

and I as firmly to the truth, but to no purpose. The influence of his director uncle saved for him his position, the blame was attached to me, and I was discharged, forced to give up my position and move. Some time before this, trusting in the security of my position, I had put all our little savings together and purchased a small house and lot in the pleasantest part of our city. I had borrowed from our savings bank the sum of two thousand dollars, and placed a mortgage for that amount upon the place, believing that with prudence and economy we should be able to repay and lift the mortgage in due course of time.

"A pleasant little place it was, and much pleasure we took in fixing it up with flowers and vines, until it presented a most attractive appearance, and to ourselves, at least, was the very perfection of taste and home comfort. Now it must all be given up. This made the blow doubly hard, for where could I obtain a position at my business, with the knowledge that I had caused a wreck?"

"No! I must give it all up, and commence at the foot of the ladder again.

"The company, having decided to put in the wires and open a station at C—, as a measure for guarding against further trouble, very kindly offered the situation to me. I could but accept. Soon we were moved into our new quarters—I cannot call it a home—in a modest house near my station.

"Day after day came and passed now, so uneventfully as

light knew no bounds as he stood upon the platform when the heavy freights went rolling by, or the fast express, with a rush and scream of the whistle, passed like a flash; and he would watch them out of sight with great round eyes, laughing and clapping his hands with delight.

"We used to watch him in silence, my wife and I, for she often came to sit with us, and cheer me by her presence; and thoughts of the opportunities he would miss, and the privilege of schooling he would be debarred from by my misfortune, were not calculated to make us cheerful.

"One beautiful summer day, when I had been some three months at my station, sitting as usual watching and listening at my instruments, for want of something better to do, I heard the dispatcher's office calling A—, heard him answer, followed by an order from the office to '14 for special freight passing east,' heard the reply exactly as the operator had given it to me on the day of the wreck—'15 for special freight'—then this order:

"To Conductor and Engineer Special Freight:

"You will not leave A— until special passenger train, Fairfield, conductor, has arrived."

"The special passenger train referred to was, as I knew, for I had heard it reported by wire, composed of an engine, superintendent's private car, and directors' car, filled with the

useless thoughts, until I was disturbed by the entrance of the little boy, who had been busy at play outside. He came in in high glee, exclaiming: 'Papa! papa! train coming!'

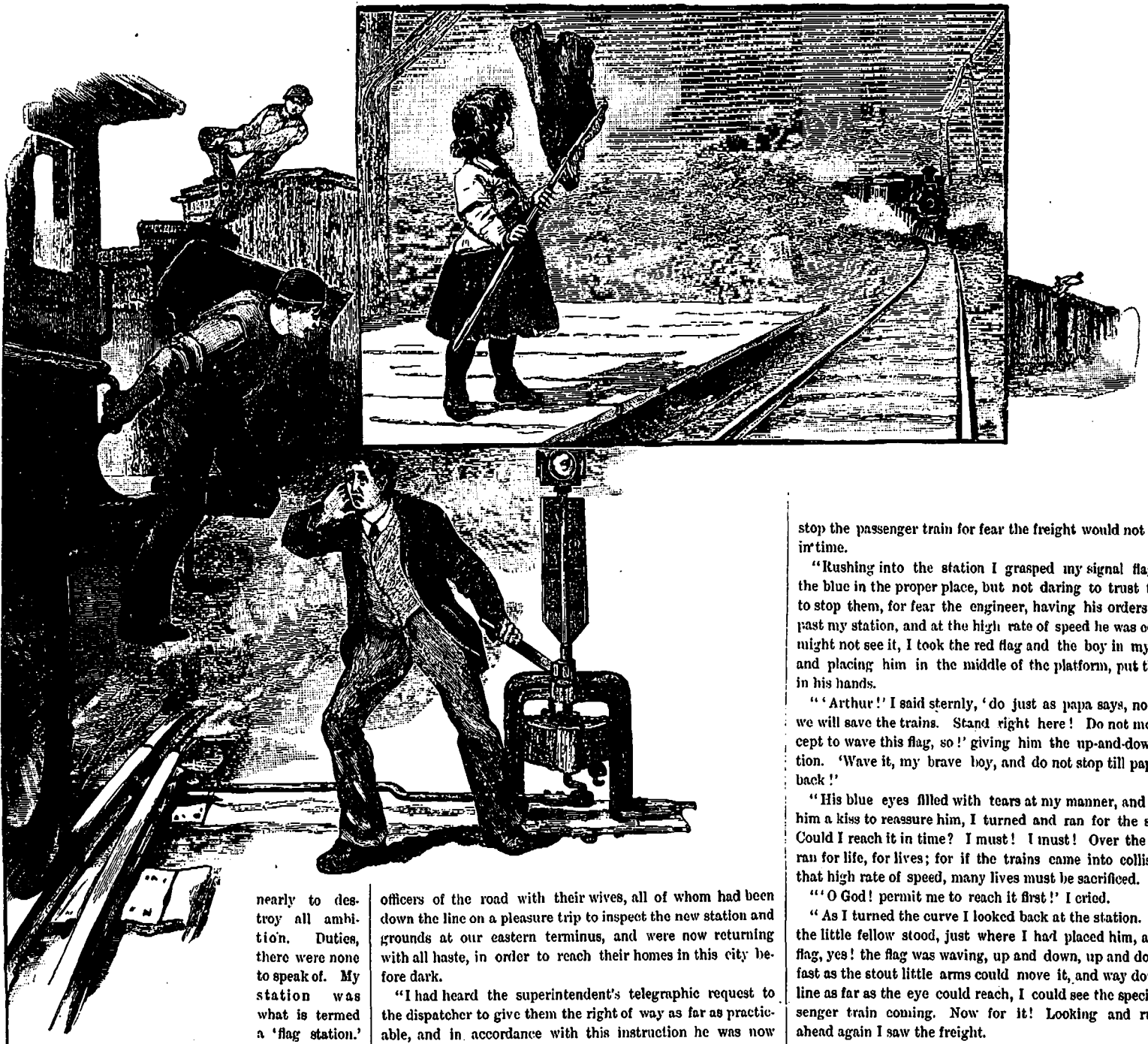
"No, dear, not just yet. Wait five minutes and then we will see them go flying by," I answered him with a smile, knowing how pleased he would be to see the rushing train.

"No! now, papa, now! I can see the smoke—come out, quick!" To please him I complied, and looked up the line in the direction of the approaching special, which had passed the last station east of me, and must now be within five miles of our station.

"That, that way, papa! Look through the trees—see?"

"I turned, and saw rising above the trees the black smoke which denoted the approach of a train. In an instant I understood the situation. The freight was approaching—the freight which was ordered to remain at A— to cross the passenger train. For a moment I was dazed, but only for a moment, for I knew something must be done, and that quickly, to avert an awful catastrophe.

"Below my station, some hundred yards or so, round a curve which hid it from sight, was a switch which opened upon a side track running by the station for another hundred yards, and which would hold the freight, could I but reach and open it before the freight arrived there. But I must also



nearly to destroy all ambition. Duties, there were none to speak of. My station was what is termed a 'flag station.' Trains made no

regular stop there, and when an occasional passenger wished to take the train, a very unusual occurrence by the way, my red flag by day, or red light at night, 'hauled up' the desired train. I grew despondent. Every day I sat in my little den of an office, listening to the business passing upon the wire, business in which I took no active part, for few, indeed, were the opportunities I had to open the wire.

"The little boy was my almost constant companion. He took great delight in the rural life which we were obliged to lead, grew stout and brown as any little rustic, and his de-

officers of the road with their wives, all of whom had been down the line on a pleasure trip to inspect the new station and grounds at our eastern terminus, and were now returning with all haste, in order to reach their homes in this city before dark.

"I had heard the superintendent's telegraphic request to the dispatcher to give them the right of way as far as practicable, and in accordance with this instruction he was now holding back the freight.

"I sat idly watching the approach of the special, and marking the quick time they were making, as the telegraphic reports, one by one, succeeded each other, as the train passed station after station—and still bemoaning my hard fate.

"No mistakes this time, I thought, only for me was the ill luck reserved: for surely the operator at A— would not, could not, commit the same fault twice. This time there would be no poor assistant to attach the blame to but the chief dispatcher.

"I sat there some time, filled with these ungrateful and

stop the passenger train for fear the freight would not get on in time.

"Rushing into the station I grasped my signal flags, put the blue in the proper place, but not daring to trust to that to stop them, for fear the engineer, having his orders to run past my station, and at the high rate of speed he was coming, might not see it, I took the red flag and the boy in my arms, and placing him in the middle of the platform, put the flag in his hands.

"'Arthur!' I said sternly, 'do just as papa says, now, and we will save the trains. Stand right here! Do not move except to wave this flag, so!' giving him the up-and-down motion. 'Wave it, my brave boy, and do not stop till papa gets back!'

"His blue eyes filled with tears at my manner, and giving him a kiss to reassure him, I turned and ran for the switch. Could I reach it in time? I must! I must! Over the ties I ran for life, for lives; for if the trains came into collision at that high rate of speed, many lives must be sacrificed.

"O God! permit me to reach it first!" I cried.

"As I turned the curve I looked back at the station. There the little fellow stood, just where I had placed him, and the flag, yes! the flag was waving, up and down, up and down, as fast as the stout little arms could move it, and way down the line as far as the eye could reach, I could see the special passenger train coming. Now for it! Looking and running ahead again I saw the freight.

"Thank God! I shall reach the switch first," I cried, and ran on. My switch key was out of my pocket as I ran, and in my hand. A moment more and the switch was reached, and the train one thousand feet behind in the race for life. To insert the key, unlock and throw the rails upon the siding, was the work of an instant.

"Yes! I was discovered by the engineer of the train—hear! the shrill whistle for the brakes, the danger signal, saw the engine reversed, the brakemen scrambling over the tops of the cars setting the brakes, and knew all was done that could possibly be done to slacken the speed of the heavy train—