

THE NERVE OF FOLEY.

By Frank H. Spearman.

There had been rumors all winter that the engineers were going to strike. Certainly we of the operating department had warnings enough. Yet in the railroad life there is always friction in some quarter; the railroad man sleeps like the soldier, with an ear alert—but just the same he sleeps, for with waking comes duty.

Our engineers were good fellows. If they had faults, they were American faults—rashness, a liberality bordering on extravagance, and a headstrong, violent way of reaching conclusions—traits born of ability and self-confidence and developed by prosperity.

One of the best men we had on a locomotive was Andrew Cameron; at the same time he was one of the hardest to manage, because he was young and headstrong. Andy, a big, powerful fellow, ran opposite Felix Kennedy on the Flyer. The fast runs require young men. If you will notice, you will rarely see an old engineer on a fast passenger run; even a young man can stand only a few years of that kind of work.

High speed on a locomotive is a question of nerve and endurance—to put it bluntly, a question of flesh and blood.

"You don't think much of this strike, do you, Mr. Reed?" said Andy to me one night.

"Don't think there's going to be any, Andy."

He laughed knowingly.

"What actual grievance have the boys?" I asked.

with Andy Cameron, very cavalier, at their head, called on me.

"Mr. Reed," said he, officiously, "we've come to notify you not to run any more trains through here till this strike's settled. The boys won't stand it; that's all."

"Hold on, Cameron," I replied, raising my hand as I spoke; "that's not quite all. I suppose you men represent your grievance committee?"

"Yes, sir."

"I happen to represent, in the superintendent's absence, the management of this road. I simply want to say to you, and to your committee, that I take my orders from the president and the general manager—not from you nor anybody you represent. That's all."

Every hour the bitterness increased. We got a few trains through, but we were terribly crippled. As for freight, we made no pretence of moving it.

I kept tab on one of the new engineers for a week. He began by backing into a diner so hard that he smashed every dish in the car, and ended by running into a siding a few days later and setting two tanks of oil on fire, that burned up a freight depot.

I figured he cost us forty thousands dollars the week he ran. Then he went back to selling windmills.

After this experience I was sitting in my office one evening, when a young fellow in a slouch-hat opened the door and stuck his head in.

"What do you want?" I growled.

"Are Mr. Reed?"

"Well, what is it?"

"Confound you, yes! What do you want?"

"Ma? I don't want anything. I'm just asking, that's all."

His impudence staggered me so that I took my feet off the desk.

"Heard you were looking for men," he added.

ing in next morning behind Foley, they concluded I had gone crazy.

"What do you think of the track, Foley?" said I.

"Fair," he replied, sitting down on my desk. "Stiff hill down there by Zanesville."

"Any trouble to climb it?" I asked, for I had purposely given him a heavy train.

"Not with that car of butter. If you hold that butter another week it will climb a hill without any engine."

"Can you handle a passenger train?"

"I guess so."

"I'm going to send you west on No. 1 to-night."

"Then you'll have to give me a fireman. That guy you sent out last night is a lightning-rod peddler. The dispatcher threw most of the coal."

"I'll go with you myself, Foley. I can give you steam. Can you stand it to double back to-night?"

"I can stand it if you can."

When I walked into the round-house in the evening, with a pair of overalls on, Foley was in the cab getting ready for the run.

Neighbor brought the Flyer in from the East. As soon as he had uncoupled and got out of the way we backed down with the 448. It was the best engine we had left, and luckily for my back, an easy steamer. Just as we coupled to the mailcar a crowd of strikers swarmed out of the dusk.

They were in an ugly mood, and when Andy Cameron and Ben Nicholson sprang up into the cab I saw we were in for trouble.

"Look here, partner," exclaimed Cameron, laying a heavy hand on Foley's shoulder; "you don't want to take this train out, do you? You wouldn't beat honest working-men out of a job?"

"I'm not beating anybody out of a job. If you want to take out this train, take it out. If you don't, get out of this cab."

Cameron was nonplussed. Nicholson, a surly brute, raised his fist menacingly.

headed, suddenly, as we swung round a fall west of town.

"Yes; and a bad one."

He reached for the whistle and gave the long, warning scream. I set the bell-ringer and stooped to open the furnace door to cool the fire, when—a chug!

I flew up against the water-gauges like a coupling-pin. The monster engine reared right up on her head. Scrambling to my feet, I saw the new man clutching the air-lever with both hands, and every wheel on the train was screeching. I jumped to his side and looked over his shoulder.

On the crossing just ahead a big white horse, dragging a buggy, plunged and reared frantically. Standing on the buggy seat a baby boy clung bewildered to the lazyback; not another soul in sight. All at once the horse severed sharply back; the buggy lurched half over; the lines seemed to be caught around one wheel. The little fellow clung on; but the crazy horse, instead of running, began a hornpipe right between the deadly rails.

I looked at Foley in despair. From the monstrous quivering leaps of the great engine I knew the drivers were in the clutch of the mighty Scramble; but the resistless momentum of the train was none the less sweeping us down at deadly speed on the woe. Between the two tremendous forces the locomotive shivered like a gigantic beast. I shrank back in horror; but the little man at the throttle, throwing the last ounce of air on the burning wheels, leaped from his box with a face transfixed.

"Take her!" he cried, and never shifting his eyes from the cut, he shot through his open window and darted like a cat along the running-board to the front.

Not a hundred feet separated us from the crossing. I could see the baby's curls blowing in the wind. The horse suddenly leaped from across the track to the side of it; that left the buggy quartering with the rails, but not twelve inches clear. The way the wheels were crammed a single step ahead would throw the hind wheels into the train; a step backward would shove the front wheels into it. It was appalling.

Foley, clinging with one hand to a headlight bracket, dropped down on the steamcatcher and swung far out. As the cow-catcher shot past, Foley's long arm dived into the buggy like the sweep of a connecting-rod, and caught the boy by the breeches. The impetus of our speed threw the child high in the air, but Foley's grip was on the little overalls, and as the youngster bounded back he caught it close. I saw the horse give a leap. It sent the hind wheels into the corner of the baggage-car.

There was a crash like the report of a hundred rifles, and the buggy flew in air. The big horse was thrown fifty feet out Foley, with a great light in his eyes and the baby boy in his arm, crawled laughingly into the cab.

Thinking he would take the engine again, I tried to take the baby. Take it? Well, I think not!

"Hi! there, buster!" shouted the little engineer, wildly; "that's a corking pair of breeches on you, son. I caught the kid right by the seat of the pants."

He called over to me, laughing hysterically. "Heavens! little man, I wouldn't've struck you for all the gold in Alaska. I've got a chunk of a boy in Reading as much like him as a twin brother. What were you doing all alone in that buggy? Who kid you you suppose it is? What's your name, son?"

At his question I looked at the child again—and I started. I had certainly seen him before; and had I not, it was father's features, stamped on the childish face for me to be mistaken.

"Foley," I cried all amazed, "that's Cameron's boy—little Andy!"

He tossed the baby the higher; he looked the happier; he shouted the louder.

"The deuce it is! Well, son, I'm mighty glad of it! And I certainly was glad."



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you oblige me with a chew of tobacco?"

But gazed at him an instant; but Foley's nerve won.

Flushing a bit, Bat stuck his hand into his pocket; took it out; felt hurriedly in the other pocket, and, with some confusion, acknowledged he was short.

Felix Kennedy intervened with a slab, and the three men fell at once to talking about the accident.

A long time afterwards some of the striking engineers were taken back, but none of those who had been guilty of actual violence. This barred Andy Cameron, who though not worse than most others, had been less prudent; and while we all felt sorry for him after the other boys had gone to work, Lancaster repeatedly and positively refused to reinstate him.

Several times, though, I saw Foley and Cameron in confab, and one day up came Foley to the superintendent's office, leading little Andy, in his overalls, by the hand. They went into Lancaster's office together, and the door was shut a long time.

When they came out little Andy had a piece of paper in his hand.

"Hang on to it, son," cautioned Foley; "but you can show it to Mr. Reed if you want to."

The youngster handed me the paper. It was an order directing Andrew Cameron to report to the master-mechanic for service in the morning.

I happened over at the round-house one day nearly a year later, when Foley was showing Cameron a new engine, just in from the East. The two men were becoming great cronies; that day they fell to talking over the strike.

"There was never but one thing I really laid up against this man," said Cameron to me.

"What's that?" asked Foley.

"Why, the way you shoved that pistol into my face the first night you took out No. 1."

"I never shoved any pistol into your face," so saying, he stuck his hand into his pocket with the identical motion he used that night of the strike, and levelled at Andy, just as he had then—a plug of tobacco. That's all I ever pulled on you, son; I never carried a pistol in my life."

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