

order, in case a steamboat should land. I did tinker at it for two months. The loafers about the platform laughed, said no boat had landed here for two years. So I gave it up. Anyhow, it's out of order. Something has gone wrong with the gearing. I tried it one day last spring when the only boat which ever brought me freight landed. I told them they would have to use the road. Even that is out of commission now; there was a landslide soon after. Since then no one has been able to get down to the landing without taking the breakneck climb down the face of the bluff.

In another hour David found himself alone—and lonely. For there was really nothing to do. The mixed train had gone. The telegraph-instrument was silent. There were no freight-bills to be prepared, no book-entries to be made. So he went out for another look about the station. When he came to the large double doors across the tramway, he worked at the lock until it yielded to his coaxing. Then he was able to look out on the track which led down into the water.

'Wish I might see a boat down there at the landing,' he thought. 'It would be a variation in the monotonous landscape.'

He put in the remainder of the day at odds and ends of work. At night he felt exhausted by the effort to invent something to do. 'I don't know but the last man was right when he said there was no chance here for faithfulness,' he thought as he went to sleep.

Next day there was a little bustle when the mixed train drew up to the platform. One passenger appeared, who bought a ticket to a point six miles down the line. A sack of flour and a barrel of oil were left. Then the train was gone. And the day was before him. Carefully he made the necessary entries in his books, then looked about him for something to do. He went to a window, and looked up the river. Then he went to a second window, and looked down the river. He went to the platform, and looked across at the little cluster of houses and the two or three men loafing before the single store. Then he sighed, and re-entered the station.

'I don't know how I'm to stand this, day after day, and week after week,' he thought, self-pityingly. 'If I had only myself to look out for, I am afraid I should send in my resignation by the next mail.'

As he discontentedly walked through the freight-room, he stopped to examine the engine. He had always had a taste for mechanics, and had frequently handled the engine at the water-tank near the home station; so he soon mastered the more intricate mechanism before him. He wished he could try it, and see the flat cars running up and down the incline.

'But it isn't only the gearing I'd need to fix,' he said aloud. He had already begun to speak aloud; it was so lonely. 'The whole thing would have to be thoroughly cleaned; the dust of months is on everything. It would have to be thoroughly oiled, too. Maybe, after all, it wouldn't run.'

He walked on to a little storeroom not far away. Here he found—also covered with dust—a spare cable, some tools, a barrel of lubricating oil, and other supplies. Evidently this was the store-closet for the engine and the hoisting outfit.

Then he took another look at the machinery. 'Wonder if I ought not to fix that,' he asked himself. 'The last agent said he was instructed to keep it in order. The G. M. didn't say anything to me about that, though he did say the retiring agent would point out my duties. Now, I wonder, have I any right to leave the engine alone, even if it isn't used? No telling when it may be wanted. I guess I'll get to work.'

In a little while, in overalls and jumper, he was busy at the grimy machinery. All the morning he gave to his task. It was hard work. But he made progress, and the hours did not seem so long.

As he was about to go to his room for a change of garments, two loafers strolled in. They laughed uproariously when they saw what he was doing.

'You must be anxious to earn your salary,'

one of them said. 'The last man soon found the thing was not needed, and he let it alone. You'll do as he did before long.'

But David persisted in his work. It was a week before he had the engine ready for use. It was another week before he learned how to lubricate the cables properly. The loafers who had seen the tramway in use some years before gave him hints, and one of them volunteered to help him as he made his first trip.

'Well, now that it is running, what's the use?' he asked himself grimly. 'Few boats are on the river, and none of those few ever stop here. Wonder if it wouldn't be easier to do as the men say, and give the engine another long rest.'

'No,' he said with decision. 'The G. M. told me to be faithful; and, as this is about the only way in which I can be faithful, I guess I might as well keep on.'

So every day he cleaned the engine, and saw that it was in shape for use. He kept a fire laid, that he might be able to get up steam at a moment's notice. And, when he heard the whistle of a steamer, he stood ready to light the fire if there should be any indication of intent to land.

But months passed, and not once did a boat land. The loafers from the village poked fun at him. They called the tramway 'Beaton's Folly.' They insinuated that he was fit for the insane asylum.

Sometimes they walked over to the station when they heard a boat's approach. Again, they would call to him from the street, asking him to give the captain their regards when his boat tied up at the landing. These sallies made no difference to David. 'It's my work,' he assured himself, 'and as long as I am here I must do it.'

One evening in late October he had just come in from supper when he heard a whistle from down stream. Mechanically he hurried to the freight-room, threw open the double doors, and looked out. Yes, there was the 'Paducah,' which had passed the landing four or five times since he had been agent. And it was going by again! Well, he might have known it. He was closing the doors, when he was startled by a burst of flame from the steamer's boiler deck. He had hardly time to wonder what it meant when the whistle sounded, blast upon blast. Then he saw what was wrong. The 'Paducah' was afire! The pilot was turning her nose to the bank!

He ran to the engine, poured oil on the fuel in the grate, and struck a match. In an instant the fire was burning fiercely. As he worked, he could hear the roustabouts shouting and yelling; and everything was confusion. The mate was trying to control them, that they might be able to make the landing.

In a few minutes the steamer was at the bank. A dozen men from the town had burst into the station. Several hurried down the timbers of the tramway toward the boat. David stopped two of the men, with a request to help him operate the cars.

'What do you want with the cars?' they jeered. 'Think they're going to send you any freight? Why, it will be all they can do to get out themselves!'

But David persisted in his determination to send down the car. At the moment the boat touched the land his engine was ready for use. The car went out the door, and slipped down the incline. Some on board, seeing it coming, set up a shout. When it rested on the water, several planks were run out from the deck; and almost immediately three children and a mattress with some one lying on it were carried over to the car. One man held the children; another knelt by the mattress. Then some one shouted.

'Hoist away there!'

And David, wondering, obeyed.

When the car was halted within the freight-room, the frightened children stepped to the floor. The kneeling man rose, and, turning to David, called

'Help me with this mattress, please.'

As he spoke, David recognized the general manager, whom he had not seen since the day he secured his appointment.

'Can you lead the way to some home where

my wife can be cared for?' Mr. Albright asked. 'She is ill, and the excitement of the last half-hour has been hard on her. Let us get away from the river as quickly as possible.'

When the little procession had made its way to the best home in the town, and David had returned to the river, the 'Paducah' was burned to the water's edge. In the station were the captain and the crew.

'Mr. Agent, I want to shake your hand,' the captain greeted him. 'Half an hour ago, when the boat caught fire, I told Mr. Albright that his one chance to get his wife ashore within reach of help was by the use of the rough road from this landing. I thought the tram wasn't working; the last agent said it was out of order when we landed here a year ago. Mr. Albright said it would be too much for his wife. You see, he brought his family on the river in the hope that the trip would benefit Mrs. Albright. Yesterday she was taken seriously ill, and we were hurrying to the Chattanooga hospital. The men tell me the road is blockaded. What would the poor woman have done if the tram had not been in order? She could never have stood it to be hoisted up the cliff. But, thanks to you, everything was all right. These men have been telling me how you have worked to be ready for any emergency. I shall take pleasure in telling Mr. Albright what he owes to you. Young man, you'll be a candidate for a real station when he has heard me out.'

David did not sleep very much that night. He was rejoicing that he had been faithful even when there seemed to be nothing to be faithful about.

And, while he tried in vain to sleep, one of the villagers who had laughed at him as he tinkered at the hoisting-engine thus expressed the general opinion:

'Somehow "Beaton's Folly" doesn't seem so funny to-night, does it, boys?'

FROM EAST AND WEST.

Two enthusiastic letters are selected from among our budget of good things this week, one from Saskatchewan, one from New Brunswick. Did space permit we could occupy a column or two each week with hearty letters from our 'Pictorial' army, now getting to be a very large company indeed. But, large as our 'army' is, we've always room to enlist new recruits, and we will be pleased to enroll any boy reader of this advertisement. All it needs is a postcard from you asking for a package of 'Pictorials' to start on, a premium list and our letter of instructions, etc. We believe in women's rights, too, and while we don't at all urge our girl readers to become newsboys, we are quite willing to give girls the same chance as boys—since some of them could quite easily secure orders for six or eight copies per month from their own personal friends. Indeed, we have several girls already who have done splendidly, earning fountain pens, cameras, locket and chain, as well as book prizes.

But we have wandered away from our letters—here they are:

C—, N.B., May 1.

John Dougall & Son, Montreal, P.Q.:
Dear Sir,—Received camera No. 2 O.K. It works fine; have taken a number of snaps and they could not be better. Am delighted with the rubber stamp. Hope I will soon get the pad. Please forward twenty May 'Pictorials' as soon as possible. Yours truly,

JAMES B. FRASER.

Box 135.

Y—, Sask., April 23.

Dear Sirs,—I am sending returns for the four papers I received. Please send me eight papers for May. The majority of my customers say that they wondered how I could sell the 'Pictorial' so cheap when I ask them how they like the papers. I received the fountain pen to-day and think it is a dandy for the little work. I have sold 49 papers since the 1st of January, and received watch and chain, for 25 papers, fountain pen for 14 papers. Please send jack knife for selling nine papers. I am writing this with the fountain pen, so you will be able to see how the pen works. Yours truly,

HOWARD JONES.

NOW FOR YOUR ORDER! The May number ran down very rapidly, but we could still supply a few new boys (or girls) with a small package to start on—only DO IT NOW. There's no time to lose. Full particulars of our prize competition sent on application.

P.S.—If you are too late for the May Number we will send a package of June issue just as soon as it is ready.

See Large Advt. on Another Page.