

THE ROCKWOOD REVIEW

house, one of them gave to me for my breakfast a share of the dinner which he had brought in the usual pail and told me to hang around till night, when the dead engine would be sent further. A bed of some of the workmen's clothes was made up for me in a corner of a shed, and I remained there until nightfall. When it came, I was told to get into the cab of the engine attached to the train, and to be low, so that old "Mug," the conductor, would not see me. I never went into smaller compass. After we had pulled out, a comfortable nest was built for me with the cushions of the cab, and lying on the seat, I stuck my feet out of the front window, and slept forty winks, or more. A draught of hot tea and a thick slice of bread and butter put new life into me. Reaching the destination of the dead engine, I got down from the train, warmly thanked my friends the driver and fireman, and was introduced to the wiper. Asking me questions as to my condition, he said: "Jack, how are they coming? Hollow? On the road?" And then he took me into a little room, in which there was a stove, "good and hot," and told me to wait a little while until a train started for the town for which I was ultimately bound. At four, a. m., he aroused me, gave me a drink of coffee and a big chunk of bread and meat, and directed me to a flat ear, loaded with beer vats, shaped like pails. These were high enough to conceal my person, and I gladly slipped down between two of them, although forced to remain standing. I was going "home" and thought nothing of the inconvenience. Approaching my objective point, I was espied by some mischievous lads, who politely invited me to "come out of that," but I didn't hear their invitation, add nobody noticed their good-natured, boyish banter. The

train stopped at a crossing not far from "Nowhere," and I gladly got from my cramped position, landed on terra firma, and so ended my series of stolen rides. Going down to a river with which I had been familiar enough in early days, I thoroughly washed myself, cleaned up as well as I could, and then walked by back ways to my father's house. Slipping unobserved into the stable, I scrambled into the hay loft, until, a sister coming in for some purpose or other, I revealed myself, and was soon properly clothed and restored to the family circle. The fatted calf was not killed, but the awaiting situation was speedily filled.

Looking back, I am ashamed of some things which I did or left undone, but to my dying day it will be impossible for me to forget the better side of human nature, which was revealed to me in unexpected places, and amongst many men of whom the world makes small account. Poverty was a passport to charity, nearly everywhere in the hearts of those who had least to give, and my trip, while bringing me in closer contact than before with men whose horny hands make happy homes, taught me the true nobility of labour, and made me intimate with the better, if not the best side of "fallen humanity." Depend upon it, original sin does not take deepest root in poorest soil.
