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Title: Danger Signals

Remarkable, Exciting and Unique Examples of the Bravery,
Daring and Stoicism in the Midst of Danger of Train
Dispatchers and Railroad Engineers

Author: John A. Hill and Jasper Ewing Brady

Release Date: August 8, 2006 [EBook #19007]

Language: English

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"Quick as a flash the Kid had my arm."

DANGER SIGNALS

REMARKABLE, EXCITING AND UNIQUE
EXAMPLES OF THE BRAVERY, DAR-
ING AND STOICISM IN THE
MIDST OF DANGER OF

Train Dispatchers And Railroad Engineers

BY
JOHN A. HILL
and
JASPER EWING BRADY

ABSORBING STORIES OF MEN WITH NERVES OF STEEL,
INDOMITABLE COURAGE AND
WONDERFUL ENDURANCE

FULLY ILLUSTRATED

CHICAGO
JAMIESON-HIGGINS CO.
1902

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DANGER SIGNALS.

PART I.

JIM WAINRIGHT'S KID

As I put down my name and the number of the crack engine of America—as well as the imprint of a greasy thumb—on the register of our roundhouse last Saturday night, the foreman borrowed a chew of my fireman's fine-cut, and said to me:

"John, that old feller that's putting on the new injectors wants to see you."

"What does he want, Jack?" said I. "I don't remember to have seen him, and I'll tell you right now that the old squirts on the 411 are good enough for me—I ain't got time to monkey with new-fangled injectors on *that* run."

"Why, he says he knowed you out West fifteen years ago."

"So! What kind o' looking chap is he?"

"Youngish face, John; but hair and whiskers as white as snow. Sorry-looking rooster—seems like he's lost all his friends on earth, and wa'n't jest sure where to find 'em in the next world."

"I can't imagine who it would be. Let's see—'Lige Clark, he's dead; Dick Bellinger, Hank Baldwin, Jim Karr, Dave Keller, Bill Parr—can't be none of them. What's his name?"

"Winthrop—no, Wetherson—no, lemme see—why, no—no, Wainright; that's it, Wainright; J. E. Wainright."

"Jim Wainright!" says I, "Jim Wainright! I haven't heard a word of him for years—thought he was dead; but he's a young fellow compared to me."

"Well, he don't look it," said Jack.

After supper I went up to the hotel and asked for J. E. Wainright.

Maybe you think Jim and I didn't go over the history of the "front." "Out at the front" is the pioneer's ideal of railroad life. To a man who has put in a few years there the memory of it is like the memory of marches, skirmishes, and battles in the mind of the veteran soldier. I guess we started at the lowest numbered engine on the road, and gossiped about each and every crew. We had finished the list of engineers and had fairly started on the firemen when a thought struck me, and I said:

"Oh, I forgot him, Jim—the 'Kid,' your cheery little cricket of a firesy, who thought Jim Wainright the only man on the road that could run an engine right. I remember he wouldn't take a job running switcher—said a man that didn't know that firing for Jim Wainright was a better job than running was crazy. What's become of him? Running, I suppose?"

Jim Wainright put his hand up to his eyes for a minute, and his voice was a little husky as he said:

"No, John, the Kid went away—"

"Went away?"

"Yes, across the Great Divide—dead."

"That's tough," said I, for I saw Jim felt bad. "The Kid and you were like two brothers."

"John, I loved the—"

Then Jim broke down. He got his hat and coat, and said:

"John, let's get out into the air—I feel all choked up here; and I'll tell you a strange, true story—the Kid's story."

As we got out of the crowd and into Boston Common, Jim told his story, and here it is, just as I remember it—and I'm not bad at remembering.

"I'll commence at the beginning, John, so that you will understand. It's a strange story, but when I get through you'll recall enough yourself to prove its truth.

"Before I went beyond the Mississippi and under the shadows of the Rocky Mountains, I fired, and was promoted, on a prairie road in the Great Basin well known in the railway world. I was much like the rest of the boys until I commenced to try to get up a substitute for the link motion. I read an article in a scientific paper from the pen of a jackass who showed a Corliss engine card, and then blackguarded the railroad mechanics of America for being satisfied with the link because it was handy. I started in to design a motion to make a card, but—well, you know how good-for-nothing those things are to pull loads with.

"After my first attempt, I put in many nights making a wooden model for the Patent Office. I was subsequently informed that the child of my brain interfered with about ten other motions. Then I commenced to think—which I ought to have done before. I went to studying *what had been done*, and soon came to the conclusion that I just knew a little—about enough to get along running. I gave up hope of being an inventor and a benefactor of mankind, but study had awakened in me the desire for improvement; and after considerable thought I came to the conclusion that the best thing I could do was to try to be the best runner on the road, just as a starter. In reality, in my inmost soul, my highest ideal was the master mechanic's position.

"I was about twenty-five years old, and had been running between two or three years, with pretty good success, when one day the general master mechanic sent for me. In the office I was introduced to a gentleman, and the G. M. M. said to him in my presence:

"This is the engineer I spoke to you of. We have none better. I think he would suit you exactly, and, when you are through with him, send him back; we are only lending him, mind,' and he went out into the shop.

"The meaning of it all was that the stranger represented a firm that had put up the money to build a locomotive with a patent boiler for burning a patent fuel—she had an improved valve motion, too—and they had asked our G. M. M. for a good engineer, to send East and break in and run the new machine and go with her around the country on ten-day trials on the different roads. He offered good pay, it was work I liked, and I went. I came right here to Boston and reported to the firm. They were a big concern in another line, and the head of the house was a relative of our G. M. M.—that's why he had a chance to send me.

"After the usual introductions, the president said to me:

"Now, Mr. Wainright, this new engine of ours is hardly started yet. The drawings are done, and the builders' contract is ready to sign; but we want you to look over the drawings, to see if there are any practical suggestions you can make. Then stay in the shops, and see that the work is done right. The inventor is not a practical man; help him if you can, for experience tells us that ten things fail because of bad *design* where one does because of bad manipulation. Come up into the drawing-room, and I will introduce you to the inventor.'

"Up under the skylight I met the designer of the new engine, a mild little fellow—but he don't figure in this story. In five minutes I was deep in the study of the drawings. Everything seemed to be worked out all right, except that they had the fire-door opening the wrong way and the brake-valve couldn't be reached—but many a good builder did that twenty years ago. I was impressed with the beauty of the drawings—they were like lithographs, and one, a perspective, was shaded and colored handsomely. I complimented him on them.

"'They are beautiful, sir,' he said; 'they were made by a lady. I'll introduce you to her.'

"A bright, plain-faced little woman with a shingled head looked up from her drawing-board as we approached, shook hands cordially when introduced, and at once entered into an intelligent discussion of the plans of the new record-beater.

"Well, it was some months before the engine was ready for the road, and in that time I got pretty well acquainted with Miss Reynolds. She was mighty plain, but sharp as a buzz-saw. I don't think she was really homely, but she'd never have been arrested for her beauty. There was something 'fetching' about her appearance—you couldn't help liking her. She was intelligent, and it was such a novelty to find a woman who knew the smoke stack from the steam chest. I didn't fall in love with her at all, but I liked to talk to her over the work. She told me her story; not all at once, but here and there a piece, until I knew her history pretty well.

"It seems that her father had been chief draughtsman of those works for years, but had lately died. She had a strong taste for mechanics, and her father, who believed in women learning trades, had taught her mechanical drawing, first at home and then in the shop. She had helped in busy times as an extra, but never went to work for regular wages until the death of her father made it necessary.

"She seemed to like to hear stories of the road, and often asked me to tell her some thrilling experience the second time. Her eyes sparkled and her face kindled when I touched on a snow-bucking experience. She often said that if she was a man she'd go on the railroad, and after such a remark she would usually sigh and smile at the same time. One day, when the engine was pretty nearly ready, she said to me:

"'Mr. Wainright, who is going to fire the Experiment?'

"'I don't know. I had forgot about that; I'll have to see about it.'

"'It wouldn't be of much use to get an experienced man, would it—the engine will burn a new fuel in a new way?'

"'No,' said I, 'not much.'

"'Now,' said she, coloring a little, 'let me ask a favor of you. I have a brother who is just crazy to go out firing. I don't want him to go unless it's with a man I can trust; he is young and inexperienced, you know. Won't you take him? Please do.'

"'Why, I'll be glad to,' said I. 'I'll speak to the old man about it.'

"'Don't tell him it's my brother.'

"'Well, all right.'

"The old man told me to hire whoever I liked, and I told Miss Reynolds to bring the boy in the morning.

"'Won't you wait until Monday? It will be an accommodation to me.'

"Of course I waited.

"The next day Miss Reynolds did not come to the office, and I was busy at the shop. Monday came, but no Miss Reynolds. About nine o'clock, however, the foreman came down to the Experiment with a boy, apparently about eighteen years old, and said there was a lad with a note for me.

"Before reading the note I shook hands with the boy, and told him I knew who he was, for he looked like his sister. He was small, but wiry, and had evidently come prepared for business, as he had some overclothes under his arm and a pair of buckskin gloves. He was bashful and quiet, as boys usually are during their first experience away from home. The note read:

"'DEAR MR. WAINRIGHT.—This will be handed you by brother George. I hope you will be satisfied with him. I know he will try to please you and do his duty; don't forget how green he is. I am obliged to go into the country to settle up some of my father's affairs and may not see you again before you go. I sincerely hope the "Experiment," George, and his engineer will be successful. I shall watch you all.

"'G. E. REYNOLDS.'

"I felt kind of cut up, somehow, about going away without bidding Old Business—as the other draughtsman called Miss Reynolds—good-by; but I was busy with the engine.

"The foreman came along half an hour after the arrival of young Reynolds, and seeing him at work cleaning the window glass, asked who he was.

"'The fireman,' said I.

"'What! that kid?'

"And from that day I don't think I ever called young Reynolds by any other name half a dozen times. That was the 'Kid' you knew. When it came quitting time that night, I asked the Kid where they lived, and he said, Charlestown. I remarked that his voice was like his sister's; but he laughed, and said I'd see difference enough if they were together; and bidding me good-night, caught a passing car.

"We broke the Experiment in for a few days, and then tackled half a train for Providence. She would keep her water just about hot enough to wash in with the pump on. It was a tough day; I was in the front end half the time at every stop. The Kid did exactly what I told him, and was in good spirits all the time. I was cross. Nothing will make a man crosser than a poor steamer.

"We got to Providence in the evening tired; but after supper the Kid said he had an aunt and her family living there, and if I didn't mind, he'd try to find them. I left the door unlocked, and slept on

one side of the bed, but the Kid didn't come back; he was at the engine when I got there the next morning.

"The Kid was such a nice little fellow I liked to have him with me, and, somehow or other (I hardly noticed it at the time), he had a good influence on me. In them days I took a drink if I felt like it; but the Kid got me into the habit of taking lemonade, and wouldn't go into drinking places, and I soon quit it. He gave me many examples of controlling my temper, and soon got me into the habit of thinking before I spoke.

"We played horse with that engine for four or five weeks, mostly around town, but I could see it was no go. The patent fuel was no good, and the patent fire-box little better, and I advised the firm to put a standard boiler on her and a pair of links, and sell her while the paint was fresh. They took my advice.

"The Kid and I took the engine to Hinkley's, and left her there; we packed up our overclothes, and as we walked away, the Kid asked: 'What will you do now, Jim?'

"'Oh, I've had a nice play, and I'll go back to the road. I wish you'd go along.'

"'I wouldn't like anything better; will you take me?'

"'Yes, but I ain't sure that I can get you a job right away.'

"'Well, I could fire for you, couldn't I?'

"'I'd like to have you, Kid; but you know I have a regular engine and a regular fireman. I'll ask for you, though.'

"'I won't fire for anybody else!'

"'You won't! What would you do if I should die?'

"'Quit.'

"'Get out!'

"'Honest; if I can't fire for you, I won't fire at all.'

"I put in a few days around the 'Hub,' and as I had nothing to do, my mind kept turning to Miss Reynolds. I met the Kid daily, and on one of our rambles I asked him where his sister was.

"'Out in the country.'

"'Send word to her that I am going away and want to see her, will you, Kid?'

"'Well, yes; but Sis is funny; she's too odd for any use. I don't think she'll come.'

"'Well, I'll go and see her.'

"'No, Sis would think you were crazy.'

"'Why? Now look here Kid, I like that sister of yours, and I want to see her.'

"But the Kid just stopped, leaned against the nearest building, and laughed—laughed until the tears ran down his cheeks. The next day he brought me word that his sister had gone to Chicago to make

some sketches for the firm and hoped to come to see us after she was through. I started for Chicago the day following, the Kid with me.

"I had little trouble in getting the Kid on with me, as my old fireman had been promoted. I had a nice room with another plug-puller, and in a few days I was in the old jog—except for the Kid. He refused to room with my partner's fireman; and when I talked to him about saving money that way, he said he wouldn't room with any one—not even me. Then he laughed, and said he kicked so that no one could room with him. The Kid was the butt of all the firemen on account of his size, but he kept the cleanest engine, and was never left nor late, and seemed more and more attached to me—and I to him.

"Things were going along slick enough when Daddy Daniels had a row with his fireman, and our general master mechanic took the matter up. Daniels' fireman claimed the run with me, as he was the oldest man, and, as they had an 'oldest man' agreement, the master mechanic ordered Smutty Kelly and the Kid changed.

"I was not in the roundhouse when the Kid was ordered to change, but he went direct to the office and kicked, but to no purpose. Then he came to me.

"'Jim,' said he, with tears in his eyes, 'are you satisfied with me on the 12?'

"'Why, yes, Kid. Who says I'm not?'

"'They've ordered me to change to the 17 with that horrible old ruffian Daniels, and Smutty Kelly to go with you.'

"'They have!' says I. 'That slouch can't go out with me the first time; I'll see the old man.'

"'But the old man was mad by the time I got to him.'

"'That baby-faced boy says he won't fire for anybody but you; what have you been putting into his head?'

"'Nothing; I've treated him kindly, and he likes me and the 12—that's the cleanest engine on the—'

"'Tut, tut, I don't care about that; I've ordered the firemen on the 12 and 17 changed—and they are going to be changed.'

"The Kid had followed me into the office, and at this point said, very respectfully:

"'Excuse me, sir, but Mr. Wainright and I get along so nicely together. Daniels is a bad man; so is Kelly; and neither will get along with decent men. Why can't you—'

"'There! stop right there, young man. Now, will you go on the 17 *as ordered*?'

"'Yes, if Jim Wainright runs her.'

"'No *ifs* about it; will you go?'

"'No, sir, I won't!'

"'You are discharged, then.'

"'That fires me, too,' said I.

"Not at all, not at all; this is a fireman row, Jim.'

"I don't know what struck me then, but I said:

"No one but this boy shall put a scoop of coal in the 12 or any other engine for me; I'll take the poorest run you have, but the Kid goes with me.'

"Talk was useless, and in the end the Kid and I quit and got our time.

"That evening the Kid came to my room and begged me to take my job back and he would go home; but I wouldn't do it, and asked him if he was sick of me.

"No, Jim,' said he. 'I live in fear that something will happen to separate us, but I don't want to be a drag on you—I think more of you than anybody.'

"They were buying engines by the hundred on the Rio Grande and Santa Fé and the A. & P. in those days, and the Kid and I struck out for the West, and inside of thirty days we were at work again.

"We had been there three months, I guess, when I got orders to take a new engine out to the front and leave her, bringing back an old one. The last station on the road was in a box-car, thrown out beside the track on a couple of rails. There was one large, rough-board house, where they served rough-and-ready grub and let rooms. The latter were stalls, the partitions being only about seven feet high. It was cold and bleak, but right glad we were to get there and get a warm supper. Everything was rough, but the Kid seemed to enjoy the novelty. After supper I asked the landlord if he could fix us for the night.

"I can jest fix ye, and no more,' said he; 'I have just one room left. Ye's'll have to double up; but this is the kind o' weather for that; it'll be warmer.'

"The Kid objected, but the landlord bluffed him—didn't have any other room—and he added: 'If I was your pardner there, I'd kick ye down to the foot, such a cold strip of bacon as ye must be.'

"About nine o'clock the Kid slipped out, and not coming in for an hour, I went to look for him. As I went toward the engine, I met the watchman:

"Phy don't that fireman o' yourn sleep in the house or on the caboose floor such a night as this? He'll freeze up there in that cab wid no blankets at all; but when I tould him that, he politely informed meself that he'd knowed men to git rich mindin' their own biz. He's a sassy slip of a Yankee.'

"I climbed up on the big consolidation, and, lighting my torch, looked over the boiler-head at the Kid. He was lying on a board on the seat, with his overcoat for a covering and an arm-rest for a pillow.

"What's the matter with you, Kid?' I asked. 'What are you doing freezing here when we can both be comfortable and warm in the house? Are you ashamed or afraid to sleep with me? I don't like this for a cent.'

"Hope you won't be mad with me, Jim, but I won't sleep with any one; there now!"

"You're either a fool or crazy,' said I. 'Why, you will half freeze here. I want some explanation of such a trick as this.'

"The Kid sat up, looked at me soberly for a few seconds, reached up and unhooked his door, and said:

"Come over and sit down, Jim, and I'll tell you something.'

"I blew out the torch and went over, half mad. As I hooked the door to keep out the sharp wind I thought I heard a sob, and I took the Kid's head in my hands and turned his face to the moonlight. There were big tears in the corner of each tightly closed eye.

"Don't feel bad, Kid,' said I. 'I'm sure there's some reason keeps you at such tricks as this; but tell me all your trouble—it's imaginary, I know.'

"There was a tremor in the Kid's voice as he took my hand and said, 'We are friends, Jim; ain't we?'

"Why, of course,' said I.

"I have depended on your friendship and kindness and manhood, Jim. It has never failed me yet, and it won't now, I know. I have a secret, Jim, and it gnaws to be out one day, and hides itself the next. Many and many a time I have been on the point of confessing to you, but something held me back. I was afraid you would not let me stay with you, if you knew—'

"Why, you ain't killed any one, Kid?' I asked, for I thought he was exaggerating his trouble.

"No—yes, I did, too—I killed my sister.'

"I recoiled, hurt, shocked. 'You—'

"Yes, Jim, there is no such person to be found as my sister, Georgiana—*for I am she!*"

"You! Why, Kid, you're crazy!"

"No, I'm not. Listen, Jim, and I will explain.'

"My father was always sorry I was not a boy. Taught me boyish tricks, and made me learn drawing. I longed for the life on a locomotive—I loved it, read about it, thought of it, and prayed to be transformed into *something* that could go out on the road. My heart went out to you early in our acquaintance, and one day the thought to get started as a fireman with you shot into my brain and was acted upon at once. After the first move there was no going back, and I have acted my part well; I have even been a good fireman. I am strong, healthy, and happy when on the road with you. I love the life, hard as it is, and can't think of giving it up, and—and you, Jim.'

"And then she broke down, and cried as only a woman can.

"I took both her hands in mine and kissed her—think of kissing your fireman on the engine—and told her that we could be happy yet. Then I told her how I had tried to get a letter to the lost sister, and how they never came back, and were never answered—that I loved the sister and loved her. She reminded me that she herself got all the letters I had sent, and was pretty sure of her ground when she threw herself on my protection.

"It was a strange courting, John, there on that engine at the front, the boundless plains on one side, the mountains on the other, the winds of the desert whirling sand and snow against our little house, and the moon looking coldly down at the spectacle of an engineer making love to his fireman.

"That night the Kid slept in the bed in the house, and I stayed on the engine.

"When we got back to headquarters the Kid laid off to go home, and I made a trip or two with another fireman, and then I had to go to Illinois to fix up some family business—Kid and I arranged that.

"We met in St. Louis, the Kid hired a ball dress, and we were married as quiet as possible. I had promised the Kid that, for the present at least, she could stay on the road with me, and you know that the year you were there I done most of the heavy firing while the Kid did the running. We remained in the service for something like two years—a strange couple, but happy in each other's company and our work.

"I often talked to my wife about leaving the road and starting in new, where we were not known, as man and wife, she to remain at home; but she wouldn't hear of it, asking if I wanted an Irishman for a side-partner. This came to be a joke with us—'When I get my Irishman I will do so-and-so.'

"One day, as our 'hog' was drifting down the long hill, the Kid said to me, 'Jim, you can get your Irishman; I'm going to quit this trip.'

"'Kind o' sudden, hey, Kid?'

"'No, been hating to give up, but—' and then the Kid came over and whispered something to me.

"John, we both quit and went South. I got a job in Texas, and the Kid was lost sight of, and Mrs. J. E. Wainright appeared on the scene in tea-gown, train, and flounces. We furnished a neat little den, and I was happy. I missed my kid fireman, and did indeed have an Irishman. Kid had a struggle to wear petticoats again, and did not take kindly to dish-washing, but we were happy just the same.

"Our little fellow arrived one spring day, and then our skies were all sunshiny for three long, happy years, until one day Kid and I followed a little white hearse out beyond the cypress grove and saw the earth covered over our darling, over our hopes, over our sunshine, and over our hearts.

"After that the house was like a tomb, so still, so solemn, and at every turn were reminders of the little one who had faded away like the morning mist, gone from everything but our memories—there his sweet little image was graven by the hand of love and seared by the branding-iron of sorrow.

"Men and women of intelligence do not parade their sorrows in the market-place; they bear them as best they can, and try to appear as others, but once the specter of the grim destroyer has crossed the threshold, his shadow forever remains, a dark reminder, like a prison-bar across the daylight of a cell. This shadow is seen and recognized in the heart of a father, but it is larger and darker and more dreadful in the mother heart.

"At every turn poor Kid was mutely reminded of her loss, and her heart was at the breaking point day by day, and she begged for her old life, to seek forgetfulness in toil and get away from herself. So we went back to the old road, as we went away—Jim Wainright and Kid Reynolds—and glad enough they were to get us again for the winter work.

"Three years of indoor life had softened the wiry muscles of the Kid, and our engine was a hard steamer, so I did most of the work on the road. But the work, excitement, and outdoor life brought back the color to pale cheeks, and now and then a smile to sad lips—and I was glad.

"One day the Kid was running while I broke up some big lumps of coal, and while busy in the tank I felt the air go on full and the reverse lever come back, while the wheels ground sand. I stepped quickly toward the cab to see what was the matter, when the Kid sprang into the gangway and cried 'Jump!'

"I was in the left gangway in a second, but quick as a flash the Kid had my arm.

"The other side! Quick! The river!"

"We were almost side by side as she swung me toward the other side of the engine, and jumped as we crashed into a landslide. I felt Kid's hand on my shoulder as I left the deck—just in time to save my life, but not the Kid's.

"She was crushed between the tank and boiler in the very act of keeping me from jumping to certain death on the rocks in the river below.

"When the crew came over they found me with the crushed clay of my poor, loved Kid in my arms, kissing her. They never knew who she was. I took her back to our Texas home and laid her beside the little one that had gone before. The Firemen's Brotherhood paid Kid's insurance to me and passed resolutions saying: 'It has pleased Almighty God to remove from our midst our beloved brother, George Reynolds,' etc., etc.

"George Reynolds's grave cannot be found; but over a mound of forget-me-nots away in a Southern land, there stands a stone on which is cut: 'Georgiana, wife of J. E. Wainright, aged thirty-two years.'

"But in my heart there is a golden pyramid of love to the memory of a fireman and a sweetheart known to you and all the world but me, as 'Jim Wainright's Kid.'"



AN ENGINEER'S CHRISTMAS STORY

In the summer, fall, and early winter of 1863, I was tossing chips into an old Hinkley insider up in New England, for an engineer by the name of James Dillon. Dillon was considered as good a man as there was on the road: careful, yet fearless, kindhearted, yet impulsive, a man whose friends would fight for him and whose enemies hated him right royally.

Dillon took a great notion to me, and I loved him as a father; the fact of the matter is, he was more of a father to me than I had at home, for my father refused to be comforted when I took to railroading, and I could not see him more than two or three times a year at the most—so when I wanted advice I went to Jim.

I was a young fellow then, and being without a home at either end of the run, was likely to drop into pitfalls. Dillon saw this long before I did. Before I had been with him three months, he told me one day, coming in, that it was against his principles to teach locomotive-running to a young man who was likely to turn out a drunkard or gambler and disgrace the profession, and he added that I had better pack up my duds and come up to his house and let "mother" take care of me—and I went.

I was not a guest there: I paid my room-rent and board just as I should have done anywhere else, but I had all the comforts of a home, and enjoyed a thousand advantages that money could not buy. I told Mrs. Dillon all my troubles, and found kindly sympathy and advice; she encouraged me in all my ambitions, mended my shirts, and went with me when I bought my clothes. Inside of a month, I felt like one of the family, called Mrs. Dillon "mother," and blessed my lucky stars that I had found them.

Dillon had run a good many years, and was heartily tired of it, and he seldom passed a nice farm that he did not call my attention to it, saying: "Jack, now there's comfort; you just wait a couple of years—I've got my eye on the slickest little place, just on the edge of M——, that I am saving up my pile to buy. I'll give you the 'Roger William' one of these days, Jack, say good evening to grief, and me and mother will take comfort. Think of sleeping till eight o'clock,—and no poor steamers, Jack, no poor steamers!" And he would reach over, and give my head a gentle duck as I tried to pitch a curve to a front corner with a knot: those Hinkleys were powerful on cold water.

In Dillon's household there was a "system" of financial management. He always gave his wife just half of what he earned; kept ten dollars for his own expenses during the month, out of which he clothed himself; and put the remainder in the bank. It was before the days of high wages, however, and even with this frugal management, the bank account did not grow rapidly. They owned the house in which they lived, and out of her half "mother" had to pay all the household expenses and taxes, clothe herself and two children, and send the children to school. The oldest, a girl of some sixteen years, was away at normal school, and the boy, about thirteen or fourteen, was at home, going to the public school and wearing out more clothes than all the rest of the family.

Dillon told me that they had agreed on the financial plan followed in the family before their marriage, and he used to say that for the life of him he did not see how "mother" got along so well on the allowance. When he drew a small month's pay he would say to me, as we walked home: "No cream in the coffee this month, Jack." If it was unusually large, he would say: "Plum duff and

fried chicken for a Sunday dinner." He insisted that he could detect the rate of his pay in the food, but this was not true—it was his kind of fun. "Mother" and I were fast friends. She became my banker, and when I wanted an extra dollar, I had to ask her for it and tell what I wanted it for, and all that.

Along late in November, Jim had to make an extra one night on another engine, which left me at home alone with "mother" and the boy—I had never seen the girl—and after swearing me to be both deaf, dumb, and blind, "mother" told me a secret. For ten years she had been saving money out of her allowance, until the amount now reached nearly \$2,000. She knew of Jim's life ambition to own a farm, and she had the matter in hand, if I would help her. Of course I was head over heels into the scheme at once. She wanted to buy the farm near M——, and give Jim the deed for a Christmas present; and Jim mustn't even suspect.

Jim never did.

The next trip I had to buy some underclothes: would "mother" tell me how to pick out pure wool? Why, bless your heart, no, she wouldn't, but she'd just put on her things and go down with me. Jim smoked and read at home.

We went straight to the bank where Jim kept his money, asked for the President, and let him into the whole plan. Would he take \$2,100 out of Jim's money, unbeknown to Jim, and pay the balance of the price of the farm over what "mother" had?

No, he would not; but he would advance the money for the purpose—have the deeds sent to him, and he would pay the price—that was fixed.

Then I hatched up an excuse and changed off with the fireman on the M—— branch, and spent the best part of two lay-overs fixing up things with the owner of the farm and arranging to hold back the recording of the deeds until after Christmas. Every evening there was some part of the project to be talked over, and "mother" and I held many whispered conversations. Once Jim, smiling, observed that, if I had any hair on my face, he would be jealous.

I remember that it was on the 14th day of December, 1863, that payday came. I banked my money with "mother," and Jim, as usual, counted out his half to that dear old financier.

"Uncle Sam'd better put that 'un in the hospital," observed Jim, as he came to a ragged ten-dollar bill. "Goddess of Liberty pretty near got her throat cut there; guess some reb has had hold of her," he continued, as he held up the bill. Then laying it down, he took out his pocket-book and cut off a little three-cornered strip of pink court-plaster, and made repairs on the bill.

"Mother" pocketed her money greedily, and before an hour I had that very bill in my pocket to pay the recording fees in the courthouse at M——.

The next day Jim wanted to use more money than he had in his pocket, and asked me to lend him a dollar. As I opened my wallet to oblige him, that patched bill showed up. Jim put his finger on it, and then turning me around towards him, he said: "How came you by that?"

I turned red—I know I did—but I said, cool enough, "'Mother' gave it to me in change."

"That's a lie," he said, and turned away.

The next day we were more than two-thirds of the way home before he spoke; then, as I

straightened up after a fire, he said: "John Alexander, when we get in, you go to Aleck (the foreman) and get changed to some other engine."

There was a queer look on his face; it was not anger, it was not sorrow—it was more like pain. I looked the man straight in the eye, and said: "All right, Jim; it shall be as you say—but, so help me God, I don't know what for. If you will tell me what I have done that is wrong, I will not make the same mistake with the next man I fire for."

He looked away from me, reached over and started the pump, and said: "Don't you know?"

"No, sir, I have not the slightest idea."

"Then you stay, and I'll change," said he, with a determined look, and leaned out of the window, and said no more all the way in.

I did not go home that day. I cleaned the "Roger William" from the top of that mountain of sheet-iron known as a wood-burner stack to the back casting on the tank, and tried to think what I had done wrong, or not done at all, to incur such displeasure from Dillon. He was in bed when I went to the house that evening, and I did not see him until breakfast. He was in his usual spirits there, but on the way to the station, and all day long, he did not speak to me. He noticed the extra cleaning, and carefully avoided tarnishing any of the cabfittings;—but that awful quiet! I could hardly bear it, and was half sick at the trouble, the cause of which I could not understand. I thought that, if the patched bill had anything to do with it, Christmas morning would clear it up.

Our return trip was the night express, leaving the terminus at 9:30. As usual, that night I got the engine out, oiled, switched out the cars, and took the train to the station, trimmed my signals and headlight, and was all ready for Jim to pull out. Nine o'clock came, and no Jim; at 9:10 I sent to his boarding-house. He had not been there. He did not come at leaving time—he did not come at all. At ten o'clock the conductor sent to the engine-house for another engineer, and at 10:45, instead of an engineer, a fireman came, with orders for John Alexander to run the "Roger William" until further orders,—I never fired a locomotive again.

I went over that road the saddest-hearted man that ever made a maiden trip. I hoped there would be some tidings of Jim at home—there were none. I can never forget the blow it was to "mother;" how she braced up on account of her children—but oh, that sad face! Christmas came, and with it the daughter, and then there were two instead of one: the boy was frantic the first day, and playing marbles the next.

Christmas day there came a letter. It was from Jim—brief and cold enough—but it was such a comfort to "mother." It was directed to Mary J. Dillon, and bore the New York post-mark. It read:

"Uncle Sam is in need of men, and those who lose with Venus may win with Mars. Enclosed papers you will know best what to do with. Be a mother to the children—you have *three* of them.

"JAMES DILLON."

He underscored the three—he was a mystery to me. Poor "mother!" She declared that no doubt "poor James's head was affected." The papers with the letter were a will, leaving her all, and a power of attorney, allowing her to dispose of or use the money in the bank. Not a line of endearment or love for that faithful heart that lived on love, asked only for love, and cared for little else.

That Christmas was a day of fasting and prayer for us. Many letters did we send, many advertisements were printed, but we never got a word from James Dillon, and Uncle Sam's army was too big to hunt in. We were a changed family: quieter and more tender of one another's feelings, but changed.

In the fall of '64 they changed the runs around, and I was booked to run in to M——. Ed, the boy, was firing for me. There was no reason why "mother" should stay in Boston, and we moved out to the little farm. That daughter, who was a second "mother" all over, used to come down to meet us at the station with the horse, and I talked "sweet" to her; yet at a certain point in the sweetness I became dumb.

Along in May, '65, "mother" got a package from Washington. It contained a tin-type of herself; a card with a hole in it (made evidently by having been forced over a button), on which was her name and the old address in town; then there was a ring and a saber, and on the blade of the saber was etched, "Presented to Lieutenant Jas. Dillon, for bravery on the field of battle." At the bottom of the parcel was a note in a strange hand, saying simply, "Found on the body of Lieutenant Dillon after the battle of Five Forks."

Poor "mother!" Her heart was wrung again, and again the scalding tears fell. She never told her suffering, and no one ever knew what she bore. Her face was a little sadder and sweeter, her hair a little whiter—that was all.

I am not a bit superstitious—don't believe in signs or presentiments or prenothings—but when I went to get my pay on the 14th day of December, 1866, it gave me a little start to find in it the bill bearing the chromo of the Goddess of Liberty with the little three-cornered piece of court-plaster that Dillon had put on her wind-pipe. I got rid of it at once, and said nothing to "mother" about it; but I kept thinking of it and seeing it all the next day and night.

On the night of the 16th, I was oiling around my Black Maria to take out a local leaving our western terminus just after dark, when a tall, slim old gentleman stepped up to me and asked if I was the engineer. I don't suppose I looked like the president: I confessed, and held up my torch, so I could see his face—a pretty tough-looking face. The white mustache was one of that military kind, reinforced with whiskers on the right and left flank of the mustache proper. He wore glasses, and one of the lights was ground glass. The right cheek-bone was crushed in, and a red scar extended across the eye and cheek; the scar looked blue around the red line because of the cold.

"I used to be an engineer before the war," said he. "Do you go to Boston!"

"No, to M——."

"M——! I thought that was on a branch."

"It is, but is now an important manufacturing point, with regular trains from there to each end of the main line."

"When can I get to Boston?"

"Not till Monday now; we run no through Sunday trains. You can go to M—— with me to-night, and catch a local to Boston in the morning."

He thought a minute, and then said, "Well, yes; guess I had better. How is it for a ride?"

"Good; just tell the conductor that I told you to get on."

"Thanks; that's clever. I used to know a soldier who used to run up in this country," said the stranger, musing. "Dillon; that's it, Dillon."

"I knew him well," said I. "I want to hear about him."

"Queer man," said he, and I noticed he was eying me pretty sharp.

"A good engineer."

"Perhaps," said he.



"I noticed his long, slim hand on the top of the reverse-lever."

I coaxed the old veteran to ride on the engine—the first coal-burner I had had. He seemed more than glad to comply. Ed was as black as a negro, and swearing about coal-burners in general and this one in particular, and made so much noise with his fire-irons after we started, that the old man came over and sat behind me, so as to be able to talk.

The first time I looked around after getting out of the yard, I noticed his long slim hand on the top of the reverse-lever. Did you ever notice how it seems to make an ex-engineer feel better and more satisfied to get his hand on the reverse-lever and feel the life-throbs of the great giant under him? Why, his hand goes there by instinct—just as an ambulance surgeon will feel for the heart of the boy with a broken leg.

I asked the stranger to "give her a whirl," and noticed with what eager joy he took hold of her. I also observed with surprise that he seemed to know all about "four-mile hill," where most new men got stuck. He caught me looking at his face, and touching the scar, remarked: "A little love pat, with the compliments of Wade Hampton's men." We talked on a good many subjects, and got pretty well acquainted before we were over the division, but at last we seemed talked out.

"Where does Dillon's folks live now?" asked the stranger, slowly, after a time.

"M——," said I.

He nearly jumped off the box. "M——? I thought it was Boston!"

"Moved to M——."

"What for?"

"Own a farm there."

"Oh, I see; married again?"

"No."

"No!"

"Widow thought too much of Jim for that."

"No!"

"Yes."

"Er—what became of the young man that they—er—adopted?"

"Lives with 'em yet."

"So!"

Just then we struck the suburbs of M——, and, as we passed the cemetery, I pointed to a high shaft, and said: "Dillon's monument."

"Why, how's that?"

"Killed at Five Forks. Widow put up monument."

He shaded his eyes with his hand, and peered through the moonlight for a minute.

"That's clever," was all he said.

I insisted that he go home with me. Ed took the Black Maria to the house, and we took the street cars for it to the end of the line, and then walked. As we cleaned our feet at the door, I said: "Let me see, I did not hear your name?"

"James," said he, "Mr. James."

I opened the sitting-room door, and ushered the stranger in.

"Well, boys," said "mother," slowly getting up from before the fire and hurriedly taking a few extra

stitches in her knitting before laying it down to look up at us, "you're early."

She looked up, not ten feet from the stranger, as he took off his slouched hat and brushed back the white hair. In another minute her arms were around his neck, and she was murmuring "James" in his ear, and I, like a dumb fool, wondered who told her his name.

Well, to make a long story short, it was James Dillon himself, and the daughter came in, and Ed came, and between the three they nearly smothered the old fellow.

You may think it funny he didn't know me, but don't forget that I had been running for three years—that takes the fresh off a fellow; then, when I had the typhoid, my hair laid off, and was never reinstated, and when I got well, the whiskers—that had always refused to grow—came on with a rush, and they were red. And again, I had tried to switch with an old hook-motion in the night and forgot to take out the starting-bar, and she threw it at me, knocking out some teeth; and taking it altogether, I was a changed man.

"Where's John?" he said finally.

"Here," said I.

"No!"

"Yes."

He took my hand, and said, "John, I left all that was dear to me once, because I was jealous of you. I never knew how you came to have that money or why, and don't want to. Forgive me."

"That is the first time I ever heard of that," said "mother."

"I had it to buy this farm for you—a Christmas present—if you had waited," said I.

"That is the first time I ever heard of that," said he.

"And you might have been shot," said "mother," getting up close.

"I tried my darndest to be. That's why I got promoted so fast."

"Oh, James!" and her arms were around his neck again.

"And I sent that saber home myself, never intending to come back."

"Oh, James, how could you!"

"Mother, how can you forgive me?"

"Mother," was still for a minute, looking at the fire in the grate. "James, it is late in life to apply such tests, but love is like gold; ours will be better now—the dross has been burned away in the fire. I did what I did for love of you, and you did what you did for love of me; let us all commence to live again in the old way," and those arms of hers could not keep away from his neck.

Ed went out with tears in his eyes, and I beckoned the daughter to follow me. We passed into the parlor, drew the curtain over the doorway—and there was nothing but that rag between us and heaven.

THE CLEAN MAN AND THE DIRTY ANGELS

When I first went firing, down in my native district, where Bean is King, there was a man on the road pulling a mixed train, by the name of Clark—'Lige Clark.

Being only a fireman, and a new one at that, I did not come very much in contact with Clark, or any of the other engineers, excepting my own—James Dillon.

'Lige Clark was a character on the road; everybody knew "old 'Lige;" he was liked and respected, but not loved; he was thought puritanical, or religious, or cranky, by some, yet no one hated him, or even had a strong dislike for him.

His honesty and straightforwardness were proverbial. He was always in charge of the funds of every order he belonged to, as well as of the Sunday-school and church.

He was truthful to a fault, but above all, just.

"Cause 'tain't right, that's why," was his way of refusing to do a thing, and his argument against others doing it.

After I got to running, I saw and knew more of 'Lige, and I think, perhaps, I was as much of a friend as he ever had. We never were chums. I never went to his house, and he never went to mine; we were simply roundhouse acquaintances; used to talk engine a little, but usually talked about children—'Lige had four, and always spoke about "doing the right thing by them."

'Lige had a very heavy full beard, that came clear up to his eyes, and a mass of wavy hair—all iron grey. His eyes were steel grey, and matched his hair, and he had a habit of looking straight at you when he spoke.

On his engine he invariably ran with his head out of the side window, rain or shine, and always bareheaded. When he stepped upon the footboard, he put his hat away with his clothes, and there it stayed. He was never known to wear a cap, excepting in the coldest weather.

Once in a while, when I was firing, I have seen him come in, in winter, with his beard white with frost and ice, and some smoke-shoveling wit dubbed him Santa Claus.

'Lige had a way of looking straight ahead and thinking of his work, and, after he got to running express, would go through a town, where other trains were sidetracked for him, looking at the track ahead, and at the trains, but never seeming to care that they were there, never nodding or waving a hand. Once in a while he would blink his eyes,—that was all. The wind tossed his mane and hair and made him look for all the world like a lion, who looks at, but appears to care nothing for the crowds around his den. Someone noticed the comparison, and dubbed him "The Lion," and the name clung to him. He was spoken of as "Old 'Lige, the Lion." Just why he was called old, I don't know—he was little more than forty then.

When the men on the road had any grievances, they always asked 'Lige to "go and see the old man." 'Lige always went to lodge and to meetings of the men, but was never known to speak. When the demands were drawn up and presented to him, he always got up and said: "Them air declarations

ain't right, an' I wouldn't ask any railroad to grant 'em;" or, "The declarations are right. Of course I'll be glad to take 'em."

When old 'Lige declined to bear a grievance it was modified or abandoned; and he never took a request to headquarters that was not granted—until the strike of '77.

When the war broke out, 'Lige was asked to go, and the railroad boys wanted him to be captain of a company of them; but he declined, saying that slavery was wrong and should be crushed, but that he had a sickly wife and four small children depending on his daily toil for bread, and it wouldn't be right to leave 'em unprovided for. They drafted him later, but he still said it "wa'n't right" for him to go, and paid for a substitute. But three months later his father-in-law died, up in the country somewhere, and left his wife some three thousand dollars, and 'Lige enlisted the next, day, saying "'Tain't right for any man to stay that can be spared; slavery ain't right; it must be stopped." He served as a private until it was stopped.

Shortly after the war 'Lige was pulling the superintendent over the road, when he struck a wagon, killing the driver, who was a farmer, and hurting his wife. The woman afterward sued the road, and 'Lige was called as a witness for the company. He surprised everybody by stating that the accident was caused by mismanagement of the road, and explained as follows: "I pull the regular Atlantic express, and should have been at the crossing where the accident occurred, an hour later than I was; but Mr. Doe, our superintendent, wanted to come over the road with his special car, and took my engine to pull him, leaving a freight engine to bring in the express. Mr. Doe could have rode on the regular train, or could have had his car put into the train, instead of putting the company to the expense of hauling a special, and kept the patrons of the road from slow and poor service. We ran faster than there was any use of, and Mr. Doe went home when he got in, showing that there was no urgent call for his presence at this end of the line. If there had been no extra train on the road this farmer wouldn't have been killed: 'twa'n't right."

The widow got pretty heavy damages, and the superintendent tried to discharge 'Lige. But 'Lige said "'twa'n't right," and the men on the road, the patrons and even the president agreed with him, so the irate super gave the job up for the time being.

A couple of weeks after this, I went to that super.'s office on some business, and had to wait in the outer pen until "His Grace" got through with someone else. The transom over the door to the "Holy of Holies" was open, and I heard the well-known voice of 'Lige "the Lion".

"Now, there's another matter, Mr. Doe, that perhaps you'll say is none of my business, but 'tain't right, and I'm going to speak about it. You're hanging around the yards and standing in the shadows of cars and buildings half the night, watching employees. You've discharged several yardmen, and I want to tell you that a lot of the roughest of them are laying for you. My advice to you is to go home from the office. They'll hurt you yet. 'Tain't right for one man to know that another is in danger without warning him, so I've done it; 'twouldn't be right for them to hurt you. You're not particularly hunting them but me, but you won't catch me."

Mr. Doe assured "the Lion" that he could take care of himself, and two nights later got sand-bagged, and had about half his ribs kicked loose, over back of the scale house.

When the trouble commenced in '77, old 'Lige refused to take up a request for increase of pay, to headquarters; said the road could afford to keep us just where we were, which was more than some roads were doing, and "'twa'n't right" to ask for more. Two months later they cut us ten per cent., and offered to pay half script. Old 'Lige said "'twa'n't right," and he'd strike afore he'd stand

it;—and, in the end, we all struck.

The fourth day after the strike commenced I met 'Lige, and he asked me where I was going to hunt work. I told him I was going back when we won. He laughed, and said there wa'n't much danger of any of us going back; we were beat; mail trains all running, etc. "'Tain't right, Brother John, to loaf longer'n you can help. I'm goin' out West to-morrer"—and he went.

Some weeks afterward Joe Johnson and I concluded that, contrary to all precedent, the road was going to run without us, and we also went West; but by that time the country was full of men just like us. When I did get a job, it was drying sand away out at the front on one of the new roads. The first engine that come up to the sand house had a familiar look, even with a boot-leg stack that was fearfully and wonderfully made. There was a shaggy head sticking out of the side window, and two cool grey eyes blinked at me, but didn't seem to see me; yet a cheery voice from under the beard said: "Hello, Brother John, you're late, but guess you'll catch on pretty quick. There's lots of 'em here that don't know nothin' about railroading, as far as I can see, and they're running engines, too. 'Tain't right."

The little town was booming, and 'Lige invested in lots, and became interested in many schemes to benefit the place and make money. He had been a widower for some years, and with one exception his children were doing for themselves, and that one was with his sister, and well cared for. 'Lige had considerable means, and he brought it all West. He personally laid the corner-stone of the courthouse, subscribed more than any other working man to the first church, and was treasurer of half the institutions in the village. He ought to have quit the road, but he wouldn't; but did compromise on taking an easy run on a branch.

'Lige was behind a benevolent scheme to build a hospital, to be under the auspices of the church society, and to it devoted not a little time and energy. When the constitution and by-laws were drawn up, the more liberal of the trustees struck a snag in old 'Lige. He was bound that the hospital should not harbor people under the influence of liquor, or fallen women. 'Lige was very bitter against prostitution. "It is the curse of civilization," he often said. "Prostitutes ruin ten men where whiskey ruins one. They stand in the path of every young man in the country, gilded tempters of virtue, honesty and manhood; 'tain't right that they should be allowed in the country." If you attributed their existence to man's passions, inhumanity or cruelty, or woman's weakness, he checked you at once.

"Every woman that becomes a crooked woman does so from choice; she needn't to if she didn't want to. The way to stop prostitution is for every honest man and woman to refuse to have anything to do with them in any way, or with those who do recognize them. 'Tain't right."

In this matter 'Lige Clark had no sympathy nor charity. "'Twa'n't right"—and that settled it as far as he was concerned.

The ladies of the church sided with old 'Lige in his stand on the hospital board, but the other two men wanted the doors of the institution to be opened to all in need of medical attention or care, regardless of who they were or what caused their ailment. 'Lige gave in on the whiskey, but stood out resolutely against the soiled doves, and so matters stood until midwinter.

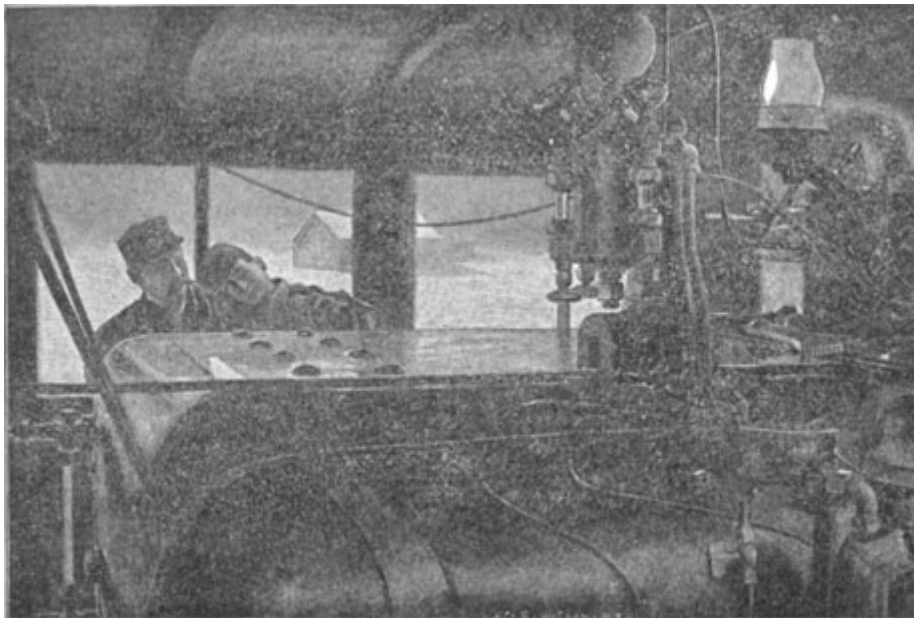
Half the women in the town were outcasts from society—two dance-houses were in full blast—and 'Lige soon became known to them and their friends as the "Prophet Elijah, second edition."

The mining town over the hills, at the end of 'Lige's branch, was booming, too, and wanted to be

the county seat. It had its church, dance-halls, etc., and the discovery of coal within a few miles bid fair to make it a formidable rival.

The boom called for more power and I went over there to pull freight, and 'Lige pulled passengers only. Then they put more coaches on his train and put my engine on to help him, thus saving a crew's wages. Passenger service increased steadily until a big snow-slide in one of the gulches shut up the road. I'll never forget that slide. It happened on the 26th of January. 'Lige and I were double-heading on nine coaches of passengers and when on a heavy grade in Alder Gulch, a slide of snow started from far up the mountain-side, swept over the track just ahead of us, carrying trees, telegraph poles and the track with it. We tried to stop, but 'Lige's engine got into it, and was carried sideways down some fifty or sixty feet. Mine contented herself with simply turning over, without hurting either myself or fireman—much to my satisfaction.

'Lige fared worse. His reverse lever caught in his clothing and before he could get loose, the engine had stopped on her side, with 'Lige's feet and legs under her. He was not badly hurt except for the scalding water that poured upon him. As soon as we could see him, the fireman and I got hold of him and forcibly pulled him out of the wreck. His limbs were awfully burned—cooked would be nearer the word.



"It was a strange courting ... there on that engine."

The passengers crowded around, but did little good. One look was enough for most of them. There were ten or twelve women in the cars. They came out slowly, and stood timidly away from the hissing boilers, with one exception. This one came at once to the injured man, sat down in the snow, took his head in her lap, and taking a flask of liquor from her ulster pocket, gave poor 'Lige some with a little snow.

I got the oil can and poured some oil over the burned parts to keep the air from them; we needed bandages, and I asked the ladies if they had anything we could use for the purpose. One young girl offered a handkerchief and another a shawl, but before they were accepted the cool woman holding 'Lige's head got up quickly, laying his head down tenderly on the snow, and without a word or attempt to get out of sight, pulled up her dress, and in a second kicked out two white skirts, and sat down again to cool 'Lige's brow.

That woman attended 'Lige like a guardian angel until we got back to town late that afternoon. The

hospital was not yet in shape, so 'Lige was taken to the rather dreary and homeless quarters of the hotel.

As quick as it was known that Elijah Clark was hurt, he had plenty of friends, male and female, who came to take care of him, but the woman who helped him live at the start came not; yet every day there were dainty viands, wine or books left at the house for him—but pains were taken to let no one know from whom they came.

One day a month after the accident I sat beside 'Lige's bed when he told me that he was anticipating quite a discussion there that evening, as the hospital committee was going to meet to decide on the rules of the institution. "Wilcox and Gorman are set to open the house to those who have no part in our work and no sympathy with Christian institutions, and 'tain't right," said he. "Brother John, you can't do no good by prolonging the life of a brazen woman bent on vice."

"Don't you think, 'Lige," said I, "that you are a little hard on an unfortunate class of humanity, who, in nine cases out of ten, are the victims of others' wrong-doing, and stay in the mire because no hand is extended to help them out? Think of the woman of Samaria. It's sinners, not saints, that need saving."

"They are as a coiled serpent in the pathway of mankind, Brother John, fascinating, but poisonous. There can be no good in one of those creatures."

"Oh yes there is, I'm sure," said I. "Why, 'Lige, don't you know who the woman was that gave you brandy, held your head, and used her skirts for bandages when you were hurt?"

Old 'Lige raised up on his elbow, all eagerness. "No, John, I don't, but she wa'n't one of them. She was too thoughtful, too tender, too womanly. I've blessed her from that day to this, and though I don't know it, I think she has sent me all these wines and fruits. She saved my life. Who is she? Do you know?"

"Yes. She is Molly May, who keeps the largest dance-house in Cascade City. She makes lots of money, but spends it all in charity; there has never been a human being buried by the town since she has been there. Molly May is a ministering angel to the poor and sick, but a bird of prey to those who wish to dissipate."

The hospital was opened on Easter, and the first patient was a poor consumptive girl, but lately an inmate of the Red-Light dance-house. 'Lige Clark did not run again; he became mayor of the little city, had faith in its future, invested his money in land and died rich some years ago.

'Lige must have changed his mind as he grew older, or at least abandoned the idea that to crush out a wrong you should push it from all sides, and thus compress and intensify it at the heart, and come to the conclusion that the right way is to get inside and push out, thus separating and dissolving it. For before me lies the tenth annual prospectus of a now noted institution in one of the great cities of the continent, and on its title page, I read through the dimmed glasses of my spectacles: "Industrial Home and Refuge for Fallen Women. Founded by Elijah Clark. Mary E. May, Matron."

A PEG-LEGGED ROMANCE

Some men are born heroes, some become heroic, and some have heroism thrust upon them; but nothing of the kind ever happened to me.

I don't know how it is; but, some way or other, I remember all the railroad incidents I see or hear, and get to the bottom of most of the stories of the road. I must study them over more than most men do, or else the other fellows enjoy the comedies and deplore the tragedies, and say nothing. Sometimes I am mean enough to think that the romance, the dramas, and the tragedies of the road don't impress them as being as interesting as those of the plains, the Indians, or the seas—people are so apt to see only the everyday side of life anyway, and to draw all their romance and heroics from books.

I helped make a hero once—no, I didn't either; I helped make the golden setting after the rough diamond had shown its value.

Miles Diston pulled freight on our road a few years ago. He was of medium stature, dark complexion, but no beauty. He was a manly-looking fellow, well-educated enough, sober, and a steady-going, reliable engineer; you would never pick him out for a hero. Miles was young yet—not thirty—but, somehow or other, he had escaped matrimony: I guess he had never had time. He stayed on the farm at home until he was of age, and then went firing, so that when I first knew him he had barely got to his goal—the throttle.

A good many men, when they first get there, take great interest in their work for a few months—until experience gives them confidence; then they take it easier, look around, and take some interest in other things. Most of them never hope to get above running, and so sit down more or less contented, get married, buy real estate, gamble, or grow fat, each according to the dictates of his own conscience or the inclinations of his make-up. Miles figured a little on matrimony.

I can't explain it; but when a railroad man is in trouble, he comes to me for advice, just as he would go to the company doctor for kidney complaint. I am a specialist in heart troubles. Miles came to me.

Miles was like the rest of them. They don't come right down and say, "Something's the matter with me; what would you do for it?" No, sir! They hem and haw, and laugh off the symptoms, until you come right out and tell them just how they feel and explain the cause; then they will do anything you say. Miles hemmed and hawed a little, but soon came out and showed his symptoms—he asked me if I had ever noticed the "Frenchman's" girl.

"The Frenchman," be it known, was our boss bridge carpenter. He lived at a small place half-way over my division—I was pulling express—and the freights stopped there, changing engines. I knew Venot, the bridge carpenter, very well; met him in lodge occasionally, and once in a while he rode on the engine with me to inspect bridges. His wife was a Canadian woman, and good-looking for her forty years and ten children. The daughter that was killing Miles Diston, Marie Venot, was the eldest, and had just graduated from some sisters' school. She was a very handsome girl, and you could read the romantic nature of her being through her big, round, gray eyes. She was vivacious, and loved to go; but she was a dutiful daughter, and at once took hold to help her mother in a way

that made her all the more adorable in the eyes of practical men like Miles.

Miles made the most of his opportunities.

But, bless you, there were other eyes for good-looking girls besides those in poor Miles Diston's head, and he was far from having the field to himself; this he wanted badly, and came to get advice from me.

I advised strongly against wasting energy to clear the field, and in favor of putting it all into making the best show and in getting ahead of all competitors. Under my advice, Miles disposed of some vacant lots, and bought a neat little house, put it in thorough order, and made the best of his opportunities with Marie.

Marie came to our house regularly, and I had good opportunity to study her. She was a sensible little creature, and, to my mind, just the girl for Miles; as Miles was just the man for her. But she had confided to my wife the fact that she never, never could consent to marry and settle down in the regulation, humdrum way; she wanted to marry a hero, some one she could look up to—a king among men.

My wife told her that kings and heroes were scarce just then, and that a lot of pretty good women managed to be comparatively happy with common railroad men. But Marie wanted a hero, and would hear of nothing less.

It was during one of her visits to my house that Miles took Marie out for a ride and (accidentally, of course) dropped around by his new house, induced her to look at it, and told his story, asking her to make the home complete. It would have caught almost any girl; but when Miles delivered her at our door and drove off, I knew that there would be a "For Rent" card on that house in a few days and that Marie Venot was bound to have a hero or nothing.

Miles took his repulse calmly, but it hurt. He told me that Marie was hunting for a different kind of man from him; said that he thought perhaps if he would enlist, and go out to fight Sitting Bull, and come home in a new, brass-bound uniform, with a poisoned arrow sticking out of his breast, she would fall at his feet and worship him. She told him she liked him better than any of the town boys; his calling was noble enough and hard enough; but she failed to see her ideal hero in a man with blue overclothes on and cinders in his ears. If any of Miles's competitors had rescued a drowning child, or killed a bear with a penknife, at this juncture, I'm afraid Marie would have taken him. But, as I have indicated, it was a dull season for heroes.

About this time our road invested in some mogul passenger engines, and I drew one. I didn't like the boiler sticking back between me and Dennis Rafferty. I didn't like six wheels connected. I didn't like a knuckle-joint in the side rod. I didn't like eighteen-inch cylinders. I was opposed to solid-end rods. And I am afraid I belonged to a class of ignorant, short-sighted, bull-headed engineers who didn't believe that a railroad had any right to buy anything but fifteen by twenty-two eight-wheelers—the smaller they were the more men they would want. I got over that a long time ago; but, at the time I write of, I was cranky about it. The moguls were high and short and jerky, and they tossed a man around like a rat in a corn-popper. One day, as I was chasing time over our worst division, holding on to the arm-rest and watching to see if the main frame touched the driving-boxes as she rolled, Dennis Rafferty punched me in the small of the back, and said: "Jahn, for the love ave the Vargin, lave up on her a minit. Oi does be chasing that dure for the lasth twinty minits, and dang the wan'st has I hit it fair. She's the divil on th' dodge."

Dennis had a pile of coal just inside and just outside of the door, the forward grates were bare, the steam was down, and I went in seven minutes late, too mad to eat—and that's pretty mad for me. I laid off, and Miles Diston took the high-roller out next trip.

Miles didn't rant and write letters or poetry, or marry some one else to spite himself, or take the first steamer for Burrage, or Equatorial Africa, as rejected lovers in stories do. It hurt, and he didn't enjoy it, but he bore up all right, and went about his business, just as hundreds of other sensible men do every day. He gave up entirely, however, rented his house, and said he couldn't fill the bill—there wasn't a hero in his family as far back as he could remember.

Miles had been making time with the Black Maria for about a week, when the big accident happened in our town. The boilers in a cotton mill blew up, and killed a score of girls and injured hundreds more. Miles was at the other end of the division, and they hurried him out to take a car-load of doctors down. They were given the right of the road, and Miles tested the speed of that mogul—proving that a pony truck would stay on the track at fifty miles an hour, which a lot of us "cranks" had disputed.

A few miles out there is a coaling-station, and at that time they were building the chutes. One of the iron drop-aprons fell just before Miles with the mogul got to it; it smashed the headlight, dented the stack, ripped up the casing of the sand-box and dome, cut a slit in the jacket the length of the boiler, tore off the cab, struck the end of the first car, and then tore itself loose, and fell to the ground.

The throttle was knocked wide open, and the mogul was flying. Miles was thrown down, his head cut open by a splinter, and his foot pretty badly hurt. He picked himself up instantly, and took a look back as he closed the throttle. Everything was "coming" all right, he remembered the emergency of the case, and opened the throttle again. A hasty inspection showed the engine in condition to run—she only looked crippled. Miles had to stand up. His foot felt numb and weak, so he rested his weight on the other foot. He was afraid he would fall off if he became faint, and he had Dennis take off the bell-cord and tie it around his waist, throwing a loop over the reverse lever, as a measure of safety. The right side of the cab and all the roof were gone, so that Miles was in plain sight. The cut in his scalp bled profusely, and in trying to wipe the blood from his eyes, he merely spread it all over himself, so that he looked as if he had been half murdered.

It was this apparition of wreck, ruin, and concentrated energy that Marie Venot saw flash past her father's door, hastening to the relief of the victims of a worse disaster, forty miles away.

Her father came home for his dinner in a few minutes from his little office in the depot. To his daughter's eager inquiry he said there had been some big accident in town and the "extra" was carrying doctors from up the road. But what was the matter with the engine, he didn't know; it was the 170; so it was old man Alexander, he said—and that's the nearest I ever came to being a hero.

Marie knew who was running the 170 pretty well; so after dinner she went to the telegraph office for information, and there she learned that the special had struck the new coal chute at Coalton and that the engineer was hurt. It was time she ran down to see Mrs. Alexander, she said, and that afternoon's regular delivered her in town.

Like all other railroaders not better employed, I dropped round to the depot at train time to talk with the boys and keep track of things in general. The regular was late, but Miles Diston was coming with a special, and came while we were talking about it. Miles didn't realize how badly he was hurt until he stopped the mogul in front of the general office. So long as the excitement of the run was on, so long as he saw the absolute necessity of doing his whole duty until the desired end

was accomplished, so long as he had a reputation to protect, his will power subordinated all else. But when several of us engineers ran up to the engine, we found Miles hanging to the reverse lever by his safety cord, in a dead faint. We carried him into the depot, and one of the doctors administered some restorative. Then we got a hack and started him and the doctor for my house; but Miles came to himself, and insisted on going to his boarding-house and nowhere else.

Mrs. Bailey, Miles's boarding-house keeper, had been a trained nurse, but had a few years before invested in a rather disappointing matrimonial venture. She was one of the best nurses and one of the "crankiest" women I ever knew. I believe she was actually glad to see Miles come home hurt, just to show how she could pull him through.

The doctor found that Miles had an ankle out of joint; the little toe was badly crushed; there was a bad cut in the leg, that had bled profusely; there was a black bruise over the short ribs on the right side, and there was a button-hole in the scalp that needed about four stitches. The little toe was cut off without ceremony, the ankle replaced and hot bandages applied, and other repairs were made, which took up most of the afternoon.

When the doctor got through, he called Mrs. Bailey and myself out into the parlor, and said that we must not let people crowd in to see the patient; that his wounds were not dangerous, but very painful; that Miles was weak from loss of blood, and that his constitution was not in particularly good condition. The doctor, in fact, thought that Miles would be in great luck if he got out of the scrape without a run of fever. Thereafter Mrs. Bailey referred all visitors to me. I talked with the doctor and the nurse, and we all agreed that it would stop most inquisitive people to simply say that the patient had suffered an amputation.

That evening, when I went home, there were two anxious women-to receive me, and the younger of them looked suspiciously as if she had been crying. I told them something of the accident, how it all happened, and about Miles's injuries. Both of them wanted to go right down and help "do something," but I told them of the doctor's order and of his fears.

By this time the reporters came; and I called them into the parlor, and then let them pump me. I detailed the accident in full, but declined to tell anything about Miles or his history. "The fact is," said I, "that you people won't give an engineer his just dues. Now, if Miles Diston had been a fireman and had climbed down a ladder with a child, you would have his picture in the paper and call him a hero and all that sort of thing; but here is a man crushed, bleeding, with broken bones, and a crippled engine, who stands on one foot, lashed to his reverse lever, for eighty miles, and making the fastest time ever made over the road, because he knew that others were suffering for the relief he brought."

"That's nerve," said one of the young men.

"Nerve!" said I, "nerve! Why, that man knows no more about fear than a lion; and think of the sand of the man! This afternoon he sat up and watched the doctor perform that amputation without a quiver; he wouldn't take chloroform; he wouldn't even lie down."



"We carried him into the depot."

"Was the amputation above or below the knee?" asked the reporter.

"Below" (I didn't state how far).

"Which foot?"

"Left."

"He is in no great danger?"

"Yes, the doctor says he will be a very sick man for some time—if he recovers at all. Boys," I added, "there's one thing you might mention—and I think you ought to—and that is that it is such heroes as this that give a road its reputation; people feel as though they were safe behind such men."

If Miles Diston had read the papers the next morning he would have died of flattery; the reporters did themselves proud, and they made a whole column of the "iron will and nerves of steel" shown in that "amputation without ether."

Marie Venot was full of sympathy for Miles; she wanted to see him, but Mrs. Bailey referred her to me, and she finally went home, still inquiring every day about him. I don't think she had much other feeling for him than pity. She was down again a week later, and I talked freely of going to pick out a wooden foot for Miles, who was improving right along.

Meanwhile, the papers far and near copied the articles about the "Hero of the Throttle," and the item about the road's interest in heroes attracted the attention of our general passenger agent—he liked the free advertising and wanted more of it—so he called me in one day, and asked if I knew of a choice run they could give Miles as a reward of merit.

I told him, if he wanted to make a show of gratitude from the road, and get a big free advertisement in the papers, to have Miles appointed superintendent of the Spring Creek branch, where a practical man was needed, and then give it out "cold" that Miles had been rewarded by being made superintendent of the road. This was afterwards done, with a great hurrah (in the papers).

The second Sunday after Miles was hurt, Marie was down, and I thought I'd have a little fun with her, and see how she regarded Miles.

"There's quite a romance connected with Diston's affair," said I at the dinner table, rather carelessly. "There is a young lady visiting here in town—I hear she is very wealthy—who saw Miles when we took him off his engine. She sends flowers every day, calls him her hero, and is just crazy for him to get well so she can see him."

"Who is she, did you say?" asked my wife.

"I forgot her name," said I, "but I am here to tell you that she will get Miles if there is any chance in the world. Her father is an army officer, but she says that Miles Diston is a greater hero than the army ever produced."

"She's a hussy," said Marie.

I don't know whether you would call that a bull or a bear movement on the Diston stock, but it went up—I could see that.

A week later Miles was able to come down to our house for dinner, and my wife asked Marie to come also. I met her at the depot, and after she was safe in the buggy, I told her that Miles was up at the house. She nearly jumped out; but I quieted her, and told her she mustn't notice or say a word about Miles's game leg, as he was extremely sensitive about it.

My wife was in the kitchen, and I went to the barn to put out the horse. Marie went to the sitting-room to avoid the parlor and Miles, but he was there, I guess, and Marie found her hero, for when they came out to dinner he had his arm around her. They were married a month later, and went to Washington, stopping to see us on the way back.

As I came home that night with my patent dinner pail, and with two rows of wrinkles and a load of responsibility on my brow, Marie shook her fist in my face and called me "an old story-teller."

"Story-teller," said I; "what story?"

"Oh, what story? That *leg* story, of course, you old cheat."

"What leg story?"

"Old innocence; that amputation below the knee—you know."

"Wa'n't it below the knee?"

"Yes, but it was only the little toe."

"John," said Miles, "she cried when she looked for that wooden foot and only found a slightly flat wheel."

"That's just like 'em," said I. "Here Marie only expected a part of a hero, and we give her a whole man, and she kicks—that's gratitude for you."

"I got my hero all right, though," said Marie; "you told me a big fib just the same, but I could kiss you for it."

"Don't you do that," said I; "but if the Lord should send you many blessings, and any of 'em are

boys, you might name one after me."

She said she'd do it—and she did.



MY LADY OF THE EYES

One morning, some years ago, I struck the general master mechanic of a Rocky Mountain road for a job as an engineer—I needed a job pretty badly.

As quick as the M. M. found that I could handle air on two hundred foot grades, he was as tickled as I was; engineers were not plenty in the country then, so many deserted to go to the mines.

"The 'III' will be out in a couple of days, and you can have her regular, unless Hopkins comes back," said he.

I hustled around for a room and made my peace with the boarding-house people before I reported to break in the big consolidation that was to fall to my care.

She was big and black and ugly and new, and her fresh fire made the asphalt paint on her fire-box and front-end stink in that peculiar and familiar way given to recently rebuilt engines; but it smelt better to me than all the perfumes of Arabia.

A good-natured engineer came out on the ash-pit track to welcome me to the West and the road, and incidentally to remark that it was a great relief to the gang that I had come as I did.

"Why," I asked, "are you so short-handed that you are doubling and trebling?" "No, but they are afraid that some of 'em will have to take out the 'III'—she is a holy terror."

Hadn't she been burned the first trip? Didn't she kill Jim O'Neil with the reverse lever? Hadn't she lain down on the bed of the Arkansas river and wallowed on "Scar Face" Hopkins, and he not up yet? Hadn't she run away time and again without cause or provocation?

But a fellow that has needed a job for six months will tackle almost anything, and I tackled the "holy terror."

In fixing up the cab, I noticed an extra bracket beside the steam gage for a clock, and mentally noted that it would come in handy just as soon as I had a twenty dollar bill to spare for one of those jeweled, nickle-plated, side-winding clocks, that are the pride and comfort of those particular engineers who want nice things, with their names engraved on the case.

Before I had got everything ready to take the "three aces" over the turn-table for her breaking-in trip, the foreman of the back-shop came out with a package done up in a pair of old overalls, and said that here was Hopkins's clock, which I might as well use until he got around again—'fraid someone would steal it if left in his office.

Hopkins's clock was put on its old bracket.

Hopkins must have been one of those particular engineers; his clock was a fine one; "S. H. Hopkins" was engraved on the case in German text. The lower half of the dial was black with white figures, the upper half white with black figures. But what struck me was part of a woman's face burned into the enamel. Just half of this face showed, that on the white part of the dial; the black half hid the rest.

It was the face, or part of the face, of a handsome young woman with hair parted in the middle and waved back over the ears, a broad forehead, and such glorious eyes—eyes that looked straight into yours from every view point—honest eyes—reproving eyes—laughing eyes—loving eyes. I mentally named the picture "Her Eyes."

Now, I was not and am not sentimental or superstitious. I'd been married and helped wean a baby or two even then, but those eyes bothered me. They hunted mine and looked at me and asked me questions and made me forget things, and made me think and dream and speculate; all of which are sheer suicide for a locomotive engineer.

I got a switchman and started out to limber up the "III." I asked him to let me out on the main line, took a five-mile spin, and sidetracked for a freight train. While the man was unlocking the switch, I looked into the eyes and wondered what their owner was, or could be, or had been, to "Scar Faced" Hopkins, and—ran off the switch. Then I wondered if Hopkins was looking into those eyes when he and the "III" went into the Arkansas river that dark night.

A few days after this the "III," Dennis Rafferty and I went into the regular freight service of the road.

On the first trip, when half way up Greenhall grade, I glanced at the clock and was startled. The "Eyes" were looking at me; there was a scared, pained look, a you-must-do-something look in the eyes, or it seemed to me there was.

"Damn that clock," said I to myself, "I'm getting superstitious or have softening of the brain," and I reached over to open the front door, so that the breeze could cool me off. In doing so my hand touched the water pipe to the injector—it was hot. The closed overflow injector was new to merit had "broke," and was blowing steam back to the tank that I thought was putting water into the boiler. I put it to work properly and "felt of the water:" there was just a flutter in the lower gage cock; in five minutes the crown sheet and my reputation would have been burned beyond recognition. Those eyes were good for something after all.

I looked at them and they were calm. "It's all right now, but be careful," they said.

Dennis Rafferty had troubles of his own. The liner came off the new fire door letting the door get red hot, but it wasn't half as hot as Dennis. He hammered it with the coal pick and burned his hands and swore, and Dennis was an artist in profanity. He stepped up into the cab wiping his face on his sleeve, and ripping the English and profane languages into tatters; but he stopped short in the middle of an oath and looked ashamed, glanced at me, crossed himself and went back to his work quietly. When he came back into the cab, I asked him what choked him so sudden.

"Her," said he, nodding his head toward the clock. "Howly Mither, man, she looked hurted and sorry-like, same's me owld mither uster, whin I was noctious with the blasthfemry." So the "Eyes" were on Dennis, too. That took some of the conceit out of me, I was getting foolish about the eyes.

We had a time order against a passenger train, it would be sharp work to make the next station, the train was heavy, the road and the engine new to me, and I hesitated. The conductor was dubious but said the "204" or Frosty Keeler could do it any day of the week. I looked at my watch and then at the clock. The eyes looked "Yes, go, you can do it easily; the 'III' will do all you ask; trust her." I went, and as we pulled our caboose in to clear and before the express whistled for the junction, the eyes looked "Didn't I tell you; wasn't that splendid." Those eyes had been over the road more than I had, and knew the "III" better. I would trust the eyes.

On the return trip, a night run, I had a big train and a bad rail, but the "III" did splendid work and made her time while "Her Eyes" approved every move I made, smiled at me and admired my handling of the engine. The conductor unbent enough to send over word that it was the best run he'd ever had from a new man, but the "Eyes" looked, "That's nothing, you can do it every time, I know you can."

Half over the division, we took a siding for the "Cannon Ball." We cleared her ten minutes and I had time to oil around while Dennis cleaned his fire. I climbed up into the cab, wiping the long oiler and glanced at the clock. The "Eyes" were looking wild alarm—"do something quick." The "Eyes" had the look, or seemed to me to have the look, you might expect in those of a bound woman who sees a child at the stake just before the fire is lighted—immeasurable pain, pity, appeal. I tried the water, unconsciously; it was all right. I stepped into the gangway and glanced back. Our tail-lights were "in" and the white light of the switch flashed safely there, and we had backed in any way. I glanced ahead. The switch light was white, the target showed main line plainly, for my headlight shone on it full and clear. What could be the matter with "Her Eyes."

As I turned to enter the cab the roar of the coming express came down the wind on the frosty air and my eyes fell on the rail ahead. My God, they were full to the siding! It was a stub-rail switch, and the stand had moved the target and the light, but not the rails—the bridle-rod was broken.

I yelled like a mad man, but the brakeman had gone to the caboose for his lunch pail. I ran to the switch. It was useless. I fought it an instant and then turned to the rails. Putting my foot against the main line rail, I grasped the switch rail and throwing all my strength into the effort, jerked it-over to the main line, but would it stay until the train passed over? I felt sure it would not. I looked about for something to hold it. Part of a broken pin was the only thing in sight. The headlight of the express shone in my face, and something seemed to say, "This is your trial, do something quick." I threw myself prone on the ground, my head near the rails, and held the broken pin between the end of the siding rail and the main line. The switch rails could not be forced over without shearing off the pin. The corner of the pilot of the flying demon caught my right sleeve and tore it off, and the cloth threw the cylinder cocks open with a hiss, the wind and dust blinded and shook me, and the rails hammered and bruised and pinched my hand, but I held on. Twenty seconds later I sat watching the red lights of the tenth sleeper whip themselves out of sight. Then I went back to the cab, and "Her Eyes" glorified me. "God bless your dear eyes," said I, "where would we have all been now but for you?"

But the "Eyes" deprecated my remarks, and looked me upon a pedestal, but the company doctor dressed my hand the next day, and the superintendent gave the whole crew ten days for backing into that siding.

Another round trip, and I fear I watched "Her Eyes" more than the signals and the track ahead. "Her Eyes" decided for me, chose for me, approved and disapproved. I was running by "Her Eyes."

In a telegraph office they asked me if I could do something in a certain time and I was dazed. I didn't give my usual quick decision, my judgment was wobbly and uncertain. I must look at my clock—and "Her Eyes." I went out to the "III" to consult them, lost my chance and was "put in the hole" all over the division by the disgusted dispatcher.

Then I got to thinking and moralizing and sitting in judgment on my thralldom. Was I running the "III" or was "Her Eyes?" Did the company pay me for my knowledge, judgment, experience and

skill in handling a locomotive, or for obeying orders from "Her Eyes." Any fool could obey orders.

Then I declared for liberty, but I kept away from "Her Eyes." I declared for liberty in the roundhouse.

I am a man of decision, and no sooner had I taken this oath than I got a screw driver, climbed into the cab of the "III," without looking at "Her Eyes," held my hand over the face of the clock and took it down. I wrapped it up and took it back to the foreman.

"Why, yes," said he, "'Scar Face' was here for it this morning. He's round somewhere yet. Ain't goin' to railroad no more, goin' into the real estate business. He's got money, so's his wife—daffool he didn't quit long ago."

"If 'Scar Face' Hopkins puts that clock over his desk and trusts 'Her Eyes,' he'll get rich," thought I. Perhaps, though, those eyes don't reach the soul of "Scar Face" Hopkins; perhaps he don't see them change as I did; men are conceited that way.

During the next month I got acquainted with "Scar Face" Hopkins, who was a first-class fellow, with a hand-clasp like a polar bear, a heart like a steam pulsometer, and a face that looked as if it might have been used for the butting post at the end of the world.

"Scar Face" Hopkins got all his scars in the battle of life. Men who command locomotives on the firing line often get hurt, but Hopkins had votes of thanks from officials and testimonials from men, and life-saver's medals from two governments to show that his scars were the brands of honorable degrees conferred by the Almighty on the field for brave and heroic deeds well done.

"Scar Face" Hopkins was a fellow you'd like to get up close to of a night and talk with, and smoke with, and think with, until unlawful hours.

One day I went into his office and the clock was there, and his old torch and a nickle-plated oiler, mementoes of the field. I looked at the clock, and "Her Eyes" smiled at me, or I thought they did, and said, just as plain as words, "Glad to see you, dear friend; sit down." But I turned my back to that clock; I can resist temptation when I know where it is coming from.

One day, a few weeks later, I stopped before a store window in a crowd to examine some pictures, satisfied my curiosity, and in stepping back to go away, put the heel of my number ten on a lady's foot with that peculiar "craunch" that you know hurts. I turned to make an apology, and faced the original of the picture on the clock. A beautiful pair of eyes, the rest of the face was hidden by a peculiar arrangement of veil that crossed the bridge of the nose and went around the ears and neck.

Those eyes, full of pain at first, changed instantly to frank forgiveness, and, bowing low, I repeated my plea for pardon for my clumsy carelessness, but was absolved so absolutely and completely, and dismissed so naturally, that I felt relieved.

I sauntered up to Hopkins' office. "Hopkins," said I, "I just met your wife."

"You did?"

"Yes, and I stepped on her foot and hurt her badly, I know." Then I told him about it.

"What did she say?" asked Hopkins, and I noticed a queer look. I thought it might be jealousy.

"Why, well, why I don't know as I remember, but it was very kindly and ladylike."

There was a queer expression on Hopkins' face.

"Of course—"

"Sure she spoke?" asked Hopkins. "How did you know it was my wife anyway?"

"Because it was the same face that is pictured on your clock, and some one in the crowd said it was Mrs. Hopkins. You know Hop., I ran by that clock for a few weeks, and I noticed the eyes."

"Anything queer about 'em?" This was a challenge.

"Yes, I think there is. In the first place, I know you will understand me when I say they are handsome eyes, and I'm free to confess that they had a queer influence on me, I imagined they changed and expressed things and—"

"Talked, eh."

"Well, yes." Then I told Hopkins the influence the "Eyes" had on me.

He listened intently, watching me; when I had finished, he came over, reached out his hand and said:

"Shake, friend, you're a damned good fellow."

I thought Hopkins had been drinking—or looking at "Her Eyes." He pulled up a chair and lit a cigar.

"John," said he, "it isn't every man that can understand what my wife says. Only kindred spirits can read the language of the eyes. *She hasn't spoken an audible word in ten years*, but she talks with her eyes, even her picture talks. We, rather she, is a mystery here; people believe all kinds of things about her and us; but we don't care. I want you to come up to the house some evening and know her better. We'll be three chums, I know it, but don't ask questions; you will know things later on."

Before I ever went to Hopkins' house, he had told her all about me, and when he introduced us, he said:

"Madeline, this is the friend who says your picture talked to him."

I bowed low to the lady and tried to put myself and her at ease.

"Mrs. Hopkins, I'm afraid your husband is poking fun at me, and thinks my liver is out of order, but, really, I did imagine I saw changing expression in your eyes in that picture—in fact, I named you 'My Lady of the Eyes.'"

She laughed—with her eyes—held out her hands and made me welcome.

"That name is something like mine," said Hopkins, "I call her Talking Eyes."

Then Hopkins brought in his little three-year-old daughter, who immediately climbed on my knee, captured my watch, and asked:

"What oo name?"

"John," said I.

"Don, Don," she repeated; "my name Maddie."

"That's Daddy's chum," put in Hopkins.

"Tum," repeated Maddie.

"Uncle Chummy," said Hopkins.

"Untle Tummie."

And I was "Untle Tummie" to little Madeline and "Chummy" to Hopkins and his wife from then on.

Mrs. Hopkins wore her veil at home as well as abroad, but it was so neatly arranged and worn so naturally that I soon became entirely used to it, in fact, didn't notice it. Otherwise, she was a well-dressed, handsomely set up woman, a splendid musician and a capital companion. She sat at her work listening, while Hopkins and I "railroaded" and argued about politics, and religion and everything else under the sun. Mrs. Hopkins took sides freely; a glance at her eyes told where she stood on any question.

Between "Scar Face" Hopkins and his handsome wife there appeared to be perfect sympathy and confidence. Sitting in silence, they glanced from one to the other now and again, smiled, nodded—and understood.

I was barred from the house for a month during the winter because little Madeline had the scarlet fever, then epidemic, but it was reported a light case and I contented myself with sending her toys and candy.

One day I dropped into Hopkins' office to make inquiry, when a clerk told me Hopkins had not been to the office for several days. Mrs. Hopkins was sick. I made another round trip and inquired again, and got the same answer; then I went up to the house.

The officious quarantine guard was still walking up and down in front of the Hopkins residence. To a single inquiry, this voluble functionary volunteered the information that the baby was all right now, but the lady herself was very sick with scarlet fever. Hopkins was most crazy, no trained nurses could be had for love nor money, the doctor was coming three times a day, and did I know that Mrs. Hopkins was some kind of a foreign Dago, and the whole outfit "queer?"

Hopkins was in trouble; I pushed open the gate and started up the walk.

"Hey, young feller, where yer goin'," demanded the guard.

"Into the house, of course."

"D'ye know if you go in ye got to stay for the next two weeks?"

"Perfectly."

"Then go on, you darned fool."

And I went on.

Hopkins met me, hollow-eyed and haggard.

"Chum," said he, "you've come to prison, but I'm glad. Help is out of reach. If you can take care of Maddie, the girl will do the cooking and I will—I will do my duty."

And night and day he did do his duty, being alone with his wife except for the few moments of the doctor's calls.

One evening, after my little charge had been put to sleep downstairs by complying with her invariable order to "tell me a 'tory 'bout when oo was a 'ittle teenty weenty boy," the doctor came down with a grave face.

"Our patient has reached the worst stage—delirium. The turn will come to-night. Poor Hopkins is about worn out, and I'm afraid may need you. Please don't go to bed; be 'on call.'"

One hour, two hours, I sat there without hearing a sound from upstairs. I was drowsy and remembering that I had missed my evening smoke I lighted my pipe, silently opened the front door and stepped out upon the porch to get a whiff of fresh air. It was a still dark night, and I tiptoed down to the end that overlooked the city and stood looking at the lights and listening to the music of the switch engines in the yards below the hill. The porch was in darkness except the broad beam of light from the hall gas jet through the open door.

The lights below made me think of home and my wife and little ones sleeping safely, I hoped, close to the coastwise lights of the Old Colony.

I thought I heard a stealthy footfall behind me, and turned around to face an apparition that made the cold chill creep up my back. If ever there was a ghost, this must be one, an object in white not six feet from me.

I'm not at all afraid of ghosts when I reach my second wind, and I grabbed at this one. It moved backward silently and as I made a quick step toward it that specter let out the most blood-curdling yell I ever heard—the shriek of a maniac.

I stepped quicker now, but it moved away until it stood in the flood of light from the doorway, and then I saw a sight that took all the strength out of me. The most awful and frightful face I ever beheld, and,—it was the face of Madeline Hopkins.

The neck and jaw and mouth were drawn and seamed and scarred in a frightful and hideous manner, the teeth protruded and the mouth was drawn to one side in a frightful leer; above that was all the beauty of "My Lady of the Eyes."

For a moment I was dumb and powerless, and in that moment Hopkins appeared with a bound, and between us we captured my poor friend's wife and struggled and fought with her up the long stairs and back to her bed.

Sitting one on either side, we had all we could do to hold her hands. She would lift us both to our feet, she was struggling desperately, and the eyes were the eyes of a tigress.

When this strain was at its worst and every nerve on edge, another scream from behind us cut our ears like a needle, the eyes of the tigress as well as ours sought the door, and there in her golden curls and white "nightie" stood little Madeline. The eyes of the tigress softened to tenderest love, and with a bound, the baby was on her mother's breast, her arms around her neck, and she was saying, "Poor Mama, what they doin' to poor Mama?"

"My darling, my darling," said the mother in the sweetest of tones.

I unconsciously released my hold upon the arm I held, and she drew the sheet up and covered her face as I was wont to see it, and held it there. With the other, she gently stroked the baby curls.

I watched this transformation as if under a spell.

Suddenly she turned her head toward Hopkins, her eyes full of tenderness and pity and love, reached out her hand and said:

"Oh, Steadman, my voice has come back, God has taken off the curse."

But poor Hopkins was on his knees beside the bed, his face buried in his arms, his strong shoulders heaving and pitiful sobs breaking from his very heart.

A couple of months afterward I resigned to go back to God's country, the home of the east wind, and where I could know my own children and speak to my own wife without an introduction, and the Hopkins invited me to a farewell dinner.

"My Lady of the Eyes" presided, looking handsomer and stronger than usual, but she didn't eat with us. But with eyes and voice she entertained us so royally and pleasantly that Hopkins and I did eating enough for all.

After supper, Hop. and I lighted our cigars and "railroaded" for awhile, then "Her Eyes" went to the piano and sang a dozen songs as only a trained singer can. Her voice was wonderfully sweet and low. They were old songs, but they seemed the better for that, and while she sang Hopkins's cigar went out and he just gazed at her with pride and joy in every lineament of his scarred and furrowed face.

Little Maddie was allowed to sit up in honor of "Untle Tummy," but after awhile the little head bobbed quietly and the little chin fell between the verses of her mother's song, and "My Lady of the Eyes" took her by the hand and brought her over to us.

"Tell papa good-night and Uncle Chum my good-bye, dear, and we'll go to bed."

Hopkins kissed the baby, and I got my hug, and another to take to my "ittle dirl," and Mrs. Hopkins held out both her hands to me.

"Good-bye, dear Chum," said she, "my love to you and yours, now and always."

Hopkins put his arm around his wife, kissed her forehead and said:

"Sweetheart, I'm going to tell Chum a story."

"And don't forget the hero," said she, and turning to me, "Don't believe all he says, and don't blame those that he blames, and remember that what is, is best, and seeming calamities are often blessings in disguise."

Hopkins and I looked into each other's faces and smoked in silence for ten minutes, then he turned to his secretary and, opening a drawer, took out a couple of cases and opened them. They contained medals. Then he opened a package of letters and selected one or two. We lighted fresh cigars and Hopkins began his story.

"My father was a pretty well-to-do business man and I his only child. My mother died when I was

young. I managed to get through a grammar school and went to college. I wanted to go on the road from the time I could remember and had no ambition higher than to run a locomotive. That was my ideal of life.

"My father opposed this very strenuously, and offered to let me go to work if I'd select something decent—that's the way he put it. He used to say, 'Try a brick-yard, you might own one some day, you'll never own a railroad.' I had my choice, college or something decent,' and I took the college, although I didn't like it.

"The summer before I came of age my father died suddenly and my college life ended."

Here Hopkins fumbled around in his papers and selected one.

"Just to show you how odd my father was, here is the text of his will, leaving out the legal slush that lawyers always pack their papers in:

"'To my son, Steadman Hudson Hopkins, I leave one thousand dollars to be paid immediately on my demise. All the residue of my estate consisting of etc., etc.'—six figures, Chum, a snug little wad—'shall be placed in the hands of three trustees'—naming the presidents of three banks—'to be invested by them in state, municipal or government bonds, principal and interest accruing to be paid by said trustees to my son hereinbefore mentioned when he has pursued one calling, with average success, for ten consecutive years, and not until then. All in the best judgment of the trustees aforementioned.

"'To my son I also bequeath this fatherly advice, knowing the waste of money by heirs who have done nothing to produce it, and knowing that had I been given a fortune at the beginning of my career, it would have been lost for lack of business experience, and knowing too, the waste of time usually made by young men who drift from one employment or occupation to another'—having wasted fifteen years of my own life in this way—I make these provisions in this my last will and testament, believing that in the end, if not now, my son will see the wisdom of this provision, etc., etc.'

"The governor had a long, clear head and he knew me and young men in general, but bless you, I thought he was a little mean at the time.

"I turned to the trustees and asked what they would consider as fulfilling the requirements of the will.

"'Any honorable employment,' answered the oldest man of the trio.

"The next day, I went to see Andy Bridges, general superintendent of the old home road, who had been a friend of father's, and told him I wanted to go railroading. He offered to put me in his office, but I insisted on the footboard, and to make a long story short, was firing inside of three weeks and running inside of three years.

"I was the proudest young prig that ever pulled a throttle. I always loved the work and—well, you know how the first five years of it absorbs you if you are cut out for it and like it and intend to stay at it.

"I had been running about two years, and had paid about as much attention to young women as I had to the subject of astronomy, until Madelene Bridges came out of a Southern convent to make her home with her uncle, our 'old man.'

"The first time I saw her I went clean, stark, raving, blind, drunken daft over her. I tried to argue and reason myself out of it, but it was no go. I didn't even know who she was then.

"But I was in love and, being so, wasn't hardly safe on the road.

"Then I spruced up and started in to see if I couldn't interest her in me half as much as I was interested in her.

"I didn't have much trouble to get a start, for Andy Bridges had come up from the ranks and hadn't forgotten it—most of 'em do—and welcomed any decent young man in his house, even if he was a car hand. Madelene had a couple of marriageable cousins then and that may account for old Andy.

"I got on pretty well at first, for I was first in the field. I got in a theatre or two before the other young fellows caught on. About this time there was a dance, and I lost my grip. I took Madelene but couldn't dance, and all the others could, especially Dandy Tamplin, one of the train despatchers.

"I took private dancing lessons, however, and squared myself that way.

"Singing was a favorite mode of passing the evenings with the young folks at the Bridges's home, and I cursed myself for being tuneless.

"It finally settled down to a race between Tamplin and myself, and each of us was doing his level best. I was so dead in earnest and so truly in love that I was no fit company for man or beast, and I'm afraid I was twice as awkward and dull in Madelene's presence as in any other place.

"Dandy Tamplin was a handsome young fellow, and a formidable rival, for he was always well-dressed, a good talker and more or less of a lady's man. Besides that, he was on the ground all the time and I had to be away two-thirds of the time on my runs.

"I came in one trip determined to know my fate that very evening—had my little piece all committed to memory.

"As I registered I heard one of the other despatchers, behind a partition, telling some one that he was going to work Dandy's trick until eleven o'clock, and then the two entered into a discussion of Dandy's quest of the 'old man's' niece, one of them remarking that all the opposition he had was Hopkins and that wasn't worth considering. I resolved to get to Bridges's ahead of Tamplin.

"But man—railroad man, anyway—proposes and the superintendent disposes. I met Bridges at the door.

"'Hopkins,' said he, 'I want you to do me a personal favor.'

"'Yes, sir,'

"'I want you to double out in half an hour on some perishable freight that's coming in from the West; there isn't one available engine in. Will you do it?'

"'Yes,' I answered, slowly, showing my disappointment. 'But, Mr. Bridges, I was particularly anxious to go up to your house to-night; I intend to ask—'

"'I know, I know,' said he kindly, taking my hand; 'It'll be all right I hope; there ain't another young chap I'd like to see go up *and stay* better than you, but my son, *she will keep*, and this freight wont.

You go out, and I'll promise that no one shall get a chance to ask ahead of you.' This was a friend at court and a strong one.

"It means a lot to me,' said I

"I know it my boy, and I'm proud to have you say so right out in meeting, but—well, you get those fruit cars in by moonlight, and I'll have you back light, and you can have the front parlor for a week.'

"On my return trip, I found a big Howe truss bridge on fire and didn't get in for two days. The road was blocked, everything out of gear and I had to double back again, whether or no.

"I was 'chewing the rag' with a roundhouse foreman about it when Old Andy came along.

"Go on, Hopkins,' said he, 'and you can lay off when you get back. I'm going South with my car *and will take the girls with me!*'

"That was hint enough, and I said yes.

"It was in the evening, and while the fireman and I got our supper, the hostler turned my engine, coaled her up, took water and stood her on the north branch track, next the head end of her train, that had not yet been entirely made up.

"This north branch came into the south and west divisions off a very heavy grade and on a curve, the view being cut off at this point by buildings close to the track. The engine herself stood close to the office building, and after oiling around, I backed on to the train, bringing my cab right opposite a window in the dispatcher's office. Just before this open window and facing me sat Dandy Tamplin at his key. I hated Dandy Tamplin.

"It was dark outside and in the cab, the conductor had given me my orders and said we'd go just as quick as the pony found a couple of cars more and put them on the hind end. Dennis had put in a big fire for the hill, and then gone skylarking around the station, and I was in the dark glaring at Dandy Tamplin in the light.

"The blow-off cock on this engine was on the right side and opened from the cab. Ordinarily, you pulled the handle up, but the last time the boiler was washed out they had turned the plug cock half over and the handle stuck up through the deck among the oil cans ahead of the reverse lever, and opened by pushing it down. I remember thinking it was dangerous, as a man might accidentally open it. On the cock was a piece of pipe to carry the hot water away from the paint work, and this stuck straight out under the footboard, the cock leaked a little and the end of the pipe dripped hot water and steam.

"While I glared at Tamplin, old man Bridges and the girls came into the room. Bridges went up to the narrow, shelf-like counter, looked at the register and asked Tamplin a question.

"Tamplin went up to the group, his back to me, and spoke to one after the other. Madelene was the last in the row and, while the others were talking, laid her gloves, veil and some flowers on the counter. Tamplin spoke to her and I could see the color change in her face. Oh! if I only had hold of Dandy Tamplin.

"Bridges hurried out into the hall behind the passage way, the girls following. Tamplin turned around and espied Madelene's belongings. He went up to them, smelled the flowers, then hurriedly

took a note out of his pocket and slipped it into one of the gloves. The other glove he put in his breast pocket. It was well for Dandy Tamplin I didn't have a gun.

"Remember, all this happened quickly. Before Tamplin was fairly in his seat and at work, Madelene came tripping back alone and made for her bundle, but Tamplin left his key open and went over to her. I couldn't hear what was said for by this time the safety valves of my engine were blowing and drowned all sound. She evidently asked him what time it was and leaned partly over the counter to hear his reply. He put his hand under her chin and turned her face toward the clock, this with such an air of assurance that my heart sank—but murder was in my soul. Then quickly putting his hand behind her neck, he pulled her toward him and kissed her. I was a demon in an instant.

"She sprang away from him and ran into the hall and he came back to his chair with a smile of triumph on his thin lips.

"Somehow or other, just at this moment, I noticed the steam at the end of that blow-off pipe, and all the devils in hell whispered at once 'One move of your hand and your revenge is complete.' I wasn't Steadman Hopkins then, I was a madman bent on murder, and I reached down for that handle, holding on by the throttle with my left hand. The cock had some mud in it and I opened it wide before it blew out and then with a roar and a shriek it burst—and the crime was done.

"All the devils flew away at once and left me alone, naked with my conscience. Murderer, murderer!' resounded in my ears; hisses, roars and screams seemed to come to fill my brain and dance around my condemned soul; voices seemed shrieking and crash upon crash seemed to smite my ears. I thought I was dying, and I remember distinctly how glad I was. I didn't let go of that valve, I couldn't—I'd go to hell with it in my hand and let them do their worst.

"Then remorse took possession of me. Wasn't it enough to maim and disfigure poor Tamplin, why cook him to death—I'd shut off that cock. I fought with it, but it wouldn't close, and I called Dennis to help me.

"Some one stood behind me and put a cool hand on my brow, and a woman's voice said, 'Poor brave fellow, he's still thinking of his duty; all the heroes don't live in books.'

"I opened my eyes, and looked around. I was in St. Mary's Hospital, and a nun was talking to herself.

"Well, John, I'd been there for more than six weeks, and it took six more before I understood just what had happened and could hobble around, for I had legs and ribs and an arm broken.

"It must have been at the moment I opened that blow-off cock that part of a runaway train came down the north grade, backward, like a whirlwind and buried my engine and myself, piling up an awful wreck that took fire. I was rescued at the last moment by the crowd of railroad men that collected and bodily tore the wreck apart to get at me. Every one thought I tried to close that blow-off cock and hold the throttle shut. I was a hero in the papers and to the men, and I couldn't get a chance to tell the truth if I dared, and I was afraid to ask about Dandy Tamplin.

"No word came from Madelene. One day Bridges came to see me, and brought me this watch I wear now, a present from the company. I determined to tell Bridges—but he wouldn't believe me. Looked, too, as if he thought I was off in my head yet and I must have looked crazy, for most of these brands I got that night. To be sure I've added to the collection here and there, but I never was

pretty after that roundup.

"At last I mustered up courage and asked: 'How is Tamplin?' 'All right, working right along, but takes it hard,' said Bridges.

"'Was he laid up long? Is he as badly disfigured as I am?'"

"'Why, man, he wasn't touched. He had gone to the other end of the room for a drink of water. I'm afraid, my boy, its Madelene he's worried about.'"

"'She has refused him then?'"

"'Well, I don't know that. She is still in bed, badly hurt. She has not seen a soul but her nurse, the doctor and my wife, and denies herself to all callers, even her best friends, even to me.'"

"Chum, I won't tell you what I said or suffered. Madelene had come into the room again for her belongings, and had faced the dagger of steam sent by the hand of a man who would give his immortal soul to make her well again.

"I couldn't get around much, but I wrote her a brief note asking if I might call and sent it by a messenger.

"She replied that she could not see me then. I waited. I hadn't the heart to write a confession I wanted to make in person, so after a week or two I went to the house.

"Madelene sent down word that she couldn't see me then and could not tell when she would see me.

"I thought the nurse, who acted as messenger, did not interpret either my message or hers as they were intended—I would write a note.

"I stepped into the library on one side of the hall, made myself at home and wrote Madelene a note, a love letter, begging for just one interview. Taking blame for all that had happened and confessing my love and devotion to her.

"It was a long letter and just as I finished it, I heard some one in the hall. I thought it was a servant and started for the doorway to ask her to carry my message. It was the nurse.

"I was partly concealed by the portieres. She was facing the door, her finger on her lips, and before her stood Dandy Tamplin.

"'It's all right' she whispered, 'be still,' and both of them tiptoed upstairs.

"This, then was why I could not see Madelene. Dandy Tamplin was her accepted lover.

"That night I left the old home for good to seek my fortunes and forgetfulness far away. I didn't care where, so long as it was a great way off.

"At New York I found some engineers going out to run on the Meig's road in Peru. I signed a contract and in two days was on the Atlantic, bound for the Isthmus of Panama.

"I ran an engine in Peru until the war broke out with Chili. I was sent to the front with a train of soldiers one day and got on the battle field. Our side was getting badly worsted, and I got excited and jumping off the engine, armed myself and lit into the fight. A little crowd gathered around me

and I found myself the leader, no officer in sight. There was a charge and we didn't run—surprised the Chilians. I got some of these blue brands on my left cheek there and made a new reputation. Before I knew it, I had on a uniform and dangled a sword. They nicknamed me the 'Fighting Yankee.'

"Peru had lots of trouble and I saw a good deal of it. When it was all over, I found myself in command of a gun boat, just a tug, but she was alive and had accounted for herself several times.

"The president sent me on a special mission to Chili just after the close of the war, and, all togged out in a new uniform, I went on board of an American ship at Callao bound for Valparaiso. I thought I was some pumpkins then. I'd lived a rough and tumble life for about three years and was beginning to like it—and to forget.

"I used to do the statuesque before the passengers, my scars attested my fighting propensities, and there were several Peruvian liars aboard that knew me by reputation, and enlarged on it.

"We touched at Coquimbo and an American civil engineer and family came aboard, homeward bound.

"That afternoon I was lolling in the smoking-room on deck, when I was attracted by the sound of ladies talking on the promenade just outside the open port where I sat. It was the engineer's wife and daughter.

"'Mamma,' said the young lady. 'I must read you Madelene's letter. Poor, dear Madelene, it's just too sorrowful and romantic for anything.'

"'Madelene! I hadn't heard that name pronounced for three years. It was wrong, I knew it, but I listened.

"'Poor dear, she was awfully hurt and disfigured in a railroad wreck.'

"It was *my* Madelene they were talking about. Wild horses could not have dragged me from the spot.

"The girl read something like this. I know for I've read that letter a hundred times. It's in this pile here.

"'Dear Lottie: Your ever welcome'—'no, not that.'

"'Uncle Andrew is going'—'let me see, Oh! yes, here it is, now listen Mamma,' said the girl.

"'Dear Schoolmate. I have never told a soul about my troubles or my trials, for long I could not bear to think of them myself. But lately I have seen it in its true light, and have come to the conclusion that I have no right to moan my life away. I'm past all that, there is nothing for me to live for in myself, but my life is spared for some purpose, and I propose to devote it to doing good to others'—'isn't she a sweet soul, mamma?'

"'After I came to live with Uncle Andrew, I was very happy, it seemed like a release from prison. I saw much company, and in six months had two lovers—more than I deserved. One of these was a plain, honest manly man; he was one of Uncle Andrew's engineers. He wasn't handsome, but he was the kind of man that sensible women love. The other was a handsome, showy, witty man, also an employee of the railroad, considered 'the catch' among the girls. Really, Lottie, both of them tried to propose and I wouldn't let them, I didn't know which one of them I liked best. But if things

had taken the usual course, I should have married the handsome one—and been sorry forever after.'

"My heart stood still—she hadn't married Dandy Tamplin after all."

"The night of the wreck, I was going out on Uncle Andrew's private car. The handsome man was on duty in the office. The plain man on an engine that stood before the open window, I didn't know that then.

"A runaway train crashed into the engine and something exploded and a stream of boiling water came into the room and scalded me beyond recognition. You would not know me, Lottie, I am so disfigured.

"The handsome man did nothing but wring his hands; the plain one staid on the engine and tried to stop the steam from coming out, and was himself terribly injured.

"I was for weeks in bed and suffered mental agony much beyond the merely physical pain. I was so wicked I cursed my life and my Maker and prayed for death—yet I lived. I was so resentful, so heartbroken, so wicked, that I refused to speak for weeks, then, when I tried, I couldn't, God had put the curse of silence on my wickedness.'

"Think of Madelene being wicked, Chum.

"When I was getting well enough and reconciled to my own fate, enough to think of others, I thought of my two lovers. Then I asked my nurse for a glass. One look, and I made up my mind never to see either of them again.

"Both of them were clamoring to see me, and I refused to see either. The plain man wrote me the only love letter I ever received. I have worn it out reading it. It was so manly, so unselfish! He blamed himself for the accident, and offered me his devotion and love, no matter in what condition the letter found me. This letter he wrote in Uncle Andrew's library, left it open on the desk and—disappeared.

"I have never heard from him from that day to this. I never could understand it. A man that could write that letter, couldn't run away. The last sentence in his letter proved that. It said: "Remember, dear Madelene, that somewhere, somehow, I am thinking of you always; that whether you see me or not, you will some day come to know that I love your soul, not your face; that your life is dear to me, and no calamity can make any difference."

"Those were brave words, and after I read them, I knew for the first time that this was the man I loved. They told me he was frightfully disfigured, too, but that made no difference to me, I loved him. But he was gone, no one knew where. Why did he go?

"The handsome man disappeared the same day, and he never came back, but he left no letter.

"Dear Lottie, I have only now solved the mystery. My sometime nurse has just confessed that the night the letter was written the other man came to the house, like a thief, he had bribed her to give me drugs to make me sleep and then she led him into my room and showed him my scars. If he ever loved me at all, he was in love with my face; the other man loved me. One went away because he saw me, the other one because he saw his rival apparently granted the interview refused to him. My true lover must have seen that man sneaking up to my room.'

"John, every fibre of my being danced for joy. I didn't hear the rest, and she read several pages. I

had heard enough.

"I went right out on the deck, begged pardon to begin with, introduced myself, confessed to eavesdropping, told who I was, where I had been and asked for that letter.

"I got it and Madelene's picture; the one you have seen on my clock.

"I finished my task at Valparaiso while the vessel lay there, reported by mail, and came home on the same ship.

"I took that letter and photograph to Andy Bridges's house and wrote across the envelope 'Madelene Bridges, I demand your immediate and unconditional surrender, signed, Steadman H. Hopkins.'

"And I got it in five minutes. Chum, that is the only case on record where something worth having was ever surrendered to an officer of the Peruvian government.

"In six months I was back on an engine in a new country, with my silent, loved and loving wife, in a new home. Three times before now someone has seen Madelene's face, twice I told this story, and then we moved away; once I told it and trusted, and it was not repeated. Madelene can stand being a mystery and wondered at, but she cannot stand pity and curiosity. As for you, old Chum, I haven't even asked you not to repeat what I have told you—I know you won't."

After a long while, I turned to Hopkins and said: "And yet, Hopkins, fools say there is no romance in railroad life. This is a story worth reading, and some day I'd like to write it."

"Not in Madelene's time, or in mine, Chum, but if ever a time comes, I'll send you a token."

"Send me your picture, Hop."

"No, I'll send you Madelene's. No, I'll send you the clock with the 'talking eyes.'"

And standing at Hopkins's gate, the scar-faced man with the romance and I parted, like ships that meet, hail and pass on, never to meet again. Hopkins and I moved away from one another, each on his own course, across the seven seas of life.

And all this happened almost twenty years ago.

The other day, my office boy brought me a card that read, "Mrs. Henry Adams, Washington, D. C." "Is she a book agent?" I asked.

"Nope, don't look like one."

"Show her in."

A young woman came in, looked at me hard for a moment, laid a package on my desk and asked,

"Is this the Mr. Alexander who used to be an engineer?"

I confessed.

"I don't suppose you remember me," she asked.

I put on my glasses and looked at her. No, I never—then she put her handkerchief up to her lips covering the lower part of her face; it was the face of Madelene Hopkins.

"Yes," said I, "I remember you perfectly, seventeen or eighteen years ago you used to sit on my knee and call me 'Untle Tummy.' and I called you Maddie."

Then we laughed and shook hands.

"Mr. Alexander," said she, "In looking over some of father's papers, we came across a request that under certain conditions you were to be sent an old keepsake of his, a clock with mother's picture on it. I have brought it to you."

"And your father and mother, what of them, my friend?" I asked, for the promise of that clock "under certain conditions" was coming back to me.

"Haven't you heard, sir, poor papa and mama were lost in that awful wreck at Castleton, two years ago."

And as I write, from the dial of "Scar Faced" Hopkins's clock "My Lady of the Eyes" looks down at me from across the mystery of eternity. The eyes do not change as once they did, or has age dimmed my sight and imagination? Long I look into their peaceful depths thinking of their story, and ask, "Dear Eyes, is it well with thee?"—and they seem to answer, "It is well."



SOME FREAKS OF FATE

I am just back from a visit to old scenes, old chums and old memories of my interesting experience on the western fringe of Uncle Sam's great, gray blanket—the plains.

If some of these fellows who know more about writing than about running engines would only go out there for a year and keep their eyes and ears and brains open, and mouths shut, they could come home and write us some true stories that would make fiction-grinders exceedingly weary.

The frontier attracts strong characters, men with pioneer spirit, men who are willing to sacrifice something, in order to gain an end; men with loves and men with hates. Bad men are there, some of them hunted from Eastern communities, perhaps, but you will find no fools and mighty few weak faces—there's character in every feature you look at.

Every one is there for a purpose; to accomplish something; to get ahead in the world; to make a new start; perhaps to live down something, or to get out of the rut cut by ancestors; some may only want to drink, and shout, and shoot, but even these do it with a vim—they mean it.

Of the many men who ran engines at the front, with me in the old days, I recall few whose lives were purposeless; almost every one had a life-story.

If there's anything that I enjoy, it's to sit down to a pipe and a life-story—told by the subject himself. How many have I listened to, out there, and every one of them worthy the pen of a Kipling!

The population of the frontier is never all made up of men, and the women all have strong features, too—self-sacrifice, devotion, degradation, or *something*, is written on every face. There are no blanks in that lottery—there's little material there for homes of feeble-minded.

It isn't strange, either, when you come to think of it; fools never go anywhere, they are just born and raised. If they move it's because they are "took"—you never heard of a pioneer fool.

One of the strongest characters I ever knew was a runner out there by the name of Gunderson—Oscar Gunderson. He was of Swedish parentage, very light-complexioned, very large, and a splendid mechanic, as Swedes are apt to be when they try. Gunderson's name was, I suppose, properly entered on the company's time-book, but it never was in the nomenclature of the road. With the railroaders' gift for abbreviation and nickname, Gunderson soon came down to "Gun," his size, head, hand or heart furnished the prefix of "Big," and "Big Gun" he remains to-day. "Big Gun" among his friends, but simple "Gun" to me. I think I called him "Gun" from the start.

Gun ran himself as he did his engine, exercised the same care of himself, and always talked engine about his own anatomy, clothes, food and drink.

His hat was always referred to as his "dome-casing;" his Brotherhood pin was his "number-plate;" his coat was "the jacket;" his legs the "drivers;" his hands "the pins;" arms were "side-rods;" stomach "fire-box;" and his mouth "the pop."

He invariably referred to a missing suspender-button as a broken "spring-hanger;" to a limp as a

"flat-wheel;" he "fired up" when eating; he "took water," the same as the engine; and "oiled round," when he tasted whisky.

Gun knew all the slang and shop-talk of the road, and used it—was even accused of inventing much of it—but his engine talk was unique and inimitable.

We roomed together a whole winter; and often, after I had gone to bed, Gun would come in, and as he peeled off his clothes he would deliver himself something as follows:

"Say, John, you don't know who I met on the up trip? Well, sir, Dock Taggert. I was sailin' along up the main line near Bob's, and who should I see but Dock backed in on the sidin'—seemed kinder dilapidated, like he was runnin' on one side. I jest slammed on the wind and went over and shook. Dock looks pretty tough, John—must have been out surfacing track, ain't been wiped in Lord knows when, oiled a good deal, but nary a wipe, jacket rusted and streaked, tire double flanged, valves blowin', packing down, don't seem to steam, maybe's had poor coal, or is all limed up. He's got to go through the back shop 'efore the old man'll ever let him into the roundhouse. I set his packin' out and put him in a stall at the Gray's corral; hope he'll brace up. Dock's a mighty good workin' scrap, if you could only get him to carryin' his water right; if he'd come down to three gauges he'd be a dandy, but this tryin' to run first section with a flutter in the stack all the time is no good—he must 'a flagged in."

Which, being translated into English, would carry the information that Gun had seen one of the old ex-engineers at Bob Slattery's saloon, had stopped and greeted him. Dock looked as if he had tramped, had drunk, was dirty, coat had holes, soles of his boots badly worn, wheezing, seemed hungry and lifeless, been eating poor food, and was in a general run-down condition. Gun had "set out his packing" by feeding him and put him in a bed at the Grand Central Hotel—nicknamed the "Grayback's Corral." Gun thought he would have to reform, before the M. M. put him into active service. He was a good engineer, but drank too much, and lastly, he was in so bad a condition he could not get himself into headquarters unless someone helped him by "flagging" for him.

Gun was a bachelor; he came to us from the Pacific side, and told me once that he first went west on account of a woman, but—begging Mr. Kipling's pardon—that's another story.

"I don't think I'd care to double-crew my mill," Gun would say when the conversation turned to matrimony. "I've been raised to keep your own engine and take care of it, and pull what you could. In double-heading there's always a row as to who ought to go ahead and enjoy the scenery or stay behind and eat cinders."

I knew from the first that Gun had a story to tell, if he'd only give it up, and I fear I often led up to it, with the hope that he would tell it to me—but he never did.

My big friend sent a sum of money away every month, I supposed to some relative, until one day I picked up from the floor a folded paper dirty from having been carried long in Gun's pocket, and found a receipt. It read:

"MISSION, SAN ANTONIO, *Jan. 1, 1878.*

"Received of O. Gunderson, for Mabel Rogers, \$40.00.

"SISTER THERESA."

Ah, a little girl in the story! I thought; it's a sad story, then. There's nothing so pure and beautiful

and sweet and joyous as a little girl, yet when a little girl has a story it's almost always a sad story.

I gave Gun the paper; he thanked me; said he must look out better for those receipts, and added that he was educating a bit of a girl out on the coast.

"Yours, Gun?" I asked kindly.

"No, John; she ain't; I'd give \$5,000 if she was."

He looked at me straight, with that clear, blue eye, and I knew he told me the truth.

"How old is she?" I asked.

"I don't know; 'bout five or six."

"Ever seen her?"

"No."

"Where did you get her?"

"Ain't had her."

"Tell me about her?"

"She was willed to me, John, kinder put in extra, but I can't tell you her story now, partly because I don't know it all myself, and partly because I won't—I won't even tell her."

I did not again refer to Gun's little girl, and soon other experiences and other biographies crowded the story out of my mind.

One evening in the spring, I sat by the open window, enjoying the cool night breeze from off the mountains, when I heard Gun's cheery voice on the porch below. He was lecturing his fireman, in his own, unique way.

"Well, Jim, if I ain't ashamed of you! There ain't no one but you; coming into general headquarters with a flutter in the stack, so full that you can't whistle, air-pump a-squealing 'count of water, smeared from stack to man-hole, headlight smoked and glimmery, don't know your own rights, kind o' runnin' wildcat, without proper signals, imagining you're first section with a regardless order. You want to blow out, man, and trim up, get your packing set out and carry less juice. You're worse than one of them slippin', dancin', three-legged, no-good Grants. The next time I catch you at high-tide, I'll scrap you, that's what I'll do, fire you into the scrap-pile. Why can't you use some judgment in your runnin'? Why can't you say, 'Why, here's the town of Whisky, I'm going to stop here and oil around,' sail right into town, put the air on steady and fine, bring her right down to the proper gait, throw her into full release, so as to just stop right, shut off your squirt, drop a little oil on the worst points, ring your bell and sail on.

"But you, you come into town forty miles an hour, jam on the emergency and while the passengers pick 'emselves out of the ends of the cars, you go into the supply house and leave the injector on, and then, when you do move, you're too full to go without opening your cylinder cocks and givin' yourself dead away.

"Now, I'm goin' to Californ', next month, and if you get so as you can tell when you've got enough liquor without waiting for it to break your injectors, I'll ask the old man to let you finger the plug

on Old Baldy whilst I'm gone. But I'm damned if I don't feel as if you was like that measly old 19—jest fit to be jacked up to saw wood with."

While Gun was in California, I was taken home on a requisition from my wife, and Oscar Gunderson and his little girl became a memory—a page in a book that I had partly read and lost, but not entirely forgotten.

One day last summer I took the westbound express at Topeka, and spreading my grip, hat, coat and umbrella, out on the seats, so as to resemble an experienced English tourist, I fished up a Wheeling stogie and a book and went into the smoking-pen of the sleeper, which I had all to myself for half-an-hour.

The train stopped to give the thirsty tender a drink and a man came in to wash his hands. He had been riding on the engine.

After washing, he stepped to the door of the "smokery," struck a match on the leg of his pants, held both hands around the end of his cigar while he lighted it, then waving the match to put it out, he threw it down and came in.

While he was absorbed in all this, I took a glance at him. Six-foot-four, if an inch; high cheek bones; yellow beard; clear, blue eyes; white skin, and a hand about the size of a Cincinnati ham. I knew that face despite twelve years of turkey-tracks about the eyes.

"Gunderson, old man, how are you?" I said, offering my fin.

"Well, John Alexander, how in the name of thunder did you get away out here on the main stem, without orders?"

"Inspection-car," said I; "how did you get here?"

"Deadheading home; been out on special, a gilt-edged special, took her clean through to New York."

"You did!" I exclaimed; "why, how was that?"

"Went up special to a weddin', don't you see? Went up to see a new compound start off—prettiest sight I ever saw—working smooth as grease; but I'm kind of dubious about repairs and general running. I'm anxious to see how the performance sheet looks at the end of the year, John."

"Who's been double-heading, Gun?"

"Why—why, my little girl, trimmest, neatest, slickest little mill you ever saw. Lord! but she was painted red and white and gold-leaf, three brass bands on her stack, solid nickel trimming, all the latest improvements, corrugated fire-box, high pressure smoke consumer and sand-jet—jest made a purpose for specials, and pay-car. But if she ain't got herself coupled onto a long-fire-boxed ten-wheeler, with a big lap and a Joy gear, you can put me down for a clinker. Yes, sir; the baby is a heart-breaker on dress-parade, and the ten-wheeler is a whale on business, and if they don't jump the track, you watch out for some express speed that will make the canals sick, see if they don't."

Without giving me time to say a word, he was off again.

"You ought to seen 'em start out, nary a slip, cutting off square as a die, small one ahead speaking her little piecechipper and fast on account of her smaller wheels, and the ten-wheeler barking

bass, steady as a clock, with a hundred-and-enough on the gauge, a full throttle, and half a pipe of sand. You couldn't tell to save you whether the little one was pulling the big one or the big one shoving the little—never saw a relief train start out in such shape in my life."

Gunderson was evidently enthusiastic over the marriage of his little girl.

We talked over old times and the changes, and followed each other up to date with a great deal of mutual enjoyment, until the porter demanded the "smokery" for his bunk.

As we started for bed, Gun laid his hand on my shoulder and said:

"John, a good many years ago, you asked me to tell you the story of my little girl. I refused then for her sake. I'll tell you in the morning."

After a hearty breakfast and a good cigar, Gunderson squared himself for the story. He shut his eyes for a few minutes, as if to recall something, and then, speaking as if to himself, he said:

"Well, sir, there wasn't a simmer anywhere, dampers all shut; you wouldn't'a suspected they was up to the popping point, but the minute they got their orders, and the con. put up his hand, so, up went —"

"Say," I interrupted, "I thought I was to have the story. I believe you told me about the wedding, last night. The young couple started out well."

"Oh, yes, old man, I forgot, the story; well, get on the next pit here," motioning to a seat next to him, "and I'll give you the history of an old, hook-motion, name of Oscar Gunderson, and a trim, Class "G" made of solid silver, from pilot to draft-gear.

"You think I'm a Swede; well, I ain't, I don't know what I am, but I guess I come nearer to being a Chinaman than anything else. My father was a sea-captain, and my mother found me on the China sea—but they were both Swedes just the same. I had two sisters older than myself, and in order to better our chances, father moved to New York when I was less than five years old.

"He soon secured work as captain on a steamer in the Cuban trade, and died at sea, when I was ten.

"I had a bent for machinery, and tried the old machine-shops of the Central road, but soon found myself firing.

"I went to California, shortly after the war, on account of a woman—mostly my fault.

"Well, after running around there for some years, I struck a job on the Virginia & Truckee, in '73.

"Virginia City and Carson and all the Nevada towns were doing a fall-rush business, turning every wheel they had, with three crews to a mill. Why, if you'd go down street in any one of them towns at night, and see the crowds around the gamblers and molls, you'd think hell was a-coming forty-mile an hour, and that it wan't more than a car-length away.

"Well, one morning, I came into Virginia about breakfast time, and with the rest of the crew, went up to the old California Chop-house for breakfast. This same chop-house was a building about good-enough for a stable, these days; but it had a reputation then for steaks. All the gamblers ate there; and it's a safe rule to eat where the gamblers do, in a frontier town, if you want the best there is, regardless of price.

"It was early for the regular trade, and we had the dining-room mostly to ourselves, for a few minutes, then there were four women folks came in and sat down at a table bearing a card: 'Reserved for Ladies.'

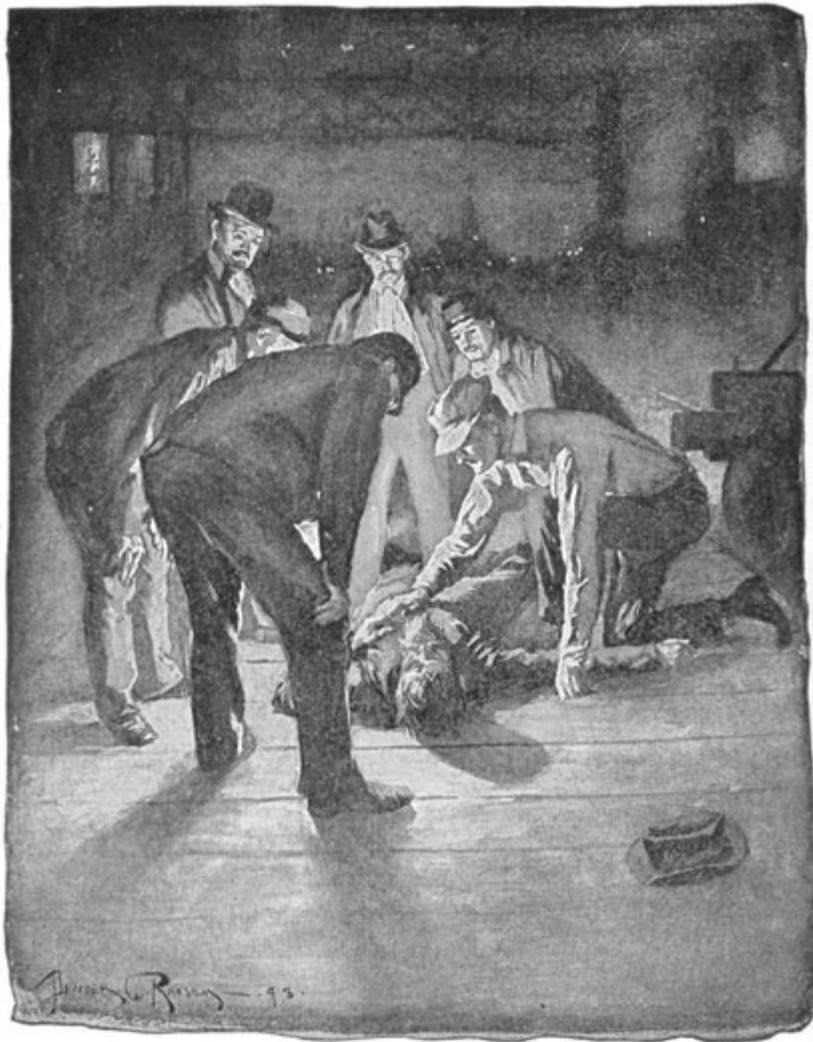
"Three of them were dressed loud, had signs out whereby any one could tell that they wouldn't be received into no Four Hundred; but one of them was a nice-looking, modestly-dressed woman, had on half-mourning, if I remember. She had one of them sweet, strong faces, John, like the nun when I had my arm broke and was scalded,—her sweet mouth kept mumblin' prayers, but her fingers held an artery shut that was trying its damndest to pump Gun Gunderson's old heart dry—strong character, you bet.

"Well, that woman sat facing our table and kept looking at me; I couldn't see her without turning, but I knew she was looking. John, did you ever notice that you could *feel* the presence of some people; you knew they were near you without seeing them? Well, when that happens, don't forget to give that fellow due credit; for whoever it is he or she has the strongest mind—the dominant one.

"I *had* to look around at that woman. I shall never forget how she looked; her hand was on the side of her face; her great, brown, tender eyes were staring right at me—she was reading my very soul. I let her read.

"I had been jacking up a gilly of a gafter who had referred to his mother as "the old woman," and I didn't let the four females disturb me. I meant to hold up a looking-glass for that young whelp to look into. I hate a man that don't love his mother.

"Why," says I, "you miserable example of Divine carelessness, do you know what that 'old woman' mother has done for you, you drivelin' idiot, a-thankin' God that you're alive and forgetting the very mother that bore you; if you could see the tears that she has shed, if you could count the sleepless nights that she has put in, the heartaches, the pain, the privation that she has humbly, silently, even thankfully borne that you might simply live, you'd squander your last cent and your last breath to make her life a joy, from this day until her light goes out. A man that don't respect his mother is lost to all decency; a man who will hear her name belittled is a Judas, and a man who will call his mother 'old woman' is a no-good, low-down, misbehaven whelp. Why, damn it, I'd fight a buzz-saw, if it called my mother 'old woman'—and she's been dead a long time; gone to that special, exalted, guilt-edged and glorious heaven for mothers. No one but mothers have a right to expect to go to a heaven, and the only question that'll be asked is, 'Have you been a mother?'



"He was the first man I ever killed."

"Well, sir, I had forgot about the women, but they clapped their hands and I looked around, and there were tears in the eyes of that one woman.

"She got up; came to our table and laid a card by my plate, and said, 'I beg your pardon; but won't you call on me? Please do.'

"I was completely knocked out, but told her I would, and she went out alone; the others finished their breakfast.

"She had no sooner gone than Cy Nash, my conductor, commenced to giggle—'Made a mash on the flyest woman in town,' he tittered; 'ain't a blood in town but what would give his head for your boots, old man; that's Mabel Verne—owns the Odeon dance hall, and the Tontine, in Carson.'

"I glanced at the card, and it did read, 'Mabel Verne, 21 Flood avenue.'

"Well, Flood avenue is no slouch of a street, the best folks live there," I answered.

"Yes, that's her private residence, and if you go there and are let in, you'd be the first man ever seen around there. She's a curious critter, never rides or drives, or shows herself off at all; but you bet she sees that the rest of the stock show off. She's in it for money, I tell you.'

"I don't know why, but it made me kind of heart-sick to think of the hell that woman must be in, for I knew by her looks that she had a heart and a brain, and that neither of them was in the Odeon or the Tontine dance-houses.

"I thought the matter over,—and didn't go to see her. The next trip, she sent a carriage for me.

"She met me at the door, and took my hat, and as I dropped into an easy chair, I opened the ball to the effect that 'this here was a strange proceeding for a lady.'

"'Yes,' said she, sitting down square in front of me; 'it is; I felt as if I had found a true man, when I first saw you, and I have asked you here to tell you a story, my story, and ask your help and advice. I am so earnest, so anxious to do thoroughly what I have undertaken, that I fear to overdo it; I need counsel, restraint; I can trust you. Won't you help me?'"

"'If I can; what is it that you want me to do, madam?'"

"'First of all, keep a secret, and next, protect or help protect, an innocent child.'

"'Suppose I help the child, and you don't tell me the secret?'"

"'No, it concerns the child, sir; she is my child; I want her to grow up without knowing what her mother has done, or how she has lived and suffered; you wouldn't tell her that, would you?'"

"'No; certainly not!'"

"'Nor anyone else?'"

"'No.'

"'You would judge her alone, forgetting her mother?'"

"'Yes.'

"'Then I will tell you the story.'

"She got up and changed the window blinds, so that the light shone on my face; I guess she wanted to study the effect of her words.

"'I was born at Sacramento,' she began; 'my father was a well-to-do mechanic, and I his only child; I grew up pretty fair-looking, and my parents spent about all they could make to complete my education, especially in music, of which I was fond. When I was eighteen years old, I fell in love with a young man, the son of one of the rich merchants of San Francisco, where we had removed. Like many another foolish girl, I trusted too implicitly, and believed too easily, and soon found myself in a humiliating position, but trusted to the honor of my lover to stand by me.

"'When I explained matters to him he seemed pleased, said he could fix that easy enough; we would get married at once and claim a secret marriage for some months past.

"'He arranged that I should meet him the next evening, and go to an old priest in an obscure parish, and be married.

"'I stood long hours on a corner, half dead with fear, that night, for a lover that never came. He's dead now, got run over in Oakland yard, that very night, as he was running away from me, and as I waited and shivered under the stars and the fire of my own conscience.'

"'Did he stand on one track, to get out of the way of another train, and get struck?' I asked.

"'Yes,' looking at me close.

"Did he have on a false moustache, and a good deal of money and securities in a satchel, and everybody think at first he was a burglar?"

"Yes; but how did you know that?"

"Because, I killed him."

"You?"

"Yes; I ran an engine over him, couldn't make him hear or see me. He was the first man I ever killed; strange he should be *this* particular man."

"It's fate," said the woman, rocking slowly back and forth, 'it's fate, but it seems as though I like you better now that you were my avenger. That accident drove revenge out of my heart, caused me to let *him* be forgotten, and to live for my child. I have lived for her. I live to-day for her and I will continue to live for her.'

"My disgrace killed my mother and ruined my father. I swore I would be an honest woman, and I sought employment to earn a living for my babe and myself, but every avenue was closed to me. I washed and scrubbed while I was able to teach music splendidly, but I could get no pupils. I made shirts for a pittance and daily refused, to me, fortunes for dishonor. I have gone hungry and almost naked to pay for my baby's board, but I was hunted down at last.

"One day, after many rebuffs in seeking employment, I went to the home of a sister of my child's father, and took the baby, told her who I was and asked her to help me to a chance to work. The good woman scarcely looked at me or the child; she said that had it not been for such as I, poor Charles would have been alive; his blood was on my head; I ought to ask God to wash my blood-stained hands.

"I went away from that house with my mind made up what to do. I would put my child in honest hands, and chain myself to the stake to suffer everlasting damnation for her sweet sake.

"She is in the Mission San Antonio now, between three and four, a perfect little princess, she looks like me, and grows, oh, so lovely! If you could see her, you'd love her.

"I can't go to see her any more; she is old enough to remember. The last time I was there, she demanded a papa!"

"I am making a great deal of money. Many of the rich men, whose Puritan wives and daughters refused me honest work, are squandering lots of their wealth in my houses. I am saving money, too; and propose, as soon as I can get a neat fortune together to go away to the ends of the earth, and have my little girl with me. I will raise her to know herself and to know mankind."

"And what do you want me to do, madam?"

"I want you to be that child's guardian; the honest man through whom she will reach the outside of San Antonio and the world. Who will go between her and me until a happier time."

"I am only a rough engineer; the child will be raised to consider herself well off, perhaps rich."

"Adopt her. I will stay in the background; make her expenditures and her education what you like. I will trust you."

"I can't do that.'

"'You are single; your life is hard; I have money enough for us all. Let us go to the Sandwich islands, anywhere, and commence life anew. The little one will know no other father, and all inquiry will be stopped.'

"I couldn't think of it, my dear madam; it's too easy; it's like pulling jerkwater passenger—I like through freight.'

"Well, John, to make a long story short, the interview ended about here, and several more got to about the same place. There were a thousand things I could not help but admire in that woman, and I liked her better the more I knew her. But it wan't love; it was a sort of an admiration for her love of the child, and the nerve she displayed in its behalf. But I shrank from becoming her husband or companion, although I think she loved me, in the end, better than she ever did anybody.

"However, I finally agreed to look after the little one, in case anything happened to the mother, and commenced then to send the money for her board and tuition, and the mother dropped out of all connection with the child or those having her in charge.

"The mother made her pile and got out of the business, and at my suggestion went down near Los Angeles and bought a nice country place, to start respectable before she took the little one home. She left money in Carson, subject to my check, for the little girl, and things slid along for a year or so all smooth enough.

"I was out on a snow-bucking expedition one time the next winter, sleeping in cars, shanties or on the engine, and I soon found myself all bunged up with the worst dose of rheumatiz' you ever see. I had to get down to a lower altitude, and made for Sacramento in the spring. I paid the Mission a year in advance, and with less than a hundred dollars of my own, struck out, hoping to dodge the twists that were in my bones.

"A hundred blind gaskets don't go far when you're sick, and the first thing I knew I was dead broke; couldn't pay my board, couldn't buy medicine, couldn't walk—nothing but think and suffer. I finally had to go to a hospital. Not one of the old gang ever came to see me. Old Gun was a dandy, when he was making—and spending—a couple hundred a month; the rest of the time he was supposed to be dead.

"I might have died in the hospital, if fate hadn't decreed to send me relief. It suddenly dawned upon me that I was getting far better treatment than usual, had a special nurse, the best of food, flowers, etc., all labeled 'From the Boys.'"

"I found out, after I was well enough to take a sun bath on the porch, that a woman had sent all my luxuries, and that her purse had been opened for my relief. I knew who it was at once, and was anxious to get well and at work, so as not to live on one who was only too glad to do everything for me.

"A six months' wrastle with the twisters leaves a fellow stiff-jointed and oldish, and lying in bed takes the strength out of him. I took the notion to get out and go to work, one day, and walked down to the shops—I was carried back, chuck full of 'em again.

"The doctor said I must go to Ojo Caliente, away down south, if I was to get well. John, if the Santa Fé road had 'a been for sale for a cent then, I couldn't 'a bought a spike.

"At about the height of my ill-luck, I got a letter from Mabel Verne—she had another name, but that don't matter—and she asked me again to come to her; to have a home, and care and devotion. It wasn't a love-sick letter, but it was one of them strong, tender, *fetching* letters. It was unselfish, it asked very little of me, and offered a good deal.

"I thought over it all night, and decided at last to go. What better was I than this woman? Surely she was better educated, better bred. She had made one mistake, I had made many. She had no friends on earth; I didn't seem to have any, either. I hadn't had a letter from either of my married sisters for six or eight years, then. We could trust one another, and have an object in life in the education of the child. I'd be no worse off than I was, anyway.

"The next morning I felt better. I got ready to leave, bid all my fellow flat-wheels good-by; and had a gig ordered to take me to the train—the doctor had given me two-hundred dollars a short time before—'from a lady friend.'

"As I sat waiting for the hack, they brought me a letter from home—a big one, with a picture in it. It was from my youngest sister, and the picture was of her ten-year boy, named for me—such a happy, sunny little Swede face you never see. 'He always talks of Uncle Oscar as a great and good man,' wrote Carrie, 'and says every day that he's going to do just like you. He will do nothing that we tell him Uncle Oscar would not like, and anything that he would. If you are as good as he thinks you are, you are sure of heaven.'

"And I was even then going off to live with a woman who made a fortune out of Virginia City dance-houses. I had a sort of a remorseful chill, and before I really knew just where I was, I had got to Arizona, and from there to the Santa Fé where you knew me.

"I wrote my benefactress an honest letter, and told her why I had not come, and in a short time sent her the money she had put up for me; but it was returned again, and I sent it to the mission for my little girl.

"Well, while I was with you there, I got a fare-thee-well letter, saying that when I got that Mabel Verne would be no more—same as dead—and that she had deposited forty thousand dollars in the Phoenix Bank for *your* little girl—*yours*, mind ye—and asked me to adopt her legally and tell her that her mother was dead.

"John, I ain't heard of that woman from then until now. I thought she had got tired of waiting on me and got married, but I believe she is dead.

"I went to California and adopted the baby—a daisy too—and I've honestly tried to be a father to her.

"I got to making money in outside speculations, and had plenty; so I let her money accumulate at the Phoenix and paid her way myself.

"About four years ago, I left the road for good; bought me a nice place just outside of Oakland, and settled down to take a little comfort.

"Mabel, my daughter Mabel, for she called me papa, went to Germany, nearly three years ago, in charge of her music teacher, Sister Florence, to finish herself off. Ah, John, you ort to see her claw ivory! Before she went, she called me into the mission parlor, one day, and almost got me into a snap; she wanted me to tell her all about her parents right then, and asked me if there wasn't some mystery about her birth, and the way she happened to be left in the mission all her life, her mother

disappearing, and my adoption of her."

"What did you tell her, Gun?" I asked.

"Why, lied to her, of course, as any honorable man would have done. I told her that her father was an engineer and a friend of mine, and that he was killed in an accident before she was born—that was all plausible enough.

"Then I told her that her mother was in poor health, and had died just before I had adopted her, and had left a will, giving her to me, and besides had left forty thousand dollars in the bank for her, when she married or became of age.

"Well, John, cutting down short, she met a fellow over there, a New Yorker, that just seemed to think she was made a-purpose for him, and about a year ago he wrote and asked me for my daughter—just think of it! His petition was seconded by the baby herself, and recommended by Sister Florence.

"They came home six months ago, and the baby got ready for dress-parade; and I went down to New York and seen 'em off; but here's where old Fate gets in his work again. That rascal of an O. B. Sanderson—I didn't notice the name before—was my own nephew, the very young cuss whose picture kept me from marryin' the baby's mother! I never tumbled till I ran across his mother, she was my sister Carrie.

"John, I don't care a continental cuss how good he was, the baby was good enough for him—too good—I just said nothing—and watched the signals. You ort to a seen me a-givin' the bride away! Then, when it was all over, and I was childless, I give my little girl a check for forty-seven thousand and a fraction; kissed her, and lit out for home—and here I am.

"But I ain't satisfied now, and just as quick as I get back, I'm a-going running again; then, when I've got so old I can't see more'n a car length, I'm going to ask for a steam-pump to run. I'm a-going to die railroading."

"Have you ever made any inquiries about the mother, Gun?" I asked.

"No; not much; it's so long now, it ain't no use; I guess that her light's gone out."

"What would you do, if she was to turn up?"

"Well, I don't know; I guess I'd keep still and see what she done."

"Suppose, Gun, that she showed up now; loved you more than ever for what you have done, and renewed her old proposal? You know it's leap year."

"Well, old man, if an angel flew down out of the sky and give me a second-hand pair of wings just rebuilt, and ordered me to put 'em on and follow her, I guess I wouldn't refuse to go out. Time was, though, when I'd a-held out for new, gold-mounted ones, or nothing; but that won't come, John; but you just ort to a been to the consolidation; it was just simply—well, pulling the president's special would be just like hauling a gravel-train to it!"

The train stopped suddenly here, and "Gun" said he was going ahead to get acquainted with the water-boiler, and I took out my note-book and jotted down a few points.

After the train got into motion again, I was reading over my notes, when, without looking, I thought

Gunderson had come back, and I moved along in the seat to give him room, but a black dress sat down beside me.

We had been sitting with our backs to a curtain between the first berth and a state-room. The lady came from the state-room.

"Pardon me, sir," she said, "I want to finish that story. I have heard it all; I am Sister Florence, music teacher to Mr. Gunderson's daughter; he does not know that I am on this train.

"Mr. Gunderson did not tell you that the Phoenix bank failed some months ago, and that the fortune of his adopted child was lost. He never told her and she does not know it to-day—"

"He said he paid her the full amount—" I interrupted.

"Very true. He did; but he paid it out of his own pocket. Sold his farm; put up all his securities, and borrowed seven hundred dollars to make the sum complete. That is the reason he is going to run an engine again. He does not know that I am aware of this, so don't mention it to him."

"Gun is a man," said I; "a great, big-hearted, true man."

"He is a nobleman!" said the nun, arising and going back into the state-room.

Half an hour later, Gunderson came back, took a seat beside me and commenced to talk.

"Say, John, that's the hardest-riding old pelter I ever see, about three inches of slack between engine and tank, pounding like a stamp-mill and—" looking over his shoulder and then at me, "John, I could a swore there was some one standing right there, I *felt* 'em.

"It seems to me they ort to keep up their engines here in pretty good shape. They've got bad water, and so much boiler work that they have to have new flues before the machinery gets worn much. But, Lord, they don't seem—" he looked over his shoulder again, quickly, then settled in his seat to resume, when a pair of hands covered Gun's eyes—the nun's hands.

"Guess who it is, Gun," said I; and noticed that he was very pale.

"It's Mabel," said he, putting up his hands and taking both of hers; "no one but her ever made me feel like that."



MORMON JOE, THE ROBBER

I'm on intimate terms with one of the biggest robbers in this country. He's an expert at the business, but has now retired from active work. The fact of the matter is, Joe didn't know he was robbing, at the time he did it, but he got there, just the same, and come mighty nigh doing time in the penitentiary for it, too.

Maybe I'd better commence at the beginning and tell you that I first knew Joe Hogg in '79, out at the front, on the Santa Fé. Joe hailed from Salt Lake City, and had run on the Utah Central, which gave him the nickname of "Mormon Joe," a name he never resented being called, and to which he always answered. I never did really know whether he was a Mormon or not, and never cared; he was a good engineer, that's about all I cared for. Joe took good care of his engine, wore a clean shirt and behaved himself—which was doing more than the average engineer at the front did.

I remember, one night, Jack McCabe—"Whisky Jack," we used to call him—made some mean remark about the Mormons in general and Joe in particular, and Joe replied: "I don't propose to defend the Mormon faith; it's as good as any, to my mind. I don't propose to judge or misjudge any man by his belief or absence of belief. All that I have got to say is, that the Mormon religion is a *practical* religion. They don't give starving women a tract, or tramps jobs on the stone-pile. The women get bread, and the tramps work for *pay*. Their faith is based on the Christian Bible, with a book added—guess they have as big a right to add or take away as some of the old kings had—bigamy is upheld by the Bible, but has been dead in Utah, for some years. It can't live for the young people are against it. In Utah the woman has all the rights a man has, votes, and is a *person*. (Since cut out of new constitution.) Before the Gentiles came to Salt Lake, the Mormons had but *one* policeman, no jail, few saloons, no houses of prostitution—now the Gentile Christian has sway, and the town is full of them. I guess you could argue on the quality and quantity of rot-gut whisky a good engineer ought to drink, better than on theology, anyhow."

I never heard any of the gang twit Joe about the Mormons again.

I didn't take an awful sight of notice about Joe until I came in, one night, and the boys told me that Joe was arrested as an accomplice in the robbery of the Black Prince mine, in Constitution gulch.

This Black Prince was a gold placer owned by two middle-aged Englishmen. They had a small stamp-mill, run by mule power; and a large number of sluice-boxes. They always worked alone, and said they were developing the mine. No one had any idea that they were taking out much dust, until the mill and sluice-boxes were burned one night, and the story came out that they had been robbed of more than thirty thousand dollars.

Each partner accused the other of the theft. Both were arrested, and detectives commenced to follow every clue.

Joe's arrest fell like a thunder-clap among us. The Brotherhood men took it up right away, and I went to see Joe, that very night. It was said that Joe had visited the Black Prince, the day before, and had been seen carrying away a large package, the night before the robbery.

Joe absolutely refused to say a word for or against himself.

"The detectives got this scheme up and know what they are doing," said he; "I don't. When they get all through, you'll know how it'll come out."

To all questions as to his guilt or innocence, to every query about the crime or his arrest, he replied alike, to friend or foe:

"Ask the sheriff; he's doing this."

He was in jail a long time, but nothing was proven against him and he was finally released.

Neither of the Englishmen could fasten the crime on his partner, and they sold out and drifted away, one going back to England and the other to Mexico.

Joe ran awhile on the road again and then took a job as chief-engineer of a big stamp-mill in Arizona, and going there he was lost to myself and the men on the road, and finally the Black Prince robbery passed into history, and nothing remained but the tradition, a sort of a myth of the mountains, like Captain Kidd's treasures, the amount only being increased by time. I believe that the last time I heard the story, it was calmly stated that thirty million dollars was taken.

When I was out West, last time, I got off the train at Santa Fé, and when gunning through the baggage for my *kiester*, I saw a trunk, bearing on its end this legend:

"MRS. JOS. HOGG."

While I was "gopping" at it, as they say down East, and wondering if it could be my Joe Hogg, a very nice-looking lady came in, leading a little girl, glanced along the lines of trunks, put her hand on the one I was looking at, and said:

"That's the one; yes; the little one. I want it checked to New York."

Just then, a little fellow with whiskers on his chin and a twinkle in his eye came in and took charge of the trunk, the woman and the child, and with the little one's arms around his neck, bid them good-bye, and got them into their seats in the sleeper.

I watched this individual with a great deal of interest; he looked like my old friend, "Mormon Joe," only for the whiskers and the stockman clothes.

Finally he jumped off the moving train, waved his hand and stood watching it out of sight, to catch the last glimpse of (to him) precious burden-bearer; he raised his hand to shade his eyes, and as he did so, I saw that it was minus one thumb, and I remembered that "Mormon Joe" left one of his under an engine up in Colorado—I was sure of him.

There was a tear in his eye, as he turned to go away, so I stepped up to him and asked:

"Any new wives wanted down your way, Elder?"

He glanced up, half angry, looked me straight in the eye, and a smile started at the southeast corner of his phiz and ran around to his port ear.

"Well, John, old man, I don't mind being *sealed* to one about your size, right now. I've just sent away the best one in the wide world. Old man, you're looking plump; by the Holy Joe Smith, a sight of you is good for sore eyes!"

Well, we started, and—but there ain't no use in telling you all about it—I went home with Joe,

went up a creek with a jaw-breaking Spanish name, for miles, to a very good cattle ranch, that was the property of "Mormon Joe."

Joe only quit running some three or four years ago, and the ranch and its neat little home represented the savings of Joe Hogg's life.

His wife and only child had just started for a visit to England where she was born.

The next day we rode the range to see Joe's cattle, and the next we started out for a little hunt. It was sitting by a jolly camp-fire, back in the hills of New Mexico, that "Mormon Joe" told me the true story of the robbery of the Black Prince mine and the romance of his life.

Filling his cob pipe with cut-plug, Joe sat looking away over space toward our hobbled horses and then said:

"Old man, I reckon you remember all about the Black Prince robbery. I don't forget you were the first man that came to the cooler to see me while I was doing time as a *suspect*. Well, coming right down to the point, *I had the dust all the time!* and the working out of the mystery would be rather interesting reading if it was written up, and, as you are such an accomplished liar, I wouldn't be surprised if you made it the base-line of one of them yarns of yourn—only, mind you, don't go too far with it, for it's as curious as a lie itself. I would not try to improve on it, if I was you. I'll tell it to you as it was.

"About four days before the robbery, I was introduced to Rachel Rokesby, daughter of one of the partners in the Black Prince. I met her, in what seemed to be a casual way, at Mother Cameron's hash-foundry, but I found out, a long time afterward, that she had worked for two weeks to bring about the introduction.

"I don't know as you remember seeing her, but she was a quiet, retiring, well-educated, rosy-cheeked English girl—impressed you right away as being the pure, unrefined article, about twenty-two karat. She "chinned" me about an hour, that evening, and just cut a cameo of her pretty face right on my old heart.

"Well, course I saw her home, and tried my best to be interesting, but if a fellow ever in his natural life becomes a double-barreled jackass, it's just immediately after he falls in love. Why, he ain't as interesting as the unlettered side of an ore-sack.

"But we got on amazing well; the girl did most of the talking and along toward the last, mentioned that she was in great trouble—of course I wa'n't interested in that at all. I liked to have broken my neck in getting her to tell me at once if I couldn't do something to help her, say, for instance, move Raton mountain up agin Pike's Peak.

"I went home that night, promising to call on her the next trip, not to let any one know I was coming, not to tell anybody I had been there, not for *worlds* to repeat or intimate what she told me, and she would tell me her trouble from start to finish, and then I could help her, if I wanted to. Well, I wanted to, *bad*.

"I went up to the Rokesby's cabin, next trip in; it was dark, and as I went up the front walk, I heard the old gentleman going out the back, bound for the village 'diggin's.' I had it all to myself—the secret, I mean.

"When I went in, I got about a forty-second squeeze of a neat little hand, and things did look so

nice and clean and homelike that I had it on the end of my tongue to ask right then to camp in the place.

"After a few commonplaces, she turned around and asked me if I still wanted to help her and would keep the secret, if I concluded in the end to keep out of her troubles. You bet your life, old man, she didn't have to wait long for assurance—why I wouldn't'a waited a minute to have contracted to turn the Mississippi into the Mammoth Cave, if she had asked it.

"Well," says she, finally, "it is not generally known, in fact, isn't known at all, that the Black Prince is a paying placer, and that papa and Mr. Sanson have been taking out lots of gold for some time. They have over fifty pounds of gold-dust and nuggets hidden under the floor of the old mill."

"Well," says I, "that hadn't ought to worry you so."

"But that isn't all the story," she continued; "we have discovered a plot on the part of Mr. Sanson to rob papa of the gold and burn the mill and sluice-boxes, to hide the crime. You will find that every tough in town is his friend, because he buys whisky for them, and they all dislike papa. If he carried out his plan, we would have no redress whatever; all the justices in town can be bribed. The plan is to take the gold, burn the mill, and then accuse papa of the crime. Now, can't you help me to fool that old villain of a Sanson, and put papa's half of the money in a safe place?"

"I thought quite a while before I answered; it seemed strange to me that the case should be as she stated, and I half feared I might be made a cat's-paw and get into trouble, but the girl looked at me so trustingly with her blue eyes and added:

"I am afraid that I am the cause of all the trouble, too. Papa and Sanson got along well until I refused to marry him; after that, the row began—I hate him. He said I would *have* to marry him before he was done with me—but I won't!"

"You bet you won't, darling," says I, before I thought. "Pardon me, Miss Rokesby, but if there is any marrying done around here, I want a hand in the game myself."

"She blushed deeply, looked at the toe of her shoe a minute, and said:

"I'm only eighteen, and am too young to think of marrying. Suppose we don't talk of that until we get out of the present difficulties."

"Sensible idea," says I. "But when we are out, suppose you and I have a talk on that subject."

"She looked at the toe of her shoe for a minute again, turned red and white around the gills, looked up at me, shyly at first, then fully and fairly, stretched out her hand and said:

"Yes; if you care to."

"Course, I didn't *care*, or nothing—no more than a man cares for his head.

"I guess that was about a half engagement, anyhow, it's the only one we ever had. She said it would be ruinous to our plans if I was seen with her then or afterward; and agreed to leave a note at the house for me by next trip, telling me her plan—which she should talk over with her father.

"A couple of days later I got in from a round trip and made a dive for the boarding-house.

"Any mail for me, mother?" I asked old Mrs. Cameron.

"No, young man; I'm sorry to say there ain't

"I was anxious to hear from home.'

"Too bad; but maybe it'll come to-morrow.'

"I was up to fever heat, but could do nothing but wait. I went to bed late, and, raising up my pillow to put my watch under it, I found a note; it read:

"Midnight, July 17.

"DEAR JOE:

"Just thought of that rule for changing counter-balance you wanted. There has always been a miscalculation about the weight of counter-balance; they are universally *too heavy*. The weights are in pieces; take out two *pieces*; this treatment would even improve a mule sweep. When once out, pieces should be changed or placed where careless or malicious persons cannot get hold of them and replace them. All is well; hope you are the same; will see you some time soon.

"JACK.'

"Here was apparently a fool letter from one young railroader to another, but I knew well enough that it was from Rachel and meant something.

"I noticed that it was dated the *next night*; then I commenced to see, and in a few minutes my instructions were plain. The old five-stamp mill was driven by a mule, who wandered aimlessly around a never-ending circle at the end of a long, wooden sweep; this pole extended past the post of the mill a few feet, and had on the short end a box of stones as a counter-weight. I would find two packages of gold there at midnight of July 17.

"I was running one of those old Pittsburgh hogs then, and she had to have her throttle ground the next day, but it was more than likely that she would be ready to go out at 8:30 on her turn; but I arranged to have it happen that the stand-pipe yoke should be broken in putting it up, so that another engine would have to be fired up, and I would lay in.

"I told stories in the roundhouse until nearly ten o'clock that fateful night, and then started for the hash-foundry, dodged into a lumber yard, got onto the rough ground back of town and made a wide detour toward Constitution Gulch, the Black Prince and the mule-sweep. I crept up to the washed ground through some brush and laid down in a path to wait for midnight. I felt a full-fledged sneak-thief, but I thought of Rachel and didn't care if I was one or not, so long as she was satisfied.

"I looked often at my watch in the moonlight, and at twelve o'clock everything was as still as death. I could hear my own heart beat against my ribs as I sneaked up to that counter-balanced sweep. I got there without accident or incident, found two packages done up in canvas with tarred-string handles; they were heavy but small, and in ten minutes I had them alone with me among the stumps and stones on the little *mesa* back of town.

"I'll never forget how I felt there in the dark with all that money that wasn't mine, and if some one had have said 'boo' from behind a stump, I should have probably dropped the boodle and taken to the brush.

"As I approached the town, I realized that I could never get through it to the boarding-house or the roundhouse with those two bundles that *looked like country sausages*. I studied awhile on it and finally put them under an old scraper beside the road, and went without them to the shops. I got from my seat-box a clean pair of overalls and jacket and came back without being seen.

"I wrapped one of the packages up in these and boldly stepped out into the glare of the electric lights—I remember I thought the town too darned enterprising.

"One of the first men I met was the marshal, Jack Kelly. He was reported to be a Pinkerton man,

and was mistrusted by some of the men, but tried to be friendly and 'stand in' with all of us. He slapped me on the back and nearly scared the wits out of me. He insisted on treating me, and I went into a saloon and 'took something' with him, in fear and trembling. The package was heavy, but I must carry it lightly under my arm, as if it were only overclothes.

"I treated in return, and had it charged, because I dare not attempt to get my right hand into my pocket. Jack was disposed to talk, and I feared he was just playing with me like a cat does with a mouse, but I finally got off and deposited my precious burden in my seat-box, under lock and key—then I sneaked back for the second haul. I met Jack and a policeman, on my next trip, and he exclaimed:

"'Why, ain't you gone out yet?' and started off, telling the roundsman to keep the bunkos off me up to the shop. *I thought then I was caught*, but I was not, and the bluecoat bid me a pleasant good-night, at the shop yard.

"When I got near my engine, I was surprised to see Barney Murry, the night machinist, with his torch up on the cab—he was putting in the newly-ground throttle.

"Just before I had decided to emerge from the shadow of the next engine, Barney commenced to yell for his helper, Dick, to come and help him on with the dome-cover.

"Dick came with a sandwich in one hand and a can of coffee in the other. This reminded Barney of his lunch, and setting his torch down on the top of the cab, he scrambled down on the other side and hurried off to the sand-dryer, where the gang used to eat their dyspepsia insurance and swap lies.

"After listening a moment, to be sure I was alone, I stepped lightly to the cab, and in a minute the two heavy and dangerous packages were side by side again.

"But just here an inspiration struck me. I opened the front door of the cab, stepped out on the running-board, and a second later was holding Barney's smoking torch down in the dome.

"The throttle occupied most of the space, but there was considerable room each side of it and a good two feet between the top of the boiler shell and the top row of flues. I took one of the bags of gold, held it down at arm's length, swung it backward and forward a time or two, and let go, so as to drop it well ahead on the flues: the second bag followed at once, and again I held down the light to see if the bags were out of sight; satisfied on this point, I got down, took my clothes under my arm, and jumped off the engine into the arms of the night foreman."

"'What did you call me for? That engine is not ready to go out on the extra,' I demanded, off-hand.

"'I ain't called you; you're dreaming.'

"'May be I am,' said I, 'but I would 'a swore some one came and called under my window that I got out at 2:10, on a stock-train, extra.'

"Just then, Barney and Dick came back, and I soon had the satisfaction of seeing the cover screwed down on my secret and a fire built under it—then I went home and slept.

"I guess it was four round trips that I made with the old pelter, before Kelly put this and that together, and decided to put me where the dogs wouldn't bite me.

"I appeared as calm as I could, and set the example since followed by politicians, that of 'dignified

silence.' Kelly tried to work one of the 'fellow convict' rackets on me, but I made no confessions. I soon became a martyr, in the eyes of the women of the town. You boys got to talking of backing up a suit for false imprisonment; election was coming on and the sheriff and county judge were getting uneasy, and the district attorney was awfully unhappy, so they let me out.

"Nixon, the sheriff, pumped me slyly, to see what effect my imprisonment would have on future operations, and I told him I didn't propose to lose any time over it, and agreed to drop the matter for a little nest-egg equal to the highest pay received by any engineer on the road. Pat Dailey was the worst hog for overtime, and I selected his pay as the standard and took big money,—from the campaign funds. I wasn't afraid of re-arrest;—I had 'em for bribery.

"Whilst I was in hock, I had cold chills every time I heard the 313's whistle, for fear they would wash her out and find the dust; but she gave up nothing.

"When I reported for work, the old scrap was out on construction and they were disposed to put me on another mill, pulling varnished cars, but I told the old man I was under the weather and 'crummy,' and that put him in a good humor; and I was sent out to a desolate siding, and once again took charge, of the steam 'fence,' for the robber of the Black Prince mine.

"On Sunday, by a little maneuvering, I managed to get the crew to go off on a trout-fishing expedition, and under pretext of grinding-in her chronically leaky throttle, I took off her dome-cover and looked in; there was nothing in sight.

"I was afraid that the cooking of two months or more had destroyed the canvas bags; then again the heavy deposit of scale might have cemented the bags to the flues. In either case, rough handling would send the dust to the bottom of the boiler, making it difficult if not impossible to recover; and worse yet, manifest itself sometime and give me dead away.

"I concluded to go at the matter right, and after two hours of hard work, managed to get the upright throttle-pipe out of the dome. I drew her water down below the flue-line, and though it was tolerably warm, I got in.

"Both of my surmises were partially correct; the canvas was rotted, in a measure, and the bags were fastened to the flues. The dust had been put up in buckskin bags, first, and these had been put into shot-sacks; the buckskin was shrunken but intact. I took a good look around, before I dared take the treasure into the sunlight; but the coast was clear, and inside of an hour they were locked in my clothes-box, and the cover was on the kettle again and I was pumping her up by hand.

"I was afraid something would happen to me or the engine, so I buried the packages in a bunch of willows near the track.

"It must have been two weeks after this that a mover's wagon stopped near the creek within half a mile of the track, and hobbled horses soon began to 'rustle' grass, and the smoke of a camp-fire hunted the clouds.

"We saw this sort of thing often, and I didn't any more than glance at it; but after supper I sauntered down by the engine, smoking and thinking of Rachel Rokesby, when I noticed a woman walking towards me, pail in hand.

"She had on a sunbonnet that hid her face and she got within ten feet of me before she spoke—she asked for a pail of drinking-water from the tank—the creek was muddy from a recent rain.

"Just as soon as she spoke, I knew it was Rachel, but I controlled myself, for others were within hearing. I walked with her to the engine and got the water; I purposely drew the pail full, which she promptly spilled, and I offered to carry it for her.

"The crew watched us walk away and I heard some of them mention 'mash,' but I didn't care, I wanted a word with my girl.

"When we were out of earshot, she asked without looking up:

"Well, old coolness, are you all right?"

"You bet! darling."

"Papa has sold out his half and we are going away for good. I think if we get rid of the dust without trouble, we may go to England. Just as soon as all is safe, you shall hear from me; can't you trust me, Joe?"

"Yes, Rachel, darling; now and forever."

"Where's the gold?"

"Within one hundred feet of you, in those willows; when it is dark, I will go and get it and put it on that stump by the big tree; go then and get it. But where will you put it?"

"I'm going to pack it in the bottom of a jar of butter."

"Good idea, little girl! I think you'd make a good thief yourself. How's my friend, Sanson?"

"He's gone to Mexico; says yet that papa robbed him, but he knows as well as you or I that all his bluster was because he only found *half* that he expected; I pride myself on getting ahead of a wicked man once, thanks to our hero, by the name of Hogg."

"It was getting dusk and we were out of sight, so I sat down the pail and asked:

"Do I get a kiss, this evening?"

"If you want one."

"There's only one thing I want worse."

"What is that, Joe?"

"My arm was around her waist now, and the sunbonnet was shoved back from the face. I took a couple of cream-puffs where they were ripe, and answered:

"That message to come and have that talk about matrimony."

"Here a man's voice was heard calling: 'Rachel! Rachel!' and throwing her arms around my neck, she gave me one more kiss, snatched up her pail and answered:

"Yes; I'm coming."

"Then to me, hurriedly:

"Good-by, dear; wait patiently, you shall hear from me."

"I went back and put the dangerous dust on the stump and returned to the bunk-car. The next morning when I turned out, the outlines of the wagon were dimly discernible away on a hill in the road; it had been gone an hour.

"I walked down past my stump—the gold was gone.

"Well, John, I settled down to work and to wait for that precious letter that would summon me to the side of Rachel Rokesby, wherever she was; but it never came. Uncle Sam never delivered a line to me from her from that day to this."

Joe kicked the burning sticks in our fire closer together, lit his pipe and then proceeded:

"I was hopeful for a month or two; then got impatient, and finally got angry, but it ended in despair. A year passed away before I commenced to *hunt*, instead of waiting to be hunted; but after another year I gave it up, and came to the belief that Rachel was dead or married to another. But the very minute that such a treasonable thought flashed through my mind, my heart held up the image of her pure face and rebuked me.

"I was discharged finally, for forgetting orders—I was thinking of something else—then I commenced to pull myself together and determined to control myself. I held the job in Arizona almost a year, but the mill company busted; then I drifted down on to the Mexican National, when it was building, and got a job. A few months later, it came to my ears that one of our engineers, Billy Gardiner, was in one of their damnable prisons, for running over a Greaser, and I organized a relief expedition. I called on Gardiner, and talked over his trouble fully; he was in a loathsome dobie hole, full of vermin, and dark. As I sat talking to him, I noticed an old man, chained to the wall in a little entry on the other side of the room. His beard was grizzly white, long and tangled. He was hollow-cheeked and wild-eyed, and looked at me in a strange, fascinated way.

"'What's he in for,' I whispered to Gardiner.

"'Murdered his partner in a mining camp. Got caught in the act. He don't know it yet, but he's condemned to be shot next Friday—to-morrow. Poor devil, he's half crazy, anyhow.'

"As I got up to go, the old man made a sharp hiss, and as I turned to look at him, he beckoned with his finger. I took a step or two nearer, and he asked, in an audible whisper:

"'Mr. Hogg, don't you know me?'

"I looked at him long and critically, and then said:

"'No; I never saw you before.'

"'Yes; that's so,' said he; 'but I have seen you, many times. You remember the Black Prince robbery?'

"'Yes, indeed; then you are Sanson?'

"'No; Rokesby.'

"'Rokesby! My God, man, where's Rachel?'

"'I thought so,' he muttered. 'Well, she's in England, but I'm here.'

"'What part of England?'

"Sit down on that box, Mr. Hogg, and I will tell you something.'

"Is she married?' I asked eagerly.

"No, lad, she ain't, and what's more, she won't be till she marries you, so be easy there.'

Just here a pompous Mexican official strode in, stepped up in front of the old man and read something in Spanish.

"What in hell did he say?' asked the prisoner of Gardiner.

"Something about sentence, pardner.'

"Well, it's time they was doing something; did he say when it was?'

"To-morrow.'

"Good enough; I'm dead sick o' this.'

"Can't I do anything for you, Mr. Rokesby—for Rachel's sake?'

"No—yes, you can, too, young man; you can grant me a pardon for a worse crime nor murder, if you will—for—for Rachel's sake."

"It's granted then.'

"Good! that gives me heart. Now, Mr. Hogg, to business, it was me that robbed the Black Prince mine. I took every last cent there was, and I used you and Rachel to do the work for me and take the blame if caught. Sanson was honest enough, I fired the mill myself.

"It was me that sent Rachel to you; I admired your face, as you rode by the claim every day on your engine. I knew you had nerve. If you and Rachel hadn't fallen in love with one another, I'd 'a lost though; but I won.

"Well, I took the money I got for the claim and sent Rachel back to her mother's sister, in England. You may not know, but she is not my daughter; she thinks she is, though. Her parents died when she was small, and I provided for her. I'm her half-uncle. I got avaricious in my old age, and went into a number of questionable schemes.

"After leaving New Mexico, I worked the dust off, a little at a time, an' wasted the money—but never mind that.

"It was just before she got aboard the ship that Rachel sent me a letter containing another to you, to be sent when all was right—I've carried it ever since—somehow or other I was afraid it would drop a clew to send it at first, and after it got a year old, I didn't think of it much.'

He fumbled around inside of his dirty flannel shirt for a minute, and soon fished up a letter almost as black as the shirt, and holding it up, said:

"That's it.'

"I had the envelope off in a second, and read:

"DEAR JOSEPH:

"I am going to my aunt, Mrs. Julia Bradshaw, 15 Harrow Lane, Leicester, England. If you do not change your mind, I will be happy to talk over our affairs whenever you are ready. I shall be waiting.

"RACHEL'.

"I turned and bolted toward a door, when Gardiner yelled:

"Where are you going?"

"To England,' said I.

"This door, then, sir,' said a Mexican.

"I came back to the old man.

"Rokesby,' said I, 'you have cut ten years off my life, but I forgive you; good-by.'

"One thing more, Mr. Hogg; don't tell 'em at home how I went—nothing about this last deal.'

"Well, all right; but I'll tell Rachel, if we marry and come to America.'

"I've got lots of honest relations, and my old mother still lives, in her eighties.'

"Well, not till after she goes, unless to save Rachel in some way.'

"Good-by, Mr. Hogg, God bless you! and—and, little Rachel.'

"Good-by, Mr. Rokesby.'

"The next day I left Mexico for God's country, and inside of ten days was on a Cunarder, eastward bound. I reached England in proper time; I found the proper pen in the proper train, and was deposited in the proper town, directed to the proper house, and street, and number, and had pulled out about four yards of wire attached to the proper bell.

"A kindly-faced old lady looked at me over her spectacles, and I asked:

"Does Mrs. Julia Bradshaw live here?"

"Yes, sir; that's me.'

"Have you a young lady here named Rachel R—'

"The old lady didn't wait for me to finish the name, she just turned her head fifteen degrees, put her open hand up beside her mouth, and shouted upstairs:

"Rachel! Rachel! Come down here, quick! Here's your young man from America!"

A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S TRIP

It is all of twenty years now since the little incident happened that I am going to tell you about. After the strike of '77, I went into exile in the wild and woolly West, mostly in "bleeding Kansas," but often in Colorado, New Mexico, and Arizona—the Santa Fé goes almost everywhere in the Southwest.

One night in August I was dropping an old Baldwin consolidator down a long Mexican grade, after having helped a stock train over the division by double-heading. It was close and hot on this sagebrush waste, something not unusual at night in high altitudes, and the heat and sheet lightning around the horizon warned me that there was to be one of those short, fierce storms that come but once or twice a year in these latitudes, and which are known as cloudbursts.

The alkali plains, or deserts, as they are often erroneously called, are great stretches of adobe soil, known as "dobie" by the natives. This soil is a yellowish brown, or perhaps more of a gray color, and as fine as flour. Water plays sad havoc with it, if the soil lies so as to oppose the flow, and it moves like dust before a slight stream. On the flat, hard-baked plains, the water makes no impression, but on a railroad grade, be it ever so slight, the tendency is to dig pitfalls. I have seen a little stream of water, just enough to fill the ditches on each side of the track, take out all the dirt, and keep the ties and track afloat until the water was gone, then drop them into a hole eight or ten feet deep, or if the washout was short, leave them suspended, looking safe and sound, to lure some poor engineer and his mate to death.

Another peculiarity of these storms is that they come quickly, rage furiously for a few minutes, and are gone, and their lines are sharply defined. It is not uncommon to find a lot of water, or a washout, within a mile of land so dry that it looks as if it had never seen a drop of water.

All this land is fertile when it can be brought under irrigating ditches and watered, but here it lies out almost like a desert. It is sparsely inhabited along the little streams by a straggling off-shoot of the Mexican race; yet once in a while a fine place is to be seen, like an oasis in the Sahara, the home of some old Spanish Don, with thousands of cattle or sheep ranging on the plains, or perhaps the headquarters of some enterprising cattle company. But these places were few and far between at the time of which I write; the stations were mere passing places, long side-tracks, with perhaps a stock-yard and section house once in a while, but generally without buildings or even switch lights.

Noting the approach of the storm, I let the heavy engine drop the faster, hoping to reach a certain sidetrack, over twenty miles away, where there was a telegraph operator, and learn from him the condition of the road. But the storm was faster than any consolidator that Baldwins ever built, and as the lightning suddenly ceased and the air became heavy, hot, and absolutely motionless, I realized that we would have the storm full upon us in a few moments. I had nothing to meet for more than thirty miles, and there was nothing behind me; so I stopped, turned the headlight up, and hung my white signal lamps down below the buffer-beams each side of the pilot—this to enable me to see the ends of the ties and the ditch.

Billy Howell, my fireman, and a good one, hastily went over the boiler-jacket with signal oil, to prevent rust; we donned our gum coats; I dropped a little oil on the "Mary Ann's" gudgeon's, and

we proceeded on our way without a word. On these big consolidators you cannot see well ahead, past the big boiler, from the cab, and I always ran with my head out of the side window. Both of us took this position now, standing up ready for anything; but we bowled safely along for one mile—two miles, through the awful hush. Then, as sudden as a flash of light, "boom!" went a peal of thunder as sharp and clear as a signal gun. There was a flash of light along the rails, the surface of the desert seemed to break out here and there with little fitful jets of greenish-blue flame, and from every side came the answering reports from the batteries of heaven, like sister gunboats answering a salute. The rain fell in torrents, yes, in sheets. I have never, before or since, seen such a grand and fantastic display of fireworks, nor heard such rivalry of cannonade. I stopped my engine, and looked with awe and interest at this angry fit of nature, watched the balls of fire play along the ground, and realized for the first time what a sight was an electric storm.

As the storm commenced at the signal of a mighty peal of thunder, so it ended as suddenly at the same signal; the rain changed in an instant from a torrent to a gentle shower, the lightning went out, the batteries ceased their firing, the breeze commenced to blow gently, the air was purified. Again we heard the signal peal of thunder, but it seemed a great way off, as if the piece was hurrying away to a more urgent quarter. The gentle shower ceased, the black clouds were torn asunder overhead; invisible hands seemed to snatch a gray veil of fleecy clouds from the face of the harvest moon, and it shone out as clear and serene as before the storm. The ditches on each side of the track were half full of water, ties were floating along in them, but the track seemed safe and sound, and we proceeded cautiously on our way. Within two miles the road turned to the West, and here we found the water in the ditches running through dry soil, carrying dead grass and twigs of sage upon its surface; we passed the head of the flood, tumbling along through the dry ditches as dirty as it well could be, and fast soaking into the soil; and then we passed beyond the line of the storm entirely.

Billy put up his seat and filled his pipe, and I sat down and absorbed a sandwich as I urged my engine ahead to make up for lost time; we took up our routine of work just where we had left it, and—life was the same old song. It was past midnight now, and as I never did a great deal of talking on an engine, I settled down to watching the rails ahead, and wondering if the knuckle-joints would pound the rods off the pins before we got to the end of the division.



"'Mexican,' said I."

Billy, with his eyes on the track ahead, was smoking his second pipe and humming a tune, and the "Mary Ann" was making about forty miles an hour, but doing more rolling and pitching and jumping up and down than an eight-wheeler would at sixty. All at once I discerned something away down the track where the rails seemed to meet. The moon had gone behind a cloud, and the headlight gave a better view and penetrated further. Billy saw it, too, for he took his pipe out of his mouth, and with his eyes still upon it, said laconically, as was his wont: "Cow."

"Yes," said I, closing the throttle and dropping the lever ahead.

"Man," said Billy, as the shape seemed to assume a perpendicular position.

"Yes," said I, reaching for the three-way cock, and applying the tender brake, without thinking what I did.

"Woman," said Billy, as the shape was seen to wear skirts, or at least drapery.

"Mexican," said I, as I noted the mantilla over the head. We were fast nearing the object.

"No," said Billy, "too well built."

I don't know what he judged by; we could not see the face, for it was turned away from us; but the form was plainly that of a comely woman. She stood between the rails with her arms stretched out like a cross, her white gown fitting her figure closely. A black, shawl-like mantilla was over the

head, partly concealing her face; her right foot was upon the left-hand rail. She stood perfectly still. We were within fifty feet of her, and our speed was reduced to half, when Billy said sharply: "Hold her, John—for God's sake!"

But I had the "Mary Ann" in the back motion before the words left his mouth, and was choking her on sand. Billy leaned upon the boiler-head and pulled the whistle-cord, but the white figure did not move. I shut my eyes as we passed the spot where she had stood. We got stopped a rod or two beyond. I took the white light in the tank and sprang to the ground. Billy lit the torch, and followed me with haste. The form still stood upon the track just where we had first seen it; but it faced us and the arms were folded. I confess to hurrying slowly until Billy caught up with the torch, which he held over his head.

"Good evening, señors," said the apparition, in very sweet English, just tinged with the Castilian accent, but she spoke as if nearly exhausted.

"Good gracious," said I, "whatever brought you away out here, and hadn't you just as lief shoot a man as scare him to death?"

She laughed very sweetly, and said: "The washout brought me just here, and I fancy it was lucky for you—both of you."

"Washout?" said I. "Where?"

"At the dry bridge beyond."

Well, to make a long story short, we took her on the engine—she was wet through—and went on to the dry bridge. This was a little wooden structure in a sag, about a mile away, and we found that the storm we had encountered farther back had done bad work at each end of the bridge. We did not cross that night, but after placing signals well behind us and ahead of the washout, we waited until morning, the three of us sitting in the cab of the "Mary Ann," chatting as if we were old acquaintances.

This young girl, whose fortunes had been so strangely cast with ours, was the daughter of Señor Juan Arboles, a rich old Spanish Don who owned a fine place and immense herds of sheep over on the Rio Pecos, some ten miles west of the road. She was being educated in some Catholic school or convent at Trinidad, and had the evening before alighted at the big corrals, a few miles below, where she was met by one of her father's Mexican rancheros, who led her saddle broncho. They had started on their fifteen-mile ride in the cool of the evening, and following the road back for a few miles were just striking off toward the distant hedge of cotton woods that lined the little stream by her home when the storm came upon them.

There was a lone pine tree hardly larger than a bush about a half-mile from the track, and riding to this, the girl, whose name was Josephine, had dismounted to seek its scant protection, while the herder tried to hold the frightened horses. As peal on peal of thunder resounded and the electric lights of nature played tag over the plain, the horses became more and more unmanageable and at last stampeded, with old Paz muttering Mexican curses and chasing after them wildly.

After the storm passed, Josephine waited in vain for Paz and the bronchos, and then debated whether she should walk toward her home or back to the corrals. In either direction the distance was long, and the adobe soil is very tenacious when wet, and the wayfarer needs great strength to carry the load it imposes on the feet. As she stood there, thinking what it was best to do, a sound

came to her ears from the direction of the timber and home, which she recognized in an instant, and without waiting to debate further, she turned and ran with all her strength, not toward her home, but away from it. Across the waste of stunted sage she sped, the cool breeze upon her face, every muscle strained to its utmost. Nearer and nearer came the sound; the deep, regular bay of the timber wolf. These animals are large and fierce; they do not go in packs, like the smaller and more cowardly breeds of wolves, but in pairs, or, at most, six together. A pair of them will attack a man even when he is mounted, and lucky is he if he is well armed and cool enough to despatch one before it fastens its fangs in his horse's throat or his own thigh.

As the brave girl ran, she cast about for some means of escape or place of refuge. She decided to run to the railroad track and climb a telegraph pole—a feat which, owing to her free life on the ranch, she was perfectly capable of. Once up the pole, she could rest on the cross-tree, in perfect safety from the wolves, and she would be sure to be seen and rescued by the first train that came along after daybreak.

She approached the track over perfectly dry ground. To reach the telegraph poles, she sprang nimbly into the ditch; and as she did so, she saw a stream of water coming rapidly toward her—it was the front of the flood. The ditch on the opposite side of the track, which she must also cross to reach the line of poles, she found already full-flooded. She decided to run up the track, between the walls of water. This would put a ten-foot stream between her and her pursuers, and change her course enough, she hoped, to throw them off the scent. In this design she was partly successful, for the bay of the wolves showed that they were going to the track as she had gone, instead of cutting straight across toward her. Thus she gained considerable time. She reached the little arroyo spanned by the dry bridge; it was like a mill-pond, and the track was afloat. She ran across the bridge; she scarcely slackened speed, although the ties rocked and moved on the spike-heads holding them to the rails.

She hoped for a moment that the wolves would not venture to follow her over such a way; but their hideous voices were still in her ear and came nearer and nearer. Then there came to her, faintly, another, a strange, metallic sound. What was it? Where was it? She ran on tiptoe a few paces in order to hear it better; it was in the rails—the vibration of a train in motion. Then there came into view a light—a headlight; but it was so far away, so very far, and that awful baying so close! The "Mary Ann," however, was fleeter of foot than the wolves; the light grew big and bright and the sound of working machinery came to the girl on the breeze.

Would they stop for her? Could she make them see her? Then she thought of the bridge. It was death for them as well as for her—they *must* see her. She resolved to stay on the track until they whistled her off; but now the light seemed to come so slow. A splash at her side caused her to turn her head, and there, a dozen feet away, were her pursuers, their tongues out, their eyes shining like balls of fire. They were just entering the water to come across to her. They fascinated her by their very fierceness. Forgetting where she was for the instant, she stared dumbly at them until called to life and action by a scream from the locomotive's whistle. Then she sprang from the track just in the nick of time. She actually laughed as she saw two grayish-white wolf-tails bob here and there among the sage brush, as the wolves took flight at sight of the engine.

This was the story she told as she dried her garments before the furnace door, and I confess to holding this cool, self-reliant girl in high admiration. She never once thought of fainting; but along toward morning she did say that she was scared then at thinking of it.

Early in the morning a party of herders, with Josephine's father ahead, rode into sight. They were

hunting for her. Josephine got up on the tender to attract their attention, and soon she was in her father's arms. Her frightened pony had gone home as fast as his legs would carry him, and a relief party swam their horses at the ford and rode forward at once.

The old Don was profuse in his thanks, and would not leave us until Billy and I had agreed to visit his ranch and enjoy a hunt with him, and actually set a date when we should meet him at the big corral. I wanted a rest anyway, and it was perfectly plain that Billy was beyond his depth in love with the girl at first sight; so we were not hard to persuade when she added her voice to her father's.

Early in September Billy and I dropped off No. 1 with our guns and "plunder," as baggage is called there, and a couple of the old Don's men met us with saddle and pack animals. I never spent a pleasanter two weeks in my life. The quiet, almost gloomy, old Don and I became fast friends, and the hunting was good. The Don was a Spaniard, but Josephine's mother had been a Mexican woman, and one noted for her beauty. She had been dead some years at the time of our visit. Billy devoted most of his time to the girl. They were a fine looking young couple, he being strong and broad-shouldered, with laughing blue eyes and light curly hair, she slender and perfect in outline, with a typical Southern complexion, black eyes—and such eyes they were—and hair and eyebrows like the raven's wing.

A few days before Billy and I were booked to resume our duties on the deck of the "Mary Ann," Miss Josephine took my arm and walked me down the yard and pumped me quietly about "Mr. Howell," as she called Billy. She went into details a little, and I answered all questions as best I could. All I said was in the young man's favor—it could not, in truth, be otherwise. Josephine seemed satisfied and pleased.

When we got back to headquarters, I was given the care of a cold-water Hinkley, with a row of varnished cars behind her, and Billy fell heir to the rudder of the "Mary Ann." We still roomed together. Billy put in most of his lay-over time writing long letters to somebody, and every Thursday, as regular as a clock, one came for him, with a censor's mark on it. Often after reading the letter, Billy would say: "That girl has more horse sense than the rest of the whole female race—she don't slop over worth a cent." He invariably spoke of her as "my Mexican girl," and often asked my opinion about white men intermarrying with that mongrel race. Sometimes he said that his mother would go crazy if he married a Mexican, his father would disown him, and his brother Henry—well, Billy did not like to think just what revenge Henry would take. Billy's father was manager of an Eastern road, and his brother was assistant to the first vice-president, and Billy looked up to the latter as a great man and a sage. He himself was in the West for practical experience in the machinery department, and to get rid of a slight tendency to asthma. He could have gone East any time and "been somebody" on the road under his father.

Finally, Billy missed a week in writing. At once there was a cog gone from the answering wheel to match. Billy shortened his letters; the answers were shortened. Then he quit writing, and his Thursday letter ceased to come. He had thought the matter all over, and decided, no doubt, that he was doing what was best—both for himself and the girl; that his family's high ideas should not be outraged by a Mexican marriage. He had put a piece of flesh-colored court-plaster over his wound, not healed it.

Early in the winter the old Don wrote, urging us to come down and hunt antelope, but Billy declined to go—said that the road needed him, and that Josephine might come home from school and this would make them both uncomfortable. But Henry, his older brother, was visiting him, and

he suggested that I take Henry; he would enjoy the hunt, and it would help him drown his sorrow over the loss of his aristocratic young wife, who had died a year or two before. So Henry went with me, and we hunted antelope until we tired of the slaughter. Then the old Don planned a deer-hunting trip in the mountains, but I had to go back to work, and left Henry and the old Don to take the trip without me. While they were in the mountains, Josephine came home, and Henry Howell's stay lengthened out to a month. But I did not know until long afterward that the two had met.

Billy was pretty quiet all winter, worked hard and went out but little—he was thinking about something. One day I came home and found him writing a letter. "What now, Billy?" I asked.

"Writing to my Mexican girl," said he.

"I thought you had got over that a long time ago?"

"So did I, but I hadn't. I've been trying to please somebody else besides myself in this matter, and I'm done. I'm going to work for Bill now."

"Take an old man's advice, Billy, and don't write that girl a line—go and see her."

"Oh, I can fix it all right by letter, and then run down there and see her."

"Don't do it."

"I'll risk it."

A week later Billy and I sat on the veranda of the company's hash-foundry, figuring up our time and smoking our cob meerschaums, when one of the boys who had been to the office, placed two letters in Billy's hands. One of them was directed in the handwriting that used to be on the old Thursday letters. Billy tore it open eagerly—and his own letter to Josephine dropped into his hand. Billy looked at the ground steadily for five minutes, and I pretended not to have seen. Finally he said, half to himself: "You were right, I ought to have gone myself—but I'll go now, go to-morrow." Then he opened the other letter.

He read its single page with manifest interest, and when his eyes reached the last line they went straight on, and looked at the ground, and continued to do so for fully five minutes. Without looking up, he said: "John, I want you to do me two favors."

"All right," said I.

Still keeping his eyes on the ground, he said, slowly, as if measuring everything well: "I'm going up and draw my time, and will leave for Old Mexico on No. 4 to-night. I want you to write to both these parties and tell them that I have gone there and that you have forwarded both these letters. Don't tell 'em that I went after reading 'em."

"And the other favor, Billy?"

"Read this letter, and see me off to-night."

The letter read:

"Philadelphia, May 1, 1879.

"DEAR BROTHER WILL: I want you and Mr. A. to go down to Don Juan Arboles's by the first of June. I will be there then. You must be my best man, as I stand up to marry the sweetest, dearest wild-flower of a woman that ever bloomed in a land of beauty. Don't fail me. Josephine will like you for my sake, and you will love her for your brother.

HENRY."

Most engineers' lives are busy ones and full of accident and incident, and having my full share of both, I had almost forgotten all these points about Billy Howell and his Mexican girl, when they were all recalled by a letter from Billy himself. With his letter was a photograph of a family group—a be-whiskered man of thirty-five, a good-looking woman of twenty, but undoubtedly a Mexican, and a curly-headed baby, perhaps a year old. The letter ran:

"City of Mexico, July 21, 1890.

"DEAR OLD JOHN: I had lost you, and thought that perhaps you had gone over to the majority, until I saw your name and recognized your quill in a story. Write to me; am doing well. I send you a photograph of all there are of the Howell outfit. *No half-breeds for your uncle this time.*

THE POLAR ZONE

Very few of my friends know me for a seafaring man, but I sailed the salt seas, man and boy, for nine months and eighteen days, and I know just as much about sailing the hereinbefore mentioned salt seas as I ever want to.

Ever so long ago, when I was young and tender, I used to have fits of wanting to go into business for myself. Along about the front edge of the seventies, pay for "toting" people and truck over the eastern railroads of New England was not of sufficient plenitude to worry a man as to how he would invest his pay check—it was usually invested before he got it. One of my periodical fits of wanting to go into business for myself came on suddenly one day, when I got home and found another baby in the house. I was right in the very worst spasms of it when my brother Enoch, whom I hadn't seen for seventeen years, walked in on me.

Enoch was fool enough to run away to sea when he was twelve years old—I suppose he was afraid he would get the chance to do something besides whaling. We were born down New Bedford way, where another boy and myself were the only two fellows in the district, for over forty years, who didn't go hunting whales, icebergs, foul smells, and scurvy, up in King Frost's bailiwick, just south of the Pole.

Enoch had been captain and part owner of a Pacific whaler; she had recently burned at Honolulu, and he was back home now to buy a new ship. He had heard that I, his little brother John, was the best locomotive engineer in the whole world, and had come to see me—partly on account of relationship, but more to get my advice about buying a steam whaling-ship. Enoch knew more about whales and ships and such things than you could put down in a book, but he had no more idea *how* steam propelled a ship than I had what a "skivvie tricer" was.

Well, before the week was out, Enoch showed me that he was pretty well fixed in a financial way, and as he had no kin but me that he cared about, he offered me an interest in his new steam whaler, if I would go as chief engineer with her to the North Pacific.

The terms were liberal and the chance a good one, so it seemed, and after a good many consultations, my wife agreed to let me go for *one* cruise. She asked about the stops to be made in going around the Horn, and figured mentally a little after each place was named—I believe now, she half expected that I would desert the ship and walk home from one of these spots, and was figuring on the time it would take me.

When the robins were building their nests, the new steam whaler, "Champion," left New Bedford for parts unknown (*via* the Horn), with the sea-sickest chief engineer that ever smelt fish oil. The steam plant wasn't very much—two boilers and a plain twenty-eight by thirty-six double engine, and any amount of hoisting rigs, blubber boilers, and other paraphernalia. We refitted in San Francisco, and on a clear summer morning turned the white-painted figurehead of the "Champion" toward the north and stood out for Behring sea. But, while we lay at the mouth of the Yukon river, up in Alaska, getting ready for a sally into the realm of water above the Straits, a whaler, bound for San Francisco and home, dropped anchor near us, the homesickness struck in on me, and—never mind the details now—your Uncle John came home without any whales, and was mighty glad to get on the extra list of the old road.

The story I want to tell, however, is another man's story, and it was while lying in the Yukon that I heard it. I was deeply impressed with it at the time, and meant to give it to the world as soon as I got home, for I set it all down plain then, but I lost my diary, and half forgot the story—who wouldn't forget a story when he had to make two hundred and ten miles a day on a locomotive and had five children at home? But now, after twenty years, my wife turns up that old diary in the garret this spring while house-cleaning. Fred had it and an old Fourth-of-July cannon put away in an ancient valise, as a boy will treasure up useless things.

Under the head of October 12th, I find this entry:

"At anchor in Yukon river, weather fair, recent heavy rains; set out packing and filed main-rod brasses of both engines. Settled with Enoch to go home on first ship bound south. Demented white man brought on board by Indians, put in my cabin."

In the next day's record there appears the following: "Watched beside sick man all night; in intervals of sanity he tells a strange story, which I will write down to-day."

The 14th has the following:

"Wrote out story of stranger. See the back of this book."

And at the back of the book, written on paper cut from an old log of the "Champion," is the story that now, more than twenty-five years later, I tell you here:

On the evening of the 12th, I went on deck to smoke and think of home, after a hard day's work getting the engines in shape for a siege. The ship was very quiet, half the crew being ashore, and some of the rest having gone in the boat with Captain Enoch to the "Enchantress," homeward bound and lying about half a mile below us. I am glad to say that Enoch's principal business aboard the "Enchantress" is to get me passage to San Francisco. I despise this kind of dreariness—rather be in state prison near the folks.

I sat on the rail, just abaft the stack, watching some natives handle their big canoes, when a smaller one came alongside. I noticed that one of the occupants lay at full length in the frail craft, but paid little attention until the canoe touched our side. Then the bundle of skins and Indian clothes bounded up, almost screamed, "At last!" made a spring at the stays, missed them, and fell with a loud splash into the water.

The Indians rescued him at once, and in a few seconds he lay like one dead on the deck. I saw at a glance that the stranger in Indian clothes was a white man and an American.

A pretty stiff dram of liquor brought him to slightly. He opened his eyes, looked up at the rigging, and closing his eyes, he murmured: "Thank God!—'Frisco—Polaria!"

I had him undressed and put into my berth. He was shaking as with an ague, and when his clothes were off we plainly saw the reason—he was a skeleton, starving. I went on deck at once to make some inquiry of the Indians about our strange visitor, but their boat was just disappearing in the twilight.

The man gained strength, as we gave him nourishment in small, frequent doses, and talked in a disjointed way of everything under the sun. I sat with him all night. Toward morning he seemed to sleep longer at a time, and in the afternoon of yesterday fell into a deep slumber, from which he did not waken for nearly twenty hours.

When he did waken, he took nourishment in larger quantities, and then went off into another long sleep. The look of pain on his face lessened, a healthy glow appeared on his cheek, and he slept so soundly that I turned in—on the floor.

I was awake along in the small hours of the morning, and heard my patient stirring, so I got up and drew the little curtain over the bulls-eye port—it was already daylight. I gave him a drink and a biscuit, and told him I would go to the cook's galley and get him some broth, but he begged to wait until breakfast time—said he felt refreshed, and would just nibble a sea biscuit. Then he ate a dozen in as many minutes.

"Did you take care of my pack?" he said eagerly, throwing his legs out of the berth, and looking wildly at me.

"Yes, it's all right; lie down and rest," said I; for I thought that to cross him would set him off his head again.

"Do you know that dirty old pack contains more treasures than the mines of Africa?"

"It don't look it," I answered, and laughed to get him in a pleasant frame of mind—for I hadn't seen nor heard of his pack.

"Not for the little gold and other valuable things, but the proofs of a discovery as great as Columbus made, the discovery of a new continent, a new people, a new language, a new civilization, and riches beyond the dreams of a Solomon—"

He shut his eyes for a minute, and then continued: "But beyond Purgatory, through Death, and the other side of Hell—"

Just here Enoch came in to inquire after his health, and sat down for a minute's chat. Enoch is first, last, and all the time captain of a whaler; he knows about whales and whale-hunters just as an engineer on the road knows every speck of scenery along the line, every man, and every engine. Enoch couldn't talk ten minutes without being "reminded" of an incident in his whaling life; couldn't meet a whaleman without "yarning" about the whale business. He lit his pipe and asked: "Been whaling, or hunting the North Pole?"

"Well, both."

"What ship?"

"The 'Duncan McDonald.'"

"The—the 'McDonald!'—why, man, we counted her lost these five years; tell me about her, quick. Old Chuck Burrows was a particular friend of mine—where is he?"

"Captain, Father Burrows and the 'Duncan McDonald' have both gone over the unknown ocean to the port of missing ships."

"Sunk?"

"Aye, and crushed to atoms in a frozen hell."

Enoch looked out of the little window for a long time, forgot his pipe, and at last wiped a tear out of his eye, saying, as much to himself as to us: "George Burrows made me first mate of the first

ship he ever sailed. She was named for his mother, and we left her in the ice away up about the seventy-third parallel. He was made of the salt of the earth—a sailor and a nobleman. But he was a dare-devil—didn't know fear—and was always venturing where none of the rest of us would dare go. He bought the 'McDonald,' remodeled and refitted her after he got back from the war—she was more than a whaler, and I had a feeling that she would carry Burrows and his crew away forever—"

Eight bells rung just here, and Enoch left us, first ordering breakfast for the stranger, and saying he would come back to hear the rest after breakfast.

As I was going out, a sailor came to the door with a flat package, perhaps six inches thick and twelve or fourteen square, covered with a dirty piece of skin made from the intestines of a whale, which is used by the natives of this clime because it is light and water-proof.

"We found this in a coil of rope, sir; it must belong to him. It must be mostly lead."

It was heavy, and I set it inside the door, remarking that here was his precious pack.

"Precious! aye, aye, sir; precious don't describe it. Sacred, that's the word. That package will cause more excitement in the world than the discovery of gold in California. This is the first time it's been out of my sight or feeling for months and months; put it in the bunk here, please."

I went away, leaving him with his arms around his "sacred" package.

After breakfast, Enoch and I went to the little cabin to hear the stranger's story, and I, for one, confess to a great deal of curiosity. Our visitor was swallowing his last bowl of coffee as we went in. "So you knew Captain Burrows and the 'Duncan McDonald,'" said he. "Let me see, what is your name?"

"Alexander, captain of the 'Champion,' at your service, sir."

"Alexander; you're not the first mate, Enoch Alexander, who sat on a dead whale all night, holding on to a lance staff, after losing your boat and crew?"

"The same."

"Why, I've heard Captain Burrows speak of you a thousand times."

"But you were going to tell us about the 'Duncan McDonald.' Tell us the whole cruise from stem to stern."

"Let's see, where shall I begin?"

"At the very beginning," I put in.

"Well, perhaps you've noticed, and perhaps you have not, but I'm not a sailor by inclination or experience. I accidentally went out on the 'Duncan McDonald.' How old would you take me to be?"

"Fifty or fifty-five," said Enoch.

"Thanks, captain, I know I must look all of that; but, let me see, forty-five, fifty-five, sixty-five, seventy—seventy—what year is this?"

"Seventy-three."

"Seventy-three. Well, I'm only twenty-eight now."

"Impossible! Why, man, you're as gray as I am, and I'm twice that."

"I was born in forty-five, just the same. My father was a sea captain in the old clipper days, and a long time after. He was in the West India trade when the war broke out, and as he had been educated in the navy, enlisted at once. It was on one of the gunboats before Vicksburg that he was killed. My mother came of a well-to-do family of merchants, the Clarks of Boston, and—to make a long story short—died in sixty-six, leaving me considerable money.

"An itching to travel, plenty of money, my majority, and no ties at home, sent me away from college to roam, and so one spring morning in sixty-seven found me sitting lazily in the stern of a little pleasure boat off Fort Point in the Golden Gate, listlessly watching a steam whaler come in from the Pacific. My boatman called my attention to her, remarking that she was spick-and-span new, and the biggest one he ever saw, but I took very little notice of the ship until in tacking across her wake, I noticed her name in gold letters across the stern—'Duncan McDonald.' Now that is my own name, and was my father's; and try as I would, I could not account for this name as a coincidence, common as the name might be in the highlands of the home of my ancestors; and before the staunch little steamer had gotten a mile away, I ordered the boat to follow her. I intended to go aboard and learn, if possible, something of how her name originated.

"As she swung at anchor, off Goat island, I ran my little boat alongside of her and asked for a rope. 'Rope?' inquired a Yankee sailor, sticking his nose and a clay pipe overboard; 'might you be wantin' to come aboard?'

"'Yes, I want to see the captain.'

"'Well, the cap'en's jest gone ashore; his dingy is yonder now, enemost to the landin'. You come out this evenin'. The cap'en's particular about strangers, but he's always to home of an evenin'.'

"'Who's this boat named after?'

"'The Lord knows, stranger; I don't. But I reckon the cap'en ken tell; he built her.'

"I left word that I would call in the evening, and at eight o'clock was alongside again. This time I was assisted on board and shown to the door of the captain's cabin; the sailor knocked and went away. It was a full minute, I stood there before the knock was answered, and then from the inside, in a voice like the roar of a bull, came the call: 'Well, come in!'

"I opened the door on a scene I shall never forget. A bright light swung from the beams above, and under it sat a giant of the sea—Captain Burrows. He had the index finger of his right hand resting near the North Pole of an immense globe; there were many books about, rolls of charts, firearms; instruments, clothing, and apparent disorder everywhere. The cabin was large, well-furnished, and had something striking about it. I looked around in wonder, without saying a word. Captain Burrows was the finest-looking man I ever saw—six feet three, straight, muscular, with a pleasant face; but the keenest, steadiest blue eye you ever saw. His hair was white, but his long flowing beard had much of the original yellow. He must have been sixty. But for all the pleasant face and kindly eye, you would notice through his beard the broad, square chin that proclaim the decision and staying qualities of the man."

"That's George Burrows, stranger, to the queen's taste—just as good as a degerry-type," broke in Enoch.

"Well," continued the stranger, "he let me look for a minute or two, and then said: 'Was it anything particular?'"

"I found my tongue then, and answered; 'I hope you'll excuse me, sir; but I must confess it is curiosity. I came on board out of curiosity to—'"

"Reporter, hey?" asked the captain.

"No, sir; the fact is that your ship has an unusual name, one that interests me, and I wish to make so bold as to ask how she came to have it."

"Any patent on the name?"

"Oh, no, but I—"

"Well, young man, this ship—by the way, the finest whaler that was ever stuck together—is named for a friend of mine; just such a man as she is a ship—the best of them all."

"Was he a sailor?"

"Aye, aye, sir, and such a sailor. Fight! why, man, fighting was meat and drink to him—"

"Was he a whaler?"

"No, he wa'n't; but he was the best man I ever knew who wa'n't a whaler. He was a navy sailor, he was, and a whole ten-pound battery by hisself. Why, you jest ort to see him waltz his old tin-clad gun-boat up agin one of them reb forts—jest naturally skeered 'em half to death before he commenced shooting at all."

"Wasn't he killed at the attack on Vicksburg?"

"Yes, yes; you knowed him didn't you? He was a—"

"He was my father."

"What? Your father?" yelled Captain Burrows, jumping up and grasping both my hands. 'Of course he was; darn my lubberly wit that I couldn't see that before!' Then he hugged me as if I was a ten-year-old girl, and danced around me like a maniac.

"By all the gods at once, if this don't seem like Providence—yes, sir, old man Providence himself! What are you a-doin'? When did you come out here? Where be you goin', anyway?"

"I found my breath, and told him briefly how I was situated. 'Old man Providence has got his hand on the tiller of this craft or I'm a grampus! Say! do you know I was wishin' and waitin' for you? Yes, sir; no more than yesterday, says I to myself, Chuck Burrows, says I, you are gettin' long too fur to the wind'ard o' sixty fur this here trip all to yourself. You ort to have young blood in this here enterprise; and then I just clubbed myself for being a lubber and not getting married young and havin' raised a son that I could trust. Yes, sir, jest nat'rally cussed myself from stem to stern, and never onct thought as mebbe my old messmate, Duncan McDonald, might 'a'done suthin' for his country afore that day at Vicks—say! I want to give you half this ship. Mabee I'll do the square thing and give you the whole of the tub yet. All I want is for you to go along with me on a voyage

of discovery—be my helper, secretary, partner, friend—anything. What de ye say? Say!' he yelled again, before I could answer, 'tell ye what I'll do! Bless me if—if I don't adopt ye; that's what I'll do. Call me pop from this out, and I'll call you son. *Son!*' he shouted, bringing his fist down with a bang on the table. '*Son!* that's the stuff! By the bald-headed Abraham, who says Chuck Burrows ain't got no kin? The "Duncan McDonald," Burrows & Son, owners, captain, chief cook, and blubber cooker. And who the hell says they ain't?'

"And the old captain glared around as if he defied anybody and everybody to question the validity of the claims so excitedly made.

"Well, gentlemen, of course there was much else said and done, but that announcement stood; and to the day of his death I always called the captain Father Burrows, and he called me 'son,' always addressing me so when alone, as well as when in the company of others. I went every day to the ship, or accompanied Father Burrows on some errand into the city, while the boat was being refitted and prepared for a three-years' cruise.

"Every day the captain let me more and more into his plans, told me interesting things of the North, and explained his theory of the way to reach the Pole, and what could be found there; which fascinated me. Captain Burrows had spent years in the North, had noted that particularly open seasons occurred in what appeared cycles of a given number of years, and proposed to go above the eightieth parallel and wait for an open season. That, according to his figuring, would occur the following year.

"I was young, vigorous, and of a venturesome spirit, and entered into every detail with a zest that captured the heart of the old sailor. My education helped him greatly, and new books and instruments were added to our store for use on the trip. The crew knew only that we were going on a three-years' cruise. They had no share in the profits, but were paid extra big wages in gold, and were expected to go to out-of-the-way places and further north than usual. Captain Burrows and myself only knew that there was a brand-new twenty-foot silk flag rolled up in oil-skin in the cabin, and that Father Burrows had declared: 'By the hoary-headed Nebblekenizer, I'll put them stars and stripes on new land, and mighty near to the Pole, or start a butt a-trying.'

"In due course of time we were all ready, and the 'Duncan McDonald' passed out of the Golden Gate into the broad Pacific, drew her fires, and stopped her engines, reserving this force for a more urgent time. She spread her ample canvas, and stood away toward Alaska and the unknown and undiscovered beyond.

"The days were not long for me, for they were full of study and anticipation. Long chats with the eccentric but masterful man whose friendship and love for my father had brought us together were the entertainment and stimulus of my existence—a man who knew nothing of science, except that he was master of it in his own way; who knew all about navigation, and to whom the northern seas were as familiar as the contour of Boston Common was to me; who had more stories of whaling than you could find in print, and better ones than can ever be printed.

"I learned first to respect, then to admire, and finally to love this old salt. How many times he told me of my father's death, and how and when he had risked his life to save the life of Father Burrows or some of the rest of his men. As the days grew into weeks, and the weeks into months, Captain Burrows and myself became as one man.

"I shall never forget the first Sunday at sea. Early in the morning I heard the captain order the boatswain to pipe all hands to prayers. I had noticed nothing of a religious nature in the man, and,

full of curiosity, went on deck with the rest. Captain Burrows took off his hat at the foot of the mainmast, and said:

"My men, this is the first Sunday we have all met together; and as some of you are not familiar with the religious services on board the 'Duncan McDonald,' I will state that, as you may have noticed, I asked no man about his belief when I employed him—I hired you to simply work this ship, not to worship God—but on Sundays it is our custom to meet here in friendship, man to man, Protestant and Catholic, Mohammedan, Buddhist, Fire-worshiper, and pagan, and look into our own hearts, worshiping God as we know him, each in his own way. If any man has committed any offense against his God, let him make such reparation as he thinks will appease that God; but if any man has committed an offense against his fellow-man, let him settle with that man now and here, and not worry God with the details. Religion is goodness and justice and honesty; no man needs a sky-pilot to lay a course for him, for he alone knows where the channel, and the rocks, and the bar of his own heart are—look into your hearts.'

"Captain Burrows stood with his hat in his hand, and bowed as if in prayer, and all the old tars bowed as reverently as if the most eloquent divine was exhorting an unseen power in their behalf. The new men followed the example of the old. It was just three minutes by the wheel-house clock before the captain straightened up and said 'Amen,' and the men turned away about their tasks.

"'Beats mumblin' your words out of a book, like a Britisher,' said the captain to me; 'can't offend no man's religion, and helps every one on 'em.'

"Long months after, I attended a burial service conducted in the same way—in silence.

"In due course of time we anchored in Norton Sound, and spent the rest of the winter there; and in the spring of sixty-eight, we worked our way north through the ice. We passed the seventy-fifth parallel of latitude on July 4th. During the summer we took a number of whales, storing away as much oil as the captain thought necessary, as he only wanted it for fuel and our needs, intending to take none home to sell unless we were unsuccessful in the line of discovery—in that event he intended to stay until he had a full cargo."

Here our entertainer gave out, and had to rest; and while resting he went to sleep, so that he did not take up his story until the next day.

In the morning our guest expressed a desire to be taken on deck; and, dressed in warm sailor clothes, he rested his hand on my shoulder, and slowly crawled on deck and to a sheltered corner beside the captain's cabin. Here he was bundled up; and again Enoch and I sat down to listen to the strange story of the wanderer.

"I hope it won't annoy you, gentlemen," said he, "but I can't settle down without my pack; I find myself thinking of its safety. Would you mind sending down for it?"

It was brought up, and set down beside him; he looked at it lovingly, slipped the rude strap-loop over his arm, and seemed ready to take up his story where he left off. He began:

"I don't remember whether I told you or not, but one of the objects of Captain Burrows's trip was to settle something definite about the location of the magnetic pole, and other magnetic problems, and determine the cause of some of the well-known distortions of the magnetic needle. He had some odd, perhaps crude, instruments, of his own design, which he had caused to be constructed for this purpose, and we found them very efficient devices in the end. Late in July, we found much

open water, and steamed steadily in a northwesterly course. We would find a great field of icebergs, then miles of floe, and then again open water. The aurora was seen every evening, but it seemed pale and white.

"Captain Burrows brought the 'Duncan McDonald's' head around to the west in open water, one fine day in early August, and cruised slowly; taking a great many observations, and hunting, as he told me, for floating ice—he was hunting for a current. For several days we kept in the open water, but close to the ice, until one morning the captain ordered the ship to stand due north across the open sea.

"He called me into his cabin, and with a large map of the polar regions on his table, to which he often referred, he said: 'Son, I've been hunting for a current; there's plenty of 'em in the Arctic ocean, but the one I want ain't loafing around here. You see, son, it's currents that carries these icebergs and floes south; I didn't tell you, but some days when we were in those floes, we lost as much as we gained. We worked our way north through the floe, but not on the surface of the globe; the floe was taking us south with it. Maybe you won't believe it, but there are currents going north in this sea; once or twice in a lifetime, a whaler or passage hunter returns with a story of being drifted *north*—now that's what I want, I am hunting for a northern current. We will go to the northern shore of this open water, be it one mile or one thousand, and there—well, hunt again.'

"Well, it was in September when we at last got to what seemed the northern shore of this open sea. We had to proceed very slowly, as there were almost daily fogs and occasional snow-storms; but one morning the ship rounded to, almost under the shadow of what seemed to be a giant iceberg. Captain Burrows came on deck, rubbing his hands in glee.

"'Son,' said he, 'that is no iceberg; that's ancient ice, perpetual ice, the great ice-ring—palæcrystic ice, you scientific fellows call it. I saw it once before, in thirty-seven, when a boy; that's it, and, son, beyond that there is something. Take notice that that is ice; clear, glary ice. You know a so-called iceberg is really a snowberg; it's three-fourths under water. Now, it may be possible that, that being ice which will float more than half out of water, the northern currents may go under it—but I don't believe it. Under or over, I am going to find one of 'em, if it takes till doomsday.'



"What seemed to be a giant iceberg...."

"We sailed west, around close to this great wall of ice, for two weeks, without seeing any evidence of a current of any kind, until there came on a storm from the northwest that drove a great deal of ice around the great ring; but it seemed to keep rather clear of the great wall of ice and to go off in a tangent toward the south. The lead showed no bottom at one hundred fathoms, even within a quarter of a mile of the ice.

"It was getting late in the season, the mercury often going down to fifteen below zero, and every night the aurora became brighter. We sailed slowly around the open water, and finally found a place where the sheer precipice of ice disappeared and the shore sloped down to something like a beach. Putting out a sea-anchor, the 'Duncan McDonald' kept within a half-a-mile of this icy shore. The captain had determined to land and survey the place, which far away back seemed to terminate in mountain peaks of ice.

"That night the captain and I sat on the rail of our ship, talking over the plans for to-morrow's expedition, when the ship slowly but steadily swung around her stern to the mountain of ice—the engines had been moving slowly to keep her head to the wind. Captain Burrows jumped to his feet in joy. 'A current!' he shouted; 'a current, and toward the north, too—old man Providence again, son; he allus takes care of his own!'

"Some staves were thrown overboard, and, sure enough, they floated toward the ice; but there was

no evidence of an opening in the mighty ring, and I remarked to Captain Burrows that the current evidently went under the ice.

"It looks like it did, son; it looks like it did; but if it goes under, we will go over."

"After we had taken a few hours of sleep, the long-boat landed our little party of five men and seven dogs. We had food and drink for a two weeks' trip, were well armed, and carried some of our instruments. It appeared to be five or six miles to the top of the mountain, but it proved more than thirty. We were five days in getting there, and did so only after a dozen adventures that I will tell you at another time.

"We soon began to find stones and dirt in the ice, and before we had gone ten miles, found the frozen carcass of an immense mastodon—its great tusks only showing above the level; but its huge, woolly body quite plainly visible in the ice. The ice was melting, and there were many streams running towards the open water. It was warmer as we proceeded. Dirt and rocks became the rule, instead of the exception, and we were often obliged to go around a great boulder of granite. While we were resting, on the third day, for a bite to eat, one of the men took a dish, scooped up some sand from the bottom of the icy stream, and 'panned' it out. There was gold in it: gold enough to pay to work the ground. About noon of the fifth day, we reached the summit of the mountain, and from there looked down the other side—upon a sight the like of which no white men had ever seen before.

"From the very summits of this icy-ring mountain the northern side was a sheer precipice of more than three thousand feet, and was composed of rocks, and rocks only, the foot of the mighty crags being washed by an open ocean; and this was lighted up by a peculiar crimson glow. Great white whales sported in the waters; huge sea-birds hung in circles high in the air; yet below us, and with our glasses, we could see, on the rocks at the foot of the crags, seals and some other animals that were strange to us. But follow the line of beetling crags and mountain peaks where you would, the northern side presented a solid blank wall of awful rocks, in many places the summit overhanging and the shore well under in the mighty shadow. Nothing that any of us had ever seen in nature before was so impressive, so awful. We started on our return, after a couple of hours of the awe-inspiring sight beyond the great ring, and for full two hours not a man spoke.

"Father Burrows,' said I, 'what do you think that is back there?'"

"No man knows, my son, and it will devolve on you and me to name it; but we won't unless we get to it and can take back proofs."

"Do you think we could get down the other side?'"

"No, I don't think so, and we seem to have struck it in the lowest spot in sight. I'd give ten years of my life if the 'Duncan McDonald' was over there in that duck pond."

"Captain,' said Eli Jeffries, the second mate, 'do you know what I've been thinkin'? I believe that 'ere water we seen is an open passage from the Behring side of the frozen ocean over agin' some of them 'ere Roosian straits. If we could get round to the end of it, we'd sail right through the great Northwest Passage."

"You don't think there is land over there somewhere?'"

"Nope."

"Didn't take notice that the face of your "passage" was granite or quartz rocks, hey? Didn't notice all them animals and birds, hey?—"

"Look out!" yelled the man ahead with the dog-sledge.

"A strange, whirring noise was heard in the foggy light, that sounded over our heads. We all dropped to the ground, and the noise increased, until a big flock of huge birds passed over us in rapid flight north. There must have been thousands of them. Captain Burrows brought his shot-gun to his shoulder and fired. There were some wild screams in the air, and a bird came down to the ice with a loud thud. It looked very large a hundred feet away, but sight is very deceiving in this white country in the semi-darkness. We found it a species of duck, rather large and with gorgeous plumage.

"Goin' north, to Eli's "passage" to lay her eggs on the ice," said the captain, half sarcastically.

"We reached the ship in safety, and the captain and I spent long hours in trying to form some plan for getting beyond the great ice-ring.

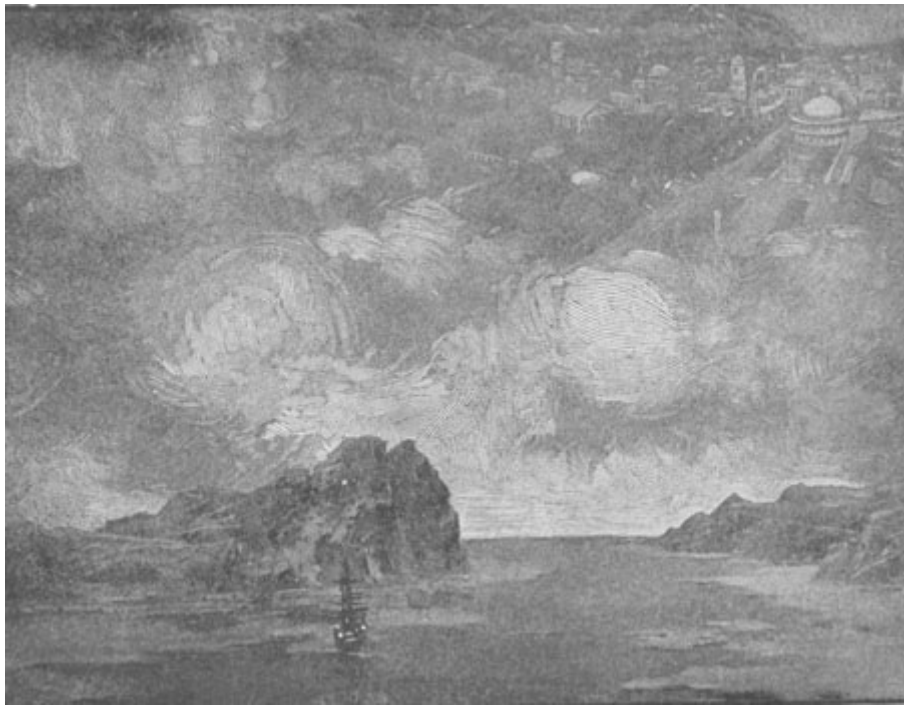
"If it's warm up there, and everything that we've seen says it is, all this cold water that's going north gets warm and goes out some place; and rest you, son, wherever it goes out, there's a hole in the ice."

"Here we were interrupted by the mate, who said that there were queer things going on overhead, and some of the sailors were ready to mutiny unless the return trip was commenced. Captain Burrows went on deck at once, and you may be sure I followed at his heels.

"What's wrong here?" demanded the captain, in his roaring tone, stepping into the midst of the crew.

"A judgment against this pryin' into God's secrets, sir," said an English sailor, in an awe-struck voice. "Look at the signs, sir," pointing overhead.

"Captain Burrows and I both looked over our heads, and there saw an impressive sight, indeed. A vast colored map of an unknown world hung in the clouds over us—a mirage from the aurora. It looked very near, and was so distinct that we could distinguish polar bears on the ice-crags. One man insisted that the mainmast almost touched one snowy peak, and most of them actually believed that it was an inverted part of some world, slowly coming down to crush us. Captain Burrows looked for several minutes before he spoke. Then he said: 'My men, this is the grandest proof of all that Providence is helping us. This thing that you see is only a picture; it's a mirage, the reflection of a portion of the earth on the sky. Just look, and you will see that it's in the shape of a crescent, and we are almost in the center of it; and, I tell you, it's a picture of the country just in front of us. See this peak? See that low place where we went up? There is the great wall we saw, the open sea beyond it, and, bless me, if it don't look like something green over in the middle of that ocean! See, here is the "Duncan McDonald," as plain as A, B, C, right overhead. Now, there's nothing to be afraid of in that; if it's a warning, it's a good one—and if any one wants to go home to his mother's, and is old enough, *he can walk!*'"



"A white city ... was visible for an instant."

"The captain looked around, but the sailors were as cool as he was—they were reassured by his honest explanation. Then he took me by the arm, and, pointing to the painting in the sky, said: 'Old man Providence again, son, sure as you are born; do you see that lane through the great ring? There's an open, fairly straight passage to the inner ocean, except that it's closed by about three miles of ice on our side; see it there, on the port side?'

"Yes, I could see it, but I asked Captain Burrows how he could account for the open passages beyond and the wall of ice in front; it was cold water going in.

"It's strange,' he answered, shading his eye with his hand, and looking long at the picture of the clear passage, like a great canal between the beetling cliffs. All at once, he grasped my arm and said in excitement, pointing towards the outer end of the passage: 'Look!'

"As I looked at the mirage again, the great mass of ice in front commenced to slowly turn over, outwardly.

"It's an iceberg, sir, only an iceberg!" said the captain, excitedly, 'and she is just holding that passage because the current keeps her up against the hole; now, she will wear out some day, and then—in goes the "Duncan McDonald"!'

"But there are others to take its place,' and I pointed to three other bergs, apparently some twenty miles away, plainly shown in the sky; 'they are the reinforcements to hold the passage.'

"Looks that way, son, but by the great American buzzard, we'll get in there somehow, if we have to blow that berg up.'

"As we looked, the picture commenced to disappear, not fade, but to go off to one side, just as a picture leaves the screen of a magic lantern. Over the inner ocean there appeared dark clouds; but this part was visible last, and the clouds seemed to break at the last moment, and a white city, set in green fields and forests, was visible for an instant, a great golden dome in the center remaining in view after the rest of the city was invisible.

"A rainbow of promise, son,' said the captain.

"I looked around. The others had grown tired of looking, and were gone. Captain Burrows and myself were the only ones that saw the city.

"We got under way for an hour, and then stood by near the berg until eight bells the next morning; but you must remember it was half dark all the time up there then. While Captain Burrows and myself were at breakfast, he cudgelled his brains over ways and means for moving that ice, or preventing other bergs from taking its place. When we went on deck, our berg was some distance from the mouth of the passage, and steadily floating away. Captain Burrows steamed the ship cautiously up toward the passage; there was a steady current coming out.

"'I reckon,' said Eli Jeffries, 'they must have a six-months' ebb and flow up in that ocean.'

"'If that's the case, said Captain Burrows, 'the sooner we get in, the better;' and he ordered the 'Duncan McDonald' into the breach in the world of ice.

"Gentlemen, suffice it to say that we found that passage perfectly clear, and wider as we proceeded. This we did slowly, keeping the lead going constantly. The first mate reported the needle of the compass working curiously, dipping down hard, and sparking—something he had never seen. Captain Burrows only said: 'Let her spark!'

"As we approached the inner ocean, as we called it, the passage was narrow; it became very dark and the waters roared ahead. I feared a fall or rapid, but the 'Duncan McDonald' could not turn back. The noise was only the surf on the great crags within. As the ship passed out into the open sea beyond, the needle of the compass turned clear around and pointed back. 'Do you know, son,' said Captain Burrows, 'that I believe the so-called magnetic pole is a great ring around the true Pole, and that we just passed it there? The whole inside of this mountain looks to me like rusted iron instead of stone.'"

Here our story-teller rested and dozed for a few minutes; then rousing up, he said: "I'll tell you the rest to-morrow; yes, to-morrow; I'm tired now. To-morrow I'll tell you about a wonderful country; wonderful cities; wonderful people! I'll show you solar pictures such as you never saw, of scenes, places, and people you never dreamed of. I will show you implements that will prove that there's a country where gold is as common as tin at home—where they make knives and forks and stew-pans of it! I'll show you writing more ancient and more interesting than the most treasured relics in our Sanscrit libraries. I'll tell you of the two years I spent in another world. I'll tell you of the precious cargo that went to the bottom of the frozen ocean with the staunch little ship, 'Duncan McDonald;' of the bravest, noblest commander, and the sweetest angel of a woman that ever breathed and lived and loved. I'll tell you of my escape and the hell I've been through. To-morrow —"

He dozed off for a few moments again.

"But I've got enough in this pack to turn the world inside out with wonder—ah, what a sensation it will be, what an educational feature! It will send out a hundred harum-scarum expeditions to find Polaria—but there are few commanders like Captain Burrows; he could do it, the rest of 'em will die in the ice. But when I get to San Fran——. Say, captain, how long will it take to get there, and how long before you start?"

Enoch and I exchanged glances, and Enoch answered: "We wa'n't goin' to "Frisco."

"Around the Horn, then?" inquired the stranger, sitting up. "But you will land me in 'Frisco, won't you? I can't wait, I must—"

"We're goin' *in*," said Enoch; "goin' north, for a three-years' cruise."

"North!" shouted the stranger, wildly. "Three years in that hell of ice. Three years! My God! North! North!"

He was dancing around the deck like a maniac, trying to put his pack-loop over his head. Enoch went toward him, to tell him how he could go on the "Enchantress," but he looked wildly at him, ran forward and sprang out on the bowsprit, and from there to the jib. Enoch saw he was out of his mind, and ordered two sailors to bring him in. As they sprang on to the bow, he stood up and screamed:

"No! No! No! Three years! Three lives! Three hells! I never—"

One of the men reached for him here, but he kicked at the sailor viciously, and turning sidewise, sprang into the water below.

A boat, already in the water, was manned instantly; but the worn-out body of another North Pole explorer had gone to the sands of the bottom where so many others have gone before; evidently his heavy pack had held him down, there to guard the story it could tell—in death as he had in life.

THE END

DANGER SIGNALS

REMARKABLE, EXCITING AND UNIQUE
EXAMPLES OF THE BRAVERY, DAR-
ING AND STOICISM IN THE
MIDST OF DANGER OF

Train Dispatchers And Railroad Engineers

BY
JOHN A. HILL
and
JASPER EWING BRADY

ABSORBING STORIES OF MEN WITH NERVES OF STEEL,
INDOMITABLE COURAGE AND
WONDERFUL ENDURANCE

FULLY ILLUSTRATED

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1902

Order 35
 DA 17/16 18—
 O.T.S. No. 16 Mn.
 O.T.S. No. 17 Lva.
 ② No. 16 ① No. 17 *mael at Mercur*
 Peking, No. 17 *to line siding - No. 16 due to beam*
 El Monte, December 16th is annulled between
 El Monte and Mercur
 35. O.T.S. 16 Mn. N. S. B.
 Ok Smith 120 am. M. N. B.
 35. O.T.S. 17 Lva.
 ex. 1211 am. M. N. B.
 35. James & Smoke No. 16 Mn. Complete 1214 am. M. N. B.
 35. Steel & Roberts No. 17 Wash. Perfect 1222 am. M. N. B.

Facsimile Of A Completed Order As Entered In The Despatcher's Order-Book

DANGER SIGNALS.

PART II.

CHAPTER I

LEARNING THE BUSINESS—MY FIRST OFFICE

Seated in sumptuously furnished palace cars, annihilating space at the rate of sixty miles an hour, but few passengers ever give a thought to the telegraph operators of the road stuck away in towers or in dingy little depots, in swamps, on the tops of mountains, or on the bald prairies and sandy deserts of the west; and yet, these selfsame telegraph operators are a very important adjunct to the successful operation of the road, and a single error on the part of one of them might result in the loss of many lives and thousands of dollars.

The whole length of the railroad from starting point to terminus is literally under the eyes of the train despatcher. By means of reports sent in by hundreds of different operators, he knows the exact location of all trains at all times, the number of "loads" and "empties" in each train, the number of cars on each siding, the number of passing tracks and their capacity, the capabilities of the different engines, the gradients of the road, the condition of the roadbed, and, above all, he knows the personal characteristics of every conductor and engineer on the road. In fact if there is one man of more importance than another on a railroad it is the train despatcher. During his trick of eight hours he is the autocrat of the road, and his will in the running of trains is absolute. Therefore despatchers are chosen with very special regard for their fitness for the position. They must be expert telegraphers, quick at figures, and above all they must be as cool as ice, have nerves of steel, and must be capable of grasping a trying situation the minute an emergency arises. An old despatcher once said to me: "Sooner or later a despatcher, if he sticks to the business, will have his smash-up, and then down goes a reputation which possibly he has been years in building up, and his name is inscribed on the roll of 'has-beens.'"

Before the despatcher comes the operator, and the old Biblical saying, "Many are called but few are chosen," is well illustrated by the small number of good despatchers that are found; it is easy enough to find excellent operators, but a first-class despatcher is a rarity among them.

I learned telegraphy some fifteen or sixteen years ago at a school away out in western Kansas. After I had been there three or four months, I was the star of the class, and imagined that the spirit of Professor Morse had been reincarnated in me. No wire was too swift for me to work, no office too great for me to manage; in fact visions of a superintendency of telegraph flitted before my eyes. Such institutions as this school are very correctly named "ham factories."

During my stay at the school I formed the acquaintance of the night operator at the depot and it was my wont to spend most of my nights there picking up odds and ends of information. For my own benefit I used to copy everything that came along; but the young man in charge never left me entirely alone. Night operators at all small stations have to take care of their own lamps and fires, sweep out, handle baggage, and, in short, be porter as well as operator, and for the privilege of being allowed to stay about I used to do this work for the night man at the office in question. His name was Harry Burgess and he was as good a man as ever sat in front of a key. Some few weeks after this he was transferred to a day office up the road and by his help I was made night operator in his stead. Need I say how proud I felt when I received a message from the Chief Despatcher telling me to report for duty that night? I think I was the proudest man, or boy rather, on this earth.

Just think! Night operator, porter and baggageman, working from seven o'clock in the evening until seven o'clock in the morning, and receiving the magnificent sum of forty dollars per month! It was enough to make my bosom swell with pride and it's a wonder I didn't burst.

Heretofore, I had had Burgess to fall back upon when I was copying messages or orders, but now I was alone and the responsibility was all mine. I managed to get through the first night very well, because all I had to do was to take a few "red" commercial messages, "O. S." the trains and load ten big sample trunks on No. 2. The trains were all on time and consequently there were no orders. I was proud of my success and went off duty at seven o'clock in the morning with a feeling that my services were well nigh indispensable to the road, and if anything were to happen to me, receivers would surely have to be appointed.

The second night everything went smoothly until towards eleven o'clock, when the despatcher began to call "MN," and gave the signal "9." Now the signal "9" means "Train Orders," and takes precedence over everything else on the wire. The situation was anything but pleasant for me, because I had never yet, on my own responsibility, taken a train order, and I stood in a wholesome fear of the results that might accrue from any error of mine. So I didn't answer the despatcher at once as I should have done because I hoped he would get tired of calling me and would tackle "OG," and give him the order. But he didn't. He just kept on calling me, increasing his speed all the time. In sheer desperation, I went out on the platform for five minutes and stamped around to keep warm, hoping all the time he would stop when he found I did not answer. But when I returned instead of calling me on one wire, he had his operator calling me on the commercial line while he was pounding away on the railroad wire. At the rate those two sounders were going they sounded to me like the crack of doom and I was becoming powerfully warm. I finally mustered up courage and answered him.

The first thing the despatcher said was:

"Where in h—l have you been?"

I didn't think that was a very nice thing for him to say, and he fired it at me so fast I could hardly read it, so I simply replied, "Out fixing my batteries."

"Well," he said, "your batteries will need fixing when I get through with you. Now copy 3."

"Copy 3," means to take three copies of the order that is to follow, so I grabbed my manifold order-book and stylus and prepared to copy. There is a rule printed in large bold type in all railroad time-cards which says, "Despatchers, in sending train orders to operators, will accommodate their speed to the abilities of the operators. In all cases *they will send plainly and distinctly.*" If the despatcher had sent according to my ability just then he would have sent that order by train mail. But instead, from the very beginning, he fired it at me so fast, that before I had started to take it he was away down in the body of it. I had written down only the order number and date, when I broke and said, "G. A. To." That made him madder than ever and he went at me again with increased violence the sounder seeming like the roll of a drum. I think I broke him about ten times and finally he said, "For heaven's sake go wake up the day man. You're nothing but a ham." Strangely enough I could take all of his nasty remarks without any trouble while the order almost completely stumped me. However, I finally succeeded in putting it all down, repeated it back to him, and received his "O. K."

When the train arrived the conductor and engineer came in the office and I gave them the order. The conductor glanced at it for a moment and then said with a broad grin, "Say, kid, which foot did

you use in copying this?" My copy wasn't very clear, but finally he deciphered it, and they both signed their names, the despatcher gave me the "complete," and they left. As soon as the train, which was No. 22, a livestock express, had departed, I made my O. S. report, and then heaved a big sigh of relief.

Scarcely had the tail-lights disappeared across the bridge and around the bend, when the despatcher called again and said, "For God's sake stop that train."

I said, "I can't. She's gone."

"Well," he snapped back, "there's a good chance for a fine smash-up this night."

That scared me almost out of my wits, and I looked at my copy of the order. But it read all right, and yet I felt mighty creepy. About thirty minutes afterwards, I heard a heavy step on the platform and in a second the hind brakeman came tramping in, and cheerfully saluted me with, "Well, I reckon you've raised h—l to-night. 21 and 22 are up against each other hard about a mile and a half east of here. They met on a curve and engines, box-cars, livestock and freight are piled up in fine shape."

"Any one killed?" I asked with a blanched face and sinking heart.

"Naw, no one is exactly killed, but one engineer and a fireman are pretty badly scalded, and 'Shorty' Jones, our head man, has a broken leg caused by jumping. You'd better tell the despatcher."

Visions of the penitentiary for criminal neglect danced before my disordered brain; all my knowledge of telegraphy fled; I was weak in the knees, sick at heart, and as near a complete wreck as a man could be. But something had to be done, so I finally told the despatcher that Nos. 21 and 22 were in the ditch, and he snapped back, "D—n it, I've been expecting it, and have ordered the wrecking outfit out from Watsego. You turn your red-light and hold everything that comes along. In the meantime go wake up the day man. I want an operator there, and not a ham."

When the day man came in, half dressed, he said, "Well, what the devil is the matter?"

Speech had entirely left me by this time, so I simply pointed to the order, and the brakeman told him the rest. Never in all my life have I spent such a night as that. The day man regaled me with charming little incidents, about men he knew, who, for having been criminally negligent, had been shot by infuriated engineers or had been sent up for ten years. He seemed to take a fiendish delight in telling me these things and my discomfiture was great. I would have run away if I hadn't been too weak. About seven o'clock in the morning, after a night of misery, he patronizingly told me, that it wasn't my fault at all; the despatcher had given a "lap order," and that the blame was on him. Well! the reaction was as bad, almost, as the first feeling of horror. I went home and after a light breakfast, retired to bed, but not to sleep, for every time I would close my eyes, visions of wrecks, penitentiaries, dead men and ruined homes came crowding upon my disordered brain.

About ten o'clock they sent for me to come to the office. I went over and Webster the agent said the superintendent wanted to see me. I had never seen the superintendent and he seemed to me to be about as far off as the President of the United States, but I screwed up my courage and went in. I saw a kindly-looking gentleman seated before Webster's desk, but I was too much frightened to speak and just stood there like a bump on a log. Presently, Mr. Brink, the superintendent, turned to Webster and said, "I wonder why that night man doesn't come?"

I tremblingly replied, "I am the night man, sir." He looked at me for a moment and smilingly said,

"Why, bless my soul, my lad! I thought you were a messenger boy." He then asked me for my story of the wreck. When I had given it he seemed satisfied, and gave me lots of good advice; but in the end he said I was too young to have the position, and I was discharged. But he kindly added, that in a few years he would be glad to have me come back on the road, after I had acquired more experience. The next day I returned to school.

CHAPTER II

AN ENCOUNTER WITH TRAIN ROBBERS

My first attempt at holding an office had proved such a flat and dismal failure that I thought I should never have the heart to apply for another. I worked faithfully in the school for about a month, and then the fever to try again took hold of me. I knew it would be of no use to apply to my former superintendent, Mr. Brink, so I wrote to Mr. R. B. Bunnell, Superintendent of Telegraph of the P. Q. & X. Railroad at Kansas City, Missouri, saying I was an expert operator and desired a position on his road. Mr. Bunnell must have been laboring under a hypnotic spell, for by return mail he wrote, enclosing me a pass to Alfreda, Kansas, and directing me to assume charge of the night office at that point at the magnificent salary of \$37.50 per month. This was a slight decrease from my former salary, but I didn't care. I wanted a chance to redeem myself and I felt confident I could be more successful in my second attempt. So I packed my few belongings, bade good-bye to the school forever, and away I went.

When I left "MN," I said nothing to any one about my destination, and I did not know a thing about Alfreda, except that it was near the border line between Kansas and Colorado. The brakeman on the train in talking to me told me it was a very pleasant place; but when he said so I fancied I could detect a sarcastic ring in his voice, and I was in no doubt about it when I arrived and saw what a desolate, dreary place Alfreda was. The only things in sight were a water-tank, a pump-house and the telegraph office; and I wish you could have seen that office. It was simply the bed of a box-car, taken off the trucks and set down with one end towards the track. A small platform, two windows, a door, and the signal board perched high on a pole completed the outfit.

I arrived at six-thirty in the morning and there wasn't a living soul in sight. An hour later, a big broad shouldered Irishman who proved to be the pumper, came ambling along on a railroad velocipede. He looked at me for a minute, and after I had made myself known he grinned and said, "Well, I hopes as how ye will loike the place. Burke, the man who was here afore ye, got scared off by thramps, and I reckon he's not stopped runnin' yit." Fine introduction wasn't it?

I found there was no day operator and the only house around was the section house, two miles up the track. The operator and pumper boarded there with the section boss; but the railroad company was magnanimous enough to furnish a velocipede for their use in going to and from the station. How I felt the first night, stuck away out there in that box-car, two miles from the nearest house and twelve miles from the nearest town, I must leave to the imagination. My heart sank and I had many misgivings, in fact, I was scared to death, but I set my teeth hard and determined to do my best, with the hope that I might be promoted to a better office. I did win that promotion but I wouldn't go through my experiences again for the whole road.

One night after I had been working there about a month, I went to my office as usual at seven o'clock. It was a black night threatening a big storm. The pumper had not gone home as yet and he remarked, that it was "goin' to be a woild night," but he hoped "the whistlin' av the wind would be after kaping me company," and with that he jumped on the velocipede, and off he went.

I didn't much relish the idea of the storm, for I knew the reputation of Kansas as a cyclone state,

and my box-car office was not well adapted to stand a hurricane. However, I went inside, and after lighting my lamps, sat down and wrote letters and read, when I was not taking train orders. This office was kept up solely because it was a convenient place to deliver orders to freight trains at night when they stopped for water.

About twelve-thirty in the morning my door opened suddenly, and a man stepped quickly in. I was startled because this was almost the only man except the pumper and the train crews that had been there since I came. Once in a while a stray tramp had gone through, but this man was not a tramp. He wore a long overcoat, buttoned to his chin, with the collar turned up. A slouch hat pulled well down over his eyes so far concealed his face that his features were scarcely visible. He came over to my desk and gruffly asked, "What time is there a passenger train east to-night?"

I answered that one went through at half past one, the Overland Flyer, but it did not stop at Alfreda. Quick as a flash he pulled a revolver and poking it in my face, said, "Young man, you turn your red-light and stop that train or I'll make a vacancy in this office mighty d——d quick."



"Two of the men tied my hands in front of me."

The longer I gazed down the barrel of that revolver the bigger it grew, and it looked to me as if it was loaded with buck-shot to the muzzle. When it had grown to about the size of a gatling gun (and it didn't take long to do it), I concluded that "discretion was the better part of valor," and reached up and turned my red-light. Meanwhile the door opened again, and three more men came in. They were masked and the minute I saw them I knew they were going to make an attempt to hold up the

Overland Flyer. Often this train carried large amounts of bullion and currency east, and I supposed they had heard that there was a shipment to go through that night.

I was standing with my back to the table, and just then I heard the despatcher say that the Flyer was thirty minutes late from the west. I put my hands quietly behind me and let the right rest on the key. I then carefully opened the key and had just begun to speak to the despatcher when one of the men suspected me and said to the leader, "Bill, watch that little cuss. He's monkeying with the instrument and may give them warning."

I stopped, closed the key, and was trying to look unconcerned, when "Bill," said that "to stop all chances of further trouble," they would bind and gag me. Thereupon two of the men tied my hands in front of me, bound my legs securely, and thrust a villainously dirty gag in my mouth. When this was done, "Bill" said, "Throw him across those blamed instruments so they will keep quiet." They flung me upon the table, face downwards, so that the relay was just under my stomach, and of course my weight against the armature of the relay stopped the clicking of the sounder. As luck would have it, my left hand was in such a position that it just touched the key, and I found I could move the hand slightly. So I opened the key and pretended to be struggling quite a little. The leader came over and giving me a good stiff punch in the ribs, said with an oath, "You keep quiet or we'll find a way to make you." I became passive again, and then when the men were engaged in earnest conversation, I began to telegraph softly to the despatcher. The relay being shut off by my weight, there was no noise from the sounder, and I sent so slowly that the key was noiseless. Of course I did not know on whom I was breaking in, but I kept on. I told the exact state of affairs, and asked him to either tell the Flyer not to heed my red-light and go through, or, better still, to send an armed posse from Kingsbury, twelve miles up the road. I repeated the message twice, so that he would be sure to hear it, and then trusted to luck.

The cords and gags were beginning to hurt, and my anxiety was very great. The minutes dragged slowly by, and I thought that hour would never end; but it did end at last, and all of a sudden I heard the long calliope whistle of the engine on the Flyer as she came down the grade. This was followed by two short blasts, that showed she had seen my red-light and was going to stop. "My God!" I thought. "Has she been warned?" So soon as the train whistled the men went out leaving me helpless on the table. I heard the whistle of the air brakes and knew the train must be slowing up. My anxiety was intense. Presently I heard her stop at the tank, and then, in about a second, I listened to the liveliest fusillade that I had ever heard in my life. It was sweet music to my ears I can tell you, for it indicated to me, what proved to be a fact, that a posse were on board and that the robbers were foiled. One of them was shot, and two were captured, but "Bill," the leader, escaped. They had their horses hitched to the telegraph poles, and as "Bill" went running by the office I heard him say, "I'll fix that d—d operator, anyhow." Then, BANG! crash, went the glass in the window, and a bullet buried itself in the table, not two inches from my head. I was not exactly killed, but I was frightened so badly, and the strain had been so great, that when the trainmen came in to release me, I at once lost consciousness. When I came to, I was surrounded by a sympathetic crowd of passengers and trainmen, and a doctor, who happened to be on the train, was pouring something down my throat that soon made me feel better.

As soon as I had recovered myself sufficiently, I telegraphed the despatcher what had happened, and the chief, who in the meantime had been sent for, told me to close up my office, and come east on the flyer, to report for duty in the morning in his office as copy operator.

That is how I won my promotion.



CHAPTER III

IN A WRECK

The change from Alfreda to the chief despatcher's office in Nicholson was, indeed, a pleasant one. The despatchers, especially the first trick man, seemed somewhat dubious as to my ability to do the work, but I was rapidly improving in telegraphy, and, in spite of my extreme youth I was allowed to remain. But the life of a railroad man is very uncertain, and one day we were much surprised to hear that the road had gone into the hands of receivers. There were charges of mismanagement made against a number of the higher officials of the road, and one of the first things the receivers did was to have a general "house-cleaning." The general manager, the general superintendent, and a number of the division superintendents resigned to save dismissal, and my friend the chief despatcher went with them. He was succeeded by Ted Donahue, the man who had been working the first trick. Ted didn't like me worth a cent, and, rather than give him an opportunity to dismiss me, I quit.

I was at home idle for a few weeks, and then hearing that there might be an opening for operators on the C. Q. & R., a new road building up in Nebraska, I once more started out. It was an all night ride to the division headquarters, and thinking I might as well be luxurious for once, I took a sleeper. My berth was in the front end of the last car on the train. I retired about half past ten and soon dropped off into a sound sleep. I had been asleep for perhaps two hours, when I was awakened by the car giving a violent lurch, and then suddenly stopping. I was stunned and dazed for a moment, but I soon heard the cracking and breaking of timbers, and the hissing of steam painfully near to my section. I tried to move and rise up, but found that the confines of my narrow quarters would not permit it. I then realized that we were wrecked and that I was in a bad predicament. I felt that I had no bones broken, and my only fear was that the wreck would take fire. My fears were not groundless for I soon smelled smoke. I cried out as loudly as I could, but my berth had evidently become a "sound proof booth." Then I felt that my time had come, and had about given up all hope, and was trying to say a prayer, when I heard the train-crew and passengers working above me. Again I cried out and this time was heard, and soon was taken out. God! what a night it was—raining a perfect deluge and the wind blowing a hurricane.

I learned that our train had stopped on account of a hot driving-box on the engine; the hind brakeman had been sent back to put out a flag, but, imagining there was nothing coming, he had neglected to do his full duty, and before he knew it, a fast freight came tearing around the bend, and a tail-end collision was the result. Seeing the awful effects of his gross neglect, the brakeman took out across the country and was never heard of again. I fancy if he could have been found that night by the passengers and train-crew his lot would have been anything but pleasant. Two people in the sleeper were killed outright, and three were injured, while the engineer and fireman of the freight were badly hurt by jumping. I didn't get a scratch.

As I stood watching the wrecked cars burn, I heard the conductor say, "he wished to God he had an operator with him." I told him I was an operator and offered my services. He said there was a pocket instrument in the baggage car, and asked me if I would cut in on the wire and tell the despatcher of the wreck. I assented and went forward with him to the baggage car, where he gave

me a pair of pliers, a pocket instrument and about eight feet of office wire. I asked for a pair of climbers and some more office wire, but neither was to be had. Here, therefore, was a pretty knotty problem. The telegraph poles were thirty feet high; how was I to make a connection with only eight feet of wire and no climbers? I thought for a while, and then I put the instrument in my pocket, and undertook to "shin up" the pole as I used to do when I was a schoolboy. After many efforts, in which I succeeded in tearing nearly all the clothes off of me, I finally reached the lowest cross-arm, and seated myself on it with my legs wrapped around the pole. There was only one wire on this arm, so I had, comparatively speaking, plenty of room. On each of the other two cross arms there were four wires, and there was also one strung along the tops of the poles. This made ten wires in all, and I had not the least idea which one was the despatcher's wire. The pole being wet from the rain, made the wires mighty hot to handle. I had the fireman hand me up a piece of old iron wire he happened to have on the engine, and with this I made a flying cut in the third wire of the second cross arm. I attached the little pocket instrument, and found that upon adjusting it, I was on a commercial wire. There I was, straddling a cross arm between heaven and earth, with the instrument held on my knee, and totally ignorant of any of the calls or the wire I was on. I yelled down to the conductor and asked him if he knew any of the calls. No; of course he didn't; and he was so excited he didn't have sense enough to look on his time-card, where the calls are always printed. Finally, after carefully adjusting the instrument, I opened my key, broke in on somebody, and said "Wreck." The answer came, "Sine." I said, "I haven't any sine. No. 2 on the C. K. & Q. has been wrecked out here, and I want the despatcher's office. Can you tell me if he is on this wire?"

Now there is a vast deal of difference between sending with a Bunnell key on a polished table, and sending with a pocket instrument held on your knee, especially when you are perched on a thirty foot pole, with the rain pouring down in torrents, the wind blowing almost a gale, and expecting every minute to be blown off and have your precious neck broken. Consequently my sending was pretty "rocky," and some one came back at me with, "Oh! get out you big ham." But I hung to it and finally made them understand who I was and what I wanted. The main office in Ouray cut me in on the despatcher's wire and I told him of the wreck. He said he had suspected that No. 2. was in trouble, but he had no idea that it was as bad as I had reported. He said he would order out the wrecking outfit and would send doctors with it. Would I please stay close and do the telegraphing for them, he would see that I was properly rewarded. Then I told him about where I was, but promised to hold on as long as I could, but for him to be sure and send out some more wire and a pair of climbers on the wrecker. After waiting about an hour the wrecker arrived, and with it the doctors; so our anxiety was relieved, the wounded taken care of, and a decent wrecking office put in.

The division superintendent came out with them, and for my services he offered me the day office at X——, which I accepted.

CHAPTER IV

A WOMAN OPERATOR WHO SAVED A TRAIN

X—— was a pretty good sort of an office to have, barring a beastly climate wherein all four seasons would sometimes be ably and fully represented in one twenty-four hours. But eighty big round American dollars a month was not to be sneezed at—that was a heap of money to a young chap—and I hung on. In those days civilization had not advanced as far westward as it is to-day, and there was not much local business on the road, due to the sparsely settled country. The first office east of X—— was Dunraven, some twenty miles away. Between the two places were several blind sidings used as passing tracks. Dunraven was a cracking good little village and the day operator there was Miss Mary Marsh; there was no night office. Now I was just at the age where all a young man's susceptibility comes to the surface, and I was a pretty fair sample. I weighed one hundred and fifty pounds and every ounce of me was as susceptible as a barometer on a stormy day. Consequently it was not long until I knew Mary and liked her immensely. All my spare time was occupied in talking to her over the wire, except when the cussed despatcher would chase me off with, "Oh! get out you big spoon, you make every one tired." Then Mary would give me the merry, "Ha, ha, ha."

One time I took a day off and ran down to Dunraven, and my impressions were fully confirmed. Mary was a little bit of a woman, with black hair, red lips, white teeth, and two eyes that looked like coals of fire, so bright were they. She was small, but when she took hold of the key, she was jerked lightning, and I have never seen but one woman since who was her equal in that line.

Our road was one of the direct connections of the "Overland Route," west to San Francisco, and twice a day we had a train, that in those days was called a flyer. Now it would be in a class with the first class freights. The west bound train passed my station at eight in the morning, and the east bound at seven-thirty in the evening. After that I gave "DS" good night, and was free until seven the next morning. The east bound flyer passed Dunraven at eight-fifteen in the evening and then. Mary was through for the night. The town was a mile away from the depot and the poor girl had to trudge all that distance alone. But she was as plucky as they make them and was never molested. A mile west of Dunraven was Peach Creek, spanned by a wooden pile and stringer bridge. Ordinarily, you could step across Peach Creek, but sometimes, after a heavy rain it would be a raging torrent of dirty muddy water, and it seemed as if the underpinning must surely be washed out by the flood.

One day after I had been at X—— a couple of months, we had a stem-winder of a storm. The rain came down in torrents unceasingly for twelve hours, and the country around X—— was almost a morass. The roadbed was good, however, and when the section men came in at six that night they reported the track firm and safe. But, my stars! how the rain was falling at seven-thirty as the flyer went smashing by. I made my "OS" report and then thought I'd sit around and wait until it had passed Dunraven and have a little chat with Mary, before going home for the night. At seven-forty-five I called her but no answer. Then I waited. Eight o'clock, eight-fifteen, eight-twenty, and still nothing from Dunraven. The despatcher then started to call "DU," but no answer. Finally, he said to me, "You call 'DU.' Maybe the wire is heavy and she can't adjust for me." I called steadily for five minutes, but still no reply. I was beginning to get scared. All sorts of ideas came into my head—

robbers, tramps, fire and murder.

"DS" said, "I'm afraid something has happened to the flyer. Turn your red-light and when No. 26 comes along, I'll give them an order to cut loose with the engine and go through and find the flyer."

Five minutes later the wire opened and closed. Then the current became weak, but adjusting down, I heard, "DS, DS, WK." Ah! that meant a wreck. "DS" answered and I heard the following message:—

"W. D. C. "PEACH CREEK, 4 | 13, 18—

"DS.

"Peach Creek bridge washed out to-night, but I heard of it and arrived here in time to flag the flyer. Send an operator on the wrecking outfit to relieve me.

(signed) MARY MARSH, Operator."

Two hours afterwards the wrecker came by X—— and, obedient to orders from the despatcher, I boarded it and went down to work the office. We reached there in about forty minutes and found that the torrent had washed out the underpinning of the bridge, and nothing was left but a few ties, the rails and the stringers. A half witted boy, who lived in Dunraven, had been fishing that day like "Simple Simon," and came tramping up to the office, telling Miss Marsh, in an idiotic way, that Peach Creek bridge had washed out. Just then she heard me "OS" the flyer and her office was the next one to mine. As the flyer did not stop at Dunraven, the baggageman and helper went home at six o'clock and she was absolutely alone save for this half witted boy. The section house was a mile and a half away to the east. A mile away, to the south were the twinkling lights of the village, while but one short mile to the west was Peach Creek, with the bridge gone out, and the flyer thundering along towards it with its precious load of human freight. How could it be warned. The boy hadn't sense enough to pound sand. She must do it. So, quick as a flash she picked up the red-light standing near, and started down the track. The rain was coming down in a perfect deluge, and the wind was sweeping across the Nebraska prairies like a hurricane. Lightning was flashing, casting a lurid glare over the soaked earth, and the thunder rolled peal after peal, resembling the artillery of great guns in a big battle. Truly, it was like the setting for a grand drama. Undaunted by it all, this brave little woman, bare headed, hair flying in the wind, and soaked to the skin, battled with the elements as she fought her way down the track. A mile, ordinarily, is a short distance, but now, to her, it seemed almost interminable; and all the time the flyer was coming nearer and nearer to the creek with the broken bridge. My God! would she make it! Presently, above the howling of the wind she heard the mad waters as they went boiling and tumbling down the channel.



"After many efforts I finally reached the lowest cross-arm."

At last she was there, standing on the brink. But the train was not yet saved. Just across the creek the road made an abrupt curve around a small hill, and if she could not reach that curve her labors would be to no avail, and a frightful wreck would follow. All the bridge was gone save the rails, stringers and a few shaky ties. Only forty feet intervened between her and the opposite bank, and get across she must. There was only one way, so grasping the lantern between her teeth, she started across on her hands and knees. The stringers swayed back and forth in the wind, and her frail body, it seemed, would surely be caught up and blown into the mad maelstrom of waters below. No! No! she could not fail now. Away up the road, borne to her anxious ears by the howling wind, she heard two long and two short blasts of the flyer's whistle as she signalled for a crossing. God! would she ever get there. Straining every nerve, at last success was hers, and tottering, she struggled up the other side. Flying up the track, looking for all the world like some eyrie witch, she reached the curve, swinging her red light like mad. Bob Burns, who was pulling the flyer that night, saw the signal, and immediately applied the emergency brakes. Then he looked again and the red-light was gone. But caution is a magic watchword with all railroad men, and he stopped. Climbing down out of the cab of the engine, he took his torch, and started out to investigate. He didn't have far to go, when he came upon the limp, inanimate form of Mary Marsh, the extinguished red-light tightly clasped in her cold little hand.

"My God! Mike," he yelled to his fireman, "it's a woman. Why, hang me, if it isn't the little lady

from Dunraven. Wonder what she is doing out here." He wasn't long in ignorance, because a brakeman sent out ahead saw that the bridge had gone.

Rough, but kindly hands, bore her tenderly into the sleeper, and under the ministrations of her own sex, she soon came around. So soon as she had seen the flyer stopping she realized that she had succeeded and womanlike—she fainted. Her clothes were torn to tatters, and taken all in all this little heroine was a most woebegone specimen of humanity.

A wrecking office was cut in by the baggageman, who happened to be an old lineman, and she sent the message to "DS," telling him of the wreck. I relieved her and she stayed in the sleeper all night, and the next day she returned to her work at Dunraven, but little worse for the experience. She had positively refused to accept a thing from the thankful passengers, saying she did but her duty.

Two months afterwards she married the chief despatcher, and the profession lost the best woman operator in the business. I was dreadfully cut by the ending of affairs, but she had said, "Red headed operators were not in her class," and I reckon she was about right.

Surely, she was a direct descendant from the Spartan mothers.



CHAPTER V

A NIGHT OFFICE IN TEXAS—A STUTTERING DESPATCHER

It was not long after Mary threw me over that I became tired of X—— and gave up my job and started south. I said it was on account of ill health, but the last thing that cussed first trick despatcher said to me was, "Never mind, you old spoon, you'll get over this attack in a very short while."

I landed in St. Louis one bright morning and went up to the office of the chief despatcher of the Q. M. & S., and applied for an office on his division. He had none to give me but wired the chief despatcher at Big Rock, and in answer thereto I was sent the next morning to Healyville. And what a place I found! The town was down in the swamps of southeast Missouri, four miles north of the Arkansas line, and consisted of the depot and twenty or twenty-five houses, five of which were saloons. There was a branch road running from here to Honiton, quite a settlement on the Mississippi river, and that was the only possible excuse for an officer at this point. The atmosphere was so full of malaria, that you could almost cut it with an axe. I stayed there just three days, and then, fortunately, the chief despatcher ordered me to come to his office. He wanted me to take the office at Boling Cross, near the Texas line, but I had the traveling fever and wanted to go further south, and he sent me down on the I. & G. N., and the chief there sent me to Herron, Texas. There wasn't much sickness in the air around Herron, but there were just a million fleas to every square inch of sand in the place. Herron was one of the few towns in a very extensive cattle belt, and a few days after I had arrived I noticed the town had filled up with "cow punchers." They had just had their semi-annual round up, and were in town spending their money and having a whooping big time. You probably know what that means to a cow-boy. I was a tenderfoot of the worst kind, and every one at the boarding-house and depot seemed to take particular delight in telling me of the shooting scrapes and rackets of these cow-boys, and how they delighted in making it warm for a tenderfoot. Bob Wolfe, the day man at the depot, told me how at times they had come up and raised particular Cain at the station, especially when there was a new operator on hand. I didn't half believe all their stories, but I will confess that I had a few misgivings the first night when I went to work. One night passed safely enough, but the second was a hummer from the word go. The office was somewhat larger than the telegraph offices usually are in small towns. The table was in the recess of a big bay window, giving me a clear view of the I. & G. N. tracks, while along the front ran the usual long wide platform. The P. & T. C. road crossed at right angles at one end of the platform, and one operator did the work for the two roads. There were two lamps over my desk—one on each side of the bay window—and one was out in the waiting-room. I also kept a lantern lighted to carry when I went out to trains.

All through the early part of the night, I heard sounds of revelry and carousing, accompanied by an occasional pistol shot, up in the town, but about half past eleven these sounds ceased, and I was congratulating myself that my night, would after all, be uneventful. About twelve o'clock, however, there arose just outside the office the greatest commotion I had ever heard in my life. I was eating my midnight lunch, and had a piece of pie in my hand, when I heard the tramp of many feet on the platform. It sounded like a regiment of infantry, and in a minute there came the report of a shot, and with a crash out went one of my lights, a shower of glass falling on the table. Before I could

collect myself there came another shot and smash out went the other light. I dropped my pie and spasmodically grasped the table. The only lights left were the one in the waiting-room and my lantern, which made it in the office little better than total darkness. All the time the tramp, tramp on the platform was coming closer and closer, and my heart was gradually forcing its way up in my mouth. In a moment the waiting-room door was thrown open, and with a wild whoop and a big hurrah, the crowd came in. The door between the office and the waiting-room was closed, but that made no difference to my visitors; they smashed it open and swarmed into the office. One of them picked up the lantern, and swaggering over to where I sat all trembling with fear, and expecting that *my* lights would go out next, raised it to my face. They all crowded around me and one of them gave me a good punch in the ribs. Then the one with the lantern said, "Well, fellows, the little cuss is game. He didn't get under the table like the last one did. Kid, for a tenderfoot, you're a hummer."

Get under the table! I couldn't. I would have given half my interest in the hereafter to have been able to crawl under the table or to have run away. But fright held its sway, and locomotion was impossible.

For about five minutes the despatcher had been calling me for orders, and in a trembling voice I asked them to let me answer and take the order. "Cert," said one of them, who appeared to be the leader, "go on and take the order, and then take a drink with us."

By the dim light of only that lantern, with my order pad on a table covered with broken glass, and smattered with pie, I finally copied the order, but it was about the worst attempt I had ever made; and the conductor remarked when he signed it, that it would take a Philadelphia lawyer to read it. The cow-punchers, however, from that time on were very good friends of mine, and many a pleasant Sunday did I spend on their ranches. They afterwards told me that Bob Wolfe had put them up to their midnight visit in order to frighten me. They certainly succeeded. My service at Herron was not very profitable, the road being in the hands of receivers, and for four months none of us received a cent of wages. The road was called the "International & Great Northern," but we facetiously dubbed it the "Independent & Got Nothing."

Some months after this I was transferred down to the southern division, and made night operator at Mankato. This was really about the best position I had yet struck: good hours, plenty of work and a fine office to do it in, and eighty dollars a month. The agent and day man were both fine fellows, and there was no chore work around the station—a baggage smasher did that. The despatchers up in "DS" office were pleasant to work with and as competent a lot of men as ever touched a key. I had never met any of them when I first took the office, though of course I soon knew their names, and the following incident will disclose how and under what unusual circumstances I formed the acquaintance of one of them, Fred De Armand, the second trick man.

About four weeks after I took the Mankato office, engine 333, pulling a through livestock freight north, broke a parallel rod, and besides cutting the engineer into mince-meat, caused a great wreck. This took place about two miles and a half north of Mankato. The hind man came back and reported it, and being off duty, I caught up a pocket instrument and some wire, and jumping on a velocipede, was soon at the wreck. I cut in an office in short order, and "DS" soon knew exactly how matters stood. One passenger train south was tied up just beyond the wreck, and in about an hour and a half the wrecker appeared in charge of the trainmaster. I observed a young man twenty-eight or thirty years of age standing around looking on, and once when I was near him I noticed that he stammered very badly.

I carefully avoided saying anything to that young man, because, I, too, at times, had a rather bad

impediment in my speech. It asserted itself especially when I heard any one else stutter, or when the weather was going to change; the men who knew me well said they could always foretell a storm by my inability to talk. From my own experience, however, I knew that when a stammerer heard another man stammer, he imagined that he was being made fun of, and all the fight in him came at once to the surface; and as this young man was about twice my size, I did my best to keep away from him. But in a few moments he came over to where I was and said to me, "A-a-a-sk 'DS' t-t-t-t-o s-s-s-end out m-m-m-y r-r-ain c-c-c-c-oat on th-th-th-irteen." Every other word was followed by a whistle.

My great help in stammering was to kick with my right foot. I knew what was coming, and tried my best to avert the trouble. I drew in a long breath and said: "Who sh-sh-sh-all I s-s-s-ay y-y-y-ou are?" and my right foot was doing great execution. True to its barometrical functions, my throat was predicting a storm. It came.

He looked at me for a second, grew red in the face, then catching me by the collar, gave me a yank, that made me see forty stars, and said, "B-b-b-last you! wh-wh-at d-d-o y-y-ou m-mean b-b-y m-mocking me? I'll sm-sm-ash y-y-our b-b-b-lamed r-r-ed head."

Speech left me entirely then, and I am afraid I would have been most beautifully thumped, had not Sanders, the trainmaster, come over and stopped him. He called him "De Armand," and I then knew he was the second trick despatcher. After many efforts De Armand told Sanders how I had mocked him. Sanders didn't know me and the war clouds began to gather again; but Johnson, the conductor of the wrecker, came over and said, "Hold on there, De Armand, that kid ain't mocking you; he stammers so bad at times that he kicks a hole in the floor. Why, I have seen him start to say something to my engineer pulling out of Mankato, and he would finish it just as the caboose went by, and we had some forty cars in the train at that."

At this a smile broke over De Armand's face, and he grasped my hand and said, "Excuse m-m-m-e k-k-id; but y-y-you k-k-know how it is y-y-yourself." You may well believe that I did know.

One night, shortly after this, I was repeating an order to De Armand, and in the middle of it I broke myself very badly. He opened his key, and said, "Kick, you devil, kick!" And I got the merry ha-ha from up and down the line. But in giving me a message a little while after he flew the track, and I instantly opened up and said, "Whistle, you tarrier, whistle!" Maybe he didn't get it back.



CHAPTER VI

BLUE FIELD, ARIZONA, AND AN INDIAN SCRIMMAGE

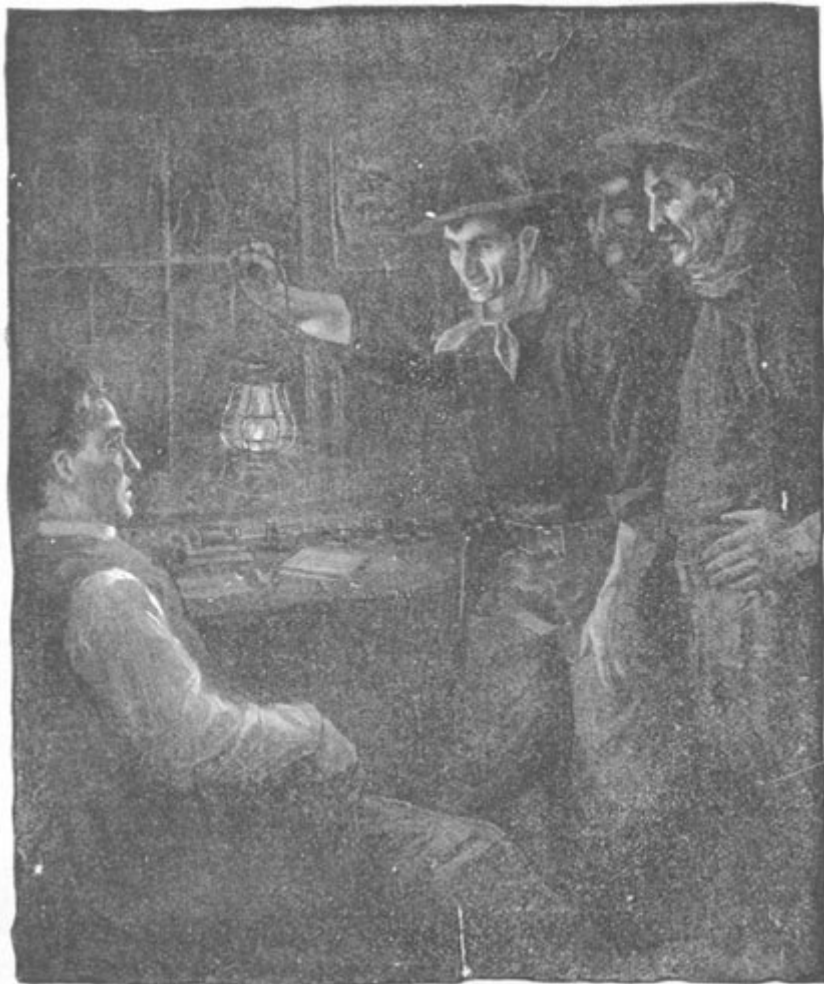
The desire to travel was strong within me, and in the following June I left Mankato, went out to Arizona and secured a position on the A. & P., at Blue Field, a small town almost in the centre of the desert. Alfreda, Kansas, was dreary and desolate enough, but there, I was at least in communication with civilization, because I had one wire running to Kansas City, while Blue Field was the crowning glory of utter desolation. The Bible says that the good Lord made heaven and earth in six days, and rested on the seventh. It needed but a single glance at Blue Field to thoroughly convince me that the Lord quit work at the end of the sixth day right there, and had never taken it up since. There was nothing but some scattering adobe shacks, with the usual complement of saloons, and as far almost as the eye could see in every direction,—sand—hot, glaring, burning sand. To the far northwards, could be dimly observed the outlines of the Mogollon range of mountains. The population consisted chiefly of about four hundred dare-devil spirits who had started to wander westwards in search of the El Dorado and had finally settled there, too tired, too disgusted to go any farther, and lacking money enough to return to their homes. It wasn't the most congenial crowd in the world. There was only one good thing in the place, and that was a deep well of pure sparkling water. The sun during the day was so scorching that the rails seemed to sizzle as they stretched out like two slender, interminable bands of silver over the hot sands, and at night no relief was apparent, and the office so stifling hot that my existence was well nigh unbearable. But the pay was ninety dollars per month and I hung on until I could save funds enough to get back to God's own country. To sleep in a house, in the day time, was almost killing, so I used to make up a sort of bunk on a truck and sleep in the shade of the freight shed. At seven-forty-three in the evening, the Trans-Continental flyer went smashing by at a fifty-five mile an hour clip and the dust it raised was enough to strangle a man.

The Arizona climate is a well known specific for pulmonary troubles, and thousands of people come down there in all stages of consumption from the first premonitory cough to the living emaciated skeleton.

The first station west of me was Clear Creek (so called on account of a good sized stream of water that came down from the Mogollons), and a few days after I arrived at Blue Field, I heard a message going over the wires saying that Fred Baird was coming down there to take charge. I had known him up in Kansas, and his looks and a hacking cough indicated only too truly, that the dreaded consumption had fastened itself on him; therefore when I heard of his assignment to Clear Creek, I knew it was his health that brought him down to that awful country. He had a wife (and a sweet little woman she was), and two beautiful children, aged two and four. A few evenings after this I had the pleasure of talking to them for several minutes as they went through on a slow passenger train, and I must say that my heart ached when I thought of the town to which that family was going. What a place to bring a woman? But then women have a faculty of hanging on to their liege lords under all circumstances and conditions. God bless 'em. Baird, himself, looked wretched, being a mere shadow of his former self, but like all consumptives he imagined he was going to get well.

Just about this time, two Indian gentlemen, named Geronimo and Victoria, were raising particular mischief all through that section of the country, and the feeling that any moment they might come down on you and raise your scalp after puncturing you full of holes was anything but pleasant. It was decidedly creepy and many a time I wished myself back in the good old state of Texas. I had come for excitement and adventure and it was not long until I had both articles doled out to me in large chunks. Those Indians used to break out from their reservations, swoop down on some settlement, kill everything in sight and then loot and burn to their heart's content. There was no warning—just a few shots, then a shrill war-whoop, and a perfect horde of yelling and shooting red devils would be upon you. Precautions were taken and some of the larger settlements were able to stand them off until some of the small army could come and scatter them. Blue Field had pickets posted every night, chosen from among the four hundred toughs that lived there, and was pretty well protected.

They gave us a wide berth for a while, but one night, I was sitting dozing in my chair about eleven-thirty, when I was awakened by the sharp crack of a rifle, followed in quick succession by others, until it was a regular fusillade. Then I heard the short shrill Apache war-whoop, and mentally I thought my time had come. I tried to breathe a prayer, but the high and unusual position of my heart effectually prevented any articulation. The window had been closed on account of a high wind blowing, or I fancy I should have gone out that way. However, I grabbed up a rifle, and then opening a trap door, dropped down into a little cubbyhole under the floor, where we used to keep our batteries. What I brought the rifle along for I can't say, unless it was to blow the top of my own head off. The place was like a bake-oven and all the air I received came through a small crack in the floor, and it was not long until I was soaked with perspiration.



"One of them picked up the lantern, and swaggering over to where I sat all trembling...."

Overhead I could hear the crack of the rifles and the whoop of the Indians as the battle raged, back and forth. During a temporary lull I heard the despatcher calling me for dear life, but he could call for all I cared; I had other business just then—I was truly "25." All at once I heard a bigger commotion than ever, there was a sound as if caused by the scurrying of many feet, and then all was quiet. I sat there wondering what was coming next, and how much longer I had to live, when I smelled smoke, and in a second I knew the depot was on fire. I tried to raise the trap-door, but it had a snap lock and had been dropped so hard in my mad efforts to get away, that it was securely locked. Good God! was I to be burned like a rat in a trap? All was quiet save the crackling of the flames as they licked up the depot. Something must be done and quickly at that, or there would be one operator who would receive his congé in a manner that was anything but pleasant. Feverishly, I groped around, and all at once my hand came in contact with the Winchester rifle. I grasped it by the barrel, and using it as a battering ram I started to smash that door. The smoke by this time was stifling, suffocating, and already my senses were leaving me,—everything was swimming around before my eyes, but it was a case of life and death, and I hammered away with all my might. Finally, Crash! Ah! I had succeeded, the lock broke and in a moment I had pulled myself up in the office.

The side towards the door was all ablaze and escape that way was impossible, so I picked up a chair and slammed it through the window over the table, and climbed out taking a loose set of instruments with me. The wires were still working, and above the crackle of the flames I heard "DS" still calling me. I reached in through the window and simply said,

"Indians—depot on fire—have saved a set of instruments—will call you later when I can fix a wire," and signed my name, "Bates."

My lungs were filled with smoke and felt like they had a million sharp needles sticking in them, but thanks to my lucky stars, I was not otherwise hurt. Everything appeared so quiet and still that I was dazed, but presently I heard a low mumbling of voices out to the westwards. I made my way thither and found the population (all that was left of it), assembled. When I staggered up to a group of the men, they turned on me like tigers, not knowing what kind of an animal I was. I recognized one of them who was commonly known as "Full-House Charley," and weakly said,

"Don't shoot, Charley, it's Bates the night operator at the depot."

"Well! where the devil have you been all the time? When the depot was burning some of us went over there, but you'd gone some place. We couldn't save anything so we let 'er burn. Your side partner, the day man, was killed and scalped."

It appeared that just as the fight was the hottest, three troops of the —th U. S. Colored Cavalry, appeared on the scene, having been on the trail of this same band all day. They made short work of the red men who melted away to the fastnesses of the Mogollons, first setting fire to the depot, the troops in close pursuit. If there ever were faithful hard working fighters in that country, it was these same dusky brunettes.

I told the gang where I had been, and in a few minutes several of them went over to the station to help me rig up a wire. I knew the despatcher's wire, and taking a pole's length out of another line, I soon made a connection to the instrument I had saved. It was no go—the wire was dead open. Then I rigged up a ground by running a wire to a pipe that ran down the well, and in testing I found the wire was open west. I called up "DS," who was east of-me, and told him what a nice hot old time we had been having out there.

"Yes," he said, "I knew there was trouble. Just after you told me about the Indians and fire, Clear Creek said their place was attacked by another band and things were getting pretty hot with them. Then the wire went open, caused as I supposed by your fire, but now it seems as if Baird is probably up against it as well. A train load of troops will come through in a short while to try and get beyond the Indians and cut them off. If you are able, I wish you would flag them and go over to Clear Creek and report from there. Disconnect and take your instrument and leave the line cut through. A line man will be sent out from here in the morning. Everything is tied up on the road, and you can tell the C. & E. there's nothing ahead of them, but to run carefully, keeping a sharp lookout for torn up track and burned trestles."

My experiences had been so exciting and the smoke in my lungs so painful, that I was ready to drop from fatigue; but then I thought of poor Fred Baird and his family, and I said I'd go. The troop train came in presently and I boarded her. It did my heart good to ride on that engine with "Daddy" Blake at the throttle, and think that four hundred big husky American regulars were trailing along behind, waiting for something to turn up and just aching for a crack at the red men.

It was now about three o'clock, and just as the first rays of early dawn illumined the horizon, we came in sight of Clear Creek. There was a dull red glow against the sky, that told only too well what we should find. The place had not been as well protected as Blue Field, and the slaughter was something fearful. The depot was nothing but a smoldering mass of ruins, and but a short distance away we came upon the bodies of Baird, his wife and two children, shot to pieces, stripped, horribly mutilated and scalped. It was sickening, and shortly after, when the troop train pulled out for Chiquito, the sense of loneliness was oppressing. A few people had escaped by hiding in obscure places and when they came out they went to work and buried the dead. I finally succeeded in getting a wire through and then, despite the heat, I slept.

The next day the troops corralled the Indians, gave them a good licking and sent them back to their old reservations. And yet in face of just such incidents as these, there are people who say that poor Lo can be civilized.

A construction gang came out and started to re-build, and the company offered me a good day office if I would remain, but Nay! Nay! I had had all I wanted of Arizona, and I went back to Texas, thankful that I had a whole skin and a full shock of red hair.



CHAPTER VII

TAKING A WHIRL AT COMMERCIAL WORK—MY FIRST ATTEMPT— THE GALVESTON FIRE

The memory of my exciting experience in Arizona lasted me a good long time, and I finally determined to leave the railroad service and try my hand at commercial work. The two classes are the same, and yet they are entirely different.

It is a most interesting sight, to the uninitiated, to go into the operating room of a big commercial office and see the swarms of men and women bending over glass partitioned tables; nimble footed check boys running hither and thither like so many flies, carrying to each wire the proper messages, while the volume of sound that greets your ears is positively deafening. Every once in a while some operator will raise his head and yell "Pink," "C. N. D." or "Wire." "Pink" means a message that is to be rushed; "C. N. D." is a market quotation that is to be hurried over to the Bucket Shops or Stock Exchange, while "Wire," means a message that pertains to some wire that is in trouble and such messages must have precedence over all others. The check boys are trained to know the destination of each and every wire and work under the direction of the traffic chief.

Far over on one side of a room is the switch board. To the untutored mind it looks like numberless long parallel strips of brass tacked on the side of the wall, and each strip perforated by a number of small holes, while stuck around, in what seems endless profusion, are many gutta-percha-topped brass pegs. Yet through all this seeming mass of confusion, everything is in apple pie order, and each one of those strips represents a wire and every plug a connection to some set of instruments. The wire chief and his assistants are in full charge of this work, and it must needs be a man of great ability to successfully fill such a place in a large office.

The chief operator has entire supervision over the whole office, and his duties are hard, constant, and arduous. Like competent train dispatchers, men able to be first-class chief operators are few and far between. Not only must he be an expert telegrapher, but he must thoroughly understand line, battery and switch board work, and his executive ability must be of the highest order.

I had always supposed if a man were a first-class railroad operator he could do equally good work on a commercial wire; in fact the operator in a small town is always employed by the railroad company and does the little amount of commercial work in addition to his other duties.

After leaving Blue Field I loafed a while, but that's tiresome work at best, so I journeyed down to Galveston, Texas, one bright fall morning, and after trying my luck at the railroad offices, I wandered into the commercial office on the Strand and asked George Clarke, the chief operator, for a job.

"What kind of a man are you?" he said.

"First-class in every respect, sir," I replied.

"Sit down there on the polar side of that Houston quad and if you are any account, I'll give you a job at seventy dollars per month."

Now a "Quad" is an instrument whereby four messages are going over the *same* wire at the *same* time. The mechanism of the machine is different in every respect from the old relay, key and sounder, used on the railroad wires. In a vague way I had heard of "quads," and imagined I could work them as well as an "O. S." wire, but when he said for me to sit down on the "Polar side," I was, for a minute, stumped. However, there were already three chaps sitting at that table, so the fourth place must be mine. I sat down and presently I heard the sounder say, "Who?" I answered "BY," and then "HO," said, "Hr. City," I grabbed a pen and made ready to copy, but by the time he had finished the address I was just putting down the number and check. "Break" I said, "G. A. from," B-r-r-r-r- how that sounder did jump. This interesting operation was repeated several times, but finally I succeeded in getting the message down, and then without giving me time to draw my breath, he said, "C. N. D." and started ahead with a jargon of figures and words that I had never heard of before. His sending was plain enough, in fact it was like a circus bill, but I wasn't on to the combination, and it was all Greek to me. Perspiration started from every pore, and in my agony I said, "Break, G. A. Ahr.," Holy Smoke! how he did fly off at that, and how those other three chaps did grin at my discomfiture.

"Call your chief operator over here," and with that he refused to work with me any more. Clarke came over and that blasted chump at "HO" said,

"For heaven's sake give us an operator to do the receiving on the polar' side of this quad. We are piled up with business and can't be delayed by teaching the ropes to a railroad ham. He's been ten minutes taking one message, and I haven't been able to pound into his head what a 'C. N. D,' is yet."

Clarke quietly gave him "O. K." and then turned to me with,

"I guess you are not used to this kind of work. Better go back to railroading, and learn something about commercial work before tackling a job like this again. Come back in six months and I'll give you another trial." I sneaked out of the office, followed by the broad smiles of every man in the place, and thus ended the first lesson.

I took Clarke's advice and went back to work on a narrow-gauge road running northwards out of Houston, through the most God-forsaken country on the footstool. Sluggish bayous, foul rank growth of vegetation, alligators as long as a rail, that would come out and stop trains by being on the track, and air so malarious in quality that it was only a question of time until one had the fever. I stuck it out for two months and then succumbed to the inevitable and went to the hospital where I lay for three weeks. After I had fully recovered they put me to work in the Houston General Office, and some eight months after reaching there I received a message from my old friend Clarke, saying, "if I had improved any in my commercial work he would give me a job at seventy dollars per month." I hadn't improved much, but as this world is two-thirds bluff, I made mine, and said I'd come, trusting to luck to be able to hold on.

I reached there one pleasant afternoon and the next morning went to work. I must have had my rabbit's foot with me, because I was assigned to a "Way Wire." I think if he had told me to tackle a "Quad," again, I should have fainted. A "Way Wire," is one that runs along a railroad, having offices cut in in all the small towns. There wasn't a town on the whole string that had more than ten or fifteen messages a day, but the aggregate of all the offices made up a very good day's work. Then again I didn't have to handle any of those confounded "C. N. D." messages. Clarke watched me closely and at the end of the first day he said my work showed a marked improvement. You may rest assured I watched my P's and Q's, and it wasn't long before I had the hang of the system and could take my trick on a "Quad" with the best of them. Rheostats, wheatstone bridges,

polarized relays, pole changers, and ground switches became as familiar to me as the old relay key and sounder had been.

Some of the rarest gems of the profession worked in "G" office at this time—George Clarke, "Cy" Clamphitt, "Jack" Graham, Will Church, John McNeill, Paul Finnegan alias the "Count," and a score or more of men, as good as ever touched a key or balanced a quad. A day's work was from eight A. M., until five P. M., and for all over time we were paid extra at the rate of forty cents per hour. This extra work was called "Scooping."

One day in December, Clarke asked me if I wanted to "scoop" that night. I acquiesced and after eating a hasty supper I went back to the office and prepared for a long siege. I was put to sending press reports, which is just about as hard work as a man can do. I sent "30" (the end) at two o'clock in the morning, and went home worn to a frazzle. I was boarding on Avenue M. with ten other operators, in a house kept by a Mrs. Swanson, and roomed with her little son Jimmie, who was a hopeless cripple. I undressed, and after shoving little Jim over to his own side of the bed, tumbled in and was soon sleeping like a log. It seemed as if I had just closed my eyes when I felt some one pulling my hair. I knocked the hand away and prepared to take another snooze, when there was that awful pull on my red head again. I opened my eyes prepared to fight, when I felt an extra hard pull, and heard the wee sma' voice of my diminutive room mate say,

"Get up, the house is on fire." "Rats," I said—Again,—the awful pull,—and,—"Mr. Bates, for God's sake get up; the house is on fire; the whole town is burning up."

I sprang out of bed and the crackling of the timbers, the glow of the flames, and the stifling smoke, soon assured me it was time to move, and quickly at that. I grabbed up a few clothes in one arm, and grasping brave little Jimmie Swanson in the other, I started for the steps. On our side, the whole house was in flames, and the smoke rushing up the stair-way was something awful. I wrapped Jimmie's head in his night shirt, and throwing a coat over mine, I started down the stairs. Half way down my foot slipped, and we both pitched head first to the bottom. Poor little Jim, his right arm was broken by the fall, and when he tried to get up, he found that his one sound leg was badly strained. He said,

"Never mind me, Mr. Bates, save yourself. I'll crawl out."

Leave him to roast alive? Never! I grabbed him again and after a desperate effort succeeded in getting him out. All our supply of clothing had been lost in our mad efforts to escape, and as a bitter norther was blowing at the time, our position was anything but pleasant. I found a few clothes dropped by some one else and we made ourselves as warm as possible. Then I grabbed Jimmie up again and fled before the fiery blast. The awful catastrophe had started in a fisherman's shack over on the bay, twenty-seven squares from where we lived, and being borne by a high wind, had swept everything in its path. The houses were mostly of timber and were easy prey to the relentless flames. Although Galveston is entirely surrounded by water, the pipe-lines for fighting fire at this time extended only to Avenue H, ten blocks from the Strand. Beyond that, the fire department depended on the cisterns of private houses for the water to subdue the flames.

With lightning-like rapidity the flames had spread and almost before they knew it the town seemed doomed. Arches of flame, myriads of falling sparks, hundreds of fleeing half-clad men, women and children, the hissing of the engines in their puny attempts to fight the monster, and ever and anon the dull roar of the falling walls, made a scene, as grand and weird as it was desolate and awful. In less than two hours time fifty-two squares had been laid waste, leaving a trail of smoldering black

ashes. That the whole city did not go is due to a providential switch of the wind that blew the flames back on their own tracks.

Of the fifteen operators in the day force, twelve had been burned out, and the next morning, at eight o'clock, when all had reported for duty, they were as sorry a looking lot of men as ever assembled.

"Some in rags, some in jags, and one in velvet gown." "Count" Finnegan had on a frilled shirt, a pair of trousers three sizes too small for him, and his manly form was wrapped in a flowing robe of black velvet, picked up by him in his mad flight.

It was many a day before the effects of this direful calamity were entirely obliterated.

CHAPTER VIII

SENDING A MESSAGE PERFORCE—RECOGNIZING AN OLD FRIEND BY HIS STUFF

Some time after this I was in Fort Worth copying night reports at eighty dollars per month. The night force consisted of two other men besides myself. The "split trick" man worked until ten o'clock, the other chap stayed around until twelve, or until he was clear, while I hung on until "30" on report which came anywhere from one-thirty until four A. M. After midnight I had to handle all the business that came along.

When I had received "30" I would cut out the instruments and go home.

One morning, about two-thirty I had said "G. N." to Galveston, cut out the instruments, put out the lights in the operating room, and started to go home through the receiving room and I was about to put out the last light there, when the outer door opened and in staggered a half drunken ranchman who said,

"Hold on there, young fellow, I want to send a message to St. Louis."

"I'm sorry, but it's too late to send it now. All the instruments are cut out and we won't have St. Louis until eight o'clock in the morning. Come around then and some of the day force will send it for you."

"But," he said in a maudlin voice, "I've got nineteen cars of cattle out here that are going up there to-morrow and I want to notify my agents."

I persisted in my refusal and was beginning to get hot under the collar, but my bucolic friend also had a temper and showed it.

"D—n it," he said, "you send this message or there is going to be trouble."

"Not much, I won't send your confounded old message. Get out of this office: I'm going home."

Just then I heard an ominous click and in a second I was gazing down the barrel of a .45, and he said,

"Now will you send it? You'd better or I'll send you to a home that will be a permanent one."

A .45, especially when it is loaded, cocked and pointed at your head, with a half drunken galoot's finger on the trigger, is a powerful incentive to quick action.

"Give me your blamed old message, and I'll send it for you."

Now there wasn't a through wire to any place at the time, but I had thought of a scheme to stave him off. I took his telegram, went over and monkeyed around the switch board for a while, and then sat down to a local instrument and went through the form of sending a message. My whole salvation lay in the hope that he was not an operator and would fail to discover my ruse. I glanced at him furtively out of the corner of my eye, and there he stood, pistol in hand, grinning like a monkey and

swaying to and fro like a reed in the wind. I didn't know what that grin portended for me, but after I had gone through the form of sending the telegram, I hung it up on the hook, and turned around with,

"There, I hope you are satisfied now. Your blamed old message has been sent."

"Satisfied! Why certainly I'm satisfied. I just wanted to show you that the Western Union Company wasn't the whole push. Come on over to the White Elephant with me and we'll have a drink together, just to show there's no hard feelings between us," and with that he put away his pistol and we went out. On the way over to the Elephant he said,

"Say, kid, did you think I'd shoot if you hadn't sent the message?"

"Well," I replied, "I wasn't taking any chances on the matter."

Then he laughed loud enough to be heard a block away and said, "Why, that pistol hasn't been loaded for six months, I was just running a bluff on you, and you bit like a fish."

Good joke, wasn't it? We had our drink, *and his message was sent by one of the day force, at eight-twelve A. M.*

The Morse telegraphic alphabet is exactly the same the world over, and yet each operator has a peculiarity to his sending, or "stuff," as it is called, that makes it easy to recognize an old friend, even though his name be changed.

In the early part of my career, when I was working days at X——, in Nebraska, at Sweeping Water there was a chap called Ned Kingsbury holding down the night job, and as wild a youngster as ever hit the road. One night when I was sitting up a little late I heard the despatcher give Ned an order for a train that ordinarily would not stop there. Ned repeated it back all right enough, and then gave the signal, "6," which meant that he had turned his red-light to the track and would hold it there until the order was delivered and understood. So far, so good. But the reckless little devil had forgotten to turn his red-board and proceeded to write to some of his numerous girls, and the first thing he knew that freight train went smashing by at a thirty-five mile clip, and Mr. Ned knew he was up against it.

In some states a railroader guilty of criminal negligence is sent up for a term of from one to ten years. The smash up that resulted from Ned's carelessness was a catastrophe of the fatal kind; one engineer was killed, and a fireman and brakeman or two laid up for months. He fully realized the magnitude of his offence and promptly skipped away from the wrath that was sure to follow, and nothing more was heard of him in that section of the country.

This all happened a number of years before I went to work in Fort Worth, and one morning I was doing a little "scooping," by working days, and sat down to send on the "DA" quad. I worked hard for about two hours on the polar side, and was sending to some cracker jack, who signed "KY." Shortly after that I changed over to the receiving side and "KY" did the sending to me. I had been taking about ten messages and the conviction was growing on me momentarily that the sending was very familiar and that I must have known the sender. Where had I heard that peculiar jerky sending before? It was as plain as print, but there was an individuality about it that belonged only to one man. All at once that night in Nebraska flashed on my mind and I knew my sender was none other than Ned Kingsbury. I broke him and said,

"Hello, Ned Kingsbury, where did you come from?"

"You've got the wrong man this time, sonny, my name is Pillsbury," he replied.

"Oh! come off. I'd know that combination of yours if I heard it in Halifax. Didn't you work at Sweeping Water, Nebraska, some time ago, and didn't you have some kind of a queer smash up there?"

Then he 'fessed up and said he had recognized my stuff as soon as he heard it, but hadn't said anything in hopes I wouldn't twig him.

"Don't give me away, old chap. I'm flying the flag now and have lost all my former brashness."

I never did.

CHAPTER IX

BILL BRADLEY, GAMBLER AND GENTLEMAN

Telegraphers are, as a rule, a very nomadic class, wandering hither and thither like a chip buffeted about on the ocean. Their pathway is not always one of roses, and many times their feet are torn by the jagged rocks of adversity. I was no different from any of the rest, neither better nor worse, and many a night I have slept with only the deep blue sky for a covering, and it may be added—*sotto voce*—it is not a very warm blanket on a cold night. 'Tis said, an operator of the first class can always procure work, but there are times when even the best of them are on their uppers. For instance, when winter's chill blasts sweep across the hills and dales of the north, like swarms of swallows, operators flit southwards to warmer climes, and for this reason the supply is often greater than the demand.

I was a "flitter" of the first water, and after I had been in Fort Worth for a very short while I became possessed of a desire to see something of the far famed border towns along the Rio Grande frontier. So I went south to a town called Hallville, and found it a typical tough frontier town. I landed there all right enough and then proceeded to gently strand. Work was not to be had, money I had none, and my predicament can be imagined. Many of you have doubtless been on the frontier and know what these places are. There was the usual number of gambling dens, dance halls and saloons, and of course they had their variety theatre. Ever go into one of the latter places? The first thing that greets your eye is a big black and white sign "Buy a drink and see the show." Inside, at one end, is the long wooden bar, presided over by some thug of the highest order, with a big diamond stuck in the centre of a broad expanse of white shirt front. At the other end is the so-called stage, while scattered about indiscriminately are the tables and chairs. The air is filled—yea, reeking—with the fumes of bad whiskey, stale beer, and the odor of foul smelling cheap tobacco smoke, and through all this haze the would-be "show," goes on, and the applause is manifested by whistles, cat calls, the pounding of feet on the floor and glasses on the tables. Occasionally some artist (?) will appear who does not seem to strike the popular fancy and will be greeted by a beer glass or empty bottle being fired at his or her head.

Now, at the time of which I speak, my prospects were very slim, and as nature had endowed me with a fair singing voice, I had just about made up my mind to go to the Palace Variety Theatre and ask for a position as a vocalist. I could, at least, sing as well as some of the theatrical by-gones that graced the place. The price of admission in one of these places is simply the price of a drink. I felt in my pocket and found that I had one solitary lonely dime, and swinging aside the green baize door, I entered.

"Gimme a beer," I said laying down my dime. A small glass, four-fifths froth and one-fifth beer, was skated at me by the bartender from the other end of the counter, and my dime was raked into the till.

Then I stood around like a bump on a log, trying to screw my courage up to ask the bleary eyed, red-nosed Apollo for a job. Some hack voiced old chromo was trying to warble "Do they miss me at home," and mentally I thought "if he had ever sung like that when he was at home they were probably glad he had left." The scene was sickening and disgusting to me, but empty stomachs

stand not on ceremony, so I turned around and was just about to accost the proprietor, when Biff! I felt a stinging whack between my shoulders. Quickly I faced about, all the risibility of my red headed nature coming to the surface, and there I saw a big handsome chap standing in front of me. Six feet tall, broad-shouldered, straight, lithe limbs, denoting herculean strength, a massive head poised on a well shaped neck, two cold blue eyes, and a face covered by a bushy brown beard; dressed in well fitting clothes, trousers tucked in the tops of shiny black boots, long Prince Albert coat and a broad sombrero set rakishly on one side of his head. Such was the man who hit me in the back.

"Hello, youngster, what's your name?"

Rubbing my lame shoulder, I said, "Well it might be Jones and it might be Smith, but it ain't, and I don't know what affair it is of yours, any way."

"Oh! come now, boy, don't get huffy. You've got an honest face and appear to be in trouble. What is it? Out with it. You're evidently a tenderfoot and this hell-hole of vice isn't a place for a boy of your years. What's your name? Come over here at this table and sit down and tell me."

Something in his bluff hearty manner gave me hope and after sitting down, I said.

"My name is Martin Bates. I'm a telegraph operator by profession and blew into this town this morning on my uppers. I can't get work and I haven't a red cent to my name. It is necessary for me to live, and as I can sing a little bit, I came in here to see if I could get a job warbling. I won't beg or steal, and there is no one here I can borrow from. There's my story. Not a very pleasant one is it?"

"There may have been worse. How long since you've had anything to eat."

"Nine o'clock this morning," I grimly replied.

"Good Lord, that's twelve hours ago. Come on with me out of here and I'll fix you up."

Meekly I followed my new found friend. I was sick at heart, weary and worn out in body and I didn't care a rap whether school kept or not; anything would be better than my present situation. He took me about three blocks up the main street and we went into a suite of beautifully furnished rooms. He rang a bell, a darkey came in, and it wasn't long before I had a lunch in front of me fit for the gods, and I may add it didn't take me many minutes to get outside of it. My friend watched me narrowly while I was eating, and when I had finished he said,

"Now youngster, you're all tired out. You go to bed in the next room and get a good night's sleep. In the morning we'll see what we can do for you, but one thing is certain, you're not going into that vile hole of a Palace Theatre again. Somewhere in this world you have a father and mother who are praying for you this night. Don't make a slip in your pathway in life and break their hearts. Everything is safe and quiet here and no one will disturb you until I come in in the morning."

There was a peculiar earnestness in his voice as he spoke that was very convincing, and as he rose to go out, I meekly said,

"What's your name, mister?"

"Bill Bradley," he answered with a queer smile. "Now don't you ask any more questions to-night," and with that he was gone.

I went to bed almost sick from my exposure and lack of food, and just as the old sand man of childhood's happy days began to sprinkle his grains in my eyes, I heard, way off in the distance, a peculiar click and a drawling voice calling off some numbers. "Four." "Sixteen." "Thirty-three." "Seventy-eight." "Ten." "Twenty-six," and then, a great shout arose and some one called out "KENO." Ah! I was near a gambling house, but I was too tired to care, nature asserted herself, and I gently crossed the river into the land of Nod.

The next morning I was really sick with a high fever, and when Bill came in I was well nigh loony.

"Hello," he said, "this won't do. Tom, I say, you Tom, go and tell Doctor Bailey I want him here quick. D—n quick. Do you hear?" and black Tom answered, "Yas, suh."

To be brief, I was three weeks on my back, and bluff old Bill Bradley nursed me like a loving mother would a sick child. Day and night he hung over me, never a thing did I need but what he procured for me, and one day after the fever had left me and I was sitting up by an open window, I said,

"Mr. Bradley, what do you do for a living?"

"Boy," he replied with a flushed face, "I am sorry you asked that question, but sooner or later you would have heard it and I'd a great deal rather tell you about it myself. I'm a gambler and these three rooms adjoin my place which is called the "Three Nines," and then he told me the story of his life. He was a son of a fine Connecticut family, a graduate of Harvard, and in his day had been a very able young lawyer with brilliant prospects, but one night, he went out with a crowd of roystering chaps, the lie was passed, and—it was the old story,—he came to Texas for a refuge. The great civil war was just over, the country in a chaotic state, and there he had remained ever since. Thrown with wild, uncouth men, and being reckless in the extreme, he opened a gambling house.

"Why did you take this great interest in me?" I asked.

"Look here, young chap, you are altogether too inquisitive. I've got an old father and mother way up in Ball Brooke, Connecticut, whose hearts have been broken by my actions, and when I saw you in that hellish den of vice you looked so out of place that I determined to save you. It was impulse, my boy, and then again, it may have been the remembrance of the one, at whose knee I used to lisp, 'Now I lay me down to sleep.'"

My recovery was very rapid from that time on, and when I was able to work I secured a position in the commercial office in Hallville. One evening after being paid I strolled into the "Three Nines;" Bill was dealing faro, and I thought I might in a measure, show my gratitude towards him by risking a coin. There was a big crowd standing around the table, but I edged my way in and placed a dollar on the queen to win. Luck was with me and I won. Once, twice, thrice, did the cards come my way, and my stack of whites and reds was growing. This didn't seem to me much like gratitude to win a man's money, and I wished I hadn't started. Presently Bill looked up, and spying me, pointed to my stack of chips, and said, "Whose stack is that?" "Mine," I replied, and with one fell swoop he dashed the chips into the rack, and taking a ten-dollar bill from the drawer, he turned to his side partner and said, "Jim, take the deal," and then he got up, took me by the arm, saying, "You come with me."

Feeling like a sneak I followed him, and when we had reached his sitting-room, he sat down and said,

"Kid, how much were you in on that deal?"

"Just one dollar," I replied.

Then he looked at me, his eyes shone like coals of fire, and he said,

"Look here boy, here's ten dollars. If you are ever hard up and want money come to me, and I'll give it to you willingly, but don't you ever let me see or hear of you staking a cent on a card again. I'm running a gambling house, and as gambling houses go, it's an honest one, but I'm not out plucking lambs like you. Your intentions were probably good but don't you ever do it again. If you really want to show your gratitude for what I have done for you, promise me honestly that you will never gamble."

I felt very much humiliated, but took his words of advice, promised, and have never flipped a coin on a card since that night.

Bill was a married man, and in addition to his suite of rooms spoken of, he had a very nice residence on Capitol Hill. His suite was a side issue, to be used when the games were running high. I had never met Mrs. Bradley, but during my illness I had evidence every day of her goodness in the shape of many delicacies that found their way to my bedside. I had asked Bill time and again to take me out to meet his wife, but he always put me off on one pretext or another.

When I started to work, I had secured a room at the house of a Mrs. Slade. She had three daughters and one Sunday afternoon we were all out walking together, when one of them pointed to a very fine residence and said, "That's the residence of Bill Bradley, the big gambler."

Just then Bill and his wife came driving by behind a spanking team of bays. Quick as a flash my hat came off, and I bowed low. Bill saw it and very cavalierly returned my salute. The elder Miss Slade turned on me like a tigress, and said,

"Mr. Bates, do you know who that man is? Do you know what he is?"

"Yes, I know him very well," I replied.

"Then what do you mean by insulting us by speaking to such a man? I did not know that you associated with men of his ilk."

In a plain unvarnished way I told them of Bill Bradley's kindness to me, but it was no go, and as I would not renounce my liking for the man who had been my benefactor, my room in their house became preferable to my society and I left.

The next evening I saw Bill in his rooms, and he said,

"Martin, yesterday, when Mrs. Bradley and I drove by you and the Slade girls, you spoke to me and lifted your hat to Mrs. Bradley. I could do naught but return the salute. Now my boy, there's no use of my mincing words with you; I befriended you, probably saved you from ruin, but young as you are, you know full well that our paths do not lie parallel with each other. I am a gambler, and although Mrs. Bradley is as good a woman as ever lived, (and I'd kill the first man that said she wasn't) we are not recognized by society; no, not even by the riff raff that live in Hallville. You have your way to carve in the world, don't ruin it right at the outset by letting people know you are friendly with gamblers. No matter how good your motives may be, this scoffing world will always misconstrue them and censure you."

This made me hot and I told him so. No matter if he was a gambler, he was more of a gentleman than nine-tenths of the men of society, yes, men, who would come and gamble half the night away in his place, and then go forth the next day and pose as models of propriety.

The upshot of the whole business was that I left Hallville soon after this and went to San Antonio to take day report, and one day I picked up a paper, and read an account of how Bill Bradley had been assassinated by a cowardly cur who had a grudge against him. He was stabbed in the back, and thus ended the career of Bill Bradley, gambler and gentleman.

CHAPTER X

THE DEATH OF JIM CARTWRIGHT—CHASED OFF A WIRE BY A WOMAN

I didn't stay at San Antonio very long after this but started northwards. You see it was getting to be warm weather. The first place I struck was a night job in a smashing good town up near the south line of the pan handle. I quit working at midnight, and to get to my boarding house had to walk a mile through a portion of the town called "Hell's half-acre."

The most prominent place of any description in the city was a saloon and gambling house known as the "Blue Goose," owned by John Waring and Luke Ravel. Both men were as nervy as they make 'em and several nicks in the butts of their revolvers testified mutely as to their prowess. Their place was like all other dens, and consisted of the usual bar and lunch counter in one room, while in the adjoining one was the hall of gaming. Faro, roulette, hazard, monte, and the great national game, poker, held high carnival there nightly. Next to the "Goose" was a long narrow room used as a shooting gallery. The place was only a few doors around the corner from my office, and many a night on my way home I would stop at the lunch counter and have a sandwich and a cup of coffee. I remembered my promise to bluff old Bill Bradley, and was never tempted to go in the gambling hall. I generally used to rise about noon each day and go up town and loaf until four o'clock, when it was time to go to work. I picked up a speaking acquaintance with Luke Ravel, and sometimes we would go into the shooting gallery together and have a friendly bout with the Flobert rifles.

At this time there was one of those tough characters in the town named Jim Cartwright. In days gone by he had been a deputy United States Marshal, and one time took advantage of his official position to provoke a quarrel with an enemy and killed him in cold blood. Public indignation ran high and Jim had to skip to Mexico. He stayed away two years and getting in trouble over there, came back to his old stamping grounds in hopes the people had forgotten his former scrape. They hadn't exactly forgotten it, but Jim was a pretty tough character and no one seemed to care to tackle him.

One night Luke Ravel and Jim had some words over a game of cards, and bad blood was engendered between them. The next day my side partner Frank Noel, and I went into the shooting gallery to try our luck, and were standing there enjoying ourselves, when Luke came in and took a hand. He was dressed in the height of fashion, and while we three were standing there, Jim Cartwright, three sheets in the wind, appeared in the doorway pistol in hand. He looked at Luke and said, with an oath,

"Look here, Luke Ravel, your time has come. I'm going to kill you."

My hair arose, my heart seemed to stop beating, but there was no way out, so Noel and I edged our way over as far as possible, and held our breath. Luke never turned a hair, nor changed color. He was as cool as an iceberg, and squarely facing Cartwright said,

"You wouldn't shoot an unarmed man would you, Jim?"

"Ain't you got no gun?"

"No," replied Luke, "I'm unarmed. See," and with that he threw up the tails of his long coat.

Jim hesitated a minute, and then shoving his gun into his pocket he said,

"No, by heavens, I won't kill an unarmed man. I'll give you a chance for your life, but I warn you to fix yourself, because the next time I see you I'm going to let daylight through your carcass," and with another oath he turned to walk away. Hardly had he taken two steps, when there was a blinding flash followed by a loud report, and Jim Cartwright lay dead, shot through the heart, while Luke Ravel stood over him; a smoking .38 pocket pistol in his hand. Where he pulled his gun from no one ever knew; it was all over in a flash. It seems a cowardly thing to shoot a man in the back, but it was a case of 'dog eat dog.'

Luke was arrested next day, and Noel and I gave our testimony before the coroner's jury, and he was bound over for trial before the next term of the circuit court to sit six months hence. There is an old and very trite saying in Texas that, "a dead witness is better than a live one." This was gently whispered into our ears, and accordingly one night about a month after this, Noel and I "folded our tents, and like the Arabs, silently stole away."

Luke was acquitted on the plea of self defence.

Spring time having come, and with it the good hot weather, I continued to move northwards and finally brought up in a good office in Nebraska, where I was to copy the night report from Chicago. We had two wires running to Chicago, one a quad for the regular business, and the other a single string for "C. N. D." and report work. My stay in this office was, short, sharp, brilliant and decisive.

The first night I sat down to work at six-thirty, and in a few minutes was receiving the worst pounding I had ever experienced, from some operator in "CH" office who signed "JL." There was no kick coming on the sending, it was as plain as a large sized poster, but it was so all-fired fast, that it made me hustle for all I was worth to get it down. There is no sense in a fellow sending so fast, because nothing is made by it and it tires every one completely out. Ordinarily, a thirty word a minute clip is a good stiff speed for report, but this night, thirty-five or forty was nearer the mark. In every operator there is a certain amount of professional pride inherent that makes him refrain from breaking on report unless it is absolutely necessary. The sender always keeps a record of the breaks of each receiver on the line, and if they become too frequent the offender is gently fired. On the night in question I didn't break, but there were several times when foreign dispatches were coming that I faked names in great shape. It was an ugly night out, and about nine o'clock our quad flew the track, and in a minute "JL" said to me,

"Here's ten blacks (day messages) just handed me to send to you," and without waiting for me to get my manifold clip out of the way he started. I didn't get a chance to put the time or date down, and was swearing, fighting mad. After sending five of the ten messages, "JL" stopped a second and said,

"How do I come?"

"You come like the devil. For heaven's sake let up a bit," I replied.

"Who do you think you are talking to?" came back at me.

Seemingly, patience had ceased to be a virtue with me, so I replied, "Some d——d ambitious chump of a fool who's stuck on making a record for himself."

"That settles you. Call your chief operator over here."

Joe Saunders was the chief, and when he came over he said,

"What's the trouble here, kid, this wire gone down?"

"No," I answered, "the wire hasn't gone down, but that cuss up in 'CH' who signs 'JL' has been pounding the eternal life out of me and I've just given him a piece of my mind."

"Say anything brash?" asked Joe.

"No, not very. Just told him he was a d—d fool with a few light embellishments."

Joe laughed very heartily and said, "I guess you are the fool in this case, because 'JL' is a woman, Miss Jennie Love, by name, and the swiftest lady operator in the business. If she makes this complaint official, you'll get it in the neck."

I didn't wait for any official complaint, but put on my coat and walked out much chagrined, because I had always boasted that no woman could ever run me off a wire. I had the pleasure of meeting Miss Love afterwards and apologized for my conduct. She forgave me, but like Mary Marsh, she married another man.



CHAPTER XI

WITNESSING A MARRIAGE BY WIRE—BEATING A POOL ROOM— SPARRING AT RANGE

After my disastrous encounter with Miss Love, I went south and brought up in St. Louis, where old "Top," the chief operator, gave me a place working a New York quad. This was about the worst "roast" I had ever struck, and it was work from the word go from 5 P. M. until 1 A. M. Work on any wire from a big city leading to New York is always hot, and this particular wire was the worst of the bunch. While working in this office I had several little incidents come under my observation that may be of interest.

The coy little god of love manifests itself in many ways, and the successful culmination of two hearts' happiness is as often queer as it is humorous.

Miss Jane Grey was an operator on the G. C. & F. Railway at Wichita, Kansas, and Mr. Paul Dimmock worked for the Western Union in Louisville, Kentucky. Through the agency of a matrimonial journal, Jane and Paul became acquainted; letters and pictures were exchanged, and—it was the old, old story—they became engaged. They wanted to be wedded and the more sensational and notorious they could make it the better it would suit them both. Jane only earned forty dollars per month, while Paul's monthly stipend was the magnificent sum of sixty, with whatever extra time he could "scoop." Neither one of them wanted to quit work just then, they felt they could not afford it, but that marriage must come off, or they would both die of broken hearts. Paul wrote,—Jane wrote,—plans and compromises were made and refused; the situation was becoming desperate, and finally Jane's brilliant mind suggested a marriage by wire. Great head—fine scheme. *It takes a woman to circumvent unforeseen obstacles every time.* Chief operators were consulted in Kansas City and St. Louis and they agreed to have the wire cut through on the evening appointed. There were to be two witnesses in each office, and I was one of the honored two in St. Louis. The day finally arrived, and promptly at seven-thirty in the evening Louisville was cut through to Wichita, and after all the contracting parties and the witnesses had assembled, the ceremony began. There was a minister at each end, and as the various queries and responses were received by the witnesses, they would read them to the contracting party present, and finally Paul said,

"With this ring, I thee wed, and with all my worldly goods I thee endow: in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, Amen."

The ring was placed on the bride's finger, *by proxy*, the benediction pronounced by the Wichita minister, and the deed was done. In due time the certificate was received and signed by all the witnesses, and the matter made of record in both places.

How long did they live apart? Oh! not very long. I think it was the next night that I saw a message going through directed to Paul saying, "Will leave for Louisville to-night," and signed "Jane."

I wonder if old S. F. B. Morse ever had any idea when he was perfecting the telegraph, that it would some day be used to assist in joining together,

"Two souls with but a single thought,
Two hearts that beat as one."

Operators are as a rule as honest as the sun, yet, "where you find wheat, there also you find chaff," and once in a while a man will be found whose proper place is the penitentiary. One of the easiest ways for an operator, so inclined to make money, is to cut wires, steal the reports of races, market quotations, or C. N. D. reports, and beat them to their destinations. Wires are watched very closely so that it is hard for an outsider to do any monkeying. Many men understand telegraphy who do not work at the business, and it is for this reason that all the instruments in the bucket shops and stock exchanges are turned so low that no one outside of the operating room can hear a sound. When it is realized that transactions are made, and fortunes won or lost in a fractional part of a minute, it will be seen how very careful the great telegraph companies must be. The big horse races every year offer great temptations.

While I was working in St. Louis, a case came under my observation that will readily illustrate the perversity of human nature. In a large office not so very far away, there was working a friend of mine, who did nothing but copy race reports and C. N. D.'s all day. On the day the great Kentucky Derby was to be run, the wire was cut through from the track in Louisville to a big pool room in this city.

Now the chief operator in this place was a scaly sort of a cuss—in fact, it was said that he had done time in the past for some skullduggery—and when the horses went to the post, he stood by the switchboard and deliberately cut the pool room wire, so the report didn't go through. He copied the report himself, knew what horse had won, and then sent a message to a henchman of his, who was an operator and had an instrument secreted in his room near the pool room. This chap went quickly into the pool room and made wagers right and left. A rank outsider, a twenty to one shot, won the race, and after the confederate had signified that he was ready, the chief sent the report through as if it had come from the track. The whole transaction didn't take over two minutes and the "bookies" were hit for about \$30,000, which Mr. Chief and his side pardner divided between them.

A little while later the suspicions of the bookmakers became aroused, complaints were made, an investigation followed, and one fine day when matters were becoming pretty warm, the recalcitrant chief disappeared. His confederate confessed to the whole scheme and the jig was up. The chief was afterwards apprehended and sent up for seven years, but he held on to his boodle.

For the first month of my stay in St. Louis, my life was as uneventful as a May day, but at the end of that time a man came on the New York end of our quad that was enough to make a man drink. The men working together on a wire like this should always be harmonious, because the business is so heavy there is no time for any war of words. However, operators are like all other men, and scraps are not uncommon. Generally they take place at long range, and no one is hurt thereby. Some men have an unhappy faculty of incurring the hatred of every person over a wire, while personally they may be princes of good fellows. The man referred to above, signed "SY," and he had about as much judgment as a two year old kid. It didn't make any difference to him whether the weather was clear or muggy, no matter whether the wire was weak or strong, he'd pound along like a cyclone. Remonstrance availed nothing, and one night when he was cutting up some of his monkeyshines, I became very warm under the collar and told him in language more expressive than elegant, just what I thought of him, threatening to have our wire chief have him fired off the wire. He answered:

"Oh! you go to blazes, you big ham. You're too fresh anyway."

The epithet "ham" is about as mean a one as can be applied to an operator, and I came back at him with:

"Look here, you infernal idiot, I'll meet you some time and when I do I'm going to smash your face. Stop your monkeying and take these messages."

"Hold your horses, sonny, what's the difference between you and a jackass?" he said.

"Just nine hundred miles," I replied.

Further words were useless and in a few minutes he was relieved, but just about the time he got up he said:

"Say, 'BY,' don't forget you've got a contract to smash my face some of these days. I'll be expecting you. Ta Ta."

That was the last of him on that wire and the incident passed from my mind. I pulled up and left St. Louis shortly after that and went to work for the old Baltimore and Ohio Commercial Company, at the corner of Broadway and Canal streets, in New York. I drew a prize in the shape of the common side of the first Boston quad. Sitting right alongside of me was a great, big, handsome Irish chap named Dick Stanley. He was as fine a fellow as ever lived, and that night took me over to his house on Long Island to board. We were sitting in his room about nine-thirty, having a farewell smoke before retiring and our conversation turned to "shop talk." We talked of the old timers we had both known, told reminiscences, spun yarns, and all at once Dick said:

"Say, Bates, did you ever work in 'A' office in St. Louis?"

"Oh! yes," I replied, "I put in three months there under 'Old Top.' In fact, I came from there to New York."

"That so?" he answered. "I used to work on the polar side of the No. 2 quad, from this end, over in the Western Union office on Broadway and Dey street. What did you sign there?"

"BY," I answered. I thought he looked queer, but we continued our talk, and finally I told him of my wordy war with a man in New York, who signed "SY," and remarked that I was going over to 195 Broadway, and size him up some day. He knocked the ashes out of his pipe, got up from his chair, and, stretching his six feet two of anatomy to its full length said:

"Well, old chap, I'm fagged. I'm going to bed. You'd better get a good sleep and be thoroughly rested in the morning, because you'll need all your strength. I'm the man that signed 'SY' in the New York office, and I'm ready to take that licking."



"He looked at me ... then catching me by the collar..."

Did I lick him? Not much, I couldn't have licked one side of him, and we were the best of chums during my stay in the city.

CHAPTER XII

HOW A SMART OPERATOR WAS SQUELCHED—THE GALVESTON FLOOD

A little while after this "Stub" Hanigan, another operator, invited Dick and me to go down to a chop house with him for lunch, and we accepted. I say chop house when in reality it was one of those numerous little hotels that abound all over New York where one can get a good meal for very little money. Hanigan was a rattling good operator, but he was very young and had a tendency to be too fresh on occasion.

He ordered us a fine lunch and while we were sitting there discussing the good things, a big awkward looking chap came into the dining-room. He was accompanied by a sweet, pretty looking little woman. She was a regular beauty, and it needed but a glance to see that they were bride and groom, and from the country. They had all the ear marks so apparent in every bride and groom. They hesitated on the threshold a moment, and the groom said very audibly:

"Dearest, this is the finest dining-room in the world," and "Dearest" beamed on her liege lord in a manner that was very trustful and sweet. Hanigan, idiot that he was, laughed outright. Dick and I both gave him a savage kick under the table, but it didn't have any effect.

The head waiter brought the couple over and sat them down at our table, and, say—that woman was as pretty as any that ever came down the pike. Towards the end of the meal, Hanigan took his knife and fork and began to telegraph to Stanley and me, making all sorts of fun about the country pair. Now that is a pretty dangerous business, because there is no telling who may be an operator. Dick growled at him savagely under his breath and told him to shut up. Nay! Nay! Mr. Hanigan wouldn't shut up worth a cent. Finally he made some scurrilous remark, and then another knife and fork came into play. Mr. Bridegroom was doing the talking now, and this is what he said to Hanigan:

"I happen to be an operator myself, and have heard and understood every word you said. As long as you confined yourself to innocent remarks about country brides and grooms, I haven't minded it a bit. In fact, I have rather enjoyed it. But now you've gone too far, and in about five seconds I'm going to have the pleasure of smashing your face."

Then, before we had time to do a thing, biff; and Hanigan got it squarely on the jaw. We hustled him out of there as soon as we could, but Mr. Bridegroom had all his Irish up and followed him out. Eventually we succeeded in calming him down; "Stub" made a most abject apology, and I don't believe he ever used his knife and fork for any such a purpose again.

The gawky chap was Mr. Dave Harrison, one of the finest operators in the profession.

Just about this time fall weather was coming on, and there was a suggestion of an approaching winter in the chill morning air, and receiving a letter from my old friend Clarke in Galveston, telling me there was a good job waiting for me if I could come at once, I pulled up stakes in New York, and sailed away on the Mallory Line ship "Comal," for my old stamping ground. I reached there the next week and was put to work on the New York Duplex, which, by the way, was the

longest string in the United States. Mrs. Swanson had re-opened her boarding house on Avenue M, everything looked lovely and I anticipated a very pleasant winter. Up to September 18th, everything was as quiet and calm as a May day. The weather had been beautiful, the surf bathing and concerts in front of the Beach Hotel fine, and nothing was left to wish for.

I quit working on Thursday, September 18th, at five P. M., and went out to the beach and had a plunge. The sky was clear, but there was a good stiff breeze blowing, and it was increasing all the time. The tide was flowing in, and the dashing of the waves and roar of the surf made a picture long to be remembered. After my swim I went home, and when supper was finished three of us again went out to the beach. The wind had increased to a perfect gale, and already the water was over the car tracks. The Pagoda and Surf bath houses were surrounded, while numerous small shacks along the shore had been washed away. Inch by inch, foot by foot, the water advanced until it began to look serious, but no one dreamed of the flood that was to follow.

We went home at eight-thirty, and at ten I dropped into the realms of the sand man, lulled to sleep by the roar of the distant surf, and the whistling and moaning of the high wind.

Jimmie Swanson was again my roommate and about five o'clock he woke me up and said:

"Mr. Bates, if this wind keeps up the whole island will be under water in a very few hours more."

"Nonsense, Jimmie," I replied, "there is no danger of that," and I turned over to have another snooze, when I heard a peculiar *swash, swash, swash*, against the side of the house.

"Jimmie, what's the swash we hear?" I asked.

He got out of bed, limped over to the window, opened the blinds, looked a minute and then yelled:

"Good Lord! the whole town is under water, and we are floating."

It needed but a glance to convince me that he spoke part truth. There we were surrounded on all sides by water, but the house was still on its foundation.

"Water, water, everywhere
Nor any drop to drink."

On account of the sandy nature of the soil on Galveston Island, most of the houses were built up on piles, and the water was gently slopping all over the first floor of our habitation. The streets were flowing waist high, and filled with floating debris of all kinds;—beer kegs, boards, doors, and tables *ad lib*. The wind soon began to quiet down, and when our first fright was over we had a high old time swimming and splashing around in the water. It's a great city that will bring salt water bathing right up to the doors of its houses.

After a very skimpy breakfast, four of us made a raft, and paddled and pushed it down to the office. Nary a wire was there in working order. You see, Galveston is on a very flat island scarcely one mile wide, and the only approach at this time was a low railroad bridge, three miles long. Our wires were strung along the side of that, and at five o'clock in the morning, every wire was under water, and the force on duty either swam home or slept on the floor.

That day was about the easiest I ever spent in a telegraph office. There was a Mexican cable from Galveston to Vera Cruz, but the flood had washed away their terminals, and for that day, Galveston was entirely isolated from the world.

Houston, fifty-five miles north, was the first big town adjacent, and as all our wires ran through there, it was apparent they were having a hot time doing the relaying all day. They had only a small force, and evidently the business was delayed. The storm had finally blown itself out, and at four o'clock Clarke called for volunteers to go to Houston to help out until our wires came in shape again. The G. H. & H. railroad people said they thought the water was low enough to permit an engine to cross the bridge, and in response to Clarke's call eight of us volunteered to attempt the trip. After reaching the mainland we would be all right, but there was that confounded three mile bridge to cross. We boarded engine 341, with Dad Duffy at the throttle, and at four-fifteen he pulled out. Water was still over the track and we proceeded at a snail-like pace. Just at the edge of the bridge we stopped; Dad looked over the situation and said:

"The water is within two inches of the fire-box now, and it's doubtful if we can get across, but here goes and God save us all."

The sensation when we first struck that bridge and realized that we were literally on a water support, was anything but pleasant, and I reckon most of us uttered the first prayer in many a day. Slowly we crept along, and just as we were in the middle of the structure the draw sagged a little, and *kersplash!* out went the fire. A great cloud of steam arose and floated away on the evening air, and then, there stood that iron monster as helpless as a babe. Dad looked around at us eight birds perched up on the tender and said:

"Well I reckon you fellers won't pound any brass in Houston to-night."

Pleasant fix to be in, wasn't it? A mile and a half from land, perched up on a dead engine, surrounded on all sides by water, and no chance to get away. There was no absolute danger, because the underpinning was firm enough, but all the same, every man jack of us wished he hadn't come. Night, black and dreary, settled over the waters, and still no help. Finally, at eight o'clock, the water had receded so that the tops of the rails could be seen, and two of us volunteered to go back on foot to the yard office for help. That was just three miles away, but nothing venture, nothing have, so we dropped off the hind end of the tender and started on our tramp back over the water-covered ties. We had one lantern, and after we had gone about a half of a mile, my companion who was ahead, slipped and nearly fell. I caught him but good-bye to the lantern, and the rest of the trip was made in utter darkness. To be brief, after struggling for two hours and a half, we reached the yard office, and an engine was sent out to help us. At twelve o'clock the whole gang were back in the city, wet, weary and worn out.

The next day the water had entirely subsided and work was resumed. We learned then of the horror of the flood. Sabine Pass had been completely submerged, and some hundred and fifty or two hundred people drowned. Indianola had been wiped out of existence, and the whole coast lined with the wreckage of ships. That there were no casualties in Galveston, was providential, and due, doubtless, to the fact that the whole country for fifty miles back of it is as flat as a pan-cake, and the water had room to spread.

I worked there until spring and then a longing for my first love, the railroad, came over me and I gave up my place and bade good-bye to the commercial business forever. I had had my fling at it and was satisfied.

CHAPTER XIII

SENDING MY FIRST ORDER

I had now been knocking about the country for quite a few years, and working in all kinds of offices and places, and had acquired a great deal of experience and valuable information, so I reached the conclusion that it was about time for me to settle down and get something that would last me for a while. Commercial work I did not care for, nor did I want to go back on the road as a night operator on a small salary. I thought I had the making of a good despatcher in me, and determined to try for that place. I knew it had to be attained by starting first at the bottom, so I went up on the K. M. & O. and secured a position as night operator at Vining. The K. M. & O. was a main trunk line running out of Chaminade, and was the best road for business that I had as yet struck. Vining was midway on the division, and was such a good old town that I would have been content to have stayed there for some time, but one day an engine pulling a through livestock express broke a driving rod while running like lightning, and the result was a smash up of the first water—engine in the ditch, cars piled all over her, livestock mashed up, engineer killed, fireman badly hurt, and the road blocked for twenty-four hours. The wreck occurred on a curve going down a rather steep grade, so that it was impossible to build a temporary track around it. A wrecking train was sent out from El Monte, and as I happened to be off duty, I was picked up and taken along, to cut in the wrecking office. The division superintendent came out to hurry up things and he appeared so pleased at my work that, in a few weeks, he offered me a place as copy operator in the despatcher's office at El Monte. This appeared to be a great chance to satisfy my ambition to become a despatcher, so I gladly accepted, and in a few days was safely ensconced in my new position. The despatchers only work eight hours a day, while the copy operators work twelve, so they work with two despatchers every day. I had the day end of the job and worked from eight A. M. until eight P. M., with an hour off for dinner, so that I really was only on duty for eleven hours. The pay was good for me, seventy dollars per month, and I was thoroughly satisfied. Really all that is necessary to be a first class copy operator is to be an expert telegrapher. It is simply a work of sending and receiving messages all day. However I wanted to learn, so I kept my ears and eyes opened, and studied the time card, train sheet, and order book very assiduously.

The first trick despatcher was honest old Patrick J. Borroughs, a man of twenty-five years' experience in the business and as good a man as ever sent an order or took an O. S. report. He was kindness and gentleness personified, and assisted me in every way possible, and all my future success was due to his help and teaching. The memory of the time I worked under him is the brightest spot in all the years I served in the business. After I had been there for about five months, he would allow me, under his supervision, to make simple meeting points for two trains, and one day he allowed me to give a right-of-track order to a through freight train over a delayed passenger. Then he would let me sit around in his chair, while he swallowed his lunch, and copy the O. S. reports. I was beginning to think that my education as a despatcher was complete, and was thinking of asking for the next vacancy, when a little incident occurred that entirely disabused my mind. The following occurrence will show how little I knew about the business.

We had received notice one morning of a special train to be run over our division that afternoon, carrying a Congressional Railroad Committee, and of course that meant a special schedule, and

you all know how anxious the roads are to please railroad committees, especially when they are on investigating tours (?) with reference to the extension of the Inter-State Commerce Act, as this one was. We were told to "whoop her through." The track on our division was the best on the whole road, and it was only 102 miles long; we had plenty of sidings and passing tracks, and besides old "Jimmie" Hayes, with engine 444 was in, so they could be assured of a run that was a hummer. Mr. Hebron, the division superintendent, came in the office and told Borroughs to tear things loose, in fact, as he said, "Make 'em all car sick."

After he had gone out Pat tossed the notification over to me, and said, "Bates, here's a chance for you to show what kind of stuff you are made of. Make out a schedule for this special, giving her a clean sweep from end to end, with the exception of No. 21."

Proud! That wasn't the proper name for it. I was fully determined that *this* special should have a run for her money if she ran on my schedule. No Congressional Committee was going back to Washington with the idea that the K. M. & O. wasn't the swiftest road in the bunch, if I could help it, and I had a big idea that I could. Pat told me he would do the copying while I made the schedule, but as he said it I fancied I saw a merry twinkle in his honest blue eyes. I wasn't daunted though, and started to work.

"Order No. 34. "To C&E, all trains:

"K. M. & O. RAILROAD (Eastern Division). "DESPATCHER'S OFFICE, 'DS,' *October* 15, 18—

"Special east engine 444, will run from El Monte to Marsan having right of track over all trains except No. 21, on the following schedule:—

"Leave El Monte, 2:30 P. M."

Thus far I proceeded without any trouble, and then I stuck. Here was where the figuring came in, along with the knowledge of the road, grades and so forth, but I was sadly lacking in that respect. I studied and figured and used up lots of gray matter, and even chewed up a pencil or two. I finally finished the schedule and submitted it to Pat. He read it carefully, knitted his brows for a moment, and then said, slowly:

"For a beginner that schedule is about the best I ever saw. It's a hummer without a doubt. But to prevent the lives of the Congressional Committee from being placed in jeopardy, I think I shall have to make another." Then he laughed heartily, and continued,

"All joking aside, Bates, my boy, you did pretty well, but you have only allowed seven minutes between Sumatra and Borneo, while the time card shows the distance to be fourteen miles. Jim Hayes and engine 444 are capable of great bursts of speed, but, by Jingo, they can't fly. Then again you have forgotten our through passenger train, No. 21, which is an hour late from the south to-day; what are you going to do with her? Pass them on one track, I suppose. But don't be discouraged, my boy, brace up and try it again. That's a much better schedule than the first one I ever made."

He made another schedule and I resumed my copying. It wasn't long, however, before my confidence returned and I wanted a trick. I got it, but in such a manner that even now, fifteen years afterwards, I shudder to think of it.

CHAPTER XIV

RUNNING TRAINS BY TELEGRAPH—HOW IT IS DONE

The despatcher's office of a big railroad line is one of the most interesting places a man can get into, especially if he is interested in the workings of our great railway systems. It is located at the division headquarters, or any other point, such as will make the despatching of trains and attendant orders of easy accomplishment. In riding over a road, many people are prone to give the credit of a good swift run to the engineer and train crew. Pick up a paper any day that the President or some big functionary is out on a trip, and you will probably read how, at the end of the run, he stopped beside the panting engine, and reaching up to shake the hand of the faithful, grimy engineer, would say:

"Thank you so much for giving us such a good run. I don't know when I have ridden so fast before," or words to that effect. He never thinks that the engineer and crew are but the mechanical agents, they are but small cogs in a huge machine. They do their part and do it well, but the brains of the machine are up in the little office and are all incorporated in the despatcher on duty. Flying over the country regardless of time or space, one is apt to forget where the real credit belongs. The swift run could not be made, and the train kept running without a stop, if it were not for the fact that the despatcher puts trains on the sidetrack so that the special need not be delayed, and he does it in such a manner that the regular business of the road shall not be interfered with.

The interior of the despatcher's office is not, as a rule, very sumptuous. There is the big counter at one side of the room, on which are the train registers, car record books, message blanks, and forms for the various reports. Against the wall on one of the other sides is a big black board known as the "call board." On it is recorded the probable arrival and departure of trains, and the names of their crews, also the time certain crews are to be called. As soon as the train men have completed the work of turning their train over to the yard crew at the end of their run, they are registered in the despatcher's office, and are liable thereafter for duty in their turn. The rule "first in, first, out," is supposed to be strictly adhered to in the running of trains. About the middle of the room, or in the recess of the bay window, is the despatcher's table. On it in front of the man on duty, is the train sheet, containing information, exact and absolute in its nature, of each train on the division. On this sheet there is also a space set apart for the expected arrival of trains on his district from the other end, and one for delays. Loads, empties, everything, is there that is necessary for him to know to properly run the trains on time and with safety. At any minute the despatcher on duty can tell you the precise location of any train, what she is doing, how her engine is working, how much work she has to do along the road, and all about her engineer and conductor. Generally, there are two sets of instruments on the table, one for use of what is known as the despatcher's wire, over which his sway is absolute, and the other for a wire that is used for messages, reports, and the like, and in case of emergency, by the despatcher. Mounted on a roll in front of him is the current official time card of the division. From the information contained thereon, the despatcher makes all his calculations for time orders, meeting points, work trains, etc. Across the table from the despatcher sits the "copy operator," whose duty it is to copy everything that comes along, thus relieving the despatcher of anything that would tend to disturb him in his work. The copy operator is generally the man next for promotion to a despatcher's trick, and his relations with his chief must be entirely

harmonious.

The working force in a well regulated despatcher's office consists of the chief despatcher, three trick despatchers, and two copy operators, with the various call boys and messengers. The chief despatcher is next to the division superintendent, and has full charge of the office. He has the supervision of the yard and train reports, and the ordering out of the trains and crews. He has charge of all the operators on the division, their hiring and dismissal, and has general supervision of the telegraph service. In fact, he is a little tin god on wheels. His office hours? He hasn't any. Most of the chiefs are in their offices from early morn until late at night, and there is no harder worked man in the world than the chief despatcher.

Each day is divided into three periods of eight hours each, known as "tricks," and a despatcher assigned to each. The first trick is from eight A. M. until four P. M.; the second from four P. M. until twelve midnight; and the third from twelve midnight until eight A. M.

At eight o'clock in the morning, the first trick despatcher comes on duty, and his first work is to verify the train sheet and order book. The man going off duty checks off all orders issued by him that have been carried out, and his successor signs his initials to all orders yet to be obeyed. This signifies that he has read them over very carefully and thoroughly understands their purport. As soon as he has receipted for them he becomes as responsible as if he had first issued them. He glances carefully over his train sheet, assures himself that everything is correct and then assumes his duties for the day. Anything that is not clear to him must be thoroughly explained before his predecessor leaves, and he must signify that he understands everything. The value of that old time card rule, so familiar to all railroaders, "In case of doubt always take the safe side," is exemplified many times every day in the running of trains by telegraph, and the attendant orders. After a despatcher has assumed charge of the trick he is the master of the situation; he is responsible for everything, and his attentiveness, ability and judgment are the powers that keep the trains moving and on time.

When all trains are running on time, and there are no extras or specials out, the despatcher's duty is easy, and consists largely in taking and recording "O. S. reports," and "Consists." The "O. S. report" is the report sent in by the various operators as the trains arrive and depart from the several stations. A "consist" is a message sent by the conductor of a train to the division superintendent, giving the exact composition and destination of every car in his train. When trains are late, however, or many extras are running or the track washed out, the despatcher's work becomes very arduous. Orders of all kinds have to be made, engines and crews kept working together and trains moving.

Down the centre of the train sheet, which varies in size according to the length of the division, are printed the names of all the telegraph stations on the division and the distances between them. On either side of this main column are ruled smaller columns, each one of which represents a train. The number of each train is at the head of the appropriate column, and under it are the number of the engine, the names of the conductor and engineer, and the number of loads and empties in the train. All trains on the division are arranged in three classes, and each class has certain rights. Trains of the first class are always passengers; the through freight, and the combination freight and passenger trains compose the second class. All other trains, such as local freights, work trains and construction trains belong to the third class. It is an invariable rule on all railroads that trains running one way have *exclusive rights* over trains of their own and of inferior classes running in the opposite direction.

What is called the "double order system," is used almost exclusively on all single track roads, and if the rules and regulations governing it were strictly adhered to and carried out, accidents for which human agency is responsible, would be impossible. It consists simply in giving an order to all the trains concerned *at the same time*. That is to say, if the despatcher desires to make a meeting point for two trains, he will send the same order simultaneously to both of them. If a train is leaving his end of the division and he desires to make a meeting point with a train coming in, before giving his order to his conductor and engineer, he would telegraph it to a station at which the incoming train was soon to arrive, and from whence the operator would repeat it back word for word, and would give a signal signifying that his red board was turned. By this means both trains would receive the same order, and there would be no doubt about the point at which they were to meet.

To illustrate this method, let us suppose a case of two sections of No. 13 running east and one section of No. 14 running west. Both trains are of the second class, and as the east bound trains have the right of way, No. 14 *must* keep out of the way of the two 13's. A certain point, call it Smithville, is, according to the time card, the meeting point for these two trains. But No. 14 finds out she has a lot of work to do at Jonesboro; or a hot driving box or a draw head pulling out delays her, and thus she cannot possibly reach Smithville for No. 13. She is at Jason, and unless she can get orders to run farther on No. 13's time, she will have to tie up there and be further delayed an hour. The conductor tells the operator at Jason to ask "DS" if he can help them out any. "DS" glances over his train sheet, and finds that he cannot let them run to Smithville, because No. 13 is nearly on time; but there is a siding at Burkes, between Jason and Smithville, and he concludes to let 14 go there. So he tells the operator at Jason to "copy 3," and then he calls Smithville and tells him to "copy 5." Both the engineer and conductor get a copy of all orders pertaining to their trains, and the operators retain one for their records and for reference in case of accident. Both operators turn their red boards *the first thing*, and so long as the signal remains red, no train can pass the station, without first receiving an order or a clearance card. In the case supposed the order would be as follows:

"DS DESPATCHER'S OFFICE, 12, 8, '98

"Orders No. 31.

To C. & E. 1st and 2nd 13, SM.

To C. & E. No. 14, JN.

First and second sections No. 13, and No. 14 will meet at Burkes.

12. (Answer how you understand).

"H. G. C."

The despatcher's operator, sitting opposite to him, copies every word of this order as the despatcher sends it, and when the operators at Smithville and Jason repeat it back, he underlines each word, great care being taken to correct any mistakes made by the operators. After an operator has repeated an order back he signs his name, and the despatcher then says:

"Order No. 31, O. K.," giving the time and signing the division superintendent's initials thereto. The order is next handed to the conductor and engineer of each train when they come to the office; both read it carefully, and then signify that they understand it fully by signing their names. The operator then says to the despatcher, "Order 31, sig. Jones and Smith," and the despatcher gives the "complete" and the exact time. Then a copy is given to the conductor and one to the engineer and they leave. On the majority of roads the conductor must read the order aloud to the engineer before leaving the office.

Thus No. 14 having received her orders, pulls out, and when she reaches Burkes, she goes on the side track and waits there for both 13's, because 13, being an east bound train of the same class, has the right-of-track over her. The same *modus operandi* is gone through with for No. 13, and when the trains have departed the operators pull in their red boards. When the meeting has been made and both trains are safely by Burkes, the despatcher draws a blue pencil or makes a check mark on his order book copy and signs his initials, which signifies that the provisions of the order have been carried out. Should its details not have been completed when the despatcher is relieved, his successor signs his initials thereto showing that he has received it. This is the method of sending train orders, exact and simple, on single track railroads. On double track lines the work is greatly simplified because trains running in each direction have separate tracks. Does it not seem simple? And how impossible are mistakes when its rules are adhered to. It really seems as if any one gifted with a reasonable amount of common sense, and having a knowledge of the rudiments of mathematics, could do the work, but underneath all the simplicity explained, there runs a deep current of complications that only long time and a cool head can master. I have worked in offices and been figuring on orders for a train soon to start out from my end of the division, when all of a sudden some train out on the road that has been running all night, will bob up with a hot box, or a broken draw head, and then all the calculations for the new train will be knocked into a cocked hat.

The simple meeting order has been given above. The following examples will illustrate some of the other many forms of orders, and are self-explanatory.

TIME ORDER

No. 14 has a right to use ten minutes of the time of No. 13 between Jason and Jonesboro.

SLOW ORDER

All trains will run carefully over track from one-half mile east of Salt Water to Big River Bridge, track soft.

EXTRA ORDER

Engine 341 will run extra from DeLeon to Valdosta.

ANNULMENT ORDER

No. 15 of January 6th is annulled between Santiago and Rio.

WORK ORDER

Engine 228 will work between Posey and Patterson, keeping out of the way of all regular trains. Clear track for extra west, engine 327 at 10:30 A. M.

When an operator has once turned his red board to the track for an order, under no circumstances must he pull it in until he has delivered the order for the train for which it is intended. In the meantime should another train come in for which he has no orders, he will give it a clearance card as follows:

To C. & E., No. 27

There are no orders for you, signal is set for No. 18.

H. G. CLARKE, *Operator*.

At stated times during the day, the despatchers on duty on each division send full reports of all their trains to the divisions adjoining them on either side. This train report is very complete, giving the composition of each and every train on the road, and the destination of every car. A form of the message will readily illustrate this:

SAN ANGELO, 5 | 16, 18—.

W. H. C. DS

No 17 will arrive at DS, at 10:20 A. M., with the following:

1 HH goods	Chgo.
2 Livestock	Kansas City.
3 Mdse	"
1 Emgt. outfit	St. Louis.
6 Coal	Houston.
6 Wheat	Chgo.
7 Empty sys. flats	Flat Rock.
—	
Total	26

H. G. B.

All work is done over the initials of the division superintendent and in his name. These reports keep the despatchers fully informed as to what may be expected, and arrangements can be made to keep the trains moving without delay. Of course the report illustrated above is for but one train, necessarily it must be much longer when many trains are running.

At some regular time during the day all the agents on the division send in a car report. This is copied by the despatcher's operator and shows how many and what kind of cars are on the side tracks; the number of loads ready to go out; the number and kind of cars wanted during the ensuing twenty-four hours; and if the station is a water station, how many feet of water are in the tank; or if a coaling station, how many cars of coal there are on hand; and lastly, what is the character of the weather. On some roads weather reports are sent in every hour.

In view of all this, I think it is not too much to say, that the eyes of the despatcher see everything on the road. There are a thousand and one small details, in addition to the momentous matters of which he has charge, and the man who can keep his division clear, with all trains moving smoothly and on time, must indeed possess both excellent method and application, and must have the ability and nerve to master numerous unexpected situations the moment they arise. He is not an artisan or a mechanic, *he is a genius.*



CHAPTER XV

AN OLD DESPATCHER'S MISTAKE—MY FIRST TRICK

I had become thoroughly proficient and more frequently than ever Borroughs would let me "spell" for him for a while each day. Be it said to his credit, however, he was always within hearing, when I was doing any of his work. He was carefulness personified, and the following incident only serves to show what unaccountable errors will be made by even the best of men.

One cold morning in January, I started to the office as usual. The air was so still, crisp and biting that the air-pumps of the engines had that peculiar sharp, snappy sound heard only in a panting engine in cold weather. They seemed almost imbued with life. As I went into the office at eight o'clock to go to work, the night man remarked that I must be feeling pretty brash; my spirits seemed so high. And in fact, that was no joke; I was feeling fine as silk and showed it all over. But as I said good morning to Borroughs, I noticed that he seemed rather glum, and I asked: "What's the matter, Dad? Feeling bad this morning?"

He snapped back in a manner entirely foreign to him, "No, but I don't feel much like chaffing this day. I feel as if something was going to happen, and I don't like the feeling."

I answered, "Oh! bosh, Dad. You'll feel all right in a few minutes; I reckon you've got a good old attack of dyspepsia; brace up."

Just then the wires started up, and he gruffly told me to sit down and go to work and our conversation ceased. That was the first time he had ever used anything but a gentle tone to me, and I felt hurt. The first trick is always the busiest, and under the stress of work the incident soon passed from my mind. Pat remarked once, that the general superintendent was going to leave Chaminade in a special at 10:30 A. M., on a tour of inspection over the road. That was about all the talking he did that morning. His work was as good as ever, and in fact, he made some of the prettiest meets that morning I had ever seen.



"... Half lying on the table, face downward, dead by his own hand"

About 10:35, I asked Borroughs to allow me to go over to the hotel to get a cigar. I would be gone only a few minutes. He assented, and I slipped on my overcoat and went out. I wasn't gone over ten minutes, and as I stepped into the doorway to come upstairs on my return, I heard what sounded like a shot in the office. I flew upstairs two steps at a time, and never to my dying day will I forget the sight that met my gaze. Borroughs, whom I had left but a few moments before full of life and energy, was half lying on the table, face downwards, dead by his own hand. The blood was oozing from a jagged wound in his temple, and on the floor was the smoking pistol he had used. Fred Bennett, the chief despatcher, as pale as a ghost, was bending over him, while the two call boys were standing near paralyzed with fright. It was an intensely dramatic setting for a powerful stage picture, and my heart stood still for a minute as I contemplated the awful scene. Mr. Hebron, the division superintendent, came in from the outer office, and was transfixed with horror and amazement when he saw the terrible picture.

Bennett turned to me and said, "Bates, come here and help me lift poor Borroughs out of this chair."

Gently and carefully we laid him down on the floor and sent one of the badly frightened boys for a surgeon. Medical skill was powerless, however, and the spirit of honest Pat Borroughs had crossed the dark river to its final reckoning.

Work in the office was at a standstill on account of the tragic occurrence, but all of a sudden I heard Monte Carlo calling "DS" and using the signal "WK," which means "wreck." Bennett told me to sit down and take the trick until the second trick man could be called. I went over and sat

down in the chair, still warm from the body of my late friend, and wiping his blood off the train sheet with my handkerchief, I answered.

It would be impossible to describe the state of my feelings as I first touched the key; I had completely lost track of trains, orders and everything else. However, I gradually pulled myself together, and got the hang of the road again, and then I learned how the wreck had occurred. About a minute after I went out, Borroughs had given a right-of-track order to an express freight from Monte Carlo to Johnsonville, and had told them to hurry up. Johnsonville is on the outskirts of Chaminade, and Borroughs had completely forgotten that the general superintendent's special had left there just five minutes before with a clean sweep order. That he had known of it was evident from the fact that it was recorded on the train sheet. Two minutes after the freight had left Monte Carlo, poor Pat realized he had at last made his mistake. He said not a word to any person, but quietly ordered out the wrecking outfit, and then reaching in the drawer he took out a revolver and—snuffed out his candle. He fell forward on the train sheet, as if to cover up with his lifeless body, the terrible blunder he had just made. Many other despatchers had made serious errors, and in a measure outlived them; but here was a man who had grown gray in the service of railroads, with never a bad mark against him. Day and night, in season and out, he had given the best of his brain and life to the service, and finally by one slip of the memory he had, as he thought, ruined himself; and, too proud to bear the disgrace, he killed himself. He was absolutely alone in the world and left none to mourn his loss save a large number of operators he had helped over the rough places of the profession.

The wreck was an awful one. The superintendent's son was riding on the engine, and he and the engineer and the fireman were mashed and crushed almost beyond recognition. The superintendent, his wife and daughter, and a friend, were badly bruised, but none of them seriously injured. The second trick man was not to be found immediately, so I worked until four o'clock, and the impression of that awful day will never leave me. Pat's personality was constantly before me in the shape of the blood stain on the train sheet. It was a long time before I recovered my equanimity.

The next afternoon we buried poor Pat under the snow, and the earth closed over him forever; and thus passed from life a man whose character was the purest, whose nature was the gentlest: honest and upright, I have never seen his equal in the profession or out. I often think if I had not gone over to the hotel that morning, the accident might have been averted, because, perhaps, I would have noticed the mistake in time to have prevented the collision. But, on the other hand, it is probable I would not have noticed it, because operators, not having the responsibility of the despatchers, rarely concentrate their minds intensely on what they are taking. A man will sit and copy by the hour with the greatest accuracy, and at the same time be utterly oblivious of the purport of what he has been taking. There can be no explanation as to why Pat forgot the special. It is one of those things that happen; that's all.

The rule of seniority was followed in the office, and in the natural sequence of events the night man got my job, I was promoted to the third trick—from twelve midnight until eight A. M.—and a new copy operator was brought in from Vining.

If any trick is easier than another it is the third, but none of them are by any means sinecures. When I was a copy operator I used to imagine it was an easy thing to sit over on the other side of the table and give orders, "jack up" operators, conductors and engineers, and incidentally haul some men over the coals every time I had to call them a few minutes; but when I reached the summit of an operator's ambition, and was assigned to a trick I found things very different. Copying with no responsibility was dead easy; but despatching trains I found about the stiffest job I had ever

undertaken. I had to be on the alert with every faculty and every minute during the eight hours I was on duty. While the first and second trick men, have perhaps more train order work attached to them, the third is about on a par with them as far as actual labor is concerned, because, in addition to the regular train order work, a new train sheet has to be opened every night at twelve o'clock, which necessitates keeping two sheets until all the trains on the old one have completed their runs. There is also a consolidated train report to be made at this time, which is a re-capitulation of the movements of all trains for the preceding twenty-four hours, giving delays, causes thereof, accidents, cars hauled, etc. This is submitted to the division superintendent in the morning, and after he has perused and digested its contents he sends a condensed copy to the general superintendent. Many a man loses his job by a report against him on that train sheet.

To show the strain on a man's mind when he is despatching trains, let me tell a little incident that happened to me just in the beginning of my career as a despatcher. Every morning about five o'clock, the third trick man begins to figure on his work train orders for the day and when he has completed them he sends them out to the different crews. Work train orders, it may not be amiss to explain, are orders given to the different construction crews, such as the bridge gang, the grading gang, the track gang, etc., to work between certain points at certain times. They must be very full and explicit in detail as to all trains that are to run during the continuance of the order. For regular trains running on time, no notification need be given, because the time card rules would apply; but for all extras, specials, and delayed trains, warnings must be given, so that the work trains can get out of the way for them, otherwise the results might be very serious, and business be greatly delayed. Work orders are the bane of a new despatcher's existence, and the manner in which he handles them is a sure indication as to whether he will be successful or not. Many a man gets to a trick only to fall down on these work orders.

I stumbled along fairly well the first night as a despatcher, and had no mishaps to speak of, although I delayed a through passenger some ten minutes, by hanging it up on a siding for a fast freight train, and I put a through freight on a siding for a train of an inferior class. For these little errors of judgment I was "cussed out" by all the conductors and engineers on the division when they came in; and the division superintendent, on looking over the train sheet the next morning, remarked, that delaying a passenger train would never do—in such a tone of voice that I could plainly see my finish should I ever so offend again.

The second night passed all right enough, and by 5:30 A. M., I had completed my work orders and sent them out. From that time on until eight o'clock when the first trick man relieved me I was kept busy. He read over my outstanding orders, verified the sheet, and signed the transfer on the order book, and after a few moments' chat I went home. I went to bed about nine o'clock, and was on the point of dropping off to sleep, when all at once I remembered that an extra fast freight was due to leave at 9:45 A. M., and that there was a train working in a cut four miles out. I wondered if I had notified her to get out of the way of the extra. That extra would go down through that cut like a streak of greased lightning, because Horace Daniels, on engine 341, was going to pull her, and Horace was known as a runner from away back. I reviewed in my mind, as carefully as I could all the orders I had given to the work train, and was rather sure I had notified them, but still I was not absolutely certain, and began to feel very uncomfortable. Poor Borroughs had just had his smash up, and I didn't want "poor Bates," to have his right away. Maybe it was the spirit of this same old man Borroughs, who was sleeping so peacefully under the ground that made me feel and act carefully. I looked at my watch and found it was 9:20. The extra would leave in twenty-five minutes and I lived nearly a mile from the office. The strain was beginning to be too much, so I slipped on my clothes and without putting on a collar or a cravat, I caught up my hat and ran with

all my might for the depot. As I approached I saw Daniels giving 341 the last touch of oil before he pulled out. Thank God, they hadn't gone. I shouted to him, "Don't pull out for a minute, Daniels; I think there is a mistake in your orders."

Daniels was a gruff sort of a fellow, and he snapped back at me, "What's the matter with you? I hain't got no orders yet. Come here until I oil those wheels in your head."

I went up in the office and Daniels followed me. Bennett, the chief, was standing by the counter as I went in, and after a glance at me he said, "What's up, kid? Seen a ghost? You look almost pale enough to be one yourself."

I said, "No, I haven't seen any ghosts, but I am afraid I forgot to notify that gang working just east of here about this extra."

The conductor and engineer were both there and they smiled very audibly at my discomfiture; in fact, it was so audible you could hear it for a block. Bennett went over to the table, glanced at the order book and train sheet for a minute and then said, "Oh, bosh! of course you notified them. Here it is as big as life, 'Look out for extra east, engine 341, leaving El Monte at 9:45 A. M.' What do you want to get such a case of the rattles and scare us all that way for?"

I was about to depart for home to resume my sleep, and was congratulating myself on my escape, when Bennett called me over to one side of the room, and in a low, but very firm voice, metaphorically ran up and down my spinal column with a rake. He asked me if I didn't know there were other despatchers in that office besides myself; men who knew more in a minute about the business than I did in a month; and didn't I suppose that the order book would be verified, and the train sheet consulted before sending out the extra? He hoped I would never show such a case of the rattles again. That was all. Good morning. All the same I was glad I went back to the office that morning, because I had satisfied myself that I had not committed an unpardonable error at the outset of my career.

In case of doubt always take the safe side.

CHAPTER XVI

A GENERAL STRIKE—A LOCOMOTIVE ENGINEER FOR A DAY

During the ensuing spring, one of those spasmodic waves of strikes passed over the country. Some northern road that wasn't earning enough money to pay the interest on its bonds, cut down the salaries of some of its employees, and they went out. Then the "sympathy" idea was worked to the full limit, and gradually other roads were tied up. We had hopes it would escape us, but one fine day we awoke to find our road tied up good and hard. The conductors and brakemen went first, and a few days later they were followed by the engineers and firemen. That completed the business and we were up against it tighter than a brick. Our men hadn't the shadow of a grievance against the company, and were not in full sympathy with the strike, but their obligation to their unions was too strong for them to resist.

It placed us in a pretty bad fix because just at this time we had a yard full of freight, a good deal of it perishable, and it was imperative that it should be moved at once or the company would be out a good many dollars. The roundhouse men and a few hostlers were still working, so it was an easy thing to get a yard engine out. Bennett, myself, Burns, the second trick man, and Mr. Hebron, the division superintendent, went down in the yard to do the switching. There were twenty-three cars of Texas livestock and California fruit waiting for a train out, and the drovers were becoming impatient, because they wanted to get up to Chicago to take advantage of a big bulge in the market.

I soon found that standing up in the bay window of an office, watching the switchmen do the yard work and doing it yourself, were two entirely different propositions. When I first went in between two cars to make a coupling, I thought my time had come for sure. I fixed the link and pin in one car, and then ran down to the next and fixed the pin there. The engine was backing slowly, but when I turned around, it looked as if it had the speed of an overland "flyer." I watched carefully, raised and guided the link in the opposite draw head, and then dropped the pin. Those two cars came together like the crack of doom, and I shut my eyes and jumped back, imagining that I had been crushed to death, in fact, I could feel that my right hand was mashed to a pulp. But it was a false alarm; it wasn't. I had made the coupling without a scratch to myself, and it wasn't long before I became bolder, and jumped on and off of the foot-boards and brake-beams like any other lunatic. That all four of us were not killed is nothing short of miracle.

By a dint of hard work we succeeded in getting a train made up for Chaminade, and all that was now needed was an engine and crew. There was a large and very interested crowd of men standing around watching us, and many a merry ha-ha we received from them for our crude efforts. Engine 341 was hooked on, and we were all ready for the start. Burns was going to play conductor, Bennett was to be the hind man, while I was to ride ahead. But where were the engineer and fireman? Mr. Hebron had counted on a non-union engineer to pull the train, and a wiper to do the firing, but just as we expected them to appear, we found that some of the strikers had succeeded in talking them over to their side. To make matters worse the roundhouse men and the hostlers caught the fever, and out they went. Mr. Hebron was in a great pickle, but he didn't want to acknowledge that he was beaten so he stood around hanging on in hopes something would turn up to relieve the strain.

Now, it had occurred to me that I could run that engine. When I was young and fresh in the railroad business, I had spent much of my spare time riding around on switch engines, and once in a while I had taken a run out over the road with an engineer who had a friendly interest in me. One man, old Tom Robinson, who pulled a fast freight, had been particularly kind to me, and on one occasion I had taken a few days' lay off, and gone out and back one whole trip with him. Being of an inquisitive turn of mind, I asked him a great many questions about gauges, valves, oil cups, eccentrics, injectors, etc., and whenever he would go down under his engine, I always paid the closest attention to what he did. I used to ride on the right hand side of the cab with him, and occasionally he would allow me to feel the throttle for a few minutes. Thus, when I was a little older, I could run an engine quite well. I knew the oil cups, could work the injector, knew enough to open and close the cylinder cocks, could toot the whistle and ring the bell like an old timer, and had a pretty fair idea, generally speaking, of the machine. Having all these things in mind, I approached Mr. Hebron, as he stood cogitating upon his ill-luck, and said, "Mr. Hebron, I'll run this train into Chaminade if you will only get some one to keep the engine hot."

"You," said Hebron, "you are a despatcher; what the devil do you know about running a locomotive?"

I told him I might not know much, but if he would say the word I would get those twenty-three cars into Chaminade, or know the reason why. He looked at me for a minute, asked me a few questions about what I knew of an engine and then said,

"By George! I'll risk it. Get on that engine, my boy; take this one wiper left for a fireman, and pull out. But first go over to the office for your orders. You won't need many, because everything is tied up between here and Johnsonville, and you will have a clear track. Now fly, and let me see what kind of stuff you are made of."

Strangely enough, after he had consented I was not half so eager to undertake it; but I had said I would and now I must stick to my word, or acknowledge that I was a big bluffer. I went up to the office and Fred Bennett gave me the orders. But as he did so he said: "Bates, that's a foolhardy thing for you to do, and I reckon the old man must be crazy to allow you to try it, but rather than give in to that mob out there I'll see you through with it. Now don't you forget for one minute, that you have twenty-three cars and a caboose trailing along behind you; that I am on the hind end, and that I have a wife and family to support, with a mighty small insurance on my life."

He went out, and Bennett told the cattle men to get aboard as we were about to start. All this had been done unbeknown to any of the strikers; but when they saw me coming down that yard with a piece of yellow tissue paper in my hand they knew something was up, for every man of them knew that was a train order. But where was the engineer?

I went down and climbed up in the cab of old 341, and removing my coat, put on a jumper I had brought from the office. Engine 341, as I have said, was run by Horace Daniels, one of the best men that ever pulled a throttle, and his pride in her was like that of a mother in a child. She was a big ten-wheeled Baldwin, and I have heard Daniels talk to her as if she was a human being; in fact, he said she was the only sweetheart he ever had. He was standing in the crowd and when he saw me put on the jumper he came over and said:

"See here, Mr. Hebron, who is going to pull this train out?"

Mr. Hebron who was standing by the step, said, "Bates is."

Daniels grew red with rage, and said:

"Bates? Why good heavens, Mr. Hebron, Bates can't run an engine; he's nothing but an old brass pounder, and, judging from some of the meets he has made for me on this division, he must be a very poor one at that. This here old girl don't know no one but me nohow; for God's sake don't let her disgrace herself by going out with that sandy-haired chump at the throttle."

Mr. Hebron smiled and said, "Well then, you pull her out, Daniels."

Daniels shook his head and replied, "You know I can't do that, Mr. Hebron. It's true I'm not in sympathy with this strike one jot, but the boys are out, and I've got to stand by them. But when this strike is over I want old 341 back. Why, Mr. Hebron, I'd rather see a scab run her than that old lightning jerker."

But Mr. Hebron was firm and Daniels walked slowly and sadly away. By this time we had a good head of steam on, and Bennett gave me the signal to pull out. I shoved the reverse lever from the centre clear over forward, and grasping the throttle, tremblingly gave it a pull.

Longfellow says, in "The Building of the Ship:" "She starts, she moves, she seems to feel a thrill of life along her keel." I can fancy exactly how that ship felt, because just as the first hiss of steam greeted my ears and I felt that engine move, I felt a peculiar thrill run along my keel, and my heart was in my mouth. She did not start quite fast enough for me, so I gave the throttle another jerk, and whew! how those big drivers did fly around! I shut her off quickly, gave her a little sand, and started again. This time she took the rail beautifully, walking away like a thoroughbred.

There is a little divide just outside of the El Monte yard, and then for a stretch of about five miles, it is down grade. After this the road winds around the river banks, with level tracks to Johnsonville, where the double track commences. All I had to do was to get the train to the double track, and from there a belt line engine was to take it in. Thus my run was only thirty-five miles.

Our start was very auspicious, and when we were going along at a pretty good gait, I pulled the reverse lever back to within one point of the centre, and opened her up a little more. She stood up to her work just as if she had an old hand at the throttle instead of a novice. I wish I were able to describe my sensations as the engine swayed to and fro in her flight. The fireman was rather an intelligent chap, and had no trouble in keeping her hot, and twenty-three cars wasn't much of a train for old 341. We went up the grade a-flying. When we got over the divide, I let her get a good start before I shut her off for the down grade. And how she did go! I thought at times she would jump the track but she held on all right. At the foot of this grade is a very abrupt curve and when she struck it, I thought she bounded ten feet in the air. My hat was gone, my hair was flying in the wind, and all the first fright was lost in the feeling of exhilaration over the fact that *I* was the one who was controlling that great iron monster as she tore along the track. I—I was doing it all by myself. It was like the elixir of life to an invalid. My fireman came ever to me at one time and said in my ear that I'd better call for brakes or the first thing we knew we would land in the river. Brakes! Not on your life. I didn't want any brakes, because if she ever stopped I wasn't sure that I could get her started again. We made the run of thirty-five miles in less than an hour, and when we reached Johnsonville I received a message from Mr. Hebron, congratulating me on my success. But Bennett—well, the rating he gave me was worth going miles to hear. He said that never in his life had he taken such a ride, nor would he ever volunteer to ride behind a crazy engineer again. But I didn't care; I had pulled the train in as I said I would, and the engine was in good shape, barring a hot driving box. I may add, however, that I don't care to make any such trip again myself.

We went back on a mail train that night, that was run by a non-union engineer, and in a day or two the strike was declared off, the men returned to work, and peace once more reigned supreme. Daniels got his "old girl" in as good shape as ever, and once when he was up in my office he told me he had hoped that old 341 would get on the rampage that day I took her out and "kick the stuffin'" out of that train and every one on it. Poor old Daniels, he stuck to his "old girl" to the last, but one day he struck a washout, and as a result received a "right of track order," on the road that leads to the paradise of all railroaders.

CHAPTER XVII

CHIEF DESPATCHER—AN INSPECTION TOUR—BIG RIVER WRECK

I had always supposed that the higher up you ascended in any business, the easier would be your position and the happier your lot. What a fallacy, especially in the railroad service, where your responsibilities, work, care, and worries increase in direct proportion as you rise! The operator's responsibility is limited to the correct reception, transmission, delivery and repetition of his orders and messages; the despatcher's to the correct conception of the orders and their transmission at the proper time to the right train; but the chief despatcher's responsibilities combine not only these but many more. A despatcher's work is cut out for him, just as the tailor would cut his cloth for a journeyman workman, and when his eight hour trick is done, his work for the day is finished and his time is his own. Not so the chief. His work is never done; he works early and late, and even at night when he goes home utterly tired out from his long day, he is liable to be called up to go out on a wrecking outfit, or to perform some special duty. As soon as anything goes wrong on a division the first cry is, "Send for the chief despatcher." Almost everybody on the division is under his jurisdiction except the division superintendent, and sometimes I have seen that mighty dignitary take a back seat for his chief despatcher.

It was some ten years after I had begun to pound brass, that I awoke one fine morning to find myself offered the position of chief despatcher on the central division of the C. N. & Q. Railway, with headquarters at Selbyville. I was very well satisfied at El Monte, had been promoted to the first trick and had many friends whom I did not like to leave, but then, I was as high as I could get in a good many years, because Fred Bennett, the chief, was a stayer from away back, and there wouldn't be a vacancy there for a long time to come. The district of which I was to take charge was about three hundred miles long, and consisted of three freight divisions of one hundred miles each. That meant a whole lot of hard confining work, but who wouldn't accept a promotion; so after carefully considering the matter, I gratefully accepted, and was duly installed in my new position. As I did not know anything about the road or the operators thereon, one of my first acts was to take a trip of inspection over the road. I rode on freight trains or anything that came along, and dropped off as I wanted to, in order that I might become thoroughly acquainted with the road and the men.

One of the time card rules was that no person was to be allowed to enter any of the telegraph offices except those on duty there; even the train men were supposed to receive their orders and transact their business at the window or counter. Generally, however, this rule was not enforced very rigidly. When I was a night operator I never paid any attention to it at all. I dropped off No. 6 at eleven-thirty one night at Bakersville. A night office was kept there because it was a good order point and had a water tank. I had never met the night man and knew nothing of him, except that he was a fiery-tempered Irishman named Barry, and a most excellent operator. It had been told me that the despatchers had, on more than one occasion, complained of his impudence, but his ability was so marked and he was so prompt in answering and transacting business, that he was allowed to remain. As No. 6 pulled out he went into the office, closed the door and then shut the window. He had apparently not seen me, or if he had he paid no attention to me, so I went into the waiting-room and rapped on the ticket window. He shoved it up, stared at me and gruffly said, "Well! what's wanted?"

I answered pretty sharply, that I desired to come into his office.

"Well then you can take it out in wanting, because you don't get in here, see!"

I started to reason with him, when he slammed the window in my face. That made me madder than a March hare, and I told him if he didn't let me in that office mighty quick, I'd smash that window into smithereens and come in anyhow.

Biff! Up went that window, and Mr. Barry's face looking like a boiled beet appeared, "Smash that window will you? You just try it and I'll smash your blamed old red head with this poker. Get out of that waiting-room. Tramps are not allowed."

Just then it occurred to me that he did not know me from the sight of sole leather; so I said: "Hold on there, young man; I'm Mr. Bates, the newly appointed chief despatcher of this division, and I'm out on a tour of inspection. Now stop your monkeying and open up."

"Bates thunder! Bates would never come sneaking out over the road in this manner. You pack up and get. It will take more than your word to make me believe you are Bates."

I saw that remonstrance with him was useless, and, besides I had an idea that he might carry out his threat to smash my head with the poker, so I went over to a mean little hotel and stayed all night, vowing to have vengeance on his head in the morning. When daylight came, I went back to the station, and Dayton, the day man, knew me at once, having worked with me on the K. M. & O. Barry had told him of the trouble, and he was having a great laugh at my expense. Barry, himself, showed up in a little while, but he didn't seem the least bit disturbed, when he found out who I really was. He said there was a time card rule, that forbade him allowing any unauthorized person in his office; he thought I was some semi-respectable "hobo," who wanted a place to stay all night; how in the world was he to know? Suppose some one else had come out and said he was the chief despatcher, was he going to let them in the office without some proof? I saw that this was mighty good reasoning and that he was right. Did I fire him? Not much. Men on railroads who so implicitly obey orders are too valuable to lose; and before I left the road he was working the third trick.

Things ran along very smoothly for a while and I was having a good time. The winter passed and with the advent of spring came the heavy rains for which that part of the country was justly noted. Then the work commenced.

One Friday evening after four or five days of the steadiest and hardest kind of rain, I received a message from the section foreman at Truxton, saying that Big River was beginning to come up pretty high, and that the constant rains were making the track quite soft. I immediately sent him an order to put out a track walker at once, and told the despatcher on duty to make a "slow order" for five miles this side of the Big River; the track on the other, or south side, was all right, being on high ground.

Our fast mail came in just then, and after the engines were changed, the engineer and conductor came into my office for their orders. I told them about the soft track, and in a spirit of pure fun, remarked to Ben Roberts, the engineer, that he had better look out or he would be taking a bath in Big River that night. He facetiously replied: "Well, I don't much mind. I'm generally so dirty when I get that far out that a bath would do me good."

They received their orders, and as Roberts went out the door, he laughingly said, "I reckon, Bates,

you'd better send the wrecker out right after us to fish me out of Big River to-night."

I stepped over to the window, saw him climb up on engine 232, a beautiful McQueen, and pull out, and just as he started, he turned and waved his hand to me as if in token of farewell.

Truxton, five miles from the river, was not a stop for the mail, but I had them flagged there, to give them another special warning about approaching Big River with caution. Just then the track walker came into Truxton, and reported that he had come from the river on a velocipede, and that while the track was soft it was not unsafe and the bridge appeared to be all right. Presently, I heard, "OS, OS, XN, No. 21, a 7:45, d 7:51" and I knew the mail had gone on.

The next station south was Burton, three miles beyond the bridge, and I thought I would wait until I had the "OS" report from there before going home for the night. Thirty minutes passed and no sign of her. This did not worry me much, because I knew Roberts would be extremely careful and run slow until he passed the bridge. In a minute Truxton opened up and said, "Raining like blazes now." I asked him where the track walker was, and he said he had gone out towards the bridge just after the mail had left.

Fifty minutes of the most intense anxiety passed, and all of a sudden every instrument in the office ceased clicking. As soon as a wire opens, all the operators are instructed to try their ground wires, and in that way the break is soon located. Bentonville, Bakersville, Muncy, Ashton, all in quick succession tried their grounds, and reported "All wires open south." Presently the despatchers' wire closed again, and "DS, DS, XN." There! that was Truxton calling us now. I answered and he said, "Wires all open south. Heavy rain now falling; violent wind storm has just passed over us; lots of lightning; looks like the storm would last all night."

I told him to hustle out and get the section foreman, and gave him an order to take his gang and car and go to the bridge and back at once and make a full report.

But where was 21 all this time? Stuck in the mud, I hoped, but all the same I was beginning to have a great many misgivings. Mr. Antwerp, the division superintendent, came in just then, and I reported all the facts of the case to him. He was very much worried, but said he hoped it would turn out all right. Getting nothing from Burton, on the south, I told Truxton to keep on his ground until the section gang or track walker came back with a report. Twenty minutes later he began to call "DS" with all his might. I answered and this is what the despatcher's copy operator took:

Truxton, 5 | 21, 188—.

"M. N. B. "DS.

"No. 21 went through Big River bridge to-night; track was soft all the way over from Truxton; engine, mail, baggage and one coach on the bridge when it gave way; three Pullmans stayed on the track. Roberts, engineer; Carter, fireman, and Sampson, conductor, all missing. Need doctors.

"O'HARA,
"Brakeman."

My God! wasn't it awful! I sent one caller to get out the wrecking crew and another for a doctor. I then instructed Burke to prepare orders for the wrecker, pulling everything off and giving her a clean sweep; told Truxton to keep on his ground wire and stay close; and pulling on my rain coat, I bounded down the steps and up to the roundhouse to hurry up the engine. Engine 122, with Ed Stokes at the throttle, was just backing down as I came out, so I ran back, signed the orders, and as

soon as the doctors arrived, Mr. Antwerp told me to pull out and take charge, saying he would come out if necessary on a special.

It was scarcely five minutes from the time I received the first message until we pulled out and started on our wild ride of rescue. Forty miles in forty minutes, with one slow down was our time. The old derrick and wreck outfit swayed to and fro like reeds in the wind, as we went down the track like a thunderbolt, but fortunately we held to the rails. There was scarcely a word spoken in the caboose, every one being intent upon holding on and thinking of the horrible scene we were soon to view. When we reached Truxton we found the track walker there, and after hearing his story in brief, we pulled out for the bridge. Our ride from Truxton over to the wreck was frightful. It was still raining torrents, the wind was coming up again, lightning flashed, thunder rolled and the track was so soft in some places that it seemed as if we would topple over; but we finally reached there—and then what a scene to behold!

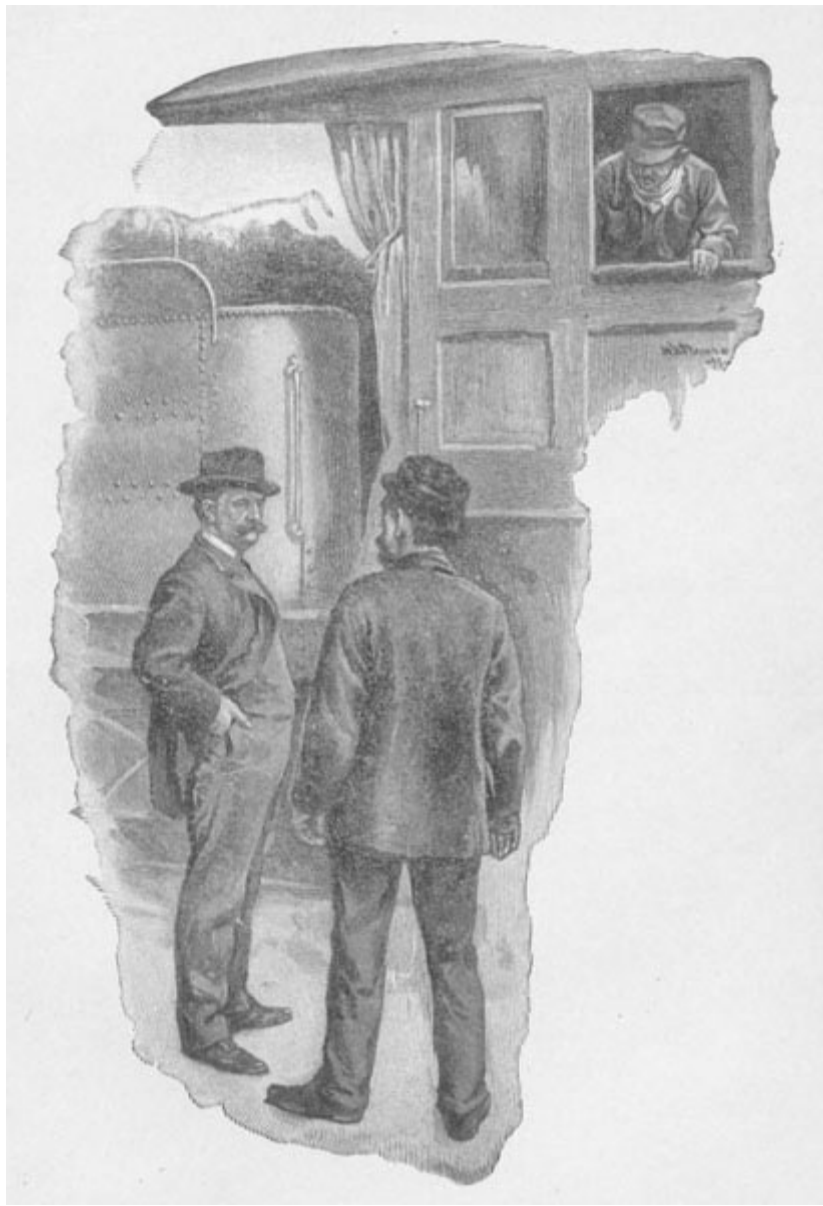
The bridge, a long wooden trestle, was completely gone, nothing being left but twisted iron and a few broken stringers hanging in the air. Four mail clerks, the express messenger, and the baggage man were drowned like rats in a trap. Poor Ben Roberts had hung to his post like the hero, that he was, and was lost. Sampson, the conductor, and Carter, the fireman, were both missing, and in the forward coach, which was not entirely submerged, having fallen on one end of the baggage car, were many passengers, a number of whom were killed, and the rest all more or less injured.

The river was not very wide, and I had the headlight taken off of our engine and placed on the bank; and presently a wrecker came up from the south, and her headlight was similarly placed, casting a ghastly weird, white light over the scene of suffering and desolation. I cut in a wrecking office, Truxton took off his ground, I put on mine, and Mr. Antwerp was soon in possession of all the facts. A little later I was standing up to my knees in mud and water, and I heard a weak voice say: "Mr. Bates, for God's sake let me speak to you a minute."

I looked around and beheld the most woebegone, bedraggled specimen of humanity I had ever seen in my life. "Well, who under the sun are you?" I asked.

"I'm Carter, the fireman of No. 21. When I felt the bridge going I jumped. I was half stunned, but managed to keep afloat, being carried rapidly down the stream. I struck the bank about a mile and a half below here, and I've had one almighty big struggle to get back. For the love of the Virgin give me a drink; I'm half dead;" and with that the poor fellow fell over senseless.

I called one of the doctors and had him taken to the caboose of the wrecker, and when I had time I went in and heard the rest of his story. The poor chap was badly hurt, having one ankle broken, besides being bruised up generally. He said when No. 21 left Truxton, Roberts proceeded at a snail-like pace, keeping a sharp lookout for a wash out. He slowed almost to a standstill before going on the bridge, but everything appearing all safe and sound he started again, remarking to Carter, "Here's where I get the bath that Bates spoke about."



"See here, who is going to pull this train?"

The engine was half way over when there came a deafening roar; the train quivered, and—then Carter jumped. That was all he knew. It was enough, and we sent him back with the rest of the wounded the next morning. He is pulling a passenger train there to-day. The engine was lost in the quicksands, and was never recovered, and Ben Roberts stayed with her to the last. He had more than his bath in Big River that night; he had his funeral; the river was his grave, and the engine his shroud.



CHAPTER XVIII

A PROMOTION BY FAVOR AND ITS RESULTS

I had been on the C. N. & Q. for about eight months, when my second trick man took sick, and being advised to seek a healthier climate, resigned and went south. Generally speaking the chief despatcher's recommendation is enough to place a man in his office; and as I had always believed in the rule of seniority, I wanted to appoint the third trick man to the second trick, make the day copy operator third trick man, and call in a new copy operator to replace the night man who would be promoted to the day job. In fact, I had started the ball rolling toward the accomplishment of this end, when Mr. Antwerp, the division superintendent, defeated all my plans by peremptorily asserting his prerogative and appointing his nephew, John Krantzer, who had been night copy operator to the third trick. I protested with all my might, in fact was once on the point of resigning my position but the old man wouldn't hear of either proposition, and Krantzer secured the place. Now while Krantzer was an excellent copy operator, he was very young, and lacked that persistence and reliability so essential in a successful despatcher. After I had protested until I was black in the face, I asked Mr. Antwerp at least to put the young man on the second trick, so that in a measure I could have him under my eye. But no, nothing but the third trick would satisfy him, so on the third trick the rattle-brained chap went the next night.

He struggled through the first night without actually killing anybody, but his train sheet the next morning resembled a man with a very bad case of measles; there were delays on everything on the road, with very few satisfactory explanations. There was the fast mail twenty-five minutes in going six miles. Cause? None was given. But a perusal of the order book showed that Krantzer had made a meet for her with a freight train, and had hung her up on a blind siding for fifteen minutes. Freights that had been out all night were still out, tied up in all kinds of shapes. Meets had been made for two long trains at a point where the passing track was not large enough to accommodate either one of them, and the result was thirty minutes lost by both of them in "raw hiding" by. Many other discrepancies were noticeable, but these sufficed to show that Krantzer's abilities as a despatcher were of a very low order. However, I reflected, that it was his first night, and I remembered my own similar experience not many years ago, so I simply submitted the sheet to Mr. Antwerp without comment. He wiped his glasses, carefully adjusted them on his aristocratic nose, and after glancing at the sheet for a few moments, said, "Ah! humph! Well! Well! Well! Not a very auspicious start, to be sure; but the boy will pick up. Just jack him up in pretty good shape, Bates; it will do him good." I jacked him up all right to the queen's taste but it was like pouring water on a duck's back.

The second night was not much of an improvement, and I made a big kick to Mr. Antwerp the following morning, but it did no good. The third night was a hummer. I was kept at the office pretty late, in fact until after eleven o'clock, and before going home I wrote Krantzer a note telling him to be very careful as there were many trains on the road. Our through business at this time was very heavy, and compelled us to run many extras and specials. I was particular to inform him of two extras north, that would leave Bradford, the lower end of the division, some time after 12:30 A. M., and directed him to run them as special freights having the right of track over all trains except the passengers. Each train was made up of twenty-five cars of California fruit bound for New

York, and they were the first of their kind to be run by us. We had a strong competitor for this class of business in the Valley Route, a line twenty miles away, and were making a big bid for the trade. The general manager had sent a message that a special effort was to be made to put the two trains through a-whooping, and I had ordered engines 228 and 443, two of the best on the road, to pull them. Burke, the second trick man had everything running smoothly at the time I wrote the note, and I told Krantzer that, as it looked then, all he would have to do would be to keep them coming. No. 13, a fast freight south, had an engine that wasn't steaming very well, and I suggested to him to put her on the siding at Manitou. It would delay 13 about fifteen minutes but her freight was all dead stuff, so that would not make much difference. I did everything but write the order, and that I could not do, because I couldn't tell just what the conditions would be when the extras reached Bradford, where they would receive the order.

Krantzer succeeded in getting them started in fair shape; but not content to let well enough alone, he thought he would run No. 13 on to Burnsidess instead of putting her on the siding at Manitou as I had suggested, and gave orders to that effect. After he had given the "complete" he told the operator to tell them to "fly." If he had given this same order for the meeting at Burnsidess to the two extras, *at the same time*, all would have been well, except that the extras would have been delayed some fifteen minutes, but this he was unable to do. Burnsidess itself is only a day office, so he could not communicate with them there, and they had already passed Gloriana, the first night office south of Burnsidess. The operator at Gloriana heard the order to 13 and told Krantzer it was a risky thing to do; but he told him "to mind his own business, as he (Krantzer) could run that division without any help."

No. 13 was pulled by engine 67, with Jim Bush at the throttle, and he was such a runner that he had earned the sobriquet of "Lightning Jimmie." While he had reported early in the evening that his engine was not steaming very well, he had succeeded in getting her to working good by this time. Burnsidess is at the foot of a long grade from the north, and about a mile up there is a very abrupt curve as the track winds around the side of the hill. The two extras were bowling along merrily when they struck this grade; and although there is a time card rule that says that trains will be kept ten minutes apart, they were right together, helping each other over the grade. In fact, it was one train with two engines, somewhat of a double header with the second engine in the middle. They were going on for all they were worth, expecting to meet No. 13 at Manitou, as originally ordered.

In the meantime, Bush pulling No. 13, had passed Manitou, and with thirty-eight heavy cars behind him, was working her for all she was worth on the down grade, so as to get on the siding for the extras at Burnsidess. He was carrying out Krantzer's order to "fly," with a vengeance. And just as he turned the curve, he saw, not fifty yards ahead of him, the headlight of the first extra. To stop was out of the question. He whistled once for brakes, reversed his engine, pulled her wide open and then jumped! He landed safely enough, and beyond a broken right arm, and a badly bruised leg, was unhurt. His poor fireman, though, jumped on the other side and was dashed to pieces on the rocks; and the head man and engineer of the first extra were also killed. I had known many times of two trains being put in the hole; but this was the first time I had ever seen three of them so placed.

Krantzer had sense enough to order out the wrecker, and send for me. I knew just as soon as I heard the caller's rap on my door that he had done something so I lost no time in getting over to the office and there sat Krantzer as cool as if he had not just killed three men by his gross carelessness and cost the company thousands of dollars. I had the old man called and when he came and learned what had occurred, his discomfiture was so great that I felt fully repaid for all my annoyance on his nephew's account. He directed me to go out to the wreck and report to him upon arrival. I had

Forbush, the first trick man, called and placed him in charge of the office during my absence. Incidentally, I told Krantzer he had better be scarce when I sent the remains of those crews in, because I fancied they were in a fit mood to kill him. When I returned I found that he had gone. It appeared that Jim Bush went up into the office, and although he had one arm broken, he was prepared to beat the life out of that crazy young despatcher. Forbush saw him coming and gave Krantzer a tip, and as Bush came in one door, Krantzer went out the other.

The effects of this wreck were far beyond calculation to the company because they lost the business they were striving to win, and the way the general manager went for old man Antwerp was enough to make us all grin with delight. It is needless to say I was allowed to place my own men thereafter.

CHAPTER XIX

JACKING UP A NEGLIGENT OPERATOR—A CONVICT OPERATOR— DICK, THE PLUCKY CALL BOY

One of the most unpleasant duties I had to perform was that of "jacking up" operators, and punishing them for their short-comings. Generally, if the case was not a very bad one, and the man had a good reputation, I would try and smooth it over with only a reprimand; but there are times "when patience ceases to be a virtue," and punishment must be inflicted. The train sheet is always the first indication that some operator is to be "hauled up on the carpet." One morning I found the following entry on the sheet:—

"No. 16 delayed forty-five minutes at Bentonville, account not being able to raise the operator at Sicklen in that time. Called for explanation and operator said 'he was over at hotel getting some lunch.'"

That excuse "over at hotel getting some lunch," is as familiar to a railroad operator as the creed is to a good churchman. A young man named Charles Ferral was the night man at Sicklen, and his ability as an operator was only exceeded by his inability to tell the truth when he was in a tight place. I was too old an operator to be fooled by any such a yarn as this; and besides, the conductor of No. 17 reported to me that he had found Ferral stretched out on the table asleep, when he stopped there for water. But he was a first-rate man and I didn't want to lose him, so I wrote him a sharp letter and told him that a repetition of his offense would cause him to receive his time instantly. He was as penitent as the prodigal son, and promised never to so offend again; and he kept his word—for just about ten days.

One morning he asked my permission to come up to "DS" on No. 2 and go back on No. 3 in the afternoon. I gave it, but warned him to not lose too much sleep. There are some men in the business that the sound of their office call on a telegraph instrument will cause to awaken at once no matter how soundly they may be sleeping, but Ferral was not one of these. The night following his return to his station, I was kept at the office until late, and about eleven o'clock No. 22 appeared at Bakersville, and wanted to run to Ashton for No. 17. They were both running a little late, and as 17 had a heavy train of coal and system empties, I told Burke to let them go. But the only station at which we could then get an order to 17 was Sicklen, Ferral's station. Burke began to call, but Sicklen made no answer. He called for forty-five minutes at a stretch, 22 all the time waiting at Bakersville. He stopped for five minutes and then went at it again. In ten minutes Sicklen answered. Burke started to give the order, but Ferral broke and gave the "OS" report that 17 had just gone by.

That settled it; No. 22 was hung up another hour all on account of Ferral's failure to attend to his duty. I opened up on him and said, "Where have you been for the last fifteen minutes?" The same old excuse, "Lunch," came back at me.

"Well, where were you for ten minutes before that?"

Then that dear old stereotyped expression, "Fixing my batteries," followed. But I was only too sure

that he had been asleep, and No. 17 going by had awakened him. So I gently remarked that "I was not born yesterday, and said that he would probably have ample time to fix his batteries after this; that, in fact, I thought it would be a good thing for him to take a long course in battery work, and I would assist him all I could—I would provide him with the time for the work."

The next morning I laid the matter before Mr. Antwerp, and he wanted the man discharged forthwith. But during the night my anger had cooled somewhat and now I felt inclined to give him another chance; so I simply urged that he be laid off for a while.

"All right, Bates, but make it a good stiff lay-off—not less than fifteen days," said Mr. Antwerp.

I wrote Ferral accordingly; but I had scarcely finished when a letter came from him to me, begging off, and promising anything if I would not discharge him; but, instead would lay him off for *forty-five days*. I took him at his word and gave him the forty-five days he asked for, instead of the fifteen I had intended to give him. But, about two weeks later he came up to "DS," and looked so woebegone, and pleaded so hard to be taken back, that I remitted the remainder of his punishment. He was greatly chagrined when he learned that he had trebled his own sentence. He was never remiss again. Go over to the despatcher's office any night and you will see him, bright and alert, sitting opposite the despatcher doing the copying. He is in the direct line of promotion, and some day will be a despatcher himself. I never regretted my leniency.

In addition to the main line, I had a branch of thirty-eight miles, running from Bentonville up to Sandia. The despatching for this branch was done from my office, and when we wanted anyone there Bentonville would cut us through. This was seldom necessary, however, because there were only two trains daily, a combination freight and passenger each way. The last station this side of Sandia was Alexis. The state penitentiary was located there, and the telegraphing was done by a convict "trusty"—a man who, having been appointed cashier of a big freight office in the western part of the state, couldn't stand prosperity, and, in consequence, had been sent up for six years. His conduct had been so good that, after he had served four years inside of the walls, he was made a "trusty." His ability as an operator was extraordinary. He had a smooth easy way of sending that made his sending as plain as a circus bill.

The two branch trains on the branch were known as 61 and 62, and one day 62, running north in the morning, had jumped the track laying herself out about ten hours. When she left Sandia as 61 on her return trip south, she again went off the track and the result was sixteen hours' more delay. We wouldn't send a wrecker up from the main line, and they had to work out their own salvation. When they finally appeared at Alexis they were running on the time of 62. That would never do, and the conductor asked the operator at Alexis to get him orders to run to Bentonville regardless of No. 62. Burke, my second trick man, was on duty at the time, and it so chanced that he did not know the Alexis man was a convict. He was about to give the order asked for when something on the main line diverted him for a moment. When he was ready again, Alexis broke him and said, "Wait a minute."

To tell a despatcher to wait a minute when he is sending a train order is to court sudden death, and Burke said, "Wait for what?"

"For whatever you blame please, I'm going out to weigh this coal."

Burke's Irish blood was all up in his head by this time, and he said: "What do you mean by talking that way to me? No. 61 is waiting for this '9'; now you copy and I'll get your time sent you in the morning."

"Oh! will you? I guess my time is all fixed so you can't touch it. I only wish you could; I'd like mighty well to be fired from this job; I wouldn't even wait for my pay."

I had been sitting at my desk taking it all in, and was just about ready to expire with laughter, when Burke called over to me: "Did you hear that young fellow's impudence?"

"Yes, I heard."

"Well, what are you going to do about it? I've never had an operator talk to me like that before. I must certainly insist that you dismiss him at once. He and I can't work on the same road."

"Unfortunately, Burke," said I, "the State has a claim on his services for two years yet, and I am afraid they won't waive it."

At this it dawned upon Burke, who and what the man really was; but I cannot say that his humor was improved at once by the discovery.

One morning shortly after this I was sitting in my office making up an annual train report, and was cussing out anything and everybody, because this train report is one of the worst things in the whole business. It was figures till you couldn't rest, and I had already been working at it for three days, and my head was in a perfect whirl. That morning one of our call boys had turned up missing and that fact also irritated me. It would seem that a call boy was a pretty insignificant chap in a big railroad, but such is not the case. In a perfect system every employee is like a cog in a big wheel, and as soon as one cog is broken there is a jar in the otherwise smooth symmetrical movement of the machine. The call boy is quite an important personage, because, upon him depends the prompt calling of the various crews in time to take out their trains. He must keep a keen watch on the call board for the marking up of trains; he must know who is the first to go out, and he must know the dwelling place of every engineer, fireman, conductor and brakeman in the city. On a big division like ours, this, in itself, was not a small job. On some roads men are employed for this work, but I had always been partial to the boys, and kept four of them, two on days and two on nights. When my day boy left, I promoted a night boy to the second day job, and was cudgeling my brain for a good chap to go on nights. In a little while I heard a sharp rap on the office door, and in response to my "come in," uttered in a tone that was anything but pleasant, a sturdy looking little chap about fourteen years old stood before me. He had a shock of jet black hair, tumbled all over his head, a pair of bright eyes, round full face, not over clean, strong limbs and a well knit body. His clothes hung on him like gunny sacks, and the crudity of the many various patches indicated that they had not been put on by woman's deft fingers. He didn't wait for me to speak, but blurted out:

"Say, mister, I have just heard tell as how you wants a call boy. Do you?"

He took my breath away by his bluntness; he looked so honest and sincere, so I simply replied, "Yes," and waited.

"Well then, I wants the job. See!"

"What's your name, youngster, and where is your home?"

"My name's Dick Durstine; I hain't got no home, no father, no mother, no nothin', just me, and I wants to learn the tick tick business. It looks dead easy."

This was really funny, but I liked his impudence, and, while I had no intention of hiring him, I determined to draw him out, so I said:

"Where were you born, when did you come here, and do you know where any of the crews live?"

"I was born in St. Louis; mother died when I was a kid, and Dad was such a drunken worthless old cuss and beat me so much, that I brought up in a foundling asylum. I come in here riding on the trucks of your mail train about three weeks ago, and the fellers up in the roundhouse have been lettin' me feed and snooze there. I know where all the crews live exceptin' some of your kid glove engineers wot pulls the fast trains, but I can soon find them out. Please give me the job, mister; I'm honest and I'll work hard."

Something in his blunt straightforward way appealed to me and I determined to try him. Handled right I imagined he would be a good man; handled wrong, he would probably become a bright and shining light of the *genus* hobo. So I hired him, telling him his salary would be forty dollars per month.

"Hully gee!" he exclaimed, "forty plunks a month! Well say! I won't do a ting wid all dat mun; I'll just buy a road. Thank you mister, I'll work so hard for you that you'll not be sorry you gave me the job. But don't you forget that I wants to learn the tick tick business."

That night at seven o'clock he went to work, and it didn't take long to see that he was as bright as a new dollar. He knew everything about the division, knew all the crews and where they lived. Days went by and still he held up his end and was a great favorite with all the force. There was a local instrument in the office, and one of the operators wrote the Morse alphabet for him, and ever after that he kept pegging away at the key. He practiced writing and it wasn't many weeks before he was getting to be something of an operator. I went out to the main line battery room one evening to give some instructions to the man in charge and there I discovered Master Dick with a battery syringe in one hand and a brush in the other deeply engrossed in monkeying with the jars.

"Look here, you young rascal," I said sharply, "what are you doing in here? First thing you know you will short circuit some of these batteries and then there'll be the de'il to pay: Don't you ever let me catch you out here again, or I'll fire you bodily."

"I hain't been doing nothin', Mister Bates, I just wanted to see what made the old thing go tick tick. Wot's all them glass jars for wid the green water and the tin in?"

I explained to him as well as I could the construction of the gravity battery. He had been forbidden to monkey with any of the instruments or the switch board in the main office, but his infernal inquisitiveness soon ran away with his sense, and it wasn't long before he was in trouble. He pulled a plug out of the switch board one evening, and Burke threatened to kill him. Another evening, he went into my office and monkeyed with an instrument that I kept there connected to the despatcher's wire, and left it open. There was no report from any of the offices on either side, and investigation soon revealed the culprit. The wire was open for ten minutes and Burke was as mad as a March hare, when he reported it to me the next morning. I sent for Master Dick and informed him that another such a report against him would cause his instant dismissal. He seemed penitent enough, but two nights afterwards he short circuited all the main line batteries by his foolishness, and raised Cain in the office for a while. The next morning his time was presented to him and he was told to get out. He pleaded hard but his offenses had been too numerous, and I had to let him go. I must confess, however, that we all missed him greatly, because, in spite of his troublesome nature, he was a prime favorite with all the force.

Our road ran through some wild unsettled country, and a few years previous, a Mr. Bob Forney and some distinguished gentlemen of the road, had paid us a visit, with the result that the express

company lost about forty thousand dollars and their messenger his life. The country became too warm for them and they fled.

Our flyer left two nights after this, having on board about a hundred thousand dollars of government money, and I remarked to Bob Stanton, the conductor, that it was a fine chance for a hold up, but he laughed it off and said that civilization was too far advanced for that kind of work just now.

About nine o'clock I was sitting in the despatcher's office smoking a cigar before going home for the night, when all at once the despatcher's wire and the railroad line opened. Sicklen reported south of him and then took off his ground. Pretty soon the sounder began to open and close in a peculiar shaky manner, and then I heard the following:

"To 'DS,' gang of robbers goin' to hold up the flyer in Ashley's cut to-night. They will place rails and ties on the track to wreck train if they don't heed signal. Warn train to watch out and bring gang out from Sicklen. This is Dick Durstine."

All was quiet for a minute and then he started again, but soon he stopped short and we heard no more. The line remained open.

We raised Sicklen on a commercial wire and told him to turn his red-light and hold everything. I was in somewhat of a quandary; the sending had been miserable, sounding unlike any stuff Dick had ever sent, and then the stopping of the whole business made it seem rather suspicious. Still Ashley's cut was an ideal place for a hold up, and the weather was dark and stormy. Everything was propitious for just such a job.

In the meantime, Ashton, the first office south of Sicklen, had reported on the commercial line that the despatcher's wire was open north of him. That would place it near the cut in all probability. Anyway I didn't intend to take any chance, so I sent a message to Sicklen telling him to notify the sheriff of all the facts and ask him to send out a posse on the flyer, and, also, for him to get the day man to go out and patch the lines up until a line man could get there in the morning. About twenty minutes afterwards the flyer left Sicklen nicely fixed with a strong posse, and an order to approach the cut with caution. It was only three miles from Sicklen to the cut, and I knew it would be but a matter of a short while until something was heard. Sure enough, forty minutes later the despatcher's wire closed and this message came:

"To Bates, DS:

"Attempt to hold up No. 21 in Ashley's cut was frustrated by the sheriff's posse. Outlaws had placed ties on the track in case we did not heed the signal to stop. Two of them killed, three captured and one escaped. Dick Durstine is here, badly shot through the right lung. Will have him sent in from Sicklen on 22 in the morning.

"Stanton, Conductor."

The next morning when 22 pulled in I went down and there, laid out on a litter in the baggage car, was Dick Durstine, my former call boy, weak, pale, and just living. He was conscious, and when I leaned over him his eyes glistened for a minute, he smiled and feebly said:

"Say, Mister Bates, didn't I do them fellers up in good shape? When I gets well again will you gimme back my job so I can learn some more about the tick tick? I'll never monkey any more, honest to God, I won't."

A queer lump came in my throat and there was a suspicion of moisture in my eyes as I contemplated this brave little hero, and I said:

"God bless your brave little heart, Dick, you can have anything on this division."

Mr. Antwerp had appeared and was visibly affected. We had Dick removed to the company hospital, and then for some days he lay hovering between life and death, but youth, and a strong constitution finally won out and he began to mend.

When he was able to sit up I heard his story. It appeared that when I dismissed him he laid around the place for a day, and then jumping a freight, started south. At Sicklen he had been put off by a heartless brakeman and had started to walk to Ashton. It was evening and he became tired. After walking as far as the north end of the cut he laid down and went to sleep behind a pile of old ties. He was awakened by the sound of voices near by, and listening intently, he learned that the men were outlaws and intended to hold up the flyer that night. They intended to flag her down as she entered the cut and do the business in the usual smooth manner. In case she wouldn't stop, they would have a pile of ties on the track that would soon put a quietus on her flight. Poor little Dick was horrified and stealing quietly away some distance he stopped and cogitated. Time was becoming precious. How was he to send a warning? Oh! if he could only get into a telegraph office! Suddenly an idea struck him. He went a little farther up the track, and shinning up a pole he took his heavy jack-knife, and after a hard effort, succeeded in cutting two wires. Another pole was climbed and only one wire cut from it. With this strand he made a joint so that the two ends of the despatcher's wire could be brought in easy contact. Then by knocking the two ends together he sent the warning. His cutting of the wire had made a peculiar loud twang and one of the outlaws heard it. Becoming suspicious, he and his partner started up the track to investigate. They came upon Dick, kneeling on one knee, engrossed in his work, and without one word of warning shot him in the back. They left him for dead, but thank God he did not die, and to-day he is on a road that before many years will land him on top of the heap.

CHAPTER XX

AN EPISODE OF SENTIMENT

The night man down at Bentonville quit rather suddenly one fall morning, and as I had no immediate relief in prospect, I wired the chief despatcher of the division south of me to send me a man if he had any to spare. That afternoon I received a message from him saying he had sent Miss Ellen Ross to take the place. I still had a very distinct recollection of my encounter with Miss Love, and I wasn't overfond of women operators anyway, so Miss Ross's welcome to my division was not a hearty one. She was the first woman I had ever had under my jurisdiction. I was at the office quite late a night or two after this, and heard some of her work; there was no use denying that she was a very smooth operator as well as a very prompt one. Burke said he had no complaint to offer; she was always on time, and I must confess I felt much chagrined. I wanted a chance to discharge her, but it didn't appear to materialize. But I was a patient waiter and one morning about three weeks later I came into the office and on looking over the delay sheet I saw the following entry in the delay column:

"No. 18 delayed fifty minutes, account not being able to raise the operator at Bentonville in that time; as an explanation, operator says she was over at the hotel getting her lunch."

Evidently Miss Ross had little ingenuity in the line of excuses or she would never have offered such a threadbare one as that. I wanted the chance to annihilate her and here it was. I called up Bentonville and asked if Miss Ross was there. She was, and I said, "Isn't it possible for you to invent a better excuse than 'lunch' for your failure to answer last night, or this morning rather?"

She drummed on the key for a moment and then said if I didn't like that excuse I knew what I could do. I caught my breath at her audacity and then "*did*." I sent her time to her on No. 21, and a man to take her place. I then dismissed the matter from my mind and supposed that I had heard the last of Miss Ross. I never was very well acquainted with the female sex or I would not have dismissed the matter with such complacency.

A day or two after this I was sitting in the division superintendent's office, he being out on the road, and I heard a voice say:

"Is this Mr. Bates?" I had not heard anyone come in and I glanced up and answered, "Yes." I saw before me a young woman of an air and appearance that fairly took my breath away. I immediately arose to my feet and with all possible deference invited her to take a seat. I supposed she was the wife of some of the officials and wanted a pass. In response to my inquiry as to what could I do for her she said, timidly:

"I am Miss Ross, lately night operator at Bentonville."

Her answer put me more off my ease than ever, but the discipline of the road had to be maintained at any-cost; so as soon as I could, I put on my severest look and sternly said, "Well!" She smiled slightly in a way that made me doubt if she were much impressed by my display of rigor; and answered, "I came to see if you wouldn't take me back. I am sure I didn't mean to offend the other night. I have been an operator for nearly four years and I have never had the least bit of trouble

before. You have no fault to find with my work I am sure; and I promise to be very careful to never offend again. Won't you please take me back?"

Gee! but she did look pretty and her big black eyes were shining like bright stars. If she had only known it I was ready by this time to have given her the best job on the whole division, even my own, but I wasn't going to give up without a show of resistance and I said:

"Humph! Well let's see!" Then I rang my bell and told the boy to get me the train sheet of the sixteenth. I looked very stern and very wise as I read the delay report to her.

"That, Miss Ross, is a very serious offense. A delay of fifty minutes to any train is bad enough, but when it happens to a through freight it is the worst possible. Then you say you were at the hotel for lunch. The order book shows that the despatcher called you from two A. M. until two-fifty A. M. Isn't that rather an unearthly hour to be going out to lunch? My recollection of the Bentonville station is that it is a mile from the excuse of a hotel in the place. Really, I am very sorry but I don't see how anything can be done."

Discipline was being maintained, you see, in great shape, but all the time I was delivering my little speech I was feeling like a big red-headed hypocrite. Miss Ross looked up at me with those beautiful eyes; then two big tears made their appearance on the scene, and she sobbed out:

"Well, I know I told a fib when I made that excuse, but the despatcher was so sharp and I was so scared when he said he had been calling me for fifty minutes, that I told him the first thing that came into my mind. Then, the next day I was angry at you, because I thought you were chaffing me, as I was the only woman on the line, and I suppose I was rather impudent. But do you think it is fair to discharge me for the same thing that you only gave Mr. Ferral fifteen days for? Are you not doing it simply because I am a woman?"

I never could stand a woman's tears, especially a pretty one, and when she cited the case of Ferral, I realized that I had lost my game. I let myself down as easily as I could and that night Miss Ross went back to work at Bentonville, and the man there was put on the waiting list.

It was very funny after this how many times I had to run down to Bentonville. That Sandia branch line had to be inspected; the switch board had to be replaced by a new one in "BN" office; wires had to be changed, a new ground put in, and many other things done, and always I had to go myself to see that the work was done properly. The agent at Bentonville came, before very long, to smile in a very knowing way whenever I jumped off the train; Mr. Antwerp had a peculiarly wise look in his eye when I mentioned anything about Bentonville, but I didn't mind it. I was in love with the sweet little girl, and was walking on the clouds. If I hadn't been I would have seen that my cake was all dough in that quarter. I might have noticed that big Dan Forbush had an amused look in his eye when I went off on one of these trips. If I had watched the mail I might have seen numerous little billets coming daily from Bentonville, addressed in a neat round hand to "Mr. Dan Forbush." But I didn't, I kept right on in my mad career, and one day when my courage was high I offered my hand and my heart to Miss Ross. She refused and told me that while she was honored by my proposal, she had been engaged to Mr. Forbush for two years, having known him down on the "Sunset" before he came to our road. I took my defeat as philosophically as I could and the next spring she left Bentonville for good, and Dan took a three weeks' leave. When he came back he brought sweet Ellen as his bride. One evening not long after that I was calling there, when Mrs. Forbush looked up at me very naively and said:

"Mr. Bates, did I pay you back for discharging me?"



"Are you not doing it just because I am a woman?"

There's no doubt about it, she did, and I felt it. She was the third girl to throw me over, and I determined to give up the business and go for a soldier. I stuck it out there till fall and then resigned for all time.

CHAPTER XXI

THE MILITARY OPERATOR—A FAKE REPORT THAT NEARLY CAUSED TROUBLE

The railroad and commercial telegraphers are well known to the general public, because they are thrown daily in contact with them, but there is still another class in the profession, which, while not being so well known are, in their way, just as important in their acts and deeds. I refer to the military telegrapher. His work does not often carry him within the environments of civilization; his instruments are not of the beautiful Bunnell pattern, placed on polished glass partitioned tables; his task is a very hard one and yet he does it without a grumble. His sphere of duty is out at the extreme edge of advancing civilization. You will find him along the Rio Grande frontier; out on the sun-baked deserts of New Mexico and Arizona; up in the Bad Lands of Montana, and the snow-capped mountains of the Rockies. A few of them you will find in nice offices at some department headquarters or in the war office in Washington, but such places are generally given to men who have grown old and gray in the service. His office? Any old place he can plant his instruments, many times a tent with a cracker box for a table; a chair would be an unheard-of luxury. His pay? Thirteen big round American dollars per month. His rank and title? Hold your breath while I tell you. Private, United States Army. Great, isn't it? Many times a detail to one of the frontier points means farewell to your friends as long as the tour lasts.

When I left the railroad business I journeyed out westward to Fort Hayes, Kansas, and held up my right hand and swore all manner of oaths to support the Constitution of the United States; obey the orders of the President of the United States and all superior officers; to accept the pay and allowances as made by a generous (God save the word) Congress for the period of five years. Thus did I become a soldier and a "dough boy" because I went to the infantry arm of the service. I've stuck to the business ever since.

I supposed when I went into the army that my connection with wires and telegraph instruments was entirely finished. I had worked at the business long and faithfully and was in a state of mind that I thought I had had enough. That's very good in theory, but powerful poor in practice, because I hadn't been soldiering a month before a feeling of homesickness for my old love came over me; in fact to this day I never see a railroad but what I want to go up in the dispatcher's office and sit down and take a "trick." But there were commissions to be had from the ranks of the army and I wanted one, so I hung on and did my duty as best I could.

The stay at Fort Hayes was a very peaceful and serene one; I did no telegraphing there for a year, and then we were ordered to Fort Clark, Texas. When I quit the commercial business I had almost taken an oath never to go back to Texas, but I couldn't help it in this case.

Fort Clark is one hundred and thirty miles due west of dear old San Antonio, and situated nine miles from the railroad. When my company arrived, there was no telegraphic communication with the outside world and all telegrams had to be sent by courier to Spofford Junction, for transmission. After having been stationed there for about eight months I was sent for by the commanding officer and told to take charge of a party and build a telegraph line over to the railroad. The poles had been set by a detachment of the 3rd Cavalry and in five days' time I had

strung the wire. Being the only operator in the post I was placed in charge of the office and relieved from all duty. It was a perfect snap; no drills, no guards, no parades, nothing but just work the wire and plenty of time to devote to my studies.

In December, 1890, the Sioux Indians again broke loose from their reservations at Pine Ridge and all of the available men of the pitifully small, but gallant, United States army were hurriedly rushed northwards to give them a smash that would be lasting and convincing. There was the 7th Cavalry, Custer's old command, the 6th and 9th Cavalry, the 10th, 2nd, and 17th Infantry, the late lamented and gallant Capron's flying battery of artillery, besides others—General Miles personally assumed command, and the campaign was short, sharp, brilliant and decisive. The Indians were lambasted into a semblance of order, and that personification of deviltry, Sitting Bull, given his transportation to the happy hunting grounds, but not before a score or more of brave officers and men had passes to their long reckoning. Captain George Wallace, of the 7th Cavalry; Lieutenant Mann, of the same regiment, and Lieutenant Ned Casey, of the 22nd Infantry, left places in the ranks of the officers that were hard to fill.

My regiment, the 18th Infantry, was too far away to go, and besides, the Rio Grande frontier, with Señor Garza and his band of cutthroats prowling around loose, could not be left unprotected. There would be too big a howl from the Texans if that occurred.

During all these trying times my telegraph office was naturally the center of interest, and I had made an arrangement with the chief operator at San Antonio to send me bulletins of any important news. I always made two copies, posting one on the bulletin board in front of my office, and delivering the other to the colonel in person.

Soldiers are very loquacious as a rule and give them a thread upon which to hang an argument, and in a minute a free silver, demo-popocrat convention would sound tame in comparison. Go into a squad-room at any time the men are off duty, and you can have a discussion on almost any old subject from the result of the coming prize fight to the deepest question of the bible and theology. Many times the argument will become so warm between Privates "Hicky" Flynn and "Pie Faced" Sullivan that theology will be settled *a la* Queensbury out behind the wash-house. Among soldiers this argumentative spirit is called "chewing the rag."

One morning shortly after Wounded Knee with its direful results had been fought, I thought it would be a great joke to post a startling bulletin, just to start the men's tongues a-wagging.

So I wrote the following:

"Bulletin

"San Antonio, Texas, 12 | 26, 1890.

"Reported that the 6th and 9th Cavalry were ambuscaded yesterday by Sioux Indians under Crazy Horse, and completely wiped out of existence. Custer's Little Big Horn massacre outdone. Not a man escaped."

I chuckled with fiendish glee as I posted this on the bulletin board and then started for breakfast. I thought some soldier would read it, tell it to the men of his company, and in that way the fun would commence. My scheme worked to perfection, because some of the men of G Company, (mine was D) had seen me stick it up and had come post haste to read. I started the ball rolling in my own company and in about a minute there were fifty men around me all jabbering like magpies as to the result of this awful massacre. Of course, the regiment would be hurried north forthwith—no other regiment could do the work of annihilation so well as the 18th. Oh! no. Of course not!

Said my erstwhile friend and bunkie "Hickey" Flynn: "Av coorse, Moiles will be after sendin' a message to Lazelle to bring the Ateenth fut up at once, and thin the smashin' we will be after givin' them rid divils will make a wake look sick."

"Aw cum off, Hickey," said Sullivan, "phat the divil does yez know av foightin' injuns? Phat were ye over in the auld sod? Nathin' but a turf digger. Phat were ye here before ye 'listed? Dom ye, I think ye belong to the Clan na Gael and helped to murther poor Doc Cronin, bad cess to ye."

A display of authority on the part of the top sergeant prevented a clash and the jaw-breaking contest proceeded. By this time the news had spread and the entire garrison were talking. Just as I was about to tell them that it was a fake pure and simple, I happened to glance towards my office, and Holy Smoke! there was my captain standing on his tiptoes (he was only five feet four) reading that confounded bulletin. I hadn't counted on any of the officers reading it. Generally they didn't get up until eight o'clock and by that time I would have destroyed the fake report.

The officers' club was in the same building as my office and the captain had come down early, evidently to get a—to read the morning paper (*which came at 4 P. M.*) and his eye lighted on my bulletin. I saw him read it carefully, and then reaching up he tore it from the board and as quick as his little legs would carry him, he made a bee line for the commanding officer's quarters. I knew full well how the colonel would regard that bulletin when he found out it was a fake. I was able to discern a summary court-martial in my mind's eye, and that would knock my chances for a commission sky-highwards—because a man's military record must be absolutely spotless when he appears for examination. What was I to do? Just then I saw the captain go up the colonel's steps, ring the bell, and in a moment he was admitted. I felt that my corpse was laid out right then and there and the wake was about to begin.

A few moments later the commanding officer's orderly came in, and looking around for a minute, caught sight of me and said:

"Corporal, the commanding officer wants to see you at his quarters at once," and out he went. "Start the band to playing the 'Dead March in Saul,'" thought I, "because this is the beginning of a funeral procession in which I am to play the leading part." I walked as slowly as I could and not appear lagging, but I arrived at my crematory all too soon. I rapped on the door and in tones that made me shiver was bidden by the old man to come in. The colonel was standing in the middle of

his parlor, wrapped in a gaudy dressing gown, and in his hand he held my mangled bulletin. Right at that minute I wished I had never heard a telegraph instrument click.

"Corporal," said the colonel, "what time did you receive this bulletin?"

"About six-fifteen, sir, immediately after reveille," I replied with a face as expressionless as a mummy's.

"Why did you not bring it to me direct as you have heretofore done?"

"Well, sir, I didn't think you were awake yet, and I did not want to disturb you."

"Have you any later news, corporal?"

"No sir, none, but I haven't been back to the office since, sir." Gee! but that room was becoming warm!

"Are you certain as to the truth of this awful report?"

"It is probably as authentic as a great many stories that are started during times like these—that is all I know of it, sir." (Lord forgive me.)

"It seems almost too horrible to be true, and yet, one cannot tell about those Sioux. They're a bad lot—a devilish bad lot"—this to my captain—and then to me: "You go back to your office, corporal, and remain very close until you have a denial or a confirmation of this story and bring any news you may receive to me instanter. That's all corporal."

The "corporal" needed no second dismissal, and saluting I quickly got out of an atmosphere that was far from chilly to me.

Now, by my cursed propensity for joking, I had involved myself in this mess, and there was but one way out of it, and that was to brazen it out for a while longer and then post a denial of the supposed awful rumor. *But the denial must come over the wire*, so when I reached my office I called up Spofford and told old man Livingston what I had done and what I wanted him to do for me, and in about half an hour he sent me a "bulletin" saying that the previous report had happily proved unfounded and the 6th and 9th Cavalry were all right. This message I took at once to the colonel and as he read it he heaved a big sigh of relief, but he dismissed me with a very peculiar look in his eye.

The next evening as I was passing the colonel's quarters on my way to deliver a message to the hospital, I heard him remark to another officer, "Major, don't you think it is strange that the papers received to-day make no mention of that frightful report received-here yesterday morning relative to the supposed massacre of the 6th and 9th Cavalry?"

No, the major didn't think it a bit strange. Maybe he knew that newspaper stories should be taken *cum grano salis*, and then maybe he knew me.

There were no more "fake reports" from that office.

CHAPTER XXII

PRIVATE DENNIS HOGAN, HERO

It was while I was sitting around a barrack-room fire that I picked up the following story. There were a number of old soldiers in my company—men who had served twenty-five years in the army—and their fund of anecdote and excitement was of the largest size.

On Thanksgiving Day, 187—, Private Dennis Hogan, Company B, 29th United States Infantry, the telegraph operator at Fort Flint, Montana, sat in his dingy little "two by four" office in the headquarter building, communing with himself and cussing any force of circumstances that made him a soldier. The instruments were quiet, a good Thanksgiving dinner had been enjoyed and now the smoke from his old "T. D." pipe curled in graceful rings around his red head.

Denny was a smashing good operator and some eighteen months before he had landed in St. Louis dead broke. All the offices and railroads were full and nary a place did he get. While walking up Pine street one morning his eye fell foul of a sign:—

"Wanted, able-bodied, unmarried men, between the ages of twenty-one and thirty-five, for service in the United States Army."

In his mind's eye he sized himself up and came to the conclusion that he would fill all the requirements. Now, he hadn't any great hankering for soldiering, but he didn't have a copper to his name and as empty stomachs stand not on ceremony, in he went and after being catechized by the recruiting sergeant, he was pounded for thirty minutes by the examining surgeon, pronounced as sound as a dollar, and then sworn in "to serve Uncle Sam honestly and faithfully for five years. So help me God." The space of time necessary to transform a man from a civilian to a soldier is of a very short duration, and almost before he knew it he was dressed in the plain blue of the soldier of the Republic. He was assigned to B company of the 28th United States Infantry stationed at Fort Flint, Montana. The experience was new and novel to him, and the three months recruit training well nigh wore him out, but he stuck to it, and some two months after he had been returned to duty, he was detailed as telegraph operator vice Adams of G Company, discharged. There he had remained since.

At four o'clock on the afternoon in question Denny was aroused from his reverie by the sounder opening up and calling "FN" like blue blazes. He answered and this is what he took:

"DEPARTMENT HEADQUARTERS ST. PAUL, MINN.

"*November 26th, 187—*

"COMMANDING OFFICER,

"Fort Flint, Montana.

"Sioux Indians out. Prepare your command for instant field service. Thirty days' rations;

two hundred rounds ammunition per man. Wire when ready.

"By command of Major General Wherry.

(Signed) SMITH,

"Assistant Adjutant-General."

Denny was the messenger boy as well as operator and without waiting to make an impression copy, he grabbed his hat and flew down the line to the colonel's quarters. That worthy was entertaining a party at dinner, and was about to give Hogan fits for bringing the message to him instead of to the post adjutant; but a glance at the contents changed things and in a moment all was bustle and confusion.

For weeks the premonitory signs of this outbreak had been plainly visible, but true to the red-tape conditions, the army could not move until some overt act had been committed. The generous interior department had supplied the Indians with arms and ammunition and then Mr. Red Devil under that prince of fiends incarnate, Sitting Bull, started on his campaign of plunder and pillage.

At eight o'clock that night Colonel Clarke wired his chief that his command was ready, and at midnight he received orders to proceed the next morning at daylight, by forced marches up to the junction of the forks of the Red Bud, and take position there to intercept the Indians should they attempt to cross. Two regiments from the more northern posts were due to reach there at the same time, and the combined strength of the three commands was supposed to be sufficient to drive back any body of Indians. There was little sleep in Fort Flint that night.

Now, Hogan wasn't much of a success as a garrison soldier, but when a chance for a genuine fight presented itself, all the Irish blood in his nature came to the surface, and after much pleading and begging, the adjutant allowed him to join his company, detailing Jones of D Company as operator in his stead. Jones wasn't as good an operator by far as Denny, but in a pinch he could do the work, and besides, he had just come out of the hospital and was unable to stand the rigors attendant upon a winter campaign in Montana.

Denny went to the company quarters in high glee and soon had his kit all packed. Some weeks before he had been out repairing the line and when he returned to the post he had left a small pocket instrument and a few feet of office wire in his haversack. He saw these things and was about to remove them, when something impelled him to take them along. What this was no one ever knew. Perhaps premonition.

The next morning just as the first dim shadows of early dawn stole over the snow-clad earth, the gallant old 29th, five hundred strong, swung out of Fort Flint, on its long tramp. From out of half-closed blinds on the officer's line gazed many a tear-stained face, and up on "Soapsuds Row" many an honest-hearted laundress was bemoaning the fates that parted her from her "ould mon."

The weather turned bitter cold and after seven days of the hardest kind of marching they reached and crossed the Red Bud just below the junction of the two forks. A strong position was taken and every disposition made to prevent surprise. The expected re-enforcement would surely come soon and then all would be safe.

The next day dawned and passed, but not a sign of that re-enforcement. That night queer looking

red glows were seen at stated intervals on the horizon—North, West and East on the north side of the river, and to the South on the other bank did they gleam and glow. Colonel Clarke was old and tried in Indian warfare and well did he know what those fires meant—Indians—and lots of them all around his command. His hope now was that the two northern regiments would strike them in the rear while he smashed them in front.

The next morning, first one, two, three, four, an hundred, a thousand figures mounted on fleet footed ponies appeared silhouetted against the clear sky, and it wasn't long before that little command of sturdy bluecoats was surrounded by a superior force of the wildest red devils that ever strode a horse or fired a Winchester rifle. Slowly they drew their lines closer about the troops like the clinging tentacles of some monster devilfish, and about eleven o'clock, *Bang!* and the battle was on.

"Husband your fire, men. Don't shoot until you have taken deliberate aim, and can see the object aimed at," was the word passed along the line by Colonel Clarke.

Behind hastily constructed shelter trenches the soldiers fought off that encircling band of Indians, with a desperation and valor born of an almost hopeless situation. Ever and anon, from across the river came the ping of a Winchester bullet, proving that retreat was cut off that way. The Indians had completely marched around them.

Where was the re-enforcement? Why didn't it come? Was this to be another Little Big Horn, and were these brave men to be massacred like the gallant 7th Cavalry under Custer? As long as his ammunition held out Colonel Clarke knew he could stand them off, but after three days of hard fighting, resulting in the loss of many brave men, the situation was becoming desperate. Fires could not be lighted and more than one brave fellow went to kingdom come in filling the canteens at the river's bank. Most of the animals had been shot, many of them being used for breastworks.

Colonel Clarke was inspecting his lines on the early evening of the third day, and had about made up his mind to ask for a volunteer to try and get beyond the Indian lines and carry the news to Fort Scott, sixty miles away, to call for re-enforcements. Six troops of the 11th Cavalry were stationed there under his old friend and classmate, Colonel Foster. He knew the character of the regular army chaps well enough to be certain they would come to his assistance, if it were a possible thing. If all went well with his courier in three days' time they would be there.

The word was passed along the line and in a few seconds he had any number of officers and men who were willing and ready to take the ride. Just as the colonel had decided to send 1st Lieutenant Jarvis on this perilous trip, Hogan appeared before him, saluting with military precision, and said with a broad Irish brogue:—

"Axin' yer pardin' kurnel, but Oi think Oi kin tell ye a better way. The telegraph loine from Scott to Kearney runs just twenty-foive moiles beyant here to the southards. Up at the end of our loines on the other side of the river is a deep ravine. If Oi kin get across with a good horse and slip through the Indian loines on the other soide, I can, by hard roidin' reach this loine in two or three hours. I have a pocket instrument wid me and can cut in and ask for re-enforcements from Fort Scott. If the loine is down I can continue on to the post, and make as quick time as any of the officers; if it is up it will be a matther of a short toime before we are pulled out of this hole. Plaze let me thry it kurnel. Lieutenant Jarvis has a wife and two children, and his loss would be greatly felt, whoile I—I—well I haven't any wan, sir, and besoides, I'm an Irishman, and you know, kurnel, an Irishman is a fool for luck." This last was said with a broad grin.

Colonel Clarke was somewhat amazed at this speech, but he studied reflectively, with knitted brows for a moment, and then said, "All right, Hogan, I'll let you try it. Take my horse and start at three o'clock in the morning. Do your best, my man, do your best; the lives of the remainder of this command depend on your efforts. God be with you."

"If I fail kurnel, it will be because I'm dead, sir."

Shortly before three o'clock in the morning, Denny made ready for his perilous ride. The horse's hoofs were carefully padded, ammunition and revolver looked after, the pocket instrument fastened around his neck by the wire, so if any accident happened to the horse he would not be unnecessarily delayed, and all was ready. He gave his old bunkie a farewell silent clasp of the hand and then started on his ride that meant life or death to his comrades. The horse was a magnificent Kentuckian and seemed to know what was required of him. Carefully and slowly Hogan pushed his way to the place opposite the ravine, and then giving his mount a light touch with the spurs, he took to the cold water. The stream was filled with floating ice but was only about fifty yards wide and in a few minutes he was safely over, and climbing up the other bank through the ravine. Finally, the end was reached and he was on high ground. Resting a minute to see if all was well, he started. So far, so good, he was beyond the Indian lines. He was congratulating himself on the promised success of his mission when all at once, directly in front of him he saw the dim shadowy outlines of a mounted Indian. Quick as a flash Denny pulled his revolver and another Indian was soon in the happy hunting ground. This caused a general alarm and Hogan knew he was in for it. Putting his spurs deep in his horse's flanks away he went with the speed of the wind. A perfect swarm of Indians came after him, yelling like fiends and shooting like demons. On! on! he sped, seemingly bearing a charmed life because bullets whizzed by him like hail. He was not idle, and when the opportunity presented itself his revolver spoke and more than one Indian pony was made riderless thereby.

Suddenly he felt a sharp stinging pain in his right shoulder, and but for a convulsive grasp of the pommel with his bridle hand he would have pitched headlong to the earth.

No, by God! he couldn't fail now. He must succeed, the lives of his comrades depended on his efforts. He had told Colonel Clarke he would get through or die, and he was a long way from dead yet. Only an hour and a half more and he would have sent the message and then all the Indians in the country could go to the demnition bow wows for all he cared.

Hearing no more shots Denny drew rein for a moment and listened. Not a sound could be heard, the snow had started to softly fall and the first faint rays of light on the eastern horizon heralded the approach of a new-born day. Ah! he had outridden his pursuers. Gently patting his faithful horse's neck, he once more started swiftly on, and when he was within a few miles of the line he chanced to glance back and saw that one lone Indian was following him.

Now it was a case of man against man. In his first flight and running fight he had fired away all his ammunition save one cartridge. This he determined to use to settle his pursuer, but not until it was absolutely necessary; and putting spurs to his already tired horse, he galloped on.

The Indian was slowly gaining on him and he saw the time for decisive action was at hand. Ahead of him but one short half mile was that line, already in the early morning light he could see the poles, and if the god of battles would only speed his one remaining bullet in the right direction, his message could be sent in safety and his comrades rescued. His wounded right arm was numb from pain and his left was not the steadiest in the world, but nothing venture, nothing have, and just then

—*Bang!* and a bullet whizzed by his head. "Not this toime, ye red devil," Denny defiantly shouted. A second bullet and he dropped off his horse. Quickly wheeling about, he dropped on his stomach, and taking a careful aim over his wounded right arm, he fired. The shot was apparently a true one and the Indian pitched off head first and lay still.

With an exultant shout Hogan jumped up and started for the line. Nothing could stop him now. Loss of blood and the intense cold had weakened him so that his legs were shaky, the earth seemed to be going around at a great rate, dark spots were dancing before his eyes; but with a superhuman effort he recovered himself and was soon at the line.

The wire was strung on light lances, and if Denny were in full possession of his strength he could easily pull one down. He threw his weight against one with all of his remaining force—but to no avail. What was he to do? But sixteen feet intervened between him and that precious wire.

The faithful, tired horse, when Denny jumped off, had only run a little way and stopped, only too glad of the chance to rest. He was now standing near Hogan, as if intent on being of some further use to him. Suddenly Denny's anxious eyes lighted on the horsehair lariat attached to the saddle. Here was the means at hand. Quickly as he could he undid it, and with great difficulty tied one end to the pommel and the other to the lance. Then he gave the horse a sharp blow, and, *Crash!* down went the lance.

Making the connections to the pocket instrument as best he could with one cold hand, he placed the wire across a sharp rock and a few blows with the butt of his revolver soon cut it. The deed was done.



Private Dunn, the operator at Fort Scott, opened up his office bright and early one cold morning and marveled to find the wire working clear to Kearney. After having a chat with the man at Kearney about the Indian trouble, he was sitting around like Mr. Micawber when he heard the sounder weakly calling "FS." Quickly adjusting down he answered and this is what he took.

"COMMANDING OFFICER,

"Fort Scott, Montana.

"29th Infantry surrounded by large body hostile Sioux just north of junction of the forks of the Red Bud. Colonel Clarke asks for immediate re-enforcements; ammunition almost gone; situation desperate. I left the command at three o'clock this morning.

(Signed.) DENNIS HO—."

Then blank, the sounder was still and the line remained open. The sending had been weak and shaky, just as if the sender had been out all night, but there was no mistaking the purport of the message.

Dunn didn't wait to pick up his hat but fairly flew down the line to the commanding officer's quarters. The colonel was not up yet, but the sound of animated voices in the hallway caused him to appear at the head of the stairs in his dressing gown.

"What is it, Dunn," he asked.

"A message from the 29th Infantry, sir, saying they are surrounded by the Sioux Indians and want help."

Colonel Foster read the message, and exclaimed,

"My God! Charlie Clarke stuck out there and wants help! Dunn, have the trumpeter sound 'Boots and Saddles.' Present my compliments to the adjutant and tell him I desire him to report to me at once. Kraus,"—this to his Dutch striker who was standing around in open-mouthed wonderment—"saddle my horse and get my field kit ready at once. Be quick about it."

A few men had seen Dunn's mad rush to the colonel's quarters and suspected that something was up, so they were not surprised a few minutes later to hear "Boots and Saddles" ring out on the clear morning air. The command had been in readiness for field service for some days, and but a few moments elapsed until six sturdy troops were standing in line on the snow-covered parade. A hurried inspection was made by the troop commanders and then Colonel Foster commanded "Fours right, trot, march," and away they went on their sixty-mile ride of rescue. A few halts were made during the day to tighten girths, and at six o'clock a short rest was made for coffee.

The sound of the firing across the river shortly after Hogan left the 29th was plainly heard by his comrades and many a man was heard to exclaim, "It's all up with poor Denny." But the firing grew more distant and Colonel Clarke had hopes that Hogan had successfully eluded his pursuers and determined to hold on as best he could. He knew full well that the Indians would be extraordinarily careful and that it would be folly for him to attempt to get another courier through that night. That day was indeed a hard one; it was trying to the extreme. Tenaciously did those Indians watch their prey. Well did they know by the rising of the morrow's sun the ammunition of the soldiers would be exhausted and then would come their feast of murder and scalps; Little Big Horn would be repeated.

About two o'clock, Colonel Clarke, utterly regardless of personal danger, exposed himself for a moment and Chug! down he went, shot through the thigh by a Winchester bullet. Brave old chap, never for one minute did he give up, and after having his wound dressed as best it could be done, he insisted on remaining near the fighting line. Lieutenant Jarvis was shot through the arm, Captain Belknap of E Company was lying dead near his company, and scores of other brave men had gone to their last reckoning. Hanigan, Hogan's bunkie, was badly wounded, and out of his head. Every once in a while he would mumble, "Never you mind, fellers, we will be all right yet, just stand 'em off a little while longer and Denny will be here with the 11th Cavalry. He said he'd do it and by God! he won't fail."

As the shades of the cold winter evening crept silently over the earth, the firing died away, and the command settled down to another night of the tensest anxiety and watching. Oh! why didn't those northern regiments come? Did Hogan succeed in his perilous mission? Depressed indeed were the spirits of the officers and men.

About nine o'clock Lieutenant Tracy, the adjutant, was sitting beside his chief, who was apparently asleep. Suddenly, Colonel Clarke sat up and grabbing Tracy by the arm said, "Hark! what's that noise I hear?"

"Nothing sir, nothing," replied Tracy; "lie down Colonel and try to rest, you need it sir"—and then

aside—"poor old chap, his mind's wandering."

"No, no, Tracy. Listen man, don't you hear it? It sounds like the beat of many horses' hoofs, reinforcements are coming, thank God. Hogan got through."

Just then, Crash! Bang! and a clear voice rang out, "Right front into line, gallop, March! *Charge!*" and those sturdy chaps of the 11th Cavalry true to their regimental hatred for the Indians, charged down among the red men scattering them like so much chaff. Then to the northwards was heard another ringing cheer, and the two long-delayed regiments came down among the Indians like a thunderbolt of vengeance. Truly, "It never rains but it pours." The 29th, all that was left of it, was saved, and when Colonel Foster leaned over the prostrate form of his old friend and comrade, Colonel Clarke feebly asked, "Where is that brave little chap, Hogan?"

"Hogan? Who is Hogan?" asked Foster.

"Why, my God, man, Hogan was the man that got beyond the Indian lines to make the ride to inform you of our plight. Didn't you see him?"

"No, I didn't see him," and then Colonel Foster related how the information had reached him.

A rescuing party was started out and in the pale moonlight they came upon the body of poor Denny lying stark and stiff under the telegraph line, his left hand grasping the instrument and the key open. A bullet hole in his head mutely told how he had met his death. Beside him lay the Indian, dead, one hand grasping Hogan's scalp lock, the other clasping a murderous-looking knife. Death had mercifully prevented the accomplishment of his hellish purpose.

Hogan's shot had mortally wounded the Indian in the left breast, but with all the vengeful nature of his race, he had crawled forward on his hands and knees, and while Hogan was intent on sending his precious message, he shot him through the head, but not until the warning had been given to Fort Scott. Denny's faithful horse was standing near, as if keeping watch over the inanimate form of his late friend.

They buried him where he lay, and a traveler passing over that trail, will observe a solitary grave. On the tombstone at the head is inscribed:

"DENNIS HOGAN,
"Private, Company B,
"29th U. S. Infantry.
"He died that others might live."

CHAPTER XXIII

THE COMMISSION WON—IN A GENERAL STRIKE

The time spent as a soldier in the ranks passed by all too swiftly. The service was pleasant, the duty easy, and the regiment one of the best in the entire army. I don't know any two and a half years of my life that have been as happy and peaceful as those spent in the ranks of the American Army. When the proper time came my recommendations were all in good shape and I was duly ordered to appear before an august lot of officers and gentlemen at Fortress Monroe, Virginia, to determine my fitness to trot along behind a company, sign the sick-book, and witness an occasional issue of clothing. One warm June afternoon I bade good-bye to the men who had so long been my comrades, and journeyed to the eastwards. I was successful in the examinations, and on a Sunday morning early in August, myself, in company with twelve other young chaps, received the precious little parchment in which the President of the United States sends greetings and proclaims to all the world:—

"That reposing especial confidence and trust in the valor, patriotism, and fidelity of one John Smith, I have made him a second lieutenant in the regular army. Look out for him because he hasn't much sense but I have strong hopes as how he will learn after a while."



"... Dennis, lying under the telegraph line, his left hand still grasped the instrument"

The apprenticeship was finished and the chevrons gave way to the shoulder straps.

This time I thought surely I had heard the last of the telegraph, never again was I going to touch a key. I had been at my first station just about two months when one morning I appeared before the Signal Officer of the post and plaintively asked him to let me have a set of telegraph instruments. He did, and it wasn't long before I had a ticker going in my quarters. There was no one to practice with me, so I just pounded away by myself for an hour or so each day, to keep my hand in. I have yet to see a man who has worked at the business for any length of time who could give it up entirely. It's like the opium habit—powerful hard to break off. I have never since tried to lose sight of it.

In 189- one of those spasmodic upheavals known as a sympathetic strike spread over the country like wild fire, and it wasn't long before the continuance of law and order was entirely out of the hands of the state authorities in about ten states, and once more the faithful little army was called out to put its strong hand on the throat of destruction and pillage. Troops were hurriedly despatched from all posts to the worst points and the inefficient state militia in several states relegated to its proper sphere—that of holding prize drills and barbecues.

Owing to the fact that the army cannot be used until a state executive acknowledges his inability to preserve law and order, and owing also to the fact that the executives in one or two of the states were pandering to the socialistic element, saying they could enforce the laws without the assistance of the army, this strike had spread until the entire country except the extreme east and southeast was in its strong grasp, and the work cut out for the army was doled out to it in great big chunks. Men seemed to lose all their senses and the emissaries of the union succeeded in getting many converts, each one of which paid the sum of one dollar to the so-called head of the union. Snap for the aforesaid "head," wasn't it? It was positively refreshing to the army at this time to have at its head a man who did not know what it was to pander to the socialists, and one who would enforce his solemn oath, "To enforce the laws of the United States," at all hazards. United States mail trains were being interfered with; the Inter-State Commerce law was being violated with impunity, and various other acts of vandalism and pillage were being committed all over the land—and the municipal and state authorities "winked the other eye."

Way out in one of the far western posts was a certain Lieutenant Jack Brainerd, 31st U. S. Infantry, serving with his company. Jack was a big, whole-souled, impulsive chap, and before his entrance to the military academy, had been a pretty fair operator. In fact, being the son of a general superintendent of one of the big trunk lines, he was quite familiar with a railroad, and could do almost anything from driving a spike, or throwing a switch to running an engine. The first three years succeeding his graduation had been those of enervating peace; all of which palled on the soul of Lieutenant Jack to a large degree. The martial spirit beat high within his breast, and he wanted a scrap—he wanted one badly.

The preliminary mutterings of this great strike had been heard for days, but no one dreamed that anarchy was about to break loose with the strength of all the fires of hell; and yet such was the case. On the evening of July 4th, a message came to the commanding officer at Fort Blank, to send his command of six companies of infantry to C—— at once to assist in quelling the riots. The chance for a scrap so longed for by Lieutenant Brainerd was coming swift and sure. The next morning the command pulled out. The trip was uneventful during the day, but at night a warning was received by Major Sharp, the grizzled battalion commander, who had fought everything from manly, brave confederates to skulking Indians, to watch out for trouble as he approached the storm centre. There were rumors of dynamited bridges, broken rails, etc. The major didn't believe much

in these yarns, but—"Verbum Sap."—and the precautions were taken. The next morning at five the train pulled into Hartshorne, eleven miles out from C——. This was the beginning of the great railroad yards and evidences of the presence of the enemy were becoming very apparent. A large crowd had gathered to watch the bluecoats and it was plain to be seen that they were in full sympathy with the strikers. "Scab" and a few other choice epithets were hurled at the train crew, and when they were ready to pull out the train didn't go. The conductor went forward and found that the engineer had refused to handle his engine because Hartshorne was his home and the crowd had threatened to kill him if he hauled that load of "slaves of Pullman" any further. When Major Sharp heard of it his little grey eyes snapped and he growled out:—

"Won't pull this train, eh! Well, damn him, we'll make him pull it. Here, Mr. Brainerd, you take some men and go forward and make that engineer take us through these yards. If he refuses you know what to do with him."

Do? Well, I reckon Jack knew what to do all right enough. He took Sergeant Fealy, a veteran, and three men and went forward. The engineer, a little snub-nosed Irishman, was at his post with his fireman, a good head of steam was on, but nary an inch did that train budge. A big crowd of men and women stood around jeering and laughing at the plight of the bluecoats. Pushing his way through the crowd, Jack climbed up into the cab closely followed by his little escort.

"Sergeant Fealy," he said in a voice loud enough to be heard a block, "get up on that tender, have your men load their rifles, and shoot the first d——d man that raises a hand or throws a missile. And you," this to the engineer, "shove that reverse lever over and pull out."

"But, my God, lieutenant," expostulated the engineer, "this is my home and if I pull you fellers out of here they'll kill me on sight—besides look at the track ahead. I'd run over and kill a lot of those people."

"There's no 'buts' about it. This train is going in or I'll lose my commission in the army; besides if these people haven't sense enough to get out of the way let 'em die."

Mr. Engineer started to expostulate farther but the ominous click of a .38 Colt's was incentive enough to make him stop and then he shoved her over and gave her a little steam—just a coaxer.

"Here, you blasted chump, that won't do," and with that Brainerd reached over and yanked the throttle so that she bounded away like a hare; at the same time he gave her sand. It's a great wonder every draw head in the train didn't pull out, but fortunately they held on. The crowd on the track melted away like the mists before the summer's sun, and beyond a few taunting jeers no overt act was committed. The engineer didn't relish the idea of a soldier running his engine and became somewhat obstreperous. Brainerd grabbed him by the scruff of the neck and landed him all in a heap in the coal. Then he climbed up on the right-hand side of the cab and took charge of things himself. There were myriads of tracks stretching out before him like the long arms of some giant octopus, but all traffic was suspended on account of the strike and the main line was clear. The train flew down the line like a scared rabbit and in thirty minutes reached the camp at Blake Park. I had arrived there that morning from the south for special service and when I saw Brainerd climb down off of that engine his face was smutty, but his eyes twinkled and he came towards me with a broad grin and said,

"Hello, Bates, where in thunder did you spring from?"

There wasn't much time for talking because the great city was groaning beneath the grasp of

anarchy, and until that power was broken, there would be no rest for the weary.

The situation that existed at this time is too well known to require any explanation here. The state and city authorities were powerless; the militia inefficient and many a citizen bowed his head and thanked God on that warm July morning for the arrival of the regulars. Only twenty-one hundred of them all told, mind you, against so many thousands of the rioters, and yet, they were disciplined men and led by officers who simply enforced orders as they received them. No matter where or what the sympathies of the men of a company might be, when the captain said "Fire," look out, because the bullets would generally fly breast high. The situation resembled the Paris Commune, and but for the timely arrival of the small body of bluecoats, another cow might have kicked over another lamp, and the frightful conflagration of 1871 have been more than duplicated. But the "cow" was slaughtered and the "lamp" extinguished.

The morning after Brainerd arrived he was detailed on special service and ordered to report to me, and together we worked until the trouble was over. Just what this service was need not be recorded, but one thing sure, railroads and the telegraph figured in it quite largely. In fact the general superintendent of the Western Union Telegraph Company placed the entire resources of the company at my disposal. A wire was run direct to Washington, lines run to all the camps, and Jack and I each carried a little pocket instrument on our person.

Although the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers did not go out in a body, there was quite a number of them who would not pull trains for fear of personal violence from the strikers. One old chap, Bob Redway, by name, had known Major McKenney of our battalion, in days gone by, when he was pulling a train on the N. P., and the major was stationed at Missoula. Bob wandered into camp one afternoon to see his old friend and just at that time a company was ordered to the southern part of the city to stop a crowd that was looting and burning P. H. Railway property. As usual the engineer backed out at the last moment. The major turned to Redway, and said, "See here, Bob, you're not in sympathy with these cutthroats, suppose you pull this train out."

"All right, major, I'll pull you through if the old girl will only hold up. She's a stranger to me, but I reckon she'll last."

Brainerd and I were to go along and do some special work around the stock-yards, and soon we were shooting down the track like a flyer. At 62nd street we passed a sullen looking crowd and when we reached 130th street, we were flagged by the operator in the tower, and informed that the mob in our rear was starting to block the track by overturning a standard sleeper. They were going to cut us off. We cut the engine loose, put fourteen men up on the tender, and Brainerd and I started back with them. The engine was going head on, having backed out from the city, and Bob let her put for all she was worth. Just at 62nd street there is a long sweeping curve and we were coming around it like a streak of blue lightning, when all at once we saw the crowd just in the act of pulling the sleeper over on our track. There was no time to lose and the command "Fire" was sharply given. "Bang," rang out the Springfields, one or two of the mob dropped to the ground, the rest let go of the ropes and ran like scared cats, and the car tottered back in its original place. Redway had shut off steam and was slowing down under ordinary air, when all at once there was a dull deafening roar, and then for me—oblivion. I was only stunned and when I regained consciousness looked around and saw the men slowly regaining their feet. Redway was not killed, but the shock and concussion of the detonation of the dynamite made him lose his speech and he was bleeding profusely at the nose and ears. The cowcatcher, headlight and forward trucks of the engine were blown to smithereens, but fortunately the boiler did not burst and there she stood like some powerful monster wounded to the death. The mob, imagining that their fiendish work had

been complete, became emboldened and rapidly gathered around the little body of bluecoats. It began to look rocky, and Brainerd came limping over to me and said, "Bates, I'm pretty badly bruised about the legs, and can't climb, but if you're able, for God's sake climb that telegraph pole and cut in and ask department headquarters to send us down some help. I'll form the men around the bottom of the pole and shoot the first damned man or woman that throws a missile. We're in a devilish bad box."

I took the little instrument, nippers and wire and up I went. There were side steps on the pole so the ascent was easy. What a scene below! Five or six thousand angry faces, besotted, coarse and ill-bred looking brutes, gazing up at me with the wrath of vengeance in their hearts; and held at bay by a band of fourteen battered and bruised bluecoats, a wounded engineer and fireman, commanded by an almost beardless boy. Well did that mob know that if those rifles ever spoke there would be a number of vacant chairs at the various family boards that night. The wire was soon cut, the main office gave me department headquarters and in thirty minutes' time that mob was scattering like so much chaff before the wind, and with a ringing cheer, two companies of the —th Infantry came down among them like a thunderbolt. We were saved and took Redway back to camp with us. That evening the major came over to see him. Poor chap! he couldn't speak but he motioned for a pencil and paper and this is what he wrote:—

"Don't worry, major, I'm all right. My speaking machine seems to have had a head end collision with a cyclone, but if you want me to pull any more trains out my right arm is still in pretty good shape." Bob hung to us all through the trying weeks that followed and in the end some of us succeeded in getting him a good position in one of the departments in Washington.

Far up in the Northwest things were in a very bad shape. Everything was tied up tight; mail trains could not run because there were no men to run them; "Debsism" had a firm grasp; and even though many of the trainmen were willing to run, intimidation by the strikers caused them to go slow.

At one place, call it Bridgeton, there was an overland mail waiting to go out, but no engineer. Here's where the versatility of the American soldier came in. Major Clarke of the —th Infantry, had four companies of his regiment guarding public property at Bridgeton and he sent word by his orderly that he wanted a locomotive engineer and a fireman. Quick as a flash he had six engineers and any number of men who could fire. He chose two good men and then detailed Captain Stilling's company to go along as an escort. Orders were procured at the telegraph office for the train to run to Pokeville, where further orders would be sent them. When the crowd of loiterers and strikers saw the preparations they jeered in derision. They had the engineer and fireman corralled, but their laugh turned to sorrow when they saw a strapping infantry sergeant climb into the cab and after placing his loaded rifle in front of him, he grasped the throttle and away they went—much to the disgust of Mr. Rioter. They didn't like it worth a cent, but as one striker put it, "What's the use of monkeyin' with them reg'lars? When they gets an order to shoot, they're just damned fools enough to shoot right into the crowd. Milish' fire in the air, because as a rule they have friends in the crowd and don't care to hurt 'em."

Pokeville was one hundred and two miles from Bridgeton and the run was carefully made and without incident. When the volunteer engineer and Captain Stillings, who was playing conductor, went to the office for orders, they found the place deserted. A sullen-looking crowd was looking on and appeared to enjoy the discomfiture of the soldiers. They had put the operator *away* for a while. Pressing up near the sides of the train they became somewhat ugly and Captain Stillings brought out his company, and lining them up alongside of the track he turned to his 1st lieutenant and said:

"Mr. Mitchell, I'm going into this telegraph office. If this crowd gets ugly I want you to shoot the first damned man that moves a finger to harm anybody."

But without an operator orders could not be procured, and without orders the train could not go. Captain Stillings was in a quandary, but all at once he stepped out in front of his company and said in a loud tone, "I want an operator."

"I'm one, sir," said Private O'Brien, quickly stepping forward and saluting.

"Go in that office and get orders for this train."

"Yes, sir," replied O'Brien, and in a minute another bluecoat was helping the train on its way. If Captain Stillings had wanted a Chinese interpreter he could have gotten one—any old thing. The train had no further mishaps, because everything necessary to run a railroad was right here in one company of sixty-two men belonging to the regular army.

July slipped away and it was well into August before we returned to our posts and the old grind of "Fours right," and "Fours left."



CHAPTER XXIV

EXPERIENCES AS A GOVERNMENT CENSOR OF TELEGRAPH

The few years succeeding the great strike were ones of calm, peaceful tranquility. Each recurring November 1st, brought the initiation of Post Lyceums at all garrisons, in which the officers were gathered together twice a week, and war in all its phases was studied. We didn't exactly know where the war was coming from, but, still we boned it out. Old campaigns were fought over; the mistakes made by the world's greatest commanders, from Alexander the Great to Grant and Lee were pointed out; Kriegspiel was played; essays written and discussed, recommendations made as to ammunition and food supply; use of artillery in attack and defense; the proper method of employing the telegraph in the war; and a thousand and one things relative to the machine militaire were gone over. All this time we were slumbering over a smoldering volcano, and on February 16, 1898, the eruption broke loose; the good ship *Maine* was destroyed in Havana harbor, and the feelings of the people, already drawn to the breaking point by the inhuman cruelties of Spain towards her colonies near our own shores, burst with a vehemence that portended, in unmistakable language, the rending asunder of the once proud kingdom of Spain. The army wanted a war; the navy wanted it, the whole population wanted it and here it was within our grasp. It was the dawning of a new day for the United States; a new empire was being born in the Western hemisphere. The feverish preparations attendant upon the new conditions are of too recent date to need any sketching here.

When it was finally determined that the time had arrived for the assembling of the small but efficient regular army, I was stationed with my regiment at Fort Wayne, Michigan. Like all other troops, we were at the post ready for the start. The pistol cracked on the 15th of April, and on the 19th we started. Mobile, Alabama, was our objective where we arrived on the 22nd of the month. Here began the ceaseless preparation for the part the regiment was to play in the grand drama of war that was to follow, all this camp life and concentration being but the prologue.

The camp was a most beautiful one, the weather pleasant, and it was indeed a most inspiring sight to see the long unbroken lines of blue go swinging by, keeping absolute time and perfect alignment to the inspiring strains of some air like "Hot time in the old town to-night," or "The stars and stripes forever."

I had started in with my regiment and expected to remain on duty with it until the end of the war, sharing all its perils and hardships, doing my part in the fighting, and partaking of any of the renown it might achieve should the Dons ever be met. But "Man proposes and God disposes," and on the afternoon of May 21st, I was sitting in my tent correcting some manuscript when a very bright-eyed colored newsboy came along and said:

"Buy a paper, cap'n."

That was the day that a wild rumor had been in circulation that Sampson had met Cervera in the Bahama Channel and completely smashed him, so I laid down my manuscript and said:

"Anything in there about Sampson licking Cervera?"

"Naw, sir, dat were a fake, cap'n, but dere is lots of oder news fur you."

"No, kid, I don't want a paper to-night, and besides I'm not a captain, I'm only a lieutenant."

"But yer may be one some day. Please buy one cap'n," and with this he laid a paper down on my table (a cracker box). I was about to shove it aside and sharply tell him to skip out when my eye fell upon:

"Nominations by the President."

"To be captains in the Signal Corps," then followed my name. I bought a paper, yes, all he had.

On May 27th, I was ordered to proceed at once to Tampa, Florida, reporting upon arrival by telegraph to the chief signal officer of the army for instructions. Tuesday morning, the 29th of May, I reported my arrival and spent the rest of the morning in looking around the camps, renewing old acquaintances. I supposed of course that I was to be assigned to the command of one of the new signal companies then forming to take part in the Santiago campaign and was filled with delight at the prospect, but about eleven o'clock I received an order from General Greely directing me to assume charge of the telegraphic censorship at Tampa. Three civilians, Heston at Jacksonville, Munn at Miami, and Fellers at Tampa, were sworn in as civilian assistants and directed to report to me, thereafter acting wholly under my orders. Mr. B. F. Dillon, superintendent of the Western Union Telegraph Company, was in Tampa, and I had a long conference with him. He assured me of his confidence and cordial support, and placed the entire resources of his company at my disposal. Operators all over the state were instructed that anything I ordered was to be obeyed and then the work began.

The idea of a telegraphic censorship was a new and irksome one to the great American people and just what it meant was hard to determine. Much has been written about "Press Censorship." That term was a misnomer. There never *was* an attempt to *censor* the *great American press*. The newspapers were just as free to print as they were before the war started. *All the censorship that existed was over the telegraph lines militarily occupied*. A government officer was placed in charge and his word was absolute; he could only be overruled by General Greely, the Secretary of War or the President. It was his duty to watch telegrams, regulate the kind that were allowed to pass, and to see that no news was sent whereby the interests of the government or the safety of the army might suffer.

The instructions I received were general in their nature and in all specific cases arising, my judgment was to determine, and I want to remark right here, the rapidity with which those specific cases would arise was enough to make a man faint. The first rule made was that cipher messages or those written in a foreign tongue were prohibited unless sent by a government official on public business. There were a few exceptions to this rule. For instance; many large business houses have telegraphic cipher codes for the transaction of business, and it was not the policy of the government to interfere in any manner with the commercial affairs of the country, so these messages were allowed to pass when the code book was presented to the censor and a sworn translation made in his presence. Spanish messages were transmitted only after being most carefully scanned and upon proof of the loyalty of the sender or receiver and a sworn translation. Not a single private message could be sent by any one, that in any way hinted at the time of the departure or destination of any ship or body of troops. Even officers about to sail away were not allowed to telegraph their wives and families. If they had a pre-arranged code, whereby a message could be written in plain English, there was no way to stop their transmission. Foreign messages

were watched with eagle eyes and many and many a one was gently consigned to the pigeon hole, when the contents and meaning were not plain.

From Key West (which was shortly afterwards placed in my charge) there ran the cable to Havana, and this line was the subject of an extraordinarily strict espionage; not a message being allowed to pass over it that was not perfectly plain in its meaning. Mr. J. W. Atkins was sworn in as my assistant at Key West, and thus I had the whole state of Florida under my control. All the lines from the southern part of the state converge to Jacksonville, and not a message could go from a point within the state to one out of it without first passing under the scrutiny of either myself or one of my sworn assistants.

My office was in H. B. Plant's Tampa Bay hotel, and there, every day, from seven A. M. until twelve midnight, and sometimes one and two in the morning, I did my work. My own long experience as a practical telegrapher stood me in good stead and when any direct work was to be done with the White House in Washington, or any especially important messages were to be sent, I personally did the telegraphing. At the Executive Mansion was Colonel B. F. Montgomery, signal corps, in charge of the telegraph office, so when anything special passed, no one knew it but the colonel and myself.

The Tampa Bay hotel was at this time the scene of the most dazzling and brilliant gaiety. Shafter's 5th Corps was preparing for its Santiago campaign and each night many officers and their wives would meet in the hotel and pass the time away listening to the music of some regimental band or in pleasant conversation. Men who had not seen each other since the close of the great civil war renewed old acquaintances and spun reminiscences by the yard. Military attaches from all the countries of the world were daily arriving, and their gaudy uniforms added a dash of color to the already brilliant panorama. The bright gold of Captain Paget, the English naval attache, the deep blue of Colonel Yermeloff, who represented Russia, contrasted vividly with the blue and yellow of Japanese Major Shiska, and the scarlet and black of Count Goetzen of Germany. But prominent among all this moving panorama of color was the plain blue of the volunteer, and the brown khaki of the regular. My view of the scene was limited to fleeting glimpses from my office where I was nightly scanning messages, doing telegraphing or overlooking 30,000 or 40,000 words of correspondents' copy. Preparations for the embarkation were going on with feverish haste, and orders were daily expected for the army to move.

There were at this time nearly two hundred newspaper correspondents scattered around through the hotel and in the various camps. They represented papers from all over the world, and were typical representatives of the brain and sinew of the newspaper profession, and were there to accompany the army when it moved. Such men as Richard Harding Davis, Stephen Bonsai, Frederick Remington, Caspar Whitney, Grover Flint, Edward Marshall, Maurice Low, John Taylor, John Klein, Louis Seibold, George Farman and Mr. Akers of the London papers, and scores of others. They were quick and active, intensely patriotic, alert for all the news, a "scoop" for them was the blood of life, and the censorship came like a wet blanket. In a small way I had been corresponding for a paper since the beginning of the war, but when the detail as censor came I gave it up as the two were incompatible.

CHAPTER XXV

MORE CENSORSHIP

I must confess that I stood in awe of these newspaper chaps, because I knew my orders would incense them and if they took it into their heads to roast me my life would be made miserable for a good many days to come. But then in the army orders are made to be obeyed and I determined not to show partiality to any of them. It was to be "a fair field and no favor," so I sent word and asked them to meet me in the reading-room of the hotel at two o'clock that afternoon. They came garbed in all sorts of field uniform and I made a little speech telling what they might send and what was interdicted; I remarked that the work was as irksome to me as it was to them, but orders were orders and if they would live up to the few *simple* rules they would make my task much easier and save themselves lots of trouble. Nothing absolutely was to be sent, that would convey in any way an idea of the number of troops in Tampa, the time of arrival or departure of any number of troops or ships, and above all, not a word was to be sent out as to when the 5th Army Corps was to sail. When I had finished one of the correspondents shook his head in a deprecatory way and said:

"Well, captain, we thought Lieutenant Miley (my predecessor) was bad enough but you can give him cards and spades and beat him out. You're certainly a hummer from the word go, and I reckon we'd better go home."

He had my sympathy but that was all. Every correspondent had a war department pass; these I examined and registered each man.

That night my fun commenced. At six P. M. they began to file stuff, and armed with a big blue pencil I started to slash and when I finished, some of their sheets looked like a miniature football field, while their faces betokened blank amazement and intense disgust. Boiled down, the first night's batch of copy consisted of a glowing description of the new censor; this fiend whose weapon was a blue pencil—his glowing red whiskers—his goggle eyes, and his Titian-colored hair. One of them said:

"This afternoon the new censor stuck his head out of the window and the glow was so great from his red whiskers and auburn locks that the fire department was turned out. The latest report is that the censor was unquenched," and so on. They couldn't send any news so they sent me. Most of them were space writers and everything went. In many ways they tried to evade the rules; by insinuations, hints upon which a bright telegraph editor could raise an edifice with a semblance of truth, but the blue pencil generally got in its work before the dispatch reached the operator. I had two stamps made; one "O. K. for transmission," and the other, "REJECTED, file, do not return." Number one went on all messages for transmission and number two on all others. As I gaze at these relics now I see that number two has been used much more than its companion.

I had made it a rule that each paper maintaining a correspondent in Tampa was to furnish me with a copy of every edition of the paper. As a result, in a few days I had a mail that was stupendous. A clerk was on hand who read these papers, marking all things bearing a Tampa date line. Then I would read them and woe betide the correspondent whose paper contained contraband news from Tampa. Off went his head and his permit was recalled for a certain time as a punishment.

There never has been a line of sentinels so strong but that some one could break through, and there was undoubtedly some leakage from Tampa, but to see news of actual importance from there was like hunting for a needle in a haystack. The mails carried out some, but even then the correspondents suffered. Two incidents may not be amiss.

One young chap whose keenness ran away with his judgment, brought me a stack of copy one night, almost every word of which was contraband. The blue pencil got in its work in great shape and then the "rejected" stamp put its seal of disapproval on the message and it was filed away with many others, that "were not dead, but sleeping." Mr. Correspondent muttered something about "a cussed red-headed censor who wasn't the pope and could be beaten" and walked away. I thought no more of the matter until about seven days thereafter when my clerk gave me a marked copy of the correspondent's paper, and there, big as life, under a Tampa date line was the rejected dispatch. He had left my office and mailed his story to a friend living up in Georgia, and it was telegraphed by him from there. You see, Georgia was beyond my jurisdiction. He had surely made a "scoop;" he had sown the wind and that night he reaped the whirlwind, because I promptly suspended him from correspondents' privileges, and forbade him the use of the wires. General Greely upheld me in this as in all other cases and for ten days I allowed him to ruminate over his offence, while his paper was cussing him out for failing to send in stuff. Then I restored him to his former status, first making him sign a pledge on honor that he would abide forever thereafter by the censorship rules.

Another young man who represented a Cincinnati daily, walked into the express office in Tampa one evening and gave the agent a package saying:

"Say, old chap, have your messenger running north to-night give this to the first operator after crossing the Georgia line and tell him to send it to my paper. It's a big scoop and I want to get it through."

Of course, the "old chap" was built just that way. He took the message and in five minutes it was reposing gently in my desk. I then quickly sent out a telegram to all my censors taking away the correspondent's privileges until further orders.

That night full of innocence—and beer—he walked into the Tampa city office and handed Censor Fellers a message for his paper, just as a sort of a bluff. Fellers grinned at him quietly said:

"Sorry, Mr. J—, but Captain B—has just suspended you from use of the telegraph until further orders."

In a very few minutes Mr. J—appeared at my office, blustering like a Kansas cyclone, and demanded to know why I had dared to treat him thus? I simply picked up his copy and showed it to him, saying:

"This is your handwriting, I believe, Mr. J—."

The props dropped out from under him and he said:

"Well, by thunder, you censor mail, telegraph and express; I reckon if I attempted to send anything by carrier pigeon you'd catch it and put that d—d old 'rejected' stamp on it."

"No," I replied, "but I might possibly use it on a mule."

In spite of his pleadings and promises he was hung up for ten days.

It must be said, however, that such men as these were rarities: most of the men, especially those representing the great dailies, were only too willing to abide by orders. They kicked hard—naturally and rightfully—because news that they were forbidden to send from Tampa was sent broadcast from Washington as coming from the war department. Oh! yes they kicked so much that it seemed as if my auburn locks would turn gray, but the protest was against the censorship in general and not against me. I was enough of a newspaper man to fully appreciate their position, and more than one message went from me to General Greely asking if Washington could not be censored as well as Tampa. No! Army officers had no power to stop the mouths of the high civil officials of the government, and so the dance went on.

And the managing editors would flood their correspondents with telegrams of inquiry as to why they did not send the news that daily came from Washington as having originated in Tampa; and the correspondents would come to me and I would endeavor to calm them down as best I could. Then, incidentally, the managing editors would take a fling at me personally, and I would receive a polite telegram of protest but to no avail.

Finally, one night the trouble culminated, and conjointly the correspondents sent a long telegram to General Greely asking if he could not right the seeming injustice. They did not mind being beaten in a fair field, but they did hate to be "scooped" by Washington correspondents who were having an easy time. Almost every man signed the protest and then it was brought to me, and I quickly O. K'd. it. Shortly afterwards a number of them came to my office and assured me that it was not against me personally they were kicking, and Louis Seibold, of the New York World, sent General Greely a message saying:

"I don't like your blooming censor business one bit, but if you have to have it, you've got the best man for it in the army right here in Tampa," or words to that effect. Many others sent similar messages, but not quite so outspoken. General Greely appreciated their position and said so, but was unable to change the condition of affairs and so matters continued.

All this time feverish preparations were being made to rush off Shafter's expedition. June 7th was a very hard and trying day, and at six o'clock in the evening I had just seated myself for a hasty bite of dinner when a messenger came to me from the telegraph office saying that the White House wanted me at once. I went to the key and was informed that the President wanted to talk to Generals Miles and Shafter and that the greatest secrecy must be maintained. After sending word to the generals, I sent all the operators out of the office, closed the windows and turned down the sounder so that it could not be heard *three feet away*. When General Shafter came in he had an officer stationed in the hall so that no one could approach in that direction. General Miles came in shortly afterwards and the door was closed. We all sat in front of the table, General Miles on my right, and General Shafter on the left. Lieutenant Miley of General Shafter's staff stood behind his chief. It was a scene long to be remembered. General Shafter was dressed in the plain blue army fatigue uniform, its strict sombreness being relieved only by the two gleaming silver stars on his shoulder straps. General Miles, the commanding general, was in conventional tuxedo dress, and looked every inch the gallant soldier and gentleman that he is. From the little telegraph instrument on the table ran a single strand of copper wire, out in the dark night, over the pine tops of Florida and Georgia, over the mountains of the Carolinas, and hills and vales of Virginia, into the Executive Mansion at Washington. In the office of the White House were the President, the Secretary of War, and Adjutant-General Corbin. The key there was worked by Colonel Montgomery, so if there ever was an official wire this was one.

When all was ready I told the White House to go ahead.

The first message was from the Secretary of War to General Shafter directing him to sail at once, as he was needed at the destination which was known at this time only to about five officers in Tampa. General Shafter replied that he would be ready to sail the next morning at daylight. Then, by the President's direction, a message was repeated that had been received from Admiral Sampson, saying he had that day bombarded the outer defenses of Santiago, and if ten thousand men were there the city and fleet would fall within forty-eight hours. The President further directed that General Shafter should sail as indicated by him with not less than ten thousand men. Then followed an interchange of messages, more or less personal in their nature, between the generals and the Washington contingent. Finally all was over and the line was cut off. The whole conversation lasted about fifty minutes, but the beginning of new history was started in that time and the curtain was going up on the grand drama of war. All the time this was going on I could hear faintly his strains of '*Auf Wiedersehen*,' together with the merry jest of the officers and the light laughter of the women. Brave men, braver women—soon their laughter was turned to tears and many of the officers who went out of the Tampa Bay hotel on that warm June night are now sleeping their last sleep, having given up their lives that their country's honor might live. The train carrying the headquarters to Port Tampa left at five o'clock in the morning. There was very little sleep that night and the next morning the big hotel was well nigh deserted. And all this time the destination of the fleet was unknown to all but those high in rank and myself.

CHAPTER XXVI

CENSORSHIP CONCLUDED

My own sleep on that night was limited to about two hours snatched between work, and the following morning was a very busy one. About once every hour I would report to the White House how things were progressing at the port. As the big transports received their load of living freight, one by one they would pull out in the stream and anchor, waiting until the time should come when all would be ready, and then like a big swarm they would pull out together. They did not sail at daylight; unexpected delays occurred, and eight, nine, ten, eleven and twelve o'clock passed and still they had not sailed, although the twelve o'clock report said they would be gone by twelve-thirty.

At one o'clock a messenger came hurriedly to me and said the White House wanted me at the key at once. When I answered, Colonel Montgomery said, "*The President wants to know if you can stop that fleet?*" Now the wire to Port Tampa was on a table right back of me and calling him with my left hand I said:

"Can you get General Miles or General Shafter?" and with my right hand I said to the President, "I'll try, wait a minute."

Then said the White House, "*It is imperative that the fleet be stopped at once.*"

From Port Tampa, "No sir, I can't find General Miles or General Shafter."

I replied, "Have all the transports pulled out of the slip?"

"Yes sir, so far as I can see they are all gone."

From Washington, "Have you stopped the fleet?"

"Wait a minute—will let you know later, am trying now."

To Port Tampa, "Go out and find a tug and get this message to either General Miles or General Shafter, 'The President directs that you stop the sailing of Shafter's army until further orders.' Now fly."

Just then Port Tampa said, "Here comes General Miles now," and in a minute more the message was delivered and the fleet stopped. I then reported to the President:

"I have delivered your message to General Miles and the fleet will not sail until further orders."

They came back wondering what had stopped them and that evening we learned of the appearance of the "Phantom" Spanish fleet in the Nicholas Channel *heading westward*. "Cervera wasn't bottled up in Santiago," said some, "and before morning he will be here and blow us out of the water." Great was the consternation and as a precaution all the ships were ordered back into the slip. It must be said, however, that General Miles *never had any idea that the Spanish fleet was approaching our shores*.

The transport fleet was tied up and then followed six days of weary waiting, and the duties of the censor became more arduous than ever, and the utmost vigilance was exercised. Private messages were almost all hung up, in fact, very little else than government business was allowed to pass over the wires. And yet, every day for a week, copies of the daily papers that reached me had, under flaming headlines, the startling news that Shafter's fleet had sailed—destination—Havana, San Juan, Matanzas,—yes—even the Spanish coast. All this was announced from Washington, and made the correspondents snort; they made every excuse to let their papers know they were still there. They wanted money, they wanted to send messages to their families, in fact, they wanted everything under the sun, but to no avail. Finally, on the 14th of June the army sailed away, filled with hope and courage, on their mission that resulted in victory for the American arms; but that was a foregone conclusion, while we less fortunate ones were left behind to pray for the success that we knew would be theirs.

The correspondents were all on the transport "Olivette," and just before they pulled out I sent them a message saying I would release the news that night about the *sailing of the fleet only*, and they might file their messages. They did in large numbers and here is where the joke came in. When the messages reached the papers they thought it was all a bluff to mislead the public, and many of them refused to publish the news, but the fleet had gone this time for certain. As late as two days afterwards I received messages from the managing editors of two of the greatest papers in the country, asking me if the fleet had really sailed. I assured them it had. One thing is certain, the destination of that fleet was a well-kept secret. Mr. Richard Harding Davis in his admirable book on the Cuban and Porto Rican Campaigns, says that credit is due the censor because it was so well kept. I am afraid that this is about the only good word the censor ever received from the said Mr. Davis.

The "Olivette," on which the correspondents sailed, was the last boat to leave Port Tampa. She left about six-thirty P. M. in the glory of the setting sun of a tropical evening. About five-thirty P. M. Mr. Edward Marshall, that prince of good fellows, who represented the New York Journal, came into my office to write a message for his paper, to be left with me and sent when the story was released. Marshall was a typical newspaper man and a thorough American, and had just returned from New York where he had been in attendance upon the sick-bed of his wife. He was very anxious to get his story written before he sailed. I knew the "Olivette" was about to pull out, and if he expected to go on her it was high time he was moving. As Port Tampa was nine miles away, I told him to fly and cut his story short or send it from Port Tampa. He thanked me and reached Port Tampa just in time to save being left. It was this same Edward Marshall who so daringly pushed to the front during the Guasimas fight of the Rough Riders, and was seriously wounded by a Mauser bullet near his spine. He was supposed to be dying, but true to his newspaper training and full of loyalty to his paper, he dictated a message to his journal between the puffs of a cigarette, when it was supposed each breath would be his last. But thank God he did not die, and now gives promise of many years of useful life. I have often thought if I had not warned him in time to go he would not have been shot; but then all war is uncertain, and in warning him I was only, "Doing unto others as I would be done by."

During all these stirring times just described there were two women correspondents, poor souls, who were indeed sad and lonely. They were very ambitious and wanted to go to Cuba with the army, but the War Department wisely forbade any such a move and then my trouble began. At all hours of the day or night I was pestered by these same women. One of them represented a Canadian paper and was most anxious to go. She tried every expedient and tackled every man or woman of influence that came along. Even dear old Clara Barton did not escape her importunities.

She wanted to go as a Red Cross nurse, but didn't know anything about nursing. However, I reckon she was as good as some of the women who did go. She was an Irish girl with rich red hair, and as mine was of an auburn tinge we didn't get along worth a cent. She didn't do much telegraphing but sent all of her stuff by mail. However, it was her intention to send *one telegram* to her paper and "scoop" all the other chaps in so doing. She wrote a letter to her managing editor in Toronto and told him there was a censor down there who thought he could bottle up Florida as regards news, but she intended to outwit him. Particular attention was being paid so as to preserve the secrecy of the sailing day of Shafter's army. Cipher and code messages bearing on this occurrence were to be strictly interdicted. But that didn't make any difference to her; she could beat that game. So on the day the fleet actually sailed she would send a message to her paper saying, "*Send me six more jubilee books.*" This would indicate that the fleet had really gone. Brilliant scheme from the brain of a very bright woman, but she lost sight of the fact that Messrs. Carranza and Polo y Bernabe were at that time in Canada spying on the United States, and that all the Canadian mail was most carefully watched. Such, however, was the case, and in a short time the contents of her letter were known to General Greely, and by him communicated to me. One evening Miss Correspondent was standing in the lobby of the Tampa Bay hotel surrounded by a group of her friends, when I approached and said:

"Excuse me, Miss J—, but I should like to speak to you for a moment."

"Well, what is it, pray? Surely you haven't anything to say but what my friends can hear, have you?" Sassy, wasn't she?

"Oh! well if that is the case?" I replied, "I am sorry to inform you that you are suspended from correspondent's privileges and from the use of the telegraph until further orders."

"And what for pray?"

"I don't just exactly know," I answered, "but I think it has something to do with sending you 'six more jubilee books' from Canada."

Well! she turned all the colors of the rainbow, and snapped out, "Goodness gracious! how did you—where did you hear that?"

I smiled politely and walked away. The next morning, shortly after I reached my office, a timid knock was heard at the door.

"Come in," I yelled, thinking it was a messenger boy. In walked Miss J——, woebegone, crestfallen and disheartened, with a letter of apology and explanation. I forwarded this to General Greely and kept her suspended for seven days. She never offended again, and the last I heard of her she was in Key West gazing with longing eyes towards the Pearl of the Antilles. She never reached there.

The other woman correspondent was different. She was an American widow, bright, dashing and vivacious. She had heard of the ogre of a censor; she would conquer him through his susceptibility. I'll admit that the censor in question was susceptible of some things—but not in business matters. One day she filed an innocent little telegram to her paper, saying, "For ice cream read typhoid." The operator glanced at it and said, "You'll have to get Captain B——'s O. K. on that message before I can send it."

She talked sweetly to him, but that didn't happen to be one of his "susceptible" days. Then she

came to me, and as my "susceptibility" had run to a pretty low ebb I refused to permit the message to go on, on account of its hidden meaning.

"Oh, pshaw! Captain, I wrote a story for my paper and in it described the death of a man from the effects of eating too much ice cream, and now I learn that he died of typhoid fever."

I was pretty hard-headed that morning and couldn't assist the lady and she left the office vowing vengeance. The next edition of her paper contained the most charmingly sarcastic article about the red-headed, white-shoed censor I have ever seen, but I had become case-hardened by this time and did not mind it in the least.

It might be supposed that as soon as the army had sailed and the correspondents had gone, that the censorship duties would be lighter. They were, officially, but otherwise they became harder than ever. The army had gone, but the women had been left behind. The husbands were away—fighting—dying—while the wives were waiting with dry eyes and aching hearts for the news that would mean life or death to them. There were some forty wives, daughters, and sweethearts remaining in the Tampa Bay hotel, and to them the censor became a most interesting party. They knew that any news that came to Tampa would come through him, and they wanted to know whether his orders would allow him to divulge it or not. Before, I had to contend with the importunities of zealous correspondents, now it was the longing eyes of sweet women whose hearts were breaking with suspense, whose lives had stood still since the 14th day of June when the fleet sailed away. Of the two, I would rather contend with the former.

The long and trying days dragged slowly by and still no news. Finally, on the 22nd of June, it was known that the army was landing; June 24th, the Guasimas fight of the cavalry division took place, and from that time on life was made miserable for me by importunate women. Many telegrams—yes, hundreds of them—came to me every day, and each time one of those cursed little yellow envelopes was put in my hands, if I happened to be in the lobby of the hotel, I could feel forty or fifty pairs of anxious eyes concentrated on me, as if to read from the expression of my face whether the news was good or bad. Colonel Michler of General Miles's staff was there, and if we should happen to be together talking, the women would surmise that the news was bad; and many times their surmises were just about right. One sweet little black-eyed woman always said she could tell from my face whether I was bluffing or not. July 1st, 2nd, and 3rd, were very gloomy days for we poor chaps who had been left behind—and for the women. We—they—knew the fight was on, that men were heroically dying, and we also knew that the army was in a hard way. Strive as we might, no gleam of hope could be culled from the news of those three days. Cervera's fleet was still in the harbor of Santiago, and the army not only had the Spanish troops to fight but the navy as well. Flesh and blood might stand the rain of Mauser bullets, but they could not stand rapid-fire guns and eight-inch shells. The third of July dragged by, and at eleven o'clock Colonel Michler retired for the night not feeling in a very pleasant frame of mind. The lobby was well nigh deserted, but Colonels Smith and Powell and a few more officers sat by one of the big open doors having a farewell smoke and chat before going to bed. At eleven-thirty I was standing by the desk talking to the clerk, when the night operator came charging out of the office and gave me a little piece of yellow paper. I quickly opened it and read, "Sampson entirely destroyed Cervera's fleet this morning." News like that, if true, was too good to keep, so I went into the telegraph office and had a wire cut through to the New York office and asked for a confirmation or denial of the report. They confirmed it and gave me the text of the official report. I bounded out in the hall and shouted out the glorious news at the top of my voice. Gloom was dispelled instantaneously, and joy reigned supreme. At just twelve o'clock midnight, we drank a toast to the army and navy, and to our

country.

Santiago surrendered and the army went to Porto Rico only to be stopped in the midst of a most brilliant campaign by the signing of the protocol. The censorship was ended and willingly did I lay down the blue pencil and take up my sword.



CHAPTER XXVII

CONCLUSION

I cannot refrain from concluding this little volume by a tribute to the telegraphers of the country.

It is but fifty-five years since Professor S. F. B. Morse electrified the civilized world by the completion of his electro-magnetic telegraph. Since that time great improvements have been made until now it is difficult to recognize in the delicate mechanisms of the relay, key, sounder, duplex, quad, and multiplex, the principle first promulgated in the old Morse register. Its influence was at once felt in all walks of life; it was an art to be an expert telegrapher. Keeping pace with the strides of advancing civilization, the telegraph has spread its slender wires, until now almost the entire world is connected by its magnetism. Away back in the early fifties when railroads and comforts were few, while danger and trials were plenty, these faithful knights of the key carried on their work under the most adverse circumstances. Since its first appearance it has manifestly been the possessor of millions of secrets, public and private. In times of joy you flash your congratulations to distant relatives or friends; in minutes of sorrow and tribulation, your message of sympathy is quickly carried as a balm to aching hearts; in the worries of business its use is of the most vital importance; and while you are peacefully slumbering on some swiftly moving railroad train the telegraph is one of the principal means of insuring a safe and speedy trip. Pick up your favorite daily paper—the one that is always reliable—read the market or press reports accurately printed, and then think that the telegraph does it all. Read news from foreign countries—from out-of-the-way places—and think of the miles of mountains, deserts, plains and valleys passed over; think of the slender cable down deep in the throbbing bosom of the ocean and of the little spark that brings the news to your door; and then reflect on the men whose abilities accomplish these results. Think of his work in the countries where it is so hot that it seems as if the land beyond the River Styx is at his elbow; in lands where it is always cold and the days and nights are long. In season and out; in times of death, pestilence and famine, with never a murmur, these sturdy, loyal men, and true-hearted women do their work. All these are incidents of peace. Now think, when war, grim-visaged and terrible, spreads its mighty power over the earth. What is responsible for the news of victory? What brings you the list you so anxiously scan of the dead and wounded? What means are employed by the subdivisions of the army in the field to keep in constant communication, so that they may act as the integral parts of an harmonious whole? In the late Spanish-American war what first brought news, authentic in character, to the Navy Department that Cervera with his doomed fleet was in Santiago harbor? And during the dark and trying days from June 22nd until July 14th, the telegraphers of the army—the signal corps men—were ceaseless and tireless in their efforts, and as a result within five minutes of its being sent, a message would be in Washington. While the army slept they worked, without any regard to self or comfort. And to-day in the far-off Philippine islands they are still striving with the best results. The telegraphers are honest, loyal, patriotic men—a little Bohemian, perhaps, in their tastes—and deserve a better recognition for the good work they do.

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