

The Mad Engineer.

This thrilling story is furnished by a Franklin railroad conductor. My train left Danville this morning generally about eight o'clock; but one week we had to wait for the arrival of the steamer from Stockholm. It was the morning of the steamer's arrival that I came down from the hotel and found that my engineer had been seriously injured that he could not perform his work. A railway-carriage had run over him, and broken one of his legs. I went immediately to the engine-house to procure another engineer for I knew there were three or four in reserve there, but I was disappointed. I inquired for Washburn, but was informed that he had gone to Sroegen to see his mother. Goldolph had been sent to Koenigsberg, on the road. But where was Mayne? He had leave of absence for two days, and had gone no one knew whither.

Here was a fix. I heard the puffing of the steamer, and the passengers ran to the guards and asked them if they knew where there was an engineer but they did not. I then went to the fireman and asked them if any one of them felt competent to run the engine to Bromberg. No one dared to attempt it. The distance was nearly one hundred miles. What was to be done?

The steamer stopped at the wharf, and those who were going on by rail were looking to the station. They had seen breakfast on board the boat, and were all ready for a fresh start. The baggage was checked and registered, the tickets bought, the different carriages assigned to the various classes of passengers, and the passengers themselves seated. The train was in readiness in the long station-house, and the engine was steaming and puffing away impatiently in the distant fire-house. It was past nine o'clock.

"Come, why don't we start!" growled an old fat Swede, who had been watching me narrowly for the last fifteen minutes. And upon this there was a general chorus of anxious inquiry, which soon settled to downright murmuring. At this juncture one touched me on the elbow. I turned and saw a stranger by my side. I expected that he was going to remonstrate with me for my backwardness. In fact, I began to have strong temptations to pull my uniform, for every anxious eye was fixed upon the glaring badges which marked me as the chief officer of the train.

However, this stranger was a middle-aged man, tall and stout, with a face of great energy and intelligence. His eyes were black and brilliant, as brilliant as I could not for the life of me gaze steadily into it; and his lips, which were very thin, seemed more like polished marble than human flesh. His dress was black throughout, and not only set with exact nicety, but was scrupulously clean and neat.

"You are an engineer, I understand," he said, in a low, cautious tone, at the same time gazing quietly at me, as though he wanted no one to hear what he said. "I do," I replied. "My train is all ready, and we have an engine within twenty miles of this place." "Well, sir, I am going to Bromberg; I must go, and I will run the engine for you!" "Ha!" I uttered, "are you an engineer?" "I am, sir—one of the oldest in the country—and am now on my way to make arrangements for a great improvement I have invented for the application of steam to a locomotive. My name is Martin Kroll. If you wish, I will run as far as Bromberg; and I will show you running that is running."

"I was not fortunate! I determined to accept the man's offer at once, and so I told him. He received my answer with a nod and a smile. I went with him to the house, where we found the iron-horse in charge of the fireman, and all ready for a start. Kroll got upon the platform, and I followed him. I had never seen a man betray such peculiar apathy and machinery as he did. He let on the steam in an instant, but yet with care and judgment, and he backed up to the baggage-carriage with the most exact nicety. I had seen enough to assure me that he was thoroughly acquainted with the business, and I felt composed, and more, and then hastened away to the office. Word was passed for all the passengers to take their seats, and soon afterward I waved my hand to the engineer. There was a puff, a growling of the heavy pistons—a trembling of the building—and the train was in motion. I leaped upon the platform of the guard-carriage, and in a few minutes more the station-house was far behind us.

In less than an hour we reached Dirham, where we took up the passengers that had come on the Koenigsberg railway. Here I went forward and asked Kroll how he liked the engine. He replied that he liked it very much. "He came," said the guard, "and swore that an engine which stood near by was his. He said it was one he had made to go to the moon, and that it had been stolen from him. We went for more help to arrest him, and he fled. "Well," I replied with a shudder, "I wish he had approached me in the same way; but he was more cautious at Dirham." At Schwartz we found an engineer to run the engine to Bromberg; and having taken out the Western mail for the next Northern mail to carry along, we saw that Kroll was properly attended to, and then started on.

that we were dashing along at a speed never before travelled on that road. Posts, fences, rocks, and trees flew by in one undistinguished mass, and the carriages now swayed fearfully. I started to my feet, and met a passenger on the platform. He was one of the chief owners of our road, and was just on his way to Berlin. He was pale and excited, and he said to me, "Sir, he gasped, 'is Martin Kroll on the engine?'" "Yes," I told him. "Holy Virgin! didn't you know him?" "I know!" I repeated, somewhat puzzled; "what do you mean? He told me his name was Kroll, and that he was an engineer. We had no one to run the engine, and—"

"You took him!" interrupted the man. "Good heavens, sir, he turned his brain over a new plan for applying steam power. I saw him at the station, but did not fully recognize him, as I was in a hurry. Just now one of your passengers told me that your engineers were all gone this morning, and that you found one that was a stranger to them. Then I knew that the man whom I had seen from the hospital at Stettin. You must get him out somehow."

The whole fearful truth was now open to me. The speed of the train was increasing every moment, and I knew that a few more miles per hour would launch us all into destruction. I called to the guard, and told him to stop forward as quick as possible. I packed the after platform of the after tender, and there stood Kroll upon the engine-board, his hat and coat off, his long black hair flying wildly in the wind, his shirt unbuttoned at the front, his sleeves rolled up, with a pistol in his teeth, and thus glaring upon the fireman, who lay motionless upon the fuel. The furnace was stuffed till the very latch of the door was red hot, and the whole engine was quivering and swaying as though it would shiver to pieces.

"Kroll! Kroll!" I cried at the top of my voice. The crazy engineer started and caught the pistol in his hand. O, how those great black eyes glared, and how ghastly and frightful the look! "Ha! ha!" he yelled demoniacally, glaring upon me like a roused lion. "They swore that I could not make it! But see! see! See my new engine! I made it, and they are jealous of me! I made it, and when it was done, they stole it from me! But I have found it! For years I have been wandering in search of my great engine, and they swore it was impossible. But I have found it! I know it this morning when I saw it at Danzig, and I was determined to have it. And I have got it! Ho! ho! ho! I will run it to the moon, and I will by the Virgin Mother, we'll be in the moon in four-and-twenty hours. Down, down, villain! If you move, I'll shoot you!"

This was spoken to the poor fireman, who at that moment attempted to rise, and the frightened man sank back again. "Here's Little Owen just before us," cried out one of the guard. But even as he spoke the buildings were at hand. A sickening sensation settled upon my heart, for I supposed that we were now gone. The houses flew by like lightning. I knew if the officers here had heard of this article in the usual way, they would have been hurled into one in a fearful crash. I saw a flash—it was another engine—I closed my eyes; but still we thundered on. The officers here were our speed, and, knowing that we would not head up in that distance, they had changed the switch, so that we went forward.

But there was sure death ahead, if we did not stop. Only fifteen miles from us was the town of Schwartz, on the Vistula; and at the rate we were going, we should be there in a few minutes, for each minute carried us over a mile. The shrieks of the passengers were a fearful sound, and the rate we were going, and more terrific than all else, arose the demoniac yells of the mad engineer. "Here's Little Owen just before us," cried out a moment to the moment to the guardman, "there's not a moment to lose; Schwartz is close. But hold," he added; "let's shoot him!" The rest of the train, about German student came over the platform where we stood, and we saw that the madman had his heavy pistol aimed at us. He grasped a huge stick of wood, and with a steadiness of nerve which I could not have commanded, he hurled it with such force and precision that he knocked the pistol from the man's hand. I grasped the man by the arm; but I should have been nothing in his mad power, had he been alone. He would have hurled me to the ground, had he not the student at that moment struck him upon the head with a stick of wood, which he caught as he came over the tender.

Kroll settled down like a dead man, and on the next instant I shut off the steam, and opened the valve. As the freed steam whirled and howled in its escape, the speed began to decrease, and in a few minutes more the danger had passed. As I settled back in my seat, I saw the movement, and on the instant that the pistol fell I sprang forward, and the man followed me. I grasped the man by the arm; but I should have been nothing in his mad power, had he been alone. He would have hurled me to the ground, had he not the student at that moment struck him upon the head with a stick of wood, which he caught as he came over the tender.

"How we go!" uttered one of the guard, some fifteen minutes after we had left Dirham. "The new engineer is trying the speed," I replied, not yet having any fear. But when I began to apprehend he was running a little too fast, the carriage began to sway to and fro, and I could hear exclamations of fright from the passengers. "Good heavens!" cried one of the guard, coming in at that moment, "what is this fellow doing? Look, sir, and see how we are going." I looked at the window, and found

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