

# Company Paid Oil Bill

The accommodation train, No. 201 of the schedule, on the branch road was stuck in the snow, and there seemed to be no relief for it. No provision had been made for such a contingency because the branch, sheltered by trees and bluffs, had been considered proof against such misfortune. The engineer, who had been on the run for twenty years, was too astonished for words when the small locomotive failed to cut the drift into which it plunged so confidently, and he sat on his seat staring dumbly at the conductor, who swore shockingly and gesticulated with his arms.

In the coach were two passengers, both young men. One was the type of commercial salesman sent out by small jobbing houses, well dressed, self assertive, crudely philosophic; the other, by appearance, plainly a farmer. He wore a baggy, shiny black suit and his white collar was attached to a gingham shirt by a white bone button, sewed with black thread. His appearance was enhanced by a carefully trimmed shock of hair and whiskers.

The commercial salesman had arisen when the train stopped and had walked to the door.

"I guess," he remarked after a minute, "that we're stalled."

He whistled a popular melody as he walked down the aisle and noted with some amusement that the other man was clutching the back of a seat his eyes filled with consternation.

"Provoking, isn't it?" the drummer said as he lighted a cigar and drew a paper covered book from his grip.

"Y-yes—by—cat!" the other stammered. "Say, do you mean that we are stuck?"

"That's it exactly. Here's the conductor now."

The conductor slammed the door viciously and shook the snow from his cap. "We're up against it, gentlemen," he announced in disgust. "The confounded teakettle is dying like a sick pig out there in a drift no bigger'n a wash tub. We're two miles from Dilkport, and the snow's so thick you can't see your hand before your face. Lucky we've been to supper."

"Then we won't get out tonight?" asked the farmer anxiously, looking at his watch.

"That's the size of it. As we're up here on this pea vine the section men won't learn what's the matter with us till tomorrow. We've got plenty of coal. It might be worse."

"Yes," said the farmer, "I s'pose it might, but I don't see how it could be much worse for me."

He picked up an overshoe.

"You see," he explained, fastening the buckle, "I've got a particular engagement tonight up at Dilkport, and if the train ain't going I've got to hoof it."

He put on the other shoe and rose, reaching for the wolfskin coat which dangled from one end of the parcel holder. The conductor and the salesman contemplated him in astonishment.

"But, man, you can't do it possibly," said the conductor. "You'll fall through a bridge or something, and then you'll freeze to death."

"I reckon 'tis a bit risky," admitted the farmer, "but I ain't at all sure it won't be riskier not to. You see, my wife's at Dilkport, and she's sick. She may be dying. I've got to go to her."

An expression of sympathy came upon the conductor's face, and that of the salesman took on a sudden gravity.

"There are certain circumstances," the farmer continued in explanation, "which make it more important that I should see her than you might naturally think from the plain fact of her being sick. I haven't treated her just right to tell the truth. I've been stupid and unreasonable. We were married only a year ago. I won her away from three or four other fellows. Any one of 'em would have made her a better husband than me. Funny how such things go ain't it?"

"It's a blooming queer old world," said the conductor, nodding his head sagely.

"And the queerest things in it are girls," added the salesman in the tone of an authority.

"We were married at Dilkport, where she was raised, and we went to my farm to live. We were happy as could be for maybe six months, and then I noticed that something was wrong with her. A sort of cloud came over her. It was nothing but homesickness, I s'pose, but I couldn't see it any other way than that she was sorry she'd married me. And one day I happened to find a sheet of paper—a part of a letter she'd been writing—that had dropped from her portfolio, and I read it. There weren't many words on the sheet. The first one was 'disappointed,' and

ing a sentence she'd begun on the sheet that went before. And then it said, 'It is not as I had pictured it. I wish to go home'— And right here it ended. I said nothing to her. I didn't think it was necessary to have a scene, as they call it. But I was hurt—hurt clean to the core—and in trying to cover up my feelings I s'pose I was unkind, maybe cruel. After two or three days of brooding I got into a regular bad state. I told her she'd better go home to her folks, that I'd decided we weren't made for each other. 'When she tried to put her arms about my neck, I wouldn't let her. When she asked for my reasons, I told her she knew well enough and turned my back. I was an unnatural, unreasoning brute.'"

"Correct," said the conductor frankly. "Well, she went. For four months I've been baching it on the farm, growing crabbier every day, and this morning I happened to meet a young chap in the store at Pepperdock that knows my wife's folks. He lives at Dilkport when he isn't traveling around the country selling things."

"I s'pose you've heard from your wife this morning?" he asked me. "No," said I, with a snap, "I hain't." "Well, I've just come from home," he said, "and there was a report on the street when I left that she was liable to die. The kid's all right, though."

"'Huh!' said I, startled to death. 'The kid?' 'Yes,' said he, looking at me in a sort of peculiar way, 'didn't you know there was a kid born yesterday?' 'Why, yes, of course,' I said, ashamed into the lie. I was that dazed I didn't know my name for a minute."

"Your wife's a fine woman," the young chap went on, me listening like one in a dream. "I sent her a patent dish washer about six months ago on trial. It didn't suit her, but she didn't do as most women would have done. She wrote me a real nice letter, telling me that it had disappointed her; that it wasn't what she'd pictured it. She said she wished to go home to Dilkport for a visit in a short time and that when she came she'd bring it up with her, saving me the express charges. I tell you, a fellow in this agency business learns to appreciate little things like that."

"And then in a flash I saw it all. The letter I'd seen was the one she was writing about that dish washer. I bolted home without getting the things I'd come to town after. I hustled around and spruced up a little and got somebody to care for the stock, and—and I'm going to get to Dilkport tonight in spite of blazes; that's all there is to it."

He left the coach, followed by the conductor and the salesman, who felt impelled by sympathy to see him off on his perilous trip. They climbed over the freight cars through the blinding storm toward the locomotive.

"Look out for the next car!" called the conductor. "It's loaded with oil barrels. Better let me go ahead with the lantern."

The farmer stopped. "All right," he said. "Is there any oil in the barrels?"

"They're full of it. Why?"

"I was just thinking that once I bought a barrel of oil, and on the way home the sled tipped over in a drift, and the bung came out of the barrel, and the oil run on to the snow. It was a pitch dark night and I didn't have a lantern. I was in a bad shape, but I gathered together a pile of straw that had been in the sled box and lit it with a match and the first thing I knew that oil-soaked drift was melting."

"By the holy green light!" exclaimed the conductor as the other's idea became clear to him. "Do you suppose we could do it?"

"I'd be willing to stand the expense of three barrels of oil toward trying it."

The conductor jumped into the cab and laid the plan before the engineer who had stubbornly refused to leave the engine until compelled by the cold.

"It might work," said the engineer after a few minutes deliberation. "Tain't like as if we were buried. We're just tangled up a little, that's all. If I could get a start, I'd go through. Jim"—addressing the fireman with sudden energy, "coal up! Make her hum!"

The conductor called the two brakemen and the express messenger, and with the assistance of the two passengers three barrels of kerosene were rolled from the car and carried to the front end of the train. The heads of the barrels were broken in, and the oil was scattered upon the snow by painful and shovelful. Then, when no more remained, the conductor lighted a great handful of greasy waste and threw it upon the drift.

It sputtered a moment, flickered, all but went out. The farmer rolled one of the empty oil-soaked barrels within reach of the burning waste.

"It's no good!"

There was a blinding flare, followed by a sizzling, hissing roar. The drift melted as if by magic. The flames licked the drive wheels of the locomotive and reached almost to the cab.

"Coal her! Coal her!" shouted the engineer to the fireman.

The conductor jumped up and down excitedly, waving his lantern. "All aboard—r-r-r-d!" he yelled.

Half an hour later the train pulled into Dilkport.

The conductor received a note the next day. It read: "Everything's all right. She's been getting better from the minute I got here. I wanted to go down to the station to see you, but I can't seem to tear myself away from her and the baby. Send me bill for the oil."

To which the conductor replied: "Glad to hear you're O.K. We all of us want to shake hands with you. The company pays for the oil."

## Protest is Made.

Paris, Aug. 15.—The announcement made after yesterday's cabinet meeting that the royalists are directing the agitation against the closing of religious schools in Brittany has evoked considerable comment. Catholic leaders and the Catholic press deny that the movement is anti-republican. Count Albert de Mun, who, with Abbe Cayraud, is the guiding spirit of the resistance in Finisterre, declares that the movement is entirely spontaneous and that of the people themselves, and that not an act or shot has occurred in Brittany to justify the allegation that a royalist conspiracy exists.

Count de Mun says the Marseillaise has been sung everywhere and that it is evident the government is embarrassed by the situation, and has invented the royalist scare in order to create a diversion. Francois Coppee, in an interview, expressed a similar opinion in more violent and picturesque language. The Patrie says it is rumored that the government intended to arrest the royalist senator from Finisterre, M. de Chamillard. The situation at St. Meon and Folgoet remains unchanged. An important pilgrimage to Folgoet took place today, on the occasion of the feast of the assumption, 65,000 people gathering from the surrounding country.

Admiral de Courville, Abbe Gayraud, who is a member of the chamber of deputies, and Councilor Soubron have addressed a protest to the premier, M. Combes, on account of the allegations of royalism, saying:

"We protest against the attempt to give a political character to the demonstrations of an indignant public conscience. While applauding the legitimate protests of the population who are grateful to the sisters, we shall continue to strive to prevent acts of violence. Long live the liberal republic."

## Judge Caron is Scored.

Montreal, Aug. 15.—Donald McMaster, leading counsel for the United States, today gave out a statement in reference to Judge Caron's judgment in the Gaynor-Greene case. "In my opinion," he said, "the judgment is bad, and the reasons in support of it worse. The judgment is in effect a snap judgment, without an opportunity for counsel being heard."

The first ground of the judgment, viz., that the warrant issued by Judge La Fontaine for the arrest of the prisoners, does not contain the date of the commission of the crime, Mr. McMaster considers most extraordinary, as he holds the warrant to be in the words of the form prescribed by the statute. According to him the date in the warrant was not at all necessary, either by the form of the statute or by the express terms of the extradition act. "The authorities submitted on behalf of the United States do not appear to receive any consideration," said McMaster. "Neither does the judgment of Justice Andrews. It is either ignored or lightly brushed aside."

"I'll never give you up, Miss Perkins—never."

"That's it, Mr. Hopkins. I'd be afraid to marry such a determined, obstinate man as you are."—Detroit Free Press.

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# SHORTAGE OF LABOR EXISTS

## In Eastern Washington Wheat Fields

### Horses for Work in Harvesters Are Also Short—Good Wages Are Paid.

Colfax, Aug. 17.—A serious difficulty confronts the farmers of Whitman county in their efforts to harvest their grain crops, and work is being seriously impeded by the scarcity of men and teams, especially the latter. There is scarcely an outfit at work in the fields of this county but is short of men or teams, or both, and farmers and threshing machine owners are in town every day trying to get teams to work. This is the result of the heavy sales of horses in this county during the past year, when thousands of head of horses were sold and shipped out. Threshing machine owners are offering \$5 per day for a man and four-horse team. Two hundred more horses could find work in the harvest fields of Whitman county at 50 cents per day and board for each horse, and many more men are needed in the fields. Such a condition was never before known in this county, where there has always been a surplus of horses.

Today H. F. Schrieber, a prominent farmer, was in town looking for a four-horse team. While he was standing on the street Paul R. Maurer, another farmer, approached him and asked where he could secure horses. Five men, all in search of four-horse teams, were found in ten minutes, and none succeeded in getting what he wanted. Mr. Maurer said that in his neighborhood, on Union flat, there are seven threshers at work in the fields, and only one has enough horses and men to run on full time. "If more horses do not come into this county we will be harvesting in November," said Mr.

Maurer. Mr. Lewis, who is running two headers and a thresher near Endicott, came to Colfax yesterday afternoon to get eight horses and several men. He succeeded in hiring four horses and bought four more, as he had to have that number to operate his machines. He is cutting and threshing sixty acres of grain a day, and the work requires an army of men and horses.

At a camping ground near the brewery, where a number of teams had camped, every man in the camp was asked if he wanted work with his teams, but all had been employed, and while the party was there three other farmers visited the camp in search of teams. F. P. Maguire was in Colfax today from Aarfield, where he had been trying to secure teams to haul hay, but said he could not hire a team for any price in or near Garfield, and the same condition is reported from all parts of the Palouse country.

While there is a scarcity of men, this deficiency is not working so much of a hardship as the shortage of horses. Men are coming in on almost every train, and all are finding employment at good wages. The wages run from \$2 to \$4 per day and board for men, the difference depending on the kind of work done. Header wagon drivers get \$2 per day, "spike" pitchers get \$2.50, header

drivers get from \$3 to \$3.50 per day, men working with threshers get from \$2 to \$4, the forkers and sack sewers getting the highest wages. If there were more teams in the country many more men could be supplied with work and all the men who have teams will find no difficulty in securing work at high wages.

Rain was falling in light showers throughout the Palouse country yesterday, and harvest work has been temporarily suspended. Header and thresher crews have come into the towns to get supplies and to seek more men. The rain has done no damage and no fear of any damage has been manifested, the general belief being that the rain will not continue long enough to injure grain and that harvest work can be resumed in a day or two. Sunday is not observed by the harvesters, but every hour of daylight in good weather will be utilized in saving the big grain crop.

Mr. Kelly—There's a mon and his wife fighting up on th' sixth flure! Officer Rooney—Well, phwat of it? Oi can't shtop people from getting married, ye fule!—Puck.

Cora—Do you believe in palmistry? Merritt—No, my dear. The only time I was glad to find a life line in my hand was when I was shipwrecked.—Town Topics.

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