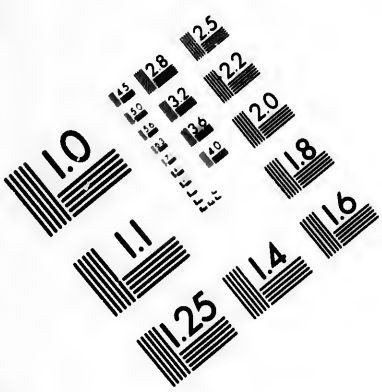

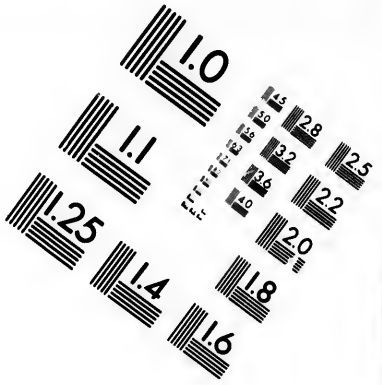

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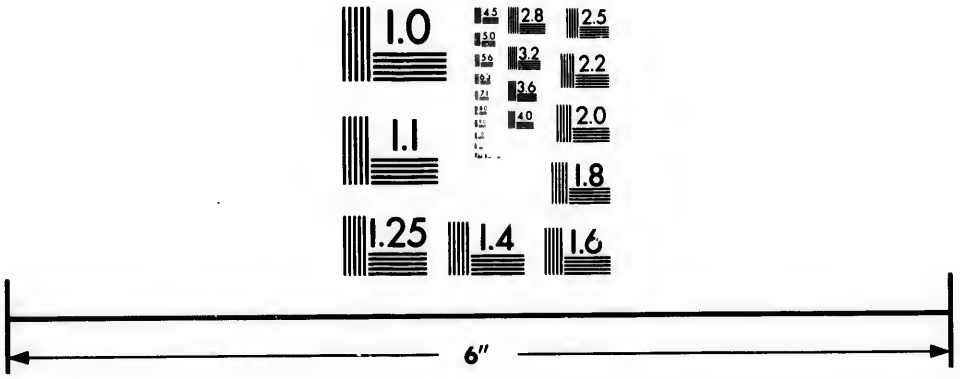

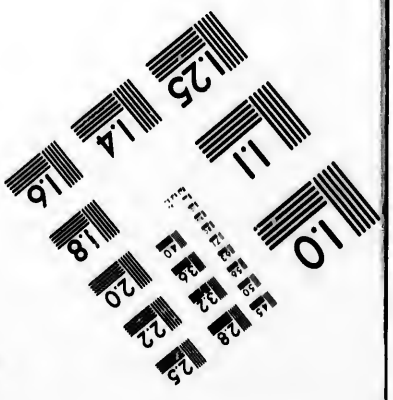

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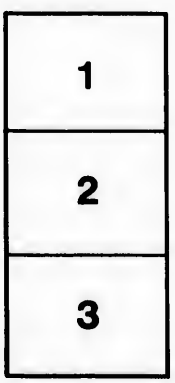

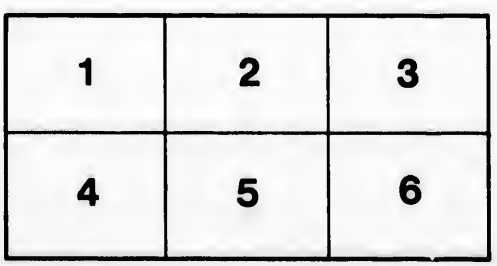

THE EXPRESS MESSENGER

AND

OTHER STORIES OF THE RAIL

THE EXPRESS MESSENGER

AND

Other Stories of the Rail

BY

CY WARMAN

NEW YORK
CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS
1900

University Press:
John Wilson and Son, Cambridge, U. S. A.

TO

DANA CY WARMAN

My Blue-eyed Baby Boy

WHOSE DIMPLED HANDS ARE KNOCKING AT MY DOOR

WHO STEALS INTO MY STUDY AND HINDERS

INTO MY HEART AND HELPS

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The Expreſs Meſſenger

THE EXPRESS MESSENGER

I

THE roar and rumble of distant thunder had been heard in the hills all the morning, and along about noon a big black cloud came creeping up over the crest of the continent and listed a little, when a peak of one of the hills caught the lower corner, ripped it open, and let the water out. It did n't rain; the water simply fell out of the cloud, and went rushing down the side of the mountain as it rushes off the roof of a house in a hard April shower.

The little fissures were filled first, then the gorges, gullies, and rough ravines, and when these emptied into the countless rills that ran away toward the foot of the range, every rill became a rushing river. Leaves and brush and fallen trees were borne away on the breast of

the flood, that grew in volume and increased in speed alarmingly. When all this water came rushing down into the main cañon, the song of the stream that rippled there was hushed, the bed of the creek was filled with big boulders that had been rolled down by the flood, and a great river went roaring toward the plain. Up through this narrow, crooked cañon a narrow-gauge railroad ran to Silver Cliff. Silver Cliff at one time had thirty thousand people, then thirty hundred, and now not more than thirty people live there, unless their business compels them to do so. It produced some silver, a sensational murder, one Congressman, and petered out.

When the flood had gone a mile in the main cañon, and picked up eight or ten railroad bridges and all the dead timber in the gulch, it presented a rolling front twenty-five feet high and reached from hill to hill.

Great spruce trees were uprooted, the track, with the cross ties still hanging to the rails, was ripped up, and the rails, bending like wire, wound about the rolling débris and clogged the cañon. Then the welling flood would fill the

whole gorge, and roll on with such a mass of bridge timber and fallen trees pushed in front of it, that you could see no sign of water as the flood bore down upon you, but only a tangled mass of rails and ties and twisted trees. A couple of prospectors heard the roar of it, and climbed the cañon wall just in time to save themselves, while the little burros, with their packs on their backs, went down to a watery grave. Next came a long string of freight teams bringing lumber down from a little mountain sawmill. The rattle and noise of the heavy wagons made it impossible for the freighters to hear the roar of the flood, and, as they were coming down the cañon, they had their backs to it, and so were overtaken in a narrow place. Some of the men, leaping from their wagons, scrambled up the steep hill out of the way of the water, while others took to the tall trees, but when the flood came, the stoutest trees in the gulch went down like sunflowers in a cyclone's path, and the luckless freighters mingled with the horses and wagons and were washed away.

Fortunately for us, we were an hour late in leaving the junction that day, and had not yet

reached the narrow part of the cañon. The engineer had been watching the black cloud as it came up over the range, and knew we were due to run into a washout at any moment. The very winds that came down the cañon, fresh and cool, seemed to have water in them. The three day coaches were filled with a heterogeneous herd pushing to the Cliff, which, like many other camps, was then posing as "a second Leadville." There were preachers and play-actors, miners and merchants, cowboys and confidence men; and here and there gaunt-faced girls with peachblow complexion and wonderful hair, billed for the variety.

Up near the engine the express messenger sat on a little iron safe. Upon either hip he wore a heavy six-shooter, and across his lap lay a Winchester rifle. He was as nearly contented and happy as men may reasonably hope to be on this earth. The refreshing breeze that came to him was sweet with the scent of summer. The hills were green and his heart was glad. But his heart was not in the hills. That very Sunday morning he had given it into the keeping of the Warden's daughter as they walked

without the walls of the gray prison down by the junction. Almost within hearing of the townspeople who passed up and down, to and from the mineral springs that gushed from the rocks at the entrance to the great cañon, he had told her the secret of his heart. The color, coming to her face the while she heard the tale, told him that she was listening. When they had come to the corner of the wall, one step beyond which would bring them into full view of the Warden's residence, he had pressed her for an answer. She could find no voice to answer, but put out her hand as if she would say good-by. He took it, and the touch of it told him all he wished to know. Now he grew so glad, thinking it all over, that he clasped his hands together as a girl would do, and the rifle, slipping from his lap, shot down into the river that ran beside the track. The door at his back, and next the cañon wall, was closed and barred. The opposite door, overlooking the little river, was thrown wide open, and to the messenger sitting there came the splash of water and the smell of pine.

He remembered that the agent, running along-

side of his car as he was leaving the junction, had pointed to the iron safe and said: "Keep your eye on the gun." The little safe held $40,000 in paper, and over in one corner of the car, in an old clay-stained ore sack, were $10,000 in gold.

We were cutting across a little piece of high ground in the bend of the river, when the awful flood burst forth from the narrow cañon just in front of us. The engineer's first thought was to back down and run away from the flood, but the recollection that a double-headed freight train was following us caused him to change his mind. The trainmen hurried the passengers all out, the messenger carried the mail and express matter to a safe place, and every one gazed in wonderment while the roaring flood went by. The main force of it, following the bed of the creek, hugged the opposite hill, but none of our party was jealous. Broad as the valley was here, it was soon filled, and the water rose high enough to float the rear coach, but the engine, being on higher ground, acted as an anchor and held the train. In less than five minutes the water had swept around and

carried away the bridge which we had just crossed, and there we were, on about three hundred yards of track, and nothing before nor behind us.

The freight train, having a clear track, backed away to the junction, told the story of our distress, and at midnight the company agent came to the top of the cañon with a white light, and in a little while we were all taken out, and, after tramping over a mountain trail for a half hour, loaded into wagons and hauled back to the junction.

II

"LET 'S have a drink afore we go."

"Nary drink," said the dark man at the head of the table, and one could see at a glance that wherever he sat would be the head of the table. "You promised me up in the gulch that day that you 'd never get drunk again, an' I promise you right now, Skinny, that if you do you 'll never get sober, for I intend to have you shot while yer happy."

Nobody replied to this. The man addressed only glanced across the table, and then, drop-

ping his eyes, brushed the ashes from his cigar with the tip of his little finger. The man at the speaker's right smiled quietly over at his vis-a-vis, and then there was a silence for a moment.

The freighter and the prospector, leaning on the bar, paid no attention to the four men who sat and smoked by the little pine table in a dark corner of the log saloon. The "Lone Spruce," as the place was called, had done a rushing business in the boom days, but Ruby Camp was dying, even as Silver Cliff, Gunnison, and dozens of other camps have died since — as Creede is dying to-day — and business was slow. A drunken Ute reeled in and wanted to play poker, shake dice, or shoot with any dog of a white man in the place. When all the rest had put him aside coldly he came over to the corner, and the dark man, being deep in thought and not wishing to be disturbed, arose, and, picking his way between the two guns which dangled from the hips of the noble red man, kicked him along down the room and out into the night.

Having done his duty in removing the red

nuisance — for he hated a drunkard — the dark man bade the barkeeper good-night and passed out by the back door. The three men at the pine table followed him.

All this occurred in the last half of the closing hour of the week. Thirty minutes later, when the four mountaineers rode away from the Black Bear Correl, it was Sunday, but the people of Ruby Camp took no note of time. When the sun came up on that beautiful Sunday morning, it found the dark man and his companions at the top of the range overlooking Wet Mountain Valley. Before they had reached the foothills, the sun caught the two threads of steel that stretched away across the park and disappeared at the entrance of the cañon at the foot of the vale. All night they had ridden single file, but now, as they entered the broad valley, they bunched their horses and conversed as they went along.

The dark man kept his eyes upon a barren peak that stood at the foot of the valley, where the railroad track, gliding smoothly over the mesa, seemed to tumble into the cañon as swift Niagara tumbles over the falls. At that

point the little party expected to dismount and take the train for the Cliff. The leader, who was able to read both print and writing, had noticed a paragraph in the Denver "Tribune" to the effect that the new Custer County Bank would open for business at Silver Cliff on July 10. He had been assured by his own banker at Gunnison that the new institution would be perfectly reliable, backed, as it was, by the First National of Denver. Being a man of good judgment, he reasoned that the necessary funds for the new bank would in all probability leave Denver Saturday night, and go up from the junction by the one daily train on Sunday. That was why he wished to take the train.

When they had crossed the valley and entered the wilderness of pine and cedar, they began to search for a side cañon which would lead them down to the main gulch. Having found a proper ravine, they watered and grassed their horses and had breakfast.

It was not yet noon, and the train, the dark man made out from the time card which he carried, would not leave the junction until

2 P. M. It would probably be 3 or 3-15 when it passed the mouth of the little rill upon which they were encamped.

Having breakfasted and smoked, the men stretched themselves upon the ground, all save the dark man, and slept like tired children.

The leader, leaning against a moss-covered spruce tree, watched a black storm that was brewing in the hills to the north. Presently he heard a sharp clap of thunder. In a few minutes there came the roaring sound of a waterfall, and the dark man knew that a cloud had given way; but, as the main gulch was between him and the storm, he gave the matter no serious thought.

At last the hour arrived. The four men, leaving their horses, descended to the main gulch, only to find that there was no railroad there. Skinny, still smarting from the effect of the rather severe temperance lectures he had received the evening before, looked at the leader and started to laugh, but the dark man scowled and crushed him. He knew the country and knew that the road had been there, but was now washed away. A little way up the

cañon they came to the torn end of the track, and knew for a surety that no train would come up the gulch that day.

The silent leader made no show of disappointment, but quietly dismissed his men and watched them ride away toward the sunset, with their broad hats tipped sidewise, and their ever ready rifles resting across their saddles. For himself he would have no rifle. "Only a coward or bungler," he used to say, "will carry a cannon to do the work of a forty-five."

When the others had passed out of sight, the dark man reined his own horse down the cañon, intending, since he was so near, to visit his wife at the junction. The recent washout had left the bed of the gulch almost impassable, and it was not until after midnight that the lone traveller came to the abandoned train, lying like a living thing that had fallen asleep on its own trail. Finding the express car locked, he opened one of the doors with a coal pick which he found on the engine. The little iron safe was securely locked. Having removed all the explosives from the car, this experienced mountaineer quietly blew up the safe with a few

sticks of dynamite, but there was no money in it. By the light of the engineer's torch he managed to read a letter that had been left there by the messenger, and which was addressed to the express agent. As the explorer finished reading it he gave a low, soft whistle of surprise, not much above a whisper, for he was an undemonstrative man.

From the car he returned to the engine, and with the clinker hook fished an old clay-stained ore sack out of the tank. When he had cached the sack in the bed of the river, he hurried away in the direction of the junction, urging his horse over the rough ground as though he were bent upon a new and important mission.

III

THERE was great excitement when we arrived at the junction without the express messenger, who acted as postal clerk as well.

When the local express agent learned that the messenger was not with the rescued party, that the conductor had been unable to find him, and that no one could remember having

seen him since we stopped, and he was seen heading for the high land with his register pouch and some packages of express matter bearing red seals, he began to wire in all directions. In a little while mounted men were dashing out toward the hills, so as to be ready to take the trail at dawn.

It was plain enough, the agent argued, that the messenger had taken advantage of the circumstances, and cleared out with the wealth in his possession. A thousand dollars reward was offered for the capture of the messenger.

A deputy Sheriff made up a posse of four, including himself, and put out for the scene of the robbery. They were among the first to leave town, and as they all knew the country, were soon upon the ground where the open and empty safe left little to be explained. The safe, they argued, had been blown up by the messenger for a blind, but they would not be fooled.

The messenger, it would seem, had remained in the vicinity of the washout until the train was abandoned, and then set out upon a long tramp through the trackless hills. He knew the packages that were most valuable, and with

these he filled his pockets. The gold he must leave, for the journey would be a tiresome one. The country, which was new to him, was extremely rough.

At times he found himself at the bottom of a deep gorge, and again at the top of a steep bluff, and saw before him a black and apparently bottomless abyss. There was no moon, but the friendly stars would guide him. Pike's Peak, standing high against the sky, showed him where the east was, while the Greenhorn range rose rough and abrupt to the west. But when he had been upon his journey less than an hour, a gray cloud hung like a heavy fog on the hills and shut out all the light from the heavens and obscured the earth. Instead of waiting for the mists to clear away, he kept on going and was soon hopelessly lost, so far as any knowledge of the points of the compass was concerned. He might, for what he knew, be headed for the hills, or he might be walking in the direction of the junction and the State's prison.

At last, having reached what appeared to be the summit of a little hill, he sat down upon a

huge rock to rest. As he sat there, he thought he heard a sound like that produced by horses stepping about on a stone floor. Presently the cloud rolled away, and although the valley below was still obscured, the stars were bright above and the crags of the main range, stood out clean cut against the western sky. Before him he saw Pike's Peak and knew that a little way below him, hid in the mist, lay the junction.

The Sheriff and his posse, lost in the fog, had halted in a small basin and were waiting for the clouds to clear away. The Sheriff insisted that he had heard a man cough, and now the little party were sitting their horses in silence, which was broken only by the nervous tramping of a broncho. "What 's that?" asked the Sheriff, pointing to the rock above them. "I should say it was a bear sitting on his haunches," said one of the men. "I 'll just tap it with a cartridge," continued the last speaker, but at that moment one of the horses gave a snort, and instantly the figure of the big messenger rose from the rock and stood out against the dark blue sky. Until now he had

been sitting bare headed, and that gave him the bunchy look of a bear, but when he stood up and clapped his bell-topped cap upon his head, the Sheriff recognized him in an instant.

"Let 's drop him," said one of the men; "there 's a thousand in it, and if he ever leaves that rock he 's gone."

"Hold," said the Sheriff; "we must give him a show to surrender."

When the four men had swung their guns into position, the Sheriff commanded the messenger to throw up his hands. Instead of obeying, the man turned as if he intended to bolt, and with the first move of his body, the four rifles cracked almost as one gun and the messenger went down.

Throwing the bridle reins over the necks of the horses, the Sheriff's posse dismounted and hurried up the little hill, but when they reached the spot where the messenger had stood, there was no messenger nor sign of messenger. Anticipating the rain of lead he had dropped behind the rocks, while the bullets passed over his head, and by the time the posse had reached

the crest of the hill and recovered from their surprise, the messenger was far up the mountain hiding among the crags.

"What d'you say now, Cap?" asked the man who had been anxious to earn the reward. "Do we git 'im nex' time er do we let 'im go?"

"Git 'im," said the Sheriff, and the posse returned to their horses.

IV

THE white cloud rolled down the mountain as the fleece rolls from a sheep that is shorn, and lay in a tumbled heap at the foot of the range. The gray dawn came out of the east and revealed the peaks that were hiding high up in heaven's blue. Upon either hand, before and behind him, the messenger, crouching in the crags, heard the clatter of steel-shod feet and knew that he was being surrounded. Delay was dangerous. The coming of dawn meant death. The whispering winds, hurrying away up the hill, reminded him of the approach of day.

His only hope was in reaching a point beyond which the horsemen might not ride, and he hurried on up to the narrow gulch. At the exit his trail was blocked by one of the deputies, and immediately both men opened fire. Now for the first time, since it shot muzzle first into the river, the messenger thought of his rifle. He was by no means an expert with a six-shooter, but managed to hit the officer's horse with his first bullet, and at the same instant a slug of lead from a Winchester crashed through his left shoulder, leaving it shattered and useless. The deputy's horse, having received his death wound, plunged wildly and made it impossible for its rider to take accurate aim. Dropping his rifle, the officer began to use his revolver, but a chance shot from the messenger's forty-five pierced his heart. Another plunge of the horse hurled him to the ground, his foot caught in the stirrup, and the messenger was horrified to see the crazed broncho bounding away, dragging his rider, head down, over the jagged rocks. The maddened animal appeared to be blind with rage. He crashed through a low, broad cedar, and a moment later

leaped over a precipice and went rolling down the splintered side of a deep gorge; and when the Sheriff and his companions came up the gulch they found where the horse and rider had fallen one mangled mass of torn and tattered flesh.

Made desperate by this appalling sight, the three officers were soon hot upon the trail of the fugitive. Finding it impossible to run away from his pursuers, the messenger cached his treasure, took refuge among some sharp rocks, and awaited the coming of the enemy. To his surprise only two men came out of the gulch; the other, having taken another route in order to head the fugitive off, was now far out of range.

The officers had the advantage of being armed with rifles, and to hold this advantage fought at long range. The besieged, being sheltered by the rocks, was able to stand them off until both of his guns were empty, but the moment he ceased firing, the Sheriff and his deputy began to advance. The messenger, weak from his wound, worked nervously with his one useful hand, and had barely succeeded in refilling one of his pistols when he was sur-

prised by the sound of a gun almost directly behind him, and not ten feet away. He turned his revolver upon the newcomer, only to find that the man was aiming at the deputies. Without a word he turned again to the work in hand, and at the next crack of the stranger's pistol saw the left arm of the Sheriff fall limp at his side, while the Winchester it was levelling fell to the ground. "Now, damn you, fight fair," shouted the stranger advancing. Following the fearless example of this man who had so unexpectedly reinforced him, the messenger came from shelter and began to advance upon his assailants. One of the horses was hit by a bullet and became almost unmanageable, so that the Sheriff, finding the brunt of the fight upon himself, and seeing that the messenger had a confederate, was about to retire, when a badly aimed shot from his companion shattered the ankle of the messenger, causing him to fall. In an instant he rose to his knees and began again to use his gun. The Sheriff, glancing at his companion, saw that he had been hit in the head, for blood was streaming down his face. The battle had gone against them, and now the

wounded Sheriff and his bleeding companion turned their horses and galloped away.

The messenger sank to a sitting posture, laid his empty, smoking revolver upon the ground, and gazed at his new found friend.

"Are you hit?" asked the latter, coming toward the young man, and the messenger made no reply until he had given his hand to the stranger; then he answered "Yes."

The dark man opened the messenger's shirt (and he did it as deliberately as he had kicked the Ute from the Lone Spruce saloon), examined the shattered shoulder and then the broken ankle, and asked, "Is that all?"

"Yes," said the wounded man; "is n't that enough?"

"Not if they meant to kill you, for they have n't found your vitals. What a lot of farmers to go shootin' a man in the foot — guess they wanted you to dance. That top scratch was n't bad. Reckon you must have got that in the previous engagement, eh? The blood 's begun to thicken up. I see that fellow's hoss go over the cliff; gee, he must have fell a mile."

The dark man had risen after examining the

messenger's wounds, and when the latter looked up his friend had his own shirt open and was squeezing at a little pink spot just under his right breast.

"My God," said the messenger, "are you shot there?"

"Yes — that was n't a bad shot, only on the wrong side."

"But why don't it bleed?"

"It 's bleedin' on the wrong side," was the answer, and then the stranger closed his shirt, looked steadily at his companion and asked: "Where 's your dough?"

"Behind those two rocks that are partly hidden by the boughs of yon cedar. Can you bring it to me? There are five pieces."

"Forty thousand, eh?" said the dark man as he dumped the five envelopes beside the messenger, "and it ain't worth the excitement you 've gone through. But I like you; there 's good stuff in you, boy."

"Half of it ought to be yours, for you saved me and the money, too. But who are you, and how did you happen to be here?" asked the messenger eagerly.

"I got your note — the one you left in the safe — "

"But that was for the agent."

"Yes, I know — I opened it by mistake."

"My, but those fellows did fight wicked," the messenger remarked as he picked up his empty gun and began to kick the shell out. "Hope that was old Huerfano himself that went over the bluff."

"The devil you do."

"Say! are you bleeding inside?" asked the messenger, as his companion sank to the ground with the air of a tired man.

"I reckon so. Can you set a hoss?"

"No," said the messenger; "but if you've got a horse, for heaven's sake take this money and go, for those wolves will return, and I'd rather they'd get me without the money than the money without me, or what is more likely now, both of us, and the money, too."

The dark man put two fingers to his lips, gave a shrill, wild whistle, and a beautiful horse — black as night — came leaping up from the gulch behind him.

"My! but you're a verdant youth," said the

dark man as the messenger offered him the money, and there was a shade of a smile about his black moustache. "Come, let me help you into the saddle while I've got strength — be quick," and he reached to help the messenger to rise.

"I shall never leave you here alone — "

"I'll be dead in twenty minutes — thirty at the outside. Now don't be a fool," and he stooped to lift the big messenger by his wounded leg. But the effort caused him to cough, blood spurted from his mouth, and both men, weak from their wounds, fell down in a heap, and then, leaning on their elbows, they looked at each other, the dark man with a cynical, the messenger with a sort of hysterical smile. The black horse sniffed at his master and snorted at the smell of blood.

V

THE Warden's dark-eyed daughter was taking her regular morning ride in the foothills. There were no daily papers to spread the news of the place, and she had heard nothing of the

washout of the previous day and of the flight of the messenger. Yesterday he had made her to feel herself the happiest woman in the world. She had gone to her bed happy, but had awakened in a dreadful dream, and had been unable to sleep from that hour until morning. Her heart was heavy within her breast. She felt half inclined to be angry with her spirited horse, who was now cantering away with her toward the fresh green hills. At the edge of the valley she met three horsemen riding hard toward the town. Two of the men were wounded — one was bleeding — and she asked what was the matter. The men appeared not to want to stop, but when she had heard, in a confused way, something about the express messenger, she turned and rode by the side of the Sheriff until he had told her hurriedly all that had occurred. He made her understand that they had left the fugitive and his confederate at the top of the gulch from which they had just emerged, and that the "thief" was severely wounded.

"He is no thief," she retorted; "there is some mistake."

"Yes," said the Sheriff, "we made a mistake in not shooting him down like a dog at first sight, but he'll never leave those hills alive. In an hour the whole town will be after him."

With that the Sheriff drove the spurs into his horse and galloped away after his companions.

The dark-eyed woman reined her horse to a stop and stood looking after the deputies. It was some moments before she could realize the awfulness of what she had heard. "In an hour the whole town will be after him," — she repeated what the Sheriff had said. The guards at the prison, those who could be spared — even her own father — would be upon his trail to kill him. It must not be. With a prayer upon her lips the bewildered woman turned her horse and dashed toward the hills.

From the valley the gulch showed plainly, but when she found herself among the rocks she became confused. The heavy growth of pinon and cedar obscured her view, and for nearly an hour she galloped up and down along the foothills, unable to find the correct pass. Her horse

was white with foam. Her veil had been torn away, and her face was bleeding from many wounds inflicted by the stiff branches of the spreading cedars. At times she actually cried out to God to guide her to her lover, whom she believed to be innocent. At last she found the trail made by the Sheriff's posse as they came down the gulch, but a moment later her heart sank as she heard the rattle of horsemen behind her. Presently she came to the dead deputy and his horse, but the sight did not appall her. Nothing could stop her now. Even in the presence of these silent witnesses — the horse and rider slain by the messenger — she was able still to believe in his innocence. Such is the capacity of a woman's love. Now a new trouble confronted her. Her horse refused to pass the dead. In vain she urged, coaxed, and whipped him; he would only snort and turn away. Nearer and nearer came the crowd of man hunters behind her. At last, having given up all hope of getting her horse beyond the ghastly dead, she leaped to the ground and continued on foot. The horse, having been trained to follow her as a faithful dog follows his master,

leaped the corpse of his brother and galloped to his mistress. It required but a moment for her to remount, and when she reached the top of the narrow cañon she turned to look behind her. The little gulch was filled with a stream of horsemen, and at the head of the column rode her father, followed by the mounted guard from the penitentiary. From the mouth of the gulch a straggling and broken line of horsemen reached down to the stage road, and the stage road was lined with wagons and boys on burros, while out of the town and over the valley men and women swarmed like ants.

"It 's awful for you to have to die for me," said the messenger, as the two men leaned upon their elbows and looked at each other. His shirt was pasted to his shoulder. His shoe being filled up, the blood was now oozing out between the lacings.

"It is not awful," said the dark man, rubbing the ends of his fingers over the wound in his breast. "It 's a useful ending of a wasted life. I never dreamed that I should die so nearly satisfied. And such sport! Why, that fight between you and the — and Huerfano Bill, as

you call him, was the best thing I ever saw, and the last wild plunge of the maddened horse! What a climax! I wonder where the soul plunges to at that last leap. Stuff! there is no soul and no place to plunge to — I 've always said so. And yet," he went on, looking steadily at his companion, "when I was near fainting a moment ago I thought the end had come, and instead of darkness there was dawn — an awful dawn — the dawn of a new life, and the glare and uncertainty of it frightened me. I can't remember ever having been frightened before. Did you ever see the sky so blue?" he asked, as he leaned against a rock and turned his face toward the heavens. "And the hills so green, and the air so fresh and cool and sweet?" And again there was silence, and the wounded man appeared to be trying to listen to the life blood that was trickling into his lung, and wondering how long it would take it to filter away. The messenger dozed. The black horse bit off a mouthful of bunch grass, and, holding it still, raised his head and listened. The men sat up and reached for their arms. The sound of the approaching army came from the cañon.

"They've been reinforced," said the dark man. "But you're all right — I can square you in two minutes — and, as I've got to cash in anyway, it makes no difference. Look out — there's a woman," he said excitedly, as the Warden's daughter emerged from the cañon and galloped toward them.

"Hello, gal!" said the dark man.

"Where is he?" she called.

"Here! here!" cried the messenger from behind the rocks, and a moment later she was bending over him. For a brief moment she suffered him to hold her to his breast, and then, pushing him away, she looked him full in the face, and asked in a tone that almost froze his blood, "Are you guilty or innocent? Tell me quickly." But the messenger appeared to be utterly unable to answer or even to comprehend her meaning.

She stood up and glanced toward the cañon.

"He's all right, gal — you've made no mistake," said the stranger.

"He saved my life," said the messenger, pointing to his companion. "Why don't you thank him?"

"How can I?" she asked, turning to the stranger and offering her gloved hand.

"Take this package to Mrs. Monaro in the white cottage on the river, down by the smelter — she's my wife; you'll find her; and if you'll take the trouble to be kind to her I shall die in your debt and remain so, so long as I'm dead. Now take this gun and protect that boy. They won't fire on you, and I don't care to kill anybody else, now that I am already overdue in another world."

She took the gun mechanically, and turned to face the posse that was at that moment beginning to swarm from the cañon.

"Are you mad?" shouted the Warden.

"Drop that gun," cried a Sheriff, with his left arm in a sling.

The messenger, utterly unable to understand what the row was all about, attempted to rise, and in his excitement stood on his broken ankle, and the quick pain caused him to fall in a faint.

"Look after the boy," said the dark man, and the Warden's daughter dropped the ugly weapon and lifted her lover's head from the ground.

"Drop that gun," repeated the Sheriff. A cowboy shied a rope at the dark man, but he dodged it.

"One minute," said he, opening his shirt and showing his death wound, "you 'll have no trouble arresting me."

"Where 's the murderer?" shouted an excited citizen.

"There 's the chief," said the dark man, pointing to the wounded Sheriff. The Sheriff scowled.

"Is the express agent here?" asked the principal speaker, and a fat man with a red face came forward.

"This messenger is innocent. I mean to kill the first man who offers to lay a hand on him; after that you must protect him. This letter, which I have taken the liberty to open, explains it all. The sack of gold he left in the tank, you 'll find where I cached it in the river opposite the engine. The paper, I suppose, is all there by his side. He was afraid of being robbed, and was trying to reach the junction when he was assaulted by these idiots whom he mistook for robbers, and how well he fought, his

own wounds and the dead man down in the gulch will show you."

The messenger, having regained consciousness, sat up and looked wildly about. The agent, realizing at a glance what an awful mistake had been made, fell upon the bewildered messenger and wept like a woman. Every passing second added to the general confusion and excitement. Cries of "Hang them, hang them," came frequent and fast from the rapidly increasing crowd.

The Warden, who also understood, lifted his daughter, held her in his arms, and kissed away the tears that were filtering through her smiles.

"I don't believe it," said the Sheriff to his companion.

"Because you're a chump," said the dark man.

"What's it all about?" asked the messenger of the agent.

"Where is the murderer?" cried a newcomer, a brother of the dead deputy, and then, catching sight of the messenger, he ran straight toward him, holding out a cocked revolver as

though it had been a sword with which he intended to run him through. When he was within four or five feet of the wounded man, the dark man struck him a fearful blow with a forty-five. The man went down, the dark man coughed, and a great flood of blood gushed from his mouth; he clutched at his throat and fell forward upon his face.

When they turned him over he was dead.

"My poor dead friend," the messenger almost moaned, dragging himself toward the prostrate form, "and I don't even know his name."

"I do," said Sheriff Shone, who had just arrived upon the scene and pushed through the crowd. "It 's Huerfano Bill, the bandit."

The Locomotive that Lost Herself

THE LOCOMOTIVE THAT LOST HERSELF

ENGINE 13 had been designed by a genius who was called a crank. He was the inventor of some of the most useful tools and appliances in use in the shops. He was an enthusiast. If he had not been, his design would never have been accepted by the superintendent of motive power and machinery. He claimed that his new locomotive would steam better, pull harder, and run faster than any engine on the K. P. She was so constructed that she could run farther on a tank of water, the enthusiast said, than an ordinary locomotive would run on two; and that was good, for water was scarce on the plains. She had patent lubricators and balanced valves, new inventions at that time, and being fresh painted and handsome, she was regarded as a good

"catch" by the engineers of the Smoky-Hill division. The genius who designed her had been sent East to the locomotive works, to superintend her construction; and long before the engine was completed, the mechanics employed upon her had arrived at the conclusion that the Western engineer was as crazy as a jack snipe.

As the locomotive neared completion the enthusiasm of her designer increased. A quiet, undemonstrative enthusiasm, it was, that seemed to possess the soul of the inventor and to fill his life with all that he needed. Upon her growing skeleton he worked himself weary, and then rested himself in quiet contemplation of his ideal engine; and finally, when the wheels were placed beneath her frame, he began to see her as she should appear when completed. One morning when the workmen came, they found Hansen's bed in the engine tank. From that day forward he worked about her by day, and slept, if he slept at all, upon her at night.

Oscar Hansen, a Dane, had yellow hair and a very poor stand of clay-colored whiskers.

Like writing and painting geniuses, he allowed his hair and beard to grow and blow as they would, and the result was that he was about as unhandsome a man as one would meet in a lifetime. All this was nothing to Hansen. He lived in his work, and believed that in time he would run away from Stephenson, Franklin, and all the rest.

When the 13 arrived at Kansas City, Hansen was with her, and he remained with her day and night until she was taken out to be limbered up for her trial trip. He insisted upon handling her himself, and would not allow the locomotive engineer to touch the throttle until the master mechanic came to him personally and remonstrated. It was evident from the very first that the engine was not right, and the engineer told Hansen so at the close of the first day with her. Hansen became so angry that he threatened to kill the engineer if he ever dared to repeat what he had said. Every day for nearly a week the new engine was raced around the yards, and never for a moment did Hansen leave her. His wild hair became wilder, his deep eyes sank deeper into his head,

and his thin white face became almost horrible to see. At the end of a week it was decided to put the 13 on the Denver Express for her trial trip, and Hansen surprised the master mechanic by asking to be allowed to run her.

"But you are not a locomotive engineer," urged the official, "and I could n't think of allowing you to handle the engine. You may go with her, if you wish; but the engineer must have full control of the locomotive."

Hansen went sullenly out, and climbed up into the cab. When the conductor came with the orders, he glanced up, and asked: "Who 's his whiskers?"

"That fellow with the tired look and troubled tresses," answered the engineer, "is the idiot who designed this machine."

Hansen had, by insisting upon running the new locomotive himself, incurred the displeasure of every engineer on the road, and as this remark was meant for him to hear, he heard it. When the conductor left the engine, Hansen crossed over to the driver's side and said: "If you don't make time to-day, I 'll run her my-

self, and I 'll send you where you won't want a fireman."

The driver only laughed, for the sanity of the inventor had been a debatable question ever since his return with the new engine.

The train to which the 13 was coupled was a heavy one, for Colorado was at that time just beginning to "boom." In the first run, of seven miles, they lost five minutes, but Hansen was too much taken up with watching his machine to take note of the time. Her boiler was foaming, as new boilers usually do; her main pins were hot, and so was her engineer. The first stop was at a small town, and when the conductor gave the signal to go, the engineer was still on the ground pouring tallow on the pins. Hansen became frantic at what, to him, seemed unnecessary delay, and springing to the driver's side he pulled the throttle wide open without releasing the air-brakes. The engine lurched forward, and when the slack was gone, her wheels began to revolve at a frightful rate. The engineer sprang into the cab, and found Hansen working frantically in a vain effort to shut off steam, and concluded at a glance that

the throttle had been left partly open, and that the high pressure of steam had forced it out. Now, when the engineer, fireman, and Hansen all seized the lever to force the throttle in, they sprung the stem, and the thing could not be closed. The engineer released the air with the hope that the train might be started, and in that way the engine could be cooled down without doing any great damage. But the wheels were now revolving at such a rate that the engine had no adhesive power, and the train stood still. Five, ten, fifteen seconds went by, and still the three men worked, each in another's way, trying to shut off steam. A solid stream of fire was rolling out of the stack, and such sprays of sparks came from the drivers that they looked like living flames.

Pushing Hansen and the fireman out of his way, the engineer opened both injectors ; and what with the cold water going in and the fire going out, the mad machine cooled rapidly, and in a few moments ground harshly and came to a stop. It was found, upon examination, that the drivers had dug great holes in the steel rails, and that the tires on the back pair of driving-

wheels, already well heated by the furnace, had loosened by expansion and slipped nearly off the wheels. In a little while the throttle was cooled and closed, and a fresh fire was made; but when they gave the engine steam she refused to move. She was uncoupled, and still refused to go; and then they saw that her tires had cooled and clasped the fire-box, and the fire-box, expanding, held them there and locked the wheels.

When they had put out her fire, the wheels let loose, so that a yard engine could drag her back to the round-house. All the way her scarred wheels ground and ground against her frame, while Hansen sat in the tank with his thin yellow whiskers full of coal dust, and nobody but he knew that he had opened the throttle.

During the weeks that followed, while the 13 was being repaired, having her tires turned down to remove the slivers of steel, and getting reset and repainted, Hansen never left her for a single hour. His condition became so pitiable that the engineers, who had at first looked upon him with contempt, now spoke kindly to him

or gave him no attention at all. He rarely washed now; his yellow beard was dark with coal dust, and his death-hued face was splotched with soot and black oil. By the time the 13 was ready for the road, Hansen was almost ready for an undertaker; and when the master mechanic saw him, he gave orders that the inventor must not be allowed to go out on the engine, which was to take out the fast freight, a night run of some importance.

Hansen had hoped, even boasted, that the 13 should never be coupled into anything plainer than a mail car, and now when he learned that she was going out on a freight run he was frantic. Formerly he had insisted upon running the engine only; now he wanted to run the road. When the foreman told him, as kindly as he could, that no one would be allowed in the cab of the 13 except the engineer and the fireman, the inventor glared fiercely for a moment, then turned and entered the office of the master mechanic. He did not wait to be ushered in, but strode to the chief's desk, and informed the head of the motive power department that engine 13 would not go out on freight; that

when she did go out she would pull a passenger train, and that he, Hansen, would be the engineer.

The master mechanic was forced to be firm with the man, whom, up to now, he had avoided or humored; and he told him plainly that the orders given concerning the new engine would certainly be carried out, and that if he became too troublesome he would be locked up. Hansen raved like a madman, and all the clerks in the office were unable to seize and hold him. "She is my life!" he shrieked. "I have put my soul into her, and I will never allow her to go out of my sight — you will be guilty of murder if you separate us."

As the mad inventor fought he frothed at the mouth, and the perspiration that almost streamed from his forehead washed white furrows down his face. It was not until the special officer came with handcuffs that Hansen could be controlled; and as the 13 rolled slowly across the turn-table he was led away to the lock-up. He became perfectly quiet now, and when they reached the "Cooler," as it was called, the officer removed the handcuffs and

turned to unlock the door. Hansen, taking advantage of this opportunity, turned quickly and bolted, and was many yards away before the officer, rattling away at the padlock, knew that his prisoner had escaped.

The officer very naturally supposed that Hansen would return to the shops, but he did not. He made straight for the freight yards, where the 13 stood steaming, all coupled up and ready to pull out on her night run over the plains. The engineer had finished oiling, and had gone into the little telegraph office where the conductor was getting orders. The fireman, who was in the cab looking after the engine, saw Hansen come leaping over the strings of flat and coal cars, with his beard sweeping round his neck, and his yellow hair blown back from his bare head. As the inventor sprang upon the engine the fireman seized him, only to be hurled out over the coal tank by the desperate Dane. Having freed himself from the fireman, Hansen gave two sharp blasts — "off brakes" — and opened the throttle. The sudden jerk broke the train in two, four cars from the engine; and before the astonished engineer

could reach the head end the engine was in motion. The mad driver knew enough to open the sand lever, and with a few exhausts the short train was moving so fast that the trainmen were unable to reach it. Out over the switches, already set for the fast freight, and down the main line dashed the wild driver, while a flood of fire came from the stack and rained upon the roofs of cars and switch shanties along the line. Flagmen, coming out at crossings to cheer the fast freight with a white signal of "all right," saw the grim face of Hansen leaning from the cab; saw his white teeth shining, and his yellow hair streaming back over his shoulders, as the engine dashed by. Farmers along the line saw a great shower of sparks falling in their fields, and in her wake the wild engine left a sea of burning stubble where red flames leaped from shock to rick.

When the fireman, dazed and stunned, had been picked up and revived, he told them what had happened, and a despatch was sent to the first station out to "ditch" the 13, which had broken loose from her train and was running wild. This station was the meeting point for

the fast freight and the incoming express, and if the wild engine was allowed to pass, she must surely collide with the passenger train. The operator, who was on duty looking out for these two important trains, realized the situation at a glance, and opened the switch at the farther end of the siding to allow the 13 to go into the ditch beyond the depot.

Because it was a junction point, the station was located at the foot of a long slope, down which Hansen drove at a frightful rate. Whatever of speed he had lost by losing fire and wasting steam, he now regained on the downward grade. So great was the speed of the train that when the engine struck the first switch she left the track and plunged into the depot, carrying the four loaded cars with her. The fourth car contained giant powder for the miners in the mountains, and this now exploded with terrific force. The agent and his assistant had stationed themselves near the other switch to witness the performance of the wild engine when she should leave the rail, and so escaped death. Hansen's escape was almost miraculous. The engine, in turning over, threw him upon the

roof of the low station, the roof was blown away by the explosion, and Hansen was carried out into the prairie. The special engine and crew that followed upon her blazing trail found the 13 buried in the burning station, and Hansen lying unconscious upon the star-lit plain.

The blackened fields had been ploughed and prepared for another crop, the station was being rebuilt, and the company's claim agent was busy settling with the farmers along the line, before Hansen was able to walk out in the garden back of the company's hospital. It seemed to him, he said, that he had been ill all his life, and that all he knew was the short life he had lived in the hospital. Back of that all was a blank, save that he had a faint notion that he had lived before, and that the world out of which he had come was made up of one great sorrow from which he had narrowly escaped.

"Is that my name?" he asked of the attendant one day when his reason had returned.

"Sure," said the nurse, "your name vas Oscar — don't you know your own name?"

"Oh! yes," said the patient wearily, "I had forgotten. What's my other name, Oscar what?"

The attendant was about to reply when the surgeon, entering, gave sign for the man to be quiet. "Restless," said the doctor, taking the patient's hand, and the sick man caught at the word, the meaning of which his wreck of a mind scarcely comprehended, and repeated: "Reslis — Oscar Reslis — that 's a nice-sounding name."

"Yes," said the surgeon, deciding to let it go at that; "Oscar Reslis is a very pretty name."

The physical condition of the patient improved rapidly enough now, but his mental condition continued to puzzle the chief surgeon and his staff. He was quiet enough, and seemed anxious to be alone — away from the other patients and the attendants. He would sit for hours thinking, thinking, hard and long, upon the great problem of life, and trying to make out how he came to be. The attendants had been instructed to keep a close watch upon the sick man, and this, as his reasoning powers returned, Hansen detected. "Why do you follow me all the while?" he asked of his German keeper one day, when the latter had trailed him down in the garden.

"To se so dot you done skedattle — flew der coop — see? Dat vos it."

"Tell me, Fritz," Hansen pleaded, "where did I live before I came here?"

"Oh, ho!" exclaimed the German, "you dink I vos one fool? Der doc tell me I shall not speak mit you about your past life. He say I must use say nix, une blay as I don't lisen, see?"

"Then tell me why they brought me here."

"Oh! I mus nit, I mus nit speak mit you about your sickness, der doc sais; because, he say, it will make you nut fly off. You see it is nit goot for you to know so much, because you been kronk in der cope — see? Dot vos it. Doc sais you must not told a man vat is crazy dot he been crazy, for dot makes him sometimes still more crazy yet again already. Dot is it. So I vill not say anoder veard from you."

Oscar thought a great deal over his conversation with Fritz, and as the days went by he began to realize that he was a prisoner; that he had been a prisoner once before, either in this world or the other; that he had escaped,

and he must escape again. All his time was now occupied in forming plans by which he might free himself from his captors, who had no right, according to his way of reasoning, to hold him.

One night when Fritz was asleep, Oscar dressed himself, slid down the rain-spout, and reached the garden. By the help of some grapevines that grew there, he was able to scale the wall; and once free, he ran away with all his might, not caring where his legs carried him so they bore him away from his prison. It happened that, as he reached the yard, a freight train was pulling out, and seeing that it was leaving the town, he boarded it and rode away. Upon some flat cars in this train there were a number of narrow-gauge locomotives going out to a mountain road then being built in the new West, and in the fire-box of one of these engines Hansen hid. The train had been out three days, and was almost in sight of the Rocky Mountains, when Hansen was forced by hunger from his hiding-place. He was put off at an eating-station, and the boarding boss took care of him. He said his

name was Oscar Reslis; and when he was strong enough to work he was put into the kitchen as dishwasher. But being sober and industrious, he was soon promoted to be second cook. At the end of the year, when the cook got drunk and lost his place, Oscar was made chief cook at one of the best-known eating-houses on the K. P. He was a little queer in his actions, but they all attributed his eccentricities to his long fast in the fire-box of the dead engine, and treated him with greater consideration than he would otherwise have received.

When they had hammered the kinks out of her warped and twisted frame, and smoothed the dents out of her boiler, the luckless locomotive was rebuilt, painted, and rolled out over the turn-table with the same unlucky number on her headlight. Nobody wanted her now. New and beautiful as she was, not an engineer asked to be allowed to run her. After she had been broken in again, and the travelling engineer had passed upon her fitness for the road, she was ordered out on local freight. She had no serious trouble for some months, but any

number of minor accidents were charged up to her in the conductor's delay reports, and the work-book in the round-house was written full of her troubles. At the end of the year it was found that she had burned more coal, used more oil, had more repairs, cost more money, made less mileage, and injured more people than any engine on the Smoky-Hill division. She was placed in the hands of one of the most experienced engineers, but she made the same bad record, if not a worse one; and neither engineer nor master mechanic was able to put a hand upon her and say: "Here she is wrong." Her trouble could not be located, and most of the men gave it up, declaring that Hansen had "hoo-dooed" her. One day her throttle flew open and stuck as it had upon her first trip, causing her to run away, kill her engineer, and injure a number of trainmen. After that she was put upon a construction train, and made to drag outfit cars from station to station along the line. But even here she had to be followed up by a machine-shop to keep her on her wheels.

In time she came to be the talk of the whole

system. If a man had a special or a fast freight behind him, he would invariably ask the despatcher where the 13 was, and he looked for her at every curve until he had found and passed her. She was always "due" to jump the track or lie down between stations in the face of the fast express. She became so notoriously unlucky that men were hardly held responsible for her capers. Wrecks that would have cost the driver of another engine ten days were not reported; and even serious accidents her engineer was not called upon to explain. So long as she remained at the other end of the line, the master mechanic was satisfied. She was a "hoo-doo."

Meanwhile Oscar Reslis had become an expert cook, and had many friends at the little Western town that was a flag station when he stopped there to break his long fast. His mind seemed clearer, but he was less cheerful. A settled melancholy seemed fixed upon him, which none of his associates was able to understand. He believed in the transmigration of souls. Where he had lived, he said, he had been deeply wronged and persecuted. He had

passed through a great sorrow, and to his acquaintances it seemed that he had been purified by pain. He lived such a simple, sinless life that those about him believed in him and in the faith he held, and in time he had a number of converts to what they called the "Reslis religion." He was constantly preaching. "Strive hard, strive hard," he would say to those about him. "Remember that all the good you do in this life will count for you in the life to come. The more you suffer here the more you will enjoy there — be patient."

One sultry summer day, when all the help were complaining of the heat in the kitchen, the patient cook surprised them by beginning to sing, as he went about his work, a thing he had never done before.

"I think I shall go away soon," he said, when the second cook asked the cause of his apparent happiness.

"Where? Oh! that I do not know; but to a better place than this, I hope. Not that this is a bad world; but we must advance, — go on and up, up and on, until we reach the perfect life."

Suddenly there came through the open windows two shrill blasts of a locomotive whistle, and instantly Hansen's face grew joyously bright.

"There she is! There she is!" he cried, bounding out of the kitchen, and clearing the back fence at a single leap. And now he beheld the old 13 just pulling out with three or four outfit cars and an old, rickety caboose behind her. She was so covered with alkali, dust, and grease, that her number could not be seen; but he had heard her voice and knew her. The fireman was busy at the furnace, the engineer was looking back to see that the yard men closed the switch behind him; and so the cook climbed into the cab unobserved. When the fireman came out of the coal tank and found the man there, he concluded that the engineer had given him permission to ride; and when the engineer looked over and saw the fireman fixing a seat for the "dead-head," he thought the two men must be friends, and, as few people ever came into the cab, he was rather pleased to find a man reckless enough to ride the 13.

The Dane's face told plainly how glad he was to find the lost idol of his heart. Dirty, disgraced, — almost despised, — drudging along in front of her wretched train of rickety, dust-covered cars, she was still beautiful to him.

The engineer was doing the best he could with the old scrap heap, for there was a passenger train coming from the west, and the first siding was nearly ten miles away. It had been raining down the line the night before, and the parched plain was fresh and cool. Both the engineer and the fireman were much interested in the bare-headed passenger, who seemed about as happy as a man can get and live. He took note of every move made by the engineer, smiling when the engine blew off steam, and frowning when the driver handled the throttle or lever in a rough or careless manner.

"Guess this is your first ride on a locomotive, eh?" asked the driver.

"My first ride?" cried Hansen. "Don't you know me? I made this engine, and they took her from me, and locked me up in a prison; but I shall never leave her again. I

shall scour her jacket, polish her bell, repaint her, and she shall pull the Denver Express."

"If I don't b'leve it 's the crazy Dane," said the engineer. "Wher 'd you git 'im?"

"I did n't git 'im at all," said the fireman. "Wher 'd you git 'im?"

"Is that what they call me over there — back there where we used to live?" asked Hansen, almost pathetically.

The engineer made no reply; the fireman shook the grates, and looked out over the plain, where the scant grass, taking courage from the recent rain, made a feeble effort to look green and cheerful.

"Open her up," shouted Hansen. "Don't be afraid of her. We shall push right on to the end of the run — until we find a round-house — and some tools, and then we will rebuild her. How handsome she will look when she comes out. We will paint her black this time — all black — all but her bell; and that shall shine like burnished gold. Black will become us now, for we have passed through great trials since our separation. How they have abused you, my noble steed," continued

the man, glancing along the boiler and up at the stack.

The engine began to roll and plunge fearfully now, and the driver, looking out, saw that the rain had been very heavy, and that the track was almost unsafe. But he dare not slow down because of his close meeting point with the east-bound express. Instead of being frightened at the capers of the rolling, plunging engine, the Dane seemed delighted, and leaned far out on the fireman's side, and shouted and laughed as the world went by. Although the track was clear and straight, the driver kept a constant lookout, for he had no air, and the way the train was rolling it would be difficult for the trainmen to get to the brakes, and when they did get to them they were apt to be out of repair. Occasionally they crossed deep, narrow gullies on wooden bridges that shook as the engine struck them. These waterless streams in the West are treacherous. It is not enough to say that they are dry one hour and bank-full the next; for they will often fill to overflowing in a single minute. The water at times will roll down in a solid wall ten or twelve feet high.

There had been a cloudburst here, and suddenly the driver saw the sagging rails hanging over a deep ravine. The bridge was gone, and there was no possible show for them. "Jump!" he shouted, and the fireman leaped out into the prairie, and the engine plunged head first into the stream, now almost dry. The three or four outfit cars piled in on top of the engine, and filled up the gap, while the caboose, breaking her coupling, leaped over the wreck, and was thrown out on the plain beyond the washout.

When the fireman had pulled himself together, and the conductor and brakemen had crawled from the wrecked caboose, bruised and bleeding, they went in search of the engineer and the crazy Dane. What they found and failed to find, is well known to thousands of railroad men. It has become a part of the history of the road and of the West. There in the bed of the narrow stream, they found the outfit cars all in a heap. The stream — only eight or ten inches of clear water — was rippling through and around the wreck; but the locomotive was gone, and so was her driver, and so was the Dane. The men stared at

one another, and when the fireman told them that the crazy inventor was on the engine, they were seized with a strange terror, and they all turned and scrambled up the bank. Far down the plain they saw the smoke of a locomotive, and they thought that the crazy Dane must have caused the 13 to leap over the washout. It must be so, for the engine had disappeared, and this discovery served only to increase their bewilderment.

Presently the conductor thought of his running orders and of the east-bound express, which they were running to meet at the siding only a mile beyond the washout, and, securing a soiled flag from the old caboose, he ran with all his might to meet and flag the approaching train. The arrival of the express explained away the smoke they had seen, and made it plain to the crew of the work-train that their engine had not escaped, but that she was somewhere in the quicksand of the little stream. It was some time before the crew and the passengers of the express could bring themselves to believe the story told by the bewildered freight crew. They went down into the stream, waded

into the water, and found the sand firm enough to hold a man up, and some of the passengers said the men were crazy, and would not believe the tale they told. What wonder then, if these men, who were there only a few minutes after the wreck, doubted this story, that men laugh to-day when the enterprising newsboy points out the place where the engine went down and disappeared in the sand?

The railway officials, however, did not doubt the story, and they came and dug and drifted, prospected, and ploughed around in the desert sands all night and all the next day. After the bridge had been rebuilt they went at it in earnest. For days and weeks and months they worked away, digging and sounding in the sand, and when thousands of dollars had been expended they gave it up. The lost locomotive has never been found.[1]

[1] The following letters, recently received by the author, will be of interest to the reader: —

Office of the General Superintendent.
UNION PACIFIC RAILWAY COMPANY,
DENVER, COLORADO, *March* 1, 1896.

CY WARMAN, Esq., Washington, D. C.

The lost locomotive of which you inquire went down in Sand Creek, a few hours' run east of Denver; and

although thousands of dollars have been expended by the company, the engine has never been found.

Respectfully yours,

W. A. DEUEL, *General Supt., U. P. Ry.*

THE DENVER AND RIO GRANDE RAILROAD COMPANY,
(Treasury Department).

DENVER, COLORADO, *March* 21, 1896.

MR. CY WARMAN, Washington, D. C.

MY DEAR CY, — I remember the story of the engine going down in Sand Creek; and, so far as I know, it has never been recovered.

With best wishes, I am, hastily, sincerely yours,

J. W. GILLULY, *Treasurer of the D. & R. G. RR.*

A Wild Night at Wood River

A WILD NIGHT AT WOOD RIVER

"KEEP that kid quiet," said Bankers in a hoarse whisper.

"I 'm doing the best I can," said his wife, trying to hush the little one who was sobbing and moaning in her lap. In tne baby's milk wagon a bitter fight was going on between paregoric and pain, and the latter was dying hard. The wind drove the rain against the side of the car and made it rock to and fro. "Emma," said Mrs. Bankers to her friend, "take that bottle and hold it between you and a crack in the car, and when it lightens drop ten drops into the spoon. I suppose we must not strike a light."

"You bet you don't strike any light here unless you are ready to give up your chignon," said Bankers, without taking his eyes from the crack through which he was peeping. Emma

took the bottle, and at each flash of lightning dropped a drop of hush medicine into the spoon, and when she had put in ten drops they gave it to the baby. That made twenty drops; it was dangerous, but it was sure death to all of them if the baby cried aloud.

The rain came in great sheets and with such force that it seemed that the car could hardly hold the rail. It was not a Pullman car; just a common red stock car standing on a siding, with a few armfuls of straw upon the floor. Occasionally Bankers turned to glance at the two women who were crouching in one end of the car, and when the lightning lit up their faces they were fearful to behold. Now the rain, cold as sleet, came through the cracks in the car and stung the faces of those within. Mrs. Bankers had seen three winters at Wood River, but her friend, the young woman who had come out to western Nebraska to teach school, was in every sense a tenderfoot, and the experience of this wild night had almost driven her mad.

"There they are," whispered Bankers. Now the women put their eyes to a crack, and when a flash came they could see a reef of feathered

heads that formed a half circle around the house like a feather boa about a woman's neck. Half the band dismounted and made a rush for the cottage. The door was broken, and the red devils swarmed in. One of them took a newspaper and lighted it at the open fireplace to make a torch, and by the light of it the little party in the stock car could see the Sioux running, half crouching, from room to room, in search of the occupants. Finding the place deserted, and smarting under their disappointment, the Indians now set fire to the house, and by the light of it started to loot the railroad station, less than a hundred yards away.

The station agent had been warned, as the others had been, by a Pawnee scout, but had bravely refused to leave his post. He had made no light, but sat in one end of the dark little room which served as ticket office, telegraph office, and sleeping room, and as the Indians approached opened fire. At the very first shot the leader of the murderous band leaped high into the air, came down on his feet, leaped up again and again, and finally fell in a heap to rise no more. With a deafening yell the angry

band made a rush for the door, and began to beat against it with tomahawks, clubs, and guns.

Having emptied his rifle, the agent now took up a pair of 45-calibre revolvers, and the lead fairly rattled against the door, and no fewer than a half dozen savages sank to the platform, causing the besiegers to fall back a space. From a distance they began to pour the lead into the building, but the agent, crouching behind the little iron safe, was still unhurt. An Indian brought a torch from the burning cottage and attempted to fire the station, but the rain and wind put out the fire. Two or three Sioux, noticing a string of cars upon the siding, began to search for stock or eatable freight. From car to car they ran, thrusting their rifles into the straw. "Uh!" said an old buck, as his rifle found something soft in one of the cars, and Bankers felt a hurt in his short ribs. Laying hold of the side of the car, the Indian began to pull and strain. By the merest chance he had taken hold of the car door, and now as it opened he thrust his hideous head inside. Bankers could have blown the top of the Sioux's head off, but he knew that to fire would be to

attract a dozen redskins, against whom he could not hope to hold out long. The women scarcely breathed. The baby, full of paregoric, slept as though it had already entered upon its final rest. The other two Indians had given up the search among the empty cars, and gone back to the station, where the agent, having reloaded all his guns, kept the gang hopping and dancing about the station platform. The old Sioux at the car door cocked his head and listened. He must have fancied he heard something breathe, for now he put his hands upon the sill and leaped into the car. He had scarcely straightened up when Bankers's rifle barrel fell across his feathered head, and he dropped like a beef. The schoolma'am uttered a faint scream, and that was the last sound that came from her corner for some time. The Sioux never moved a finger, and Bankers, having removed the warrior's firearms and ammunition, gave the gun over to his wife, and then covered the dead Sioux with straw. Already the little frame cottage had burned to the ground, and the rain had nearly quenched the fire. Every attempt made by the band to fire the station had ended

in failure, and the Sioux were now preparing to storm the fort. It was hard for Bankers to keep quiet in the car while the agent sold his life so bravely and so dearly to the Sioux, but there were his wife and baby and the helpless schoolma'am, who had been persuaded by the Bankerses to come to this wild region, and he felt it his duty to protect them as best he could. Presently Bankers felt the stock car vibrate perceptibly, as though it were being rolled slowly along the rail. His first thought was that the Indians were pushing the empty cars down near the station, and that they would set fire to the straw, and then there would be no possible escape. Now there was a roar as of an approaching train, and an instant later a great dark object hove in sight and rolled past the car. It was a locomotive drawing a dozen box cars and running without a headlight. The shouts of the besiegers, the rattle of rifles, and the wild cry of the night prevented the Sioux from feeling the vibration or hearing the sound of the approaching train.

The agent, who had been severely wounded, now crawled to the key and called Ogallala.

At the first attack he had wired for help, and now he told the operator there he could hold the place only a little while longer. The agent was still at the key when the engine, rolling up to the station, shook the building, and he knew, the moment he felt the quiver of it, that help was at hand. Instantly the doors of the box cars came open, and a company of Government scouts, all Pawnees, except the officers, leaped to the platform just as the band of Sioux were making their last desperate charge upon the station. Before they could realize that reenforcements were at hand, the Sioux were beset by the scouts, who always fought to kill. The battle was short and decisive, and when the Sioux fled they left more than half their number upon the field.

Probably the most anxious man in the whole party was the conductor of the special train that had brought the scouts from Ogallala. He had ridden all the way on the locomotive, and the moment the train stopped he had leaped to the ground, and gone through a shower of bullets to where the cottage which had been the home of the Bankerses had stood. The sight

of the house in ashes made him sick at heart, but there was still hope; they might have taken refuge in the station, and, facing about, the fearless conductor fought his way to the door. By this time the Sioux were giving all their attention to the scouts, and the conductor forced his body through the shot-riddled door. The agent lay upon the floor in a pool of his own blood, but he was still alive. "Where are they?" asked the conductor, glancing about the dark room.

"Among the stock cars, if they are still alive," was the reply which came in a faint whisper. "I saw them leaving the house at dusk — go to them — I 'm — I 'm all right;" and the conductor, having placed the wounded man upon his bed, made for the stock cars.

"Bankers, where are you?" he called; and Bankers answered, only two cars away. Now the conductor lighted his white light and climbed into the car. The brave Mrs. Bankers greeted him with a smile that soon changed to tears, for in the light of the hand-lamp she had seen her baby's face, and it looked like the face of a dead child. "Emma," she called excitedly,

but there was no answer. "Is she dead?" cried the conductor, falling upon his knees and holding the light close to his sweetheart's face.

"No, you chump," said Bankers; "she only fainted when I killed this Sioux;" and he gave the dead Indian a kick and rolled him out of the car.

"But the baby?" pleaded Mrs. Bankers.

"She's all right," said the husband. "Only a little too much paregoric." And so it proved.

"Here, Em," said Bankers, shaking the young woman, who was regaining consciousness, "brace up. You 've got company."

"Are we all safe?" asked the schoolma'am, feeling for her back hair. "Oh, my dear, brave friend, you have saved us all!"

"Yes, I played ——," said Bankers, "hiding here in the straw while the agent was being murdered."

"But you saved the women," said the conductor, who was overjoyed at finding all alive.

"Yes," said Bankers, "that 's something, after all."

And all this is not a dream. It is only a

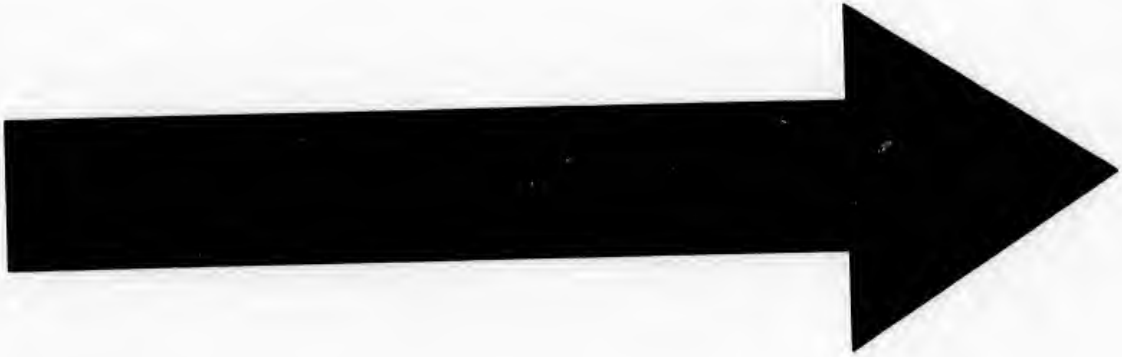
scrap of the history of the early days of the Union Pacific. The brave station agent is an old man now, and one of his legs is shorter than the other, — the one that was shot that night. The baby, having recovered from her severe tussle with colic and paregoric, is now one of the most charming women in a Western city. The conductor of the soldier train is at this writing a general superintendent of a well-known railway. The snows of forty winters have fallen upon his wife's hair. It is almost white, but her face is still young and handsome, and I remember that she blushed when telling this story to me, and recalling the fact that she had fainted in a stock car on that wild night at Wood River.

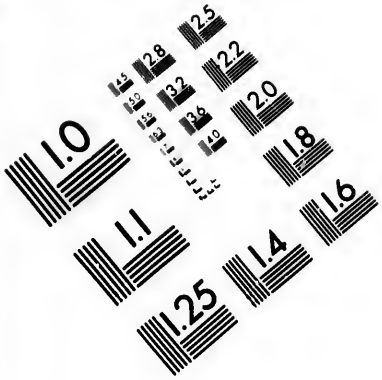
Makalona

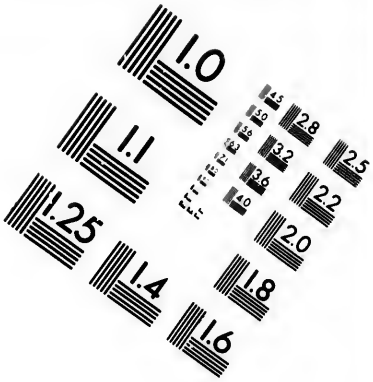
WAKALONA

THE old engineer and I had dragged our chairs round to the south side of the hospital and were enjoying, as well as the weak and wounded could be expected to enjoy, the mountain air and the morning. June was in the mountains, but the snow was still heavy on the high peaks. The yellow river, soiled by the Leadville smelters, and still freighted with floating mush-ice, splashed by on its way to Pueblo and the Tierra Caliente. The little gray, glad-faced surgeon came along presently and told Frank that he might go home on Saturday, and that made the old engineer, usually a little mite cranky and irritable, as happy as a boy about to be loosed from school.

"Say, Frank," I began, "did you ever catch up with an Indian girl who could, by







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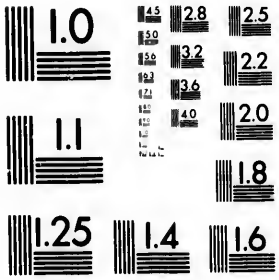

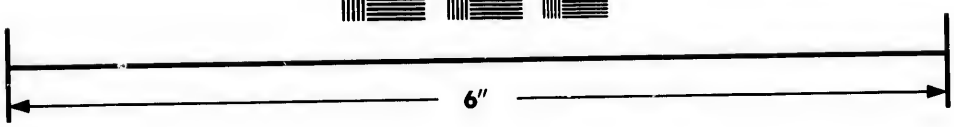

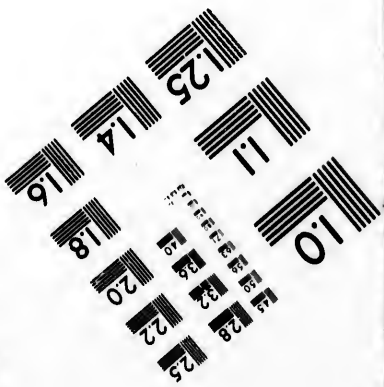

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any stretch of imagination, be considered handsome?"

"Yes," he said thoughtfully, placing well his foot on the top of the railing and frowning from mere force of habit. "We were laying at North Platte at the time, that being the end of the track, and there I knew a Pawnee maiden who was really good to look upon. I never knew her name; we called her 'Walk-alone' at first because she seemed never to mix up with the other squaws, but when Slide McAlaster, the head brakeman on the construction train, began to make love to her he named her Wakalona, which he thought a more fitting title, inasmuch as she had already been called by Colonel Cody, the Princess of the Platte.

"Wakalona's father, Red Fox, was one of the bravest of the Pawnee scouts, and his daughter was naturally something of a belle among her people. She was tall, tawny, graceful, willowy, and wild. It was a long while before Slide, big, blonde, and handsome as he was, could gain the confidence of the stately princess. It was months before she would allow him to walk with her, and even then the

feathered head of a jealous buck could always be seen peeping from the high grass and keeping constant watch over the girl. Wakalona, like the other women, worked in the fields when there were any fields to be worked, and at other times made herself useful about her father's tent. Her mother was dead. She was the only child her father had, and he was very proud of her. In a battle between the Sioux and the Pawnees near Ogallala the Sioux had captured Wakalona and her father, and Buffalo Bill had rescued her, almost miraculously, from four of their foemen, three of whom they had slain. After that the Sioux had marked Red Fox and his daughter as their own, and many lures had been set to ensnare them. At North Platte Red Fox had planted a little field of corn, and it was here, when the sun was low, that Slide used to woo the dark-eyed Princess of the Platte. I used to watch her working in the field, and when we whistled she would always pause in her labors and look up to make sure that it was the whistle of the 49, although she never looked up for the whistle of any other engine. I think, as she began to lose

her heart to McAlaster, that she came to know the sound even of the bell and the rattle of the spring-hangers on the old work engine. Jim was McAlaster's real name; we called him Slide because he could never set a brake, if he used both hands, without twisting it up so tight that the wheels would slide, so marvelously strong were his long sinewy arms. When we were coming into the Platte on a summer's evening Slide used to jump off the engine, where he always rode, open the switch, close it behind the caboose, and then stroll over into the little corn field where Wakalona worked.

"Now she always knew he was coming, but like her white sisters she liked to play that she did n't, and when he would steal up behind her and catch her in his arms (if no one was looking), she would start and shudder as naturally as a country schoolma'am.

"We went in the ditch one day. Slide had his ankle sprained and was obliged to ride in that evening in the caboose. I whistled, as usual, for the station, and in the twilight saw the Indian girl still working in the field and waiting for the sweet surprise for which she

had learned to wait. As we pulled in over the switches I glanced out into the field again, feeling sorry for Slide and for his sweetheart as well, but now she was nowhere to be seen. When we had made the big brakeman comfortable in the hospital tent, he signalled me ahead, and when I bent over him he pulled me down and whispered, 'Wakalona,' and I knew what he meant. I found her father and told him that the brakeman had been hurt, and asked him to allow his daughter to see the sufferer in the surgeon's tent. Red Fox was much surprised. We had been an hour late coming in that evening, it was now dark, and Wakalona had not been seen by any of her people since the setting of the sun. I told the warrior that I had seen her working in the field as we were nearing the station and how, when I looked again a moment later, she was gone.

"With a start the brave chieftain threw up his hands, and then controlling himself with a great effort, he signed to me and I followed him out into the field. The Indian put his face close to the ground, when I had shown him where she was standing when I saw her last,

and when he straightened up he looked all about him and said, 'Sioux.' I brought a white light from the locomotive and, by the light of it, the wily Indian made out that two of the hated tribe had slipped up behind the helpless girl and seized her and carried her away. Presently he brought a blade of corn to me and upon it there was a tiny drop of blood, and yet he insisted that his daughter had not been killed. Later he assured me that she had not been carried, but had walked away taking a different direction from that taken by the Sioux. Now I saw it all. She had heard our whistle and while she waited for her lover, the panther-like Sioux had stolen upon her.

"What mental anguish must have been hers when she realized that, instead of the protecting arms of her fair god, the arms of murderers were around her. Love, like the locomotive, is a great civilizer. Wakalona had tasted the joy of love, and life had become dear to her. The past, for her, was veiled in dark mystery, the future was little better, but already she had begun to feel that beyond it all there must be a brighter and better world. Once she had asked

McAlaster about the future and he, touched by the earnestness of her nature, had told her in his own way a story his mother had told to him many a time, — the story of the Christ. 'Think of a big awkward clown like me,' said Slide, 'trying to unravel the mysteries of the future, — trying to convert this white-souled woman who, without knowing it, has been the means of making me a better man.'

"I 've noticed all along, though, that love of a good woman always makes a man gentler, braver, and better.

"When Red Fox had explained to me that Wakalona had not been killed but had wandered away, I urged him to call the scouts and search the plains for her, but he shook his head. 'It is true that my child has not been killed,' he said sadly, 'but she is dead. It is true that she still walks the earth, but she is dead to me and to all her people;' and the great brave bowed his head in silent sorrow.

"Then I remembered having heard that an Indian who had lost his scalp was looked upon as one demented or dead, and I knew then what had happened to the Princess Wakalona.

"How best to break the news to poor McAlaster was a question over which I pondered on my way back to the camp. He was strong and sensible. He had seen many a comrade pulled out of a wreck mangled almost beyond recognition. He had been in more than one Indian fight, but he had never lain helpless upon a stretcher and listened to a tale such as I might tell, and I would not tell it. I 'd lie first and so I did. And while I framed a story of how Wakalona had gone that very day to visit a neighboring camp, the poor Princess wandered over the prairie. All night she walked the trackless wilds and when the stars paled, laid down upon the damp earth to sleep. She knew that she was expected to die, that she ought to die, but she shunned death; not from any dread of it but for the love of life. No doubt she fully intended to die, but she would put the thought of it by for a little longer and dream of the pale-faced brave. Ah, he might love her still, who could tell, for the white people were so strange. She slept and doubtless dreamed of the little field, of her father, of the twilight time and of the sweet

surprise of her lover's arms about her, and then she started up suddenly, putting her hand to her head, and the recollection of her misfortune made her heart sad and soon she slept again.

"When she awoke the sun was high in the heavens. She was hungry and thirsty. The blood had dried in her midnight hair, and now she went down to the river to drink and bathe her fevered face. Then she sat by the river for a long time trying to make up her mind to die, but she could not. There was a certain amount of mystery about the river, and she liked to look upon its quiet face. Where did it come from and where was it going? Then, in her wild way, she likened her life to the river. Where did she come from and where was she going? She could n't make it out. Only, she remembered that her teacher, the brakeman, had said something about another world beyond the sky, but he was still in this world and she was loath to leave it; and so she sat all through the long summer day with her hands locked over her knees, rocking to and fro, half crooning and half moaning: —

'When the great red sun is half in the sky
And half in the earth, then the dead must die.'

"She knew that she was counted among the dead by her people, and if she returned to them she would be drowned in this river when the sun went down.

"Yes, it was clearly her duty now to die, and she would drown herself at the set of sun. Having r[illegible]iled herself to her fate she fell asleep, a[illegible]hen she awoke the sky was all studded with stars. She had slept over the death time and now must await another sunset. She went down to the river and bathed her face. Oh, the mystery of the river! Where did it come from and where was it going? Would it bear her back to her lost lover? No, it was flowing toward the morning and would carry her farther away. She turned away, haunted by the conviction that she had no place in this world, for she had heard them sing in the death chant: —

'The shadows lie upon the shore,
The dead shall walk the earth no more.'

"And yet she could not put out of her heart the longing to live; and, setting her face from

those she loved, she wandered out over the star-lit plain. All night she tramped through the sagebrush with never a pause for rest or sleep, and when the red sun swung out of the earth, she tramped on and on. The sun poured its pitiless rays upon her wounded head, her soiled mantle trailed upon the dewy earth, her tired feet were torn and bleeding, and yet to all these ills she gave no thought. Vaguely now she remembered that she had a fixed purpose, a certain duty to perform, and that was to be the end of all. She must not lose sight of the river; but even now when she looked for it, the river was not to be seen. Her lips were parched, her throat seemed to be burning. The wide waste o'er which she wandered lay quivering in the white glare of the noonday sun. Away at the outer edge of this shipless sea, the gray air trembled; her brain whirled, she swooned and fell to the earth.

"The cool night wind was about her when she came to herself again, but she could remember but dimly the events of the past; and so, half-dazed, she wandered on. Late in the afternoon she came to a little station where

there was a lone operator and a water tank. The station agent gave her food and offered her shelter, but she shook her head and asked him where the river lay. The spectacle of a woman wandering about half-crazed, half-starved, and alone, was a sad one; and the operator, feeling his own utter loneliness, tried to persuade her to stay. Pointing to the west, she began to chant: —

> 'When the great red sun is half in the sky
> And half in the earth, then the dead must die.'

"Then she bared her bowed head, and he saw the little round red spot where the skin had been cut away, and understood. This revelation, however, caused the agent to redouble his efforts to save the hapless maiden from herself.

"After much coaxing he succeeded in getting her into his little room in the rear of the telegraph office, where she soon fell asleep. The sun went down and still she slept, and he knew she was safe, at least for another day. The darkness deepened on the desert waste, the evening wore away, the operator got 'Good-

night' from the despatcher at Omaha and fell asleep in his chair. Presently he was awakened by a sound as of a door closing softly. He stole into the little back room only to learn that his guest had gone. He slipped outside and listened, but save for the doleful cry of a lone wolf, the night was voiceless, and he returned to his narrow room.

"Next day, when the sun was falling away in the west, the operator, sitting at his little table, noticed a shadow in the door, and looking up beheld the sad face of the Indian, gaunter and sorrier than before. Again he gave her food, and from his medicine chest, which in those days was furnished by the company to all agents and conductors, he brought medicated bandages which he bound about her torn ankles, and ointment which he put upon her wounded head. After that she continued to come to him every day, to accept a meagre meal, and at night to steal away and sleep upon the prairie with only the stars above her. At the end of a fortnight she was almost well again. Now the woman that was in her nature caused her to long for some one to whom she might

tell her story, in whom she might confide; and she told it, as well as she could, to the agent. He helped her to arrange her hair so as to hide the hateful scar at the top of her head, and persuaded her to return to her people. 'If the white man loved you once, he will love you all the more now, and he will save you from your people if they try to molest you,' was the agent's encouraging advice, and she determined to return.

"Slide McAlaster's severely sprained ankle had become strong, and he was at work again. The name of Wakalona was never mentioned by the Indians, for to them she was dead. It was never mentioned by the whites when it could be avoided, for no one cared to tell the awful story to the brakeman; and so he lived from day to day expecting her to come home. His was the only cheerful face in the camp during those two weeks. He was happy in the morning, hoping that the day would bring her back, and happy again at night, for there was one day less of waiting for her return. And she did come back. One night, when the rain was pouring down, she opened the door of her

father's tent and waited to be welcomed home. The old scout was pacing his tent, for he had not ceased to grieve for his daughter, but now that she had returned to him, as one from the grave, her coming served only to augment his misery. At sight of her he had taken a step or two toward the tent door, and then pausing to look upon her for the last time, his face grew grave as he pointed a long arm down the darkness. In a hoarse voice he uttered those ominous words, 'The shadows lie upon the shore, — to the river begone.' With a despairing look, the Princess turned back into the rain-swept night, and now a new danger confronted her. The guards had seen her at the tent door, by the dim light of a grease-lamp, and now they seized and bound her. Her father had left to her the one chance of flight, the guards had shown less pity. And while she sat bound and guarded in .. darkly lighted tent her lover slept and dreamed of her coming, not a hundred yards away. The day dawned grudgingly, the darkness seemed reluctantly to leave the earth, the sun remained behind the dark clouds, from which the rain continued to fall in torrents. At

noon the rain ceased, the sun came out, meadow larks carolled free in the blue above, but the hapless Wakalona lay fettered in a rain-soaked tent. The story of her capture was kept a profound secret, for the Indians knew that the United States army officers would interfere if they learned that the Princess was to be put to death. In the darkness of their ignorance they believed that they were doing their duty.

"On account of the rain we had not gone out that day, but late in the afternoon an order came from the despatcher for us to run light to Omaha to bring out a train of steel. As we pulled out over the switches I noticed a great crowd of Pawnees down by the river near the railroad bridge. As we approached we could see that they were waving their hands and putting up weird signals. Now as the engine, still creeping along, working the water out of her cylinders, neared the bridge, McAlaster suddenly cried, 'Wakalona,' and leaped to the ground. I stopped the engine, and, looking over, saw Wakalona seated in a canoe with her head bowed down almost to her knees. A

stalwart Pawnee sat in one end of the canoe holding a single oar, while another Indian, equally well proportioned, sat near the girl, whose feet were fettered, and whose hands were bound behind her back. Now the whole band began to chant: —

'The shadows lie upon the shore,
The dead shall walk the earth no more.'

"The sun sat like a great red wheel that had sunk hub-deep in the sand, and when half the rim was below, and half above the earth, the second stanza of the death chant arose from the river, as the boat was pushed out into the stream.

'When the great red sun is half in the sky
And half in the earth, then the dead must die.'

"Now for the first time Wakalona lifted her eyes, and she beheld her lover leaping from the shore. A few long strokes brought him within reach of the little boat and he climbed aboard. The Indian at the oar stood up and faced him. The big brakeman swung his long right arm, caught the Pawnee under the ear, and over he went. Reaching down he lifted the other

Indian bodily, turned him half over, and with all his might drove him head first into the sand at the bottom of the river.

"While this was going on the little bark was drifting rapidly toward the bridge. McAlaster cut the cord that bound the woman, seized the oar, and made the land just below the engine. Lifting the girl in his arms he ran up the dump, placed her in the caboose, and we were off. As we reached the east end of the bridge I looked back, and saw the baffled band swarming in from the west, but even as they ran the sun went down, the death hour had passed, and they turned back to their tents."

A Locomotive as a War Chariot

A LOCOMOTIVE AS A WAR CHARIOT

"SMOKY HILL was the end of the track at that time," said the old engineer, shifting his lame foot to an easy position. "We had built a round-house, — a square one, with only two stalls and room at the back for three or four bunks and a work bench. To protect ourselves against the Sioux we had lined the house up to about five feet from the ground, and filled in behind the lining with sand.

"Indians were thicker than grasshoppers in Kansas in the days of the building of the Kansas Pacific, and scarcely a day — never a week — went by without a fight. At first they appeared to be awed by the locomotives, but in a little while their superstitious fear had vanished, and they were constantly setting lures to capture the 'big hoss,' as they called the engine.

One day we were out at the front with a train of steel, some eight or ten miles west of the Hill. It had been snowing all day in little fits and spits, and near nightfall the clouds became thicker and darker, and before the sun had gone down the snow was falling fast. By the time the last rail had been unloaded it was pitch dark, and as the engine was headed west, we were obliged to back up all the way to Smoky Hill. The conductor and the captain of the guard, composed of government scouts, took a stand on the rearmost flat-car, and when I got a signal I opened the throttle and began to poke the blunt end of the construction train into the darkness. Ordinarily I hate running backward at night, but in a case of this kind it is a real relief to know that there are a dozen or more well-armed soldiers between you and whatever the darkness holds. Three or four men with white lights were stationed at intervals along the tops of the ten or twelve cars that made up the train. The house car, or caboose, was next the engine, and upon the top of this car stood the foreman of the gang, and from him I was supposed to take my 'tokens.'

"We had been in motion less than ten minutes when I saw the conductor's light (we were going with the storm) stand out, and following this movement all the lights along the train's top pointed out over the plain, and I began to slow down. Instantly a dozen shots were fired from the darkness. Muffled by the storm, the sound came as if a pack of fire-crackers were going off under a dinner pail, and we all knew what we had run into. 'Injuns,' shouted the fireman, leaping across the gangway, 'and they 're on my side.' 'Keep your seat,' said I, 'they 're on my side, too.'

"Now all the white lights, following another signal from the conductor, began to whirl furiously in a short circle. That was my notion precisely. If they had prepared to ditch us, we might as well go into the ditch as remain on the tops of the cars to be picked off by the Sioux, so I opened the throttle and began to back away again as fast as possible. The Indians had prepared to ditch our train. They had placed a great pile of cross ties upon the track, expecting that when we struck them our train would come to a dead stop. This small

party which had fired upon us was the outer watch, the main band being huddled about the heap of ties where they expected us to halt, and where most of the amusement would occur. The track was newly laid, and as billowy as a rough sea, but this was no time for careful running. The old work engine soon had the empty train going at a thirty-mile gait, and then we hit the tie pile. The men on the rear car, which was now in front, had anticipated a wreck, and retired in bad order to the centre of the train. The Indians, who had only a faint notion of the power and resistance of a locomotive, stood close together about the pile of ties. The falling snow had made the rail and timbers so wet and slippery, that when we hit the stack of wood the ties flew in all directions. Some of them were thrown to the tops of the cars and others flew into the mob of redskins, knocking them into confusion. A fine buck, who must have been standing on the track, was picked up in the collision and landed upon the top of the second car, right at the conductor's feet. The fellow was considerably stunned by the fall, and, taking advantage of

his condition, the scouts seized and bound him with a piece of bell-cord, taking care to remove an ugly knife from his rawhide belt. The band was so surprised to see the train plough through the wreckage that they forgot to fire until we had almost passed them, and a great flood of fire from the engine stack was falling among them. They then threw up their guns, those who were still on their feet, and let go at us, but none of the bullets affected our party.

"When we reached the station the Pawnees who were among the scouts recognized our captive at once as Bear Foot, a noted and very wicked chief. When the Sioux came to himself and realized that he was a captive, he became furious. He surged and strained at the bell-rope, but in vain, and finally he gave up.

"When we had eaten our supper we all went into the round-house, soldiers and all; for we knew the Sioux would make a desperate effort to rescue their chief before the night was out.

"Now appreciating the importance of our capture, the captain in command had set four powerful Pawnee scouts to guard Bear Foot, the Sioux chief. It was no sure thing that we

would be able to stand the Indians off till morning, and as the storm had knocked the wires down, we had been unable to telegraph to Lawrence for reenforcements. The fact that their brave chief was himself a captive would increase the wrath of the red men without, and taking even a moderate view of the situation, we were in a hard hole. I for one would have gladly bartered our captive and the glory of the capture away, for the assurance of seeing the sun rise on the following morning, but I dared not hint such a thing to the captain, much less to the Pawnees.

"The four scouts, with their prisoner, were placed in the coal tank of the locomotive, while the fireman and I occupied our places in the cab and kept the steam up to one hundred and forty pounds. If at any time it seemed to me the fight was going against us, and the Sioux stood a chance to effect an entrance, I was to pull out for Lawrence with the captive and fetch assistance, provided I did not meet a west-bound train and lose my locomotive. I rather liked this arrangement, risky as it was, for it was preferable to remaining in the round-

house to be roasted alive. Then, again, I disliked fighting, — that 's what we fed and hauled these soldiers around for. They were so infernally lazy in times of peace that I used almost to pray for trouble, that they might have an opportunity at least once a week to earn their board and keep. Now that the opportunity seemed to be at hand, I had no wish to deprive them of the excitement and glory of being killed in real battle, and so sat nodding in the cab of old 49.

"It was long after midnight when one of the men on duty heard a low scraping sound, like that made by a hog crawling under a gate. A moment later the noise was repeated, and when the same sound had been heard three or four times, the lieutenant in command flashed a bull's-eye lamp in the direction of the door, and the light of it revealed three big braves standing close together, while a fourth was just creeping in under the door. Then, as if the idea had struck all of them at once, they threw their guns up and let go along down the ray of light, and the lieutenant fell severely wounded. The scouts returned the fire and four Indians fell.

"The report of the rifles within the building had been answered and immediately a shower of lead rained and rattled upon the wooden doors from without. One of the scouts picked the bull's-eye lamp up and placed it upon the work bench, training the light upon the double doors immediately in front of my engine. Our men knew how useless it would be to fire into the sand-stuffed sides of the building, and not caring to put themselves into a position where they could fire effectively above the wainscoting, they very wisely kept close to the ground and allowed the Sioux to empty their guns into the sand.

"Presently, hearing no sound from within, the attacking party ceased firing, and began to prowl about the building in search of a weak spot through which they might effect an entrance. The fate of the three early callers who had hogged it under the door, kept them from fooling about that trap for the remainder of the evening. In a little while the whole place was as still as the tomb, save for the soft flutter of steam from the safety valve of the 49. Bear Foot knew what was going on. Even though

he could see nothing, he knew that his faithful followers were working his release, and now when all was silent, he shouted from the coal tank to his braves to break the door and come in. Before the Pawnee scouts could pound him into a state of quietude he had imparted to his people the particulars of his whereabout, and immediately the whole band threw themselves against the front of the building.

"The house fairly trembled, the Indians surged from without, and the great doors swayed to and fro, threatening at any moment to give way and let the flood of bloodthirsty redskins in upon us.

"'Stand together,' cried the captain to his men.

"'Put on the blower and get her hot,' I called to the fireman, for I knew the frail structure could not withstand the strain much longer. As often as the fireman opened the furnace door to rake his fire, the glare of the fire-box lit up the whole interior and showed four dead Sioux near the door. One of them lay across the rail, and I found myself speculating as to whether the pilot of the 49 would throw him

off, or whether I must run over him. Now it seemed that the whole band had thrown themselves against the building, and the yelling was deafening. Above it all I heard our captain shout: 'Get ready, Frank.'

"'I am ready,' said I.

"'All right,' said he, 'shoot it to 'em,' and I opened the sand valves and the throttle. I have often thought what a temptation it was for those soldiers to leap upon the engine and make their escape, but although they all understood perfectly what was going on, not one of them took advantage of this 'last train out.'

"Just as the 'Big Hoss' moved with all her ponderous and almost irresistible weight toward the front of the building, the double doors sagged toward me like the head gate of a great reservoir that is overcharged, and then I hit 'em. The big doors, being forced from their hinges, fell out upon the redskins, and they were caught like rats in a trap. The pilot ploughed through them, maiming and killing a score of them, and on went the 49 over the safe switches, which had already been set for her before the fight began. The confusion caused

by the awful work of Big Hoss, which they regarded as little less than the devil, was increased when the Indians who remained unhurt realized that the engine was making away with their chief, for he had told them how he was held a captive in the belly of the big horse.

"All effort for the capture of the round-house was instantly abandoned, and the Sioux, as one man, turned and ran after the locomotive. The captain in command of the scouts, taking advantage of the confusion of his foe, and of the fact that his force was in the dark building, while the Sioux were out upon the whitened earth, quickly massed his men at the open door and began to pour a murderously wicked fire into the baffled Sioux, who, like foolish farm dogs, were chasing the 49 over the switches.

"All the Indians who were crippled by the engine were promptly, and I thought very properly, killed by the Pawnee scouts, and the rest were driven away.

"It was a desperately risky run from Smoky Hill to Lawrence, with no running orders, and due to collide with a west-bound special or an extra that might be going out to the rescue

with a train load of material, but the officials, fearing that something might arise which would cause us to want to come in, had very wisely abandoned all trains the moment the wires went down, and so we reached Lawrence just before day without a mishap.

"My first thought was of our captive, Bear Foot, who had made track laying dangerous business for our people for the past three or four weeks, but upon looking about I saw only four Pawnees, and concluded that the fierce fellows had killed the chief and rolled him off.

"'Where 's Bear Foot?' I demanded.

"'Here,' said a Pawnee, who was quietly seated upon the manhole of the engine tank, and he pointed down. During the excitement in the round-house at Smoky Hill the Sioux had made a desperate effort to escape, and had been quietly dropped into the tank where he had remained throughout the entire run.

"Now, it 's one thing to stay in a tank that is half filled with water when the engine is in her stall, and quite another thing to inhabit a place of that kind when a locomotive is making a fly run over a new track. After much time

and labor had been lost fishing for the chief with a clinker hook, one of the scouts got into the tank, which was now quite empty, and handed Bear Foot out.

"When we had bailed him out and placed him alongside the depot where the sun would catch him early, the coroner came and sat on him and pronounced him a good Indian."

A Ghost Train Illusion

A GHOST TRAIN ILLUSION

WHEN the Rio Grande Western was a narrow-gauge road it was very crooked. Even in the Utah desert there were many curves among the sand hills that have been piled up during the last few thousand years. A locomotive — one of a type known as "sewing machines," because all their machinery was in sight — was trying to make a spur for the general manager's special, against which she had a time order. The time was growing alarmingly short, and the driver of the light engine knew that the man on the special, with the C[illegible]ehind him, would be crowding the [illegible]se "sewing machines" were fam[illegible] The springs were so light and so p[illegible]djusted, that one of these locomotives would ride as easily to the engineer as a Pullman car does to a commer-

cial traveller, with one seat for himself and another for his feet. As the little machine rocked round the corners, screaming at every curve, the engineer and fireman kept a sharp lookout ahead, at the same time counting the minutes and reckoning the miles that lay between them and the spur.

Down the desert one of the swiftest engines on the road was trembling away toward the sewing machine, and at the end of each minute the two locomotives were a mile and a half nearer each other.

To be allowed to "pull" the general manager is an honor earnestly striven for by engineers, and when once obtained it is carefully guarded. Whatever record a man makes at the head of such a train is sure to count for or against him, since he is then directly under the eye of the management. The chances are always in favor of a good run, for the train despatcher, with his own reputation at stake, can be depended upon to keep the track clear. He will hold a passenger train ten minutes rather than hold the special five. Another point in favor of the special engineer is the fact

that he is due at no particular point at any specified time, and having no time-card to hold him down, he may regulate the speed of the train to suit himself. He is always an experienced runner who knows the road, — knows every low joint and high centre, every curve and sag on his division; consequently the officials put no limit upon the speed of the train, but leave it all to the good judgment of the engineer. It was a clear, dry day in the early autumn, the very best time of year for a fast run, and "Old Sam" had been gauging his speed for fifty miles back so as to hit Coyote spur on the dot, and break the record for fast running on the Alkali division.

By the rules of the road, five minutes were allowed for the variation of watches, but the rule is not always respected, and as the man on the special was known to be a daring driver, the sewing machine crew saw that they were in a close place long before the smoke of the approaching locomotive was seen. Now they had barely five minutes left, and nothing for the variation, and the coveted siding four miles away. At last there remained but a single mile,

and only a minute to do it in. The throttle was wide open, and the little engine was rolling so that the bell rang continually. The fireman had put in his last fire, and was now straining his eyes to catch the smoke of the special. The engineer, with his left hand on the whistle-rope, clung to the side of the cab to keep from being thrown out of the right of way.

The wheels under the sewing machine were so small that the best she could do was forty-five miles, and now when she came down to the very last second, there was still a quarter of a mile between her and the meeting point, but at that moment the flying wheels of the special engine crashed over the switch and shut her out. The little sewing machine, hid among the sand hills, was straining every nerve to reach the passing point at which she was already overdue. The man on the special was just beginning to feel sure of his position, when he rounded a curve and saw the light engine emerging from a shallow cut. Of course, he shut off and tried to lessen the force of the collision, but to stop was out of the question.

The fireman on the light engine saw the

special, and warned his companion, for they were curving to the left and the driver could not see, but the four men knew that nothing short of a miracle could prevent a dreadful collision, and that in a few seconds' time they would all be piled up in a heap. Both drivers had called to their firemen to jump, and the firemen had turned to their windows. The special engineer was in the act of reversing, that he might take the good opinion of the official with him. The other driver only shoved the throttle lever in, braced himself, and awaited the shock.

A man who has never lived up to what he thought his last moment on earth, and survived to tell about it afterward, can never know how much business one can transact, in his mind, during that moment in which he waits and listens for the swish of the scythe. But one does not always review his past life at such a moment; often he wastes time thinking upon a mere trifle. Lafe Pence was in a wreck the next day after his election to Congress, and, although he had been a Democrat, and had become a Populist, he gave no thought to the

past nor the future, but said to himself, as the sleeper plunged down an embankment, "Now, what the devil was I elected for?"

The driver of the special engine had a boy, and this boy had climbed up on a picket fence to kiss his father good-by that morning at their home in Salt Lake, but he slipped, fell, and hung there with a fence picket through the seat of his first pair of trousers, and it was all so funny that, now as the engineer recalled the circumstance, he threw back his head and laughed as heartily as he had ever laughed in his life. The fireman, casting a farewell glance at his companion, saw him laughing, and concluded, in his last moment, that the driver had suddenly become insane, but as he glanced ahead where death was waiting, he was not sure that he was sane himself.

The driver, having finished his laugh and still feeling no shock, looked ahead. The track was clear! He unlatched the reverse lever and threw the engine in the forward motion, and the speed of the train, which had been but little checked, carried them away down among the sand hills. The driver looked at

the fireman and asked: "Did you see anything?"

"No," said the fireman. "Did you?" and the driver said no, tried his water and opened the throttle, and the engine whirled away, while the fireman returned to his place at the furnace door.

The two men scarcely glanced at each other again until they stopped for water at Green River, but each in his own mind was recalling all the wild tales of ghost trains he had ever heard. Each was firm in the belief that he had seen a ghost, but he would never tell it, — not for his job.

The officials in the special train felt the resistance of the engine when the engineer shut off and reversed, and the general manager, turning to the superintendent, asked, with surprise: "When did you put in that siding?"

"What, back there? That 's Coyote spur, and has been there for six months," was the reply.

"I know very well," said the manager, "where Coyote spur is, for we waited there fifteen minutes for No. 8 going down the other day, but we just passed a siding on the north."

The superintendent was inclined to be funny, but the Colonel, stroking his long gray Peffers, remarked that he had seen a locomotive standing at the point mentioned, and "as trains are not in the habit of meeting and passing between stations, I take it that there must be a siding there." There was just a twinkle of mirth in the Colonel's eyes, which, despite the finger marks left about them by the touch of time, are still bright with the sparkle of youth, but the superintendent was utterly unable to understand the general manager.

There was silence for a little while, but the general manager was by no means satisfied. He pressed the button, and when the black porter came in he asked: "Did you see an engine on a siding back a ways, George?"

"No, sah, I have n't saw no engine: d'ain't no sidin' 'cept Ci-ote spur, an' dat was clear."

"Send the conductor to me," said the official, and when the conductor came in the manager asked to look at the running orders.

"Run special to Grand Junction, avoiding all regular trains. Extra engine 57 has until 5-55 to make Coyote spur against you."

"What time did you pass the spur?" demanded the Colonel.

"Precisely at 5-55," said the conductor, now somewhat alarmed at the manager's air.

"Is there a siding between here and Coyote?" asked the Colonel, and the superintendent, being at a loss to make out what the manager was driving at, started to leave the car, but was called back.

"There is not," was the conductor's reply.

"Perhaps," said the Colonel, "there was not when we went down, but there is now, for I saw a locomotive standing there."

The conductor laughed as the superintendent had done, but the Colonel offered to risk a case of champagne that he had seen no ghost train, and the superintendent took the bet as the easiest way of settling an argument which was about to become embarrassing.

When the special reached Green River the party went into the eating-house, where supper had been ordered, and, as was his habit, the Colonel sat at the same table with the train and engine crew.

"What did you shut off for just this side of

Coyote spur, Sam?" asked the Colonel, looking the engineer in the eye, and instantly the eyes of the whole party were upon the driver's dusky face. The engineer was speechless. Not that the circumstances had escaped his mind, for as a matter of fact he had thought of little else, but he knew not how to answer.

"Did you think that engine was on the main line?" asked the general manager, noticing the embarrassment of the engine crew.

"What engine?" asked the engineer, trying to look and speak naturally.

"There was only one engine there besides your own," was the Colonel's response. "Will you be good enough to answer my question?"

"Well," thought the driver, "if I've got 'em the G. M.'s got 'em," and he answered: "I did think she was on the main stem."

"What did you think, Harry?" asked the superintendent of the fireman, who was staring at the engineer. The fireman only closed his eyes and shook his head slowly, as if he considered them all crazy, and his long lashes, dark with coal dust, lay upon his newly washed face like the lashes of a chorus girl.

"Did you see anything on your side?" asked the Colonel, who was determined to unlock the lips of the fireman.

"Not a thing," said Harry. "I don't believe in ghosts."

"It will not be necessary for you to take out 63 [an accident report], but I wish you would tell me what you saw and how it affected you," said the general manager to the engineer.

"May I ask you first if you saw anything, Colonel?" said the driver.

"I saw a locomotive standing on a spur or siding just east of Coyote."

"When I see her first," said Sam, taking courage from the Colonel's confession, "she was bang in front of us, coming out of a cut like a ball out of a cannon. I saw it was all up with us, but I naturally shut off — mechanically, so to speak. I think I hooked her over, but I did n't whistle, open the sand valve, or set the air — they wa n't no use — no time; but just then I thought of little Sammie as I saw him last, hangin' on the fence by the seat of his pants, an' it seemed to me that I never see anything quite so funny, and I laughed that

hard that the tears came in my eyes and blinded me. Then the thought came to me that we were a long time coming together, so I looks ahead, an' there was n't a thing in sight. I asked Harry if he see anything, an' he lied an' asked if I see anything, an' I lied, too, an' opened up the throttle again. That 's all I know about it."

There was a noticeable increase in the attention of the company, and Tim Flarrity, the flagman, leaning low toward the table, crossed himself and ventured the prediction that they would have a head-end collision before they reached the junction. "I never see a ghost train show up yet that did n't mean something," he added, but the burst of laughter that followed closed his circuit, and he said no more.

Now the agent came in with a number of messages for the superintendent, and as the official began reading the first of the lot, he began to smile.

"Read it out," said the Colonel. "Perhaps it will tell us something about the ghost." The superintendent read: —

"Engine 57 is off the track and nearly off the right of way 1,000 yards east of Coyote spur, but still on her feet."

That explained the ghost engine. At the instant when the engineer shut off, the "sewing machine," just then rounding a sharp curve, jumped the track, lit square on her wheels, and went ploughing out over the hard adobe of the desert. She rolled and rocked for a few seconds, and then came to a stop with the enginemen still standing in the cab. The engine had been working hard, and if the throttle had remained open, she might have made the curve all right, but the sudden relaxation of all her tension caused a jar that threw her off her feet, and it was a lucky jar for her crew.

Since that time, however, old Sam has been in hard luck. He has already lost three legs. The last one, being caught under an engine, was chopped off by the conductor with an ordinary axe to prevent the engineer being roasted alive. Those who witnessed the operation say that Sam rested on one elbow and smoked a cigar while the conductor hacked away at his ankle. It was a wooden leg.

The Story of Engine 107

THE STORY OF ENGINE 107

SOME fifteen years ago "Baldwins" received an order from a Western road for two locomotives of a peculiar type. They were for a narrow-gauge line which at that time connected the East and West, and by which the tourist travelled across the Rocky Mountains. They were to be compact, short, strong, and swift, capable of pulling like a mule on a heavy grade and running like a scared wolf in the valley.

At that time the concern was turning out a locomotive complete every twenty-four hours. Look at the workmen as they begin to erect the two "Rockaways," as they were afterward called, probably because they rolled and rocked when running at a high rate of speed through the crooked cañons of Colorado. On the floor of the shop are two boilers, two sets of frames,

cylinders, eccentrics, — in short, all the parts of a locomotive in duplicate; and from this heap the helpers bring one of each of the duplicate parts, and the machinists put them together until one locomotive is completed and rolled out to be painted. Out of what is left the second engine is made. There is no culling or sorting, and as the separate parts of each are made by one and the same pattern, there is no good reason why these two locomotives should not ride, run, and steam equally well. When the two engines were completed, painted, and numbered, they were loaded on a standard gauge flat car and shipped to the road for which they were built. When they arrived and had taken stalls in the round-house at Pueblo, they became engines 107 and 109, and attracted a great deal of attention from the enginemen of the division.

"She 's a scary-lookin' devil," said Baldy Hooten, as he stood in front of the 107; and she really did look a bit top heavy with her long legs, short body, and "feet" so close together that they could almost run on one rail.

"Take her, you fellows that are lookin' for

fly runs; I do' want her." And with that Baldy walked out of the round-house and over to the "Place of the Triangle," and shook the man there for a cigar.

When the two engines had been raced around the yards a few days and "limbered up," the 109 was coupled on to the Pacific express one night and introduced to the curves and corners of the Grand Cañon. The road then was not what it is now. The next time you go through there, if you sit on the rear platform, you will notice that the crumbling grade that marks the route of the old narrow gauge, crosses the present standard track one hundred times in fifty miles. It was so crooked, Baldy said, that a new runner was sure, at some of the corners, to shut off for his own headlight. However, the 109 held the rail and made a good record; so good, in fact, that, notwithstanding it was Friday, the 107 was sent out on the following night. She left the house an hour before leaving time, and it was lucky she did, for she ran off the track at the water tank and was got back barely in time to take her train out.

"No man can call me superstitious," said

the engineer. "But they ain't no sense in temptin' Providence by takin' a new engine out on a Friday."

"It 'll be midnight before you reach the cañon," said the night foreman, "and there is no danger this side."

"There 's danger in bed ef it 's down that way," was the sullen response of the driver, as he backed down and coupled on to the express.

It was one of those clear moonlight nights that make every peak and pinnacle on the mountain ranges stand out as clear and distinct against the cold sky as they do in the daytime; a moon that shames the headlight, and shows the twin threads of steel running away off yonder and meeting and going on together where the darkness begins. Being new, with a clean boiler, the 107 steamed like a burning house, and the fireman, not being affected by the fact of its still being Friday, found time to hang out the open window, and watch the silvery ripples that were romping on the cold, white bosom of the winding river along whose banks the road lay.

Not a word had passed between the engineer

and fireman since they started out, and now they were swinging round the curves at a good express gait. The new engine was rocking like a light boat on a rough sea, but otherwise she was riding as easily as a coach. It was 11:50 when they passed Good-night, and two minutes later the fireman was startled by that dreadful word which almost every fireman has heard at some time or another: "Jump!"

It is as natural for an engineer to call to his fireman to jump and save himself — for he is of no use on a locomotive about to be wrecked — as it is for the engineer to remain at his post.

"Jump!" shouted the driver; and the fireman glancing ahead saw a confused mingling of horns, hoofs, and tails between him and the track. He jumped and came down on a bunch of sage brush amid a shower of steers, and saw the 107 leave the track, plough along the side of the low bank, and finally stop without turning over. The train — the engineer having set the air — stopped with all the cars, save the mail car, still on the track.

Thus, the 107 on her first trip made a bad record and got herself talked about. Of course

she was put back on the run as soon as a few slight injuries were repaired, for it was no unusual thing in those days, where the track was not fenced in, to plough up a herd of cattle on a run like this. In fact, a railroad track seems to be a favorite place for cattle to sleep and deaf people to walk. The 107 went along for a week or more and her crew had begun to think well of her, when she disgraced herself by breaking both parallel rods, — those bars of steel that tie the wheels together, — and with the broken ends whipped her cab into splinters before the fireman could crawl over her high boiler-head and shut her off; for the engineer had both legs broken, and from the ripped and riddled deck was unable to reach the throttle, though the fireman said he tried, standing on the two stubs of his broken legs.

When the "scary-lookin' devil," as Baldy Hooten had called her, had gone to the shops and her driver to the hospital, the trainmen and enginemen began to discuss her from a superstitious standpoint. Not one railroad employee in a dozen will admit that he is the least little bit superstitious, but watch them when they see

a new moon, and if nine out of every ten don't go down in their clothes and "turn over silver," it's because they are "broke;" and in the left breast pocket of three out of every five switchmen you meet, sandwiched in between a lead pencil and a toothbrush, you will find the fuzzy foot of a graveyard rabbit, killed in the dark of the moon.

For the third time within three months from the day she left the Baldwin shops, the 107 was limbered up and put onto the regular night run from Pueblo to Leadville; and on the second trip she left the track at a switch and turned over, killed the engineer and fireman, and crippled the mail agent. The switch, upon examination, was found to be all right, and in fact no one seemed able to give any good reason why the engine should have left the rail; only her old driver, turning over in his little iron bed, said "Friday," and went to sleep again.

Of course, the railway officers simply laughed at the foolish talk of the men about the Rockaway being "unlucky" because she went out on Friday, but when she was rebuilt she was transferred and put on a less important run, with not so many people behind her.

"It's all poppycock," said McIvor, oiling the engine, "this Friday talk is all child's talk;" then he stopped short, looked at the new moon, and made a wish.

"Of course it is," said Paymaster O'Connor, who, noticing McIvor's play at the moon, worked his fingers in his trousers pocket and made riot with the silver there.

The unlucky engine was taking out the pay train, consisting of two light cars. The first day was uneventful, but at the close of the second day, while they were rolling down the Black Cañon trying to make Cimarron for the superintendent's special, they turned a corner and came suddenly upon a big rock in the middle of the track. McIvor made a desperate attempt to stop, but before he could do so, the 107 had her belly on the bowlder and hung there, her wheels still revolving as though she were trying to claw the rock to pieces.

"What is to be will be, if it neveh comes to pass," said McIvor as he climbed out of the cab. "I neveh did believe that I was bo'n to be killed on an engine."

For a long time after that, the 107 stood out

in the field at the company's shops near Denver, where all the old relics were side tracked, and the employees began to hope that she might be allowed to remain there; but the company, if for no other reason than to prevent the employees from becoming hopelessly superstitious, put her into the shops, rebuilt and repainted her, so that when she came out again to be limbered up she looked better than ever before. When she had "found herself" again, as Mr. Kipling would say, she was sent back to the mountain division, the scene of her last escapade. Her coming was not regarded as a joyful event by the trainmen and enginemen of the fourth division, and the division master mechanic knew it, and for some time she stood in the round-house with the dust and ashes on her jacket, until her rods rusted and her bell began to corrode. Then, for the same reason that she had been brought out of the field at Denver, she was taken from the round-house and put in order.

One of the regular engines on what in the early days had been called "The Death Run" having been disabled, the Rockaway was ordered

out in her place. While every man on the road dreaded her and hated the sight of her, there was not one among them who would shun the responsibility of handling her if it fell to him; so when Engineer Ryan and Fireman North were called to take the night run with the 107 they made nothing of it, but signed the book, said good-by to their families, and went away. It may be that each lingered at the door a little longer than usual, and took an extra kiss or two from their wives and little ones, but that was all. They did not mention the fact to their wives that the engine on the call book was the fatal 107. To do that would have been to increase the anxiety of the women folks without diminishing the danger of the trip.

Ryan, though usually cheerful and entertaining with his delightfully musical Irish accent, was silent as he went about oiling and inspecting the machinery, and North looked like a man going to his own funeral.

The train came in on time, drawn by the 109, and she stood with calm dignity on the siding, while her wild, wayward, and disreputable sister, all gaudy in her new paint, with clanging bell

and blowing steam, with polished headlight and new flags fluttering at her shoulders, glided backward, like a gay girl on roller skates, to take her place. She had a helper up the hill, one of those heavy-mounted climbers, and when they came to the steep grade, and the powerful mogul with steady step marked perfect time, the Rockaway chafed and fretted like a spoiled colt. At every curve her feet would fly from under her, and her wheels go round so fast that it seemed she would strip herself; and when the driver shut off and dropped sand to allow her to get her footing again, she blew off steam and wasted the water which is so precious on a heavy grade. Between stations she would foam and throw water out of her stack, and when shut off show dry blue steam in her gauges; so when they stopped the driver had to hold her on the centre, with her valves closed and throttle wide open, for that keeps the boiler strained and holds the water up over the flues and crown sheet. In good time the mogul dragged her and her train to the top, 10,050 feet above the sea, and left her to fall down the western slope.

Ryan smiled at "Noah" North and he smiled back over the boiler head as they whistled for Gunnison, but their smiles soon changed to sadness, for the despatcher came out with an order for them to continue over another division. This took them through the Black Cañon, which was then to trainmen what the Black Sea is to sailors. A new road in a mountain country is always dangerous until the scenery gets settled, and the loosened rocks roll down and the cuts are properly sloped; and this piece of track through the Black Cañon was then especially so, though not now.

They were nearing the place where McIvor had found the rock. The night was clear, the rail good, the grade easy, and they were turning the curves gracefully, while now and then the steam — for she was always hot — escaping from the dome of the Rockaway screamed in the cañon, and startled a lion or caused a band of elk or deer to scamper away up a side cañon.

An excursion party, in heavy wraps, sat in an open observation car at the rear of the train, viewing the wonderful scenery, made weird by the stillness of the night. How wild the walls

looked with their white faces where the moonlight fell and dark recesses where the shadows were. To the right, beyond the river, the falls of Chipeta leaped from the rocks five hundred feet above the roadbed and tumbled into the water below; while to the left Curicanti's needle stood up among the stars.

It was not the time of year for rocks to fall, for rocks only fall in the spring, and this was summer, but the unexpected is hardest to avoid; and now, for some unaccountable reason, a great rock, whose wake was afterward followed for more than a mile up the mountains, came down with the speed of a cannon ball, and striking the Rockaway just forward of the air pump, cut her clear from her tank and shot her into the river with poor "Noah" North underneath her. The swift current brought the lucky Irish engineer out of the cab, however, and at the next bend of the river threw him out on a rock. The parting of the air hose set the automatic brakes, which, as the train was on a down grade, were already applied lightly, and — the track being uninjured — the train stopped before the second car had passed the point where the engine left

the rail. The murderous rock, standing in the middle of the deep stream, showed still three or four feet above the surface of the river.

The roadmaster, another Irishman, whose name, I think, was Hickey, came from the smoking car, took in the situation at a glance, and being used to such wrecks, ran along the bank below to be at hand if either of the enginemen came to the surface.

Hickey, overjoyed at finding Ryan, dazed and dripping, seated upon a rock, caught the wet driver in his arms, — for they were very dear friends, — and, turning the pale face up to the moon, asked anxiously: "Tom, are yez hurted? I say, Tom, spake to me. Tom, tell me, are yez hurted?"

Tom, upon hearing the voice of his friend, realized that he was really alive, and said coolly: "Hurted, now why the devil should I be hurted?"

"That's so," said Hickey, whose wit was as handy as was that of his friend. "That's so, I wonder yez got wetted."

They worked for two days and nights before the Rockaway could be lifted, then she came

up slowly, and "Noah's" body floated to the surface and was taken back to Salida and buried. It would be absurd to say that the railroad company was in any way responsible for the accident, but it gave Mrs. North five hundred dollars to start in business for herself.

Engine the 107 was not rebuilt for a long time and was never again employed in passenger service. The foreman in one of the repair shops wrote to Philadelphia and learned that the 109 was completed on Thursday and the 107 on Friday. As I said a while ago, railroad employees are not superstitious, — they will all tell you so, — much less railway officers; but it is a fact to-day that a new locomotive or a locomotive that has been rebuilt is never taken out on the Denver and Rio Grande on Friday. No order was ever issued forbidding it, but it came to be one of the unwritten rules of the road, — a sort of Monroe doctrine that is always respected.

And now after a dozen years, — after all that has been related here, which includes only what the writer remembers, — the tank and cylinders of the 107 are rusting in the scrap heap at Salida,

while her boiler, stripped of its bright jacket, is made to boil water for a pump at Roubideau. But every Thursday night at midnight, the fire is drawn, on Friday the boiler is washed out, and at midnight she is fired up again.

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Catching a Runaway Engine

CATCHING A RUNAWAY ENGINE

THE grade on La Veta Mountain is over two hundred feet to the mile, and when a locomotive gets away it drops down the hill much as a bucket drops down a well when the rope breaks. Jakie Moyer and a new man who had been hired from an Eastern road, had helped the west-bound passenger train up the hill, and were ordered by the train despatcher to turn at the summit and run light to La Veta, which is at the foot of La Veta Mountain. These Eastern runners were called "prairie sailors" by the mountain men, who took great pleasure in chasing the tender-foot drivers down the hill. Jakie was one of those dare-devils famous for fast runs, and to prevent his becoming "funny," the despatcher had ordered him out first.

Jakie dropped down off the east leg of the "Y," took a copy of the order from the opera-

tor, and began to fix himself for a comfortable ride down the hill. The fireman banked his fire, and made himself comfortable also, for these mountain men have nothing to do on the down grade. If the run is twenty-two miles, they will do it in an hour, for which they are allowed a half day, the fireman receiving one dollar and twenty cents, and the engineer two dollars. Running on a mountain is more or less hazardous, but no more so than politics, biking, or bull-fighting. There is no dearth, however, of opportunity for the daring driver who is "laying" for a show to distinguish himself; but the opportunity usually comes when it is least expected. It was so in this instance. Jakie had barely fixed his feet comfortably among the oil-cans, when he was startled by the wild scream of a locomotive calling for brakes. One short, sharp blast, under these circumstances, signifies that the engineer wants to stop, but can't, and so publishes his embarrassment. Glancing back, Jakie saw the fireman shoot out at one window and the "prairie sailor" out at the other, leaving the locomotive free to chase Jakie's. Both engines were going

at a lively gait, — too lively to make jumping for Jakie less hazardous than dying at his post. This statement is made as a fact, and not to insinuate that Jakie was shy on "sand," for he was not. He was an old-timer on the hill, and had his own engine under complete control. He could stop her in three telegraph poles, but the other engine would surely play leap-frog with him if he did; so how to stop them both was a problem which Jakie had to solve inside of five seconds. He told his fireman to jump, but the fireman, for the first time in his life, refused to take Jakie's signal. If he jumped on his side he would smash up against a rough rock wall, and on the other side it was at least three-quarters of a mile to the bottom of the gulch; so the fireman elected to die with the engineer, and have the whole matter settled in one issue of the *Huerfano County Cactus*. These arrangements were made by the engineer and fireman in much less time than it takes to tell the tale.

It was not necessary for Jakie to slow down in order to allow the wild engine to come up with him; she was coming up at every revolu-

tion of her wheels. The delicate task which Jakie had to perform was to get a good gait on, so that when the runaway struck him, both engines might still remain on the rail; and that he proceeded to do. Round curves, reverse curves, through tunnels and hemi-tunnels, over high wooden bridges, and down deep cuts, Jakie slammed the 403 at a rate which the builders of the time-card had never dreamed of. The right of way behind the flying engines was literally strewn with headlights, white lights, oil-cans, coal, smoking tobacco, and pictures of play-actresses, — in fact, a little of everything that properly belongs on a locomotive. Now and then Jakie glanced back only to see the rolling engine bearing down upon his unprotected tank. Nearer and nearer she came, and at last, as he headed into a short tangent, Jakie concluded that here was a good place to settle the matter. He had even gone so far in his deliberations as to grasp the reverse lever to slow down, but it was not necessary. When the wild engine found the tangent and freed her flanges from the hard, grinding curves, she shot ahead as though she had been thrown

from the mouth of a great cannon, and the next moment she had Jakie's tank on her pilot. The force of the collision threw Jakie and his fireman both back into the coal-tank, but aside from a few bruises they were unhurt.

Climbing into the cab again, Jakie left the fireman in charge of the 403, and undertook to climb back over the tank and board the runaway. The task under ordinary circumstances would have been a difficult one, but at the rate they were now running it was almost impossible. As the flying engines left the short tangent and dashed into another group of curves they rolled frightfully, and made it almost impossible for Jakie to hang on to the hand-railing. But he was so accustomed to being slammed about that he managed to stick to the wreck, and finally reached the cab of the second engine. The curves, so long as the engines could make them, were to the advantage of the runaways; and now, what with the resistance they made, and the second engine being put far down in the back motion, the locomotives began to slow down, and were finally brought to a standstill.

It was a great achievement, and Jakie was

the hero of the day. "Windy" Davis said afterward that Jakie stopped them because he was unable to get off, but the railway officials did not agree with "Windy." Mr. Sample, the general master mechanic, believed that Jakie had done a brave act, and he set about to see him rewarded for his bravery. This kind official — who looks like Lincoln, though not so homely — caused Jakie to receive a gold watch, and money to buy a ranch or waste in riotous living. I don't know how much money, but I have heard it stated all the way from two hundred to one thousand dollars. At all events, it was enough to prove Jakie a good emergency man; and when you cross La Veta Mountain again, ask for Jakie Moyer, — he 's the boy.

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A Railway Mail Clerk

A RAILWAY MAIL CLERK

RAILWAY mail clerks are not railway employees, although they are under the orders of the railway officials when on the road. They are, as a class, a bright lot of men. They bring more brains and acquired skill into their work than any class of government employees in proportion to the amount of money they draw. They ride the fastest trains in the country, and ride ahead. On most roads their car is coupled to the locomotive, and they take whatever is left when the grim reaper has finished with the enginemen. Statistics show that the mortality among railway mail clerks through railroad accidents is greater than was that among the troops in the civil war. These clerks are required to pass an examination at a rating of more than ninety per cent. Department employees at Washington are given thirty days vacation each year, but the railway mail

clerk is called upon to face the dangers of midnight rides twelve months in the year.

I knew one mail clerk intimately, and found him one of the most interesting characters I ever met. The story of his eventful life would be interesting at any time, and ought to be especially apropos here as an illustration of the character of the average railway mail clerk, and of the dangers through which they pass.

The farms in Illinois upon which we were reared were not far apart, but "Doc," who lived with his uncle, left home before he was twenty-one and went West. I had been to town to get the plough sharpened, and on my way home I saw "Doc" climbing across a cloddy field behind a harrow, and he hailed me. When he came out he hung his chin over the top of the fence and said: "I 'm goin' West."

"When?"

"To-night."

"No!"

"Yes. Will you jine me?"

"What 'll it cost?" I asked.

"Forty-nine dollars, second class, from St. Louis to Denver."

"Have you got the money?"

Doc shook his head.

"Did you ever see that much money?"

"Well, not at one look, but I 've got it all figured out."

"How much *have* you got?"

"Have n't got any, but I got a job at Whiticer's stable in Carr street, an' if you 'll go I 'll see that you never want. We can sleep in the haymow and board around."

"How 'll we get to St. Louis?" I asked.

"Ride when we 're tired o' walkin' an' walk when we can't ride," was his reply.

"I 'm in the silk an' you 're in the tassel," he added thoughtfully. "Life is all before us, but you can't get anywhere on a farm. Look at the jays around here. What do they know? They simply stand round on one foot like a gander, till the beard breaks through the freckles, and then they push the old folks off and take the plough, and in a little while get pushed off themselves. Life on a farm is one continual round of work and want. Will you jine me?"

The thought of getting up at morning and not knowing where I was going to sleep at

night frightened me and I told Doc so, and so we parted.

A few years later, when the west-bound train stopped at a little bleak and dreary mountain town where I, having gone West, had elected to drop anchor, I looked out from the car window and saw Doc sitting close up to the crupper of an old sorrel horse that was hitched to an express wagon.

I went over to him at once, for I was lonesome. A mountain town is not a thing one is apt to love at first sight. Desolate. That is better than four columns of agate to describe the place. The dry March winds came out of the cañon and swept the sand of the mesa up into eddies that swished and swirled in around your collar and cut your face. The sunlight was so dazzling that it bewildered one and seemed unreal, and the cold winds were constantly contradicting its warmth.

"Are you homesick, Doc?" I asked, as I rode up town with him, for he was there to haul people and their baggage up to the hotel.

"Nop," he said, "it 's the dry wind ; it 's busted my lip so that I look like I 'm goin' to

cry when I 'm tryin' to laugh. I 'm goin' back home this fall," he added, after a pause, "to get my money, — I 'm twenty-one now, — but I 'm comin' back out here ; this country is all right."

Doc, who had earned his title by doctoring his uncle's horses, had inherited a little fortune of eighteen hundred dollars, and when the summer had come and gone, he went back home in a Pullman car, for he had saved fifty dollars out of his salary of sixty dollars and board every month.

Five years later, in the dawning of the morning, as I was climbing out of an upper berth at another mountain town, a man caught hold of my coat-tail, and I found that the "man under my bed" was Doc Pippin. He said he was living in Denver ; so was I, and in a few days he came in to see me. He came often and told the best stories I had ever heard. He was thin and pale, and I noticed that he coughed and pounded his left lung when he did so. These stories were not told to me for publication, but I know he will not care, for he is careless now.

Doc went to Chicago after receiving his

money, and became acquainted with a well known detective. I think he said it was Billy Pinkerton. It was like the Pinkertons to detect in this almost beardless boy a remarkably intelligent person.

Pippin was offered employment; he accepted it, and was sent at once to a small town in Illinois to find out a band of thieves who were stealing hogs and robbing shops.

If Doc had tried he could never have become a good dresser. Even clothes that were made for him did n't fit, and he wore his hat crosswise, like the leading man at a French funeral. His appearance upon this occasion was in his favor, and he was not long in forming the acquaintance of the toughest lot of loafers in the town. They liked Doc, as every one did who knew him, but it was a long time before they would trust him. Doc's money gave out and he tried to borrow, and the gang gave him the laugh. "Git out an' turn a trick — work." said one of the men.

"What can I do? Show me and then watch me," said Doc.

"See that jay ridin' out o' town?" said the

tough, nodding down the road where a lone horseman was going away with the sunset on his back.

"Yes."

"Well, he 's goin' out to his place in the country, — goes every Sat'day night an' comes back Monday; hold 'im up."

Doc knew the man, as he knew nearly every man in the place, by the description given him at Chicago, and by the middle of the following week this wealthy citizen had been notified from headquarters that he would be held up on the next Saturday night. Doc was at his post, and as the lone horseman came down the road, the highwayman stepped out from the shadows of a jack oak and covered his man.

That night the gang drank up the best part of twenty-eight dollars and fifty cents, and voted Doc a dead game "toucher."

The verdancy of the gang he had to deal with made Doc's work comparatively easy. He invariably drank gin and water, and by a simple trick that a child ought to have detected — the trick of drinking the water and leaving the gin — he always kept sober.

When the proceeds of Doc's raid had been expended, together with the seven dollars received for the "jay's" watch, the gang determined to rob a hardware store. The job had been undertaken once, but had failed. The time, at Doc's suggestion, was fixed for election night. A great many farmers, he said, would be in to vote and trade, and the people being either drunk or tired would sleep soundly when once asleep; and the gang voted that Doc was a great thinker.

The time arrived, the store was entered, and when they were all in, Doc ducked down behind the counter and reached the rear end of the store. Now a big bull's-eye was turned upon the gang, who arose from their work to look down the barrels of a half dozen shot-guns. One of the gang, seeing Doc with the sheriff's party, made a play for his pistol, but the sheriff shoved his shot-gun yet nearer the robber's face and said softly, "Be quiet," and he was calm.

The next day the father of one of the gang, who was himself a hard man, made an attempt to kill the detective; and, having done his

work, Doc departed. Friends of the accused hired a lawyer who made a beautiful picture of these innocent lads who had lived all their lives in this quiet country town, and who had never been guilty of a wrong until they were encouraged and trapped into it by the wicked young detective.

Alas for the criminals! One of the gang gave up to the sheriff, and by the finding of stolen goods and the property of a man who had been murdered, they were all, save the one who had weakened, sent to Joliet, where they are still receiving their mail.

Doc's remarkable success in this case encouraged the agency to send him to Southern Illinois, where he was successful in working out a mystery that had baffled the best men they had. But he refused another assignment, to the agency's surprise, and returning to the West again, entered the service of Uncle Sam as a railway postal clerk.

Finding a letter in the mail marked to me, he took his blue pencil and wrote on the back of the envelope: "Hello — Doc — R. M. S."; and I knew then that he was in the railway mail service.

It was some time after the receipt of this brief message that the meeting in the sleeping car, already referred to, occurred, and it was during his many visits to me at Denver that he related the detective stories herein re-told.

"How is it," I asked one day, "that you are assistant superintendent of mail service here in the West, when you are under thirty and new, comparatively, at the business?"

"Hard luck," said Doc, smiling sadly, coughing and thumping his chest.

Then it was that he began to tell me some of his experience in the postal car, but he did not tell it all. He was as modest as he was honest, and would not tell to me, his friend, the real tales of heroism in which he was himself the hero. He told enough, however, to interest me and cause me to find out more from a mutual friend, and to verify the information by some of the reports and correspondence which I was afterward permitted to see. I found that his loyalty, bravery, and devotion to duty had been warmly commended in autograph letters from the highest officials in the mail service.

It was, indeed, hard luck that brought him promotion and an easy place, which he could not have gained save through the kindness of higher officials. He had been in any number of wrecks, for many of the western roads were new, at that time, and railroading was not safe as it is now. Once there was a head-end collision, in which the wreck took fire. Doc was dreadfully bruised, but he had all his limbs, and as the flames crept closer and closer to his car he busied himself carrying the mail matter to a place of safety. When his work had been completed, and the flames lit up the cañon, they showed Doc lying upon his mail bags apparently dead. The trainmen found him and soon restored him to consciousness, for he had only fainted from overwork and the pain of his many wounds.

It was nearly a year before he was able to take his run again, and this time his routes lay over the Santa Fé system.

One night when the train came roaring down the cañon, the engine jumped the track, the mail car went to pieces against the locomotive, the coaches piled upon the pieces, and the wreck began to burn.

When the trainmen and passengers came forward to look for "the fellows up ahead," they saw large and small envelopes sailing out of the burning débris, and they knew at once that the mail agent must be fast in the wreck. The whistle valve had been forced open, and now the wild, ceaseless cry of the wounded engine drowned all other sounds, and made it impossible for the men to hear the cries of the imprisoned postal clerk. All this he knew, and while the hungry flames were eating their way to where he lay, he pulled the register bag to him and began to shy the valuable mail out into the sagebrush.

When the steam was exhausted, and the cry of the engine had hushed, there came no sound from the enginemen, for their voices were hushed in death. Above the sound of the cracking flames they could hear Doc calling to them from his place below the wreck, and the brave train crew worked desperately right in the very face of the fire to rescue the unfortunate.

Gradually the voice of the prisoner grew fainter and fainter, and before the rescuers reached him it hushed entirely.

At last, just as they were about to give him up, as he was now apparently dead, they succeeded in dragging Doc from the wreck, and to the joy of all he soon revived. He was yet alive, but had breathed so much of the flames that his left lung was almost ruined, and he was never able to resume his place on the road.

It was this unfortunate wreck, and the story of his heroism, that gave him the important position of assistant clerk of the western division of the United States mail service when he was not yet thirty years old. It was the burn in his breast that made him cough and beat his left lung, that pinched his face and made his eyes look larger than they were. He went on silently,—almost cheerfully,—doing what he could; but we who watched knew that the hidden scar he had there was wearing his life away.

Not long ago I returned to Denver, and meeting the chief clerk in the street, asked him about Doc. I had been wandering over the face of the earth for nearly two years, and was

"behind the times" as good country folk say, and now as my friend looked at me, his face took on a sadder shade and he answered slowly: —

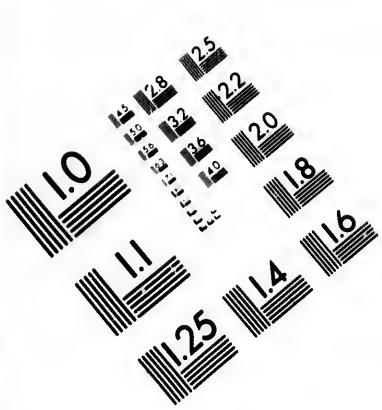
"We buried Doc six months ago."

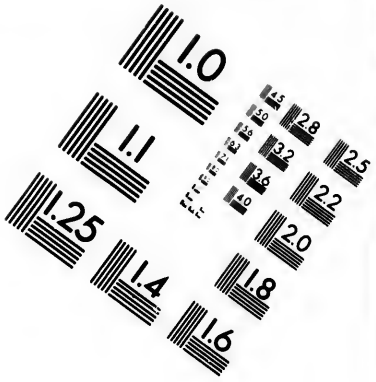
y folk say,
, his face
answered

The Mysterious Message

THE MYSTERIOUS MESSAGE

ANY one could see by the air of industry that pervaded the place, that something unusual was going on. Everybody was busy. Three or four switch-engines — noisy little tugs of the rail — were puffing and snorting amid the sea of cars that covered the freight yards. The station agent moved with a quick, nervous step among the clerks, encouraging them by his example to show signs of life. Down at the round-house the day foreman, in a newly washed suit of overclothes, hurried to and fro with crumpled copies of telegrams from the train-master. The boss wiper, with his gang, was clearing the circle in front of the house, of dirty waste and lumps of coal. One of the men was sweeping the turn-table with a new broom. Now a yard engine came by with a freshly painted mail car, and another followed





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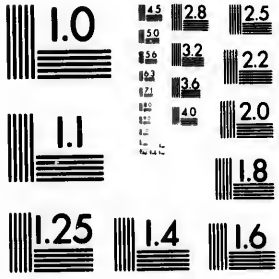

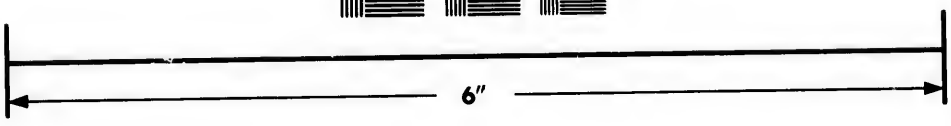

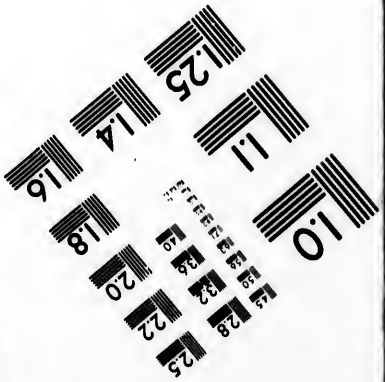

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it with a mile or so of empties, reminding you of a little black ant at one end of a fish worm.

The superintendent had gone into the despatcher's office to talk with the train-master about a meeting point for No. 8 and the President's special. This was the new President, who, with the chairman of the Board of Directors, was making his first tour of inspection. Every official of any importance knew that he must meet the new chief and be introduced. Every official knew that a great deal depended upon the impression made upon this occasion. He must have his department in good shape without showing any unusual effort.

Every one must be busy without appearing to try to be. The section boss saw that each man was at his shovel, and waved a "slow" signal himself to show the officials that he did not trust such an important office to his illiterate men. This slow signal would indicate, also, that they had been doing something to the track. The road-master had gone out that morning occupying a camp stool on the rear platform of No. 8.

All these things combined to show to the most casual observer that something was up. In the face of every officer of the road at this particular point there was a look of anxiety, as though he might be repeating: —

> "He 'll cut me off or let me stay,
> Just as he happens to feel to-day."

The division superintendent, who had just gone into the despatcher's office, was an exception to the rule that all subordinate officials are afraid of a new management. He knew his business and knew he could go with the retiring manager to another road. He simply went about his work without any unnecessary noise. The train-master was of a different caste. He was as nervous as a maiden lady in her first bicycle suit. Having sent the "trick" man away he was handling the trains himself, to make sure that everything was O. K.'d.

"I sent a girl over here yesterday, — an operator — " said the superintendent, after they had fixed the meeting point, "and you sent her away. I have instructed her to call here again this morning, and I hope you will be good

enough to put her to work. Her father was the engineer who was killed when the fast mail went in the ditch on the east end, and she is the only support her mother has."

The train-master mumbled something about the company running unnecessary risks for charity's sake, when the superintendent cut him off with the information that there was no charity about it. It was just an act of simple justice and decency, and he hoped the train-master would not only give the girl something to do, but that he would take especial care of her and keep her out of trouble. The man at the key said he would endeavor to find a place for her, but he positively refused to be responsible for her. "Then, sir," said the superintendent, "I shall cease to be responsible for you." And there followed a scene, in the midst of which a pale girl slipped into the room and sank upon a seat outside the railing, unobserved by either of the angry officials.

The superintendent, after pacing the room a time or two, paused at one of the windows overlooking the yards. The President's special had for the moment been forgotten by the

despatcher, who now turned to the key to send the order for the meeting.

Still smarting from the effect of the tilt with his chief, his mind was disturbed. The pale girl who had seated herself without the railing was the applicant for work whom the train-master had turned down the day before.

The office was now as still as death, save for the clicking of the keys and the slow, measured ticking of the great clock above the despatcher's desk, — the clock that marked time for all the clocks on the entire system. Presently the despatcher jerked the key open and began to call Westcreek, and when he got them said : —

"Train No. 8, Conductor Smith, will take siding for special west eng. 88 at Eastcreek."

Now he began calling the operator at Look-out siding and when he answered, the despatcher shot him an order that almost burned the wire : —

"Special west eng. 88 will meet train No. 8 at Westcreek."

The pale girl sprang to her feet. The despatcher turned and saw her, and when he real-

ized that she must have overheard the quarrel between the superintendent and himself, his anger rose against the innocent young woman; and the other official, seeing their embarrassment, quit the room by a side door.

"Mr. Goodlough, you 've made a great mistake," said the girl.

"Have I?" shouted the train-master, "and do you expect a salary for correcting me?"

"Look at your sheet. You 've —"

"What?" yelled the man, "do you mean to —"

"For heaven's sake, man," pleaded the girl, "see what you 've done — look at the clock — there 'll be a collision in less than ten minutes. You 'll be a murderer if you fail to save those trains."

"You 're about as crazy as they get," said the despatcher; and really she looked like a mad woman, with her big eyes burning in her pale face. Of a sudden she turned, darted out of the office, and ran down the stair as an actress quits a burning hotel.

"She 'd be a bird in a telegraph office," muttered the train-master, going back to his

desk. "Ah, well! I 'm sorry for her, and glad she 's gone. I presume she 's lost her mind grieving after her father; but what could have put that fool notion in her head? Can it be —" and then he stopped short, staring at the train sheet in front of him, and one would have thought, to look at him, that his eyes had caught the wild light that was in the eyes of his visitor, and that the malady he seemed to see in her mind had been suddenly transmitted to his. Now he glanced quickly from the sheet to the clock. "Twenty-seven," he said, and he knew by heart that No. 8 was due at Westcreek at twenty-eight, and he reached a trembling hand for the key and began calling the operator. Ten, twenty, thirty seconds went by and no answer came. Forty, fifty, fifty-five seconds, and he fancied he could see the operator standing out in front of the little station with a pen behind his ear and ink on his shirt sleeve. For another five seconds he called, and as the minute wasted it seemed to him that his blood was boiling and his brain on fire. Then he thought of calling Eastcreek to hold the special. The operator, who happened to be at the key

about to report, answered quickly, and the despatcher asked, "Where's the special?"

"Gone," said the wire, and the train-master pitched forward fainting among the ink-stands and instruments.

The operator at Westcreek stood in front of the little station, smiling at the road-master on No. 8, and the operator at Eastcreek sat looking through the window at the rear end of the President's private car, puckering up in the distance; and the three drivers, ignorant of the awful mistake, were now dashing, at the rate of a mile a minute, into the open door of death.

. . . . . .

The superintendent, who had looked into the ghost-like face of the girl as she passed him on the stair, thought he read there of a wrong done, and returned at once to the despatcher's office, determined to have the matter out with his rebellious train-master. He had entered the office unobserved by the operator and stood directly behind him, and heard him ask Eastcreek where the special was, and heard the answer — "Gone." Of this he made nothing, until the despatcher threw out his arms

and fell forward upon his desk; then the superintendent knew that something had gone wrong. A glance at the record of the despatcher's work showed it all. It was nine twenty-nine. The great clock told him that No. 8 had already passed Westcreek, the special had passed Eastcreek; and now there was nothing to do but wait for the collision which, in the narrow, crooked cañon, was sure to come.

Tenderly he lifted the limp despatcher from the table and laid him upon the floor. He poured water in his hand and bathed the face of the unfortunate official, but it failed to revive him, and then he called up the hospital, and one of the surgeons came with an ambulance and carried the sick man away.

The superintendent, who was himself an operator, called Eastcreek and told him to let nothing pass that point, west-bound, until further notice from the despatcher's office. Then he sat, for what seemed to him a very long while, listening for either Eastcreek or Westcreek to call to report the collision. A half hour went by and the wire was still silent. "Surely," mused the superintendent, "they

can't have all been killed; there must be some one left to tell the tale."

He walked to the window and looked out over the coach yards, and saw the pale girl pacing the platform, waiting for a train to carry her back to her home. Her heart was heavy with dread of the collision, and at thought of returning to her widowed mother with the news of her failure to secure work. The superintendent tapped upon the window with a switch-key, and, when she looked up, beckoned her to him. She shook her head, for she did not wish to face the train-master, now that he had probably found out his awful mistake; but when the official scowled and jerked his head round in the direction of the stairway that led to the despatcher's office, she went to him.

"Take that seat," said the superintendent, pointing to an empty chair at the despatcher's desk. She did as he had told her, and waited tremblingly for the wire to give her something to do.

Mr. Creamer, the first trick man, who had been sent away, having heard of the sudden illness of the train-master, now came hurriedly

into the office. The superintendent waved his hand in the direction of the desk where the girl sat. "Keep your seat," said the despatcher as she was about to rise, and after glancing over the work, turned a blanched face to the superintendent. "Where 's Tom?" he asked after a pause.

"Gone to the hospital, and I 'm afraid he 's gone crazy as well."

Then there was a moment of silence, in which the two men gazed helplessly into each other's faces, and listened constantly for a call from Eastcreek or Westcreek. The keys clicked merrily, and the girl, whose cheeks were now burning red, gathered in the reports from the various stations of the coming and going of many trains.

"Sit down," said the superintendent, and the two men took seats near the operator, while the great clock, ticking off the seconds, marched up through the morning. Now they began to discuss softly the probable result of the collision. The special, having a down-hill pull, would be running rapidly as specials usually do. She would be making forty posts,

and when her light locomotive came up against the heavy mogul which was helping No. 8, and making twenty, it would be as though she had gone against the side of the cañon at sixty miles an hour. It was awful even to think of it. Now there came a message from the general manager, urging the superintendent to get the new President over the road as rapidly as possible, as he was anxious to spend Christmas with his family at Boston. The superintendent read the message, and smiling sadly, as men sometimes do to keep from crying, shook his head slowly and laid the paper down.

"Poor devil!" he said, after a pause,— "just got a good job and now he gets killed," and then the operator at Eastcreek touched the key and said: "No. 8 twenty minutes late;" and fresh color came to the white faces in the despatcher's office.

. . . . . .

When the operator at Westcreek, with the pen behind his ear and ink on his shirt sleeve, quitted the platform and re-entered the office, he heard a hurry-up call for him which came in a quick, nervous way and told him that he was

wanted. He answered at once and got this in return: "Hold No. 8, — lap order." The last two words assured him that compliance with this order was necessary to prevent a collision. "No. 8 is gone," he replied. "Hold her — T. J. C." came back to him in an instant. The man is crazy, thought the operator, but he would try. As he rushed from the office a light engine was just pulling out of the siding to take water. This locomotive belonged to the crew of a work train, but the train had been left in the siding. The operator sprang into the cab, and shouted to the engineer to pull out and catch No. 8; "lap order," he added, and that was enough. The driver, without waiting for his fireman who was some yards behind, tugging at a stiff switch in an effort to close it, pulled the throttle open and bounded away up the steep grade behind the passenger train. The operator, who was leaning in the window, heard the driver yell, and glancing round got a signal to get into the tank and shovel coal into the furnace. It made little difference under the circumstances where he put the fuel, so long as he got it inside the

fire-box, for the rolling, shaking machine levelled it off, and the rapid exhaust burned it out or lifted it in red hot balls through the quivering stack. Now they could see the rear end of No. 8 just whipping a corner. The road-master saw the approaching engine and, as she came nearer, guessed that she was running wild — riderless — or that her rider had lost control of her. It might be that the engineer did not see them. Theirs was a heavy train — they were losing time. He remembered that they had been two minutes late at Westcreek. He called the rear flagman, who was "railroading" with a dead-head conductor in the smoking-room of the sleeper. The flagman took in the situation at a glance. His business was to flag, regardless of circumstances and vague possibilities, and before the road-master could stay him, the fearless flagman swung himself round and dropped from the train. By the time he had regained his feet and found his flag, the light engine, uttering a wild shriek, dashed by him. The engineer, to avoid running by a red flag, turned his face to the fireman's side and refused to see the danger signal. Now he

was near enough to whistle the other engines "down," and the enginemen pulling the passenger train shut off, and when the driver of the light engine saw a chimney of white steam shoot up from each of the forward locomotives, he knew they had quit, and slowed his own machine accordingly. When they had come up to the train, the operator ran to the rear of No. 8, shouted, "lap order, back up," and hurried over to the head end. The road-master reached for the rope and signalled the engineers to back up, but they wanted to know why, and to assure themselves that the light engine was out of the way. When the operator boarded the mogul, the driver of that monster machine opened the whistle and gave three wild shrieks that told the regular man whose engine was next the train that they ought to back up. As the train began to move back the second man saw the driver of the helper glancing anxiously up the track, and understood by the look upon his face that something was coming. The conductor, who had been in the middle of the train, naturally felt that he was being ignored, and not caring to back up with-

out knowing why, began to apply the automatic air-brakes. The drivers felt it instantly, and the danger of it, and opened their throttles and whistles and began to jam the train back regardless of brakes, and the conductor, taking something of the alarm that was in the cry of the locomotives, released the air.

The driver of the light engine had reversed at once upon dropping the operator, picked up the flagman, and was now backing away for Westcreek at a frightful pace. His fireman, still at the switch, let him in on the siding; No. 8 dropped in after him, and just as the operator and conductor had forced the stubborn rails back to the main line, the President's train crashed over the switch.

Not a soul on board the special knew how near they had been to death. Their orders read to meet No. 8 at Westcreek, and there she was, in to clear, just as the daring driver of the special engine had expected to find her.

The conductor of No. 8, with his two engineers, the road-master and operator, wasted five minutes reading, checking, comparing, and examining the orders they had received. They

were all signed "T. J. G." by the train-master himself. The thing was plain: he had given a lap order but had discovered his mistake in time, by the good fortune that had left the light engine at Westcreek, to prevent an awful disaster. He was a good fellow and they were all glad he had saved himself, although the incident might work to his embarrassment when he came up for promotion. Incidentally, they were glad that they were alive.

. . . . . .

To appreciate the mysterious part of the tale, the reader should understand the value of time — not of hours and minutes, but of seconds — in handling trains on a single track railroad. It will be remembered that Goodlough discovered his mistake at 9-27. No. 8 was due to pass Westcreek at 9-28 and at 9-29 the superintendent had seen the train-master collapse. It will be remembered, also, that No. 8 was two minutes late, but the man who had sent the lap order did not know it, and his nerve would not last until he could find it out. The order to hold No. 8 — the order which prevented the collision and doubtless saved

many lives — was sent at 9-31. It was signed with the initials of the train-master, but at a time when that gentleman was dead to the world, and had been so for two whole minutes.

No man was in a better position to know these facts than the superintendent, who was the only man in the despatcher's office at the moment when the "mysterious message" flashed over the wire, and whose business it was to investigate the whole matter. As the investigation proceeded, the superintendent became intensely interested in the mystery. For a while he kept the matter to himself, but these things will out, and in less than a month's time the "mysterious message" became the leading topic in shops, cabs, way-cars, and boarding-houses. To say that the clocks were at variance would not satisfy a railroad man, for they had taken time at 9 A. M., only a half hour before the message went out. The operator at Westcreek declared that at the end of the twenty-four hours following the receipt of the "mysterious message," his clock had not varied one second. Not a few of the employees refused to become excited or even interested

in the matter. Such things were constantly occurring, they argued. Women had wept for their husbands hours before receiving news of their death. A mother, a thousand miles away, had seen her son killed in a wreck in the Black Cañon, giving not only the day and hour, but the exact moment in which it occurred, describing accurately his appearance after death. A clerk in the treasurer's office said it was simple. The train-master had so longed to send this very message, — doubtless, word for word, — but could not get the operator, that the force of his mind had, in some way (which was not quite clear, even to the clerk), transmitted the message to the wire, so that when the operator at Westcreek touched the key it came to him, — not over the wire, perhaps, but direct from the brain of the sender to that of the receiver. It was the great effort, he argued, of transmitting his thought to the operator which caused the train-master to collapse, and not his alarm at the impending collision.

In time, the story of the "mysterious message" came to the ears of the President at Boston, and as his life had been saved by the

sending of this wire, which amounted to almost a miracle, he set himself at once to the task of solving the mystery. He belonged to a certain society whose members delight to delve in things occult, and they were not long in accounting for all that had occurred. It fell out later that the treasurer's clerk was also a member of the Boston society to which the President belonged.

. . . . . .

The day's work in a despatcher's office is divided into three tricks. The first trick man works from 8 A. M. until 4 P. M., the second from that hour to the end of the day, and the third man works the "death trick," — in which nearly all the ugly wrecks occur, — from midnight till morning.

"You may go now," said Mr. Creamer to the girl, when the second man came in and took his trick at 4 o'clock.

"Shall I — come — back in the morning?" asked the girl with some embarrassment.

"Yes," was the answer, after a moment's thought.

By a sort of unwritten rule, the first trick

man had stepped to the post of train-master when that industrious, but over zealous, officer had fallen; but, having no official notice of his appointment by the superintendent, he felt that he had no right to promote the men under him. The best he could do was to keep his trick, and look after the train-master's work beside. He had, of course, — being a despatcher, — the right to sign his own initials to all orders, prefixing the word "Acting" when signing as train-master. So it came about that the familiar "T. J. G.," the initials of the unfortunate Thomas Jefferson Goodlough, now derailed, disgraced, and possibly deranged, were seen no more at the end of telegrams.

"Whose initials shall I put to this order?" asked the girl, sending her first message on the morning of the second day.

"Your own," said Mr. Creamer, and the receiving operator at Livingston wondered who the new despatcher could be. Every night, after midnight, the operators along the line would ground wire, cutting off the officials, and discuss the new despatcher. Not a few of them felt that they were entitled to promotion, and

were in favor of sending a grievance committee in at once. "Who is the new guy?" asked the operator at Lookout one afternoon, when he supposed the second trick man was at the other end of the line.

"Go ahead, 'guy'," said Miss Morgan, for she had not yet been relieved.

"Working the first trick?" said the operator, finishing his query and making it plain. There was a dash of Irish in Minnie Morgan, and she answered without hesitation: "Miles Mulcahy."

"Solid with the new push?"

"Sure," was the girl's answer, and then she shut him off.

It was not long, however, until the trainmen carried the news out over the road that Miles Mulcahy was a woman, but not until the new despatcher had gained something of a reputation as an expert handler of trains. Many an operator who had indorsed the new despatcher upon divers occasions was now sorry he had done so.

A woman operator was bad enough, but a woman despatcher was sure, they argued, to make trouble. A girl at twenty giving orders

to gray-haired conductors and storm-faced engineers was a thing that ought not to be. Some of the swift senders tried to rush her, but it did n't go. The great clock continued to measure off the days, trains arrived and departed on time, the "mysterious message" was still a mystery, and the girl stayed at her post. The superintendent was quietly proud of his protégée and Mr. Creamer was enthusiastic. She knew the road, he had declared to his chief, as the red man knows the forest, and the time card as Father Maloney knew the catechism. "She 's just a bird, that 's all," he observed to the smiling superintendent; "a reg'ler crockerjack, and you can't tie her."

. . . . . .

The January sun, swinging far and low in the south, sent a stingy ray aslant the window and touched the covers on the sick man's couch. He rubbed his eyes, looked about, and whispered: "Where am I?" but he was not acting. The bare white walls, the iron bedstead, the little table, and the one wooden chair told him that he was in the hospital. A vase of fresh cut roses stood upon the table, and he knew

that he had a friend somewhere. He remembered afterwards that the smell of roses was the first thing that was quite clear to him.

"Have I been ill?" he asked of the attendant who now entered the room, for, being an official and able to pay extra, Goodlough had not been placed in the open ward. His malady, too, had been of a nature that required close attention. At times he had been a raving maniac, screaming and calling for help to rescue the President from a burning car.

"Yes," said the nurse, coming cautiously to the sick bed, "you have been very ill. You 're all right now, but you must not talk."

In a little while the sick man fell asleep again, for the fever had left him very weak.

When he awoke on the following morning his mind was much stronger. His eyes wandered directly to the little table, and there was the vase with fresh flowers, and tears came to the eyes of the sufferer. He wondered, as the days went by, that none of his old friends came to see him. Vaguely he began to recall the past and all that had happened. He wondered how many were killed, but he dared not ask.

The few people that he saw seemed so cheerful, and the chief surgeon was always so genial, that he began to hope that things had turned out better than he expected. And there were the flowers, too; somebody sent them, and somebody cared for him still. At the end of another week the superintendent came in to see him, and he, too, was as cheerful and happy as a man could well be. "It is good of you to come and see me," said the sick man. "I don't deserve it."

"You do deserve it," was the reply, "and I have been here many times, but the doctor thought you would be better off alone. Now that you are so strong, though, he says we can all come and see you as often as we will."

"Will Creamer come? I always liked Dan, and his absence has hurt me, but he has not forgotten our past friendship," and the speaker's eyes filled with tears as they rested on the vase.

"He 's here now," said the superintendent, touched deeply by the tears and tenderness of the sick man. "Every morning for nearly a month he has called here to ask after you. I

shall send him to you at once, and now you must brace up — good-by."

The meeting between Creamer and his sick friend was too much for the patient, and the chief surgeon, who had come in with the visitor, was obliged to send him away almost immediately.

It was nearly a week before any more visitors were admitted to the sick room. Only the flowers came every morning. They were not many but always fresh.

"I 'm strong enough to know now, Dan," said the patient when Creamer had been left alone with him, "and I want you to tell me all about it."

"About what, Tom?"

"About the collision — how many were killed?"

Dan assured him that there had been no collision on the road for over a year. "And you," he explained, "have been here just a month to-day — this is the twentieth of January."

"Don't lie to me, Dan, — anybody could do that; but from you I ask the truth, and I think

I have a right to expect it. I sent a lap order the day I fell ill. I became confused over the repetition of No. 8 and engine 88, Eastcreek and Westcreek, and I gave a lap order. A girl in the office tried to save me, but I laughed at her. I thought her crazy, and when at last I noticed my mistake I tried to call Westcreek to hold 8, but could not get him. I called and called, up to the last second, but he did not answer and it seemed to me that I must go mad. Suddenly it occurred to me that I might get Eastcreek, and hold the special, but the answer came quick and awful: 'Gone,' and then I knew no more until I smelled the smell of those fresh roses you sent me, and came to life again."

"Now, I'll tell you the truth, Tom, the whole truth and nothing but the truth, as the judge would say," began his visitor. "You did give a lap order, but you saved yourself. Westcreek did answer and got your order to hold No. 8, and he held her, and there was no collision."

"Dan, I never sent that message, — I wanted to. God knows I would gladly have given my

life to have saved those poor fellows on the engines; and the new President? Was he killed? Ah! Dan, why don't you tell me the truth?" and the miserable man held out his hand beseechingly.

"I have told the whole truth," said Creamer; "there was no collision." But Goodlough shook his head, his eyes filled with tears, and he turned his pale pinched face to the wall.

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The superintendent, whose "long suit," as the road-master expressed it, was "hoss sense," had maintained all along that the transmission of the "mysterious message" was still a mystery. Those occult scientists might sit up nights and work out answers satisfactory to themselves, declared the superintendent, but they would never go at his end of the line. He was not a highly educated man, save in what pertained to the handling of men and machines, trains and traffic. He strove to do the best he could for the company without injuring the community in which he lived. He was popular, and so the new manager kept him. "There must be another solution of this 'mysterious

message,'" he declared to the President, "and I shall find it before the end of the year."

The statement of Goodlough to the effect that he had not sent the message which saved the two trains, made no change in the mind of the superintendent, to whom it was related by Mr. Creamer. At the expiration of forty days the medical staff declared Goodlough sound in body and mind, and the old train-master called upon the superintendent for his decision. He had begun as a messenger-boy in the train-master's office on an eastern road, when he could barely reach the top of the high desk. He had been with this company so long that he felt a proprietary interest in the road. He would be glad to return to his old post, but men were usually dismissed for giving a lap order.

"It will not be necessary for us to review this matter," began the superintendent, when Goodlough had seated himself in the private office of his old chief. "Under ordinary circumstances I should feel it my duty to discharge you, but in consideration of your excellent record and other extenuating circumstances, the confusing nature of the numbers of the loco-

motives and trains, and the names of stations, I have concluded that I shall serve the company best by allowing you to return to your former place. In doing this I wish you to understand that the matter of personal friendship, which has grown strong in the years that we have spent together, makes no difference in my decision. The sixty days, which I must now give you, is meant more as punishment for your refusal to listen to a well-meant warning which might have saved you, than for your carelessness in giving a wrong order. It is more your misfortune than your fault, however, that you have lost these forty days, therefore your suspension will date from the twentieth of December."

Goodlough thanked the superintendent warmly for his consideration, and went out to begin the hard task of waiting twenty days; for to him, every day spent away from his work was wasted.

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The old train-master found it impossible to keep away from the office, and, finding a warm welcome from Creamer, spent the greater part of his twenty days where he could hear the rattle of the instruments, and the slow, measured

ticking of the great clock. He was interested in, and then amazed at, the work of the young woman who was now handling the trains on the first trick. At first he felt half angry with her for being able to do what he had once made a mess of, but she was so sweetly modest, and so utterly unconscious of herself and so faithful to her work, that he soon found himself wishing she were a man. He said so to Creamer, once, and she heard him. Long before his time was up he had begun to wonder where he could put her, for he had no thought of letting her go. But she was a lucky soul, and it seemed that the same power that sent the ravens to Elijah looked after her. Just about the time Goodlough was to resume his office a connecting road wanted a train-master, and the place was offered to Mr. Creamer. He accepted it, of course. Mr. Goodlough was ordered to report for duty, and having no one he considered competent at hand, allowed Miss Morgan to remain where he had found her. It was understood by all that this arrangement was only temporary, but Goodlough soon learned that he would lose an able assistant when he parted with Miss

Morgan, and so was a good while in making a change which all precedent made necessary. The second trick man was entitled to the first, the third man was in line for the second, and if he kept Miss Morgan she must do the "death trick."

The two men were notified by letter of their promotion, and then the train-master braced himself to tell the young lady that she would be transferred to the company's telegraph office, unless she chose to take the third trick, which he felt ashamed to ask her to do. It was only right and fair, she said, and she would be glad to take the third trick. All she wanted was an equal show with the men and no favors. If he could overlook her sex, and forgive her having been born a woman, she would be content to take whatever he had to offer her. "Ye gods," said the train-master to himself, "she makes me ashamed. She 's as brave as she is gentle, and as brilliant as she is beautiful." He wondered, now, knowing her, that he had failed to see that she was a very superior woman when he sent her away without the promise, even, of employment.

When the two despatchers who had received notice of promotion came into the train-master's office, they did not appear over joyous. The man who had thus honored them saw that something was wrong, and inquired the cause of it.

"It 's just this way," said Killeen, the second trick man. "If you are setting Miss Morgan back because she is incompetent to handle the heavy business on the first trick, we have nothing to say; but if the change is being made because she is a woman, or as a matter of justice to Mr. Ricker and myself, we most respectfully decline a promotion that will work a hardship to this most deserving girl."

"The change was ordered as a matter of justice to you, and in keeping with the policy of the management. However, if you gentlemen are disposed to do the gallant, the young lady can remain where she is. She is thoroughly competent to manage the business, and I can see no reason why she should not have an even break with the rest of us."

So the split trick man who had done the talking, and the "death trick" man who had

nodded assent, went away feeling that they had done the proper thing, and the train-master congratulated himself upon the result.

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Minnie Morgan was a woman to win a man's heart if he had such a thing to lose, and so, as the spring deepened, Goodlough, who had been too busy all his life to go out into the world and win a heart, discovered, when it was too late, that he was slowly but surely losing his own. Up to now he had been too much occupied with his work to think of love, but, as is usual with such men, when the fever came it was high and unremitting. Miss Morgan, on her side, had pitied Goodlough at first, and then, when he recovered and came back to work, she had learned to respect and soon to admire him. It might have ended there, so far as she was concerned, if he had not fallen in love with her and showed it a dozen times a day, or every time he attempted to hide it; and soon they both loved, and each resolved to keep the secret from the other, but while Cupid held his hands over their eyes the world looked on and laughed.

Soon the summer came with moonlight excursions to the mountains and boat rides on the star-lit lakes. They parted late at night only to meet again in the morning. The days, that were all too short, flashed by as mile-posts pass the window of an express train. In time the summer went out of the skies, the frost came and killed the flowers, but the summer stayed in their hearts and kept them glad.

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It was winter without. The snow lay in deep drifts upon the pilots of locomotives that came down from the hills, and hid the tops of incoming freight trains. Miss Morgan stood at the window overlooking the yards. An old storm-stained work engine stood in front of the station, toil-worn and weary, — leaking like a sieve, — and the water, dripping through her fire-box, had frozen and hung icicles upon her very grates. Her driver, looking as rusty as his engine, was coming up the stair to tell the despatcher that he was not yet in and would not be for ten minutes, and the despatcher erased the arrival and put him in ten minutes later, so that the engineer might not

get ten days for fast running. He was a hero, this man, begrimed as he was with soot and grease, for this was the engine, and he the engineer who had outrun the Atlantic express a year ago and saved that train, as well as the President's special.

The train-master came in with a sad face and a heavy heart. He remembered that it was just a year ago to-day that he had turned a pale-faced young woman away, not because there was no room for her, but (he blushed to admit it) because she was a woman. And now that same woman was doing a man's work. More, she could enslave him with a glance or bind him with a single strand of her silken hair. He knew this and knew that she knew it, and resolved not to let another day dawn before he had told her everything.

Miss Morgan was sad, too, for she had lost a secret, — not of her love, for that was no secret; but she had just revealed to the superintendent the true story of the "mysterious message." For a long time he had guessed that she knew something about it, but had refrained from calling her up for fear of forcing

her to utter a falsehood. He had himself nearly told an untruth, at the very beginning of the examination, when he declared that he had every reason to believe that she held the secret. At first she was inclined to be obstinate, but when he appealed to her sense of honor and urged her to clear up a mystery, which was really no mystery, according to his belief, and thus prevent the employees from growing superstitious and relying too much upon an unseen power to take care of trains, she saw the wisdom and justice of his argument and gave way.

The superintendent was happy. He had promised to have an answer for the President by the end of the year, and this was the last week but one. Miss Morgan's story was all the more timely because the President would arrive on the morrow, and the superintendent was anxious to convince him that the average occult expert, who makes a specialty of "seeing things nights," knew about as much of the future, or of things unknown, as the codfish out in the Atlantic.

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There was a sound of singing bells, and the low squeak of iron sleigh shoes upon the white

carpet of the earth, for Goodlough, after hours, was tightening the reins over a handsome team. Miss Morgan was by his side, cuddling close in her furs to avoid the flying snow and the cold twilight. When the horses had grown quiet, so as not to require all his time and strength, the train-master turned to his fair companion, and reminded her that this was the nineteenth day of December.

"Yes," she said.

"It was a year ago to-day that I first saw you — and — "

"Turned me down," said the girl, darting a quick glance at the train-master, which was followed by a pretty blush.

"But I know you now," he went on, feeling himself at a disadvantage, "and I have but one regret, and that is — "

"That I am a woman."

"Never," he declared earnestly. "It is that I did not know you sooner."

"But you have said so. I heard you tell Mr. Creamer that you were sorry I was not a man."

"Then I was thinking only of your work —

now I am thinking only of you. I liked your work, but I — I love you."

Now for the first time he looked her full in the face. It was a great deal for him to say, for, unlike most men, he had not said the same before. He felt relieved, somehow, having it out, and looked as if he were glad he had said it. Miss Morgan, in addition to looking radiantly lovely, looked straight ahead.

"Minnie" (he began very deliberately now), "I did turn you down a year ago, and I know now that it meant a great deal to you, but if you turn me down to-day it means a million times more to me. It means a life of joy or one of sorrow; all happiness — even the faintest hope of it — aye, life itself."

She was still silent, but he had begun instinctively to feel himself secure. He was almost happy. He felt like joking with her. He wanted to ask if her wire were down, but he dared not risk so much, — she was too serious. Liquor makes some men sad, others it makes silly, and so it is with the intoxication of love. Goodlough was almost foolishly glad, and yet she had given him no word of encour-

agement. Presently his left arm stole away, and he asked her seriously for her love, her companionship for life; and she hid her face, but not in her furs.

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The morning broke clear and beautiful, and the crisp air was full of the sounds of clanging bells and the screams of switch engines. Express wagons came down laden with boxes and packages — bundles of sunshine — that would find their way to hundreds of homes, and gladden the hearts of thousands of people. Everybody was busy, for the President of the road was to arrive to-day. When Goodlough left his private office and wandered into the big room where the despatchers worked, he heard Miss Morgan calling Westcreek, and when Westcreek answered, heard her say: —

"Train No. 8, Conductor Smith, will take siding for special west engine 88, at Eastcreek."

She was making a meeting point for the President's special which, by a strange coincidence, was coming over the division again on the 20th of December. A year ago to the hour — almost to the minute — he had endeavored

to do what she was now doing, and had failed. She had tried to help him, he would help her now, if she went wrong; and he listened until the operator at Lookout siding answered, and she said: —

"Special west engine 88 will meet train No 8 at Eastcreek."

"Bravo," cried the train-master. "That 's exactly what I was trying to do a year ago, only I said 'Westcreek' at the last."

"How 's everything?"

"On time," said Miss Morgan, still working the key.

After glancing about for a few minutes, Goodlough returned to his office, and sent out a bulletin promoting the operator at Lookout to be train despatcher on the third trick. The same order put the two old despatchers a step nearer the presidency of the road. The bulletin named the second trick man to be day despatcher "to succeed Miss Morgan, assigned to other duties."

He had barely finished this pleasant task, when the superintendent came in with the President, whom Goodlough had never met.

When they were all seated, the superintendent asked the train-master to relate what he knew about the so-called "mysterious message."

"I know absolutely nothing," declared Goodlough, earnestly, for the subject was naturally embarrassing to him.

"You told Mr. Creamer, I believe, that you were positive that you did not send the order to Westcreek to hold No. 8, although your initials went with it," said the superintendent, with the air of a lawyer cross-examining a witness.

"I did."

"And you do not know who sent the message?"

"I do not."

"Well, I do," said the superintendent with a broad smile, "and I'll let you gentlemen into the secret. The 'mysterious message' is no longer a mystery. When Miss Morgan saw, or rather heard, your mistake, she endeavored to convince you that you were in error, but failed. Despairing, she left the building. She was almost wild with grief and alarm. I saw her face as she hurried down the stair, and it

was the face of a mad woman. I read it wrong, and returned at once to you to learn the cause of her distress. I heard you call Eastcreek and ask for the special, — your last message that day, — and heard the answer 'Gone' and saw you fall. But the frail woman whom you had turned away, did not fail. While you fell fainting among the ink-stands and instruments she rushed into the hotel over the way, and finding no one in the Western Union office, took the key and began calling Westcreek. She could not see the clock as you did, and she called, and called; and when at last the operator answered she told him to hold No. 8. 'No. 8 is gone,' said the operator. 'Hold her,' said the wire back at him, and fearing the operator might question the message, she sent your initials at the end of the order. It was her persistency in ordering the operator to hold an express train that had already gone by, that inspired the agent with the idea of following the train. You know the rest."

"Who is this woman?" asked the President, and the superintendent told him the story of the girl — of her father's death; how she had

been called to the despatcher's desk in a dire emergency and kept there from day to day until the train-master had recovered and resumed his office. And then, when one of the despatchers had gone to another road, she had been kept as day despatcher, and all this time she had kept the secret of how she had saved the two trains and possibly the President's life. Every one seemed to regard her as a sort of heroine, but nobody knew exactly why.

"Brave girl!" cried the President, rising and beginning to pace the floor, for he was deeply affected by the story of how a young woman, who, but a day before had been refused employment by the company, had contrived to save the company's property and the lives of men whom she had not known. "She shall have the company's check for a thousand," the President added. "You will furnish her with transportation," he continued, addressing the superintendent, "and have her report to me at the Boston office the first of the year. We need a trustworthy operator in the general office — the pay is good and the hours easy."

"Miss Morgan reports to the train-master,"

said the superintendent, smiling and waving a hand toward Goodlough, who sat pale and silent, like a man who had just received a hard fall.

The suggestion of our heroine's going to Boston brought him to his feet. "Miss Morgan will not be in the company's employ after to-day," he said, looking steadily at the President.

"Has she been dismissed?"

"She has been promoted, and is to take her new place on New Year's day."

"Have you anything better for her than what I can offer?" asked the President, for he did not relish the thought of a train-master questioning the wisdom and justice of his order.

"Are you a married man?" asked the train-master.

"I am, but what has that to do with the matter?"

"In that case I think I have something better for her than you can offer."

"May I ask what office she is to take?" inquired the President, glancing from the train-master to the superintendent, who was still smiling.

"She is to be Mrs. Goodlough," said the train-master with a stern, calm face.

"Accept my congratulations," said the President, holding out his hand. "This is the second time, then, she has saved your life," he continued as Goodlough took his hand; "and I hope you will allow her to accept my personal check for another thousand, for she saved mine as well."

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Goodlough was greatly affected by the news of Miss Morgan's heroism, and the conduct of the President and superintendent of the road. He kept clear of the despatcher's office that day, for he dared not trust himself in her presence.

After the departure of the President, he had visited his chief and heard the story of Miss Morgan's achievements over again. So she had kept the secret for a whole year and revealed it only at the earnest request of the superintendent, who, since the family's misfortune, had been almost a father to her. He had helped her establish her mother at this place, where they were now living comfortably.

That evening, when Minnie's mother had retired to her room, and the lovers were left alone together in the little lamp-lit parlor, they looked at each other in silence for a moment.

"What distresses you?" asked Miss Morgan.

"And you?" inquired the train-master.

"Order No. 76," was her reply. "I 've lost my place."

"And found a friend, a lover, — aye, a husband and happiness, I hope."

"And what have you found?"

"The sender of the 'mysterious message,'" said Goodlough, advancing to where his sweetheart sat.

"Did he tell you?"

"Yes, and he told the President, and you are to be rewarded handsomely by the company whose property you saved, and the President is not sorry he 's alive. And I? How shall I repay you for all that you have done for me?"

"By pardoning me for forging your name to the message, and becoming cheerful, and shortening your office hours, and — well, if anything more occurs to me I 'll tell you later."

"Then you did send the message?"

"Yes."

"And how about the flowers that came to the hospital every day, — the red roses whose breath called me back to life?"

"Yes," she said, and the little hand stole into his and nestled there.

And then they talked on for just a little while. She forgot that she was out of employment, and he forgot the lap order of a year ago. The lamp burned low. He lighted a match to look at his watch, and it was neither yesterday nor to-morrow, but just between, and then, as all telegraphers do at the end of the day, she gave him "good-night," and he went away.

Scraptomania

SCRAPTOMANIA

EVERY man who has railroaded for a single day on the Rio Grande, has heard of John Jones, — "Scrappy" Jones they called him. If there is such a disease as scraptomania then John Jones had it, good and hard. He began at the bottom as helper in the machine shops and industriously fought his way up the ladder until he became a full-fledged locomotive engineer. There is scarcely a flag station on the entire system that has not at some time or another been his battlefield.

The most interesting feature in the history of Jones is the fact that he never sought a fight, or fought for the "fun of it," as most fighting characters do. I knew him intimately, worked with him many a day, and it seemed to me that he had fights thrust upon him in nearly every instance. When he was "hostler" at Salida

I was his assistant. One day when we were dangling our feet from a high bench in the round-house, I asked him how it was that he had so many fights. "You are better tempered and happier than I am. I have had one fight since I began railroading; how many have you had?"

"'Bout a hundred," said Jones, and his homely face was sad. He told me, then and there, that fighting was his besetting sin. He had worked and prayed that he might be spared the necessity of thrashing men, but it seemed a part of his mission on earth. When the noon whistle sounded, we slid off the high bench and went into the washroom to prepare for luncheon. Before we left the house we were obliged to use the turn-table. "Hey there, back up. We want to use the turn-table!" Jones called cheerfully enough to a passenger engineer who was oiling his locomotive which, contrary to all rules and customs, was left standing on the table. Now Jones had thrashed nearly every engineer he had fired for during his apprenticeship and they all hated him, so this middle division man only gave him a sour look and went on oiling.

"Say," said Jones, rolling his thumb and twirling his watch chain about it, "are you going to back up?"

"Yes, when I get ready," was the reply, and Jones made straight for the engine. As he climbed up on one side the driver mounted from the other, and, snatching up a hand hammer, raised it above Jones's head and warned him to keep off his engine. I held my breath as Jones continued to climb and the engineer stood ready to brain him. When the hostler, who appeared not to have heard the warning, had gained the deck, he twisted the hammer from the grasp of the engineer, threw it back into the coal tank, backed the engine from the table, set the air brakes, and leaped to the ground. He had missed a fight here simply because the engineer weakened, and yet Jones was wholly in the right. Once when he was firing a passenger engine they stopped at Cleora, only two miles from the end of the run; the engineer abused Jones and Jones thumped him. The driver told the conductor that he would not run the engine in with that fireman, whereupon Jones gave the driver another lick-

ing, drove him into the cab, and compelled him to go to the end of the division. There was an investigation in the office of Master Mechanic Kelker, at Pueblo, the engineer began to abuse the fireman, and he was notified by the latter that such a course was liable to lead to trouble. Presently the engineer called Jones a liar, and instantly he fell sprawling across the master mechanic's desk. This caused the fireman's discharge. But the provocation had been great, and the official gave Jones a rather complimentary letter to the general master mechanic at Denver. Jones went up and told the whole story, not even attempting to justify his own actions, and he was reëmployed upon another run.

In those days engineers and firemen worked far apart, and as Jones had licked about half the engineers on the middle division, he was simply despised by the men on the right hand side. There was a young Irishman who was a magnificent man, physically, and possessed of no end of sand, and to this handsome fellow was given the task of thrashing Scrappy Jones. They met one day out at the steel works, and

the Irishman had no trouble in working Jones up to the proper pitch. Jones told the story of this fight to me. "He looked like a giant," he said, "when he faced me, but I was mad. Before I knew he was within reach he hit me square between the eyes, and it seemed to me that it was raining fire. I fell sprawling on my back, but got up as quickly as I could, and he knocked me down again. I got up again, with the air full of sparks. He knocked me down again. More fire. I continued to go down and get up. It didn't hurt so very much, only it blinded me, and that annoyed me, for I was anxious to see how he did it, for I had never found it utterly impossible to get at a man before. As often as I straightened up he hit me plumb between the eyes and down I went. I had been down six times, but my wind was better than that of my opponent, and that very fact seemed to discourage him. He was breathing like a snow plough, and when I went down for the seventh time he started to climb my frame, and that was his Waterloo. I saw him coming, dimly, as through a veil all dotted with stars. I doubled up like a jack-knife, and when I

straightened my legs out I drove my feet into the stomach of my antagonist. He went over on his back, and I went over on top of him and closed the incident. He had me whipped. I was completely done out and three more falls would have ended me, but he got scared and wanted to end the fight."

The next man selected to discipline Jones was a yard-master, named Jim Williams. When Williams saw the fighter for the first time he laughed at him.

"Are you the artist that has licked all the engineers on the middle division?" asked Jim with a quizzical smile.

Jones showed plainly that he was embarrassed. He always looked so when he knew that a man was trying to pick a quarrel with him. He answered that he had done the best he could for those who had come up against him, and Jim laughed some more. Three or four seconds were now wasted in preliminary talk, and then the two climbed into an empty box and shut the door. The men on the outside only listened to catch a word that would give them some idea as to how the fight was

going, but there was no talk. At times one would fancy that a football team was performing inside. Now there came heaves and grunts as if two men were trying to put up a heavy stove, and then you might guess that a dray had backed up to the opposite door and they were throwing in a few sacks of potatoes. Presently there was a "rush" and they threw in the dray, horse and all. This was followed by perfect quiet, save for the heavy breathing of the horse. A few moments later the door was opened and the two men came out, bleeding through their smiles, and still the result of the fight was a secret, and it has, so far as I know, remained so to this day.

Jones's fights became so notorious that the travelling engineer waited upon him to say that the master mechanic had ordered that the belligerent engineer be discharged at the conclusion of his next fight. Jones promised to reform. About a month later the travelling engineer climbed into the cab of the engine which Jones was running, helping trains from Colorado Springs up over the Divide. The young driver showed much feeling upon meet-

ing the T. E., and at once assured the official that he appreciated the leniency of the management; that they had all been very forgiving, and now he hoped that he might leave the service with the good wishes of the officials.

"Why, you are not going to quit, are you, John? The old man has complimented you repeatedly upon the excellent work you have been doing here on the hill."

"Then I take it that the old man is n't on," said Jones. "That 's like you, Frank, to try to save my neck, but it 's no use."

Suddenly it dawned upon the mind of the travelling superintendent of motive power that Jones had been fighting. If he wanted to be sure, all he had to do was to ask Jones and he would get the whole truth, so he asked him whom he had fought with.

"The hill crew," was the brief reply.

"All of them."

"Yep — began on the head brakeman and cleaned out the caboose, including the captain," said Jones with no show of pride. The official jumped off the engine and swung into the caboose of an east-bound freight train, and

that was the last Jones heard of the order to discharge him, for the conductor was too proud to report the fact that a little man weighing less than one hundred and forty pounds had cleaned out the crew with his naked hands. The story of this fight and how it came about was related to the writer by the travelling engineer himself.

"We 've got a cranky engineer," the old brakeman had said to the new brakeman, who boasted that he was off the stormy division of the "Q," and that he had not yet met an engineer who could tame him. "The only way you can handle him is to go at him dead hard from the jump; cuss him good and plenty, and, if necessary, thump him, and he 'll be your friend."

"Cussin' 's like walkin' to me," said the "Q" man, "and when it comes to a scrap, that 's me Prince Albert," and he went up to the head end. When he had arrived at a point immediately under the cab window, he began a torrent of blankety blanking that made the engineer dart his head out of the window to see what was the matter. The moment that

Jones realized that the fellow was cursing him, he leaped right out through the cab window and lit on top of the brakeman, and by the time the rear man came up the head man was yelling for help. He told Jones at once that the rear brakeman had informed him that the engineer was a tough mug, who had to be cursed or he would be ugly, and Jones promptly apologized to the head brakeman and thrashed the other fellow. Now the conductor, who had allowed all this to come about with his knowledge and silent consent, observed that Jones was a brute, and he got what the other two men had received, and from that day the hill crew dwelt together in peace and brotherly love.

Once when Jones was still a fireman he was transferred to the mountain division, so as to be forgotten for a time by the engineers of the middle of the road. When he reached the top of the hill for the first time he noticed that the rear end of the tank was covered with wet cinders, and, like the industrious fireman that he was, he got up and began to sweep them off in the long snow shed at Marshall Pass.

The superintendent's private car was standing near by, but Jones did not notice it in the smoky shed, and the first swipe of his broom sent a flood of cinders over the superintendent, who happened at that moment to be passing.

"Blank, blank you," shouted the official, and, as he looked up, he saw the fireman leap from the top of the tank, and he had to step back to avoid a crush. "Do you know who I am?" asked the official.

"No, and I don't care so long as you 've got gray hair."

"I 'm the superintendent."

"Well, ——you, don't you ——me again," said Jones, and he got back on his engine, and the superintendent, who was himself a high-spirited man, remarked afterwards that he liked that fellow's spunk, and, in fact, he showed in after years that he did like it, for he would have Jones when none of the other division superintendents would.

The last time I saw Jones he told me that he had quit railroading. He had bought, with the money he had saved up, the old farm in

Kentucky where he was born, had married the little girl who had been his playmate in childhood, and I presume she and I were about the only close friends he had whom he had never thrashed.