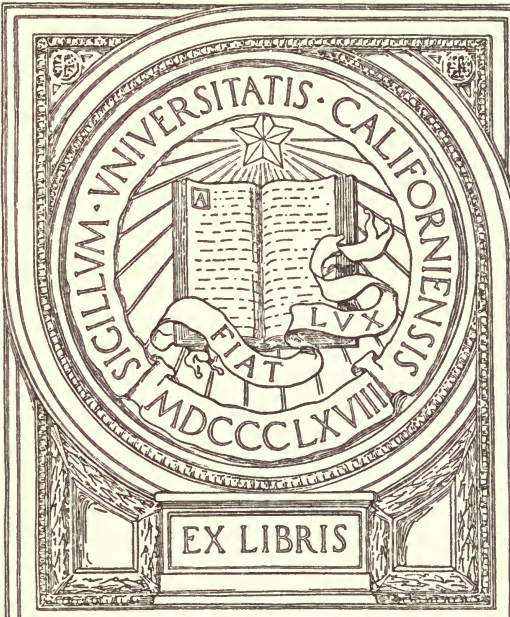


"Books that you may carry to the fire, and hold readily in your hand, are the most useful after all"

—JOHNSON

STORIES OF THE RAILWAY

STORIES FROM SCRIBNER

STORIES OF THE RAILWAY

NEW YORK
CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS
1893

Trow Print

STORIES OF THE RAILWAY

AS THE SPARKS FLY UPWARD

BY GEORGE A. HIBBARD

HOW I SENT MY AUNT TO BALTIMORE

BY C. S. DAVISON

RUN TO SEED

BY THOMAS NELSON PAGE

FLANDROE'S MOGUL

BY A. C. GORDON

"AS THE SPARKS FLY UPWARD"

By George A. Hibbard

It was a minute past the time when the "through" night express should start, but still the ponderous engine stood motionless, the steam escaping with a terrific roar, and mounting high in the air, first in a vigorous jet, and then spreading in dull, whitened clouds that soon mingled with and were lost in the denser mass and greater volume of the rolling smoke. The hands of the illu-

minated clock, placed on the depot wall, had passed the points on the dial that indicated the hour of departure, and now stood at not more than a minute after; but even so small a particle of time was of importance, for this, the night express, was the particular feature of this particular road, and to get it to its destination at the advertised instant was the duty and pride of every employé; for this, every resource of the great corporation was employed, every sacrifice of other considerations made. Over those miles and miles of shining rails, on which the train must run all night, lay the road from West to East and from East to West, and upon the speed and certainty with which they were covered depended many an important affair—the success or failure of a venture, sometimes the life or death of a Cause.

The station-master hurried up to the engine and looked in the window.

"What's the matter, Irby?" he said to the engineer.

"Spurlock's not here," answered the man, who sat on the narrow, transverse seat in the cab, with his hand on the heavy, shining, round-tipped handle of the reverse-lever.

"Where is he?"

"Don't know," replied Irby. "He stepped off five minutes ago, saying he'd be back directly."

"If he isn't here in thirty seconds I'll have to give you another fireman."

Everything indicated readiness for departure. The loungers along the broad, cemented walk of the station — those who had sought a little exercise before the long, cramped ride—had mounted to the cars; and the porters, after picking up the little stools placed before the steps of the "sleepers," stood ready all along the line to swing themselves on to the platforms as soon as the series of

jarring jerks with which a train straightens itself out for work, indicated that the "7.30" was off.

The scene as it now presented itself —a minute and more after the time when "No. 47" should have been under way—was characteristically American, for nowhere else in the world is quite its like to be found. The huge arched station (so large that, numerous as were the hard, clear, powerful electric lights, there still were left many areas of gloom) echoed and re-echoed with multitudinous sounds, and, closing your eyes, you might almost have imagined yourself in an asylum for demented noises, the air was so burdened with the sustained uproar, distressed by such brazen clangor, torn by so many a wild shriek. The gleaming steel rails banded the broad, boarded space, stretching in innumerable lines far across to the opposite wall; now running with the parallel exact-

ness of a copy-book; now crossing and recrossing each other in what seemed inextricable confusion. Long strings of cars, their windows all aglow, stood here or there—just arrived, or just on the point of leaving—this train "in," after having run all day along the shores of the great lakes; that ready to plunge into the dark Pennsylvania forests, and hurry away, perhaps, past some flaming oil-well into the more distant coal-fields. People swarmed everywhere — passengers and employés, baggage-men, brakemen, and express-men. Heavy trucks, overloaded with luggage, were wildly trundled through the place; small iron carriages, piled high with mail-bags, were recklessly rolled past; and in and out darted the bearers of flaming torches that cast a wild glare about them as they moved, who, with long-handled hammers tested the car-wheels with ringing blows. And away in the distance, where the im-

mense, arched opening of the station permitted a glimpse of the darkness beyond, gleamed innumerable lights—green, red and orange—some stationary and arranged in complex designs, others swinging in eccentric circles, or flitting like the *ignes fatui* of swamp-lands, along the ground, now appearing and now disappearing.

"Here he comes!" shouted a voice somewhere in remote darkness.

"Hurry up," commanded the station-master; and, with a running accompaniment of questions, exhortations, and admonitions, lit up by some scattered execrations, a slight man, dressed in the blackened and greasy overalls and "jumper" of a laborer, ran along the walk and mounted the engine.

"Let her go, Dan," he said.

The engineer glanced at the conductor leaning against the wall; saw him quickly shut his watch and wave his hand. One

pull on a lever, already under his hand, and the piston-rods began to glide out and in, the huge driving-wheels to revolve, and the train, with almost a dislocating shock, so hurried had been the start, was finally off.

"What was it, Jeff?" said Irby.

"Why," answered Spurlock, with a hardly perceptible hesitation, "a little celebration of my own. Do you forget what night it is?"

"No," answered the other and older man, a trifle sharply. "But what did you promise me?"

"It's only once a year," responded Spurlock, sullenly, "and I haven't touched a thing for ten weeks."

Irby did not answer, but peered out into the darkness through the narrow cab window.

The depot had been left behind, and the engine was now passing through the outer business belt of the great city.

Huge, silent warehouses, with their shutters closed, quite as if they had gone to sleep with iron lids shut over their innumerable eyes, were to be seen along the deserted streets; high chimneys here and there rose above the roofs—they might have been columns supporting the leaden sky—the dull clouds of smoke that lazily seemed to overflow them only distinguishable from the dark heavens by their greater density. It had been snowing during the early evening, but the flakes had melted as they fell, and the ill-paved roads were full of spreading pools that caught the rays cast by the glowing embers in the engine's fire-box, and, seeming to hold them for an instant in dull reflection, threw them weakly back. And now the pavements cease altogether; no longer are there any gas-lamps or electric lights to reveal the dripping squalor, but as one looks ahead there are to be

seen by the spreading illumination of the headlight only the shining, converging rails, and between them, and on either side, the sodden, half-frozen earth. Now only infrequent buildings start into

view; but there appear instead long, shadowy lines of freight-cars, apparently innumerable, drawn up on either side of the track, by which the engine thunders with reverberating clatter — the strange but still familiar characters, letters, and names on their many-colored sides—the stars, the diamonds, the crosses, the often-repeated initials, the numbers, reaching sometimes into the tens of thousands—only showing for an instant in the dim rays cast by the single light in the engine, and then quickly blotted out by the broad hand of darkness. At length those, too, are gone, and now there is nothing to be seen but the occasional hut of some switch-tender, and the constantly recurring telegraph poles that so rapidly flash in and out of sight. Far behind appears in the sky a dull, orange glow that marks the position of the town that has been left behind, but all before is unbroken black-

ness. Now, at last, the train has reached the open country, Irby pushes the throttle-valve still farther open, and the engine, with a quiver, almost such as a spirited horse will give at the touch of the spur, plunges more swiftly forward, and finally tears along at almost full running speed, over fifty miles an hour through the night.

The narrow place in which the men are seated, face to face, is but dimly illuminated. They are neither of them particularly exceptional-looking persons; you might see their like almost any day through an engine's window and not turn to look again, and still their faces are not without a certain stern significance—the significance to be found in the countenances of most men who have for any length of time held what might be called "non-commissioned" office in the army of labor, where, though opportunity of honor is rare, responsibility is great and incessant.

Irby, ten years the older of the two, heavy, but with a muscular strength that enables him to move with perfect ease in spite of his stoutness, has in his countenance that indescribable something that indicates firmness, even obstinacy ; while in the mobile features, more shifting glance, and more changeful expression of his companion you could as readily detect the equally evident, but more subtle evidences of weakness and irresolution. And yet he was a pretty fellow enough with his thick, lustrous, black hair, and his small, pointed mustache, his highly colored cheeks and his dull, dark eyes. Of graceful build too—his belt was drawn about a waist as small almost as a woman's—slight but lithesome, a man to surprise you with unsuspected strength.

"Don't it make you feel, Dan, as if we were regularly out in the cold," he said, "to be on this job to-night?"

"Well, you see," answered Irby, argu-

mentatively, "all the other boys have got sweethearts or wives, and it's only natural they should want the evening to themselves. Now what's Christmas Eve to us —you, who haven't got a belonging in the world, as you say, and I——"

Irby paused, whether or not he saw something worthy of attention in what seemed the impenetrable night, Spurlock could not determine, but the engineer looked through the window with what appeared increased attention.

"Tain't much like one's general notion of a Christmas," he added at length.

"No," answered Spurlock.

Neither spoke again for some time, and Spurlock busied himself with the flapping canvas curtain that gave doubtful shelter to the occupants of the cab, for the icy wind blew briskly as the scudding clouds attested.

"Let me see," said Irby at length. "This time of the year rather lends itself

to reckoning—how long is it now that we've travelled along together?"

"Going on eight months," answered Spurlock, "from the time when you first set me straight."

Irby glanced across at the man before him. "Set him straight." Yes, he had "set him straight," and the memory came to him of what Spurlock had been, a picture rose before him of how Spurlock looked when he first saw him. A thin, bent form, with pallid face, and trembling, it would almost seem palsied, hands, dressed in a mysterious garment that was only a remote suggestion of a coat, and with all his other clothes correspondingly frayed and tattered. A being, coming from no one knew where, and going no one cared whither—slinking out to bask in the sunshine, as if doubtful if the world, which afforded him so little, might not grudge and deny him even this; leading one of those mysterious, almost reptilian

existences in the dark holes and corners of the earth, which, were they not so common, would seem more awful and more significant, but which, seen every day, we scarcely notice and easily allow to pass from memory.

Irby had first seen the ill-looking creature loitering about the confines of the station, sometimes penetrating even to the engine-yard and standing at gaze before the big, resplendent, perfectly "groomed" locomotive—looking at it revengefully, as if resentful of the fact that this thing of iron and steel should receive such care, when he, a creature of flesh and blood, was so destitute. Such as he was, he had been the jest, the jeer of the whole place. There was no one so insignificant that he did not dare to scoff at him, and it seemed that there was no indignity that the poor creature would not endure. But one day from his lofty post Irby had noticed that a row was going on.

In that neighborhood—in the circles in which his locomotive moved, that was a thing of no uncommon occurrence, but this particular difficulty seemed more serious than was commonly the case.

"What's the matter?" he shouted.

"Joe Bannager's been givin' the tramp mor'n he can stand an' he's showed fight," was the answer.

Irby let himself down from the engine and joined the crowd just in time to see the burly Bannager very neatly knocked out of time by the now animated vagabond, to the admiration of the on-lookers.

"If you've got spirit enough for that," said Irby, looking curiously at the now erect figure of the stranger, "you've got spirit enough to be a man. Come with me."

He had taken Spurlock over to the engine, and in its torrid shade had inspected him more thoroughly.

"If I gave you money, would you drink it up?" he asked.

"Try me and see," said the man.

Irby handed him a bill, and the next day there had appeared before him a person whom he did not at first recognize. It was Spurlock, decked in a suit of the poorest clothing, but clean and decent looking.

"Give me something to do," he had said.

Irby had again looked at him scrutinizingly. It had always been his—Irby's boast, that he knew a man, when he saw one, who had anything in him, and after a moment's contemplation, which the other had borne unflinchingly, he spoke doubtfully.

"My fireman's laid up, perhaps I might get you taken on."

"All right," answered Spurlock. "You've picked me out of the gutter, now set me on the walk."

And this, Irby thought, was the same man who now sat opposite to him. Indeed, Spurlock had changed. As he quickly emerged from his state of degradation, he displayed unexpected intelligence, exhibiting a surprising knowledge about all sorts of unlikely things. Irby, who had started in life with only a limited knowledge of reading and writing, but who had graduated long ago with "honors" from the great University of the Newspapers, was thoroughly able to appreciate higher acquirements than his own, and both marvelled and admired. Spurlock never spoke of his past, and Irby had never asked him a question. That it was not the usual past of a man in his position Irby felt sure; but they were both of that world that should in truth be called the "great world," instead of the insignificant portion that now bears that name, where few questions are asked, for the reason that a close knowl-

edge of the strange haps and mishaps of life has dulled curiosity. Day and night they had travelled together in the little cab, over thousands of miles, through heat and cold, through storm and sunshine, and gradually there had grown up in Irby a real friendship for this being whom he had, as it were, created. He looked at Spurlock, and reflecting that had it not been for him, the alert, self-respecting man, who was now his companion would have been in a pauper's grave or leading a life than which any death would be better, he took credit to himself for what he could almost regard as his handiwork, and beamed upon him with something like affection.

"Seeing the time it is," said Spurlock, at length, "I've got a Christmas present for you, Dan, and I don't know but I might as well give it to you now as another time."

He reached up and took down his coat

from the place where it hung, then drawing out a tobacco-pouch, cheaply embroidered, handed it across to the engineer. Irby took it, opened it, and found instead of tobacco, a carefully folded bill.

"The money you lent me that time, you know," explained Spurlock.

Irby stretched out his hand, with the powerful, blunted fingers, to the younger man, who took it and shook it roughly with an awkward consciousness. Neither spoke.

The wide plains that lay around the city—mere bare, uncultivable barrens—had been swiftly traversed, and now the track ran over land partly uncleared. In and out it darted through the thick woods, plunging into the narrow openings among the dark, serried trunks and spreading branches, as if into some tunnelled mountain.

"You've been the making of me, Dan,"

Spurlock went on, "and if I come to anything now it'll be your doing."

"The engine's seemed a different place since you've been on it, Jeff," he said, quietly, "an' so I guess we're square."

Another of those long silences followed, which will occur between people who are constantly together—one of those pauses that indicate intimacy more fully than any speech.

"I wasn't always what you found me, Dan," said Spurlock, finally.

Irby glanced at his companion.

"But I began bad," the other went on, "and I kept on growing worse. I was the black sheep of a particularly white flock, and, by contrast, my color only showed up the more. Where I was born, or what or when, don't matter. I wouldn't like to show disrespect for any of my highly respectable relations by bringing them into any such unfortunate society as mine."

He paused, and the expression of reck-

lessness that had lain on his countenance, almost like a mask—so evidently unnatural was it—seemed suddenly to be snatched away.

"The fiend take it, Dan," said he, "there's something in this cursed time that sets you remembering."

Irby's face darkened; it appeared as if the past had also come up before him with unusual vividness, and that the vision was disquieting and painful.

"I don't think I ever came near being respectable in my life but once," continued Spurlock, dully, almost as if some strange power were forcing him to speak—as if volition had nothing to do with it.

"But," he went on, "we're generally standing on the ground even when we're looking at the clouds. Oh, of course it was a woman that did it. You, Dan, you can't understand that; you—you've the face of a true misogynist. You see," he broke out, "I haven't forgot all that my

little 'fresh-water' college taught me. You're the kind that are superior to that inferior influence." "I really believe that I could have reformed then," murmured Spurlock after another pause, "for I loved her. Strange how you feel when you really love a woman. There seems to come out of the very holes and corners of your being feelings and sentiments and aspirations that you never knew you had before. Mind I don't say that the same cause doesn't sometimes work a very different way on your nature—doesn't stir up and set moving a number of dark, hideous things also — passions, jealousies, hatreds—that you never suspected were in you. Oh, it's a queer thing this love—it's like a streak of varnish across the natural wood that brings out the beauty of the grain and the ugliness of the knots as well. I loved her from the first time I set my eyes on her pretty, pale face. Oh, don't be frightened. I'm not going to tell

you a yarn, for there's none to tell. But Agnes Holcombe was the only one who could ever have made anything out of me."

"Women," said Irby, slowly, "do a deal of good when they don't—do a deal of harm."

"She could have been the making of me. But circumstances——"

"How long ago was it?" interrupted Irby.

"About eighteen months."

"Eighteen months." With the instinct that leads every one to measure the nearness or remoteness of an event by its relation in time to their own lives, Irby thought of himself as he had been a year and a half before. That, he remembered, was before his quarrel with Mabel—before the final separation. He ground his teeth in sudden rage. Could he not get the miserable affair out of his mind; must everything he heard or saw always serve to remind him of it?

The train had now for some time been on its way, dashing by isolated farm-houses, usually, at this hour, merely black shapes in the dim landscape, but to-night with windows all alight; past scattered groups of cottages where the smoke, rolling comfortably from the chimneys suggested glowing and generous hearths; in and out of villages; where a quickly opened, quickly closed door would often suddenly disclose some bright interior. And now the spreading glow in the sky before them proved that they were again approaching a city. Stronger, brighter, more diffused it grew as the train spun swiftly on; and finally the many detached points of light showed that they were quite near. Again the engine plunged among long lines of coal-trucks and freight-cars—again clattered by the echoing walls of great factories, and finally, at decreased speed, puffed into the city. As it chanced in this par-

ticular place the tracks lay along streets that crossed some of the great thoroughfares, and sometimes for a short distance even ran in them. It was hardly more than nine o'clock, and the sidewalks were thronged. It seemed as if the whole town had turned out, and yet there must have been many who were at home. Every shop was open—was brilliant with the best display it was possible for it to make. Here, as at the place they had left, it had evidently been snowing during the day, but here the wind had blown boisterously and long enough to dry the walks and bring a crackling sheet of ice on the surface of the street puddles. There was a briskness in the air well accordant with the time, and there was an animation in the crowd that clearly indicated that it was no concourse such as might ordinarily be found in and before the stores. It was much larger, it was much more alert, and it was much more self-satisfied

and self-important; certainly it was much jollier. You might have jostled it as much as you pleased without exciting anything but good-natured remonstrance, you could tread on its toes with nearly perfect impunity. It was a true Christmas crowd in every aspect and every attribute—baskets, bundles, and all—and as the great engine slowly ground its way along, the bell sounding with regular brazen clang, the two men in the cab gazed upon the animated spectacle with greedy eyes. They looked upon it all as aliens in a double sense—separated from it in situation and in mood—and the knowledge of their twofold remoteness filled each with a rebellious bitterness that strengthened as they went on. It all seemed like some mocking show prepared for their special torment—some deluding mirage as tantalizing as the semblance of water is to the thirsty traveller of the desert.

The stop in the dark, nearly deserted depot, was not long, and soon they were out again in the populous quarters of the town. It was Christmas time at its brightest and best—cheerful *Noël* in its most comfortable mood. It was Christmas Eve—more mirthful, better perhaps than Christmas itself—as a promise is often better than a fulfilment. That feeling of the time that calls upon all to "eat, drink, and be merry," found most ample manifestation—the sense of human fellowship that, let what may be said, is just a little stronger on and about the wonderful December day than at any other time of the year, was evident everywhere. Gazing like prisoners through prison bars, the two men avidly drank in the scene, its very geniality making them the more morose.

And as the engine passed on again into the desolate country—between the brown banks and broken fences—the men were

almost tempted to rub their eyes and ask themselves if really what they had seen had not been a dream, so sudden had been its appearance, so apparently doubtful its reality, even while it was before them, and so absolute its eclipse.

"Agnes Holcombe," said Irby, half to drive from his mind the memories that tormented him; half to lead Spurlock to talk further of himself.

"Agnes Holcombe," repeated Spurlock. "That of course wasn't her real name, as I soon found out."

"Not her real name?" Irby half asked.

"No," said Spurlock. "Though there's but little to tell I might as well tell you that little. It all happened out at Arapago."

"Arapago?" repeated Irby, glancing sharply around.

"Yes, Arapago," continued Spurlock. "It was one of my respectable times—

when I was still struggling. I was clerk in one of the big freight depots. One night I was sitting in that park that looks out over the lake when I saw a woman on the next bench to mine. I saw that she was pretty and that she was crying. The two things were too much for me—they ought to be for any man. I made an excuse to speak to her, she answered me and we had a long talk. I asked her where she lived, but although she would not tell me, she promised to meet me on the night after the next, at the same place. She kept her word, and it was the first of many meetings. Dan, I loved that woman, and, what is the strangest thing, I loved her as I never loved another. It almost seemed as if I didn't want her to love me; why, man, the ground she walked on, it seemed to me, was the only thing that I was fit to touch. There are some women who can make you feel like that, though, like as not, they're laughing at you all

the time. One night I followed her, to find out if I could know something about her.

"Well," said Irby, impatiently, and yet hesitatingly.

"I followed her to a pretty little house just where the city begins to break up and you get a little air and space."

"Yes," said Irby, looking at his fireman with a curious glitter in his eyes.

"It was in Canestoga Street, number one hundred and seventeen—queer how you'll remember those little things—and there she went in, with that air you know that one has when going into a familiar place."

"Yes," said Irby, as he leaned forward to look at one of the gauges, and then again fixed his eyes on Spurlock with the same intensity of gaze.

"She was mad enough when she found out what I'd done, but she soon forgave me. And it was there we met when her

husband was away." He paused, then added quickly, "What's the matter, Dan?"

"Nothing," answered Irby; "go on."

"Yes, and when he was there she'd come to the park sometimes; but I generally saw her in the garden. I learned all about her from the people in the neighborhood, but I never let her know that I knew the truth, though she must have suspected that I did. I've seen enough not to appear to know any more than a woman wants that you should. She was married, so they told me, to a man a good deal older than herself, who, though he was generally well considered, was thought by the neighbors a little too strict and glum for her. I imagined I saw how it was. He was an engineer on one of the Western roads, away half the time, and the poor young thing was left all alone. I think he made her pretty unhappy, and so the inevitable happened, and I hap-

pened to be the inevitable, though in this case the inevitable wasn't so very much after all."

"Go on," said Irby.

"Though neither of us ever spoke about it, I gathered from what I picked up that it was only when her husband—Shaw, that was the engineer's name—was away that I could appear. Then, when it was dark enough, I'd slip over the white picket-fence and sit with her in the arbor under the grape-vines. I never kissed her but—once——"

Before Spurlock had time to do more than instinctively raise his arm in defence, Irby was upon him, and with an iron wrench that he had snatched from its place had felled him with one blow to the floor, where he lay, an almost shapeless heap, on the hot, riveted, iron plates.

What Irby consciously noticed next was that the train was swiftly running over the

causeway built across the widespreading marshes that lay an hour and more beyond the last stopping-place. It was not that the sky was clearer and therefore gave more light, but there was more of it, stretching as it did to the horizon, and Irby could distinctly see the dull, sullen waters above which, on the embankment, the locomotive so swiftly moved along; could mark the acres and acres of low-lying land partially covered with rank grass and partially with tall, tangled, aquatic plants. It was a sad, desolate place at any time, but now, seen only by the uncertain light of the stars—the wind had torn the clouds from the sky—it was indeed forbidding and awful.

In Irby's mind was an uneasy consciousness that something unusual had happened, what, he half knew, yet hardly could have told. With the instinct of his calling, he glanced first at all the cocks and levers about him, then looked

cautiously around. Yes, there it was, more like some bundle of old clothes than the form of a man, for Spurlock had fallen face down, with his arms doubled up under him, and there was no pallid countenance, no worn, blackened hand to show what was really there. Irby did not start, he had half-prepared himself for what he was to see, but only gazed intently, almost apathetically, at the object at his feet. Then his eyes caught something that needed attention in the machinery, and he, with action almost as automatic as that of any one of the engine's appliances, set it right. The fires must have burnt low, he thought; but how could he replenish them? Dulled as his mind was, it seemed an insurmountable difficulty that Spurlock's body lay on the floor—how could it be possible to open the furnace door? how shovel in the coal? But gradually perception became clearer—that the engine should be run

all right seemed to him more important than anything else—and he left the shelf-like seat on which he had been sitting, and picking up the body carefully, placed it in a corner, with the back against the wall of the cab and the side of the opposite bench. Then he threw open the furnace-door. With the glare of what seemed to him the nether pit, the tongues of flame, writhing and twisting in the strong draft, leaped up, licking around the iron edges of their prison-house. The whole place was illuminated with the fierce, ruddy light, and even the face of the man whom he had struck down seemed to gain even something more than its natural color. Drawing back the canvas screen he grasped Spurlock's shovel and cast the coals into the furnace's mouth ; then he carefully drew together the curtain, shut the opened door, mounted to his seat, and glanced down the straight road that seemed almost to slip

under the engine and glide away. Fancies, rather than such positive thoughts as it would seem should be the natural and unavoidable outcome of the situation, filled his brain. First, there started into quick vision the astonishment, the horror of the officials, when he should ride into the next station with a murdered man on the engine with him. There seemed something so grotesquely ludicrous in the idea, that he almost laughed aloud. Then he listlessly thought of what the newspapers would say—of the heavy headlines and sensational sentences. People would talk about it the next day — Christmas Day—Christmas of all days. The sense of the awful inharmony between what he had done and what the feeling of the time enjoyed, brought him the first thrill of horror that he had felt. His regular respiration was broken by a quick, raucus gasp, and on his brow he felt the chilly dew of terror.

Christmas Eve! It seemed to Irby that everything of any consequence to him had happened on Christmas Eve. It was one Christmas Eve that he had been married; it was on the next Christmas Eve that the baby was born; it was only just before Christmas Eve, a year past, that they—Mabel and he—had their final misunderstanding and had parted; he swearing that though she might wish to seek his forgiveness she should not have the chance. So he had gone to a distant place, where, under a new name—perhaps even then apprehensive that he might not be able to withstand her pleading should she attempt to soften his heart—he had sought new employment, while she had fled he knew not whither.

He had often wondered, sometimes doubted, whether he had not been unjust to her. There were even times when he had accused himself of blind cruelty to her, and had felt impelled, then and there,

to seek her out wherever she might be, and ask her forgiveness. But he had been too deeply hurt; the wound, to one of his nature, was too grievous to permit any such action, and he had quickly fallen back into his old state of obduracy and inert despair. For days before he had finally spoken to her, he had watched and waited, had reasoned and argued, until it almost seemed that he had lost all power of continuous thought, so distracted had he become; and now, since they had been separated, he had weighed the evidence again and again; had never ceased laboriously to revolve the matter in his mind; to seek to comprehend her motives and to test his own. He could not have made a mistake. It was true that she had never confessed anything, but again she had never denied anything, merely contenting herself with an indignant silence, or with impetuous assertion that she disdained to defend herself against suspicion, adding

that if he did not trust her he did not love her, and that they had best part.

And so he, unable to control the fierce jealousy, the rugged wrong-side of his strong love, and she feigning or feeling the deep indignation of affronted womanhood, had given to the wind the vows they had both made, that they would thereafter cling to one another, even until the last great parting. No, he must have been right—there was so much to justify him. Though he had imagined her so different from other women, was there really any reason why she should be so? There was her own sister — beautiful, headstrong, erring Ethel—and might not Mabel really have been—was it not indeed reasonable to believe, that she was as vain, as frivolous, as light as the other? Was it not highly probable that as one sister had been, so the other would be? And yet at first he had felt that she was of another nature than this wilful being

who had fled from the tedium of a life in which there was only peace and sufficiency, to seek the excitement and lavishness that she seemed to crave—had fled from the small but pretty house, on the city's outskirts, where Mabel had seemed so contented, and where during the long, lustrous summer evenings he had timidly courted her; where, on the brisk, brilliant December night, three years ago, he had finally married her.

It was about her sister, Ethel, that they had had their first quarrel—he peremptorily refusing ever to let his wife see or communicate with one whom he had thought so unworthy of her love and countenance, and she, only after argument and contention, finally yielding. It had always been disagreeable to him to think of Ethel as his wife's sister. It was with real relief that, in the first year of their marriage, he had listened to Mabel as she told him that she had received

news of Ethel's death in one of the hospitals of an Eastern city, and reflected that this being, whose life was so worthless to herself and others, could no longer come between them.

Yes, Mabel had always been light-hearted and pleasure-loving. But granting only this, was not that enough to cause difficulty in time? Was he the man—middle-aged, serious, and a trifle taciturn—to satisfy such a woman; pretty, with the desire, and even the right to have her beauty recognized; naturally longing for the enjoyment that youth demands as its peculiar prerogative? Was it not only natural that she should fancy some one nearer her own age, some one with a readier wit, and more adaptable manner? He was as conscious of his own shortcomings as he was of his inability to overcome them; but he nevertheless suffered grievously, and had been continually on the lookout for some sign

of disapproval, of dislike, on her part. It is true it never came, but he was always apprehensive; it was the seed-time for suspicion, and the soil in which the grain might come to deadly fruit was morbidly rich. It was only to be expected that he should hearken to what people said. When he had received the first anonymous letter he had sworn that he would not read the thing; but when, with trembling hand and quick-beating heart, he had first glanced along the cowardly, feigned writing—as he deliberately read it again, as he had read all that succeeded it, he had in his heart believed what was said. Had she not acted strangely for a long time, as if she were keeping something from him? All seemed calculated to strengthen him in his apprehensions, all to bear witness against her. And when he had shown her the letters, with their blackening tale, though she had appeared indignant, outraged, even then

she had denied nothing, and had refused to defend, to exculpate herself. It had been a brief but violent scene, and then they—she proudly, and he besottedly jealous and passionately inflexible—had separated.

It was a common enough story, as he knew, but in spite of this knowledge it seemed strangely pathetic to him. And that had been the end of the life that had begun so happily, but it had not been the end of torturing thought, of eternal questionings, of occasional self-crimination. Now, with a sense almost of relief, he reflected that the time of doubt was past for him. Since he had heard Spurlock's confession he need torment himself no more. He had been right. Her fancy had been taken by the good looks and careless grace of the stranger, and she had forgotten his love, lost her love—if there had really ever been any—for him.

It did not require any great time for

these thoughts to arise, to eddy giddily about, to crowd one another in Irby's mind. And yet—he was thinking more calmly and collectedly now—it was strange that he should have felt so deeply about it all, at this late day, as to have been moved to kill this man. And then he reflected how wonderful it was that the poor creature whom in pity he had befriended and rescued, should have been the man who had robbed him of his happiness. The injustice—what seemed to him almost the ingratitude of it—struck him with sudden force, and he glanced with quick-kindling hatred at the motionless something in the corner.

And all the while the engine sped on, thundering over bridges, and roaring through "cuttings," a terrible, it might almost seem in its awful momentum, an unmanageable force—sped on, pouring a dense cloud of smoke from its swaying stack, and flinging into the air myriads

of glowing, dancing sparks that streamed behind in a cometic trail!

Now another city lies not far ahead, as Irby well knows. Shall he tell what has happened and give himself up? Uncertain what to do, he determines to do nothing. The stop he knows will be but short. At so late an hour there will be but few about; none at all who will think of mounting on the engine. The cab is so high from the ground that no one passing on the platform of the station can see into it. Why not go as he had come, without allowing a person to know what had occurred; then, in the long unbroken run to the next stopping place, he would have time to reflect—decide upon his ultimate course.

Crouching over the lever he brought the engine up to the building that gave shelter to the travellers, and stopped it, trembling before the lighted windows. The sudden illumination disconcerted him

somewhat and he turned to adjust the tattered, greasy curtain more carefully. His change of position had brought the body within his gaze, and he looked at it now for the first time coolly and curiously. Blood stood in almost inky black spots on the white face—the distended arms lay along the floor in flaccid, impotent immobility. Had it not been cowardly to take the man unawares; should he not have given Spurlock a chance to defend himself? He thought vaguely that if the deed were to be done over again he would prefer not to do it in that way.

"Merry Christmas!"

The voice seemed almost at his elbow, and he gave a great start. But it was only one of the station people, whom he knew, hurrying by on the platform below him.

"Merry Christmas!"

He was afraid that if he did not answer

the man might return, and so he shouted the cheery, conventional greeting after him in a voice that he did not seem to recognize as his own.

The time the train could remain at this place was nearly up, and he glanced at his clock to see if even then he might not set the engine in motion. The hands stood exactly at twelve, folded together in a manner that suggested palms closely pressed in prayer; and now, as he sat waiting for the moment when he might be off, the chimes rang out from a church near at hand. In the clear night air they sounded merrily, and it seemed to him that he had never heard sounds so sweet, so holy. He knew what it meant, they were ringing for the midnight service of Christmas. Had he not gone once, with her, and as the memory came back to him—it seemed almost brought to him by the wind-borne cadences of the bells—he bowed his head on his hand that rested

on the cold, hard handle of the steel beam, and a sob broke from him and left him trembling and afraid. He thought of the momentous event in remembrance of which the bells were ringing—the birth of the Child that was born into the world to bring the message of hope and of salvation; to teach that lesson of gentleness and peace that the world had never known before—that it has only so imperfectly learned. "Peace on earth and good-will toward men." He turned again and glanced at the upward staring face in the corner. The contrast between word and fact was so terrible, so complete, that its realization overcame him, and in his sudden agony he again sobbed aloud.

On flew the train. The flat, open country was crossed, and its way now lay among high hills that soon would become mountains. Irby felt that there was something threatening in their ragged outline

and wished himself back again in the level land. Then he tried to dismiss such senseless, such insane ideas from his mind and sought to reason, and to resolve, but found he could do neither. Was he becoming mad, or had he been mad all the time? It was a new thought, and he pondered over it diligently.

He seemed to hear a noise as if someone were moving, and glanced around. Spurlock stirred uneasily, raised himself slowly on his elbow, then, in an instant, was on his feet. It was evident that complete intelligence had returned with renewed physical strength, his still vigorous youth making sudden recovery possible. He threw himself instantly into a position of defence, as if his last conscious thought was still in his mind, or was the first to return to it.

"Dan," he cried, "what's the matter? Have you gone mad?"

But Irby did not answer. The knowledge

that, after all, he had not killed his companion filled him for an instant with strange relief; then the old fierce hate returned, and he looked at the other threateningly.

"What is it, Dan?" said Spurlock, entreatingly; "can't you tell me?"

Still Irby did not speak.

"Can't you say something?" continued Spurlock.

"No," answered Irby. "I'm not crazy, whatever you may think — although perhaps I ought to be."

"Then what is it?"

"You were telling me a story."

"Yes."

"Do you remember there was—a—woman in it?"

"Yes."

"She," said Irby, calmly enough, "was my wife."

"It isn't true, Dan, it can't be true," almost shrieked Spurlock, raising his voice high above the roar of the train.

"It was true," answered Irby.

"But, Dan," implored Spurlock, "I never knew, I never could have suspected. She had another name."

"Shaw was my name then, is my real name now."

"But I swear to you, swear to you as I hope for salvation on the day of judgment, that there was nothing."

"I know," said Irby, slowly, "and I believe you. But you said that she told you that she loved you. You confessed that yourself, and isn't that enough?"

"And what are you going to do?"

"What I started to do," answered Irby.

"No, Dan," cried Spurlock, "don't say that, don't do that. If I've done you a wrong, I didn't mean it, and——"

"I don't pretend," answered Irby, sullenly, "that I can see the thing clear. I only know what I have felt, and what I feel. There may not be any justice in it,

but justice is for them who can think, and I can't. I only know that you're the man that came between us; that I tried to find then, and that I've found at last."

"And you're going to kill me?" asked Spurlock, now with entire calmness; "is that what you mean?"

"Yes," said Irby.

"Then I tell you what it is," continued Spurlock, with perfect coolness, though with a certain quickness of utterance, "I haven't done anything to you, knowingly, and if you try that again I'm going to defend myself. You know I'm not afraid, and that I'll make a good fight."

"All the better," said Irby, grimly; "I'll feel it the less after it's over."

"But look here," Spurlock went on, "do you propose that we settle this here, and now?"

"Yes," answered Irby.

"Then I'd like to say something," said Spurlock, seating himself, but watching

his companion carefully. "We're both strong men. I'm as likely to do you an injury as you me. We might both meet with an accident, and then what would become of the train?"

Irby did not answer. After what had passed, this calm parleying with life and death did not strike him as in the least unnatural. Whether or not he should kill Spurlock then and there, or wait until later, seemed to him a matter that might be talked over quite calmly and collectedly.

"It's our duty," said Spurlock, "to look out for the train, whatever we may feel ourselves."

Irby thought of the scores of sleeping passengers, and hesitated. What Spurlock said was true. A struggle between them in such confined quarters would indeed be something determined and dangerous; and though he had no doubt as to its outcome, still Spurlock could very

easily do him an injury that would incapacitate him.

"I think you're right," he answered, briefly, and then he again sat down, for he had risen when he had first spoken; "there's more coal needed, put it on."

Spurlock threw open the furnace-door

again allowing the ruddy glow to play over the place, cast half-a-dozen shovelfuls of coal on the embers, fanned by the draft to almost a white heat, then closed the heavy iron shutter, and took his place opposite Irby.

Mile on mile they rode in silence, hardly looking at each other. The lights were all out now in the houses along the road, the landscape unbroken by a gleam anywhere. It was like travelling through some lately deserted land.

"Dan," said Spurlock at length, "I don't speak because I want you to let up on me, but you know you're the last man in the world I'd harm."

"I know it," answered Irby, shortly.

Then again there was silence, lasting for minutes and miles.

"If there's no way out of this," said Spurlock, once more speaking, "I'd like, Dan, to understand it a little better. I want to know what I've done to you."

Should he answer him, Irby thought. He knew that he could not give expression to the least part of what he had known and suffered, but the instinct that makes even the bravest sometimes cry out when they are hurt forbade silence.

"It was you that spoiled the only happiness that I ever had," he said, relentlessly; "it was you that destroyed my confidence in her."

It appeared incomprehensible that he could sit there so calmly discussing his own misery with the man who had been the cause of it, tossing reasons back and across, as if it were the most ordinary subject. But so much had happened to him that he had not thought possible that the position only caused him momentary surprise.

"Yes," said Spurlock. "But I didn't know—I couldn't look ahead."

"But you must have understood that

harm was bound to come somewhere—to someone."

"A man doesn't stop to think," answered Spurlock, "at such a time."

"Someone was bound to suffer," said Irby.

"Well," exclaimed Spurlock, bitterly, "I think we've all done that—all."

"I thought it was bad enough when I lost the child," continued Irby, disregarding the other's speech, "but to lose her! A man don't marry a woman unless he has trust in her, and to such as I, who have never had a chance to believe much of anything, it's about the only faith that's given to them. When you take away such belief you're robbing him of everything in this world and the next, for some woman's all the religion many a man's got. She can make him believe that something's right, and that right's something, and when you find out that she has been deceiving you, there don't seem to

be anything anywhere. She's not only been a worse woman, but, Spurlock, I've been a worse man since then."

His first hesitancy was past now, and he was talking unconstrainedly, almost argumentatively.

"I suppose, Dan," Spurlock hastened to speak, "its only natural that you should feel the way you do; I suppose I'd do the same in your place; but let's try and be reasonable. I grant that you've got grounds of complaint against me, and I'm willing to give you the satisfaction you want. That's only square. But, Dan, we've been friends so long, mates on the engine for some considerable time now, and it isn't as if I'd been a stranger, and you'd learned this thing."

"No," assented Irby.

"If I should give you revenge, I owe you gratitude, and whatever comes I'm not going to forget that."

Another city was near as they both

well knew, a city where a longer stay would be made than at any place since they had started on the long ride.

"In ten minutes we'll be in the depot," said Spurlock, "what's to happen then?"

"Nothing," answered Irby, after a moment's consideration.

"We'll take the train through?"

"Yes, we'll take the train through," answered Irby.

The track, after passing the station, ran directly over a great bridge that spanned a broad river, and the train, with carefully diminished speed, almost crawled along, high over the rushing stream that beat with such strong current against the massive piers. It was still perfectly dark, and the two men felt, rather than saw, the black waters rolling beneath them. Slowly, it would seem for the first time almost timidly, the engine rolled on, but

soon the measured clang—the almost rhythmic reverberation of the iron girders, as the wheels ground over them—ceased suddenly; was succeeded by a more confused and unbroken din, and wheeling around a bend in the shore, the locomotive took up a swifter pace, and soon the lights glittering along the wharves, and the gas-lamps shining in rows up and down the steep streets, were lost from sight.

It was a straight "run in" now for the metropolis, unbroken by another halt.

For a time the landscape was obscured by the flying flakes, for the train had run into a snow-squall and the air was full of whirling, downy particles. Finally the storm passed, or the train passed it, and as the engine tore on, the two men saw that the ground beside the track, lit by the dancing light of the cab windows, was unbrokenly white. The train frequently raced by small way stations,

for the country along the river was more thickly settled than any through which it had passed; but they were all dark, or with only a signal-light at some switch, and so the time passed—the train grinding swiftly on. At length, at one place larger than the rest, there shot up into the darkness strange, lambent flames that caught and held, though it was no strange sight to them, the gaze of both the men. Nearer, it was easy to see that they rose from the great chimneys of an iron mill—that like huge stationary torches lit up all around. Of vivid green when they sprang from the chimney's mouths they twisted away in strange orange convolutions—fantastic and fascinating. Now the windows of the wide-spreading buildings, row after row, came into view; and now, through an opening, could be seen the glowing interior, with glimpses of dark, diabolic forms, and of brilliant masses of heated metal that either flowed

in slow, fiery stream, or cast off, beneath the blows of ponderous hammers, bewildering showers of sparks. But, like all else, this was speedily left behind.

"Dan," said Spurlock, finally, "there's one thing I wish you'd do."

"What?" asked Irby.

"Shake hands with me for the time that's past—when we didn't know."

Irby hesitated a moment, then held out his hand to his companion; Spurlock seized and shook it silently.

"We'll be in the city in a little more than an hour, now," continued Spurlock, "and I thought we'd better settle up everything and then start fresh."

Irby nodded.

"They gave me a letter for you just as we were leaving, that had been waiting for you at the office," Spurlock went on: "but the hurry of starting drove it out of my head, and," Spurlock smiled grimly, "you knocked it out."

He drew a letter from his coat and handed it to Irby.

The day had just broken and the first tinges of anything like color appeared in the sky. It was still dark, but the shape of the great, swelling headlands across the broad river that flowed along unfrozen, and with swollen flood, could now with difficulty be distinguished. It was light enough, however, for Irby to read the direction on the envelope, and as he did so his face, already so pale, became a duller white and he slightly trembled.

Then he hastily tore open the letter, and read in the dim but strengthening light:

DAN, DEAR: I do not know why I write to you at this time unless it is for the very reason that it is this time. The day that is so near is so closely connected with so much that was most important to me, and must be so to you—that is if you ever think of me and the

past at all—that I have ventured to do it. I know that you have done all in your power to make it impossible for me to reach you—all uselessly heretofore—for even if I had been able to approach you I would not have done so. I was very proud, and you hurt me very much. But I am changed now; suffering has made the girl, intolerant in her ignorance, a woman who can understand and who can condone. I have changed, and the consciousness of that fact has made me think that you may have changed too, and that perhaps all may be different. We have made a mistake, Dan, I as well as you, and now I know it. I should not have been so resentful of your suspicions; you should not have been so angered by my resentment. You were older than I, and you should have been more patient. But I am not writing these lines to show you wherein you have failed, but rather to acknowledge my own errors. For, Dan, I did you a wrong, though not in the way you accused me of doing it. I did deceive you, but it was not in the way you thought. I deceived you once, but

even then I did not tell you a lie. I only let you go on thinking something that was not true. Ethel died last night, here, with me by her bedside. It was not true the news that came to us from that Eastern hospital; she was very ill, but she recovered, and one day, more than a year and a half ago, she came to me, when we were living in Arapago, and begged me to be kind to her. I remembered what you had told me, and—recollected that you are a stern man—sometimes almost hard—that you have been hard even with me, though you never meant it—and I was afraid if I let you know that you would not allow me to see her. And poor Ethel, if anyone needed help in this world, such help as sympathy alone can give, it was she. She was never really bad, only weak—fearfully, fatally weak—and though God knows that I needed strength—that was one of the reasons I loved you, Dan, you made me feel so secure of myself—I could aid her. Under the name of Agnes Holcombe, the name she had taken when she left her home, she lived in the city, supporting herself

with some little assistance from me. She could only come to the house—I could only see her, when you were away. Perhaps you will understand now what it was I was keeping from you. I felt that I must see her, if she was to be saved. I was the only influence for good that there was near her—I alone had power to control her, and I did see her and kept the knowledge of it from you. There was a young man who was in love with her—I did not know that for some time, she did not tell me, and though I did what I could, she insisted upon seeing him, slipping out to meet him, even in the garden beside the house. Poor girl, it seemed as if she craved love more than most of us, and that it was her very need for affection that always brought her trouble.

I did not think that I would ever seek to justify myself. At the time of our trouble I felt too deeply your unworthy doubts; the very fact that I loved you so much made the wound deeper, and I imagined then that I never would forget; but time does so much, and as the day has once more come around that has

meant so much to us, is so nearly here, I have seen things differently—and I have wanted you to hear the truth. I do not know what effect it will have upon you, but at least there will no longer be any misunderstanding, and whatever the future may be for us, it will not be the result of a mistake.

I am—no I have some pride left and I will not tell you where I am—but if you really wish to see me you can find me. The postmark on the letter will give you a clue. But, Dan, if you are coming, do not wait long. I cannot bear suspense. If you are coming, come at once, and make this for me, what I could not expect and perhaps do not deserve, indeed a merry Christmas and a happy New Year.

MABEL.

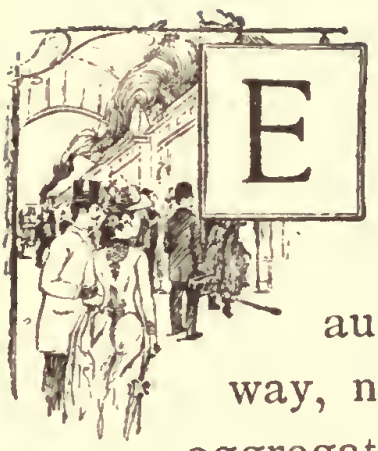
As Irby finished reading the letter the sun started up from behind a not distant hill and flung its light full into the engine windows; then its brilliant rays spread across the small sparkling waves of the grandly rolling river, and fell on the op-

posite shore—turning the snow-covered hills a warm and delicate pink. The smoke, rising from the many chimneys of a village through which the train dashed, mounted slowly and almost in unswerving lines in the still air, while the unshuttered windows cast back the new radiance of the morning, flash on flash. It seemed a new world, and to Irby it was one. Silently he handed the paper he had just read to Spurlock, who took it wonderingly, and again his head sank upon his left hand, which hardly for more than an instant had left the bar that controlled the onrushing engine.

HOW I SENT MY AUNT TO BALTIMORE

A TRUE STORY

By Charles Stewart Davison



EVERY well-regulated New Englander is, or should be, possessed of at least three maiden aunts, whose ages, by the way, never by any possibility aggregate less than one hundred and ninety-five to two hundred and forty years. While not desiring to arrogate to myself any superiority in this respect over the average descendant of the pilgrim fathers, I can, or rather could, at the time when the events hereinafter detailed occurred, have laid claim to this distinctive badge of Puritan descent. In the course of events, which may possibly be regarded as natural, the oldest of my three aunts, then a frail and delicate old lady of about seventy-four, became (some six years

hence) overwhelmed with a desire to travel. Her first pilgrimage extended as far from the "centre of the universe" as Staten Island. After a brief stay at our house she determined that the next step in her peregrinations should be to the house of a married sister residing in Baltimore. It being impossible, on account of other duties, that any member of the family should accompany her, I was delegated, as being the most experienced traveller and the possessor of the greatest

executive ability in the family, to see her safely placed in some seat in some drawing-room car, which should deposit her, if not in the arms of her relatives in Maryland, at least in the Baltimore railroad depot.

The enterprising Canadian, who now rules the destinies of Staten Island, having at that time not yet burst upon an astounded community in the full and effulgent glory of Rapid Transit, islanders were accustomed to visit the city of New York at comparatively irregular, but officially stated, periods. On consideration, it seemed unnecessary to leave Staten Island by a boat which would afford opportunity for, at the very least, fifty-five minutes' reflection in the railroad depot before train time, and an alluring time-table promised a much closer connection by the succeeding boat. We therefore determined to take it. It is needless to say that that boat was five minutes late in

starting; unnecessary to add that at New York a passing canal-boat delayed for a few minutes our entrance into the ferry slip; and it surely was nothing more than might be expected, that an elevated train at South Ferry should leave one end of the platform as we reached the other. As a result, however, of these wholly natural forces, we entered the ferry-house on the New York side of the North River with three minutes to spare before the last boat which would catch a fast through train, whose intermediate stops were so few and brief as not to deserve mention, would leave. With the tendency which has been well called "the gorgeous orientalism of the Western mind," this train bore a special name which had become familiar as its destination to many ears, including my own. From this fact many troubles thereafter arose, as will be seen. Fortunately, one thing was in our favor, my aunt's trunk had pre-

ceded us and, with a calm confidence in the baggage system in vogue in this country, it reposed on one end awaiting its inevitable tagging, in front of the baggage counter, as I had time to notice while dashing into the ferry-house. Cautioning my aunt under no circumstances to move until I returned, I rushed to the ticket-office, tossed the man a ten-dollar bill, and in my haste, with the train on my mind, mentioned mechanically the name by which it was known, and which included the name of an intermediate city. It will be readily seen how the name of the train she was to travel by momentarily obliterated all consciousness as to the objective point of the journey.

I had just time enough to wonder, in a semi-stupefied way, as to the amount of change that was returned out of the ten-dollar bill, while hurrying to the baggage-room. There I silently exhibited the ticket, was handed a check, and rushed

back to my aunt. I hurried her through the gates, and we had a few moments' breathing time crossing the river. Simultaneously, on our arrival at the New Jersey side of the North River, the gates leading to the train were opened, and the stentorian guardian of the portal recited, in unintelligible tones, the names of most of the railroad stations of the United States. I found time, however, to get a seat-ticket at the little window in the extreme right-hand corner of the waiting-room, where, for the purpose of making matters as inconvenient as possible, as it momentarily seemed to me, those valuable pieces of pasteboard were dealt out. Fortunately, I noticed that the seat assigned on the little slip of card handed me, was No. 25, in car No. 1. But here, again, instead of asking for a seat to any particular place, I silently exhibited the railroad ticket which I had purchased on the other side of the river. We hurried


BALTIMORE

through the gates, found car No. 1, and placing my aunt in the first vacant chair, I proceeded to look for seat No, 25. As I turned from her to do so, I noticed that the sides of the station were gently slipping past the car. Asking the nearest person if it was possible that the train had already started, I received so unqualified an affirmative response that no possible doubt could remain. As the train's first stop was a full hour away, and as I had several matters needing attention in New York, the conclusion was forced upon me that extreme promptness would alone procure their being duly attended to. Selecting the nearest traveller, I thrust into his hands my aunt's railroad tickets, her little wicker basket of lunch, and a novel purchased at the elevated station; asked him in one breathless phrase to find her seat for her, fled to the door, and jumped from the steps as the train cleared the end of the long station. After performing vari-

ous agile contortions in the air, with a view to an ultimate recovery of equilibrium, I rested from my labors in this respect and walked slowly back along the platform, reflecting upon the very unsatisfactory way in which I had started her on her journey, and naturally, as anyone in contemplative mood would, I thrust my hands into the pockets of my overcoat. With gloomy forebodings I extracted from one pocket a strange object. It was my aunt's purse, which I had taken from her that I might, for greater security, put her trunk-check in one of its compartments. This raised a new doubt, if not a new complication. It was clearly necessary to make certain beyond peradventure that she should be met on her arrival at her destination, since she had no money with her. With this object in view, I made my way to the telegraph window in the station, secured a blank, and wrote: ——, Esq., No. — Lexington Street, *Balti-*

more? The pen dropped from my hand. Photographed on the mental wall before my inward eye, aroused by this first recognition of Baltimore as a distinct entity, appeared the designation of the train, including the name of the intermediate city. In a flash the superabundance of change which I had received at the ticket office became understandable. There could be no doubt. I had started an elderly lady, totally inexperienced in the ways of the world at large, and of the travelling world in particular, without money and without power of reclaiming her trunk, with a ticket and a seat only, to a point a couple of hundred miles short of her destination.

Desperate cases need prompt action.

I had in mind but one idea, that if I could hire a special locomotive I might overtake the train at its first stopping-place.

Looking firmly at the telegraph oper-

ator, I said, "Has this road got any superintendent?"

"Yes."

"Where is he?"

"Outside, to the right, upstairs." And outside, to the right, upstairs, I proceeded.

Opening a door, I came on several clerks seated at desks, writing.

"Where is the superintendent?"

"Through there," said one, pointing. Through there I went.

I found a medium-sized room; a desk in the centre, a youngish man of dark complexion and smooth-shaven face—a man not over thirty-five, of pleasing impression and unruffled front, seated at it.

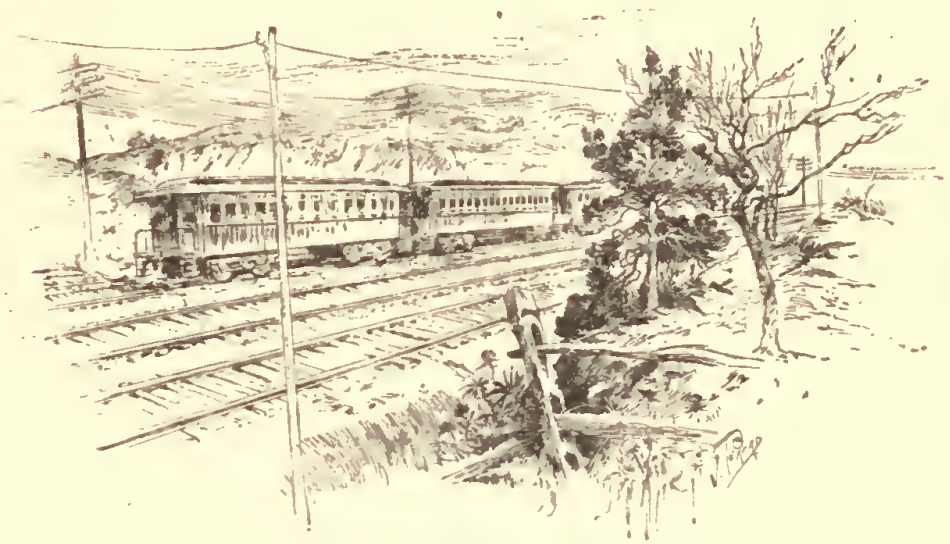
"Are you the superintendent?"

"Yes."

I sat down.

Looking at him with as much of earnest entreaty, desperate resolve, alarm, determination, and a few other qualities as I

could summon to my instant aid, I said, without a breath or pause, "I have just started an old lady inexperienced in travelling who wants to go to Baltimore with tickets only half-way and without any money; she is in car No. 1, seat 25."



Never yet have I seen a man rise so instantly, so calmly, and so unconsciously to the exact level of an occasion. He smiled and touched a bell and said, "That is all right. As long as she does not get scared and get off the train, we've got her. I will have them flag the train,

and tell the conductor to look out for her." While he talked he wrote. Almost instantly the door opened. A messenger appeared. The message was finished. It read, "Conductor, train 37. Elderly lady, car No. 1, seat 25. Is to go through to Baltimore, whether she has tickets or not. Don't let her leave the train." Handing the slip to the messenger he turned to me and repeated, with a smile, "As long as we have got her on the train she is all right. Now," he said, continuing, "we will telegraph to the agent at the station at which her tickets expire, to buy her a ticket on to Baltimore, and to buy the same parlor-car seat she is now in, on to Baltimore, and to take the tickets to her on the train." In two minutes the telegram was sent. "Now," he said, "we will telegraph the conductor fully, at his first regular stop, what the circumstances are. And," said he, turning again to me, "You say she has no

money." "I have her purse here," I replied. "Well," he said, "we will tell the conductor to hand her ten dollars in change." While talking his pen was busy. In a moment more he read me a concise statement of the facts of the case, addressed to the conductor at the first way-station. This despatched, he sat back in his chair and reflected for a moment. "Now," he said, pushing over to me a pad of paper and a pencil, "she won't know what all this means, and may get alarmed. Had you not better send her a long conversational telegram, to be delivered on the train?"

I wrote some twenty lines explaining the situation, telling her that all she need do was to remain in her seat until the train reached Baltimore, that tickets and money would be supplied to her, that under no circumstances was she to leave the train, and that I was overwhelmed with sorrow at having so badly arranged her journey.

While writing this telegram another door opened, and a head and hand appeared through it. The hand waved a little slip of yellow paper, and the head said, "Conductor, train 37, says, Elderly lady all right." An enormous weight rolled from my mind. The man who, so far as my purview extended, controlled the destinies of creation, then said, "Now, how are you going to get her purse and trunk check, which I see you have, to her?"

"I thought of sending them by mail."

"Well, suppose you write her a note and do it up with the purse in a package, and I will send it down the line so she can get it to-night. We have a wild-cat engine going over the line in about half an hour." The resources of the road seemed inexhaustible, and it is needless to say that to this further extent I availed myself of them. But before the package was sealed, another idea had occurred to the superintendent, who indeed, I think,

rather made a point of showing me what the possibilities of their system of management were. "That trunk check," he said, "is only for the same point as her tickets. What is its number?" I told him. "Now," said he, "we will telegraph the baggage-master there, that that piece of luggage, though checked only to his point, is not to be put off, but is to go on to Baltimore, where it will be redeemed on the original check."

Again his pen sought the invaluable pad, and the final message was despatched.

With a general feeling that I had incurred anywhere from one to five thousand dollars of expense, I inquired in relation to this delicate question. "Well," said he, "now let me see. The difference in fares is (referring to a schedule) $3, the parlor-car seat is $1. We gave her $10 in the train (observe the unconscious certainty with which he spoke of that which

he had by telegraph ordered done being already the fact) that makes in all $14." "But," I said, "is there no charge for all these telegrams and the trouble that the road has been put to in the matter?" "Oh, no," he said, "all these are matters of detail;" giving one the general impression that "the road" stood *in loco parentis* to those who travelled by it. With thanks which were sincere, if not effusive, I was about leaving, when again the head and yellow-slipped hand appeared through the door. "Ticket agent number nine-two-three says, All right. Baggage-master number four-four-five says, All right," and the head vanished. I came away with the general stunned feeling which we all experience when we run up against an approximately perfect system, working without hitch or delay. On the succeeding evening I learned by letter from my aunt that it had not been mere appearance of efficiency. As she

expressed it, before she knew anything was wrong, people kept bringing her telegrams, and handing her money, and saying that everything was all right. The conductor came to her immediately after the train was flagged, explained to her that her tickets were accidentally for the wrong place (of which she had not become aware), but that she would be carried on to Baltimore, and that under no circumstances was she to leave the car or the train. Came to her again at the first stop and handed her ten dollars. A ticket agent came to her thereafter and handed her new tickets to take her to Baltimore. She was met at Baltimore in accordance with a telegram which I forgot to mention was also despatched by my friend, the superintendent, and later in the evening her purse and trunk check were delivered to her at her sister's house.

The above might well be thought to be an imaginary sketch of what might be

done on and by a well-organized road. It is, however, something more than that; it is an exact statement of facts which actually occurred.

"RUN TO SEED"

By Thomas Nelson Page

JIM'S father died at Gettysburg; up against the Stone Fence: went to Heaven in a chariot of fire on that fateful day when the issue between the two parts of the country was decided; when the slaughter on the Confederate side was such that after the battle a lieutenant was in charge of a regiment, and a major commanded a brigade.

This fact was much to Jim, though no one knew it: it tempered his mind: ruled

his life. He never remembered the time when he did not know the story his mother, in her worn black dress and with her pale face, used to tell him of the bullet-dented sword and faded red sash which hung on the chamber wall.

They were the poorest people in the neighborhood. Everybody was poor, for the country lay in the track of the armies, and the war had swept the country as clean as a floor. But the Uptons were the poorest even in that community. Others recuperated, pulled themselves together, and began after a time to get up. The Uptons got flatter than they were before. The fences (the few that were left) rotted; the fields grew up in sassafras and pines; the barns blew down; the houses decayed; the ditches filled; the chills came.

"They're the shiftlesses' people in the worl'," said Mrs. Wagoner with a shade of asperity in her voice (or was it satisfac-

tion?). Mrs. Wagoner's husband had been in a bomb-proof during the war, when Jim Upton, Jim's father, was with his company. He had managed to keep his teams from the quartermasters, and had turned up after the war the richest man in the neighborhood. He lived on old Colonel Duval's place, which he bought for Confederate money.

"'They're the shiftlesses' people in the worl'," said Mrs. Wagoner. "Mrs. Upton ain't got any spirit; she jus' sets still and cries her eyes out."

This was true, every word of it. And so was something else that Mrs. Wagoner said in a tone of reprobation, about "people who made their beds having to lay on them;" this process of incubation being too well known to require further discussion. But what could Mrs. Upton do? She could not change the course of Destiny. One—especially if she is a widow with bad eyes, and in poor health, living

on the poorest place in the State—cannot stop the stars in their courses. She could not blot out the past, nor undo what she had done. She would not if she could. She could not undo what she had done when she ran away with Jim and married him. She would not if she could. At least the memory of those three years was her's, and nothing could take it from her —not debts, nor courts, nor anything. She knew he was wild when she married him. Certainly Mrs. Wagoner had been careful enough to tell her so, and to tell every one else so too. She would never forget the things she had said. Mrs. Wagoner never forgot the things the young girl said either—though it was more the way she had looked than what she had said. And when Mrs. Wagoner descanted on the poverty of the Uptons she used to end with the declaration: "Well, it ain't any fault of *mine:* she can't blame *me:* for Heaven knows I

warned her: I did *my* duty!" Which was true. This was a duty Mrs. Wagoner seldom omitted. Mrs. Upton never thought of blaming her, or anyone else. Not all her poverty ever drew one complaint from her lips. She simply sat down under it, that was all. She did not expect anything else. She had given Jim to the South as gladly as any woman ever gave her heart to her love. She would not undo it if she could—not even to have him back, and God knew how much she wanted him. Was not his death glorious—his name a heritage for his son? She could not undo the debts which encumbered the land; nor the interest which swallowed it up; nor the suit which took it from her—that is, all but the old house and the two poor worn old fields which were her dower. She would have given up those too if it had not been for her children, Jim and Kitty, and for the little old enclosure on the hill under the big

thorn-trees where they had laid him when they brought him back. No, she could not undo the past, nor alter the present, nor change the future. So what could she do?

In her heart Mrs. Wagoner was glad of the poverty of the Uptons; not merely glad in the general negative way which warms the bosoms of most of us as we consider how much better off we are than our neighbors—the "Lord-I-thank-thee-that-I-am-not-as-other-men-are" way—but Mrs. Wagoner was glad, positively. She was glad that any of the Uptons and the Duvals were poor. One of her grandfathers had been what Mrs. Wagoner (when she mentioned the matter at all) called "Manager" for one of the Duvals. She was aware that most people did not accept that term. She remembered old Colonel Duval—the *old* Colonel—tall, thin, white, grave, aquiline. She had been dreadfully afraid of him. She had

had a feeling of satisfaction at his funeral. It was like the feeling she had when she learned that Colonel Duval had not forgiven Betty nor left her a cent. Mrs. Wagoner used to go to see Mrs. Upton—she went frequently. She carried her things—especially advice. There are people whose visits are like spells of illness. It took Mrs. Upton a fortnight to get over one of her visits—to convalesce. Mrs. Wagoner was a mother to her: at least she herself said so. In some respects it was rather akin to the substance of that name which forms in vinegar. It was hard to swallow: it galled. Even Mrs Upton's gentleness was overtaxed—and rebelled. She had stood all the homilies—all the advice. But when Mrs. Wagoner, with her lips drawn in, after wringing her heart, recalled to her the warning she had given her before she married, she stopped standing it. She did not say much; but it was enough to

make Mrs. Wagoner's stiff bonnet-bows tremble. Mrs. Wagoner walked out feeling chills down her spine, as if Colonel Duval were at her heels. She had meant to talk about sending Jim to school; at least she said so. She condoled with every one in the neighborhood on the "wretched ignorance" in which Jim was growing up, "working like a common negro." She called him "that ugly boy."

Jim was ugly—very ugly. He was slim, red-headed, freckle-faced, weak-eyed; he stooped and he stammered. Yet there was something about him, with his thin features, which made one look twice. Mrs. Wagoner used to say she did not know where that boy got all his ugliness from, for she must admit his father was rather good-looking before he became so bloated, and Betty Duval would have been "passable" if she had any "vivacity." She was careful in her limitations, Mrs. Wagoner was. Some women will

not admit others are pretty, no matter what the difference in their ages: they feel as if they were making admissions against themselves.

Once when he was a boy Mrs. Wagoner had the good taste to refer in Jim's presence to his "homeliness," a term with which she sugar-coated her insult. Jim grinned and shuffled his feet, and then said, "Kitty's pretty." It was true: Kitty was pretty: she had eyes and hair. You could not look at her without seeing them—big brown eyes, and brown, tumbled hair. Kitty was fifteen—two years younger than Jim in 187–.

Jim never went to school. They were too poor. All he knew his mother taught him and he got out of the few old books in the book-case left by the war—odd volumes of the Waverley novels, and the *Spectator*, "Don Quixote," and a few others, stained and battered. He could not have gone to school if there had been

a school to go to: he had to work: work, as Mrs. Wagoner had truthfully said, "like a common nigger." He did not mind it; a bird born in a cage cannot mind it much. The pitiful part is, it does not know anything else. Jim did not know anything else. He did not mind anything much—except chills. He even got used to them; would just lie down and shake for an hour and then go to ploughing again as soon as the ague was over, with the fever on him. He had to plough; for corn was necessary. He had this compensation: he was worshipped by two people—his mother and Kitty. If other people thought him ugly, they thought him beautiful. If others thought him dull, they thought him wonderfully clever; if others thought him ignorant, they knew how wise he was.

Mrs. Upton's eyes were bad; but she saw enough to see Jim; the light came into the house with him. Kitty sat and

gazed at him with speechless admiration; hung on his words, which were few; watched for his smile, which was rare. He repaid it to her by being—Jim. He slaved for her; waited for her (when a boy waits for his little sister it is something); played with her when he had time (this also was something); made traps for her; caught her young squirrels; was at once her slave and her idol. As he grew up he did not have time to play. He had to plough: "just like a common nigger," Mrs. Wagoner said. In this she spoke the truth.

It is a curious thing that farming paid better shortly after the war than it did later. Lands fell. Times grew harder. They were always growing harder with Jim. The land was worked out. Guano was necessary to make anything grow. Guano was bought on credit. The crops would not pay. Several summers there was drouth; crops failed. One of the two

old mules he had died; Jim ploughed with one. Then he broke his leg. When he got about again he was lame; the leg had shortened.

"They're the shiftlesses' folks in the

worl'," said Mrs. Wagoner; "they can't blame *me*. Heaven knows I told——" etc. Which was true—more than true.

Jim ploughed on, only slower than ever, thinner than ever, sleepier than ever.

One day something happened which waked him up. It was a Sunday. They

went to church; they always went to church—old St. Ann's—whenever there was service. There was service there since the war only every first and third Sunday, and every other fifth Sunday. The Uptons and the Duvals had been vestrymen from the time they had brought the bricks over from England, generations ago. They had sat, one family in one of the front semicircular pews on one side the chancel, the other family in the other. Mrs. Upton, after the war, had her choice of the pews; for all had gone but herself, Jim, and Kitty. She had changed, the Sunday after her marriage, to the Upton side, and she clung loyally to it ever after. Mrs. Wagoner had taken the other pew—a cold, she explained at first, had made her deaf. She always spoke of it afterward as "our pew." (The Billings, from which Mrs. Wagoner come, had not been Episcopalians until Mrs. Wagoner married.) Carrie Wagoner, who was a year

older than Kitty, used to sit by her mother, with her big hat and brown hair. Jim, in right of his sex, sat in the end of his pew.

On this Sunday in question Jim drove his mother and Kitty to church in the horse cart. The old carriage was a wreck, slowly dropping to pieces. The chickens roosted in it. The cart was the only vehicle remaining which had two sound wheels, and even one of these "wabbled" a good deal, and the cart was "shackling." But straw placed in the bottom made it fairly comfortable. Jim always had clean straw in it. His mother and Kitty noticed it. Kitty looked so well. They reached church. The day was warm, Mr. Bickersteth was dry. Jim went to sleep during the sermon. He frequently did this. He had been up since four. When service was over he partially waked—about half-waked. He was standing in the aisle moving toward

the door with the rest of the congregation. A voice behind him caught his ear:

"What a lovely girl Kitty Upton is." It was Mrs. Harrison, who lived at the other end of the parish. Jim knew the voice. Another voice replied:

"If she only were not always so shabby!" Jim knew this one also. It was Mrs. Wagoner's. Jim waked.

"Yes, but even her old darned dress cannot hide her. She reminds me of——" Jim did not know what it was to which Mrs. Harrison likened her. But he knew it was something beautiful.

"Yes," said Mrs. Wagoner; then added, "Poor thing, she's got no education, and never will have. To think that old Colonel Duval's fam'bly's come to this! Well, they can't blame me. They're clean run to seed."

Jim got out into the air. He felt sick. He had been hit vitally. This was what people thought! and it was true. He

went to get his cart. (He did not speak to Kitty.) His home came before his eyes like a photograph: fences down, gates gone, houses ruinous, fields barren. It came to him as if stamped on the retina by a lightning-flash. He had worked—worked hard. But it was no use. It was true: they were "clean run to seed." He helped his mother and Kitty into the cart silently—doggedly. Kitty smiled at him. It hurt him like a blow. He saw every worn place, every darn in her old dress and little faded jacket. Mrs. Wagoner drove past them in her carriage, leaning out of the window and calling that she took the liberty of passing as she drove faster than they. Jim gave his old mule a jerk which made him throw up his head and wince with pain. He was sorry for it. But he had been jerked up short himself. He was quivering too.

II.

On the following Friday the President of one of the great railway lines which cross Virginia was in his office when the door opened after a gentle knock and some one entered. (The offices of presidents of railroads had not then become the secret and mysterious sanctums which they have since become.) The President was busily engaged with two or three of the Directors; wealthy capitalists from the North, who had come down on important business. He was very much engrossed, and he did not look up directly. When he did he saw standing inside the door a queer figure — long, slim, angular— a man who looked a boy, or a boy who looked like a man—red-headed, freckle-faced, bashful—in a coat too tight even for his thin figure, breeches too short for his long legs; his hat was old and brown; his shirt was clean.

"Well, what do you want?" The President was busy.

It was Jim. His face twitched several times before any sound came:

"– – I– w– w– w– want t– t– t– to ge– get a place."

"This is not the place to get it; I have no place for you."

The President turned back to his friends. At the end of ten minutes, seeing one of his visitors look toward the door, he stopped in the middle of a sentence and glanced around.

The figure was still there—motionless. The President thought he had been out. He had not.

"Well?" His key was high.

"– – – – I– I– w– w– want to– to get a place."

"I told you I had no place for you. Go to the Superintendent."

"– – – I- I've b– b– b– been to him."

"Well, what did he say?"

"Si- si- si- says he ain't got any place."

"Well, I haven't any. Go to Mr. Blake."

"- - - I've b- been to *him.*"

"Well, go to—to——" The President was looking for a paper. It occupied his mind. He did not think any further of Jim. But Jim was there.

"- - Go- go where?"

"Oh, I don't know—go anywhere—go out of *here.*"

Jim's face worked. He turned and went slowly out. As he reached the door he said:

"Go- go- good evening, g- gentlemen."

The President's heart relented: "Go to the Superintendent," he called.

Next day he was engaged with his Directors when the door opened and the same apparition stepped within — tall, slim, red-haired, with his little, tight coat, short trousers, and clean shirt.

The President frowned.

"Well, what is it?"

"– – – I– I– I w– w– w– went to– to the s– s– Superintendent."

"Well, what about it?"

"Y– y– you told me t– to go– go to him. H– e– e ain't got any place." The Directors smiled. One of them leaned back in his chair, took out a cigar and prepared to cut the end.

"Well, I can't help it. I haven't anything for you. I told you that yesterday. You must not come here bothering me; get out."

Jim stood still—perfectly motionless. He looked as if he had been there always—would be there always. The Director with the cigar, having cut it, took out a gold match-box, and opened it slowly, looking at Jim with an amused smile. The President frowned and opened his mouth to order him out. He changed his mind.

"What is your name?"

"J- J- James Upton."

"Where from?"

Jim told him.

"Whose son are you?"

"C- c- c- Captain J- J- James Upton's."

"What! You don't look much like him!"

Jim shuffled one foot. One corner of his mouth twitched up curiously. It might have been a smile. He looked straight at the blank wall before him.

"You are not much like your mother either—I used to know her as a girl. How's that?"

Jim shuffled the other foot a little.

"R- r- run to seed, I reckon."

The President was a farmer—prided himself on it. The reply pleased him. He touched a bell. A clerk entered.

"Ask Mr. Wake to come here."

"Can you carry a barrel of flour?" he asked Jim.

"I– I'll get it there," said Jim. He leaned a little forward.

"Or a sack of salt? They are right heavy."

"I– I– I'll get it there," said Jim.

Mr. Wake appeared.

"Write Mr. Day to give this man a place as brakeman."

"Yes, sir. Come this way." This to Jim.

Jim electrified them all by suddenly bursting out crying.

The tension had given way. He walked up to the wall and leaned his head against it with his face on his arm, shaking from head to foot, sobbing aloud.

"Thank you, I — I'm ever so much obliged to you," he sobbed.

The President rose and walked rapidly about the room.

Suddenly Jim turned and, with his arm over his eyes, held out his hand to the President.

"Good-by." Then he went out.

There was a curious smile on the faces of the Directors as the door closed.

"Well, I never saw anything like that before," said one of them. The President said nothing.

"Run to seed." quoted the oldest of the Directors; "rather good expression!"

"Damned good seed, gentlemen," said the President, a little shortly. "Duval and Upton—that fellow's father was in my command. Died at Gettysburg. He'd fight hell."

Jim got a place—brakeman on a freight-train. That night Jim wrote a letter home. You'd have thought he had been elected president.

It was a hard life: harder than most. The work was hard, the fare was hard; the life was hard. Standing on top of rattling cars as they rushed along in the night around curves, over bridges,

through tunnels,
with the rain and snow
pelting in your face, and the tops as slippery as ice. There was excitement about it, too : a sense of risk and danger. Jim

did not mind it much. He thought of his mother and Kitty.

There was a freemasonry among the men. All knew each other; hated or liked each other; nothing negative about it.

It was a bad road. Worse than the average. Twice the amount of traffic was done on the single track that should have been done. Result was men were ground up—more than on most roads. More men were killed in proportion to the number employed than were killed in service during the war. The *esprit de corps* was strong. Men stood by their trains and by each other. When a man left his engine in sight of trouble, the authorities might not know about it, but the men did. Unless there was cause he had to leave. Sam Wray left his engine in sight of a broken bridge after he reversed. The engine stopped on the track. The officers never knew of it; but Wray and his fireman both changed to another road.

When a man even got shaky and began to run easy, the superintendent might not mind it ; but the men did ; he had to go. A man had to have not only courage but nerve.

Jim was not especially popular among men. He was reserved, slow, awkward. He was "pious" (that is, did not swear). He was "stuck up" (did not tell "funny things," by which was meant vulgar stories; nor laugh at them either). And according to Dick Rail, he was "stingy as h—l."

These things were not calculated to make him popular, and he was not. He was a sort of butt for the free and easy men who lived in their cabs and cabooses, obeyed their "orders," and owned nothing but their overalls and their shiny Sunday clothes. He was good-tempered, though. Took all their gibes and "dev'ling" quietly, and for the most part silently. So, few actually disliked him. Dick

Rail, the engineer of his crew, was one of those few. Dick "despised" him. Dick was big, brawny, coarse: coarse in looks, coarse in talk, coarse in feeling, and when he had liquor in him he was mean. Jim "bothered" him, he said. He made Jim's life a burden to him. He laid himself out to do it. It became his occupation. He thought about it when Jim was not present; laid plans for it. There was something about Jim that was different from most others. When Jim did not laugh at a "hard story," but just sat still, some men would stop; Dick always told another harder yet, and called attention to Jim's looks. His stock was inexhaustible. His mind was like a spring which ran muddy water; its flow was perpetual. The men thought Jim did not mind. He lost three pounds; which for a man who was six feet (and would have been six feet two if he had been straight) and who weighed 122, was considerable.

It is astonishing how one man can create a public sentiment. One woman can ruin a reputation as effectually as a churchful. One bullet can kill a man as dead as a bushel, if it hits him right. So Dick Rail injured Jim, for Dick was an authority. He swore the biggest oaths. wore the largest watch-chain, knew his engine better and sat it steadier than any man on the road. He had had a passenger train again and again, but he was too fond of whiskey. It was too risky. Dick affected Jim's standing ; told stories about him ; made his life a burden to him. "He shan't stay on the road," he used to say. "He's stingier'n ——. Carries his victuals about with him—I b'lieve he sleeps with one o' them *I*-talians in a goods box." This was true—at least about carrying his food with him. (The rest was Dick's humor.) Messing cost too much. The first two months' pay went to settle an old guano-bill ; but

the third month's was Jim's. The day he drew that he fattened a good deal. At least, he looked so. It was eighty-two dollars (for Jim ran extra runs—made double time whenever he could). Jim had never had so much money in his life; had hardly ever seen it. He walked about the streets that night till nearly midnight, feeling the wad of notes in his breast-pocket. Next day a box went down the country, and a letter with it, and that night Jim could not have bought a chew of tobacco. The next letter he got from home was heavy. Jim smiled over it a good deal, and cried a little too. He wondered how Kitty looked in her new dress, and if the barrel of flour made good bread; and if his mother's shawl was warm.

One day he was changed to the passenger service, the express. It was a promotion, paid more, and relieved him from Dick Rail. He had some queer experi-

ences being ordered around, but he swallowed them all. He had not been there three weeks when Mrs. Wagoner was a passenger on the train. Carry was with her. They had moved to town. (Mr. Wagoner was interested in railroad development.) Mrs. Wagoner called him to her seat, and talked to him—in a loud voice. Mrs. Wagoner had a loud voice. It had the "carrying" quality. She did not shake hands; Carry did, and said she was so glad to see him: she had been down home the week before—had seen his mother and Kitty. Mrs. Wagoner said they still kept their plantation as a country place. Carry said Kitty looked so well. Her new dress was lovely. Mrs. Wagoner said his mother's eyes were worse. She and Kitty had walked over to see them to show Kitty's dress. She had promised that Mr. Wagoner would do what he could for him on the road.

Next month Jim went back to the

freight service. He preferred Dick Rail. He got him. Dick was worse than ever, his appetite was whetted by abstinence; he returned to his attack with renewed zest. He never tired—never flagged. He was perpetual: he was remorseless. He made Jim's life a wilderness. Jim said nothing, just slouched along silenter than ever, quieter than ever, closer than ever. He took to going to another church on Sunday than the one he had attended, a more fashionable one than that. The Wagoners went there. Jim sat far back in the gallery, very far back, where he could just see the top of Carry's head, her big hat and her face, and could not see Mrs. Wagoner, who sat nearer the gallery. It had a curious effect on him; he never went to sleep there. He took to going up-town, walking by the stores—looking in at the windows of tailors and clothiers. Once he actually went into a shop and asked the price of a new

suit of clothes. (He needed them badly.) The tailor unfolded many rolls of cloth and talked volubly: talked him dizzy. Jim looked wistfully at them, rubbed his hand over them softly, felt the money in his pocket; and came out. He said he thought he might come in again. Next day he did not have the money. Kitty wrote him she could not leave home to go to school on their mother's account, but she would buy books, and she was learning; she would learn fast, her mother was teaching her; and he was the best brother in the world, the whole world; and they had a secret, but he must wait.

One day Jim got a bundle. It was a new suit of clothes. On top was a letter from Kitty. This was the secret. She and her mother had sent for the cloth and made them; hoped they would fit. They had cried over them. Jim cried a little too. He put them on. They did not fit, were much too large. Under

Dick Rail's fire Jim had grown even thinner than before. But he wore them to church. He felt that it would have been untrue to his mother and Kitty not to wear them. He was sorry to meet Dick Rail on the street. Dick had on a black broadcloth coat, a velvet vest, and large-checked trousers. Dick looked Jim over. Jim winced, flushed a little: he was not so sunburned now. Dick saw it. Next week Dick caught Jim in a crowd in the "yard" waiting for their train. He told about the meeting. He made a double shot. He said, "Jim's in love, he's got new clothes! you ought to see 'em!" Dick was graphic; he wound up: "They hung on him like breechin' on his old mule. By ——! I believe he was too —— stingy to buy 'em, and made 'em himself." There was a shout from the crowd. Jim's face worked. There was a handspike lying near and he seized it. Someone grabbed him, but he shook

him off as if he had been a child. Why he did not kill Dick no one ever knew. He meant to do it. For some time they thought he was dead. He laid off for a month. After that Jim wore what clothes he chose : no one ever troubled him.

So he went on in the same way : slow, sleepy, stuttering, thin, stingy, ill-dressed, lame, the butt of his tormentors.

He was made a fireman ; preferred it to being a conductor, it led to being an engineer, which paid more. He ran extra trips whenever he could, up and double straight back. He could stand an immense amount of work. If he got sleepy he put tobacco in his eyes to keep them open. It was bad for the eyes, but waked him up. Kitty was going to take music next year, and that cost money. He had not been home for several months, but was going at Christmas.

They did not have any sight tests then. But the new Directory meant to be thor-

ough. Mr. Wagoner had become a Director, had his eye on the presidency. Jim was one day sent for, asked about his eyes; they were bad. There was not a doubt about it. They were inflamed; he could not see a hundred yards. He did not tell them about the extra trips and putting the tobacco in them. Dick Rail must have told about him. They said he must go. Jim turned white. He went to his little room, close up under the roof of a little house in a back street, and sat down in the dark; thought about his mother and Kitty, and dimly about someone else; wrote his mother and Kitty a letter, said he was coming home—called it "a visit;" cried over the letter, but was careful not to cry on it. He was a real cry-baby—Jim was.

"Just run to seed," he said to himself, bitterly, over and over; "just run to seed." Then he went to sleep.

The following day he went down to the

railroad. That was the last day. Next day he would be "off." The trainmaster saw him and called him. A special was just going out. The Directors were going over the road in the Officers' car. Dick Rail was the engineer, and his fireman had been taken sick. Jim must take the place. Jim had a mind not to do it. He hated Dick. He thought of how he had pursued him. But he heard a voice behind him and turned. Carry was standing down the platform, talking with some elderly gentlemen. She had on a travelling cap and ulster. She saw him and came forward—a step:

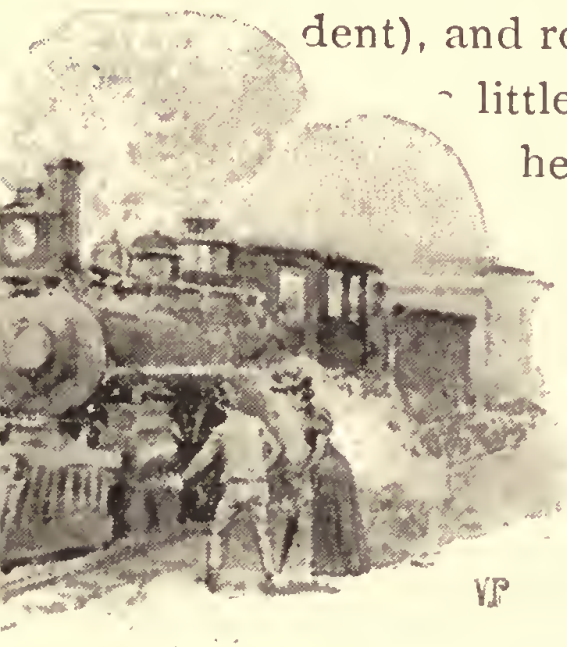
"How do you do?" she held out her little gloved hand. She was going out over the road with her father. Jim took off his hat and shook hands with her. Dick Rail saw him, walked round the other side of the engine, and tried to take off his hat like that. It was not a success; Dick knew it. Jim went.

"Who was that?" one of the elderly gentlemen asked Carry.

"An old friend of mine—a gentleman," she said.

"Rather run to seed—hey?" the old fellow quoted, without knowing exactly why; for he only half recognized Jim, if he recognized him at all.

They started. It was a bad trip. The weather was bad, the road was bad, the engine bad; Dick bad—worse than all. Jim had a bad time: he was to be off when he got home. What would his mother and Kitty do?



Once Carry came (brought by the President), and rode in the engine for a little while. Jim helped her up and spread his coat for her to sit on, put his overcoat under her feet; his heart was in it. Dick was sullen, and Jim

had to show her about the engine. When she got down to go back to the car she thanked him—she "had enjoyed it greatly"—she "would like to try it again." Jim smiled. He was almost good-looking when he smiled.

Dick was meaner than ever after that, sneered at Jim—swore; but Jim didn't mind it. He was thinking of someone else, and of the rain which would prevent her coming again.

They were on the return trip, and were half-way home when the accident happened. It was just "good dusk," and it had been raining all night and all day, and the road was as rotten as mud. The special was behind and was making up. She had the right of way, and she was flying. She rounded a curve just above a small "fill," under which was a little stream, nothing but a mere "branch." In good weather it would never be noticed. The gay party behind were at din-

ner. The first thing they knew, was the sudden jerk which came from reversing the engine at full speed, and the grind as the wheels slid along under the brakes. Then they stopped with a bump which spilled them out of their seats, set the lamps to swinging, and sent the things on the table crashing on the floor. No one was hurt, only shaken, and they crowded out of the car to learn the cause. They found it. The engine was half buried in wet earth on the other side of the little washout, with the tender jammed up into the cab. The whole was wrapped in a dense cloud of escaping steam. The noise was terrific. The big engineer, bare-headed and covered with mud, and with his face deadly white, was trying to get down to the engine. Someone was in there.

They got him out after a while (but it took some time) and laid him on the ground, while a mattress was got. It was Jim.

Carry had been weeping. She sat down and took his head in her lap, and wiped his blackened and bleeding face with her lace handkerchief; and smoothed his wet hair.

The newspaper accounts, which are always reflections of what public sentiment is, or should be, spoke of it—some, as "a providential;"—others, as "a miraculous;"—and yet others as "a fortunate" escape on the part of the President and the Directors of the road, according to the tendencies, religious or otherwise, of their paragraphists.

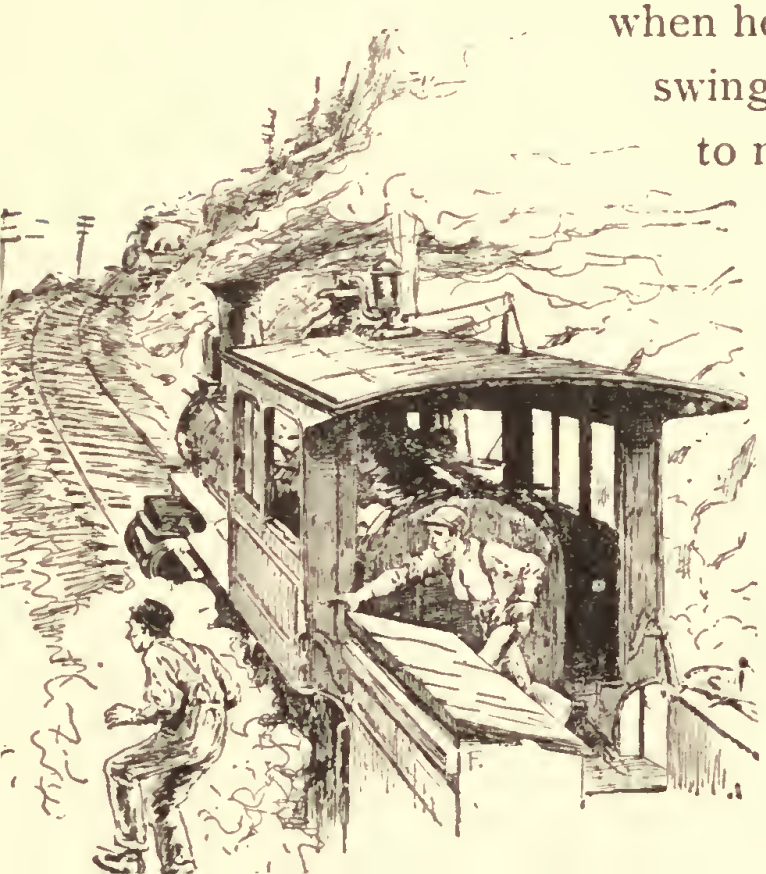
They mentioned casually that "only one person was hurt—an employee, name not ascertained." And one or two had some gush about the devotion of the beautiful young lady, the daughter of one of the directors of the road, who happened to be on the train, and who, "like a ministering angel, held the head of the wounded man in her lap after he was taken from

the wreck." A good deal was made of this picture, which was extensively copied.

Dick Rail's account, after he had come back from carrying the broken body down to the old place in the country, and helping to lay it away in the old enclosure under the big trees on the hill, was this:

"By——!" he said, when he stood in the yard, with a solemn-faced group around him, "we were late, and I was just shaking 'em up. I had been meaner'n hell to Jim all the trip (I didn't know him, and you all didn't neither), and I was workin' him for all he was worth, I didn't give him a minute. The sweat was rolling off him, and I was damnin' him with every shovelful. We was runnin' under orders to make up, and we were just rounding the curve this side of Ridge Hill, when Jim hollered. He saw it as he raised up with the shovel in his hand to wipe the sweat off his face, and hollered to me, 'My God! Look, Dick! Jump!'

"I looked and Hell was right there. He caught the lever and reversed, and put on the air before I saw it, and then grabbed me and flung me clean out of the cab: 'Jump!' he says, as he give me a swing. I jumped, expectin' of course he was comin' too; and as I lit, I saw him turn and catch the lever and put on the sand. The old engine was jumpin' nigh off the track. But she was too near. In she went, and the tender right on her. You may talk about his eyes bein' bad; but when he gave me that swing, they looked to me like coals of fire. When we got him out 'twarn't Jim. He warn't nothin' but mud and ashes. He warn't quite dead;



opened his eyes, and breathed onct or twict; but I don't think he knew anything, he was so smashed up. We laid him out on the grass, and that young lady took his head in her lap and cried over him (she had come and seed him in the engine), and said she knew his mother and sister down in the country (she used to live down there); they was gentlefolks; that Jim was all they had. And when one of them old director-fellows who had been swilling himself behind there come aroun,' with his kid gloves on and his hands in his great-coat pockets, lookin' down, and sayin' something' about, 'Poor fellow, couldn't he 'a jumped? Why didn't he jump?' I let him have it; I said, 'Yes, and if it hadn't been for him, you and I'd both been frizzin' this minute.' And the President standin' there said to some of them, 'That was the same young fellow who came into my office to get a place last year when you weredown, and said he

had "run to seed." But,' he says, 'Gentlemen, it was d——d good seed!'"

How good it was no one knew but two weeping women in a lonely house.

FLANDROE'S MOGUL

By A. C. Gordon

I.

THE November sunshine came in through the grimy panes, where a belated fly was buzzing drearily. The jury, worn out with their three days' service in the case, were half-dozing in the box. The deputy sheriff, a little man with a big mustache and a fierce manner, walked down from his seat on the platform near the clerk's desk, and opened the door of the iron stove. Then he stirred the embers with a stout hickory-pole, and pitched in the butt-cut of an oak-log; the sparks flew in showers; the stove-door was shut with a bang; the deputy climbed into that elevated seat of

torture, the witness-stand, which was reached by a narrow flight of steps, and surveyed the court-room. The only noise audible was the loud hum of the replenished fire and the monotonous voice of the portly lawyer for the rail-road-company, as he read from the slips of paper which he held in his hands.

The dust was thick upon the three portraits of eminent legal functionaries of the local bar, long since departed this life, that hung from precarious nails above the judge's head. The furniture of the room was primitive and worn, and the clerk's desk and sheriff's box alike were scarred with the carvings of idle jack-knives. The atmosphere was close and unpleasant, and yet there was a crowd congregated there, for the case was one that had excited peculiar interest in the little country-town.

The deputy-sheriff, whose mind was never perfectly at rest except when his

body was actively engaged, moved down from the witness-chair at an inopportune moment, and, seeing Mr. Bamford, the railroad-lawyer, pause and look at him over his spectacles, called out, as if in self-defence :

" Silence in co'te ! "

Bamford, who, in spite of his stalwart form and ample girth, was nervous and easily thrown off his balance, glared fiercely at the little deputy, looked at the judge with an expression of despair, took off his spectacles and laid them upon the written memoranda he had placed before him on the bar, and pulled out a huge white handkerchief, like a flag of truce, as though to say :

" Well, what's the use ? I give it up ! "

The judge, however, had no sympathy with nervousness, and these dramatic performances on the part of counsel only served to anger him. He said, impatiently, " Oh ! go on."

And Mr. Bamford, dropping his handkerchief, picked up his spectacles and his notes, and proceeded.

The deputy in the meanwhile, considerably abashed, crept back to his seat near the desk of his friend the clerk, and queried of that worthy over the intervening railing, "Ain't old Bamford a durned fool?"

The clerk, to whom the prolonged examination of witnesses had brought an agreeable respite from work, acquiesced with a nod of his head, and went on rolling and unrolling a sheet of legal-cap paper, through which, in its telescopic shape, he looked now and then at Mr. Bamford, with the malicious purpose of attracting his attention and exciting his nervous ire. But he was out of the focus of the lawyer's spectacles; and Mr. Bamford continued to read his instructions prosily and deliberately. Mr. Hyke, the counsel for the plaintiff, had already

taken occasion to express his fine scorn of the idea of "instructing" such a jury as the one he saw before him. He was "perfectly willing to commit the case as it stood, without a word from the court, and even without argument, to the untrammelled judgment of so intelligent a body of men; whose superiors, in fact, in his four years' practice he had never yet seen in that box."

His wily adversary, recognizing Hyke's transparent trick, had exposed it with much ridicule to the jury—one of whom had been observed to smile broadly.

"Gentlemen," Mr. Bamford had said, "you have all heard the story of the boy in the big road, with his wagon-load of hay upset, and making a great outcry for help. He didn't care a cent about the hay, gentlemen—oh, no! But the reason he hollered was, his dad was under it. Mr. Hyke don't care about instructions, gentlemen of the jury—but

he's hollering all the same. Gentlemen of the jury"—leaning forward confidentially, and speaking in a stage-whisper, "Hyke's dad is under the hay."

Mr. Hyke, who was taking notes in a tablet on his knee, regarded his adversary with a twinkle in his eye and a good-humored smile on his lips. There was one thing about Hyke which always gave him a great advantage in a fight before a jury, and that was, he never got mad. This equanimity and easy composure were wofully lacking in the tall and rotund and pompous Bamford, who regarded Hyke at all times with a decided disapprobation.

The judge yawned wearily as Mr. Bamford proceeded with his reading, and gazed now and then through the grimy window-panes into the street beyond. There was nothing to interest him in that quarter, however, for the two canvas-covered wagons that went by, laden with

back-country produce, were no unusual sight, and the people on the plank sidewalks drifted rapidly past in the whirlwind of dust that a stiff November breeze was raising and shaking over everything.

"Let me see your instructions, Mr. Bamford," he said at length. Then, turning to the jury:

"Gentlemen of the jury, you are adjourned until ten o'clock to-morrow morning. Be prompt in your attendance at that hour. In the meantime, do not speak to anyone, and do not allow anyone to speak to you, about this case."

He glanced over the written slips which the deputy-sheriff had handed him, returned them to the older lawyer, leaned back in his chair with another yawn, and gazed once more wearily out the window. The jury filed through the room, and when they were gone, he said:

"Proceed, gentlemen."

Taking up the knotty legal points sug-

gested by the memoranda of the defendant's counsel, the two lawyers in turn besieged the bench with quibble and quirk, until the audience of whites down-stairs became bored and gradually melted away, to gather in little groups in the court-house yard and discuss the testimony and speculate on the result.

"It's a-gwine ter be a hung jury," said a man with a late straw-hat and a big nose. "Jim Rogerson ain't a-gwine ter give no verdic' 'gin' a railroad-copperation. I've heerd him allow as copperations nuvver gits jestis f'om farmers on a jury, nohow. He'll stay up thar in that jury-room fur a week, afo' he'll give in. Thar ain't no bull-headeder man in the county than Jim Rogerson."

"I dunno 'bout Jim Rogerson, but ef *I* war on that jury *I'd* give that man every cent he claims, an' mo', too," said a younger man, who was braving the November gusts in a linen jacket and

corduroy pantaloons, "an' I ain't no farmer, nuther. I don't blame the farmers fur bein' agin' the railroads, thet's al'ays a-killin' of thar stohck, an' nuvver pays 'ceptin' at the p'int o' the law—an' al'ays wants the bigges' price fur haulin' of thar wheat an' truck ter market, beca'se they've got the monopoly. I'm with the people agin' the copperations."

The speaker was president of the local debating society, and had political aspirations.

"I cudden give no verdict agin' the comp'ny on that feller Horgan's evidence," chimed in a third; "he conterdicted Flandroe flat-footed on the witness-stan'."

And so the battle was waged outside the court-room, while within Bamford read, for the tenth time:

"If the jury believe from the evidence ——," until even the negroes, who thronged the galleries through love of forensic contest and with a keen appreciation of the grateful warmth of the place, could stand the tedium of the legal argument no longer, and ebbed outward, too, to hang about the steps, or listen open-mouthed to the debaters in the yard.

"Dat ar man gwi' talk dat jedge ter death in dar, sho!" said one of them, as they emerged into the outer air. "I ain't nuvver heard nothin', 'scusin' of a thrashin'-machine, as cud keep up wid dat Mr. Bamford."

Still, here and there in the galleries a man and brother lingered, overtaken by a not unwelcome somnolence, and sleeping bolt upright on the hard bench, with nod-

ding and wavering head. Occasionally a gentle snore, that grew gradually into a series of startling snorts, came down to the seat of justice, incongruously breaking in upon some microscopical distinction which the lawyers were drawing between the meanings of words. The deputy-sheriff, who was munching an apple, again stalked down from his elevation at the sound from the sleeper, twirled his big mustache, looked up fiercely into the gallery, tapped vigorously with the haft of his knife upon the iron stove, and in a sharp treble gave utterance to the seemingly irrelevant command:

"Walk light, upsta'rs, thar!"

The drowsy snorer opened his eyes with a start, blinked solemnly down at the deputy, and in a few moments was nodding again.

II.

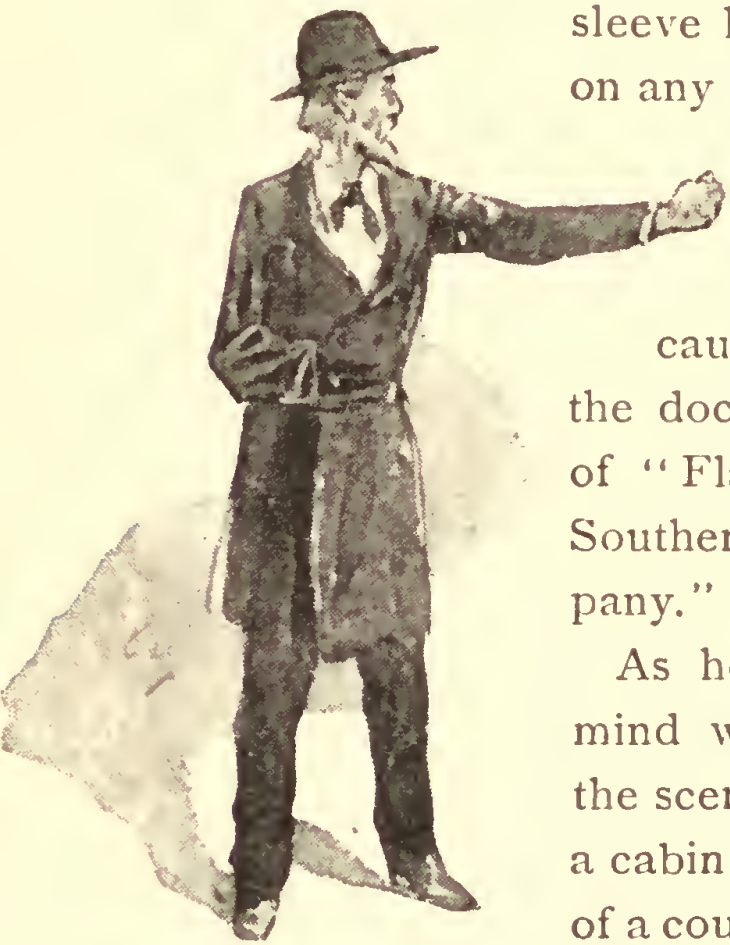
THE clerk had begun to enter a decree in his chancery order-book. The dozen or more spectators who yet lingered in the warm atmosphere of the room were either asleep or drowsily indifferent to what was passing. Beyond the judge, and the two lawyers, Bamford and Hyke, behind the bar, backed up by a sprinkling of idle young barristers who chewed tobacco languidly and gave indifferent attention to the discussion, there was only one man who seemed to be interested in the present phase of the case. He sat near Mr. Hyke's chair, and at intervals looked at that gentleman with an expression that betokened anxiety to ascertain what impression Bamford's speech was making on him.

With a brain unaccustomed to active execution outside of a fixed routine, this

man had been striving to follow the legal subtleties of the learned counsel for the defendant company, that ran like tangled threads through his ingenious argument, and taxed the trained mind of the judge himself. He very soon felt that the effort was more than futile, and so he gave it up, contenting himself with eying in turn the court, Mr. Bamford, and Mr. Hyke. He was a striking figure, standing, when erect, some six feet in his stockings ; and his build was massive and vigorous. From under the weather-beaten forehead keen, though kindly, black eyes looked out beneath shaggy brows, and the lines about the mouth, half-hidden in a fringe of thin iron-gray mustache and heavier beard, indicated resolute firmness and decision.

He was a lieutenant of cavalry in the great rebellion, promoted from the ranks for gallantry in battle, and in his day had faced danger in many forms. That scar

on the side of his bronzed cheek was made there by a Federal sabre years ago, but the lost right arm where the empty sleeve hung did not lie on any battle-field. He was James Flandroe, plaintiff in the pending cause that stood on the docket in the style of "Flandroe *vs.* The Southern Railroad Company."



As he sat there, his mind wandered from the scene before him to a cabin in the pine-flats of a county two hundred miles to the South, where his wife and children were waiting for news of the verdict, and wondering if the railroad company could ever be made to pay even a pittance for the loss of that strong arm,

without which the future offered them but a barren prospect.

"Mr. Rife 'lows ye'd better see ef ye can't settle it outside'n the law, daddy," his oldest son had said to him before he brought his suit; "he 'lows that mebbe the comp'ny'll give ye a place whar ye kin use yer arm that's soun', an whar ye won't be in no danger no mo'. Ef they'd make a job fur George Horgan 'long o' his hurt foot, Mr. Rife says he reck'ns they mought do sump'n 'nuther fur you. He says as he's heern tell as it don't pay fur ter fight railroads in law; an' he 'lowed at the post-office, Saturday, ter Jim Dollins, that even ef ye didn't git casted in the suit, yer lieyers 'ud chowzle ye out'n what the law gin ye. He says ye better see ef you can't fix it up, outside'n the law, 'thout feein' of a lieyer."

Wherefore Flandroe went up to the Cross Roads Store, where Jamison dispensed the scanty mail-matter of the

neighborhood over the same counter on which he sold his groceries and drygoods. It was the scene of Squire Rife's warrant-

trials on every alternate Saturday—and that worthy's office on other days for the writing of deeds and wills, the judicial determination of whose meaning and legal effect made many a case for the lawyers

at the court-house. But in spite of the fact that Squire Rife was the involuntary author of so much litigation in the county-side, his reputation as "a judge o' the law" was wide-spread, and his advice was sought on "law-p'ints" by many who, with strong scruples against "a-feein' of a lieyer," often had subsequent reason to regret it.

He heard Flandroe through, and then, with grave deliberation, delivered himself of his opinion in the premises, from the dry-goods box where he sat whittling a bit of white-pine:

"I wudden give it to no lieyer, Jim. The lieyers'll chowzle ye. Ye'd better go down ter the headquarters, an' see ef yer can't get 'em ter compermise it. I've seed a heap o' the workin's o' these yer cop-perations in tryin' of cow-cases in my co'te. Ef ye gits ter lawin' with 'em, they al'ays fights it up ter the last place. A po' man don't stan' no mo' chance a-

lawin' of a railroad-comp'ny than a bumble-bee stan's in a tar-bucket."

The assembled crowd, waiting for the distribution of the mail, greeted the simile with applause, and nodded and smiled at each other in approval of the squire's sage advice. And so Flandroe made a journey to the office of the general superintendent in the city of W——, which is the company's southern terminus. But the corporation that he had served for thirty-six consecutive years, barring the four when he rode with Jeb Stuart, had turned a deaf ear to him. His skill and experience as an engineer were worthless to it without the right arm which enforced them; and there were plenty of younger men with whole limbs who were ready and eager to take the vacant place. The corporation had no position to offer him, unless he was willing to take the post of watchman in the yard at Tyron; and the salary connected with it was very small.

"This is a matter of business with us," the superintendent had told him; "railroads can indulge in no foolish sentimentality, you know. Of course, we are sorry for you, but past services don't make new dividends, and that's what we are working for. The man we employ must give a full equivalent for his wages; and his worth to us is measured solely in dollars and cents. An engineer with his right arm gone isn't of much account as an engineer, Mr. Flandroe. The only thing that he can do is to take some such position as the one the company is willing to give you, on a release by you of all claim for damages."

This cool alternative of a summary dismissal, without compensation for his great loss, or else a job at starvation-wages, staggered Flandroe for a moment. He had not looked for such treatment at the hands of his employers. It was no matter of sentiment with him,

either ; but one of simple justice. He had served this company a lifetime, and now that it had maimed him and destroyed his usefulness, it proposed to turn him off to die like a dog in a ditch. His eyes blazed, and he shook his left hand fiercely at the superintendent, who leaned back in his cushioned chair and smiled at the indignant old man's threat "ter put the law onter 'em."

"Crack your whip, then," he said in reply, and waved his hand to Flandroe in token that the interview was at an end.

The mutilated old man went back to the little town near the scene of his misfortune, and consulted Lawyer Hyke. who, after telling him that a corporation is a creature of the law which has neither a soul to be damned nor a body to be kicked, and is worthy of the contempt and hatred of all mankind, proceeded to make copious memoranda of Flandroe's

narrative of the accident. Then he looked into a number of books, and said to the would-be suitor that he had "a fighting chance," with the odds against him; and advised him to see if he could compromise the case.

"Find out what's the best they'll do for you. They've got a way of making black look white with their evidence; and they can prove anything. You understand what I mean? In your case, for example, all the testimony as to the accident must necessarily be that of men in the company's service, except, of course, your own. Nobody else knows anything about it, you know. Now, how many of those men have got families? Where do they get their bread and meat? How many others, capable and efficient, are waiting to slip into their places as soon as they become vacant? And don't the railroad-employé know it? And don't the company know that he knows it?"

Flandroe was half-dazed with the lawyer's volubility; but he saw the point, and nodded his head despondingly.

"It's human nature," Hyke went on, "and I reckon we can't blame 'em. But, understand me—and I always like to make this point clear when I discuss a railroad-case with a client—I don't mean to say that witnesses in these cases are always, or even usually, directly coerced. I don't mean to charge that; the bosses are too sharp for that. But I do say that these fellows feel the pressure behind them in a way that makes them regard things from a different standpoint than that from which, under ordinary circumstances, they would look at them. You understand me?"

Flandroe nodded again. Then he blurted out:

"But thar ain't no use a-foolin' 'bout a compermise, lieyer; I've done tried 'em on that, an' they've done tried me, an'

we can't come tergether. I went down thar an' I seen the sup'intendent, an' he offered me a job that 'ud skasely do ter starve on by myse'f, let alone my wife an' child'n. I tole him it looked ter me like the wuss a fellow gits hurt the slacker the job the company wants him ter take. George Horgan got a heap better place than they was a-willin' ter give me—an' him jes' a fireman with a mashed foot."

"If they hadn't given Horgan that place we would have had a dead open-and-shut case on 'em," said the lawyer. "Oh, we could have smoked 'em! We'd have gotten big damages. But they are smart, those fellows. Horgan's got all the points about that switchman as clearly as you have. They gave him that place to shut his mouth. He knows the whole truth, if he'd only tell it."

"George'll tell it! he'll tell the truth, lieyer; thar ain't no manner o' doubt o' that. He'll sing it out, an' thar won't be

no more' stoppin' o' him than stoppin' o' the pop-valve on that old Mogul o' mine 'twel she stops herse'f. I knows him."

"I don't," said the lawyer, with a sneer, "but I'll agree to take down my shingle if, when he comes to tell the truth in this case, the truth's most intimate friend can recognize it. I tell you, it's human nature for him to save his own hide, and he's going to do it."

The next day the suit was entered. The term of the trial-court came on rapidly. The issue was made up, the jury drawn and empanelled, and the evidence heard. Employé after employé of the company took the stand for the defendant; and, in spite of Hyke's ingenious cross-examination, Flandroe's faith that law always means justice continued to waver in the balance. During the argument on the instructions to the jury, his spirits sank as he heard Mr. Bamford read from his books case after

case to show that servants of a railway-corporation, injured by default of a fellow-servant, ought not to recover damages. But they were correspondingly elevated when Hyke flatly contradicted the statement of his adversary that the cases he had cited were applicable to the one at bar; and in turn hurled precedent and citation at the court's head, in quick succession, in support of his own theory and position.

Perplexed with these subtle matters of the law, he was stricken with an involuntary and sudden pang at the recollection of how his fireman had "gone back" on him from the witness-stand.

"The lieyer was right, though I hadn' thought it. He run with me two year, an' I larnt him as much as mos' fus'-class engine-eers knows, an' thar warn't nothin' I wudden ha' done fer George Horgan. Now what do I git fur it?"

Stern in his devotion to truth and

honesty, the grim old man could not adjust the fireman's story of the accident to the requirements of the oath which he saw him take on the greasy-backed little Bible there on the clerk's desk; and even his extended charity was lacking in breadth to cover the transgression of Horgan's narrative.

"He didn' tell the whole truth an' nothin' but it, fyar an' squar', by no manner o' means," he said to himself. "He didn' let it all out, like a man; but he kep' back what would 'a' holp me. *I* wudden 'a' helt nothin' back, ef *he* hed been a-lawin' the road fer that hurt leg o' his'n, even ef it had cost me ten jobs like that they gin him, an' the old 'ooman an' the chaps ter boot, let alone a gal I was a-courtin'. I cudden ha' kissed thet book an' tole thet tale, an' uvver looked fur the Almighty ter smile on me no mo'. I cudden ha' done it. I'd 'a' out with it, no matter whar it hit. But I dunno.

Mebbe them thar lieyers side-tracked him with their everlastin' queshtuns, an' ef so, he warn't so pow'ful much ter blame."

As they left the court-room, when the adjournment came for the day, Flandroe walked out behind his lawyer, who staggered under a load of books.

"I think we've got 'em, Jim," Hyke said, exultingly, "even though that d—d rascal of a Horgan did go back on you. If the judge don't kick those instructions out to-morrow I'll take down that shingle of mine, sure enough."

And away he went, to delve into his notes of the evidence, and get up his appeal to the jury on the next day.

Flandroe observed George Horgan standing near the door, and approached him. His late fireman started to hobble off as he saw him coming, but the old man stopped him:

"George!"

Horgan glanced nervously up, then averted his face and hung his head. Two or three by-standers drew near, with eager curiosity. Flandroe said:

"I hadn' 'a' thought ye'd 'a' evidenced agin me that-a-way."

The man winced, and answered in a low voice, without looking up:

"I didn't want fur ter do ye no harm, Jim; but the comp'ny summonsed me, an' I was 'bleest fur ter come."

III.

In front of his cabin among the pines, two hundred miles away from the little town in whose court-house the case Flandroe *vs.* The Southern Railroad Company had been strenuously fought by both sides, and won at last by Hyke, the plaintiff's energetic little red-haired, bullet-headed, snub-nosed attorney, Jim Flandroe was sitting in the sunshine.

His robust strength had left him; the bronzed face had grown pale and haggard, and the iron-gray of his beard had faded to a rusty white. The loss of his arm had diminished his vitality; and his mind had been for months past tormented with apprehension lest his case should go against him in the appellate court, to which his defeated adversary had taken it.

His lawyer had told him that the judges of the Supreme Court would not hear the oral evidence of the witnesses, but would make up their opinion from the record which the trial-court had certified up to them. This information had increased his fear of an adverse decision.

"They can't tell nothin' 'bout it, 'thouten they see me with this yer stump, an' let me show 'em how the whole thing happened. An' they can't jedge how it's sapped my strent', 'thouten they cud

look at me, an' have somebody that knowed tell 'em the difference 'twix' the machine that I used ter be an' this yer old wreck that'll nuvver be out on the run no mo'."

The successful issue of his case in the trial-court had mitigated whatever soreness Horgan's testimony had caused, and in its present aspect he took comfort in the knowledge that his former fireman would not be compelled to repeat his unfair evidence.

"George was always a tender-hearted sort of a boy," he said, "an' I reck'n he meant right, only he didn' have the sand in the box to run on orders. I'm really down glad the comp'ny ain't a-gwine ter call on him fur ter lie fur 'em twicet ter pay fur that slack job o' night-watchman at Smoky Tunnel. I'm sorry fur George, bein' as how I've heern tell that the gal wudden marry him arter all he'd done fur ter keep a job on the road. Some

'lowed that she got mad at him 'ca'se he lied on the trial; but t'others says she didn' want ter hitch onter no cripple."

His mind was constantly upon the case, and the details of it had grown to be more than familiar to the members of his family.

"It's been two year sence I got hurt, come June," he one day said, "an' the case is still a-hangin' on—al'ays put off an' put off, 'long o' the railroad, fur sump'n or 'nuther. Gittin' out o' law ain't as easy as gittin' inter it—leastways ef you're agin' a railroad-copperation.

"Two year, an' thar's skasely a night in all that time that I hain't dreamed o' runnin' on the Northern Division. Sometimes it's one lay o' the track, an' then ag'in anuther. But it seems like I'm on the old Mogul, all the while, a-feelin' of her shakin' an' a-quiverin' from whar I sets in the cab, like a race-hoss under the line. An' George is al'ays with me, up

thar on his box on t'other side when she's on the level or a-rollin' on the down-grade, an' a-heavin' in coal when she's on the up an' the smoke's a-flyin'. I reck'n it's all in my mind so much endurin' o' the day, that I'm beholden fur ter dream 'bout it o' nights."

Shading his face with his hand, as though peering at some object in the distance, he continued:

"The track's al'ays afo' me, an' I'm constant' a-lookin' out fur sump'n on it. I used ter cud see a pig betwixt the rails as fur as the next one, but, somehow, these old eyes are gittin' dimmer. I tell ye, it takes a power o' nerve fur ter run a ingine, ef *I* do say it, that run one these thirty year. I don't mean ter brag, for I kep' the fear o' God afo' me, an' jes' done the best I cud for the comp'ny, come what would. But it was a ticklish business, an' it skeers me sometimes now, when I looks back at it.

"Ye've got ter have faith in Goddlemighty then, sure, a-swingin' up an' down them mount'n-sides, dark nights or bright, when a rock on the track f'om a landslide 'u'd fling the whole caboodle down the mount'n an' inter kingdom come afo' you'd know it. Ye're 'bleest ter keep a steady han' an' a keen eye; but mo'n that, ye're 'bleesten ter b'lieve thar's somebody bigger'n the president o' the road or the gen'al supe'intendent a-backin' of ye up. Ef ye don't, ye ain't no fittin' man fur ter run a lightnin'-express on that division, that's all; though thar's many a one that ain't nuvver looked at it that-a-way. God he'p 'em, when thar time comes.

"I kep' that notion fo'mos' in my head all the years I druv an ingine, an' most of all when I had that passenger Mogul. I reck'n I cuden a' shet it out ef I had tried, which I didn't. It was strong on me las' night, strong as it al'ays used ter be on me in them times when I run through

Smoky Tunnel. That thar hole in the mount'n is nigh onter a mile long; an' on the up-grade, goin' South, as ye start inter the mouth of it, the man in the cab that can forgit the Lord that made him mus' be built on a cur'us patent. Overhead an' all aroun' an' about ye thar's darkness an' furss; an' coal-smoke gits in yer eyes, an' in yer nose an' in yer mouf; an' fur off at the een' thar's a leetle teenchy speck o' light like the p'int of a needle. Ye can't see the track, ye can't hear yerse'f talk; thar ain't nothin' fur ye ter do, 'thouten it is ter have faith an' let her go. An' then, that thar speck o' light grows on ye, an' keeps gittin' bigger'n bigger; an' the smoke an' the racket don't bother ye so much as they did at fust. Then ye begin ter ree-collec' thar's a 'een' ter the Smoky Tunnel out thar beyant, that ye'll git ter bimeby. An' it comes acrost yer mind that thar ain't no purtier valley in the worrul than the one

jes' ter the tunnel's foot at t'other side, whether ye glimge it by night, when the moon is shinin' on the fogs that half-way hides it, or whether ye see it in the daylight, when ye can foller the windin' roads like cow-paths, an' the creeks, an' the branches that look like slips o' silver ribbons in the sun.

"I used ter al'ays think o' heaven when I seen Los' Gap Valley, beca'se comin' through Smoky Tunnel 'peared somehow ter fetch up ter my mind the dark and onsartin way o' life."

IV.

It was half-past nine o'clock of an evening in June, and the first section of Number Thirteen was due at Kayton Station, one mile south of Smoky Tunnel and overlooking the beautiful valley of Lost Gap. In the telegraph office up-stairs the instruments were ticking rapidly;

while in the depot below were seated some half-dozen men, dressed in blue jean blouses and overalls, with picks and shovels and tool-kits and lanterns at their feet. They were railroad-hands who had been at work in the tunnel, and were now waiting for the incoming freight-train to take them home.

"I heerd as how Flandroe los' his case," said one. "What makes me think of it is, 'twas jes' about this time a year that Fifty-seven was wrecked out thar by the tunnel."

"Los' his case? That can't be," said another, who was known to his comrades as Long Tim. "I ree-collec' how old man Bamford snorted when the jury come in. They gin him six thousan' dollars. I war thar at the trial an' heern it all. The comp'ny summonsed me, but they didn' put me on. I knowed nothin' mo' 'bout it than what Mike Dunlap tole me afo' the comp'ny run him off down

South; an' Bamford 'lowed that they didn' want that, an' cudden have it ef they did, bein' as it was hearsay."

"Yes, but they tells me the comp'ny tuk the case up higher; an' that the big court down ter Richmon' busted old Jim up wusser'n uvver Mike Dunlap done when he opened the switch that night, like a sleepy-head fool that he was. They tuk'n tuk the las' cent away f'om him. I got it f'om George Horgan. He says Cap'n Hemstone fotch the news up f'om the junction ter-day on Number One. He 'lows they say Flandroe got hurt 'long of a fellow-sarvant, or some sich foolishness, an' that it ain't law fer the comp'ny ter pay."

"Well I'm sorry for old Jim," said one of the men who had not before spoken; "I seen a heap of him when I war in the yard at Tyron; an' it's my jedgmen' thar warn't no better man to han'le a ingine on the road. That's what they all said—Cap'n Bigby, an' all on 'em thar."

"I reck'n George Horgan feels sorter put out 'bout his evi-*dence*," said Long Tim. "I've heerd tell that the lieyers all 'lowed that what George said at the trial hurt Jim's case wusser'n anything else."

"I dunno," replied the man who had first spoken, a low, thick-set fellow with a bushy brown beard, whose name was Brand; "he's al'ays a-comin' over the case; 'pears like he can't let up on it. He was pow'ful cut up t'other day when somebody tole him how low-down an' feeble the old man was a-gittin'."

"Yes, he's talked ter me 'bout the old man failin'. It 'pears ter sorter lay onter his mind. He can't be alongside o' ye five minutes afo' he's a-tellin' ye that he's l'arnt that Jim Flandroe's purty po'ly, and pow'ful hard run for money ter live on. He axed me this mornin' ef I hadn' heerd it," said another one of the men.

"Who's runnin' Fifty-seven now, anyhow?" queried Brand.

"She ain't nuvver come out o' the shops sence the last accident ter her. Thar ain't no wages 'u'd make me run on that old Mogul, gen'lemen, ef I war an ingine-driver. No, sirree! John Brice got his leg bruk on her at Payson's Bridge, an' Henry Dexter was hurt in the back the night she smashed inter Number One at Stapleses. The boys is all a-gittin' mistrus'ful of her, they tell me; an they're mighty right. She's onlucky, an' I've heern a heap on 'em say they wudden travel behine her, not for no pay."

"I reck'n the comp'ny better keep her in the shops," said Brand. "They ain't a-gwine ter fine no ingineer on this yer division fur ter drive her no mo'."

"What's the matter with George?" asked one of the party, sitting nearest the window, and starting up; "he's jes' went pas' the window with his lantern like a streak o' lightnin'. I nuvver thought he cud git over groun' that fas' on his game leg."

"'Twudden 'sprise me ef George was a-drinkin'," Long Tim said, in an undertone, to his next neighbor. "I think he's got sump'n 'nuther on his mine. I dunno ef it's beca'se Sal Desper kicked him an married Hinksley, or ef it's the old trouble long o' his evi-*dence* 'g'in Jim Flandroe. Ef it gits ter Bigby that he's a-samplin' the bug-juice, he'll fire him out o' his job afo' he can bat his eye."

Up above, in the telegraph-office, the instruments continued to tick merrily. The first section of Number Thirteen was on time, and due in twenty minutes. The operator was at his desk, with the forefinger of one hand on the key and a pen in the other, when the man who had just passed the window came hobbling and stumbling into the depot, and, hurrying past the men who were waiting there, went up-stairs toward the telegraph-office.

As he passed, he called out:

"For God's sake, boys! thar's a-gwine

ter be a cullision three mile south, ef Thirteen's on time."

"What's the matter?" they asked, breathlessly and in chorus, and tumbled up the steps after him, kicking over tool-kits and lanterns as they went. Long Tim, who had just expressed a doubt of the speaker's sobriety, was leading the van.

With ghastly face and shortened breath Horgan hobbled on, and flung the door of the telegraph-office wide open. The gang of workmen pressed in behind him as the operator, looking up in astonishment and anger, exclaimed:

"Well, what in the h—ll's broke loose now?"

The reply was a contra-query from Horgan:

"What train was that just went by?"

"Train? what are you talking about?" asked the now astounded operator.

"That express train that went south

little while ago. I met her betwixt here an' the tunnel. I signalled for her ter stop with my lantern, but she went on like makin' up los' time. She was fyarly a-sailin.' She'll smash damnation out o' Thirteen."

"Have you got the mikes, or are you a natural-born fool?" asked the operator, with increasing wrath. "You know no train has gone by here for thirty minutes."

The night-watchman looked about him in a dazed fashion, and passed his hand over his eyes. Shadows of superstitious awe gathered about the waiting gang of section-hands, who gazed at him with blanched faces. Turning to Brand, he said:

"Ye seen it, didn' ye, Jo?"

"Thar ain't no train been by here sence Number Seven," was the half-whispered answer.

Even Long Tim felt the hair bristling

on the back of his head and cold chills creeping down his spine.

The men gathered closer about Horgan, in silent expectation.

"What did ye see, George?" queried one, more eager than the rest.

The telegraph-operator, with a frown on his face, looked up from the work which he had resumed, to listen. The ticking of the instrument was loudly audible above the speaker's voice.

"I seen a passenger-express come out'n the tunnel at sixty mile an hour. By the light o' my lamp, it was Fifty-seven. The ingine-man war a-lookin' down the track, an' his lef' han' war on the lever. I cudden ketch his full face——"

He paused a moment, as if thinking. Then:

"But his beard and his hyar—Goddlemighty save me! it war Jim Flandroe."

"Boys," said Brand, solemnly, turning to his companions, "do you know what that means? It means old Jim is dead."

"It means that George Horgan's drunk, and you all are a pack of d—d fools," said the disgusted telegraph operator. "Get out o' here, all of ye! I'll let Bigby know about this to-morrow."

Two nights later, as he sat alone in his office, reading a novel, a call came over the wires from an operator at the southern terminus. The response of the novel-reader brought the message:

"*I heard to-day that old Flandroe, who was hurt at Smoky Tunnel and sued the company, has gone out on the long run. He died a day or two ago, and I thought you'd like to know about it, being close to the scene of the accident.*"

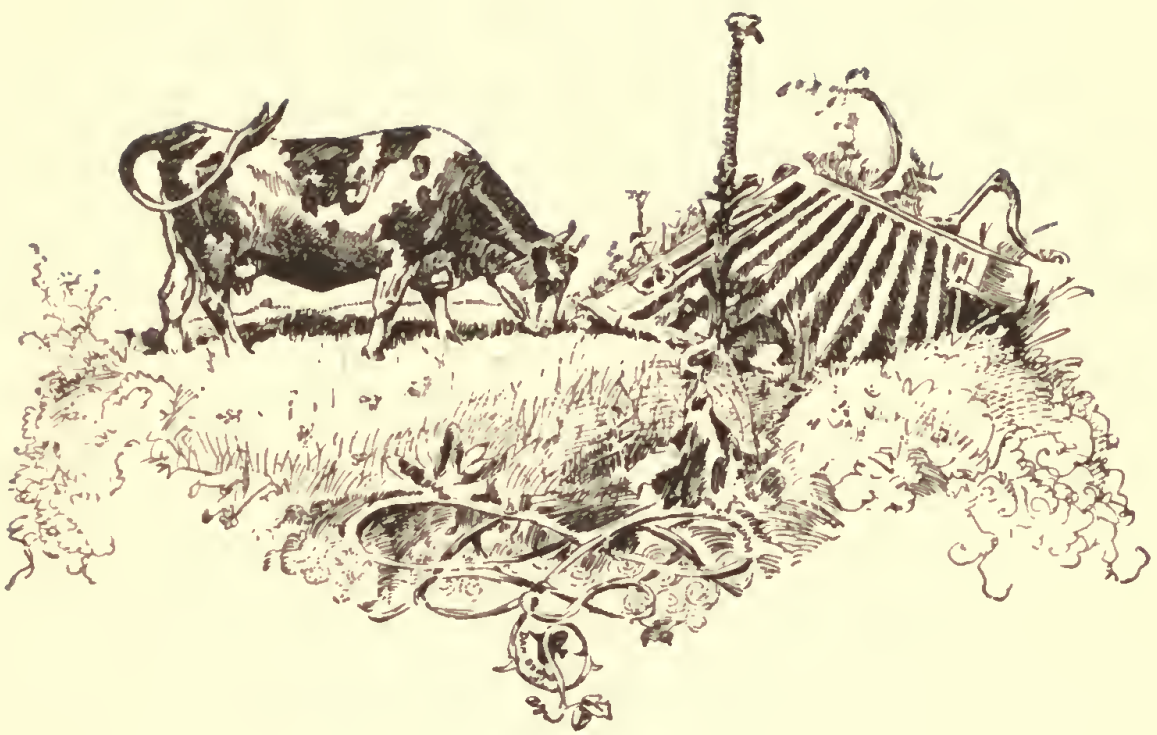
Back went the question:

"*When did he die?*"

There was an interval of waiting that taxed the nerves of the man at the keys in the Kayton office. The novel had fallen unheeded to the floor. Presently the instrument ticked out:

"*Half-past nine on Tuesday evening last, McDonald tells me.*"

It was the very hour when Horgan had met the spectral engine.



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