

# BELNAP RETURNS WITH EDSON

## Story of the Recapture in Texas.

How Edson Was Located at Smithville—Route Taken and Travels of the Prisoner After He Broke Jail—How the Texas Officers Treated Edson.

Sheriff Belnap arrived on the 1:40 Union Pacific train from the east yesterday with Will S. Edson who was arrested by Marshal Dan Jenkins at Smithville, Texas, about a week ago. Both the sheriff and Edson appeared tired after their long journey, but the complacent sheriff through whose vigilance Edson was recaptured, would not admit that the trip had in any way wearied him. Edson is thinner than when he bade goodby to the county jail last December and does not appear in as good spirits though he talked freely of his adventures since the memorable escape.

In conversation with a STANDARD reporter Edson said after he broke jail he walked most of the way to Brigham City where he caught a north bound train which carried him to Pocatello. From there he drifted a little further north and then he made the circle almost home again by way of the Short Line to Granger, back to Echo, up to Park City, down to Salt Lake, and thence over the R. G. W. to Pueblo, Colo., from where he gradually got down to El Paso, Texas. The next move was a jaunt down into the heart of Mexico and back to the United States again. At El Paso he applied for work and was sent out to Valentine about 150 miles. He began work Jan. 8th and was discharged Feb. 1st. He quit Valentine to go further east and was given employment at Smithville, Texas. In getting work there he furnished the clue that led to his arrest. As is usually the case before a railroad man is employed he has to give references. Edson had assumed the name of Stephen Ahern and under that name he worked at Valentine. He referred his Smithville employer to the man who had hired him at El Paso and from that moment he was a marked man. Edson's application for a recommendation reached El Paso about the time that Sheriff Belnap's letter reached there. When Sheriff Denison, of El Paso, received Belnap's letter he examined the railroad payroll and found that a man giving the name of Stephen Ahern had been employed there and at Valentine. So when an enquiry as to Ahern's record was received from Smithville Denison was notified and he immediately telegraphed the marshal there to place Stephen Ahern under arrest. Texas is a place where the officers generally accomplish what they go after and half an hour after Denison's message was received, Marshal Dan Jenkins tapped Edson on the shoulder and told him he was wanted. Sheriff Belnap was immediately informed of the arrest and the public knows the rest.

Edson did not get hotel accommodations while in the hands of the Texan officers. He was "staked out," as they call it there, manacled, hands and feet, and his irons fastened to a staple driven in the floor. His companions were half a dozen negroes incarcerated for minor offenses. Edson was given a hearing before a Smithville justice of the peace, charged with being a fugitive from justice. Marshal Jenkins and his deputy swore that they knew Edson was the right man and the justice ordered him held for ninety days. He remained "staked out" until Sheriff Belnap arrived. One reason the officers had for believing they had the right man was that Edson admitted his name in order to receive a telegram sent to William S. Edson. Edson was permitted to read the mes-

sage, but when the officers attempted to take it, he put it in his mouth and before the officers could stop him he succeeded in swallowing it. Two scars on Edson's neck show what treatment he received in the scuffle for the telegram. The Texan officers never knew what that message contained but by a little clever manipulating Sheriff Belnap learned what the contents were and also the name of the sender. This information will no doubt be used at the proper time.

Edson's willingness to return did not develop until after he was satisfied that Belnap had requisition papers and other necessary documents. It was then that a prospect of leaving behind the unceremonious officers who "staked" him out appeared inviting. The trip back was devoid of particular interest.

Edson says he is ready to stand trial and that when the facts are known a large share of the blame now attached to him will be removed. He found his former fellow prisoners occupying the same quarters as when he escaped and he is quite at home again. He declined to discuss the manner in which he broke jail but stated emphatically that the cells were locked. He said Jailor Wright could not be chargeable with any blame as the escape was not made through any neglect of duty on the part of Wright.