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The Weeping Willow telegraph office faced the level prairie. Up and down before it, like shining ribbons, lay the rail road tracks, converging mysteriously until distance blended them into one. The telegraph operator, satiated with landscape, leaned back, stretched himself prodigiously, yawned audibly and collapsed in his chair, which creaked in vexed remonstrance. He tossed a remark over his shoulder, "So this is what you are yearnin' for. Dave!"

Dave took his cane, and, limping to the door, viewed the inertness in silence. Then he roused himself and said cheerfully:

Then he roused himself and said cheerfully:

"A telegraph operator is all I'm good fer since I got hurt."

"Seems like the com'ny might have done more for you when you got smashed up in their own accident. 'Twouldn't have hurt 'em none to keep you as a conductor," grumbled his friend.

Dave obediently limped up the street, where, in the midst of a crowd of rough men, stood a girl holding some little animal high above her head, while the dogs leapt and snapped around her.

The girl, with scarlet cheeks, begged and scolded and threatened them all to their infinite amusement.

"Call off your dawg, Jim," she said fiercely to the owner of the largest, whose leaps sometimes almost reached the quivering little object in her hands.

"Throw down the beast an' I will," he answered.

"A runaway engine coming this way," he said hoarsely. "Spite work of a discharged engineer. No one on her—go ing twenty-five miles an hour—a single track—Dave's train only going fifteen—the 44 and that ore car on the only siding between here and Red Valley. My God!"

"Where is it?" cried Brier Rose.

"It broke away from Horseshoe Gap. Message is from Prairie City, headed straight for here. It's bound to catch Dave before his train gets into Red

answered.

"If that there dawg gives another jump, I'll pizen him before sunup," she said, slowly.

Jim made a lunge for the dog and sat on him to keep him down, while the crowd hooted in derision of his obedience.

"What's all this," cried Dave, coming me and pushing his way through their

ed up No. 7."
"Not the feller that got hurt savin"

story she knew by heart, as she heard him defend her.

To be sure, she had been defended before; there was hardly a man who would not have risked his life to save her's, but they teased her unmercifully when they got the chance. Dave's interference was on a new line. She did not quite understand it, but it appealed to her at once.

When Dave went back to the station to tell Joe the latter roared with delight.

to tell Joe the latter roared with delight.

"Just like her! Exactly like her!" he
cried, slapping his leg so inhumanly
that his lame friend winced for him.

"Who is Brier Rose?" he repeated, in
answer to Dave's question. "You don't
know much if you don't know old Bryan's
daughter. She's the best known girl
from Horseshoe Gap to Powder Crik.
Old Bryan's been engineer on the road
ever since the track was laid. All eyes she
was then as she is now. What wasn't eyes
was temper. Same now, savin' that
now she bosses the boys in addition to
old Bryan. She can run an engine with
the best of 'em. Bryan's taught her all
the tricks, and he thinks the sun rises
and sets for just her."

"Strange she would defend a gopher,
when she's so hard on the boys," observed Dave.

when she's so hard on the boys," observed Dave.

"That's just it. That's Brier Rose! She's got more tame pets; she's friendlier with every beast in Weepin' Willer than with any of the boys. She ain't even got a head fur anybody but old Bryan; you notice I make no mention of heart concernin' Brier Rose; I don't keer to talk of what she ain't got—and just now she's specially bewitched about him. After keeping straight for forty years he's taken to drink. The girl knows he'll lose his job if the company guts wind of it, and she watches him like a hawk."

"What's Bryan's Run?"

"Horseshoe to Powder Crik. She knows every inch of track and siding. And I fwish you could see her handle the critter. She knows all Bryan does, and

critter. She knows all Bryan does, and she's a heap sight quicker calc'latin' than the old man. It's wuth while to see her oil and clean the machine. She goes oil and clean the machine. She goes over it as spry as a kitten."

In spite of what he had heard, or perhaps because of what he had heard, all things, even the melancholy town itself, grew rose-colored to Dave's sunny eyes. With his unfailing cheerfulness he waited hopefully for news of his appointment at Red Valley, and hovered, as if fascinated, around Engine No. 44.

Neither the boys nor old Bryan were slow to notice this, the latter having accepted such attentions periodically from all the young men. It was so inevitable a proceeding that, up to the time of the Middleton's dance, they paid no attention to it.

to it. But that night something extraordiary occurred.

The next day, as Brier Rose rode down the street on her hardy little pony, the boys gathered around her eagerly, notwithstanding the fact that she had a stout little whip in her hand. They had something new and strange to tease her about

"You'd rather set all the evenin', wouldn't you, now?"

"D'you like the name o' Dave, or do you reckon you'd rather have Comstock?"

Rose looked from one to the other as the bottled-up taunts fell rapidly upon herears, hercheeks and lips growing scarlet. For once her ready tongue failed her: Small need to ask them what they meant. Too well she knew. But was her subjugation apparent in such a trifle? And so soon? And Dave as yet had said nothing. Emboldened by her silence they went further, "What does he say about it?"

The shamed crimson leaped to her very temples and receded, leaving her.

A cyclone blew down several nouses uear Natchez, Miss., on Tuesday evening of last week.

RHEUMATISM CURED IN A DAY:—South American Rheumatic Cure for Rheumatism and Neuralgia radically cures in 1 to 3 days. Its action upon the system is remarkable and mysterious. It removes at once the cause, and the disease immediately disappears. The first dose greatly benefits. 75 cents. Warranted by J. Fallen & Son.

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Rose turned white to her very lips.
She covered her face with her brown hands. Only for a moment, though.
Then she flung back her head and looked Joe full in the face.
"I can save him?" she cried. She sprang for her engine and climed into the cab.
"Rose!" Rose!" roseof Jee in July 1985.

what Brier Rose was doing; then from sheer nervousness, he squeezed Foxy until he yelped wildly.

Out of sight of Weeping Willow and Dave's train in the distance, nearer and nearer came the runaway. The 44 snorted in defiance of being caught. Rose braced herself for the shock. Crashi came the cowcatcher of the runaway into the unprotected rear of the gallant 44. Rose had loosened her hold, and the concession flung her to the floor, with her soft cheek against the cab seat.

runaway, up along the boiler side into the cab, and crashed the throttle shut when the 44 was within a car's length

of Dave's train.

When she came to herself she was in the Red Valley station. Dave was bending over her and calling her name with trembling lips. She opened her eyes and smiled into his face.

"Oh, Brier Rose, how could you do it?" he whispered with a shudder.

"I did it for you, David—for—you."

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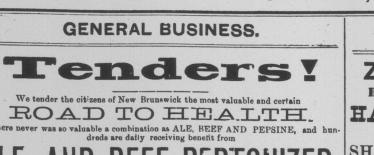
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you as a conductor," grumbled his friend.

Suddenly the afternoon stillness was broken by excited voices and the sharp barking and yapping of dogs. Joe brought his feet to the floor in a hurry.

'I can't leave the machine, Dave. Go and see what the rumpus is about. I bet Brier Rose is up to somethin'. It takes that there girl to stir up the boys. No. Foxy," he said to his terrier, who was whirling around in an ecstacy of anticipation. "you' stay here. If Brier Rose is at the bottom of it, a little feller like you might get lost in the shuffle."

Dave obediently limped up the street, where, in the midst of a crowd of rough men, stood a girl holding some little animal high above her head, while the dogs leapt and snapped around her.

The right with sould a strong an attraction. Therefore he kept away.

She trod fearlessly along the side of the boiler, rubbing the hand-rail with ablack of its bodden cloth. She touched the engine as if she loved it. Every part of it shone like the sun. Every screw was secure. Joe laughed to see her fling a shovelful of coal into the furnace like a born fireman.

His own machine called his attention the station.

'A runaway.

"What's all this," cried Dave, coming up and pushing his way through their midst.

"Brier Rose is being held up!" cried a voice.

The crowd yelled with delight. The girl's whole face became white with rage as she singled out the speaker.

"Yru'll pay for that, Ben Miles, as you've paid before," she said.

"Call off those brutes," cried Dave, rapping the nearest dog with his cane.

"For shame, to tease a woman!"

"Look a hyer, stranger," said a young giant, menacingly. He towered above Dave, who stood his ground.

"I'm lame, and no account in a fight," said Dave, "but half a man ain't going to see a woman tormented.

"Who in thunder—" began his breatener; but Ben Miles laid a hand on his arm.

"Wheld on Jim "he said, "that there's the said way through their midst.

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"I'm lame, and no account in a fight," said Dave; "but half a man ain't going to see a woman tormented.

"Who in thunder—" began his breatener; but Ben Miles laid a hand on his ama at all little less than twenty-five miles an hour began running away from the speaker.

"Wheld on Jim "he said, "that there's the said way through the cab.

"Bris Hotel bas been Newly and Handthee the switch, Ben dismay.

Rose turned her white face towards him imploringly. "Be at the switch, Ben say you the switch, and listen for my signals, as you value Dave's life!" she cried. Then she pulled the throttle valve out to its full driven by Brier Rose, leaped down the speaker.

"He louse can be reached by Horse Cars, Stage, and Elevator. Railroad and Steamboat. Ticket, The engine shivered all over, and at fifty-two miles an hour the 44, driven bless the shape of the sprore dall over, and at fifty-two miles an hour the 44, driven bless the switch, Jee, and at fifty-two miles and not listed in the cab.

The Crow Lame Hand-Ben Newly and Hand-Ben Parinted, contains a grand Exchange. The switch, Jee, and Elevator. Railroad and Steamboat.

an hour began running away from the

"Sho, stranger!" said the molined Jim.
"You're welcome to interfere. Give us yer hand. We wouldn't hurt her fer nothin." Bless my stars! Brier Rose can take care of herself better'n most men."

The dogs were all held now, and the girl put her tired arms down. She looked curiously at the man, whose brave story she knew by heart, as she heard him defend her.

To be sure, she had been defended before; there was hardly a man who would not have risked his life to save her's, but they teased her unmercifully when they got the chance. Dave's interference was on a new line. She did not quite under
"I can signal for the sliding if I fail,"
In sight of Weeping Willow at last. The 44 whistled frantically. Rose signaled for a clear track, and only a train length apart the 44 and the runaway for the chance was hardly a man who would not have risked his life to save her's, but they teased her unmercifully when they got the chance. Dave's interference was on a new line. She did not quite under-

with her soft cheek against the cab seat.

Faint with her fall she gathered herself together and shut off the steam. Then with the nose of the runaway viciously pushing the 44, Brier Rose crept like a cat over the tender, down over the trembling engine, and on her hands and knees she crawled over to the runaway up along the helps gid into

face pitifully white. Her wounded pride now panted for but one thing—a way out. Probably he knew it, too. She saw him coming down the street.

"Do you love him? Say, Brier Rose, do you love Dave?" cried the one furthest from her whip.

"Do I love him?" she cried, looking him fairly in the face. "I come nearer to hatin' him!"

She turned her horse sharply, and the blows the boys had expected fell on her fiery little pony. He craned his neck and went up the street on a dead run, but fast as Rose flew the grieved look in Dave Comstock's blue eyes kept pac with her.

That night Joe fidgeted around, unable to decide whether or not he should speak to Dave about the occurrence of the afternoon. Dave's genial smile and cheery hopefulness were gone. He sat with his face buried in his folded arms. The position of the telegraph operator at Red Valley was given to Dave Comstock. The afternoon freight, heavily loaded, had just pulled clumsily out of the Weeping Willow station, with Dave on the rear platform of the way car.

The 44, having come down on the rear of the freight as second engine, now stood on the siding, waiting to go back to Horseshoe for the midnight express.

Old Bryan was up in a crowd of men in front of the postofice. Brier Rose watched him anxiously. As long as he kept away from the Owl she felt easy. He knew she was watching him. He also knew that she would not hesitate to come after him if the Owl proved too strong an attraction. Therefore he kept away.

She trod fearlessly along the side of

"Where is it?" cried Brier Rose.
"It broke away from Horseshoe Gap.
Message is from Prairie City. It's already passed Prairie City, headed
straight for here. It's bound to catch
Dave before his train gets into Red
Valley." Valley."
Rose turned white to her very lips.

an hour began running away from the runaway.

Slowly, almost imperceptibly, it gained on her brave engine. A norrible fear took possession of her that it was coming too slowly, and that they both would reach Dave's train before she stopped the runaway. She changed the speed and let the engine gain on her faster.

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