mr Fogg woke up, and the discussion came to an end. Later, without being heard by his master or Aouda, Passepartout said to the detective: 'Would you really fight instead of him?'

'I will do everything to bring him back alive to Europe,' answered Fix.

Was there any way to keep Mr Fogg in the carriage to prevent him from meeting this Proctor? It should not be difficult, for Mr Fogg did not enjoy moving around. In any case, the detective had a good plan and, a few minutes later, said to him: 'Time passes very slowly in the train.'

'Yes,' answered the other, 'but it passes all the same.'

'On the boat,' said Fix, 'you used to play cards.'

'Yes,' answered Phileas Fogg, 'but here it would be difficult. I have neither cards nor people to play with.'

'Oh we can easily buy the cards; they are sold on all American trains. As for people to play with, if by chance the lady plays...'

'Oh, yes,' answered the lady. 'I know the game that Mr Fogg likes playing.'

‘So do I,’ said Fix. ‘In fact I am quite good at cards. So perhaps the three of us . . .’

‘Very well; if you would like to,’ answered Phileas Fogg, who was very pleased to have the chance of playing again.

Passepartout was sent to get the cards, and soon came back with everything that was necessary for the game. A table was brought and a cloth was laid over it, and they started playing. Aouda really played very well, and Mr Fogg told her so. As for Fix, he was a first-class player.

‘Now,’ thought Passepartout, ‘everything is going to be fine. He will not move from the table.’