THE SUPERINTENDENT'S STORY OF A DISAPPRARANCE.

A New Engine That Just Threw Its Euglacer and Vanished—Affidavit: That it Left a Ghost Which Ran Over the Country—Fate of the Engineer.

One of the most beautiful traits of my character,' began the division superintendent, 'is an overwhelming love of truth. For that reason your demand for a story places me in an unpleasant predicament, since the only story I know is one which no one has ever believed. But you shall have it.

'Some years ago I was yardmaster at Great Plains, Neb., then the western terminus of the Missouri, Nebraska and western Railway. Along in December we received three new engines from the Baldwins. One was a yard engine, another a twelve-wheel freighter, and the third a big compound to haul the California and Chicago express. Sixty seven was the number of the last engine, and she was a beauty ! For a week or so she was put at jerking the big freights between Great Plains and Millersburg just to get her wind, and then-Dec. 24, it was-she was fired up in the afternoon preparatory to making her first trip with the express from the West An engineer of the name of Gabbert was to take her out, and a young Irishman, Tom Brine, was to fire. Bill Gabbert was an old hand and one of the best on the road, and we knew that if any, man was capable of getting the best licks out of an engine he was that man.

'There was quite a crowd in the roundhouse that night when the time came for running 67 out and down to the station She stood, with her brass work shining brightly in the dim light, humming and

switch 'Gabbert nodded and waved a hand.

'Good bye, lads' he cried.

'Good-by.' we answered, without enthusiaem. Then 67 gave a twang of her bell, her drivers slowly revolved, and resplendent in new paint and polished metal she ran slowly out through the big doorway on to the two glistening rails which curved away into the darkness to the left.

'It was probably a desire to ateady his nerves that led Gabbert to pull wide the throttle as he did, for when clear of the house the big wheels bit at the rails, a shower of sparks shot off into the night, and 67 s tender went whisking around the curve like a can on a dog's tail. It was a good quarter of a mile to the station, and owing to the long curve, 67 was out of sight when a third of the distance had been travelled. One or two of the men and mysell walked down the track to the paint shop, which, after a moment's talk with the loreman, I leit just as the whistle of the express sounded outside of town. Under the shadow of the water tank, a figure hurried past me.

"Is that you. Brine?" I called.

of the figure hurried past me.

'Is that you, Brine P' I called.

'Yes, sır. Where's 67, sir P They telephoned from the roundhouse that she

telephoned from the roundhouse that she came down ten minutes ago.'

'So she did; Gabbert took her out.'

'We can't find her.'

'Can't find her! Nonsense! What's that down on the switch?'

'That's an M. P. special, sir. I've looked all over the yard and so has Chase. Some one said she went by the station a while ago running thirty miles a hour.'

What! Come on; I'll telephone down to the east tower. Look out!"
We stepped aside and the express went by, her shoes grinding the wheels as she slid down the frosty track to the platform. Two minutes after I was in the baggage room telephoning to the eastern switch tower.

tower.

'Yes,' came the answer. '67 went east running light at 7:04 What you mean I don't know, but it you're going to run any more wildcats around here let me know and I'll resign. There's an extra freight at—.' I banged the receiver into place and ran to the platform. Brine, with a scared face, met me at the door.

'They've foun! Bill Gabbert, sir., down the track with his head knocked open. They're bringing him up. What's it mean sir P! I shook my head. Down the track a 'ttle bunch of lights flashed to and fro, coming nearer.

air? I shook my head. Down the track a little bunch of lights flashed to and tro, coming nearer.

Take a switch engine. I said, 'run up to the house and bring down 34 or 37. Tell Brinker he'll have to take the run. If Brinker's not there, find someone else.' Then, as Brine rushed off, I turned and sprang upitairs to the despatcher's room. A minute or two later all traffic to the east was stopped and side tracked. Then the despatcher wired Millersburg. sixty miles away, to ditch 67 in a good soft bed and for God's sake to keep the track clear.

The California and Chicago express pulled out of Great Plains four minutes late, drawn by engine 44. Brinker at the throttle and Tom Brine firing. Bill Gabbert, with a cracked skull, lay, in the hospital two weeks before he spoke. Then it was little enough he told. He had opened the trottle for a spurt down the yard and when about 300 feet shy of the station had put his hand out to slow down when a fit of dizziness seized him. He clutched at the side of the cab, felt as though some one was pushing him from the cab, found himself falling and knew no more. That was all he could—or would—tell us. The blow had left him not quite right in the head, it was thought, and two months later he was made foreman lof section 12 and went down the road to live in the section house. His engineering days were over.

She stood, with her brass work shining brightly in the dim light, humming and stewing as though eager for the road. Bill Gabbert looked her carefully over from pilot to coupler, and then stepped absard and disappeared in the cab. A moment later we loiterers outside saw his stagger out and fall back against the tender and stand there looking abead with terror on his face.

"What is it, Bill ?! cried. He turned toward us, his features drawn and ghastly, passed his hand across his face, and staggered to his feet. He moved as though to leave the engine, and then, pulling himselt together, stood there looking down, dazed and white and trembling.

"What's up, Bill?" cried a dozen voices. He shook his bead; then said; in soice low and horse. I was studying the gange when all of a sudden! seemed to be looking out of a cab window, and to see something on the track sheed. I jerked be looking out of a cab window, and to see something on the track sheed. I jerked be looking out of a cab window, and to see something on the track sheed. I jerked to yell and couldn't make a sound, and then-then—it all went away sgam." He passed his hand across his face. "Boys I've seen my death."

"No. obey spoke for a minute Thi." Nobody spoke for a minute Thi." Nobody spoke for a minute Thi." Nobody spoke for a minute Thi. "Nobody spoke for a minute Thi." Nobody spoke for a minute Thi." Nobody spoke for a minute Thi. "Nobody spoke for a minute Thi." "Nobody

about her.'
'Look here, Bill,' I continued. 'You know more than you've ever told. What is it? What did you see in the cab of 67 after you pulled out of the roundhouse that night?

But he only shook his head and turned to go. Then he hesitated, and, facing

to go. Then he hesitated, and, facing me again. said, 'I know this, sir; 67 is stilk-running. I've seen her twice—once in the Big Cut; again on bridge 6. The next time I'll not live to tell of it. Good-by sir.'

next time I'll not live to tell of it. Goodby, sir.'
The division superintendent paused to light a fresh cigar, then continued:
But I'm making a long dog of a short tail, friends. So for what I have told may be corroborated by reterring to the company's officials. though they won't care to say much. What follows was seen by but two men of whom one is dead, the other here before you.
It was the anniversary of 67's exodus, Christmas eve. The right was cold, dark,

Christmas eve. The night was cold, dark, and still, and smelt of snow. I had gone

dsor Purest and Best for Table and Dairy Ne adulteration. Never cakes.

down to Wilson's in the afternoon to take supper with a friend, and new, at 10.30. I found myself some four miles from home speeding through the darkness on my railroad bicycle. No trains were due until almost midnight, and I paid small heed to 'he track ahead or behind, but buckled tightly down to business and made the little wheels fairly fly. Through the Big Cut I flew with dealening clatter, crossed a little bridge, and a moment later sighted the lights of the section house twinkling far up the track.

'Suddenly above the noise of my own locomotion I distinctly h-ard the hum of an approaching train behind me. Astounded. I looked backward over my shoulder. Nearer and nearer came the sound, and then a flood of light rounded the curve behind, out of the Big Cut came a flaring headlight, and instantly the track became two long, curving needles of light. It was useless to attempt to reach the section house. I applied the brake, awang my bicycle off the rails into a gully, and, drawing back, wa'ched the oncoming train. What it could be I could not think. Pessibly some belated treight, though, for the matter of that, I was almost certain that all the trains had passed. Louder and louder grew the rattle and jar, higher and higher sang the rails, and more distinct each moment came the bug-bang, thumpthump of the great wheels. Then I noticed a strange unsteatiness of the headlight. From side to side it swayed, like a mast head light in a heavy swell, and with a queer tramor at my heart I knew that the engine approaching me was light; running light, and at such a terrific speed as threatened each moment to burl her from the track. And at the same instant Bill Gabbert's strange tale came back to me. With a gasp I crouched back against the further bank of the ditch. I felt faint, and then my sight cleared, a glare of intensely white light was all about me, a deafening noise filled, my ears and I saw quite plainly the black figures 67 against the light, caught a fleeting glimpse of the empty and dimy illumined cab, saw t

only a laint clear of sources.

'I stumbled over some obstacle, and fell to my knees. With fingers that trembled I drew forth a match and lighting it, held it alott. A man's body lay directly across the rails. As the little flame brightened I looked about me. A few feet distant within the dim circle of light, stood a milepost, white and ghostlike, and the black figures on it stood forth distinctly, 126. Gathering courage, I dropped my gaze and looked into the wide, unseeing eyes of Bill Gabbert.'

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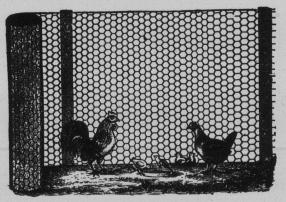
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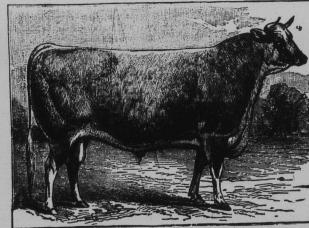
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