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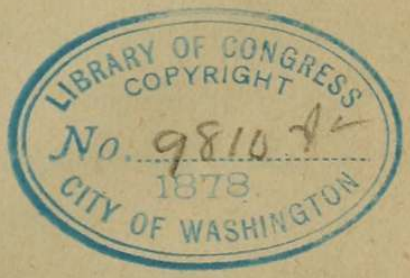
SAM JOHNSON;

The Experience and Observations

OF A

RAILROAD TELEGRAPH OPERATOR.

BY SAMSON.



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PREFACE.

THIS book has been written for a two-fold purpose. First, to give the public an insight into the social life of railroaders; a near view of the daily and nightly workings of the busy bees that manipulate the two greatest modern agents of civilization—electricity and steam. It is hoped that the panorama here presented will lead to a better understanding of the duties and responsibilities of railroaders, and to a corresponding appreciation of their arduous labors while promoting the safety and comfort of the traveling public.

Secondly, I believe, with Charles Lamb, that a laugh is worth a hundred groans in any market; and with Carlyle, that no man who has once heartily and wholly laughed, can be altogether irreclaimably bad; and also with Addison, who charmingly says: "If we consider the frequent reliefs we receive from laughter, and how often it breaks the gloom which is apt to depress the mind, one would take care not to grow too wise for so great a pleasure of life."

Holding to these views, I have endeavored to cull from the inexhaustible fund of Sam Johnson's experience and observations those incidents of actual occurrence which, while illustrating some particular phase of railroad life, shall also excite laughter and good feeling.

I have not spared the railroader at the expense of truth; neither have I bestowed upon him unmerited commendation. I have simply striven to hold him up before the public mirror, that the people may see him as he is seen by his fellows.

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SAM JOHNSON;

THE EXPERIENCE AND OBSERVATIONS

OF A

RAILROAD TELEGRAPH OPERATOR.

FIRST EPOCH.

PRINCETON.

SAM JOHNSON was a telegraph operator, not born into the profession, nor the profession born into him—but a telegraph operator when we make his acquaintance. Sam was small of stature and uncouth in appearance, but his pretensions were as large as the largest. He had a boasting, humorous way of expressing himself, utterly at variance with the language of his countenance, and so out of harmony with his size and strength, that their very oddity was ludicrous and laughable. Sam was one of those boyish men with whom young and old are alike sociable and familiar.

For punctuality, reliability, and perseverance, Sam recognized no superior. He was always on time, and would "hang" to a situation as long as it would "hang" to him. His first experience as operator was as "all night man" at Princeton, a town situated in the swamps in Indiana. Everybody had the "ager" there. It was about the only thing they were sure of. All other crops might fail, but the "ager" crop wouldn't, one could bet on that. There was no cure for it, either. When it attacked a man or a boy it went through him like electricity through a

wire—not so quickly, perhaps, but certainly as effectually. You couldn't grasp it or define it, yet you knew it was there from the effect it produced. It only left a man when he was dead, or when he wasn't worth staying with any longer. Skin and bone and soul were all that remained of the man after the Indiana "ager" had "prospected" him. When it had once shaken him thoroughly, however, it left him and never returned. That's the only commendable virtue the "ager" possessed.

Sam Johnson did not fear the "ager." He learned in time, to his great sorrow, that the "ager" did not fear him, either. Seven o'clock P. M. until seven o'clock A. M. were Sam's hours to be on duty. His only company was the clicking of his instrument, and the occasional call of a conductor or engineer. Sam used to say that even the "ager" would have been a relief to him on some of the long, lonesome nights; but the "ager" was not a "night owl." It took no mean advantage of a man, but assailed him when he was wide awake—unless he slept in the daytime, and that was his lookout, not the "ager's." Man might reverse nature's laws, but the "ager" wouldn't. Sam got the "ager." Got it badly. Got it in the daytime. Sometimes it would throttle him before he went to bed, and shake him until his teeth would rattle and his knees knock together. It would send cold chills down his spine, and all over him, until he came to think that some one must have attached a wire to him that was connected with a frozen battery on "Greenland's icy mountains." At other times he would get snugly ensconced in bed, and be just in the act of dropping into peaceful repose, when he would suddenly experience a cold sensation running up his spine, giving him the impression, for a moment, that a snake had crawled into his bed, and causing him to shudder all over with cold chills of horror. Then the "tug of war" would begin: Sam striving with "might and main" to keep himself warm and go to sleep, and the 'ager" doing its utmost to keep him cool and awake.

The "ager" held dominion as long as it chose to remain. When it left, a fever would set in that seemed to Sam's exhausted nature hotter than a fiery furnace seven times heated. He would writhe and squirm and kick and strike until he became so weak as to be unable to move a muscle. Then, probably, he would fall asleep, but only to dream of the most frightful and hideous things that a distorted imagination could conceive. In this manner Sam passed his days and nights. No sleep at night, and but little sleep or rest in the day-time will speedily wear out the strongest constitution. Sam was not physically robust, but nevertheless possessed a strong will and cheerful spirit, and no matter how miserable he might feel inwardly, he outwardly presented a smiling countenance, and was always ready for a joke or a laugh.

The "ager" kept working at Sam, and Sam continued working the wires until he was but a shadow of his former self. His friends advised him to resign his position, "cut out" as it were, and get away while he was able, or, they said, he never would get away alive. Sam ridiculed the idea, and laughed at their fears. But such a laugh. It was but the wreck of what it once was. His walk, too, began to grow unsteady, and his hand to shake when using the pen. This *did* frighten him, and for once he wore a solemn countenance. The "ager," moreover, began to "hang" to him longer and longer, sometimes extending away into the night.

AN UNKNOWN VISITOR.

Late one night, or early one morning, when Sam was feeling unusually miserable, he was startled by a strange, clanking, drawling sound, that proceeded from the farthest corner of the depot on the back side. Sam was delirious and weak, and besides had just been meditating upon the probability of soon having to engage passage into the unknown future. Could this be the summons? If so, it must be the call of the "Evil One," and straightway all

his misdeeds paraded themselves before his mind, distorted and magnified a thousand times. Nearer and nearer approached the mysterious, grating, clinking sound. Light steps were now and then distinguishable from the other sounds. "It is Satan broken loose," thought Sam, "with part of his chain dragging after him," and he trembled from head to foot, closed the window shutters, locked the office door, and waited with "bated breath" what he now believed to be his certain doom. Slowly but steadily the hideous noise moved all the way along the platform, around the further end of the building, and then toward the office. Sam was in a fever of excitement. He hardly realized where he was. A minute seemed an age, so dreadful a feeling is suspense. Closer and closer drew the infernal fiend, with its infernal music, until, finally, it came to the office door, and began clawing and scratching for admittance.

Train No. 4 arrived at Princeton a few minutes late on the morning of this catastrophe. The conductor rushed to the office to get orders, but could not get in. He knocked and kicked furiously on the door, and cursed like—well—like a conductor. No response. He looked through the ticket window, and saw Sam stretched out on the floor. Of course he was asleep! That was the inevitable conclusion. Had Sam then aroused from his swoon, no reasoning under the heavens would have convinced that conductor but that Sam had been taking a nap—stealing a march on the train dispatcher. But Sam did not revive. He was as unconscious of the commotion and fury made to arouse him as the iron horse that stood panting and snorting on the track outside. The door was broken open, and then it was seen that Sam was not asleep. His eyes were wide open, staring upward, and glistening like glass beads. Cold water was brought and dashed in his face, and, after a time, he revived; but it was some minutes before he regained strength sufficient to get the order for the conductor, and send him on his way.

As soon as Sam was relieved that morning he betook himself to his bed, and did not leave it until called to supper. He had fully determined to write his resignation that night, and send it to headquarters by the first train. It was a bitter humiliation. The only thing that consoled him was that old, old saying; "He that fights and runs away, may live to fight another day." Sam was still in ignorance as to the cause of the, to him, unearthly noises of the night before. He would hardly believe it when told that they were occasioned by a large dog which had been given away, and had got loose from his fastenings and came home, dragging a long chain after him.

Sam wrote no less than four letters of resignation that night, and tore every one of them to pieces. Not because they were not formally satisfactory, but because he would repent of his resolution, and determine to "hold on" a little longer—to give the "ager" another tussle for victory. One incentive to this was the fact that that very day a night watchman had been appointed to keep watch over the company's property, particularly the loaded cars in the yard. The watchman would be company for Sam, for he would be in and out of the depot at all hours of the night.

"TRICKS OF THE TRADE."

Occasionally passengers would stay in the depot all, or a greater portion of the night. They would generally stretch out on the benches or the floor, and go to sleep, that is, if Sam would let them, which, however, he seldom did. He would say to himself: "I cannot sleep, neither shall they." He would permit a man to get just soundly asleep, when he would shake him in a vigorous manner, and say: "Three dollars and a half to Chicago!" The surprised man would stare at him, and answer: "I did not ask you the price of a ticket to Chicago, did I?" Sam would retort: "Well, I guess you did. You've been yelling at me for the last ten minutes to know how much you would have to pay to get to Chicago. If you don't

know what you are saying when you are asleep, you would be better to keep awake."

The man would get up and walk around, and probably not go to sleep again. If he did, Sam would arouse him once more, and hollow: "The train leaves for Fort Wayne at five fifty!" The man would look more surprised than ever, and say: "I don't want to know when the train leaves for Fort Wayne. I'm going to Chicago."

"You don't!" says Sam, "then why do you ask me, and why don't you hear me when I answer you. I have yelled myself hoarse trying to make you understand, but you wouldn't be satisfied until I came and shook you. Do you always talk in your sleep that way?" This would silence him, and he would get up and go out of doors, and walk around. It was very seldom that a man would get offended when approached in this manner.

In winter the favorite amusement was to roast them out. Wood was plenty, and near at hand. Sam would close the doors, heat the stove red hot, and keep it so. Soon the sleeper would begin to gasp, to turn over, and struggle for breath; then he would wipe away the perspiration, and, finally, sit up, and say: "Operator, don't you think it extremely warm in this room now?"

"O, no!" says Sam, "it's barely comfortable; I'm used to it. Besides, I've had the 'ager' so much that I can almost sit on a red hot stove," and he would move his chair closer to the fire.

This was what Sam called legitimate fun. He said the railroad company gave a man passage in the train for himself and a hundred pounds of baggage for one fare, but they did not agree to provide him with free lodging at both ends of the route.

A SERIOUS JOKE.

All new beginners in telegraphy, as in almost every other profession, must run the gauntlet of a series of practical jokes. Sometimes these jokes terminate quite seri-

ously, as the following incident in Sam's "schooling," will illustrate.

One Sunday the day operator went on a visit to Valparaiso, leaving Sam in charge of the office. A gentleman and lady, with their little girl of about two years old, took passage on the same train for the same place. Sam was intimately acquainted with these parties, and as he was a great favorite with the little folks, he and the little girl had quite a merry romp around, and in and out of the depot before the train started.

Not long before the train was due at Valparaiso, Sam was called, and answering, received the following telegram:

VALPARAISO, June 10th.

To L. E. PHANT, (Elephant):

Your trunk cannot be found here.

ADAM GOODSELL.
(A dam good sell).

6 Collect. 40.

Sam returned the usual O. K., signed his private letter, and closed the key.

"Be sure to deliver that message," remarked "V," "if you have to go to every house in town."

Now, this was a stale joke to all but new and verdant operators. Sam had read of the same in a book on telegraphy, and so was not to be "taken in" in this manner. But he chose to let the senders think he was, and get as much satisfaction out of their "little joke" as they could.

Late in the afternoon Sam received another call from "V." To his i. i. P., came this message:

VALPARAISO, June 10th.

To JOHN SIMONDS, Princeton.

Come to nine o'clock train with carriage, little Mabel is dead. PETER SIMONDS.

11 paid. 43.

This was too much for even Sam's good nature. He thought it was carrying the joke too far, and replied that they had better desist, that he was not "sold" by their first message, and would not be by this one. "V" admitted that the first was a "sell," but averred that this one was genuine, and must be delivered without fail. Sam said that that was "too thin," that little Mabel was as lively as a cricket when she left there, and that he thought such a solemn subject as death ought not to be trifled with. "V" urged that it was only too true, that Mabel was actually dead, that she had dropped lifeless while playing. Sam could not and would not believe it, consequently he did not deliver the message.

The train arrived, and, sad enough, little Mabel was a passenger, but not the merry, laughing Mabel who had romped about the depot so lively a few hours before, but only her dead body.

There was no carriage at hand, no conveyance for the afflicted parents, and their dear child's remains. How could this be? Sam must answer, and he did by saying that he forgot to deliver the telegram. There was no time to tell the true cause, nor would it have been believed had it been told. Sam's heart was too full to talk much. He was a great favorite with children, and was particularly fond of Mabel. A few hours before she was bright, active, and full of life, but now she was stiff and cold in death. It made Sam think of the "ager," and his own failing strength, and wonder if he mightn't be the next to go.

MORE DARING THAN WISE.

The night watchman proved to be as much of a night sleeper as anything else. When everybody had gone to bed, and all was tranquil about the station, the watchman would go into the sitting-room, and, remarking that he was going to "stretch himself," would deposit his full length on one of the seats. He claimed that he never slept—O, no, not he! Sam thought he did; at least he

had never heard a man snore so persistently, and with so much regularity, when awake. One night he lay down with a fine fur cap on his head. Sam said to himself: "If he goes to sleep with that fur cap on, I'll take it off, and he'll never see it again." And he did.

The watchman sprang up at the sound of a locomotive whistle, felt on his head for his cap, then looked all about the room, but could not find it. He dared not accuse Sam of taking it, for that would be at once confessing sleep; nor does he know to this day what became of his cap. This trick played upon him, cured him for awhile of sleeping at his post, but after a time he again fell into the habit.

Sam vowed that he would "spring one on him," the first favorable opportunity, that *would* cure him of sleeping on his watch.

One night Dave Martin, one of Sam's favorite companions, kept him company. Dave was a giant in stature and strength, Sam was a pigmy. When together the contrast was laughable in the extreme. It was the lion and the lamb together, but the lamb was the stronger of the two. The lamb's will controlled the lion's muscle. Toward morning Dave's eyelids began to feel as though a pound weight were hanging to each, and he dropped asleep. All at once the watchman's nasal bugle gave a blast. Dave sprang to his feet, and exclaimed, "What's that?" and stared about as if he expected to see Gabriel, trumpet in hand, prepared to sound the judgment day.

"That is the night watchman blowing his whistle for help," said Sam, "doubtless he is dreaming of arresting a whole band of car robbers."

"I'm a sinner if I didn't think some one had shot me," said Dave.

"Now, Dave," said Sam, "if you're in for a 'lark,' and will promise not to 'squeal' if you get in a tight place, I'll tell you how we can fix that watchman so that he will not sleep on duty again."

"You can rely on me, Sam," said Dave. "I'll follow where you lead, and be as mute as a mummy. If I don't get at something to stir me up, I'll have to do as the watchman is doing, all but the bugle accompaniment."

"It's rather a risky job that I'm thinking of," said Sam, "and I am afraid it may turn out badly for the watchman. I bear him no ill will, and don't want to be the cause of his losing his situation, but these are war times, you know, and the soldier that sleeps at his post in presence of the enemy deserves death. He is paid for keeping awake, and he ought to do it, or not pretend to."

"Don't go to moralizing, and getting tender-hearted, Sam," replied Dave; "suppose that you should go to sleep here, and a couple of trains pass that you could tell nothing about, why you know that your head would come off so quickly that you wouldn't know what hurt you."

"That's true enough," said Sam, "but you needn't calculate on anything of that kind. I am not going to sleep here. But now for our 'lark.' You know that there has been a good deal of freight missing here lately, from cars which were left in the yard over night, loaded. Well, this watchman was put on to prevent it, and to detect the thieves."

"He's doing it now, just listen," said Dave, "If he would hire to the government for a fog whistle, and get pay according to his deserts, he would soon be a rich man."

"Don't interrupt me again," replied Sam, "for day is breaking, and we must carry out our plot before it is entirely light, or not at all. 'Evil deeds love darkness,' you know, and something seems to tell me that this is one of them. What I propose to do is this: we will go out and see if we can find a car that is unlocked. If we do you can hoist me into it, and I'll slide a box of something out, which we'll take over to the wood pile, and secrete where the wood-sawyers will find it the first time they load their push car in the morning. Probably they will bring it in

before the watchman is off duty, which will give him a big scare, and save him his position."

"One would think you an old 'cracksman' to hear you talk," said Dave, "but come, let us be about it," and they stole silently out of the office. They found a car with a side door half drawn back. Dave hoisted Sam into the car, remarking that he was as light as a pillow. Sam handed out a box of boots, got down from the car, and the two hurried away with their plunder, feeling indeed like thieves in action if not in intention. They hid their "booty" in the wood pile, and hied back to the depot in all haste. There lay the watchman puffing and snorting like an engine pulling a heavy train up a hundred and sixteen foot grade, utterly unconscious of the magazine under him that might explode at any moment and blow him out of a "soft snap."

Sam and Dave sought their respective couches, Dave to sleep, dead to all the world, Sam to battle with the "ager," alive to indescribable torment.

Sam was slowly walking to the depot in the evening, when, on turning the corner of a building, he met Dave, at sight of whom he almost fell to the ground. As soon as he could speak he exclaimed: "Good heavens! Dave, what is the matter? You are as pale as the moon."

"Matter, Sam, you may well ask that!" excitedly answered Dave; "if you had been in my place to-day, you would be a corpse now. I feel as if I had lived a hundred years since I saw you. Why, Sam, those heathen wood-sawyers broke their saw at the first turn of the wheel this morning, and couldn't saw any wood, and, of course, didn't find the box. The freight was checked out of the car, and a box of boats reported short. The watchman was questioned, but he could tell nothing about it, only that he had been past that car every half hour during the night. The agent telegraphed to the superintendent about it, and he and three detectives came down from Fort Wayne. Somehow they found out that I had been at the

depot last night, and they came and awoke me, and put me through two hours of such questioning, cross-questioning, pumping and squeezing, that I feel as interminably mixed up as a worm fence struck by lightning."

"You didn't tell, though, did you?" queried Sam.

"No, you can rest assured I didn't," rejoined Dave, "but I believe they suspect me, for one of these detectives has been "shadowing' me ever since. They'll question you as soon as you get to the office, but don't 'peach,' if you do we are 'goners.'"

"Never fear for me, Dave," said Sam. "I've no desire for solitary confinement. It's too restraining for a man of my energy and aspirations."

"Energy in you!" ejaculated Dave, and he laughed, notwithstanding that his looks but a moment before had been as mournful as the gloomiest thoughts of the grave could have inspired. Then he added: "Sam, if that "ager" stays with you much longer you needn't fear going to jail, you can crawl through the keyhole, and give them the slip whenever you feel so disposed. Sh—sh! here comes one of those detectives," and they moved ahead. As they walked along, Dave said in a whisper: "Sam, while you were in the car, the night watchman at the stave factory came out, and looked all around. I dodged down behind a pile of bolts so that he could not see me. If he did not discover you it's all right, but if he did then it's 'good-bye, Liza Jane.'"

"O, hush!" said Sam, "turn and go down that street, (pointing), don't keep with me. Don't you see that that 'cop' is watching us?"

Sam found things even in a worse state of excitement than Dave had represented. The railroad magnates were on hand in full force. The simple disappearance of one box of boots was not what caused the *furore*, but the many similar occurrences preceding, and the seemingly mysterious manner of their "taking off." Sam was thoroughly "interviewed," but he could not throw any light

upon the matter. No one cast any suspicion upon him. Every one who knew him knew that he could not spoil a joke to save a friend, and they believed just as sincerely that he was "as honest as daylight." And so he was, intentionally. Sam's love of adventure and fun often made him commit rash acts for which he was afterward sorry. This was one of them. The watchman lost his situation. The box was found in the wood-pile. Sam and Dave are the only persons who know to this day how it got there.

"THROWS UP THE SPONGE."

The "ager" was still Sam's best friend, if one can judge by the way it stood by him. It never deserted him in time of trouble. That was the trouble that troubled Sam. Everything has its mission, and is created for some good—even the "ager." It saved Sam's life. One dark night he had a message for the engineer of train No. 4. The engine was taking wood just below the water house. Sam started to deliver the message without taking his lantern. As he was passing between the water-house and the car next to the engine, his foot slipped on the ice, and he slid down between the wheels of the forward trucks, with his body across the rail. He tried to pull himself out, but he was too weak. He thought of shouting for help, but just then the train began to move, and he must act at once if he wished to be saved. There was no alternative but to slide back upon the track, and allow the train to pass over him, if it would. Here's where the "ager" served Sam a good turn. It had wasted him away so that he was but little thicker than a postage stamp. The way Sam adhered to that track would have put to shame the best mucilage ever invented. The whole train passed over him without inflicting even a scratch as a reminder that it recognized him and applauded his heroism. He arose from his dangerous situation almost lifeless from fright. He could not walk, but crawled on his

hands and knees back to the office. As soon as he had sufficiently recovered to be able to write, he sat down to the desk, and penned his resignation in these words:

"O. H. B., *Supt.*, MANSFIELD, O.

"'Ager' wins. I'm a ghost. Send a fresh victim.

SAM JOHNSON."

For fifteen months Sam had been a faithful "night owl," and only succumbed to what seemed inevitable fate. He did not belie the cognomen "owl," either. He had dwindled away to such a skeleton that his large, rolling eyes, in contrast to his sharp nose and pointed chin, seemed to bulge out of their sockets like the round crystal of a bull's-eye watch. But Sam is gone. While he is recruiting for another attack, let us see what he has left behind him. He was a pretty close observer, and loved to study character as depicted in men's faces and developed by their actions. He was also somewhat of a composer, and used to fill in the lagging hours by putting his thoughts on paper. Here is one of his productions entitled:

"WHY DO ALL RAILROADERS SWEAR?"

They are obliged to; it is a necessity. The human system is so constituted that when the feelings are unduly excited or depressed, the superabundance of emotion must find a mode of escape. Prosperity and joviality produce laughter. Grief and misfortune escape in tears and sighs, but the railroader's excitement is of a different nature, and demands a different remedy. The causes that most frequently disturb the equanimity of the railroader are anxiety, watchfulness, danger, the uncertainty of the permanency of his situation, and the certainty that all his actions are scrutinized by the Argus eyes of his superiors. There is no food for hilarity here, nor will despondency relieve this condition of the mind of its strain. It is an impulse of anger and impetuosity, it agitates the whole

body and mind in a twinkling. Like the rainbow, "It is born in a moment, yet, quick as its birth, It has stretched to the uttermost ends of the earth." Nothing will relieve it but an instantaneous gush of words, a flood of adjectives bristling with exclamation points. Swearing, in a railroad sense, is simply a prolific use of words without reference to, or care for their meaning. It is the intent to kill that makes killing murder, and so it is the intent to be profane that makes swearing profanity. Railroaders, with scarcely an exception, are good-natured, sociable, and free hearted, particularly among themselves. They are generally men of more than ordinary intelligence and respectability, therefore it must be admitted that they do not swear solely from evil motives, but that it is the effect of a cause begotten of necessity, and which has probably become a habit—a railroad institution. I will place a few witnesses on the stand to corroborate the foregoing:

"Van Adams, come forward and be sworn. State to the jury what you know about the case now on trial."

"Before I turned my attention to railroading," said Van, "I was a devout Christian, a strict church member, obeying both the letter and the spirit of the law. I would as soon have thought of jumping into a lion's den as of polluting my lips with an oath. Ambitious to begin business life for myself, I went West, and not finding anything more remunerative, took charge of a gang of fifty laborers building a new railroad. It was to the company's interest to get as much work out of the men as possible, and to the foreman's interest to forward the company's. I was particularly desirous of making a good 'showing' for myself, for on a new road promotion is rapid. At the same time I did not wish to be overbearing or hard on the men. I spoke to them mildly, but earnestly. Well, the second day of my service my superior in authority came to me and said: 'Mr. Adams, what is the trouble? your men do not work, you are getting nothing done, this will not do.'

"That information stunned me, and caused me much uneasiness. I urged and drove the men with all the severity that my Christian spirit would allow. Still, I did not make the headway that I should, and that the other gangs did. At the end of my first week's foremanship, the division track builder called me into his office, and said, plainly: 'Adams, you have not given satisfaction this week, but we will try you another week, then, if we see that you cannot get the work out of the men that others do, you will have to retire.'

"Here was a dilemma. How to remedy it was the quandary that worried me almost to distraction. I decided to go to one of the other foremen, and see if he could tell me how I could put spirit into my men, and get them to do more work. To my query: 'Why do your men do double the work mine do?' he answered: 'Go look in the glass.'

"Here was another puzzle. What could he mean? I said: 'I don't understand you, please explain.' He laughed, and replied; 'No man with a solemn, forbearing countenance like yours can be successful on a railroad. I have read somewhere that there is a time to preach, a time to pray, a time to weep, and a time to rejoice, and so there is, and the writer might have added, 'a time to swear,' too, and the place to do so most advantageously is on a railroad—nothing else will answer. Why, my friend, those men of ours expect it, they have been educated to it, they can't work without it—it is the battery that fires up their nerves, and makes them lively and energetic. Come over where I am working, Monday, and I will give you a lesson; and if you will 'go and do likewise,' you will have no more trouble.'

"I was amazed, shocked. I vowed I would surrender my position and future prospects before I would commit such an immoral act. Monday came. The men went to work. I exerted myself in every manner possible to get them to 'rush things,' but it was no use. I 'lost my

balance.' Forbearance ceased to be a virtue. I went to my adviser for the promised lesson, got it, and came back perfectly desperate—enraged. The men saw it, and immediately all hands flew at their work as if they were determined to build a hundred miles of track that day. Too late. The tide had set in, and could not be kept back. I pelted them with a fusillade of Billingsgate, such as they had never heard before—not only once, but all through the day.

"They did as much work that day as they had done the whole week before, and what was more strange to me, they respected me a great deal more than before. That was my experience then, and it has been verified a thousand times since. I don't approve of swearing when it can be avoided, but I conscientiously believe there are times in a railroader's life when it is actually necessary."

"Sam Johnson, hold up your right hand, and take the oath. Now, state what you know about the subject under consideration."

"One night, just after train No. 4 was due at Hanna, a station twenty-five miles west, my instrument began to click my call. I answered promptly. The operator at Hanna began:

'HANNA, 21st.

"'To ——.' Here my local battery collapsed. I had the poorest relay on the line—new beginners always have. If I had had ears as large as Balaam's celebrated steed, I could not have distinguished one letter from another by it. My local was on the ground beneath my office. To get to it I had to go through the dining room and kitchen of the eating house. To get through them I had to arouse the cook, to get her to unlock the doors. This particular cook was an American lady, born in Ireland. She was averse to being awakened in the night, and much more opposed to getting up after she had been awakened. I had tried it once before, and had been the recipient of such a tirade of abuse from her that the din and clatter did

not get out of my head for a week after. I would rather have had an attack of the measles than to have disturbed her again, but there was no escaping it. 'Hanna' was still calling me furiously, and I must get the battery recruited, no matter what she threw at me—visible or invisible objects. I went to the window, and called: 'Bridget! Bridget!' with all the power of my lungs. No reply. I rapped on the window: 'Thieves! thieves! murder! murder! Go 'way wid yees. Would yees be after robbin' a poor, hard workin' sarvant girl, that's not got a blessed penny to her name. Shame on yees.'

"'It's not thieves, Bridget,' said I, 'it is I, Sam Johnson. I want to get down beneath the house to clean the battery. Please hurry, the train will soon be here.'

"'The divil's born imp yees are, Sam,' said Bridget, 'for skeerin the life clane out 'o me. An' sure it's me heart that's chokin me now.'

"'Stop talking, and let me in, or I'll break the door down,' I said, 'I won't wait five minutes longer.'

"'Break the door down!' retorted Bridget, ironically, 'did yees know yees wasn't bigger than a shrimp. Go 'way wid yees, and don't be rushin' in as soon as I unlock the door. If yees do, I'll break yer head with the lamp.'

"Here was a precious half hour wasted. It took me fifteen minutes longer to get the battery in order. Then I got the message, which was to the car repairer, ordering him to be on hand when No. 4 arrived with new brass for a hot box. The car repairer lived five blocks away. He got to the depot just as the train arrived. He had to go a few steps to the shop for his tools. It would not take a moment. He was gone when the conductor got off the train, and accosted me with: 'Where is that repairer? Why isn't he here?'

"I answered, 'He has gone to the shop for his tools, he will be here in a minute.'

"'Be here in a minute!' repeated the conductor, 'didn't you get a dispatch to have him here when I arrived.'

"'I did not get the message in time,' I said.

"'Sandwiches without bread and butter!' he wrathfully exclaimed, 'may Satan take me for a door mat if I don't report that miscreant operator at Hanna to the superintendent before I am a day older, and have him jerked out of there quicker than the lightning he slings. You scarecrows of darkness! why can't you attend to business promptly?'

"'If you report any one, report me, I am to blame,' I said.

"He stared at me a moment as if he would sting me to death with the venom in his eyes, and then exclaimed, with vehement emphasis: 'It was you, was it? I might have known it. You fossil! you petrified skeleton! you owl-eyed mummy! you king of drones! You weren't asleep? Don't say that! Don't talk back! I'll spit on you, and drown you. Asleep! you're always asleep. You're a walking nightmare, an eternal somnambulist. You can sleep to-day, to-night, forever! You needn't trouble yourself to awake. I'll fix you! You'll not be wanted here again!' and he walked to and fro on the platform, puffing like a porpoise, until the train was ready to leave.

"The next time he came along he rushed into the office, grabbed me by the hand, and exclaimed: 'Halloa, Sam, you here yet? Of course you are! and you'll stay here until you dry up and blow away, if you want to, so far as I am concerned. Never mind me, Sam, I must blow off sometimes, or I'd burst. You never saw a railroader that wouldn't. They have so much excitement that they can't stand it, and keep the safety-valve closed all the time. Ta, ta! I'm away.'

"Jim Blair was as polite and gentlemanly a conductor as ever punched a ticket, and as cool and even-tempered as a deacon. There was but one lady operator on the road in Jim's day. She was an experiment in the business, and therefore attracted attention. The lady was young and handsome, and so was Jim. So much the worse for the sequel.

"Jim started out of Chicago with train No. 2, at eight o'clock A. M., one fearfully stormy winter morning. He was due at Pearson, where the lady presided at the key, at 12:10 P. M. Instead of reaching there on time, he was just twenty-four hours late. His train had been snowed in, dug out, and snowed in again. No one but a railroader can form a just idea of the responsibility and labor devolving upon a conductor in an emergency like this. Anxiety to avoid collisions and unforseen dangers; the fear of wood or water giving out; the persistent, earnest questioning of passengers, and the bitter, pinching cold and drifting, blinding snow, all serve to work his nerves up to the highest pitch of excitement.

"Jim entered the office at Pearson, mechanically, automatically, from the force of habit, utterly blind to what he went there for, and to the fact that the operator was a lady. As he entered the door, Miss Myers—that was her name—accosted him pleasantly with, 'Good afternoon, Mr. Blair, I have several orders for you.'

"Without seeming to recognize the speaker, Jim unburdened himself thus: 'To perdition with you and your orders! I'm padded with them, I'm smothered with them, I'm sick of them, I've had nothing but orders, orders, orders for twenty-four hours. One pulls me this way, another that way. One starts me ahead, another stops me. One says go to such a place to meet such a train, another revokes it, and so they come, forever and forever. Well, what have *you* got? trot them out,' and he dropped his eyes, and met those of Miss Myers. Jim saw the tears standing in them. Then it dawned upon him to whom he had been talking, and what he had been saying, and he turned about, ran out to his train, signaled it to go ahead, jumped aboard, and sped away without his orders. Result—Jim lost his situation.

"It's my deliberate opinion that railroads would be a failure were the employés forbidden to speak above the common key, and restricted to words of four or less syllables."

"Why do all conductors 'knock down?'" Because they are human, because they are tempted, because they are suspected. It is said that poets are born, not made. Poets have existed in all ages, and were doubtless conceived in the mind of the Creator when He first thought of giving man to the world. Not so with railroad conductors. They are the creatures of a very late necessity. Even if their existence at the present day had been foreseen from the beginning, so changeable is humanity that it is simply sublime ridiculousness to advance the idea that a peculiar germ or faculty could have been implanted in man's organization, that should ripen and bring forth what might be termed a "born railroad conductor," six thousand years afterward. Therefore we will have to admit that the calling of "conductor" was not provided for from the beginning; in other words, that he is not of divine origin, only as a man. He is human, and it is "human to err." This amplifies one reason why the conductor "knocks down."

Temptation is the immediate cause of one-half the crimes committed by man. Temptation is always before the conductor. He is every day receiving money that he can appropriate to himself, or hand over to its rightful owners, as he pleases, and the consequences will be the same. This, taken in connection with the fact that he is branded as a pilferer, not only by his employers, but by the public, by every one, is an almost irresistible incentive to do that which he is believed to do, whether he does it or not. The reason for the unanimity of the people upon this verdict is one of the things past finding out, unless it be that "the wish is father to the thought." It is a sweeping assertion, but I can truthfully say that I have never met a man who would not take advantage of a railroad company, if he could, or who was not pleased to hear that some other person had done so. I know a man who is above reproach among his neighbors, and whose honesty is never questioned, yet that man took three tickets from a railroad agent, paying only for two, and exulted over it afterward. He knew, too, that

the agent, and not the company, would lose the price of the ticket unpaid for by him; yet he didn't seem to have any compunction of conscience about it, until I told him he might just as well have picked that agent's pockets of six dollars as not to have returned the extra ticket, whereupon he throttled me and choked me until I was black in the face. This being the feeling of the company and of the public toward conductors, is it surprising to hear one of them reason in this way: "Here is ten dollars that the company says I have 'knocked down' to-day. The people all say the same. If I do not 'take' it, the company has lied, the people have lied. Is it not, therefore, better that one man should sin than a million? The majority rule in this country. I give way to the majority. I have 'taken' the ten dollars."

I do not believe that conductors, as a class, are more dishonest than other persons similarly circumstanced. Their situations are very uncertain, their expenses heavy, and they are under continual excitement, and are guilty before the world, whether they "knock down" or not. *Their* little manipulations certainly pale in comparison with the gigantic *mis*-appropriations of their superiors in authority. But two wrongs will not make a right. Until they do, all railroad conductors will continue to "knock down."

TELEGRAPHING EXTRAORDINARY.

I performed a feat of train reporting last night that is rarely accomplished successfully; at least I suppose I did it, but it's only supposition, as the sequel will show. But have patience while I explain the circumstances that occasioned it. Early yesterday morning passenger train No. 3, bound west, was speeding along at the rate of thirty miles an hour, when, about two miles east of Wasatch, twenty-five miles east of this station, she ran over a cow that was sleeping on the track, doubtless dreaming of pastures green, and wholly unconscious of the dangers of the iron horse. The engine "flew the track" down a ten foot bank, pulling

the train after it. The train consisted of one mail, one express, one baggage car and seven coaches. The coaches were all heavily laden with human freight. The baggage car was third from the engine, and, breaking away from the others, it bounded over the express and mail car, and landed on the engine, smashing in the cab, killing the engineer, and seriously wounding the fireman. In the baggage car was old Pap McGinnis, the line repairer, to whom it was attributed that he could *smell* an escape in a line, no matter how small. He was one of the first line builders in the service, and was proud of his vocation and well-earned reputation. To be out on the line, day or night, rain or shine, was his chief delight. His conduct on the occasion of this accident illustrates the wonderful influence habit wields over the faculties, even at death's door. His ladder, being too long to take into the car, had been fastened on top. The miraculous leap of the car he was in, and its sudden halt on the engine, threw Pap forward, with his face against the side of the stove, which was hot enough to burn, though not badly. A trunk, or a valise, or a chest would light upon Pap, then bound off, or be knocked off by another with more accelerated motion, each in its turn leaving its card with Pap, in the shape of bruised shoulders, skinned shins, scarred head and bleeding cuts.

The Superintendent of Telegraph happened to be on board the train, in the rear car, which ran off the track, but did not upset, and consequently no one in that car was injured. He hastened to the baggage car, expecting to find Pap a mangled corpse. The car door was soon broken open, but the baggage was in such confusion and disorder that no one could be seen. The Superintendent called, "McGinnis! McGinnis!" then listened. A very faint answer made its zigzag way to him through the medley of trunks: "Here, sir! Here, sir! I'm flat on me face; there's a Saratoga on me back, a hot stove at me face, an' the divil's own lot o' traps on me legs an' fate. Was me long ladder that was on top of the car broken?" At this last question the Su-

perintendent could not but smile, though the air was rent with the screams and groans of the injured and frightened around him. Pap was released from his prison as quickly as possible. No bones were broken, but every inch of his flesh was terribly lacerated, and one side of his face was baked to a crisp. Pap was laid up for a month. This forced retirement from active duty hurt his pride and feelings far more than his actual injuries did.

Five of the passenger coaches were literally "ground to splinters," but, impossible as it may seem, not a person in them was killed, though none escaped uninjured.

The wrecking train was starting to the scene of the accident just as the "day man" came into the office. More curious than wise, I leaped aboard. When we arrived, the Superintendent had taken down a wire, attached his pocket instrument, and was sitting on a stump, sending and receiving messages. I tried to "dodge" him and keep out of his sight, but failed. He was posted in our ways, and was doubtless on the lookout for one of us.

"This way, Johnson," he hallooed, as I was moving toward the part of the wreck farthest from him.

I was obliged to obey his summons, and doomed, I knew, to a seat for an indefinite time on that stump. I relieved him. Think of a Superintendent being relieved by a "night owl." Ye gods! how the mighty have fallen! Ye experts in the profession, envy me the glory. Alas, such glory! Click, click, click; write, write, write, and hammer the diminutive key incessantly, until five o'clock P. M. constituted the glory. About noon the Superintendent left me, saying he would walk down to Wasatch and send up the day operator to relieve me, and then I could come down, get something to eat, and probably get a little sleep before the wrecking train started back.

The slow, dragging hours wore away, and wore on me most pitilessly. A stump is a miserable seat at best. No support for the back, no rest for the feet, and where there should be a cushion, a roughness that, for excruciating tor-

ture, would have put to shame the horrors of the Inquisition. If the man who felled the tree that once waved proudly over the spot whereon I sat had a foreknowledge of the use to which the stump would to-day be put, he showed himself devoid of pity and soul; and, if I can learn his name, he shall receive the execrations of the telegraphic fraternity throughout all time.

My promised relief did not come. I dared not leave my post (stump) for a moment. My feet and legs became swollen and painful; my back and shoulders began to ache most distressingly. In this condition the "ager" attacked me in "full force," doubtless thinking "Now's the day and now the hour" to break my determined spirit, and to carry off the "spoils of victory," or, in other words, my life. No sleep since the afternoon before, no breakfast, no dinner, no rest. My stomach was begging for food, my eyelids were heavy with sleep, and my brain was dizzy with the accumulated griefs of my whole body. I actually believe that I should have "given up the ghost" then and there, had I had time. Few railroaders die with the "harness" on, unless accidentally killed. Time, to them, is too precious to be frittered away for any such useless consideration. I am not certain, had the angel of death approached me on that stump, with drawn sword, and with murder in his heart, but that he would have blushed for shame at my wretched condition, sheathed his sword, and departed in disgust. But I survived the ordeal, though more dead than alive.

About five o'clock P. M. the track was cleared, and trains got under headway. I got down from my "roost," disconnected my instrument, repaired the break in the line, climbed into the tender of the engine of the wrecking train, stretched out on the wood and went to sleep, and did not awake until the train arrived here, and the fireman turned the engine hose in my face. I had barely time to get my supper and return to the office to go on watch promptly at seven o'clock P. M.

At 9:15 P. M., passenger train No. 6 was due, going east. Until it had passed, the depot was all life and activity—a rush for tickets, baggage checks, sending telegrams, farewells, kisses and tears. After this train had departed the depot began to relapse into silence, and by ten o'clock I was generally the only soul left awake in and about the station. Solitude is drowsy company, even in daytime, and when one has had his proper hours of repose, but when for this we substitute the absence of refreshing sleep for thirty hours (to the latter fifteen of which for wearisome labor and misery no description can do justice), breathless stillness and the natural gloom that darkness suggests, should one be censured for unconsciously falling into the arms of Morpheus?

Freight train No. 12 was due at Princeton at 11:10 P. M., and train No. 18 at 12:17 A.M. If I could keep awake until these trains passed, I could then take a couple of hours sleep. But here was the "rub." My eyes would close and my head droop, notwithstanding that I bathed my face with cold water every few minutes. I resolved to try the out-door air, and went out and walked to and fro on the platform. Here, too, sleep came upon me. But I was suddenly aroused by walking off the end of the platform, falling on my face, and bruising myself.

Train No. 12 passed. I reported it, drew my chair to the table, bowed my head with my ear to the sounder, believing that should I fall soundly asleep (of which there was no doubt), the repetition of my call would awake me. After what had seemed but a few moments, I sprang up, wide awake. The next act was to look at my watch. "What! can it be possible? 12.30 A. M.? No, no! I must be mistaken. It *is*, truly!" I exclaimed, greatly agitated. Where is No. 18? Has it passed, or has it not? That was the question that distressed me. "To be, or not to be," was insignificant in comparison with it. I rushed out to see if I could find some one to enlighten me. "Not a sound was heard, not a funeral note," but

the death knell of my own "taking off," as an operator, rang loudly in my ears, unstringing my nerves, and giving me an aching heart. It was not so much the loss of my situation that smote me, as the disgrace attending it. I went back into the office, expecting every moment to be called, and asked for a report of the train. The moments wore away, but the call did not come. The longer it was delayed, the worse for me. The train was probably late, and I would have orders to hold it until No. 11 arrived. Should I receive the order, giving O. K. to it, and the train had passed, there would be a collision, some one killed, and I would be the murderer; and cold chills of horror crept over me that almost palsied my limbs. Chancing to look at my train register sheet I saw—"What! merciful Providence! can it be that Thou hast intervened to save me?" In the column and place for No. 18's report, was its, to me, unknown arrival and departure in figures, in ink. Could it be possible that the train had come and gone, that I had noted its arrival and departure on the register, and reported the same to the dispatcher, in my sleep? It was too astonishing for belief, much as I desired that it might have been done. Yet, had I not done so I should most assuredly have been asked for a report ere this. "Probably the line is open, I thought," and I proceeded to test it. It never worked better. I had undoubtedly reported the train in my sleep!

While I was pondering over this most strange affair, Loran Hodge, who was conductor of train No. 18 last night, came along on No. 11. As soon as he saw me, he said: "Sam, what in the 'bloody mischief' ailed you last night? I came into the office to learn how No. 11 was running, and found you leaning over on the table as unconscious as 'The Rock of Ages.' I pulled your ears, pinched your arms, and shook you until I was ashamed of myself, and then left in disgust."

I will not question anything marvelous hereafter. I am

ready to believe that the moon is a big cheese—as soon as I "sample it."

A REVELATION.

A week ago to-day I went down to Valparaiso to see my friend Bob Slade, who has held the position of night operator there for a year past. He had not been at his post for several nights, and I thought I would run down and stir him up. I found him abed. To my "Halloa! Bob, what are you doing here?" he opened his large, gray eyes, looked me in the face, and then said in a whisper,

"Sam, you've got it."

"Got what?" I asked.

"Got what I have."

"What have you got?" I interrogated, with increasing curiosity.

"Don't know," he whispered faintly, and closed his eyes.

"I know what I've got, or rather what's got me. It's the 'ager,'" I said; "Did you ever have the 'ager,' Bob?"

He shook his head.

"Are you very sick?" I asked, brushiug back his long, black, disheveled hair from over his wrinkled forehead.

"Not sick at all," he answered.

"Then why don't you get up, and get out into the fresh air?" I exclaimed, astonished at his reply.

"Can't," was his faint reply.

"Is your back broken?"

He shook his head.

"Are any of your limbs broken?"

Same retort.

"O, I see, now," I said, sarcastically; "your neck is broken."

He reached out his fleshless hand, pulled my head down to his, and, speaking in a low whisper, said: "Sam, no joking, but keep adjusted; my battery is mighty weak,

may go down at any moment. I suffer none, Sam. I experience no pain, but I have no strength. My head and hands are all I can move. I've an idea, Sam, that electricity is the life that is within us, and when that is exhausted we're dead. I've been thinking, too, Sam, that as the philosophers say action and re-action are equal, so it is with electricity; and if we manipulate something that is constantly conducting our electricity—our life—away, like these telegraph lines that we work, and we don't get the same quantity back in some manner, that we'll just unconsciously flit away, and weaken, and die, just as though we had gone to sleep."

His hand fell from my head, I gazed into his face, saw no signs of life, and then called lustily for help. The landlady came in, looked at him unconcernedly, and said: "O, never mind, he is taking a nap."

That is the last I ever saw of Bob. Poor fellow, he was buried to-day. I hope he was not inspired when he imparted to me his theory of life and electricity. Operators are full of life and energy, I know—they are obliged to be. However, they have not as many lives as a cat, that they can afford to have them drawn out and distributed over a hundred thousand miles of wire.

A "SOFT SNAP."

"Here's a bottle and an honest friend:
Wha wad ye wish for mair, man?
Wha kens before his life may end,
What his share may be o' care, man?
Then catch the moments as they fly,
And use them as ye ought, man,
Believe me, happiness is shy,
And comes na aye when sought, man."

I've been revelling in a sea of bliss, a kind of earthly paradise, for the past few nights, brought about by a little flirtation with the tempter. The "heavy man" at the freight house is a jolly fellow, and an expert at sampling "forbidden fruit" in a sly way. Pete and I are "two

hale fellows well met." Pete scented a barrel of blackberry brandy that had come all the way from Harper's Ferry, Virginia, the garden spot for blackberries. It was marked A 1. Pete knocked a hoop to one side, inserted a gimlet, filled a jug with the precious fluid, plugged the gimlet hole, replaced the hoop, and "all is well." What's Pete's is mine, and what's mine is Pete's, consequently he shared the brandy with me. It is delicious—superb—ropy, and thick as cream. None of the "make drunk" kind, but a mild stimulant that keeps one in a kind of honeymoon state all the while. It comes nearer my idea of what should constitute the "milk of human kindness" than anything I ever imbibed.

A RUSH OF THE FAIR.

Our division has lately received an addition to its force of two lady operators—sisters, twins into the bargain, and Yankees besides. One of them is located at Bordentown, the other at this station. They are as prim, precise and proper as any two old maids ever were. By the way, however, "our twins" are not old maids. They are as much alike in form and feature as two eggs, and are always dressed alike, to the very pins in their clothes. They consult every evening as to what shall be worn the day following. I have frequently seen passengers, who had seen the one at Bordentown standing in the office door as the train started away, and who on arriving here, seeing her sister (not knowing it to be her sister), would stand and gaze at her most impolitely, perfectly unconscious of their rudeness, wondering how she could have got here ahead of them. Sometimes they would turn away without solving the mystery, while others would exclaim: "Well, how did *you* get here so quickly? Didn't we leave you at Bordentown?"

She would laugh and reply, "Oh! that was my sister, my twin sister."

Fred Black, an operator at the stock yards, Chicago,

"sprung" a question on the one at this office one day, of rather doubtful propriety. He said to "our" fair manipulator—

"Have you a sister at Bordentown?"

"Yes, sir, thank you," was the reply.

"A twin sister?"

"Yes, sir."

"Which is the older?" was the next shocking question.

There was no reply, but if Fred could have seen the fire in "our" lady's eyes, and the nervous working of her fingers, he would have been doubly thankful for not being "come-at-able."

SECOND EPOCH.

VAN WERT.

Sam Johnson left Princeton and betook himself to his father's home, in Ohio, a walking shadow. Yet, though weak in body, he was still strong in faith, and confident that he would ultimately "outride the storm," outstrip the "ager," renew his life's battery, and be all the brighter and stronger for his experience.

Sam had kept awake at night and slept in the daytime so long, and so punctually and systematically, that this condition of things had almost become second nature to him, so that when he began sleeping at night again he was as restless and uneasy as a bird in its cage. When he did get to sleep it was only to dream of whistling locomotives, passing trains, the flurry and hurry of travelers, clicking instruments, and lightning dispatches. But a greater annoyance than this began to work upon Sam's brain. Everything that his eye rested upon seemed to swim in the air, to jostle about, to work to and fro, and around and around. He was not dizzy nor unsteady himself, and was perfectly rational. He knew that all things were not in motion and commotion, as they appeared to him. At first he treated this phenomenon of nature derisively, thinking it was the dying spasm of the "ager." But when it had continued a week, and was still increasing in intensity, he began to be alarmed. Was it possible that he was becoming deranged? Was his mind getting weaker and weaker? "Well, there is no remedy but silence," he thought. "My malady is not noticed by others. I'll nurse the canker in my own mind until it eats it up or is eaten up." The determination to fight the battle to the death, if need be, turned the scale. "Where there's a will there's a way." He began

to recover his wandering faculties, and to see things as they really were.

This bewildered state of his mind was doubtless occasioned by a conflict of first and second nature; by light and darkness struggling for the control of his system.

Two months of rest and idleness restored Sam's lost strength, and rendered him as fresh and ambitious as he ever was. He once more "panted" for the fray. He was not compelled to pant long, but was soon summoned to prepare for battle. The welcome news came in this shape:

CRESTLINE, O., October 1st.

SAM JOHNSON, Van Wert:

Be at depot on arrival of train No. 1, ready to go to Wasatch, to relieve the night operator. O. H. B."

Sam was on hand at the train, went to Wasatch, arrived there at 9:10 P. M., and was immediately clothed with the toga of "all night man," and was happy. True, he was in Indiana, the land of chills and fever. He might get the "ager" again. What might occur did not trouble Sam. He was not one of the sorrow-seeking kind. He stuck a pencil behind one ear, a pen behind the other, and drew his chair to the instrument table, prepared for business, as wide-awake and as patient as a cat watching for a mouse. The night wore away, and at 7 A. M. Sam locked the office, and started up-town to the hotel, before the day operator arrived. As the day operator was not expected until eight o'clock, and the trains were on time, he was at liberty to go.

A WARM RECEPTION.

Sam had never been in Wasatch before, except to pass through it on the railroad, and that only skirted the suburbs. Imagine his surprise, then, as he was passing meditatively along one of the business streets, to have a man rush out of a clothing store, grab his hand and shake it enthusiastically, exclaiming: "Sam, I am glad to see you. Looking better, too! When did you arrive? Going

to stay long? Call in before you go. Guarantee to suit you in quality and price better than any house in town," and he grinned all over his face.

Sam could not make out who his interrogator was, nor what he meant, nor did he trouble himself to find out. If the man knew him, all right. If he didn't know him, all right. If he was perpetrating a joke to catch his custom, that was all right—provided he trusted. Sam bade his new acquaintance "good morning," and passed on.

He had hardly gone a block before he was accosted by a well-dressed, intelligent looking man, on the opposite side of the street, with: "Why, bless my soul! is that you, Sam? I thought we would never see you again. Where do you hail from? Hold on a minute, please, till I come over and 'have a shake!'" and he crossed the street toward Sam.

Sam waited for him, both amused and perplexed, and wondered what such proceedings meant. The stranger shook Sam's hand warmly, patted him on the shoulder, and said, familiarly: "Old boy, you are as smiling as ever. That face of yours is a fortune to its owner."

Sam thought it was about time to clear away the mystery, and so said: "Stranger, you seem to know me, but I hope I may never die if I ever saw you or met you before."

The stranger laughed, and answered: "That won't do, Sam; won't do. Don't you know John Barkley, lawyer? Well, if that isn't *too* cool, Good morning, I'll see you again."

Sam was confounded. Was it a joke some one had "put up" on him, or was it the way this people greeted every stranger? It was sociability and familiarity bordering on impudence.

Sam stepped into the hotel, up to the counter, and registered his name in a bold business hand, the proprietor staring at him all the while. When Sam looked up the proprietor said, tauntingly: "Oh! you've changed your name, have you?"

"Changed my name!" exclaimed Sam. "What do you mean? Are you all bewitched in this town, or am I dreaming?"

"You're not Sam Haines, the bare-faced, oily-tongued book agent who was here two months ago selling law books?" propounded the landlord. "You didn't get an advance on your books from our lawyers, smart as they are? Of course not. Didn't I just see that clothing merchant talking to you. Suppose he wasn't dunning you for the bill you run there for a suit of clothes that you got away with? And pray, what was Lawyer Barkley speaking to you about? Asking your advice legally, I suppose. 'Johnson' won't 'wash.' It's 'too thin.' However, it don't matter about your name, whether it is Haines, Johnson, or the Devil, you can't secure accommodations in this house until you have settled the 'old score,' first," and he folded his arms complacently, as much as to indicate that "it is said."

Sam knew now that he was mistaken for another person, one, too, who had a rather questionable reputation. It was a joke, and a good one, but it had too serious an aspect to allow it to go any further unexplained.

"Landlord," said Sam, "you are 'off your reckoning,' I was never in this house before. I am not and never was a book agent. I am an operator."

The landlord eyed Sam a minute, contemptuously and incredulously, and then said, sarcastically: "An operator! yes, and a very fine one. One of those ever-smiling, polite, clever, butter-mouthed confidence operators, who have been swindling honest people ever since the first one of your class beguiled innocent Eve with his flattery. But you have 'put your foot in it' this time. You'll be in the 'Jug' in less than half an hour," and he started out of the room.

"Hold on, Mr. Knoweverybody!" shouted Sam, "don't go away in a passion. If you say that I am a confidence operator, that I am any other person than Sam Johnson,

that I was ever in this house before, or that I owe you or any other man in this town one penny, or any other amount, then I emphatically say that you are—well—the most deceived man above ground. I'll have nothing to do with you. Good morning!" and he moved toward the door, greatly excited.

Just at this moment a man hurriedly entered, clasped Sam's slender arm with a vice-like grip, exclaiming: "Ah, ha! Mr. Samuel Haines, I've got you at last. You're my man, sir. I have a warrant for you. Come along with me," and he made an effort to force him along.

As quick as a flash, Sam jerked his arm through the vice of the officer's hand, assumed an attitude of defense, and ejaculated: "To Hades with your warrants, your Samuel Haines, and yourself, too. I am not Samuel Haines, nor do I intend to be. If you want to know who I am, go down to the railroad office and inquire for Sam Johnson."

But resistance was useless. Sam was marched away to the "Jug," and furnished accommodations behind cross-bars of iron. To say that Sam was angry would only be mockery to his feelings. He was tempestuous. He was convulsed with a perfect hurricane of rage, and expressed the emotion within him in true railroad style, then felt relieved. Gradually he subsided to his natural state of feelings, and finally laughed heartily at his ridiculous but dramatic situation. Second thought satisfied him that he could easily prove himself to be Sam Johnson, telegraph operator, and no mistake. Almost every man on the division knew him.

Sam never looked on the dark side of anything very long. It was contrary to his nature, as the following note, written in prison, will show:

"Dan Brown, Agent:

"In the prison cell I sit thinking of how you are wondering why I am not on hand with the key. I can't get away from my friends. I never met with so cordial a recep-

tion in a strange place in my life. Everybody seems to know me. I am stopping at the County Hotel. I have every accommodation and luxury which the place affords, free, too ; think of that. The landlord is the most obliging man I ever met. He even insisted on my wearing some of his jewelry. You know, Dan, that there is nothing proud about me. I feel miserable with it on. But he was so urgent, and it seemed as though I would confer so great a favor upon him by accepting it, that I couldn't refuse. Now, Dan, don't think that all these favors are being showered upon Sam Johnson, 'night owl.' No, no ! They dub me Sam Haines, and won't listen to anything I say to the contrary. What a joke it will be on them when they discover that they have been bestowing so much atten tion upon Sam Johnson ! If Sam Haines doesn't 'turn up' before night, I fear that I may not get away from here in time to go to work. If you can satisfy the bearer of this note that I am truly Sam Johnson, telegraph operator, and not Sam Haines, the rascally book agent, you will oblige me very much. True, everything is as pleasant here as can be, under the circumstances, and my board and lodg- ing are free, but then I prefer to be independent, and not beholden to any one. Very sincerely,

SAM JOHNSON."

The sheriff delivered Sam's note to the agent. Dan read it, pausing every few words to laugh, not so much at the contents of the letter, as at the idea that Sam Johnson should be a victim of mistaken identity. That Sam John- son could be imitated or duplicated in looks and actions, he thought an utter impossibility. He finished perusing the note, folded it up, and, after recovering from his boist- erous laughter, looked up at the sheriff and said : "Every word of this letter has the ring of Sam Johnson in it. By Sam Johnson I mean the little, lean, ghostly-looking fel- low who was night owl at Princeton for more than a year, until within two months past. But I can tell you how you

may know Sam Johnson without mistake. Sam Johnson was to come on the west bound train last night to take the place of our night operator, who is sick. I was not here when the train arrived, but I understand he came. If it is Sam Johnson you have in custody, you will find a square hole in the lobe of his left ear, which was made by a conductor's punch."

Armed with this description the sheriff returned to the jail. He found the hole in Sam's ear, sure enough, and immediately set him at liberty. Sam always looks upon this affair as one of the richest jokes he ever had a hand in.

The way Sam happened to have a hole in his ear was in this wise: He was taking a run down to Chicago, one day, when he was working at Princeton, just for variety's sake. Frank Ames was conductor of the train by which Sam returned. He was the jolliest of the jolly, and "up to" all the tricks and mischief going. On his round through the train, coming to Sam—who was dozing—he thumped him on the head with his punch, and called out "Tickets!" Sam shook his head. "Pass!" Same reply. "Money!" Sam laughed. "I must have something to punch," said the conductor.

"Well, then, punch my ear," said Sam, turning the left one to him.

The conductor put his punch on Sam's ear, only intending to pinch it. But just at that moment the train gave a sudden jerk ahead, which threw the conductor backward. The punch came down with a snap, cutting entirely through the ear, and almost pulling it out of his head besides.

Time sped along on its heedless course at Wasatch, and Sam with it. A night telegraph operator has much more to do than simply keep awake (though that is a laborious effort sometimes), and report the arrival and departure of trains. He has the tickets to sell, baggage to check and put on the train, and often express business to attend to, reports to put aboard the train, train orders to deliver; if

any cars are wanted, to get them from passing trains, to deliver way bills to conductors for cars that are to go from the station, to check out of the cars any freight received at night, to keep his signal lamps always filled and trimmed and ready for immediate use. A railroad operator must live in continual expectation of being wanted at any moment, and must be always ready for the emergency. At stations where there is but one operator this is all the time, day and night, week days and Sundays. Of course one man can not be on duty all day and all night continually, but he must be "come-at-able" when his services are required, which we will see is frequently the case, before we take our leave of Sam Johnson.

THE ALARM.

When Sam was at Wasatch, it was the custom for the operator in the train dispatcher's office to call each night operator on the line a few times every half hour, beginning at nine o'clock P. M. Any operator not answering would be recorded, and at the end of the month would receive notice of the number of calls missed. If the number was above a certain per cent., a fine was imposed, which was deducted from the wages.

Sam noticed that operators who caused the most annoyance by sleeping, and being out of the office when wanted (thus "laying out" trains, and retarding the business of the road), usually "came out ahead" of the faithful operator, in the way of promotion. They brought themselves into notice and prominence by their neglect of duty, would get discharged, taken on again in an emergency, soon "sacked" again, and—result—a good day job. No fault was found with their operating, and so, like the "prodigal son," they would be rewarded for their waywardness by the "fatted calf," while the strictly faithful night operator might toil on, and on, unnoticed and unrewarded, like the "Ninety and Nine," who did not go astray, and consequently got no grand reception.

A "LITTLE UNPLEASANTNESS."

Railroaders have all classes of people to deal with, and are frequently placed in positions that severely test their forbearance and courage. One night, at Wasatch, two half-inebriated men called for tickets to Chicago, each presenting a five dollar bill. Sam gave them tickets and change, and went to his instrument. Presently he was called to the ticket window, when he was again confronted by these two individuals, each demanding five dollars more change, claiming that he had given Sam a ten dollar bill. Sam knew that it was impossible that he should have made two mistakes of that kind. He unlocked the safe, examined the money drawer, and found no bills of such denomination in it. He politely explained this to the men, but they would not be satisfied. They wanted five dollars each, and would have it if they had to come in, and "choke it out" of Sam. Finding that they could not frighten him into paying each the extra five dollars, they made a rush for the door that opened from the sitting room into the office. The door was fastened with an old-fashioned bolt, but the bolt was of wood. As both of them were lunging against the door, Sam feared that their united weight would cause the bolt to break, and that they would be unceremoniously precipitated upon him, and as they were desperate looking characters, he would take no chances. Arming himself with a heavy, iron poker, he stood near the door with uplifted weapon, ready to strike down the first that should enter. He had not long to wait. Soon the bolt gave way, and in tumbled one of the assailants. Sam gave him a "poker benefit," with all his strength, knocking him senseless, and cutting a long scar in his head, from which blood flowed freely. The other "rounder," seeing the condition of his companion, and that Sam was ready for him also, withdrew, and did not attempt to force an entrance. The whistle of the approaching train was heard, and Sam told the uninjured

man to drag his friend out, and put him aboard the train, which he was glad enough to do.

At another time a large, vicious looking "customer" walked into the office about eight o'clock P. M., and lay down on a cushioned bench without recognizing Sam, or even saying: "By your leave, sir."

Sam's first impulse was to order the intruder instantly out, but then, he thought, probably he is an intimate acquaintance of the agent, who had been permitted such liberties, and he refrained from so doing. Sam's instructions were to close the office at nine o'clock P. M., and admit none but train men after that hour. The safe always contained more or less money, and it was not business prudence to allow every one who chose to enter, admission to the office.

At nine o'clock Sam informed his gentlemanly (?) visitor that he wished to close the office, and would be pleased to have him walk out into the sitting room.

"We'll see about that!" was the growling rejoinder.

This scornful reply kindled Sam's wrath in a twinkling, but he smothered it, and said: "Mr., I have told you civilly and politely what my instructions are, and have asked you in a gentlemanly way to comply with them. Either you or I must leave this office, and that soon. As I have the better right here, I am under the impression that you are the party that will go."

The stranger turned on his back, and grunted: "I guess not."

Sam had stationed himself beside a drawer that contained a large navy revolver, determined not to be "pounced upon" unarmed. This last reply of the impudent stranger aroused Sam to the highest pitch of anger and determination. The words had hardly died on the speaker's lips, ere Sam pointed a revolver at his head, cocked, and with his finger on the trigger, said, in language the meaning of which could not be mistaken: "If you are not out of this office in one minute I shall adopt

another mode of persuasion, which I am positive will be more effective than the first, and which will place you in a condition to be removed peaceably."

The stranger was fully aroused now, and convinced, too, that Sam "meant business," and he got up, and hurried out of his presence.

Sam was affable, yielding, and disposed to defer his own opinions to those of others, for the sake of harmony and good feeling, socially, but in business regulations he was inflexible.

CONFIDENCE OPERATORS.

Wasatch was a kind of exchange depot for confidence operators; a class of shrewd, polished, plausible, gentlemanly-appearing persons, who, by their suavity, natural magnetism, and acquired dexterity and proficiency in reading character in faces, ingratiated themselves into the confidence and good graces of travelers, and by so doing "fleeced" them of considerable "filthy lucre." Not only did they work upon the verdant and unsuspecting, but their greatest success was with the intelligent man of business, and the staid, sober men of morals and uprightness. It is truly wonderful how frail human nature is when subjected to temptation, and how easily thrown off its guard when there is a possibility of "large profits and small losses."

While Sam Johnson was at Wasatch, he was an eye witness to several incidents confirmatory of these views.

In the neighborhood of Wasatch there is quite a settlement of Dunkards, a religious society whose members are known for their sobriety, thriftiness and honesty. "Help one another" is their principal rule of conduct. They are plain and neat in manners and dress, and one need only see to know them. Gambling, to them, is a heinous crime. That one of these people, and that one a minister, should be inveigled into staking his money on a game of chance, is almost too incredible for belief, yet Sam Johnson says such is the case, and what Sam asserts is unquestionably true.

Train No. 5, bound west, was due at Wasatch at 1.30 A. M. The confidence operators would "work" No. 5, from Fort Wayne, west, as far as Wasatch, and remain over and "manipulate" No. 4 back, which left Wasatch at four o'clock A. M. No. 5 brought three of these wily persons to Wasatch one morning, all of them perfect gentlemen in appearance and conversation. They bought tickets, and of course had the same privileges at depots and on the cars as other travelers. On this particular morning, when No. 5 arrived with the three "wolves in sheep's clothing," the only occupant of the sitting room was a Dunkard minister, who, in the flight of time, had probably "turned the scale of fifty." The three roguish gentlemen "looked him all over" again and again, went out of his hearing, and consulted and planned, and finally decided upon their mode of operation. One of them introduced himself to the old gentleman, and engaged him in conversation; first upon the weather, then upon the war, then upon general topics, and finally upon religious matters, the theme nearest the minister's heart. The "operator" was well versed in all these subjects, and proved most agreeable company to the minister, completely gaining his esteem and confidence. When the proper time arrived he introduced his business, or what he was thinking of making his business, which was that of becoming agent for a newly invented patent lock, the right of which his friend there (pointing to one of his confederates), had for sale.

"Yes," says the confederate, "here is one of the locks, (handing one out), and I'll stake my reputation and my fortune that it is just what I represent it to be," and he, at the same time, displayed a large roll of greenbacks.

He explains its merits, shows how it works, and offers to back his word with money.

The minister reproves him for his gambling propensity, and volunteers some good, wholesome advice. The gambler very politely admits the force of his remarks, but justifies his conduct by arguing that it is much easier to

preach than to practice, and of what consequence is a man in the world without money, and why concern ourselves about the future, of which we know nothing, when the present demands all our attention. Then, addressing himself to the third "operator," whom he treats as a stranger, he asks him to examine his patent lock.

"I don't care about it," says he, "I have very little faith in 'new-fangled' inventions."

"You certainly cannot object to looking at this," said the gambler, "it shall not injure you, nor cost you anything."

The apparent stranger steps forward and examines the lock, remarking that it is a very nice piece of workmanship, and ingeniously constructed, but he doesn't see why it cannot be opened as easily as any other lock.

"I assert that it cannot," says the 'operator,' and will back my assertion by from ten dollars to ten thousand."

"I am not a betting man," affirms the 'decoy,' but, to teach you a lesson, I will wager ten dollars that I can open your lock in less than five minutes."

The wager is accepted, the trial begins, and, of course, the "decoy" wins. Appearing to be elated with his success, he continues to bet, increasing each wager with the money previously won.

The man of strict morals, from declaiming and reasoning against the practice, has become a highly excited and interested spectator. His conversational, newly-made friend has explained to him that the gambler has a large fortune, which nothing can hinder him from spending; that he is a monomaniac on this patent lock, and though he never wins he never despairs, believing that he will triumph in the end. He further adds, that, as the monomaniac seems intent upon parting with his money in such a manner, he has almost been tempted to avail himself of the opportunity to "feather his own nest," to use a vulgar and metaphorical expression. "Is it not better?" he argues, "that persons should obtain this money who can

and will put it to good use, than that gamblers and persons of disrepute should squander it in debauchery?" This mode of reasoning, coupled with the powerful human incentive which exists in every mind to better one's fortune quickly and easily, at last completely triumphed over the nobler principles of the "man of morals," and, with trembling hand and beating pulse, hardly knowing what he is doing, he draws forth a wallet from an inner pocket, takes two hundred and fifty dollars therefrom in bills, and places the amount in the hands of his confidential friend (?) while he is given one of the locks, which, if he opens in five minutes, he doubles his money. If he fails he loses it. He lost it.

When the minister's new-made friend, who was holding his watch in one hand, and the money in the other, exclaimed: "You have lost!" and he (the minister) realized what he had done, he stood motionless in the middle of the room, as one petrified. This gave the confidence operators a chance to escape, which they were not slow in doing.

The remorse and agony of the conscience-stricken Dunkard were painful to witness. He groaned, wrung his hands, pulled his long beard as if he would pluck it out, walked to and fro with a quick, nervous step, until the perspiration oozed from his forehead, running down on his beard, and at last sank into a seat, overcome with grief, and sick at heart.

"LIGHTNING FLASHES."

In the summer season thunder showers were of frequent occurrence, often coming up suddenly, startling the stillness of night with peal upon peal of Jehovah's dread artillery, and illuminating the darkness with vivid flashes of electric light from nature's overcharged battery. At such times it was imperative that the instruments should be disconnected from the wires, otherwise they were in great danger of being rendered unfit for immediate service. The

operator, too, ran no small risk of being "dispatched" to his long home, not exactly in a chariot of fire, but, as it were, on the wings of a streak of lightning.

During Sam's "administration" at Wasatch, he was one of the participants in a *tete-a-tete* with the warring elements that was more venturesome than prudent. The thunder rolled and roared through ethereal space, causing the air to tremble and vibrate alarmingly, and, ever and anon, as the thunder broke forth in sudden peals of wrath, the earth would seem to shudder as though convulsed from center to circumference. Forked tongued lightnings, lightnings with a thousand tongues, and lightnings with tongues without number, flashed hither and thither, and everywhere, brilliant as diamonds, and fiery as the sun—a blaze of dazzling beauty for those whose nerves could withstand the shock. The rain descended in sheets, in waves ; an ocean seemed to have dropped out of the clouds, and fallen in a body to earth. In the very midst of this furious battle of the elements, train No. 18 arrives ; the conductor hurries to the office, and asks Sam to try and get orders for him to run his train to Columbia City, regardless of train No. 9.

"Impossible," answered Sam, "I dare not connect my instrument with the line for fear of ruining it, not to say anything about my own safety."

"Have I got to be here for No. 9, after flagging my train in through this infernal storm, and getting drenched and beaten against by the wind until I am as wretched as a bare-footed Turk on a pilgrimage to Mecca? Sam, get me orders to get away from here if it blows the top of your head off."

"If you will stand by the table and hold fast to my left hand, so that should I make a sudden dash for the other end of the room you can hold me back, I will make the attempt," said Sam.

"Now you *are* talking, Sam," said the conductor, "give me your left hand and 'sail in' with the other. I'll stick to you as long as there is anything to hold to."

Sam connected his instrument. Sharp flashes, snaps and sparks executed a regular "Highland Fling" around and among the instruments—a kind of Satanic dance, accompanied by the deep bass music of the element's thundering band. Now and then sparks would bound off from the instruments and almost blind the conductor and Sam for the moment. After much adjusting and vexation Sam got the desired order, and was repeating it to the dispatcher, when a powerful flash completely blinded him, causing him to let his fingers slip off the knob of the key on to the brass lever. In a twinkling he was knocked backward with such force that his chair was upset, and he and the conductor went bounding on the floor. The effect of the blow from the lightning disappeared with the flash, and in a moment Sam was on his feet again, renewing the dangerous warfare. He had just succeeded in getting the order O. K. when the conductor aroused from his shock. As soon as his senses returned he sprang out of the door at one bound, exclaiming: "Confusion to your treacherous lightning! Why, the forked-tongue fiend can knock a man as cold and lifeless as a frozen potato, quicker than a singed cat can jump," he ejaculated, as he started away.

"Hold on! hold on!" cried Sam, "here's your order. Come in, attach your signature, and get out of this place as soon as you can."

"To Hades with the order," retorted the conductor; "just order my coffin, will you, before I come in. There's no doubt but I'll want it before I get out."

TASTING ELECTRICITY.

It may not be generally known that electricity can be tasted as well as felt; that is, that it has a flavor peculiar to itself, by which it can be distinguished from anything else. Sam affirms that it has, having demonstrated the truth thereof to his own satisfaction. He gives the manner of tasting it as follows: "Let the person who is to taste it take hold of the ground wire in the office with his right

hand. Let a second party place the fingers of his right hand on the 'cut out' of a line with a strong battery, and then complete the circuit by touching the first party on the cheek with the forefinger of his left hand. The party touched will immediately experience the vilest taste in his mouth known in nature or compounded from drugs."

A CHANGE.

Sam was transferred from Wasatch to Van Wert, a station one hundred miles east, on the same line. He worked all night at Wasatch, traveled during the day, so that he should be at Van Wert for duty at night. No matter about *his* loss of sleep and rest, the company must not lose his services. Nevertheless, if he should fail to perform any part of his allotted task on account of this extra duty, he would surely be held responsible for it.

Sam was welcomed to Van Wert with a grand reception, in fact a perfect ovation. The train that bore him entered the town amid the booming of cannon, the displaying of flags, and the singing of the National Anthem by a large crowd of men and women assembled at the depot. The train stopped, and immediately cheer upon cheer rent the air. Sam was wonderfully surprised. He had not dreamed of such a thing. It was extraordinary. He was not aware that he had performed any public service that should excite such enthusiasm in the people. Yet it must be that he had, otherwise why all this parade, and show, and outpouring of the people upon his return? He began to feel exalted in his own estimation, and to chide himself for being so thoughtless as not sooner to have discovered his own greatness. Then he would have doubts. Probably, with him, "Distance lends enchantment to the view," and the kind-hearted, generous people have magnified his few virtues into unlimited numbers. It might be possible, too, that he was one of those persons who, as the poet says, have greatness thrust upon them. "Well, if what is to be will be, there is no use to rebel," thought Sam. "I'll wear

the honors as nobly and gracefully as I can. I suppose that upon alighting from the cars I shall be taken up by the multitude and carried upon their shoulders to a banqueting hall, where, after feasting and drinking, I shall be called upon for a speech. Let me see—what shall I say? I think the proper and most affecting address would be something like this:

"Ladies and gentlemen! a-a-a-a-a-'hem, but really—a-a a I can't speak, a-a your magnanimity has overcome me. My feelings choke me when they undertake to express themselves in words. Believe me, my heart speaks though my lips be silent. I must sit down."

These thoughts shaped themselves in Sam's mind in much less time than it has taken to pen them. Sam alighted to the platform big with expectations, but they only lasted for a moment. There was no rush or scramble to see him, to lift him up and bear him away. On the contrary, he was not noticed, except by a howling "pack" of hotel runners. A red-nosed, red-faced, long-haired, portly man a short distance from him seemed to be the center of attraction. He was lifted into an open carriage, when one of the leading men in attendance swung his hat in the air, and exclaimed: "Three cheers and a tiger for the Hon. William Thorn, our noble candidate for Congress!" They were given with a will, the band played "Yankee Doodle," the carriage started, followed by the people, and soon the depot resumed its usual appearance.

Sam immediately lost confidence in humanity. When a people could become "swallowed up" in a man who had no more respect for himself than to aspire to be a Congressman, it was about time for another flood.

RAILROADING UNDER DIFFICULTIES.

There is a limit to human endurance, a point at which the physical machinery of the man breaks down, and will not and can not move further until recuperated, no matter how persistently urged by the ambitious spirit of the indi-

vidual to go forward. This is frequently exemplified on a railroad, in the winter season, when the weather is unusually severe and inclement. Sam has recorded one particular instance of this nature which occurred while he was "night owl" at Van Wert.

Train No. 12, Jack Dare conductor, pulled out of Fort Wayne, east bound, at 6 o'clock A. M. Monday morning. The morning was bitter cold, a kind of icy sleet was falling that froze fast to everything it touched. The wind was blowing furiously, making it very dangerous for brakemen to be on top of the cars. But one had to be out all the time, and two at the approach to every station, as well as at every sharp curve in the road, and at every heavy grade. The sleet made the rails slippery, and a heavy train of stock tried the skill of the engineer and the power of the engine to its utmost in the endeavor to "make time." The elements were "too many" for the genius of man and the strength of the iron horse. The train failed to make its first meeting point, and had to lie at Monroeville forty-five minutes waiting for No. 11. The freezing sleet had formed so heavily on the wires that they were broken in a number of places, and communication with the Superintendent's office was impossible. The engineer had to build fires on both sides of his engine, while it was standing still, to keep the pumps from freezing and the engine from becoming glazed with ice—an iceberg on land. The forty-five minutes required by rule for one delayed train to wait for another coming from an opposite direction, expired and No. 11 had not appeared. It was necessary to move with great caution now, for it might be met between stations. The conductor took a stand on the engine, one brakeman on top of the forward end of the train, the other on the rear end, to keep a sharp look-out for No. 18, behind. In this manner they pulled out of Monroeville and "felt" their way along. The sleet gradually changed to blinding, drifting snow, and fell thick and fast, rendering it impossible to see to any great distance. Dixon was reached and

passed without encountering No. 11. About midway between Dixon and Conroy the engineer saw something across the track, and immediately reversed his engine and called for brakes. The train was brought to a stand with the engine but a few feet from the obstruction. An examination revealed a large elm tree, two feet and a half in diameter, across the track, half covered with drifting snow. The engineer stared at the conductor, the conductor at the brakeman, and the brakeman at the fireman, all stricken dumb at the perplexing situation. For once railroaders did not swear. Language was powerless to express their feelings. The only remedy was to get their axes (with two of which every train was supplied), and by cutting the tree in two twice, clear the track for going ahead. This was no small undertaking. Each of the five men chopped in turn. It was one o'clock P. M. when they moved from the place where the fallen tree had detained them. The snow was still falling rapidly. They expected to meet No. 11 at any moment. It was dangerous to proceed without sending a man ahead with a flag. It was like "taking his life in his hands" for a flagman to attempt to walk the track in such a storm, with the trestle work and bridges covered with snow, underneath which was a coating of glassy sleet. However, it must be done. It was attempted by the brakeman and conductor, and abandoned by each, in turn. They must get along as best they could without an advance guard. At two-thirty they passed Conroy, without meeting No. 11. It was seven miles to Van Wert. Freight trains must keep out of the way of all passenger trains. No. 12 had one hour's time in which to run to Van Wert, after leaving Conroy, so as to arrive there ahead of passenger train No. 2. They could easily run that distance in half the time, in fair weather and with a clear track. But now they had No. 11 to look out for, and snow drifts to contend with. They would be fortunate and thankful to get there within the hour. Two miles east of Conroy there was a deep cut.

Once through that they would have pretty clear sailing, unless further retarded by trees or by broken rails. But they did not get through the cut. It was filled with drifting snow, which repelled every effort at dislodgement by the engine. There was no other remedy but to shovel it out. Of what avail were five shovels against a furious storm of wind and snow? No matter, they must do what they could, and so went to work with a will. Their numbers were soon increased by the men from two sections of train No. 18, and three sections of No. 20, following them. Behind No. 20 came No. 2, with a gang of section men; with their aid the snow was finally cleared out of the cut so that trains could move ahead. It was six o'clock P. M. when No. 12 reached Van Wert. The men had not partaken of a morsel of food since eating their breakfast before starting. They were already almost worn out with fatigue, but they must move ahead. They swallowed a hasty meal while No. 2 and No. 11 were passing, and then started, once more, for Crestline, their objective point. The track was comparatively clear. The only delay being caused by retarded trains from the opposite direction, and by broken rails. Near Dunkirk a pair of trucks jumped from the track, thrown off by a broken rail. One hour was lost by this mishap, and a painful one it was, too. The snow had ceased falling, and the weather had turned bitter, biting cold, with a stinging, northwest wind blowing a gale.

Train No. 12, Jack Dare conductor, reported its arrival at Crestline, the end of the division, at 8:30 A. M., Tuesday morning. The crew had been on the road twenty-six hours and a half without rest or sleep, and had fought an unceasing battle with the elements the whole of the time. One would suppose they would be allowed to recuperate their strength with rest and sleep before starting back. Not so. The third section of No. 11 was made up and ready to start as soon as No. 12's engine could "cut loose" from her own train, and couple to it. The train

must start immediately, and there was no "crew" at hand but Jack Dare's to take charge of it.

On a road where there are twenty trains a day each way, and the majority of the freight trains running in sections of from two to five each, it is necessary for the men to be wide awake and active to avoid accidents, do the work of setting out and taking in cars, switching in and out at meeting points, and still keep on their card time. There is little opportunity for rest or sleep, however much the men may be disposed to take it.

At two o'clock A. M., Wednesday morning, the third section of train No. 11, Jack Dare conductor, pulled into the siding at Middlepoint, to allow No. 10, bound east, to pass. This was forty-four hours after leaving Fort Wayne, Monday morning. Middlepoint was the first station east of Van Wert. Three sections of train No. 10 left Van Wert on time, and passed three sections of No. 11 at Middlepoint. The first and second sections of No. 11 reported at Van Wert on time, but the third did not put in an appearance. Passenger train No. 3 arrived at Van Wert at 4:30, and reported a train on the siding at Middlepoint. What could this mean? The train dispatcher was asking Sam every few minutes if third No. 11 was in sight yet, and got "no, sir," for an answer. At 5:50 it pulled into the station. The conductor came into the office looking considerably worried, and said to Sam: "Has No. 3 passed? Has No. 10 passed?"

"Well," said Sam, "those are curious questions for you to ask. What right had you to leave Middlepoint without knowing whether No. 10 and No. 3 had gone by?"

"Sam, you've caught me," answered Jack. "I confess that every man on the train fell dead asleep as soon as the train stopped. We could not do otherwise. We had not life enough left in us to keep awake when idle. Think of it, Sam, forty-four hours of the hardest work and most unceasing vigilance that any set of men ever went through,

and you'll not wonder at our falling asleep. When I awoke and looked at my watch I was dumbfounded. I had not heard a train pass. I awoke my two brakemen. They knew no more than I did. I ran to the engine. There sat the engineer and firemen in their seats, sound asleep. I awoke them. They were as greatly astonished as myself. We consulted, and concluded to come ahead, keeping a sharp lookout both ways. Have the trains passed?"

"Yes," said Sam, "but what answer are you going to give the dispatcher for your delay?"

"That's it, Sam," said Jack, "I want you to help me out, and keep mum about it. Tell him that we got a truck off the track pulling into the siding, and had to jack the car up before we could get it on."

"I will tell him whatever you request," replied Sam, "but if I had been in your place I should have lain on that siding until the Milky-way turned into cheese before I would have "pulled out" and taken the chances of colliding with No. 10, and of being run into by No. 3."

PLAYING CHECKERS BY TELEGRAPH.

Walt Smedley, "owl" at Upper Sandusky, and Sam used to pass a good many hours quite pleasantly, playing checkers over the line, until an outsider came in and broke up the game. The *modus operandi* was as follows:

Walt and Sam each had a checker board, with the spots numbered from one to thirty-two. All the checkers were placed on both boards, the line representing the opposite player to each. If Walt wanted to move from one to three, he would make the figures on the line "1 to 3," and make the move on his own board, and Sam would move the same men on his. When Sam played he would move his own men on his board, and Walt would make the same move on his. They played on a line that was not used at night, and so they did not interfere with business. Now and then some operator who was listening would make figures, while Sam or Walt was waiting for the other to move. But

as these moves were always "wide of the mark," they caused no confusion. After awhile it was noised about in both towns that this game was going on, and people began to gather into both offices at night, some out of curiosity to see the game played by telegraph, and others for the interest they took in the recreation. The good players came forward, and the game became exciting and interesting.

One night two hotly contested games had been played, each office winning one. Then came the deciding game, the struggle for the championship. Both combatants played very cautiously and slowly, each planning deeply intricate manœuvres to entrap the other. Sam and his backers had "dug a pit" for Walt, and were anxiously waiting for him to fall into it, when, sure enough, the instrument clicked off the figures wanted. Sam immediately made the next move.

"Hold on," said Walt, "it is my move."

"No, sir," said Sam, "you just this moment moved so and so."

"That won't do," replied Walt, "I had you in an uncomfortable situation, and you have adopted this underhand way to get out of it."

Walt was undoubtedly greatly excited over the game, or he would never have spoken in that way. Sam retorted: "It's you who were in a 'corner;' you certainly did move."

They could not agree, each claiming that it was his move next. Angry words passed between them, and the game was given up unfinished. Walt wrote to Sam the next day, accusing him of unfair playing. Sam answered, pleading "not guilty," but charging him with unfairness. And so ended the telegraphic checker playing.

It afterward occurred to Sam that probably some disinterested operator had accidentally made the figures he wanted, and thus caused the confusion and misunderstanding. He informed Walt of this supposition, but he would

not believe it, but intimated that it was a partial confession of guilt on Sam's part. They were never warm friends afterward.

"IGNORANCE IS BLISS."

Unsophisticated people, who have formed their ideas of electricity and telegraphy from hearsay evidence alone, often astonish and amuse the better informed, by their crude opinions as to its real nature. Sam narrates numerous incidents illustrative of this. One of them will suffice to show the vague ideas people form of things of which they can have no clear conception.

Early one morning, quite an aged couple came to the depot at Van Wert, to take the west-bound train. Sam's green lantern was sitting on the counter in his office, lit, ready to signal a train for which he had orders.

When he slid back the ticket window, the old gentleman stepped up and called for two tickets to Wanatah. Happening to espy the green light, he turned about quickly, and exclaimed: "Come here, Betsy, and see the telegraph!"

Betsy presented herself at the window, with an old style dark bonnet on, and a white fringed cap on her head underneath it, and asked: "Where is it?"

The old gentleman replied, pointing to the green lantern: "There it is, Betsy. See what a beautiful color. That's the color of electricity. Whenever any one wants to send a message, the operator touches a little knob on the table, the electricity gives a flash, and the news is where it was going to, right away."

"Oh, my! how fast it must go!" said Betsy, and she gasped as if the thought of it had taken her breath away.

The old gentleman and old lady conversed about it a few minutes, and then the old gentleman asked Sam if he would allow them to come around into the office, saying that Betsy, his wife, wanted to see the telegraph work.

"With pleasure," answered Sam.

The old couple were wonderfully charmed with a near view of the telegraph — green light. The old gentleman explained its seemingly miraculous powers quite animatedly and profoundly, to the old lady.

Now, this old gentleman was a local preacher — a leader in the neighborhood where he resided. He doubtless went home to his cranberry marsh, on the Kankakee, and imparted to his flock, at the first opportunity, the information he had obtained during his travels, dwelling enthusiastically and graphically upon the beauties of the telegraph, and the incomprehensible speed of its flight.

A STEP UPWARD.

After nine months' night work at Van Wert, Sam was promoted to "day operator." Van Wert station did a large freight and passenger business, and transacted more telegraphic railroad business than any other station on the division, excepting Crestline and Fort Wayne. It also did a good pay business in commercial telegrams. Sam was ambitious, and desirous of perfecting himself in a knowledge of all the business pertaining to a railroad station. Therefore, every moment that he could spare from his telegraphic duties, he devoted to making out freight way-bills, filling up blank receipts for freight to be delivered, booking bills, making out reports, checking freight in and out of the cars, delivering goods to draymen, selling tickets, checking baggage, and the thousand and one other things to be attended to about a station.

SAM'S EPITAPH.

Often, when his own day's work was done, which was at seven P. M., he would write for the agent until nine, ten and eleven o'clock. Railroad companies are not encumbered with drones. They put upon their employés everything that they can possibly do. Corporations have no souls, consequently no scruples against "riding a willing horse to death." Where there was work to do, Sam was not the

person to "shirk" it. One night, after having put in a hard day's work on his own account, Sam wrote up the books for the agent. It was almost eleven o'clock when he finished, and threw himself, exhausted, on the lounge. The agent was still at work. Sam lay quiet for some time, which was a thing so unusual for him that it attracted the agent's attention, and he turned toward Sam to see what was the matter. Sam was lying on his back, gazing upward as if he were looking into another sphere. The agent said: "Sam, what do you see? What are you thinking about? One would think you had lost your senses, you are so motionless and silent."

"I was thinking," answered Sam, "what would be the most appropriate epitaph for my tombstone when I am dead."

"What! you think of dying! Impossible!" spoke the agent.

"Well, I may not die naturally," said Sam, "but if I cling to this railroad and telegraph business I shall wear myself entirely away, which is the same thing in the end."

"Bosh!" exclaimed the agent, disapprovingly, "you're better than a thousand dead men yet. But, supposing that you were to die, what inscription would you prefer to have on your tombstone? If I'm above ground then, Sam, I shall take great pleasure (?) in seeing that your wishes are complied with, in that respect."

"I think," said Sam, "about the proper thing would be:

"HERE LIES SAM, WAKE HIM UP WHEN THE TRAIN COMES."

The agent gazed at Sam as if he questioned his sanity, and then burst out laughing, and laughed and laughed until he was weak with the exertion. Sam's apparent earnestness, and the utter variance of such sentiments from his usually jubilant feelings, made the expression sound so ridiculous and absurd that it could not be otherwise than mirth-provoking to those who knew him.

A SURPRISE.

No matter how arduous Sam's duties, he never permitted an opportunity to pass unimproved, when there was a chance for a joke or a trick to be played on some one.

Old Uncle Joe was general utility man at Van Wert station. He was pleasant enough when allowed to have his own way, but very excitable and crabbed when thwarted or disturbed. He was a deacon in church, and therefore it was incumbent upon him to always wear a long face, and keep his speech down to plain words, which was very much against him among railroaders. One afternoon Uncle Joe had lain down on the lounge to take a nap. While he was enjoying this pleasant diversion from the usual routine of business, a noble son of toil, a giant in stature and a Hercules in strength, came into the office, and, in a voice harsh and loud, inquired of Sam if there was any freight there for Bob Slocum. Here was Sam's opportunity to "stir up" Uncle Joe, and he was not slow to take advantage of it.

"That old gentleman there on the lounge," said Sam to the stranger, (pointing to Uncle Joe) attends to the freight. You will have to speak to him about it. It is very difficult to make him hear when awake. Now that he is asleep it will be almost impossible to make him understand. Go over to him and hollow right in his ear."

The unsuspecting stranger shuffled along to the side of Uncle Joe (Sam slipping out of the door and looking in at the window), bent his huge body until his lips were almost against Uncle Joe's ear, and bellowed in a voice like muffled thunder, "Halloa! old coon, have—" here Uncle Joe sprang to his feet on the lounge, and stared at the stranger like a madman, his hair standing straight out from his head as stiff as knitting needles, and his limbs trembling like a hoosier's with the "ager."

As soon as Uncle Joe could speak he hissed vehemently, "Fiend, bear, fool, devil! what do you want to frighten me so for!"

The stranger leaned toward Uncle Joe, and spoke in a deep, loud, bass voice: "Keep cool, keep cool, old man, you're a little weak on your pins, I see, and oughtn't to get excited."

This only increased Uncle Joe's agitation and fears, and he backed against the wall, and kicked, and struck, and cried: "Go away! Get out of here! Do you want to murder me, you bloodthirsty wretch?"

The imperturbable stranger was as cool and calm as a marble statue, and stared at Uncle Joe, more with pity than with anger. "I want to know if there is any freight here for Bob Slocum, and I am going to find out from *you*," said he, and he reached out his right hand and caught Uncle Joe by the coat collar, and lifted him down upon the floor, gave him a shake, and told him to "look up" that freight in a hurry if he didn't want to be shaken to pieces.

While these proceedings were being enacted in the office, Sam was on the outside viewing the fray at a safe distance, convulsed with laughter so uncontrollable that the tears ran out of his eyes for very joy.

PETE JONES.

The jokes were not all in Sam's favor. They sometimes went against him pretty heavily. One day a rustic looking young man stepped into the office, in front of the counter, and eyed Sam sharply and steadily. Sam paid no attention to him for awhile, but went about his business, sending and receiving dispatches, delivering orders and selling tickets. But all this time he was aware that he was being scrutinized by the country gentleman. Such circumstances will beget an uneasy feeling after awhile in the most tranquil mind. Sam permitted the young man's curiosity to gratify itself upon him as long as he could bear it. Then he spoke, and said: "Young man, I beg pardon for interrupting your anatomical observations, but don't you think you have looked me about

all over, and will be able to recognize me the next time you see me, without any further scrutiny at present?"

"I think I know you now," the young man replied.

"Probably you do," said Sam, "but I would not advise you to mention it to any one."

"Didn't you use to be around Bill King's livery stable, in Wooster," said the young man, "leading the horses out to water, sweeping out the stables, oiling the harness, and doing light jobs of that kind?"

Before Sam could reply, the agent spoke up, and said: "Of course he did. He doesn't like to admit it now, because he has a better situation, and considers himself above such work."

"You can't fool *me* on Pete Jones," confidently exclaimed the young man, then addressing his remarks to Sam, he said: "I knew it was you, Pete, as soon as I came in, but I wanted to be sure before I spoke. You havn't forgotten the time, Pete, when Sal Judson doused you in the water trough because you said she stepped high, like a blind horse?"

There were several persons in the office now, who laughed heartily at Sam's discomfiture, and gathered around him, insisted on shaking hands with him, and congratulated him, saying: "Halloa, Pete! glad to see you. How did you leave things in Wooster? She steps high, does she?" and numerous like expressions.

"O, leave off," said Sam, as soon as he could be heard, "I never was in Wooster." Then addressing the young man he said: "Don't allow these fellows to gull you like that. Don't you see they are making a fool of you?"

But he "couldn't see it," and persisted that he knew Sam was *not* Sam, but Pete Jones.

PERQUISITES.

It was customary for traveling shows, circuses, and theatrical troupes, to dispense complimentary tickets pretty liberally to agents and operators at stations, thereby

hoping to moderate the charges when their extra baggage was being checked.

A change of night operators brought to Van Wert an overgrown youth of nineteen, bright and intelligent, but too inexperienced in the ways of the world, and too honest to be "let loose" among railroaders. Not that railroaders are dishonest, or would take any mean advantage of an honest person, but their inherent love of fun prompts them to abuse simplicity and confidence.

Noah Truxton, the new night man, early fell a victim to Sam's propensity for joking. The second night after his advent at Van Wert, there was a show advertised of trained dogs, birds, etc. Sam did not wish to go, but he offered to work for Noah while he went, and presented to him two complimentary tickets besides. Noah was not particularly anxious to go. He did not wish to trouble Sam to work for him. "O, never mind the trouble, it's a pleasure," said Sam, and he prevailed on him to go.

Sam gave him two tickets, not for the performance that Noah was going to witness, but tickets for a circus that had been in Van Wert some time before. It was accidental on Sam's part, of course. Noah went to the show. He did not stop at the ticket office, but passed on up to the head of the stairs, handed his ticket to the door-keeper without looking at it, and was passing in, when the door-keeper grabbed him by the arm, pulled him back, was about to pitch him down stairs, and would have done so had it not been endangering the lives of others who were coming up. Noah explained that the ticket had been given to him, that he thought it was the proper one, and to show his sincerity, bought a ticket and went in. But he didn't remain long. His feelings were too lacerated to enjoy the exhibition. He came back to the office. Sam saw the moment he entered that he was terribly "worked up."

"What's the trouble, Noah?" said Sam; "didn't you like the entertainment? Humbug, I expect. Most everything that travels now-a-days is."

"Yes, I was humbugged, Johnson," replied Noah, angrily, "though not by the show, but by you. And what's more, I don't like it, either."

"Why, what do you mean, Truxton?" exclaimed Sam, with surprise. "What have I done to displease you."

"You gave me the wrong tickets," answered Noah, "and I came very nearly getting my head broken for presenting one of them and trying to pass in."

"Can it be possible!" exclaimed Sam, (feeling in his pockets and bringing forth the right tickets.) "I did, sure enough, for here are the tickets you should have had. I beg pardon, Truxton; accidents will happen, you know, in the best of families."

AN EPIDEMIC.

Operators are ingenious, or would be if they had time to develop their innate powers. Genius is contagious, or the desire to be men of genius is, at least. Like an epidemic, it pauses not in its course until the flame that feeds it has burnt out.

While Sam was at Van Wert, one of these destructive floods of genius (destructive to prospective greatness,) swept over the land, and thrilled every telegraph operator's heart with hopes of fame and fortune. The cause of the excitement was the attempt to invent a self-closing telegraph key. The mania seemed to have originated in New York City, and to have spread rapidly westward. The inventive spirit burst upon Sam like a cloud of glory; at all events Sam thought so and felt so. He would soon astonish the telegraphic world with a self-closing key so simple and so perfect that they would think the millennium had come. He wanted an old key to work upon. As he had graduated at the Superintendent's "plug factory," and was on pretty familiar terms with him, he wrote to him, asking for an old key, stating that he (Sam) had a self-closer in his head which he thought he could make work if he had something to work upon. The Superintendent sent the key, and also

a note with it in these words: "I have seen the self-closer in your head, Johnson. It works best when there is a piece of beefsteak in it."

That was decidedly a rich hit, Sam thought, and a very suggestive one too. Sam did not invent a "self-closer." He was of the opinion that an operator who could not keep his key closed when it should be, was not capable of filling the position of operator, and no "self-closer" would make him competent.

GUSHING.

All phases of human nature are exhibited at a railroad station and on trains. There is no better place in the world to study the true and false feelings of parting and meeting friends and relatives. Sam's observations convinced him that mothers-in-law are the most demonstrative and affectionate at parting, and the most distant and unsociable at meeting.

One morning a middle-aged man and two women came to the station at Van Wert. The man bought one ticket for Lima, twenty-five miles east. Sam soon learned, by their conversation, that the younger of the two women was the man's wife, and the other his mother-in-law. His wife kissed him "good bye," and wished him a safe journey, then stepped aside. The mother-in-law threw her arms about his neck, and sobbed and moaned: "O, John! I'm so afraid that you will not come back to-morrow. I feel as though something was going to happen. God bless you, John, good bye!" and she kissed him a dozen times, and held on to his hand until he was aboard the train. He was going on a freight train, and it stood at the station several minutes unloading and loading freight.

The two women started away after a second leave-taking, more gushing than the first on the part of the mother-in-law. John stood on the platform at the rear end of the caboose, waving his hand at his departing relatives, as they turned to salute him at every few steps. When they had

gone about half a block, the mother-in-law turned about, began to "boo hoo," and cried, "O, John! come here; I can't give you up!" and she started toward him with arms extended and tears coursing down her cheeks. John got off the car and advanced toward her. When they met, the old lady clasped him in her embrace, and sobbed awhile; then she held him at arm's length and gazed into his face; then she kissed him, and looked at him again; then repeated the kiss, then the hugging, all the time giving expression to words of fear and anguish. The locomotive whistled for the train to start, and John had to use so much force to free himself from his mother in-law, that she sat down on the walk with a thump. But she was equal to the emergency, and jerked the red handkerchief from around her neck, and waved it at the receding train without ceasing, until it was out of sight. The next day John returned and was met at the station by his wife. The mother-in-law did not put in an appearance.

SNAPPISHNESS AND SIMPLICITY.

People of all classes take greater liberties, commit more follies, and shock the proprieties more at a depot, among a crowd of strangers, than they would think of doing, or would dare do in their own homes.

One day a little, old woman came to the ticket window, at the Van Wert depot, and called for a ticket to Mansfield. She had a concave nose, snapping eyes and a creaky voice, and her face was sharp and bony. Beside her stood a big, lubberly, sleepy-looking, overgrown lad, who was doubtless the old lady's grandson.

Sam stamped the desired ticket, held it in his hand and said: "Three dollars and ninety cents."

"Three dollars and ninety cents!" repeated the old lady, looking at Sam with astonishment.

"That's the price, madam," said Sam.

"I know better," she retorted, quickly. It's only three dollars and ten cents. I guess I ought to know as well as

you do. I came from there here six years ago, and that's all I had to pay."

"Three dollars and ten cents was the price then," answered Sam, "but during the war prices were raised."

"I don't believe it!" she snapped, "I have heard how you fellows make money. You want to charge me three ninety, so that you can put eighty cents in your own pocket. I can see it in your eye, you young rascal."

This thrust of the old lady at Sam caused those within hearing to laugh heartily. The old lady counted out three dollars and ten cents, and persisted in demanding the ticket for that amount. Sam assured her that he could not sell it for that price, and replaced it in the case and left her. Just as the train was due she called again. Sam answered by his presence. The old lady screeched: "Give me that ticket! Here's your money. I'll never buy another ticket here as long as I live. I'll go to another town first."

A "KNOCK DOWN" ARGUMENT.

The operator at Forest, sixty miles east of Van Wert, had allowed a train to pass without delivering an order to it, which had been sent to him for that purpose. Nothing but the rarest good fortune prevented a collision. The dispatcher asked the operator what excuse he had for not delivering the order. What excuse could he give? None. He said that he had forgotten it. That it was certainly not intentional carelessness on his part; that it was his first offense or neglect in the year that he had been on the line; and he hoped this, his first transgression, would be overlooked, that he might have a chance to redeem himself.

"Suppose that you should kill a man," said the dispatcher, "and offer, as palliation for the crime, the plea that he was the first man you had killed, do you suppose that that would clear you?"

That astonishing question was "too heavy" for Mr. Night Owl. However, he was not discharged. His previous faithful services saved him.

Operators often have opportunities to line their pockets quite freely with ill-gotten gains. But, to their honor be it said, few instances are known where they have yielded to the tempter. Important secrets of a social, business and political nature become known to them. They are rarely divulged. Why? Because operators are trusted, because their employers and the public have confidence in them. They are not branded, the moment they enter the service, as dishonest. They are human, and humanity is proud. Place implicit confidence in a man and he will seldom betray it. Place the mark of Cain upon him, ostracize him from society, distrust and cast suspicion upon him in all things, give him to understand by innuendoes, if not by plain speech, that you think he cannot be relied upon, and he will seldom prove to be otherwise.

Van Wert was the county seat of Van Wert County, and the county bordered on the Indiana State line. Violaters of the law in one State would endeavor to get across the line into the other, and thus gain time to escape. Once out of the State where the act was committed, they could not be pursued or arrested by the officers of that State.

Van Wert was so situated that it was made a *rendezvous* for outlaws from Indiana, and a highway for those passing out of the State. On this account the officers were vigilent, and kept a sharp lookout for suspicious looking characters. When persons were arrested who were not positively known to be guilty, the telegraph was appealed to either by the suspected parties to establish their innocence, or by the officers to satisfy themselves of the party's guilt. Not infrequently operators who were called upon to dispatch this kind of business were given to understand, in one way or another, by the culprits, that a favorable reply would be handsomely paid for.

On one occasion a party had been placed under arrest at Van Wert for horse-stealing. He sought the telegraph office to prove that he was not the person that he was sup-

posed to be. He wrote his message, and handed it to Sam with a fifty dollar bill, remarking, in an undertone, accompanied by a very significant wink: "No change!"

At another time the owners of a patent right were about closing a very large sale of territorial rights, but lacked the signature of one of the patentees. This particular person resided in Albany, New York. He had written to the parties at Van Wert that he would send a power of attorney to sign his name on a certain day. Now, the Van Wert parties were desirous of closing the bargain that day, fearing to allow the purchaser to sleep over it, lest he should rue it, and not fulfill his agreement the next morning. Could they get a telegram to the party at Albany, and a reply stating that the power of attorney had been forwarded, then they would affix his signature and close the contract. The Albany party had a country residence to which he repaired at four o'clock P. M. It lacked but a quarter of four when Sam sent their message. They had but faint hope of getting a reply that evening. The principal party visited the office every few minutes, so great was his anxiety. More than once Sam was given to understand, by indirect propositions, that he could name his own price, up in the thousands, for the production of the required answer.

Parties who deal largely in stock and grain are always anxious to get the first information of a rise or fall in the market. Operators are frequently approached by one or more of these dealers, in a cautious way, and hints are thrown out that if they should receive valuable information for another, and, withholding it for a time, communicate the same to them, they would not go unrewarded.

"BULLING."

One of the worst acts that railroad men are guilty of, is what is called, in railroad parlance, "Bulling." Every railroad company has very strict rules for the government

of its employés, and the running of trains. It is in the management of trains that the "bulling" is done. Rules and regulations, in a general sense, are more ornamental than useful in the proper handling of trains. There are so many emergencies continually arising, that could not have been foreseen or anticipated, and for which, therefore, preparations could not have been made, it is of the utmost importance that conductors and engineers should be men of good judgment and foresight, quick to plan and prompt to execute. Time is the Alpha and Omega of railroading. It is better to act quickly and make one blunder, than to hesitate and be the cause of ten. As a rule, engineers are better informed and are men of more experience than conductors. The engineer's is a calling for life, the conductor's while fortune favors him. It requires no long apprenticeship to prepare a man of ordinary business intelligence for the conductor's punch. True, he must have a knowledge of the making up and manipulating of trains. He must be acquainted with the division over which he runs, and the ticket and freight regulations pertaining to trains. This information can be acquired in a year's or two years' time, at most, while, to become a competent engineer, five years is none too long an apprenticeship. This is not speaking disparagingly of conductors. They are men of discretion, generally speaking, but their positions must be filled as circumstances require, and "seasoned material" is not always at hand. When the conductor and engineer of a train work against each other, it is somewhat similar to the head of a snake striving to pull in one direction and the tail in another. Of course it will not do to carry such proceedings too far. If it should become known to the officers of the road, the guilty parties would be very likely to "take a walk." The most inexcusable "bulling" (in fact none of it is excusable), is done when two trains meet at a station, and both refuse to take the siding, one claiming that he has a right to the main track,

according to rule, and the other that he cannot pull in, or that he cannot get out if he does. Sam relates an instance illustrative of this phase of "bulling."

First section of train No. 18, Sam Beeler conductor, met train No. 15 at Upper Sandusky. No. 18 had the right to the main track. No. 15 should have pulled in at the upper end of the siding, but it did not, but wanted No. 18 to back down and allow her to back in at the lower end of the side track. This Beeler would not do, claiming that No. 15 could have pulled in if she had wanted to, and now, that second section of No. 18 would be likely to run into his train if it was backed down around the curve. Both conductors were stubborn, and the engineers also, and the more they argued and swore about it, the firmer each became in his "bullheadedness." In this position they remained for three hours, blockading the road so that no other trains could go by, and confusing trains on other parts of the division. Finally a peremptory order from the Superintendent for No. 15 to back up and pull in on the siding severed the "Gordian knot."

A LONG AND ARDUOUS SIEGE.

At four o'clock A. M., Wednesday, April 17th, 1868, Sam was aroused from peaceful slumber by the night operator, who informed him that he was wanted at the office. He hurriedly donned his clothes, and hastened to the depot amid pouring rain. There he learned that the bridge over the Anglaize River, twelve miles east, had been washed away, and that he was wanted to go there with the construction train and open an office. He learned, also, that Rock Creek, between Dixon and Monroeville, west, had overflowed its banks, and covered the track for a length of two miles, in some places washing it entirely away. This state of affairs caught three extra passenger trains at Van Wert. They could not be moved either way until the road should be repaired, which would be in the indefinite future. The passengers occupying these extra

trains consisted of vocal and instrumental musicians from every German society in the Eastern States, and one company from Prussia. They were on their way to attend a grand musical entertainment at Chicago. Sam surmised that their presence all day would bring the office an increased amount of paid business, and as the night operator was not posted in the rates, he preferred to remain and attend to it himself, and send the "night man" out on the line. It had been raining steadily and heavily for three days, and the whole country was under water. Telegraph poles had been washed out, and the lines broken and crossed, besides, the constant rain and consequent carrying off of the electric fluid to the earth made the working of the lines very difficult indeed. In order to get a working line on the division, it was necessary to splice and re-splice short stretches out of the six different wires on the road, so that hardly an operator on the division worked the same consecutive wire.

On occasions like this the ordinary telegraph business of the company is doubled and trebled. The operators in the superintendent's office are crowded and pushed with important orders and other dispatches. They become excited and nervous, and then woe be unto the operator who does not keep adjusted, and is continually breaking others, and cannot get his own business without much repeating on the part of the sender.

When the music-loving Germans "turned out," and learned where they were, and how they were situated, they were disposed to make light of it, and treat it as a good joke, though a damp one. They made merry over it, sang songs and laughed, and were as jolly as the jolliest. They had money in plenty, and dispensed it liberally. They flocked into the telegraph office, and wrote messages in all kinds of hieroglyphics, murdered English, and twisted German. They wrote English better than they spoke it, so if Sam asked for an interpretation of a message it only made "confusion worse confounded."

He gave that up. While this was transpiring, some would be asking when they were going to start, how much of the track was washed away, when would they reach Chicago, and a thousand other questions.

One of the citizens opened a hall up town, and invited them to take possession, and give a concert. They did so, and favored the citizens with some excellent vocal and instrumental music. One of the engines gave a long, loud whistle, which brought all of them pell-mell back to the depot, thinking their trains were going to start. Disappointment begets harsh feelings. The water-imprisoned travelers besieged the telegraph office in strong force, and flung at Sam such a corruption of tongues that he fairly staggered beneath their weight. They wanted a definite answer as to when they would get away. That could not be given. This provoked some of them very much. Anything but suspense for them. Once more they rallied in the town hall and exercised their voices. They attacked the saloons and soon swallowed all the beer in town. There was a double supply on hand that day, too, for it was circus day, and saloon keepers had made preparations accordingly. When the beer gave out, they began to indulge in something stronger. Mixing drinks in a man's stomach — like the coming together of strange cats — breeds ill feelings. Sam was the center target for all their grumblings. Fortunately he could not understand much of their storming, and thus escaped being literally annihilated. Finally they became so boisterous, and made such urgent and persistent demands upon the superintendent to be moved ahead, that he gave the order to start, first assuring the travelers that they would be taken beyond the reach of food or refreshments of any kind except water.

Their departure was a great relief to Sam. It was four o'clock P. M., when they went away, and he had not had an opportunity to swallow a mouthful of food in peace since breakfast.

Sam sent seventy-four paid messages that day, two press

reports of one hundred and fifty-two words each, and received forty-one paid messages, besides handling treble the usual amount of railroad business. Taking into consideration the condition of the wires, this was no small day's work. Sam was proud of it, and weary of it, too, and could have lain down and gone to sleep without rocking by the time the hour hand of the clock pointed to seven P. M. But he did not do so. Why? Because the night operator had not returned. He would not return that night. He had gone to a farmer's house near his temporary office, taken a bed, and gone to sleep, and Sam was "elected" to fill his place at Van Wert. Sam was pretty thoroughly weaned from the ways of the night, which made this particular one seem all the longer and more tedious. Morning came at last, and with it increased work for Sam. Rock Creek had fallen sufficiently to permit the road to be repaired, and trains west were put in motion during the night. But the bridge over the Anglaize, east, had not yet been replaced, and most of the east bound trains were held at Van Wert, and their number was legion. Any one familiar with the running of trains knows what it is to have two and three miles of siding blocked with delayed trains that must be ready to move at any moment. First, the operator will have an order or a message to one conductor, then to another, which must be delivered immediately. Often the operator has to run the gauntlet of all the trains before he can find his man. When he returns he is fortunate if he does not get a "blowing up" from the dispatcher for being out of the office so long. Thus beset round about, pulled one way by the wires, pulled another by the trains, Sam put in another day and another night, and still the road was not clear, and no relief came. It was now Friday morning, Sam had not had his clothes off, nor an hour's sleep for forty-eight hours. He was a fright to behold. Clothes out of order, hair disheveled, eyes red and swollen, and a languid worn-out expression in his face, and a listlessness about all his

movements, that made him a fit model for a statue of wretchedness. In this condition he worried through the day and evening, until eleven o'clock at night, when he was relieved by the return of the night operator.

Sam returned to duty the next morning at his usual hour much recruited, but still weak from the fatigue of his "long pull and steady pull" to demolish time.

Nothing of unusual interest transpired to disturb the tranquility of the Van Wert office until the arrival of an "error sheet," about the first of July, on the debit side of which was fifty-two dollars and twenty-five cents checked by New York office. The receipt of this document caused Sam to open his eyes so widely that trains could have passed in and out without danger of colliding. "Fifty-two dollars and twenty-five cents!" he exclaimed, as soon as he could catch his breath, "won't leave me cigar money out of a month's salary, not to speak of an occasional toddy."

By correspondence with New York office Sam learned that the press report which he had sent the *New York Herald* on that memorable 17th of April, and for which he had collected press rates, had been checked to him at commercial rates, making a difference of fifty-two dollars and twenty-five cents against himself. A disruption of friendly relations between the *Herald* people and the Western Union Company caused the *Herald* to be charged commercial rates. Sam was not aware of this state of affairs, and so explained. The company could not "see" the explanation. Van Wert office was debited with fifty-two dollars and twenty-five cents. They could see that, and would continue to see it until it was balanced by a remittance of the amount.

The papers kept passing to and fro, through several hands, each time having a note added to the package by each, until it approached the size of a a half yearly supply of blanks. Sam got heartily sick of it. It began to wear on his nerves. He was sorely tempted, sometimes, to

pitch the bundle into the stove, and send it meandering up the chimney.

One day when the superintendent came along, Sam asked him how many months the error sheet was likely to keep on its travels, and what would probably be the final disposition of it. The superintendent laughed, and said: "Don't be disheartened, Johnson, keep up your courage, and you will eventually wear it out."

"It is more likely to wear me out," said Sam. It did. He resigned, and turned over the office to his successor, the first day of December, after having faithfully served the company at Van Wert, nine months, nights, and sixteen months, days, without missing a day from the pay-roll.

THIRD EPOCH.

NEWTOWN.

New Year's day, just one month after Sam Johnson had vacated Van Wert office, we find him installed as agent and operator at Newtown, on the T. P. and W., (Tired, Poor and Wretched) railroad. The town was very new, in truth *no*-town would have been a most appropriate name for it. If houses are necessary to constitute a town, then indeed Newtown was not a town, unless, perchance, the depot be called a house, and two large granaries be called houses.

The train halted. The conductor sang out: "Newtown!" Sam looked out of the car window to catch a view of the town. "Make haste, young man," spoke the conductor, "you can search for the city at your leisure, when we have left you."

Sam needed not the second bidding. He quickly reached the depot platform, the conductor exclaimed: "All aboard!" leaped aboard himself, and soon the train was out of sight.

Here was room for observation. There were no narrow streets with towering buildings on each side to obstruct the view. The eye could wander in all directions to the line where the horizon kissed the earth, with only here and there a house, barn, or corn-rick to mar the view. To a lonely stranger, these evidences of civilization did not mar the picturesqueness of the scenery, but added a warmth and beauty to it that made it seem all the more home-like and sociable. Yonder to the south, on the summit of the rolling prairie, low down upon its base, a small frame house. Black smoke ascends from its single chimney, indicative, at least, of life within. To the westward, just beneath the horizon's rim, a giant stack of straw

lifts its huge, snow-sprinkled body, gray and ruffled upon the view, like a frosted hill. Around to the north, and nearer and plainer to the sight, nestled in a shallow ravine, is a cottage, hooded with snow, and wrapped in winter's sable folds. Ah! what is this so near and yet so drear? 'Tis the depot, cold and deserted. No sound greets the ear, save the moaning and sighing of the bleak winds on the wires that run into the office. There is no tramping in and out of excited, restless travelers, no clinking of baggage checks, no pitching about of trunks, no stamping of tickets nor clicking of telegraph instruments. Surely, this cannot be a railroad depot? "Oh! I see," said Sam, "it is new. I am to be its first occupant," and he scanned its interior from the outside with increased interest.

"How am I to get into it?" was the next question that presented itself. "Some person in the neighborhood must have charge of the key, but who and where is that person? The nearest residence is a mile distant. But no matter, I must go somewhere, the shadows of night are falling, and I am chilling to death standing here in the cold."

Sam had barely finished revolving these embarrassments in his mind, when a hand was laid on his shoulder from behind. He turned quickly about, and was confronted by a small man who was hidden under a slouchy fur hat, and wrapped in a large woolly overcoat. Sam's first thought was "A bear!" and instinct said: "Run!" but before he could heed the warning, or his limbs could obey his desire to preserve himself by flight, his fears were dispelled by a pleasant voice which proceeded from under the hat, and from beneath the folds of the great coat, and said: "Are you the operator who was to come here?"

"I don't know who was to come here," said Sam, re-assured by the pleasant tone of the speaker's voice, and resuming his former cheerfulness, "but I know that I am here, and that I am an operator."

"Well, I guess you are the man," spoke the individual

beneath the hat; "here is the key to the depot, my name is Harry Hart, I am manager of those grain warehouses you see yonder," and he started away.

"Please stop a moment, my friend," said Sam, "I want to inquire the name of the best hotel, and the way to it. I have never been in the city before, and am ignorant of its streets and hotels.

The stranger laughed, and replied: "It is not the multiplicity of streets that will lose you, but the absence of them. Neither need you worry about the choice of hotels, indeed you will be fortunate if you can find a place in which to remain over night."

"That's one of the inconveniences of pioneering," said Sam. Then, turning to his new-made acquaintance, he said: "I must appeal to your kindness to aid me in finding board and lodging. I have been standing in this cold wind until I am almost as stiff as a mile post, and my appetite as sharp as beavers' teeth."

"You can go with me, where you can get supper at all events, said he," "but I fear you cannot be accommodated with lodging. There are eleven children in the family, one grandmother, and the two parents. I am obliged to sleep with two of the boys regularly, and when there are visitors who remain over night, I have to sleep with three of the little imps. I said sleep. Sleep is a delusion. It is one continual kick, strike, twist, pull and roll, and double up, of one or the other of the little mischiefs, the whole night through. One does well to keep sufficiently covered to prevent freezing. To add to this dilemma, the old gentleman was severely injured internally, to-day, by a runaway team, and moans and groans continually," and he looked at Sam with such anticipated misery in his countenance that it almost brought tears to Sam's eyes.

"Why do you remain in such a place?" queried Sam.

"Why did Jack do without his supper?" said Hart, "because he couldn't get it, of course. I board and lodge at Peter Marble's because it is the only place where I can be accommodated."

In this manner they conversed until the house was reached. On entering there was such a scampering and dodging about of children, that Sam thought the chairs, tables, and everything else were alive and jumping around. The furniture in the room was neat, though plain, and none too plentiful. The clean rag carpet, the curtains at the windows, and grandmother in her snow white cap, all looked homelike and cheerful, and gave to the room an air of refinement and taste entirely unexpected by Sam.

Supper was announced. It was served in the kitchen. The older persons took seats, but the children remained standing. As many gathered about the table as could find "elbow room." A large baking pan filled heaping full with the spare ribs and back bone of a lately killed "porker" occupied the center of the table. Turnips, cornbread, and coffee were the side dishes.

The hearty manner in which the young people—in fact, all of the family—partook of this plain but substantial fare, was truly refreshing to witness, and Sam enjoyed it as well as he would sitting down to a table groaning under luxuries.

The landlady very kindly informed Sam that she would have been pleased to have granted him entertainment, but the limited spare room in the house, and the unfortunate condition of her husband, rendered it impossible. Sam thanked her, and, though sympathizing with the good lady, he could not but feel grateful that he had escaped the trying ordeal of passing a night in bed with three restless children.

Supper over, Mr. Hart volunteered to conduct Sam to the next neighbor's, about a mile distant. The snow was six inches deep, and still falling, making walking difficult and tiresome. Sam was not a "walkist," by any means—his favorite position was sitting down. But there was no other mode of locomotion at hand, and go they must.

The neighbor's house reached, a knock on the door by Mr. Hart was answered by a peremptory: "Come in!"

Mr. Hart opened the door and walked in, followed by Sam. Sitting close to a red hot coal stove, in the center of the room, was an old gentleman, with very gray hair, wrinkled forehead, a Roman nose that peeked into his mouth as if it were Inspector General of his stomach, and a pointed chin that turned upward in close proximity to his nose. The continual movement of his eyelids, the rolling of his eyes, and the general expression of his face, denoted shrewdness and self-conceit. Near him sat a large, middle-aged woman, and rolling on the floor by her side were two boys of about four and six years old respectively.

The whole family jumped up, stepped back, and stared. Mr. Hart said, addressing the old gentleman, "This young man is the telegraph operator we have been expecting. He has come to see if you can board him," and he stepped out of the door and departed, leaving Sam to his fate.

The old gentleman inspected Sam from head to foot very deliberately, his eyelids closing and opening all the while. Then he suddenly blurted out: "Can't board you, sir. No, sir. *Cannot* do it."

Sam's appearance, at best, was not prepossessing, not calculated to inspire esteem and admiration at first sight, but he wore well and gained favor as he was better understood.

Sam asked permission to sit down and warm himself, which was cheerfully granted. Conversation ensued. The old gentleman was inclined to be talkative and argumentative. His favorite theme was religion. He had the Bible at his "tongue's end." Sam was working for a point—a bed, in fact. If he could ingratiate himself into the old gentleman's good graces, he need not fear being turned away that night. Sam nerved himself for the task, and gave the old man battle on his own grounds, not strong enough to defeat him, but still severe enough to challenge his admiration and respect. The old gentleman arose to enthusiasm, to eloquence, and fairly shouted with the fullness of his subject.

Time sped rapidly away unheeded by the old man and Sam, until the clock struck the hour of eleven. Sam arose to go, remarking that he did not know whether he could find the depot or not.

"You are not obliged to be at the depot to-night?" inquired the old gentleman.

"It is preferable to remaining out in the cold," answered Sam. "I cannot look for lodging any further at this hour of the night."

The old man's sympathies were now fully aroused, and he said, quickly: "You are welcome to remain here if you will accept our humble accommodations."

Sam gained his point, was conducted to a small but neat room, and slept soundly in a clean, warm bed. He breakfasted with the family the next morning, and continued to board with the kind but eccentric family as long as he desired to.

NEWTOWN EXCITED.

New Years' morning, 1869, Sam Johnson opened telegraphic communication with the world at Newtown. It was a wonderful day for Newtown, and Sam wondered also at the curiosity and ignorance of the Newtownians, telegraphically. The people around and about Newtown had been anxiously looking for the arrival of the promised operator ever since the completion of the depot. Now that he had actually arrived, the news sped from one to another, and from house to house, with amazing rapidity. Before midday, New Years, the sitting room of the depot was literally jammed with a surging, gesticulating, excited crowd of boys, young men, middle-aged men, and old men. They were peaceable and well-behaved, did not ask questions, but expressed some of the crudest and most laughable opinions in regard to telegraphy that could possibly be conceived. One man said very confidently that he believed it was nothing more nor less than the evil spirit working in a secret way to advance the interests of his kingdom. Another said he believed it was lightning gathered from the

clouds and concentrated in vessels to shoot messages over the wires. He had doubtless heard of Dr. Franklin's feat with the kite. These ominous assertions from the older persons naturally inspired the younger ones with fear. Whenever Sam approached them, they moved away to allow him to pass without touching them, as though they thought he was the "Old Nick," or a mysterious being from cloud land. One very verdant looking youth, apparently about nineteen, slipped inside the office door, seated himself on the floor tailor fashion, and remained in that position for three hours, gazing intently all the while at the instrument on the table. When Sam put his fingers on the key to send a message, or report a train, or took his pencil to receive a dispatch, the rural gentleman on the floor would stretch his long neck, like a turtle, his eyes would bulge almost out of their sockets, his mouth would fly wide open, his chest would swell, and he would present the most perfect picture of wonder and astonishment that could be imagined. He slipped out as quietly as he came in, not having spoken a word. What his thoughts were it would be difficult to conceive.

Newtown was an inland town, isolated from quick communication with the busy world. The nearest market where the people could dispose of the products of their farms was on the Mississippi River, sixty-five miles west. To this market they hauled their grain and drove their stock in the fall of each year. This period was before the advent of the railroad. Newtown was simply the name of the post office. The latter was located in the crown of Abel Thompson's hat. Wherever one found Abel Thompson, there he found the Newtown post office. The mail passed through Newtown (though not through Abel Thompson's hat), semi-weekly, on horseback.

Newtown was an old settlement. Children had been born there who had grown to manhood and womanhood, and had not ventured twenty miles from their birthplace; yet they were well advanced in the common branches of

education, and were an industrious, God-fearing people. School houses and churches were numerous. All the education that was necessary to make them accomplished was a practical knowledge of the ways of the world. Is it not reasonable, then, to suppose that a community of contented, unaspiring people, such as composed the population of Newtown — whose opinions of telegraphy had been formed from what they had read — should be filled with a desire to improve the first opportunity to see and hear it work?

QUALIFICATIONS NECESSARY TO BE POPULAR AT NEWTOWN.

Sam soon learned that to be successful at Newtown he must not only attend to the railroad business punctually and politely, but he must also be one of the people. To be one of them, he must know more about others' affairs, socially, than his own. Newtown had no theatres, no billiard halls, no club rooms, no police courts, no fire department, no brass bands, no secret societies, no dog catchers, not even a saloon or sewing society to furnish recreation and excitement for the people. People will talk. It is the design of the Creator that they should. If Newtown lacked entertainment of a public nature to furnish mind-food for the people to feast upon and talk about, then were they not excusable for talking of themselves?

In recording Sam Johnson's railroad experience and observations, we must be pardoned if we seem to go beyond telegraphic communication. Nothing shall be penned except to illustrate the peculiar and trying situation of a railroad servant, who is also a servant of the people.

Newtown and vicinity was "honeycombed" with churches. There was one on every section corner. They represented all religious denominations in their congregations, as also all kinds of architecture in their construction. There was only one man in the community who did not belong to one church or another. He was the scape-goat for the sins of all the others, whom the Lord was hourly expected to visit with some terrible calamity.

The impression had already gone abroad in the secluded neighborhood of Newtown, that railroaders were about as fast, in a worldly sense, as the trains and lightning which they handled. In fact, these modern inventions were regarded by the more incredulous as agencies instituted by the devil to hasten his victims into his kingdom. Such being the sentiments of the people of Newtown concerning the moral fitness of a railroader to become one of their number, and Sam being the first one of the "species" thrown among them, his actions were scrutinized closely, and his conversation disseminated throughout the neighborhood, weighed in the community's balance, and judged accordingly.

Sam did not attend church the first Sabbath he sojourned in Newtown. That was almost an unpardonable offense to Newtownianism. Sam heard the rumblings of the gathering storm and took warning. His second Sunday evening in Newtown was passed at church, if a school-house, where meetings are held, can be called a church. Previous to this evening the snow had melted, the roads had become muddy, and had then frozen as hard as iron. The conveyance to the place of divine worship was a heavy, two-horse (on this occasion two-mule) wagon, having neither springs nor seats. Straw was spread in the wagon bed to make amends for the absence of seats and cushions. The wagon, when all were seated and ready to start, contained six young men and six young women, crowded into the box as closely as they could comfortably sit. It was Sam's misfortune to get a seat directly over the hind axle of the wagon. The driver urged his team as though his future salvation depended upon the quickness of his trip. Such a jerking, jolting, bobbing up and down, and knocking about and against each other, was never experienced in a wagon before. A sudden bounce of a hind wheel over a large frozen clod sent Sam into the air, and he came down astride of the end gate, and would have fallen to the ground had not one of the girls grabbed him by the coat-

collar and pulled him in. This proceeding caused the others to shout and laugh uproariously, notwithstanding that they were on their way to church. It was very funny, no doubt, but Sam "couldn't see it." The far-famed "Rocky road to Dublin" pales in comparison with this.

Sam entered the school house and sat down on one end of a long bench that had no support for the back. The house was built of logs hewn only on the inside. It was plastered overhead, and contained a row of desks next to the wall on each side, that seated two persons each. The only seat that was vacant when Sam entered was the bench mentioned. As others came in they should have occupied it. But they did not. They stood in the aisle and gazed at Sam with looks of unfathomable curiosity. After a while a buxom young girl sat down, very cautiously and slyly, on the end of the bench farthest from Sam. She watched him closely, as if she feared he might make a "lightning movement," and carry her away on the wings of electricity. Sam divined her fears and moved toward her, when up she sprang, as quickly as though a two hundred cup battery had suddenly been applied to her.

In country places all attend church. None are left at home; neither the infant nor the centenarian. They come by families. By watching the door, the number in each family can easily be ascertained. First enters the mother, with an infant in her arms, followed by the father with another and larger one in his stronger arms, and after him follow the other and older branches of the parental oak.

Just inside and above the door there was no plastering on the ceiling, and Sam, being of an inquisitive turn of mind, and desirous of knowing the cause for every effect, set his wits to work to solve this new problem. He could not account for it scientifically or methodically, therefore he concluded that it must have been caused accidentally. He had not long to wait for a solution. Ere these thoughts had passed from his mind, a very tall man entered, stooping as he came through the door, and straightening up

immediately thereafter, his head came in contact with the ceiling, causing some of the plastering to fall.

The congregation having assembled, the minister arose to open the service. After the customary hymn and prayer, he announced the text. He remarked that there was no desk or other convenience on which to lay his Bible, in fact none was necessary, as he had forgotten to bring it. He would select as a basis, as the fountain head from which he should draw the inspiration for his exhortation, a text that could be found in every page of the Bible, and inscribed in all the works of the Creator. It was: "God is good!"

Some people, particularly some ministers, seem to labor under the misapprehension that God is deaf, at least that is the conclusion deducible from their actions. The speaker on this occasion was one of this stamp. He spoke with excessive earnestness and great physical exertion, and indulged in the most ridiculous gestures and inappropriate language, working himself into a state of excitement that carried him beyond himself and his subject, causing him to gasp for breath, and finally, to break down and close with: "and so forth, and so forth."

BUSINESS.

The T. P. and W. was a new road, and the most poorly constructed and poorly managed road in the west. Trains were seldom, if ever, on time. If a train went through from one end of the road to the other without getting off the track, it had performed almost a miracle. Accidents were of daily and nightly occurrence. They were so numerous, and so certain to happen, that a daily paper in Peoria, in publishing them, invariably placed at the foot of the column headed: "T. P. and W. Railroad Accidents," "Continued in our next."

Newtown was located in the heart of a rich stock and grain producing country. Cars were daily being loaded with corn and wheat for the eastern markets, and with

stock for Chicago and New York. An agent at such a station must be active and watchful to see that the company's interests are properly cared for. Grain merchants are liable to overload cars, (accidentully (?) of course) so they must be properly looked after, otherwise they would realize very nice profits in the saving of freight charges alone.

The stock pens at Newtown were about three hundred yards from the depot. Very often there would be twenty-five or thirty cars of stock to load in one day. At such times an engine would be furnished purposely to assist in loading them, and to take them away. It was important that the way bills should be ready the moment the loading was completed. In order to have them ready, Sam was obliged to make numerous trips to the pens, to ascertain the number of cattle in each car. He must also see that the cross-bars to the doors were all up, and the doors all securely fastened. The walk from the depot at Newtown to the stock pens, particularly when it was muddy — and it was nearly always muddy the winter Sam was there — was not a pleasant recreation. Repeat the jaunt twenty times a day and — well, its horrors cannot be depicted. Newtown mud was black, sticky as tar, and heavy as lead.

The T. P. & W. put on more "red tape" than a government bureau. They required several slightly varied reports concerning the same things, and issued more complicated blanks than the traditional Philadelphia lawyer could understand. The road had few cars of its own, and consequently depended upon other roads for a supply. They came from every road in the Union. Of forty-two cars on the siding one day, thirty-nine were from different companies. The number and kind of each of these had to be reported to headquarters by telegraph at 5 P. M. every evening, and two reports, slightly altered, must be sent by train. The Company issued printed blanks, on which to copy train orders, that few conductors and engineers, or even operators could understand. Sam doubted if the superintendent himself understood them.

The T. P. & W. was designated by conductors of other roads as "the knock-down road." The careless and reckless manner in which the business of the road was managed, gave conductors so disposed opportunity to "sink" almost every dollar they collected. Conductors gave up positions on other roads, and came on the T. P. & W., simply because of its reputation for liberality(?).

Newtown was situated at the summit of a heavy and winding grade of seven miles that led up from Spoon River. These seven miles of track were a fruitful source of annoyance and expense to the Company, and also caused Sam much vexation and extra labor. The country sloping down to Spoon River was thickly studded with small, gnarled, stunted oak trees and undergrowth. It was a public pasture in the spring and summer for everybody's cattle. The cattle were branded and turned out in the spring, to be gathered in in the fall. The railroad found its way through this uneven, hilly country, by following the small ravines and watercourses. To these streams the cattle came to drink. The cattle were so numerous that it was almost impossible for a train to get through in day time without killing or injuring one or more of them. The cattle were buried by the section men, and the brand, age, and probable value reported to Sam, who was to adjust the losses with their owners, and report to headquarters. Whoever heard of a man demanding a reasonable reimbursement of a railroad company for damages sustained by him? Out of a hundred or more cases at Newtown, Sam failed to find one.

These cattle not only killed themselves, but they also threw trains from the track, and delayed others. Sam was often compelled to remain on duty all night, on account of such accidents.

A COLORED JOKE.

The people of Newtown were so sanctimonious, and always wore such "Sunday-go-to-meeting" faces, and fol-

lowed their noses so straight, deviating neither to the right nor to the left, that Sam feared to perpetrate a joke on one of them, lest he should be committing the "unpardonable sin." During Sam's whole pilgrimage in Newtown, he "fathered" but one joke, aud that was more trick than joke.

Old Granny Brown, the only colored woman in Newtown, came to the office one day to send a message. She said she wanted to see the message go herself. She'd hearn tell how dreffuI quick de tullygoff war, an' how de meffages went so fast nobody could see 'em, an' now she war gwine to watch dis'n hersel.

Sam presently "raised" the office to which the message was directed, sent it, and then turned to Granny and said, "It's gone ; I've sent it."

"Come, now, Masser Operator," said Granny, rolling her large white eyes, and grinning good-naturedly, "you better not dun go to foolin' wif dis yah yaller gal. Don' I see de meffage dah on de table afore you?" And she ha! ha! ha'd long and loud.

Sam saw that he must slip the message away somewhere if he wished to part from his incredulous customer. He folded the message a number of times, and then told Granny to step to the door and watch the wires, for he was going to send it. She turned her head to the door, and the moment she did so, Sam slipped the message under the relay, clapped his hands together, and exclaimed, "There it goes!"

"Wha? wha?" shouted Granny, scanning the wires with wide-stretched eyes.

"Oh, you weren't quick enough," said Sam.

"Wal, I do declar ef dat don' jes' tak de kinks all out o' de wool on dis yah yaller gal's head, den I ain't no Christian ;" and she walked away looking greatly puzzled.

ODDS AND ENDS.

Sam's working hours at Newtown were from 7 A. M. until 9.50 P. M., provided the 9.50 train was on time, which

was seldom the case. If it was not, he had to remain until it came. After this hour he had to walk a mile to his lodging, either through mud, slush and rain, or through snow, or over bare, frozen ground. Sometimes the wind blew so fiercely and coldly that it almost froze his breath, and he with difficulty kept on his feet. Sam was not a "heavy weight." One hundred and one pounds was the highest notch he ever turned. If a day passed over the heads of the Newtownians without wind, it boded evil, and they straightway began to pray. The salutation of one Newtownian on meeting another was invariably something about the wind. "It's pretty breezy." "It's fearful!" "It's wild!" "It's blowing a gale," and like expressions.

Sam noticed that nearly every man in Newtown thirty years old or more was bald-headed. The prevalence of this custom or calamity puzzled him very much for a while. "Probably they are a bald-headed race," he thought. But no, that could not be, for they were not born so, if their infantile appearance could be judged by that of their children. Time revealed the cause of their bare heads. The wind was the agent that had shorn them of their strength and their beauty.

Another Newtownian peculiarity was, they were all related, one to another, either by marriage or by blood. If one is condemned, all are condemned. If one is praised, all are praised. Silence is the essence of wisdom in Newtown.

Combating the wind, rain, snow, mud, and cold three times a day, passing to and from his meals and lodgings, began to exhaust Sam's strength. He concluded to prepare a "bunk" in the depot, and pass his nights there. He was induced to adopt this expedient by another consideration also. He was express agent, and often had charge of large amounts of money. There was no safe in the depot, consequently he had to carry money packages about with him. Going to his lodging alone late at night was hazardous, if not positively dangerous.

Newtown lightning, like everything and everybody in Newtown, is no respecter of persons, needs no introduction, and is on sociable and familiar terms at first sight and touch.

One night at Newtown Sam was unwell, barely able to be about, yet he dare not retire, for the 9.50 train had not passed, though it was then after eleven o'clock. He stretched out on his instrument table, to be within hearing of the instrument, if he should be called. It was a fearful night.

"The wind blew as 'twad blaw it's last;
The rattlin' showers rose on the blast;
The speedy gleams the darkness swallow'd;
Loud, deep, and long the thunder bellow'd;
That night a child might understand,
The de'il had business on his hand."

At times the office would be literally ablaze with lightning, so closely did one flash follow another. This warfare of the elements did not disturb Sam. He had become accustomed to it, and rather liked it than otherwise.

"The lightnings flash from pole to pole;
Near and more near the thunders roll."

Sam heeds them not. Who knoweth what a second may bring forth? Look at Sam now. He is on his feet, trembling violently and staring wildly. Where are the boots that were on his feet a moment ago? There they lie on the floor, the bottoms off and the seams ripped open. And his pantaloons, alas! they, too, have been ripped open at the seams, and hang loosely about him, held up only by his suspenders. And his coat, too, has been "rent asunder" at every seam. From a well-dressed young man he has instantly been converted into a "rag man."

While Sam was lying with his head in close proximity to the instrument, a flash of lightning leaped off the "cut out," and performed what might properly be called a "freak of lightning," divesting Sam of his outer garments without injuring his person. Though unhurt, Sam was never worse frightened in his life.

SAM RESOLVES TO LEAVE NEWTOWN.

Winter wore away and spring time came, but not spring. A rainy season came in its stead. The tenth day of May arrived, the day that united the east and the west by an iron band, a silver tie, and a golden spike. On that day the wires all over the Union were connected with the hammer that was to strike the final blow that should consummate one of the mightiest undertakings of the age. Sam sat in his office at Newtown, nervously listening to catch the sound that should be heard in every telegraph office, from the Pacific to the Atlantic, from the sunny South to the breezy North. Two thirty-eight P. M. was the time appointed when the first stroke of the hammer was to be made. It did not fall until two fifty-eight. Those twenty minutes decided Sam's future, in one sense at least. While waiting and listening, Sam's imagination naturally carried him to the place where the proceedings were actually in progress that were to bring about this grand union. From there his mind quickly passed to the golden sun-set land, and as he recalled the many glowing accounts he had heard and read of the golden sands and the sunny clime of California, and then thought how near it would soon be, he exclaimed aloud, "I'll go there! I'll leave Newtown and every other town behind me, and tarry not in my westward course until I have beheld the blue waters of the Pacific." The hammer came down. It drove Sam's resolution deeper and deeper into his heart. It clenched it with a golden spike. From that moment he was wedded to a new idol—California.

Sam resigned as operator and agent at Newtown, June 1st, but he did not get away then. Operators were in demand at that time, or probably the T. P. & W. people were unwilling to part with Sam, as he was offered ten dollars a month additional salary to remain. But no, Newtown could not hold him now. His star was traveling westward, and he must follow it. He was relieved on the last day of June. He purposed starting to his home in Ohio the next day, so as to be there to unite with his own people in cele-

brating his country's natal day. He did not start. The operator at Hollis, learning that Sam was not on duty, called him to the key the morning of July 1st, and told him that he had broken the steel spring in his cork leg, that in consequence he had to use a crutch, that he would have to go to Chicago to get it repaired, that an operator could not be found "high or low" to fill his position while he should be gone, and that it would be a great favor and an act of mercy if he would come and work for him while he should go and get his artificial limb repaired.

This was a "stunner" for Sam. He had set his heart on being at home on independence day. He would disappoint his friends and himself also if he did not go. But then again, he thought that a few days would not make any material difference to him or his kinsfolk, and it would certainly be a great accommodation and relief to an unfortunate individual. He therefore decided to remain and help his fellow operator out of trouble.

"OUT OF THE FRYING-PAN INTO THE FIRE."

Friday afternoon, July 2d, Sam turned his back on Newtown and entered the cars bound to Hollis. There were no tears shed at his departure, nevertheless many regretted seeing him go. Though he often shocked the religious proprieties of the sedate Newtownians, yet they could not but admit that he was a well-meaning, jolly fellow.

The train that bore Sam away from Newtown, sped along on its heedless course, over the winding track, down into narrow ravines, across bridges, through cuts, and on and on until it reached Spoon River. There it halted. The road-bed skirted the river bank for some distance. The river had risen and washed the embankment away, leaving the ties and rails resting on a smooth rock declining to the river. Trains dared not attempt to pass over it. To do so would simply be a sudden plunge into the rushing, swelling, muddy waters, and all would be over.

The train remained at this place until three o'clock A. M.,

before the road was made sufficiently safe to admit of its passing over. The passengers beguiled the long, tedious hours by listening to the lullaby of millions of musquitos, and engaging them in desperate single encounters, and in bloody battles, when myriads were pitted against one person. Musquitos are irrepressible, always singing, always happy, never weary, and the most ill-mannered and heartless of all God's creatures. The Illinois musquito is a true sucker. He will suck himself to death—so full that he will burst. One hundred of them will suck a man as dry as a smoked herring. Most musquitos, like all animals except man, spurn tobacco as they spurn death. Not so the Illinois musquito, at least the Spoon River tribe. Sam smoked half a box of fine Havanas, and almost puffed his life away trying to disgust them, but no, they seemed to relish the smoke, to admire the beautiful rings that he formed in the air; and to show their appreciation and express their thanks, dove at his hands as if they wished to shake them in true human style. No matter how much Sam resisted, and tried to prevent them from being grateful, they would not get insulted or lose their tempers, but would sing as merrily as ever, and patiently await a more favorable opportunity. They finally became so unbearable that the lights were all put out in the car. Now, indeed, had the musquito triumphed, which the passengers soon learned to their sorrow. Darkness is the musquito's native element. He has no eyes—he is governed by taste altogether. He tastes a man a long distance. That is the reason he is always so happy. His bill is full of the taste though his stomach be a vacuum.

Sam said that he believed the mission of the musquito was to teach man cheerfulness and perseverence.

Every one in the train was greatly relieved when it moved away from death-dealing Spoon River.

HOLLIS.

At 7:30 A. M. Sam alighted from the train at Hollis. The operator handed him the keys to the ticket cases,

stepped aboard the same train by which Sam had arrived, and departed without a word of instruction. Sam watched the fast disappearing train until it could no longer be seen. He had never done so before. Something seemed to tell him that he should have kept on. He looked about him, and thought of the lone traveler in the wilds of Africa. Of all the forsaken places that he had ever gotten into, this one "took the rag off the bush." Newtown was a Paradise in comparison with it. Sam was grievously tempted to break a leg and get away. If operators could have been produced as quickly as legs could have been broken he would have done it.

Water, water, water, east, south and west, with steep, rugged hills north, covered with scrubby oak; but one little, old log cabin in sight, one little, old woman looking out of its one small window, one little, old woman standing in its narrow door; and one little, old man standing at the switch target. Such was Hollis. "God pity Hollis!" exclaimed Sam, feelingly.

Hollis was the name for the junction of the T. P. and W., with the P. P. and J. railroad. The fact of its being a junction was the reason of its having a telegraph office, in truth of its having an existence at all. Sam surveyed the office. Dirt, dirt, dirt everywhere. In one corner was a bed with a musquito bar over it. "Musquito bar," thought Sam, "why, the musquitos will fly away with the flimsy thing." However, he was "in for it," and was not going to grieve over it long.

Hollis was two and a half miles from the Illinois River, in a straight line, yet the river extended to the office door. From the first day of April until the first day of July, there had not passed twenty-four consecutive hours during which it did not rain. The whole country was deluged with water. The rivers overflowed their banks far and wide, and the land above water was like a sponge.

Sam was hungry. No need to look for a hotel. There was only one house in sight, and that was but little larger

than a respectable pig pen. He asked the little, old man where the former operator had obtained his meals. He rubbed his bony hands together, smiled all over his little face, and said: "He gets his meals from Pekin, by train."

"What train brings his breakfast?" said Sam.

"The nine-fifteen train," he replied.

Sam consulted his watch. It was exactly eight o'clock. "Merciful heavens!" he exclaimed, "must I fast an hour and a quarter yet?" Then he placed his hands on his stomach, and walked to the edge of the water, contemplating the question: "Which is the easier death, drowning or starving?"

Slowly, slowly the hours dragged their seemingly never-ending, dreary length along. The clouds settled low down upon the hill tops, and held the day in their gloomy embrace, and when darkness at length spread her mantle over the earth, it was more dismal still. The evil doer loves darkness because it enables him to ply his vocation undiscovered. Not so the musquito, he never takes a mean advantage of any one. Whether his intended victim be asleep or awake he warns him with the unceasing chant of his simple lay that he is in search of blood. Sam found the Hollis musquito to be a different variety from the Spoon River tribe. The Spoon River musquito has a short bill, the Hollis musquito has a bill—bill of fare—as long as the longest ever printed, and he "goes" for everything in his bill, and gets it, too, if it is in the establishment.

SAM'S FOURTH OF JULY BREAKFAST.

The Fourth of July, 1869, came on Sunday—that is, where it came at all. It didn't come to Hollis. No train came from Pekin to Hollis Sundays, consequently Sam would have no breakfast, nor any other meal that day, unless he went to Pekin to get it. After eleven o'clock he could go where he liked, provided he returned Monday morning.

The little, old switchman knew that Sam could not get breakfast until he arrived at Pekin, and so extended to him an invitation to breakfast with himself and family. Sam's better judgment told him: "No, don't go," but his sympathies triumphed, for he saw that the little, old man would be greatly pleased should he accept the invitation, and so he replied: "Thank you, I shall be happy to partake of a Fourth of July breakfast with you."

The little, old man hastened to the house to inform the two little, old women that the operator would come to breakfast with them, and then there was a great fluttering about the little, old house for a good long hour. Then the little, old man conducted Sam to his little, old mansion, and set him down to his little, old table. He did not introduce the two little, old women; indeed it was not customary so to do in rural towns in Suckerdom, as Sam had learned while at Newtown. Sam was curious to know which was the little, old man's wife, and which wasn't, and wondered how he knew the one from the other, for each was the exact counterpart of the other in size, features and voice.

Ah! talk about fine meals, Fourth of July feasts! Hollis out-Hollis' them all. Sam was handed a cup of coffee, black and strong. No sugar, no milk. The little, old man passed him a piece of fat side meat on his fork, and one of the little, old women reached to him a piece of cornbread with her hand, and the ceremony was ended, and "all hands laid to." Sam strove to fulfil the Scripture injunction, "Eat what is set before you, and ask no questions," but it was a fearful task. He could manage to eat the cornbread, but his stomach revolted against the fat meat and strong coffee. The little, old women noticed Sam's uneasiness, and looked as though they really pitied him. At this moment a little, old hen flew in at the little, old open window, and right over Sam's head, and lit on a shelf opposite to him. The little, old

women's faces brightened, and they both said, at once: "Would the operator like an egg?"

"That hen is my deliverer," thought Sam, and he silently thanked the Lord for hens.

"I am very fond of eggs," said Sam, in answer to the two little, old women's question. Immediately both arose from their seats at the table, each grabbed an egg from a box on the shelf on which the hen had lit, broke it on the rim of the frying pan, wherein the side meat had been fried, which was on the stove with the warm fat still in it, dropped the egg into the pan, stirred the fire, and as soon as they (the eggs, not the two little, old women) had cooked sufficiently, one of them carried them to Sam's plate, and deposited the contents of the frying pan thereon. The eggs swam in the fat, and looked more like little drowned chickens, just out of the shell than anything else Sam could think of. He had said that he was fond of eggs, and there opposite him sat the two little, old women, looking so very happy because they thought they had got something the operator could eat. Sam vowed he would eat those eggs though he should strangle in the attempt. But O! what a struggle to keep them eaten. He excused himself, and got away from the little, old house as soon as he could, politely, and out of sight of its inmates, and then he quickly parted with his Fourth of July breakfast.

A PERILOUS RIDE.

At eleven o'clock Sam started to Pekin, in company with several others who came to Hollis by train. Pekin was on the opposite side of the Illinois River. The river was two miles and a half wide. This distance had to be accomplished on foot, over trestle work, the water running beneath it from five to twenty-five feet deep. One of the party was a young lady. She was the bravest of all. Walking, running, skipping from tie to tie, turning about, laughing at the slow, carefully moving "procession," she had distanced. One man became very dizzy·

He could walk but a few steps until he would have to sit down and steady himself. In this manner the crowd shuffled along to the main stream. "The draw-bridge is open!" screamed the lady in advance, and immediately consternation overshadowed the countenances of all. "How would they get over?" was the question that weighed heavily on the minds of all. To go back to Hollis was little better than starvation. The only alternative was to try and attract the attention of a boatman on the opposite side of the river by hollowing and waving handkerchiefs. Finally, after all had made themselves hoarse and weak, a boatman noticed them, and started toward them, but he was a long time getting over. The current was very strong and rapid, and he had to keep his boat headed almost directly against it. Arriving where the pedestrians were waiting, the boatman informed them that he could only carry nine. That would leave three behind. None wanted to remain. They would rather drown. Notwithstanding the boatman's forewarning of a watery grave, the anxious travelers prevailed on him to take them all. Their united weight almost sank the boat. They had to proceed cautiously, and very nearly down stream. Twice the boat dipped, and half filled with water. In the crowded condition of the boat bailing it out was difficult. All got their feet thoroughly wet.

"And still they rowed amidst the roar,
Of waters fast prevailing."

After a perilous half hour on the water the boat touched the muddy shore, one mile and a half below the town, and the cramped, forlorn passengers leaped ashore, heartily thankful that they were on land once more. They were in fine condition and humor to celebrate the glorious Fourth by the time they had tramped through the mud and slush to the city. Sam stopped at the first eating house that "came in his way," and did ample justice to a good meal.

The weather was delightful, and the Germans were cele-

brating the Fourth in grand style. Parading, dancing, singing, eating and drinking. Some societies celebrated on Saturday the third, some on Sunday the fourth, and still others on Monday the fifth.

Monday morning Sam returned to Hollis by an early train. Tuesday his sufferings in that desolate place were to have ended, but they didn't. The operator whom he had relieved did not return until Thursday. Sam departed from Hollis after the operator returned, in the first train bound to Peoria. He shed not a tear, and heaved not a sigh for the place and the people he left behind, not even the little, old house, the two little, old women, nor the one little, old man won his sympathy.

SAM ENRAGED.

Sam called at the telegraph office at the depot at Peoria, to have a chat with the operator, who was an "old time friend." In the course of their conversation Sam mentioned his reasons for stopping at Hollis.

"What?" exclaimed his friend, looking greatly surprised, "did he tell you that he had broken his artificial limb, and that he was going to Chicago to get it repaired?"

"Certainly he did," said Sam, his curiosity now excited by the earnestness and astonishment with which his friend put the question. "Is it not true? Did he not go to Chicago? Has he been 'playing' me?"

"'Playing' you! I should think he had," said his friend. "He has been no farther than Washington, just east of here, where his parents live. He was here an hour this morning, and did nothing but talk of the jolly time he has had in celebrating three fourth of July's in one year."

Sam was amazed beyond expression — rendered speechless for the moment. He got up, went out, and walked the streets for an hour. He bought a heavy cane, went back to the depot, and told his friend Ralph that he was going to Hollis. He would probably stay a week — he thought very likely the operator would want to go to Chicago to get some repairs done to his head.

Ralph laughed at first, but seeing Sam's determined looks, and the revengeful fire flashing in his eyes, turned his mirth to remonstrance, and finally prevailed upon him to give up the idea of seeking satisfaction for his injured feelings in such a questionable manner.

This abuse of confidence and kindness rankled in Sam's bosom for many a day. It was the meanest thing he ever knew an operator to do.

"SOULLESS CORPORATIONS."

When Sam took charge of Newtown office, he was made express agent, with the understanding that he should be remunerated for his services with a commission in proportion to the amount of business done. He had not received this commission previous to leaving Newtown, and as the company's chief office was in Peoria, he called on the manager for the purpose of having a settlement.

As soon as Sam entered the office, he was told by the manager that the agent at Newtown had been robbed Saturday night of nine hundred dollars, and he was asked if he knew any person in Newtown who he thought might commit such an act.

"Every man in Newtown, except one, is a member of church," answered Sam, "and they all wear long, solemn countenances that would defy a prophet to discern what is behind them."

"What kind of a man is the one exception you speak of?" queried the manager.

"He is old and rich, charitable and kind, a moral man beyond suspicion," said Sam.

"Then you can think of no one there whom you would suspect?" asked the manager.

"No one. I understand that you have arrested the agent and thrown him into prison, charging him with being the party or one of the parties to the theft," said Sam. "Have you any good reason to think he is deserving of such treatment?"

"Our detectives cannot trace the theft to any other person, therefore they suspect him, and have put him in jail hoping to make him confess," said the manager.

"If you have no further inquiries to make, I would be pleased to state the business that brought me here," said Sam.

"Proceed."

"You are aware that I have resigned the agency at Newtown, and that I have never been paid for acting as the agent of the express company there. I have called to-day for a settlement."

"We have no statement at hand of the amount of business you transacted, and it will take some time to get it from Newtown, therefore we cannot settle with you at present," said the indifferent manager.

"I have a copy of the amounts here, which I will guarantee is correct to the penny," said Sam, handing it to the manager.

The latter unfolded it, looked it over carefully, then laid it on his desk and said: "You have done a very good business for so small a place. I must inform you, however, that the company allows very small commissions to new offices. Should we pay you a salary, what sum would be satisfactory?"

"If I should be remunerated in proportion to the responsibility you wish your agents to assume, and the risks that I ran," said Sam, "I should be entitled to fifty dollars a month. You did not furnish a safe, not even a tin box, in which to secure money packages. I was obliged to carry them with me whenever I left the depot, even to my meals. Often these packages contained from one to five thousand dollars, consigned to stock shippers, who would not call for them sometimes within two weeks. Any person at the train when these packages arrived, could see them handed to me. In order to protect myself, and your interests, I did not venture away from the depot after dark. The man who took my place would not sleep in the depot. What is

the result? The third night after my departure he is stopped on his way to his lodgings, a revolver is placed to his head, and the express money packages demanded. You follow this by imprisoning him, thereby reflecting upon his character. And why do you do this? Simply because you cannot find the thief or the money. I suppose, if the agent had been murdered, and the murderer and the money had not been found, that you would have had a *post mortem* examination to see if he had not swallowed your packages," and Sam looked at the stolid manager defiantly.

"Mr. Johnson, I am not disposed to argue the matter," said the manager. "If you are willing to sign a receipt in full for your services as express agent while you were at Newtown, for five dollars, we can close the transaction at once."

"Five dollars for the whole time I was at Newtown?" said Sam, thinking it utterly improbable that such could be the meaning of the manager's proposition.

"Exactly," was the laconic reply.

Sam looked him squarely in the face for a minute, then turned about and walked slowly away without speaking.

We will leave Sam to his thoughts. We shall probably not hear of him again until he arrives in California.

FOURTH EPOCH.

CALIFORNIA.

Sam Johnson awoke at the peep of day, August 3, 1869, in the State of California. The train was winding in and out of ravines and canoñs, around peaks and points, over rushing mountain streams, beneath huge overhanging rocks, into and through dark, dismal tunnels, beneath seemingly never-ending snow sheds—on, and on, and up, and up amidst the towering pines, the snow-capped mountain peaks—almost to the very clouds. It was grand; it was glorious. It filled Sam's soul with awe and reverence for the mighty creative power that brought such stupendous works into existence, and exalted his opinion of man for his perseverance and skill in overcoming these giants of nature.

"Tickets!" sang out the conductor. O! what a fall was there, for Sam. From the very air of heaven, the silver lined clouds, the white-robed sentinel peaks, the waving pines, the rushing waters; from the most sublime in nature and grand on earth, to—"Tickets!"

Sam cast his eye on the man who was holding out his hand, but he made no movement toward producing the ticket; his mind was too securely riveted to the grand and beautiful to be thus easily diverted. "Ticket!" again suggested the conductor, sharply. Sam was fully aroused now, and surrendered his ticket without delay. "I am my grandfather's ghost," said Sam to himself, "if that man is a conductor." Such airs, such dress, such a display of ornaments by a railroad conductor. "Ah! I have it," said Sam, "I am in California." Think, ye unfortunate of other climes, of a conductor wearing a fine, silk, plug hat; a soft, black, frock coat; a standing collar; white vest; immaculate shirt front mounted with a dia-

mond pin, and a heavy gold chain, to which is attached a golden spike an inch in length. He wore flesh-colored kids on his hands, on the outside of which, on the third finger of each hand he wore a large, heavy, gold ring, with moss agate setting. Thought Sam: "His wages cannot be less than a thousand dollars a month; of course, telegraph operators are paid equally as munificently," and he felt as though he were a rich man already.

Before the conductor got out of the car Sam heard him accosted, by a man who entered with, "Holloa, George! Big train to-day?"

"You bet! Tickets!" and on he passed.

"George!" thought Sam, "Great heavens! what a common name for such an uncommon man; and what rude language for such a noble appearing specimen of cultivated taste and refinement." Once more "California," was whispered in his ears, and his amazement was at an end. Everybody and everything that Sam met that day seemed to be got up on the same grand scale of splendor and magnificence. Indeed, so gorgeous did all things appear to him that he would not have been surprised to have seen golden nuggets growing on the bushes, and double eagles flying about in the air. Before the train had reached Sacramento, Sam was made to understand that San Francisco is in fact California, and that a person is not really in California until San Francisco has been reached. Sam continued his journey to San Francisco. He landed on the wharf, and was immediately confronted by a "pioneer," (so the badge on his cap indicated) hollowing "Pioneer Hotel!" with a pioneer voice. "Get into the Pioneer hack, carry you to the Pioneer Hotel free of charge." Sam never invested in free institutions of that description. He wanted to view the city also, and therefore walked. Everything and everybody seemed to be "Pioneer." "Pioneer Hotel," "Pioneer Store," "Pioneer Restaurant," "Pioneer Saloon," "Pioneer Cigar Stand," "Pioneer Barber Shop," "Pioneer Commission

House," "Pioneer Broker," "Pioneer Junk Shop," "Pioneer Dray," "Pioneer Bootblack Stand," "Pioneer Bank," "Pioneer Mill,"—in fact "Pioneer" was to be seen and met everywhere. Sam was impatient to see the Golden Gate and the Pacific Ocean. To do so he must ascend to the summit of Telegraph Hill. He would ascend a streak of lightning, if necessary and possible. To get to the top of Telegraph Hill was no "boy's play," as Sam was ready to testify before he had reached its topmost point. But he was amply repaid for his toil. There to his left lay the blue expanse of the ocean of oceans, the broad Pacific; and nearer, almost beneath his feet, the Golden Gate, the narrow entrance to the Golden City, to the land of precious metals and— "Pioneers."

It is not our purpose to record all Sam's thoughts, or follow him through all his sight-seeing excursions in California, but simply to keep trace of him until he has again taken up the pen and pencil, and settled down for another telegraphic siege.

WHIMS.

Inform a Californian that you are a late arrival in the State, and he will invariably exclaim: "Then you were not here when we had our great earthquake?" and look upon you with an expression of mingled pride and pity. Sam soon learned that Californians are an excitement-loving people, and care not how it is produced, whether by freaks of nature or their own fearlessness and recklessness, they are equally well pleased, and never lose an opportunity to speak of it with enthusiasm and pride. Anything that is peculiarly Californian, to a greater extent than in any other locality is worshiped by them as *their* property.

The San Francisco fog is as treacherous as Satan, and about as impenetrable as a snowbank. One may be walking along in the sunshine, dodging his way through the

rushing throng of excited people, perfectly innocent of impending danger, when suddenly a solid wall of salt water fog strikes him in the back, almost prostrating him, and enshrouding him in a perfect spray of vapor, almost as dense as rain, and completely obscuring the sun. It was told Sam by a "forty-niner" that a carpenter was one day covering a house during a fog, and kept putting on shingles away out into the fog without knowing that he had got away from the building. Yet these people idolize the fog as though it were their patron saint.

POVERTY FLAT.

Sam "explored" the city from cellar to garret, from the Cliff House to Butcher Town. He caught the California fever and "went in" to rule or ruin. He would either be a nabob or a "gutter snipe." He came nearly being the latter. His finances were fast failing him. The What Cheer House stared him in the face. That savored too much of Hollis' fare. He went to Sacramento, the headquarters of the Central Pacific Railroad Company, and applied for a situation as telegraph operator. It was Tuesday when he made the application. The superintendent said he wanted operators, but was engaged just then — to come in at four o'clock. Sam called at four o'clock, "sharp," and was informed that the superintendent had gone out over the road, but would probably be back that night. He was told to call at nine o'clock next day. Sam obeyed instructions, but the superintendent was not visible. Sam thought that probably they were trying to "shake him off." If they were, they did not know Sam Johnson, or they would not have attempted it. Thus the "dance" was kept up until Friday, no superintendent appearing. Friday, at four o'clock P. M., the train dispatcher said to Sam: "Come to the office at seven this evening and I'll 'fix' you."

Sam was there promptly — the dispatcher was not. Sam began to think that he could run off the entire management

if his finances would only hold out. They had *holed* out already. The dispatcher appeared at eight o'clock — an hour late — and after disposing of his accumulated business, looked at Sam and said: "I want you to go to Poverty Flat."

Sam got up from his chair, glanced at his own "make up," and then looked the dispatcher directly in the eye, to see whether he was in earnest, or only making a pun at his shabby appearance. Sam was in doubt, and so said: "You want me to go to Poverty Flat? I am there already. I am 'flat broke' — if that isn't poverty flat, then I'm 'off my reckoning.'"

The dispatcher laughed, and said: "I mean the town or station named Poverty Flat," and he pointed it out on the time card.

Sam was furnished with the necessary instructions, and ordered to depart on the 6.30 A. M. train next day.

He arrived at Poverty Flat at 6.42 A. M., Dec. 11th, 1869. He alighted from the cars right upon the flat, and sank into it almost to his boot tops. It was raining. Day had not fairly dawned. The train sped on. Sam looked about for the depot and telegraph office. Where were they? Echo answered not a word. Sam espied several wires leading into a small shanty close to the track and almost beneath it. "That cannot be the office," he thought, "it must be the battery room." Just as Sam was about to knock, the door opened and a young man presented himself.

"Can you tell me where the Poverty Flat telegraph office is?" said Sam.

"This is it," replied the young man.

Sam sat down on the end of a railroad tie and "took in" the situation. He could have taken in the office by a very slight enlargement of his head. "Newtown, Hollis, Poverty Flat — worse and worse," he thought, and was about to get up, shake the mud off his boots, and walk away in disgust, when, happening to run his hands down into his

pockets, he realized at once his great need of funds, repented of his recently-formed resolution, made himself known to the young man before him, and entered the office. And such an office! Talk about California grandeur. Here it was in a nutshell. Eight feet every way—up and down, to and fro, backward and forward. The telegraph instrument was on a small desk screwed to the wall, just beneath the only window in the building. The office contained a cot for the operator to sleep on, which could be turned to the wall when not in use. The stove almost blocked the entrance. A large clock that ticked as loudly as the sounder, hung against the wall, one office chair, and you have Poverty Flat telegraph office complete as Sam found it, except the dirt and spider webs. They were everywhere. Sam did not allow the office to remain in this condition long. He got it elevated so that it stood on a level with the platform, entirely reconstructed and renovated it on the inside, and made it as neat and comfortable as such a structure could be rendered.

Give a man good food and plenty of it and he can be contented under the most adverse circumstances. That is what Sam got at Poverty Flat in a good, kind family.

Poverty Flat was the junction of the Central Pacific Railroad with the Safety Valve Railroad. That is what gave it its telegraphic importance. As a town Poverty Flat was a complete failure. It was certainly *poor* in that respect. The country around about was also very flat. Never was place more appropriately named.

To the lover of nature the view from Poverty Flat is picturesque. Eastward, toward the rising sun, the snow-crowned summits of the Sierra Nevada mountains loom up bold and grand, gradually decreasing in height as they approach to the south, until distance blends them with the lesser coast range. Directly south Mount Diablo rises dark and sullen. Passing around to the westward our eyes behold the broad valley of the Sacramento, whose muddy

stream of the same name flows sullenly and slowly to the father of oceans. Five miles west, seemingly beneath our feet, so deceitful is distance in this treeless valley, sits the City of the Plains, sunny Sacramento, the capital of the State.

Sam plied his profession in his prison "sell" one winter and summer. This class of buildings was a necessity when the road was being built. They could be taken apart in a half hour, put on a car, conveyed to the end of the track, and set up again as quickly as they had been taken down. The "boys" called them kennels. They were cold in winter and hot in summer. When the heat was very oppressive, even in the coolest buildings, the "boys" on the line frequently called Sam and asked: "How does she boil in the kennel?"

She didn't boil. Sam erected a second roof, a foot above the first, which kept out the heat and allowed a draft to pass underneath.

In less than a year after Sam took charge of Poverty Flat office we find him installed in the neatest and most comfortable office and depot on the road. And he takes pride in keeping it so.

SUGARVILLE, POVERTY FLAT AND BEETLAND RAILROAD.

Near Poverty Flat, and on the line of what is known as the "levee track," a sugar factory was erected for the purpose of manufacturing sugar from beets. During the gathering of these beets, which lasted from three to five months, a train was run from the beet fields to the factory. Sam had the supervision of this train so far as getting its orders and posting it in regard to trains on the roads over which it ran. In order that *his* road might not be behind the times, Sam got up a time-table, and rules and regulations for its government, in approved railroad style. As it contains much valuable railroad information of its kind, we here append a copy:

SUGARVILLE, POVERTY FLAT AND BEET LAND RAILROAD.

Time Table—No. 1.

To take effect September 1st, 1872, at 7 o'clock A.M.

For the government and information of Employés only. The Company reserve the right to vary therefrom whenever it suits its convenience and pleasure.

Read Rules carefully. All new.

TOWARD BEETLAND.				FROM BEETLAND.		
No. 5.	No. 3.	No. 1.		No. 2.	No. 4.	No. 6.
Passenger.	Passenger.	Passenger.	STATIONS.	Passenger.	Passenger.	Passenger.
P.M.Leave.	A.M.Leave	A.M.Leave		A.M.Arrive	P.M.Arrive	P.M.Arrive
3.00	11.00	7.00	.... Sugarville	10.00	2.00	6 00
3.15	11.15	7.15	..Potter's ¾ Saloon..	9.45	1.45	5.45
3.20	11.20	7.20	...Poverty ¼ Flat.. .	9.40	1.40	5.40
3.30	11.30	7.30	.Newbert's ½ Saloon.	9.30	1.30	5.30
3.40	11.40	7.40	.....Distillery ½	9.20	1.20	5.20
3.45	11.45	7.45	.Perkin's ¼ Saloon..	9.15	1.15	5.15
3.50	11.50	7.50	... . Junction ¼	9.10	1.10	5.10
4.00	12.00	8.00	....Beet Land ½	9.00	1.00	5.00
Arrive.	Arrive.	Arrive.		Leave.	Leave.	Leave.

All trains must come to a full stop at Poverty Flat, and conductors go to the Superintendent's office and inquire for orders.

Conductors of connecting roads must supply themselves with time tables of the S., P. F. & B. L. R. R., and govern themselves accordingly.

The S., P. F. & B. L. R. R. trains have right to track over trains of all connecting roads.

Approach all saloon stations carefully, keeping sharp lookout for candidate's signals.

Employés will take notice that distilleries are prohibited by law from disposing of liquor by retail. Every train will be supplied with a five gallon demijohn.

A quart measure held up at the distillery is a signal to stop, which must in all cases be obeyed. When the demijohn is full, it must be delivered to the Superintendent, who will supply another.

All trains daily and weekly, except Sunday.

Employés are forbidden to drink oftener than once at each saloon station each trip, without permission from the Superintendent.

SAM JOHNSON, *Sup't.* SAM JOHNSON, *Gen. Sup't.*

RULES AND REGULATIONS GOVERNING EMPLOYES OF THE S., P. F. AND B. L. R. R.

1. The general and division Superintendents' watch is the time by which trains are to be run. Conductors and engineers will compare their watches with it daily. One hour's variation therefrom will be considered sufficient cause for dismissal from the service.

2. None but dead beets will be carried. No tickets are sold, and money will not be taken. Conductors shall not be tempted nor their honesty impugned.

3. No person or persons employed on trains or at stations will leave his or their places without permission from the general and division superintendents—unless he or they can do so without being found out.

4. All trains will be under control of the conductor, but the engineer need not obey his orders if he is otherwise disposed.

5. Conductors, engineers, and brakemen will be at their trains before starting. Delays are dangerous.

6. Conductors will not make any report of persons or stock injured or killed. Trains are run for the exclusive accomodation of dead beets. If the live ones cannot keep out of the way of trains, and keep their stock out of the way, this company will not be responsible for damages sustained.

7. Trains bound toward Beet Land will have right to track against trains bound from Beet Land.

8. Trains bound from Beet Land will have right to track against trains bound toward Beet Land.

9. Trains moving in opposite directions must not attempt to pass each other on a single track.

10. This road will be run by the Golden Rule, therefore no red or white signals will be allowed. "The night cometh when no man can work." Wherever the night overtakes you there remain until the morrow. One whistle of the engine is a signal to stop, two to start, and three to back up. A glass held up in the right hand at a saloon station, is a candidate's signal. When so signaled trains will come to a full stop, and all hands "take something."

11. In all cases of doubt be sure you are right, and act accordingly.

12. Trains must not leave Sugarville until all trains due from Beet Land have arrived.

13. Trains must not leave Beet Land until all trains due from Sugarville have arrived.

14. Whenever a train is delayed until it falls on the time of another moving in the same direction it will take that train's No. and time, and proceed accordingly.

15. No deviation from these rules will be permitted. Train men are required to commit them to memory.

16. No order must be obeyed except from the general and division superintendent.

Persons not familiar with the running of trains on the S., P. F. and B. L. R. R., may form the impression that rules seven and eight conflict, and so they do of themselves, but rules twelve and thirteen render rules seven and eight entirely consistent; and, besides, a careful study of the time-table will explain that there is but one train on the road at the same hour; in truth, there is but one train on the road at any time, though it assumes different numbers. The General and Division Superintendent of the S., P. F. and B. L. R. R., after many years railroad and telegraph experience, has become convinced that the only way to avoid collisions is to run but one train.

OBSERVATIONS.

One, two, three, four and five years have passed, and still Sam is at Poverty Flat. He passes many what would otherwise be monotonous hours, putting his observations in the form of words. He writes as he thinks and feels. He generally takes a comical and humorous view of things, nevertheless he seldom fails to see them in their true light. We will here produce two of his articles pertaining to railroaders. The first one is entitled:

TRAIN MEN IN CALIFORNIA.

Californians are a fast people for many reasons. The climate is conducive to it. The pursuits of the people also, and the ease with which fortunes are made and unmade. Their mind food is excitement—excitement produced by venturing, risking, losing, gaining, gambling, shooting, drinking, eating, racing, swindling, rejoicing and grieving. They live fast and die fast.

Train men, particularly conductors and brakemen, are subject to these influences; and, in addition to the excitement attending their calling, they are continually passing to and fro, from place to place, meeting new faces, encountering new and unforseen adventures every day; some grave, some laughable; and thus never burthened

with monotony, they become fascinated with it, partake of its nature, which is that of venture, and risk, and haste.

Second in the order of wide-spread evils in California—intemperance is the first—is gambling. Some of it is legalized, as stock gambling, racing, and lotteries. Almost every person in California, at one time or another, has had experience with the "tiger." Gambling in stocks is the mania of railroaders, and more of them lose their situations from that cause than from any other. Not because they buy and sell stocks, but in consequence of the acts which it leads them to commit. The desire to invest in a favorite stock at what he thinks a favorable time, causes the conductor to "knock down" more than he otherwise would, and more than is prudent. I say prudent, not because I think it proper that a conductor should "knock down," but because he is expected to do so, to a certain extent, and not quarreled with if he keeps within certain bounds, at least such is the general inference. Take a passenger conductor, for instance. The company pay him a salary of one hundred dollars a month. They know that he must have a seventy-five dollar suit of clothes every two months, that he must present an unruffled, immaculate shirt front every day, that he must smoke, if not drink, that he is away from home two-thirds of his time, that he pays forty dollars a month house rent, beside the keeping and clothing of his family in fine style. Now, they know that he cannot do this on his salary, then, of course, he must "knock down," and they know about how much, for they have their "spotters" on every train. Yet, so strong is the temptation among railroad men to "take chances," in one way or another, that they overstep their bounds, and are "let out," without being told the reason why.

When a freight conductor on a salary of ninety dollars a month, in a short six months, exchanges a silver watch for a two hundred and fifty dollar gold one, with a fifty dollar chain attached, besides sporting jewelry to a lavish

extent, it does not take a Solomon to discover that there is a "screw loose" somewhere. It is proverbial that railroaders are the best "watched" men in the country, and yet they do not always run correctly. Few railroad men, except the high officials, ever accumulate much property. They are too liberal and too fond of living up to the "highest notch." As a general thing their salaries will not justify a very extensive banking business; if they did, they would very quickly be cut down.

A train man who has held a position for a number of years seldom follows anything else with satisfaction to himself. This calling begets in a man a kind of desire and appetite that no other occupation will gratify. If he loses a situation on one road he will wander to another, and another, as the Wandering Jew traveled from pole to pole, and from hemisphere to hemisphere. But I never knew a railroad conductor to forget his dignity and importance so far as to accept the position of street car conductor. No, sir, not he. That kind of traveling is too slow, too confining. There is not danger and excitement enough about it. Neither was a brakeman ever known to come down from his proud and dangerous stand on the top of a railroad car, to twist a street car break. He would go to the almshouse first. There is something really noble and grand about this sacrifice of position and emoluments for principle and honor.

Train men are clannish and free-hearted. They will not permit one of their number to miss his regular meal for want of its equivalent—four bits—if they possess it. A brakeman will dress one of his fellow "twisters" out in his best and most stylish suit, if he wishes to attend a party, in order that he may not disgrace the craft. He will do this, and be happy, though he may have grave doubts of getting it back in presentable shape again.

Train men never spare the dollars when a comrade needs assistance. They extend their generosity to the wife and children of those of their calling who have been accident-

ally killed in the service. When conductor Finch was killed at Stockton, the train men, agents, and operators on the division contributed five hundred dollars for the benefit of the afflicted widow. And these cases are not isolated.

The running and handling of trains has been statistically demonstrated to be the most dangerous occupation in the world; yet this very feature seems to give it a charm and fascination for the venturesome. Train men, as a class, have their distinctive virtues and their faults, but taking into consideration all their surroundings, we ask the question, and shall allow the reader to form his own answer:

"Could *men* do differently?"

RAILROADERS RELIGIOUSLY.

Unrighteousness is imputed unto all railroad men. I was forcibly reminded of this fact by a young minister who officiated at the school-house in this village, not long since. So forcibly, indeed, that I regretted very much that I could not applaud him as he deserved. He was portraying the humbleness of the followers of Jesus. Matthew, he said, was the only one who held an official position, and he was a tax-gatherer, spurned of all the people. He described the manner of collecting taxes in Matthew's day, showing wherein a tax-gatherer could, and was supposed to "knock down," — to use a railroad term — the minister said steal. But, he said, because persons who were tax-gatherers were supposed to, and generally did, appropriate that which did not rightfully belong to them, is not proof that Matthew did, any more than the assertion that there is not one strictly honest railroad man proves such to be the case. All eyes immediately fell upon me, for I was the only railroader in the house. I impute this thrust of the minister to his youth and short service in his Master's calling, and also to its being spoken in the midst of a political canvass, when railroad and anti-railroad were issues.

Poverty Flat was opposed to railroads for the same reason that the old lady discountenanced fanning mills. She

said the Lord made the wind to clean the chaff out of the grain. The Lord made horses to carry people about, and man had no right to build railroads and engines to defeat His purposes.

I admit that railroad people do not attend gospel service as frequently as some others. Why not? Is there not some plausible reason for their doing as they do? All of them believe in a future state—in Heaven. Is it rational to suppose that they would knowingly and intentionally do that which would shut them out of Heaven? I ask, who are these people that by professing certain doctrines are made better than those who do not? I answer, those who find it the most convenient to profess them. The history of man from his origin, or as far back as we have any record of him, to the present day, establishes the truth that the most devout worshipers of any faith are the poor and disconsolate. In direct proportion as man is denied the comforts and luxuries of this world does he look to the future for consolation and happiness. Even the Jews, the chosen people of God, whenever they became prosperous, turned away from "the straight and narrow path," and excelled the heathens round about in wickedness. Take the active, live men, men of business and genius at the present time—those persons who keep pace with the age, who move the world in fact, and we find that they do not bow down to creeds and isms. Are they any less perfect than those who do? These same religious people would follow the same course did circumstances permit. Men do not make themselves. Inherent qualities, education and circumstances do. The railroader's life is all action and excitement. His time is not his own. He has no thought for the morrow. If he takes care of to-day he is fortunate. He has plenty to eat, drink, and wear. What need he care for more? His animal wants are all supplied; his spiritual necessities, if such there be, are only imaginary, not visible, not material; therefore why concern himself about that of which he knows nothing? He does not. Put yourself in their place before you condemn them.

HER FIRST APPEARANCE ON THE "STRING," AND SOME INCIDENTS THAT FOLLOW IN HER *TRAIN.*"

The ladies were slow claiming their rights, telegraphically, in California, though it was an open field. California girls born prior to the present time, will never learn telegraphy. They are too sprightly, too restless, too wild, and aspire to loftier places. Every young girl in California confidently expects to be a millionaire's wife. Until she is disabused of this fanciful idea, she will not think of earning a living with her own hands. She is generally too well advanced in years before this can be done to undertake to master telegraphy, and so she accepts the first presentable man, and — there is one millionairess less.

Elk Town was the first station on the Central Pacific Railroad to welcome a lady operator. She had acquired a knowledge of the art telegraphic in a little village away to the east, on the banks of the Father of Waters. In obedience to the command of the prophetic Greeley, she came west, and that is how she came within the scope of Sam Johnson's observations. Their introduction was somewhat singular. Sam knew that the regular operator at Elk Town had gone away for a few days, but he did not dream of a lady taking the place. The operator at Mud Springs, an inland office, wanted to get a substitute, and had asked Sam to look out for one for him. Now, it is quite common for one operator to tell another who sends feebly, that he had better go to the "Springs." Sam asked the lady at Elk Town, (supposing the operator to be a man,) if he would like to go to Mud Springs when the regular operator returned. "Oh, no!" she said, "I think I will be able to get along here." As soon as Sam learned the true state of affairs, he explained matters satisfactorily.

Train men, generally, are prepossessing, dressy, and ladies' men. The lady operator proved to be, as all operators of the opposite sex are, intelligent, refined, pleasant, talkative, and good-looking. What more or better inducements would a freight train conductor, who is a man and

a gentleman, want to cause him to get his train to Elk Town ahead of time, and keep it there as long as he dared? None. Jack Franks and Jim Kutting were the two most attentive. Jim was a married man, and knew the advantages of good company, and so, when he could spend a few minutes or hours in the company of the fair telegrapher, he never failed to do so. One evening Jim went to Elk Town on train No. 6, intending to return on train No. 7, which would allow him to remain one hour at Elk Town. Jack Franks happened to be conductor of No. 7. Hearing from the conductor of No. 6 that Kutting was at Elk Town, and intending to return with him, he held his train back until it was past due at Elk Town, and then went flying by the station. Kutting did not get aboard. He had to wait until ten o'clock for No. 3.

Jack served himself a worse, or, rather, a better joke than this. One Sunday he went to Elk Town on No. 2, at eleven A. M., intending to return on No. 3. He hired a "rig," took the lady out riding, and passed the day pleasantly. The lady had a piano in her office, and the evening was passed very agreeably, she playing accompaniments to Jack's singing. Jack was a splendid (?) vocalist. His favorite song was "All Aboard!"

As the time approached for No. 3 to be due at Elk Town, Jack looked at his gold chronometer, and said: "She'll soon be here."

The lady opened her large, rolling eyes widely, and exclaimed: "Why! how you astonish me. Who's coming?"

Jack laughed, and said he meant train No. 3.

"No 3" repeated the fair operator, slowly, staring at Jack as if she thought he might be crazy. "Why, don't you know that No. 3 don't run Sundays?"

Jack staggered back, and fell over the stove upon the cat, which was so badly frightened that she gave one piercing scream, and leaped through the ticket window, taking most of the glass with her. Happily there was

no fire in the stove, otherwise Jack would have fared badly. The stove was near the wall, and when Jack fell the weightiest portion of his body went down first, and he was wedged in between the stove and the wall, head and heels up, almost as tightly as if he had been driven there by a pile driver. The lady had to call for assistance to help move the stove before Jack could be released from his unpleasant predicament.

After order was restored, the lady was disposed to laugh, and did laugh until she got the hiccoughs, and almost strangled. But Jack was sober and meditative. He looked as though he had suddenly lost every one of his near relatives, and not one of them had left him a penny to remember them by. The fair operator recovered from her fit of laughter, noticed Jack's troubled countenance, and said: "Mr. Franks, are you hurt, do you feel sick?"

"Am I hurt! do I feel sick?" repeated Jack, with emphasis. "Why, my dear lady, don't you understand what troubles me. I've got to be in Sacramento at four o'clock to-morrow morning to bring out train No. 8. How am I to get there but to 'foot it.' Jack Franks walk fifteen miles in five hours! I should think I was doing well to make the trip in five days," and he sat down in a low, cane-bottomed chair so thoughtlessly and forcibly that he came nearly not getting out of it again.

"Well, it *is* really too bad," said Miss Operator, consolingly, but there was a mischievous twinkle in her eye that plainly showed her true feelings to be: "I don't care, its one of the best jokes ever perpetrated, and I know I shall laugh myself sick when he gets away."

Jack was one of the promptest railroad men on the pay-roll, and would have traveled the fifteen miles on his hands and knees that he might be at Sacramento ready to start with his train on time. He left Elk Town at exactly eleven o'clock P. M. He passed Poverty Flat, ten miles from Elk Town, at 2.10 A. M. At Poverty Flat there is a

train register, where each conductor must invariably record his arrival and departure, and affix his signature. So faithful was Jack to obey all the rules of the company, that, from force of habit he stopped at Poverty Flat, and registered as passing at 2.10 A. M. That is how Sam discovered the joke.

Jack reached Sacramento at 3:30 A. M., nearly exhausted, and as thoroughly disgusted with himself as a man could possibly be. If one wishes to touch Jack in a tender spot let him just ask him how many railroad ties there are between Elk Town and Sacramento.

AN EXPLANATION.

Almost all professions and vocations have their distinctive features, originating within themselves, or adopted for some particular purpose. These after awhile become customs, and are impressed upon their respective followers so habitually that they become "part and parcel" of their natures, and by these their caste can be easily recognized. They show themselves either in looks, actions, or dress. The stranger, traveler, and casual observer must form their ideas principally from appearance.

It is a well-known fact that the leading officers of railroad companies, from presidents down to division superintendents, are careless of their appearance. On the other hand, the working bees, the sinew and muscle of the company, dress according to fashion. One day one of the officers of the company asked Sam to explain why all his employés wore better clothes than he did.

Sam answered by saying that that question had puzzled him considerably, but he had solved it to his satisfaction. The world worships appearance more than reality, therefore we, the employés of the company, are desirous that the company shall appear to the best advantage, as typified by its managers. But we see that the managers neglect this important consideration either from taste, from being too busily engaged otherwise, or because their sal-

aries will not permit them to do it; therefore, rather than allow our company to fall into disrepute in this respect, we rally to its aid, and give it a standing among the best, one that we are not ashamed of.

This explanation was perfectly satisfactory.

PHANTOM RAILROADERS.

Everything pertaining to railroading must be systematical, practical, lucid. No vague ideas, no dreamings, no uncertainties. Abe White was an engineer, and a good one; but he had one failing, and a serious one it proved. He put too much confidence in departed spirits. He was continually holding communication with them when on duty, allowing them to ride on the engine (which was in violation of rule forty-nine), and listening to their advice. His train had orders one night not to leave Altamont until No. 12 had arrived from Midway. Altamont is at the summit of the coast range. From Altamont toward Midway the grade descends very rapidly, and it is almost impossible to stop a train after it gets under headway. Now, Abe White understood his order, but his spiritual friends knew nothing about it, or if they did they disregarded it altogether. These phantom railroaders told Abe that No. 12 was on the siding at Midway waiting for him, and even opened his eyes so that he could see for himself though it was night, and he must have looked over, around, or through several hills. No matter, Abe believed the invisible mischief-makers, started his train down the grade, and had it not been that every brakeman was at his post, and immediately plied the breaks, there would have been one of the worst "smash ups" on record. As it was, the two trains came within a few feet of colliding. Spirits are not reliable as railroaders. They are "too thin."

TRAMPS.

Tramps are a source of great annoyance to train men. They become so dextrous at stealing rides and getting on

and off trains, that it is almost impossible to thwart them, especially on a long train. On a passenger train they usually select the platform of the car next to the engine. If "fired off" from this, they will run toward the rear end of the train and jump on. If put off at the rear end they will run ahead to get aboard, and, unless every car is guarded, will succeed. Whenever possible they will get upon the top of a passenger car and lie down by the ventilators as "flat as a shingle." It is becoming very common for them to lie down on the cross-beam of the breaks between the wheels, and within six inches of the track. It is a very cramped and dangerous position, but they cling to it with death-like tenacity. It is more difficult to hinder them from riding on long freight trains than on passenger trains. Freight train No. 8 started out of Sacramento one morning for San Francisco with one of these irrepressible "dead head" travelers "stowed away" on a brake beam. He was routed out at Poverty Flat, but got aboard again. He was put off at every station at which the train stopped, and often raced up and down its whole length, but he always succeeded in eluding the train men and in getting on. He boldly asserted that he was going through to San Francisco on that train, and they could not prevent him. At Midway, half way to San Francisco, the conductor told the tramp that if he was determined to go, to get into the caboose. He did, and was immediately seized by the conductor, who, with the assistance of the brakeman, securely bound him to a telegraph pole near the depot, and then "pulled out" with the train and left him a martyr at the stake.

Persons who endeavor to steal a passage on trains are almost invariably hoodlums, or those who would not work if offered the most lucrative employment. These characters meander from city to city, getting their living at free lunch saloons, and when that fails they beg, boldly, and in many cases impudently, and steal too, with very little compunction of conscience.

The public are quick to discover and cry out against any

infringement of their rights by railroad companies, be such grievances real or imaginary. Should the people not be willing to "do as they wish to be done by?" The law ought to be such that whenever a person undertakes to steal a ride on a train, such person becomes liable to the same punishment that would have been inflicted had he stolen the money necessary to pay his passage as far as he had ridden when discovered. Such a law would work hardship to no one disposed to be honest and willing to work; on the contrary, it would compel a set of scoundrels and loafers to go to work or starve.

STRANGE BUT TRUE.

Country people, who have been benefited by railroads more than any others, by the increase in the value of their lands, and by the bringing of markets for their produce to their very doors, are the most unreasonable people with whom railroad companies have to deal. They will demand crossings at every field, and if any of their stock are killed through their own negligence, or seemingly intentional carelessness, they will put in a bill of damages much in excess of their loss. The same is the case if they have a few acres of grain or hay or dry stubble burnt by fire kindled by sparks from an engine. But how is it if they cause the company to be damaged, and also occasion loss of limb or life to one or more persons? Here is an instance:

Freight train No. 10 left Stockton at 2.13 A. M. on time, and was running at regular time card speed, when about four miles west of Stockton, and near a long trestle-work, the head light shone on four horses feeding near the track. The moment the light flashed upon the horses they sprang into the center of the track, and started ahead of the train at their utmost speed, and ran into the trestle-work. The engineer called for brakes, and reversed his engine, but it was useless. In a moment the engine struck the struggling horses, cutting one of them "half and half," but

another got under the wheels, threw the engine from the track, the cars in the train following it. The engineer leaped out, falling on the hard ground below, badly spraining his back, and otherwise maiming himself. The fireman was not so fortunate. The engine went over on his side of the track, and he dared not jump. He must take his chance where he was. The engine fell on its side, and car after car fell upon it, completely burying it, and so crushing and disfiguring the fireman that he could hardly be recognized as a human being when rescued.

How did the horses get out of the field onto the track? Examination revealed the bars down at the ranche's crossing. Not broken down, but laid down carefully. At daybreak the rancher came directly from his barn, with his bridle on his arm, to these bars, looking for his horses. The feed was much better along the railroad than in the field. The inference is that the rancher left the bars down purposely when he passed through the evening before, and, knowing where to look for his horses, came directly to the track after them. Did that rancher think he was a murderer? Of course not. It is no crime to kill a railroader. Did he re-imburse the company for the loss he had caused them? Did Jonah swallow the whale? Did he claim damages for his horses that were killed? If he did not the millennium is certainly near at hand.

"If self the wavering balance shakes,
It's rarely right adjusted."

THE ONLY ONE.

The Safety Valve Railroad was the first in California, and, if the Scripture be fulfilled, and it keeps up its present good behavior, it will be the last. In the eight years that Sam Johnson has been at Poverty Flat it has had but one accident. Such an isolated instance, and one, too, that was so frightful and yet so harmless in its results, is worthy of record.

The Safety Valve Railroad in its early history transacted

a tremendous business, but the exhaustion of the placer mines and the completion of the Central Pacific Railroad turned the tide of travel and freight into other channels, so that the ten and twelve heavy trains that once ran over the road daily are now reduced to four. The through train consists of but one baggage and one passenger car. At Folsom the road begins to ascend the foot-hills of the Sierra Nevada mountains, winding around hills, through cañons, and on and up into the mountains. At Willow Bend—which is nothing more than a side track—trains do not stop unless signaled. The road makes a sharp curve here, and as the outside rails on a curve are much the higher, on rounding these places the car naturally tips to the inside of the curve. The curve at Willow Bend was noticeably one-sided, in fact dangerously so. But such is the love of Californians for adventure that the uncertainty of passing over this particular curve in safety only lent a charm to it.

In several places on the Safety Valve Railroad above Folsom good views of the Sacramento valley and the State capital can be had from the cars. For a short distance above, at, and below Willow Bend an excellent view can be obtained on a clear day. It had been raining very hard for several days previous to the day on which the accident occurred of which we are about to speak. The ground was very soft, the creeks, sloughs and ponds were all full and the track liable to give way. But on this particular day the sun shone warmly, the air was balmy and refreshing, and the landscape in every direction sparkling with dew-drops of delight. The passenger car was barely half filled, and every one was on the lookout to catch a view of the broad, green valley of the Sacramento, and the noble dome that crowns one of the finest public structures in the Union. The passengers had all taken seats on the side of the car that would favor them with this charming sight.

Henry Jones was conductor of the train. Henry was one of the most agreeable men in the railroad service. He was

dignified, nevertheless he was courteous to all, and made everybody his friend, particularly the ladies. Henry was not a great talker, but a jovial one. When he spoke he invariably "said something." He was a great admirer of beauty in fair fields, and also in fair women. On this occasion he had seated himself beside a lady whose raven black hair hung in long wavy curls down over her shoulders. Her alabaster forehead and cheeks glowed with animation, and her white, evenly set teeth shone fair as pearls as she made merry over the witticisms of conductor Jones. "Look! look!" exclaimed the conductor, pointing out of the car window to the westward. "Ah! what a sight, what a flood of rapturous beauty flashes before the eyes, a picture fit for the gaze of the gods!"

"Look a little to the northward," again spoke the conductor to the fair entranced, "and you will see the white dome of the capitol rising like a statue of virgin purity out of the green-carpeted valley."

"Perfectly magnificent and"—and she flew out of the window and lit down in the water and soft mud fifty feet distant, with a thud and a force that caused her to sink to her waist. The conductor followed not a second behind, and was about to light in exactly the same spot already monopolized by his lady friend. Had he done so, the collision would doubtless have been fatal to her, for conductor Jones is a "heavy weight." But with that rare presence of mind peculiar to railroaders, and with a quickness of thought and action never surpassed, he managed to pass over her head and light in a pond beyond her. As he passed the lady, he threw his right hand behind him and his fingers caught in her raven locks and clung to them, and for a moment he thought he had jerked her head off. The pond in which the conductor lit was only arm-pit deep, but it was miry, and when he pulled one foot out the other sank deeper in the mire. But after much struggling and perspiring he got upon firmer ground. His first thought was of the lady. He still held her wavy curls in his hand.

They were not so wavy as they had been a few moments before. He confronted the lady struggling to extricate herself from her unpleasant situation. O, ye gods! what a transformation was here! A few straggling gray locks were all that remained of that once magnificent head of hair, and that face which but a moment ago had been as fair as the bust of Venus, was now wrinkled and blotched; and those teeth, where are they? Extracted, sure as fate. He dropped the heretofore priceless ringlets, and turned away without lending the floundering lady his assistance. This was the most heartless act conductor Jones was ever known to do.

What was the fate of the other passengers? Singular to relate, not one had suffered a broken limb. Some had received slight scratches from the broken glass, and a few had got bruises from falling on rocks, but none were seriously injured. The brakeman, who was standing in the side door of the baggage car when the car went over, was shot up in the air with lightning velocity, and came down into the top of a large, live-oak tree which was standing near the track. He was more frightened than hurt, and could hardly be persuaded to come down. He thought an earthquake had caused the disaster, and proposed to keep above the earth until all danger had passed. The most seriously injured were the engineer and fireman. Both jumped as the engine went over, and, after turning a somersault, lit on their feet on pretty solid ground. The engineer, who weighed two hundred and fifty pounds, fell across the fireman's chest. The wood that was in the tender came flying at them and around them, as though a lot of infuriated demons were pelting them with it. They were unable to free themselves until the more fortunate in the wreck came to their assistance. The engineer was bleeding pretty freely from several cuts inflicted by the wood, but had not received any serious or fatal wounds. The fireman was almost lifeless, and considerable trouble was experienced in bringing him to consciousness again. As soon as he could speak he said he thought one of the

Calaveras big trees had fallen on him. That was the last he remembered.

Another train was dispatched to the scene of the accident as quickly as possible, and after a few short hours delay, the passengers and train men once more started for Sacramento.

A cloud had fallen over conductor Jones. He was as staid and thoughtful as a deacon. When he arrived at Poverty Flat, Sam noticed at once that there was something weighing heavily on his mind. Calling Sam to one side, he said, very earnestly and impressively: "Sam, I'm as good a friend as you've got."

"Of course you are. Who ever doubted that?" exclaimed Sam.

"Well, nobody," he said, "but I want to give you a word of advice, as a particular friend: NEVER GET MARRIED!" and he turned about, and singing out: "All Aboard!" sprang on his train and was gone.

STEALING TIME.

"Procrastination is the thief of time," is a saying as old as time itself; and it is as true as it is old. Previous to the building of railroads, "procrastination" had monopolized the whole time stealing business. But since "necessity," that most prolific of mothers, brought into the world the "railroad conductor," Procrastination has had to "trail his flag in the dust." No matter about the great age of "Procrastination," and that other time-worn saying that "practice makes perfect," his laurels have been snatched from him by his young and irrepressible competitor, the "rail oad conductor." If telegraph operators placed no check upon conductors, they would steal time enough in the first six months of the year to bring their Fourths of July on Christmas. For persistent, audacious time stealing commend me to the railroad conductor. However, if there be virtue in thieving of any description, it is stealing time on a railroad. To illustrate:

Freight trains are not allowed by rule to run faster than fifteen miles an hour—one mile in four minutes. Freight train No. 6's schedule time to leave Sacramento is eleven o'clock A. M., and to meet passenger train No. 1 at Galt one-thirty P. M. No. 6 is detained, and does not leave Sacramento until eleven fifty-five, but reports to the superintendent as leaving at eleven-forty, stealing fifteen minutes at the start. It arrives at Poverty Flat at twelve-fifteen, but reports leaving there at twelve o'clock, stealing another fifteen minutes. It runs to Elk Grove, ten miles, at the speed of one mile in three minutes, arriving there at twelve forty-five, but reports leaving at twelve forty, stealing five minutes. It runs from Elk Grove to Galt, eleven miles, in thirty-five minutes, arriving at Galt at one-twenty, clearing the track for the passenger train, ten minutes before it is due, according to rule. The reports to the superintendent from each telegraph station in its route, show the train to have run at the rate of exactly one mile in four minutes, though its actual speed was one mile in three minutes and a quarter, and the total time stolen, forty-five minutes. At this rate of time stealing how long would it take a conductor to make a trip to the moon, provided, of course, that there was an "all rail route" to that unexplored kingdom? Had the conductor not stolen this time he could not have run to Galt to meet train No. 1, would have failed to make other meeting points, have delayed other trains, and probably been four or five hours late reaching the end of his division. Stealing time is not legally a crime. That is why "Procrastination" has been allowed to carry it on so extensively. Neither is it a crime in the eyes of railroaders so long as no accidents arise from it, and the officials of the road do not find it out. A conductor who would not steal time would have time stolen from him, and would almost always be behind his card time, which would eventually result in his dismissal from the company's service.

FLAGGING THE MOON.

George Young—poor fellow, he is dead now—performed an exploit in railroading never attempted before or since, and which made him the butt of all his fellows ever after. George was impulsive, nervous, always acting upon the "spur of the moment." He was conductor of a freight train on the Visalia division of the Central Pacific railroad. Cabooses on the C. P. road and branches have elevated seats in them to enable conductors to look over their trains to the engine, and thus be assured that their trains have not broken in two. The train of which George Young was conductor had been running along nicely for some time, when, suddenly, purely from habit, George sprang up, mounted his elevated chair, cast a glance toward the forward end of the train, then as quickly leaped to the floor again, shouting: "Stop her! Put on the brakes, quick, for God's sake. There's a train ahead, coming toward us—I saw the head light," and he grabbed his lantern, rushed out of the caboose, and up on the top of the train, and hurried to the engine, making signals with his lantern, to the engineer to stop.

By the time George had reached the engine the train had been brought almost to a stand.

"What is the trouble?" said the engineer, addressing George, thinking, from his nervous actions and frightened looks, that probably a brakeman had fallen from the top of a car on the track, and been run over and killed.

"Don't you see that train coming yonder?" said George, pointing to what he supposed to be the head-light of an engine, shining directly in the center of the track ahead of them.

"O! is that all?" answered the engineer, coolly.

"All! man, what more do you want? I wouldn't give a farthing for your life now. She'll be into us in a few minutes. I'll run ahead and flag her," and without waiting for a reply, he jumped down from the engine to

the ground, and ran ahead to flag what he supposed to be an approaching train.

The engineer and fireman saw George's mistake at once, and laughed heartily at his ridiculous blunder, but decided to allow him to discover the error himself.

George walked ahead of his own train, in the center of the track, keeping a sharp lookout for the supposed train ahead. In this way he proceeded for over a mile, getting no nearer the imaginary train. Wearying of walking, George climbed into the engine, saying: "Boys, I think she's backing out of our way."

At this moment the track curved to the right, and the engineer said: "George, where are your dreaded headlight and train now?"

George was appalled, and stood as mute as a statue for a minute, and then said: "Boys, don't 'give me away,' about this, and I'll present every one of you with a new hat, pay day."

But it was too good to keep, and poor George never heard the last of "Flagging the Moon," while he was on the road.

"TRUTH IS STRANGER THAN FICTION."

An incident occurred at Poverty Flat one day that is almost too incredible to be believed, yet it is as true as truth itself.

Sheep raising is carried on very extensively in California. Immediately after shearing in the spring the sheep are driven high up into the mountains where there is good pasture, and kept there until approaching winter drives them down into the valleys again. One or two men have charge of a band of sheep and live all alone with them, not seeing half a dozen persons in as many months. One day one of these sheep-herders came directly down from the mountains to Poverty Flat, to take the cars for San Jose. He looked wild, and was wild. He had not shaved his face nor cut or combed his hair for six months, and his whole "make up"

harmonized with his head. The train that he was to take passage in came and went. Shortly after it had departed Sam had occasion to step out of the office, and seeing the herder standing gazing intently at the fast disappearing train, said to him, "Why, I thought you were going on that train."

The herder looked at Sam curiously, then cast another look at the train, and exclaimed: "My God! I forgot to get on."

TELEGRAPH LINE REPAIRING.

Telegraph line repairing is one of the most important branches of the telegraphic service. The amount of business that can be transmitted over a wire depends upon its insulation. Upon the line repairer devolves the duty of keeping the line properly insulated and free from breaks, crosses, and other impediments to a "strong circuit."

The line repairer must be a man who is impervious to the weather — rain or snow, heat or cold. Storms and floods, and snow-slides and land-slides are his particular benefactors. They pull down that he may build up. They confuse the wires that he may unravel them. He must undertake this at once. He cannot wait until the storm subsides. He must go out into the drenching, pelting rain, the blinding snow and the pinching cold.

Andrew McFinn was one of the oldest and best telegraph line repairers in California. He had seen a great deal of varied and hard service. He was one of the pioneers who stretched the first line across the western plains, over the Rocky Mountains, through deserts, over the "bold Sierras," and down into the valley of the Sacramento, and on to the Golden City of the Pacific. He joined the telegraphic expedition to Alaska and Behring's Strait. Getting separated from their supply ship, they were obliged to travel inland by dog sledges to procure food. And such food — dried seal and seal oil! Andrew McFinn had experienced all these privations and more, and yet he was in the prime of

life. But California had in reserve for him an adventure that surpassed all his previous ones, at least in its propitious outcome.

In many places in the mountains in California the telegraph line is stretched from tree to tree, and across deep, narrow cañons and gulches. In the mountain wilds of Calaveras County, where the bear and the California lion roam at will, and the sound of human footsteps is seldom heard, is a narrow ravine which bears the name of Musquito Gulch. Its rocky and almost perpendicular sides reach upward until they seem to touch the sky, and nearly shut out the light of day from the narrow stream of clear, cold water that rushes along at the bottom. Musquito Gulch is several miles in length. In building a telegraph line in this mountainous country, it was found expedient to cross Musquito Gulch near its center. This was a most difficult undertaking, as Andrew McFinn can truthfully testify. Having attached the wire securely to the limb of a tree on one side of the gulch, he trailed it along the summit for half a mile before he could find a place where he dared attempt to descend to the bottom. Once at the bottom his trouble had but fairly begun. To reach its summit on the opposite side from which he started, from the base of the gulch, was a difficult and exceedingly dangerous undertaking. Sometimes a rock gave way from under his feet and he started to descend, but saved himself from destruction by grabbing a bush or root. Sometimes loosened rocks and dirt tumbled down upon him from overhead, and cut and bruised and almost blinded him, while it kept him, as it were, suspended above the grave. All this time he retained possession of the wire, which was a heavy weight to carry, and often very nearly severed his hold on the "ragged edge" of life, to which he clung tenaciously. He finally reached the top "more dead than alive," and after a "breathing spell," carried the wire back along the uneven summit to a place opposite the tree to which he had attached it, ascended a tree and fastened the wire to a limb that extended out over the gulch.

One of the most prolific sources of income to telegraph companies in California arises from the stock gambling mania. Mining stock telegrams are given the preference over all other commercial business. Sometimes a single message is burdened with the weight of a million dollars. Fortunes are made and lost so quickly in speculations in mining stocks that the millionaire of to-day may be the beggar of to-morrow, and *vice versa*. But it is safe to say that ninety-nine lose where one gains. Stock gamblers — those who control the markets — are a shrewd, unscrupulous, mystery-plotting, excitable, speculating class. They will "move heaven and earth" to "bull" or "bear" the market, and engage in every imaginable species of manipulation which is not downright, open dishonesty, to deceive the public and forward their own schemes. One of the wealthiest men in California at the present day was once a telegraph operator, and made his "strike" by the shrewd use of his telegraphic knowledge.

There was a mining case being tried in Virginia City, Nevada, wherein the title to a mine valued at fifty million dollars was in dispute. Now, the future market value in San Francisco of the stock of the mine in litigation depended altogether on which of the claimants won the suit. If the prosecution won, the stock would fall; it the defendant won, it would rise. If one of the "mining sharps" in San Francisco could obtain reliable information of the final decision of the suit in Virginia City a few hours in advance of any others, there would be "millions in it." Abe Parker — that is not his proper name — the telegraph operator referred to, agreed to furnish one of the leading stock brokers of San Francisco the desired information for a share in the spoils. Abe's plan was satisfactory and his proposition accepted. Abe supplied himself with a telegraph instrument, some office wire and blank paper, dressed himself like a "prospector," and started for the mountains. He located in a lonely, out-of-the-way place, about midway between Virginia City and San Francisco, in a deserted sheep-herder's cabin, in near proximity to the telegraph

line. At that time there was but one line between the two cities. Abe ran a fine wire down on two sides of a telegraph pole and into his cabin, arranged his ground wire, set up his instrument, and was ready for business. His idea was to watch the development of the trial by the dispatches that were constantly passing over the wire about it, and when it finally culminated, to attach his ground wire —which would not be felt, being about equi-distant between the two cities—receive the messages from Virginia City that would be sent to parties in San Francisco announcing the decision of the trial, as if he were the San Francisco operator. Then he would turn about and send the important information to *his* broker, successfully withholding it from the others. This Abe accomplished, and was rewarded for his shrewdness—you may call it rascality if you like—by the handsome little fortune of two hundred thousand dollars in gold coin.

At the time that Andrew McFinn's adventure occurred, there was an important mining claim in litigation at Calaveras involving the title to a mine of great value. One of the means adopted by parties in San Francisco to secure the first information of the decision in such cases, was to have the wire cut, and then, by mounted messengers, send to the next telegraph office toward San Francisco from the place where the wire was cut, and forward the decision. To guard against this practice McFinn was sent to Calaveras by the telegraph company, to keep vigilant watch over the line during the progress of the trial, particularly toward its close. He was especially charged to keep a sharp lookout for Musquito Gulch, for if the line was severed at that point it would take several hours to make the connection again.

The case was given to the jury one miserably hot, sultry, July day. McFinn immediately started on foot, along the line toward Musquito Gulch, ten miles distant, "the way the bird flies," but the way a footman had to go up hill and down, it was almost fifteen.

As McFinn was nearing the summit of the mountain above the Gulch, about two o'clock in the afternoon, a man on horseback shot past him like an arrow from the strong bow of an Indian. McFinn knew then that the deed was done that he had been endeavoring to prevent, and had he been the possessor of a rifle he would have paid his respects to the bold rascal. But he did not. A few steps brought him to the tree to which the line had been attached. It had been severed sure enough. He looked down from his dizzy height to the bottom of the gulch, a thousand feet below, and shuddered at the thought of having to go down there, and climb up again with the wire attached to him. But he was not a man to hesitate at difficulties or dangers, and so immediately set about performing the task.

After three hours of the most incessant labor and indescribable suffering, caused by the blinding heat, the falling rocks, and loosened dirt, he reached the summit again. After a short rest he ascended the tree cautiously, crawled out on the limb extending over the Gulch, made the wire fast to the end of the limb, and then turned about to descend to the ground. He did not do it, however. But every hair on his head *did* stand straight out, and he turned pale, and trembled so violently that he almost fell from the tree.

On the same limb, and but a few feet from McFinn stood a large bear leisurely contemplating McFinn's movements, as though he were anxious to acquire a knowledge of the telegraph line repairing business, or, more likely, he was calculating how many meals McFinn would make for a bear of his size and appetite. McFinn scrutinized his unwelcome caller with consternation and alarm. Not so Bruin. He watched McFinn with great complacency and coolness, and seemed to enjoy the situation hugely, if one could judge by the grin on his hairy face. Sitting astride of the limb of a tree, over a yawning abyss, a single telegraph wire behind, and a huge bear immediately

in front, is not the most enviable position one could wish to occupy. McFinn did not think it was, and he certainly ought to know. He called upon all the saints he ever read or heard of to come to his rescue, but in vain. Apparently there were none in that part of the country. He made a movement toward the bear to frighten him. The bear sat up, reached his arms toward McFinn, seemingly to assure him that he would embrace him as fondly as parent ever did a loved child. McFinn had been hugged oftener than once, and would not have objected to its repetition had the conditions been favorable, but at present he would beg to be excused. The bear waited some time for McFinn to come to him, but not being accommodated, he started toward McFinn. McFinn tried to frighten him away by kicking, striking, cursing and yelling. Bruin did not heed his admonitions, but boldly advanced upon him. Desperate emergencies beget desperate remedies. McFinn slid off the limb, and hung to the wire, intending to reach the other side of the Gulch, if possible, by passing one hand over the other. Bruin seemed to understand the situation almost as well as McFinn did, and, with apparent human intelligence, took hold of the wire with one of his paws, and began shaking it. McFinn gave up all hope of life, and was earnestly calling on the Lord to forgive his many sins, when the report of a rifle rang in his ears, and Bruin fell from the limb and went bounding and rolling, and tumbling to the bottom of the Gulch. McFinn's hands were almost cut in two, and were bleeding profusely, so that he could not hold on much longer. He made an effort to reach the tree, but his hand slipped, and he, too, went down, down, to the ravine beneath, striking the side of the Gulch, bounding off, only to strike lower down, and be struck in turn with loosened dirt and rocks. His face was scratched, and his clothes torn by brambles and briers. He dashed on, and on, and on until he reached the bottom apparently lifeless, and within a few feet of his, but a moment before, dreaded enemy—the bear.

Who is this running down the gulch, toward our fallen hero, a rifle in her right hand, a hatchet in her left, moccasins on her feet, and her long black hair streaming behind? It is the "Maid of Musquito Gulch," the heroine of many daring adventures. She approaches the bear cautiously. Satisfied that he is dead, she hastens to McFinn, turns him upon his back, puts her ear to his heart, to learn if it still beats, straightens up, gives two long, shrill whistles, and then hastens to apply cold water to McFinn's face from the foaming stream at his side.

What dusky forms are these approaching? Two Indian squaws. They have come in answer to the maiden's call. By direction of the maiden the squaws prepare a litter by laying brush and small limbs crosswise on two poles. Upon this McFinn was laid, and carried by the squaw to the maiden's home at the foot of the gulch, four miles distant. It was a slow and fatiguing journey through the winding cañon. They were obliged to halt many times to recuperate their strength, and also to revive the faintly living McFinn by the application of cold water to his head and face. It was after nightfall when the maiden and her cortege reached her father's rude log cabin at the mouth of the Gulch, where it widens out into a beautiful little valley.

McFinn fought the "Grim Destroyer" Death, for four long weeks before he finally overcame him, and regained his senses. The "Maid of Musquito Gulch," McFinn's rescuer, was his faithful attendant all this while, and until his former strength was fully recovered.

McFinn's absence was noted, and search instituted for him. His tools were found at the foot of the tree where he had left them, and it was currently believed that he had been murdered by some one who had attempted to cut the line, and that the wild beasts had devoured his body.

McFinn regained his bodily strength, but still he was loth to leave the rude but hospitable home of his kind

deliverers. He did not do so until the "Maid of Musquito Gulch" consented to become the wife of Andrew McFinn. She joined him in his camping expeditions, in the summer season, repairing telegraph lines, and traveled with him until an interesting event occurred that made a proud man of Andrew McFinn, but which rendered the camp so "squally" that Mrs. McFinn was obliged to abandon traveling.

RECREATION.

There is no business, vocation, or profession that so depresses and consumes all the faculties of the mind, and so wastes the physical system, as telegraphy. It is a constant strain, in fact the mind almost becomes welded to it, in time. Whenever the operator is within hearing of the instrument his thoughts are with it, no matter what is occurring around him. The body may wear away, yet the faculties of the mind be active and strong, but if the mind be overworked, depressed, the physical organization is affected in like manner.

Not wishing to adopt the "Sliding Scale," and degenerate into a mere automatical machine, Sam made it a rule to embrace every favorable opportunity to "break away" from the monotony of the office, and unfetter its withering grasp by seeking more lively and cheerful company.

Poverty Flat is not only poor in name, and flat on its surface, but it is as barren of cultivated society—in a society sense—as the opossum's tail is of hair. It has a number of good, sociable people, and fine, hospitable families; but each family is a little, isolated community of its own, loving and caring for itself. These island homes are cheery and pleasant, and agreeable places at which to pass an evening, and their inmates kind and free-hearted; but they will not venture beyond their own homes to form an organized society for the general good. Such being the social status in Poverty Flat, congenial company can only be found in a private family.

Those persons enjoy liberty best who have suffered imprisonment. Blessings are seldom truly appreciated until they have flown. Sam enjoyed these social visits all the more for their rarity, and because of his close confinement to the office. That Sam heartily enjoyed these oases in the desert of business, the reader can best judge by perusing a description of one of them, in Sam's own language. It is entitled:

SATURDAY EVENING.

Closely confined all day long in my office, a disagreeable northwest wind blowing furiously without, compelled to listen to the constant clicking of the instrument, diversified by reading and writing, yawning and stretching, I am only too happy when evening comes to be permitted to leave my dreary, lonesome prison, and wander away in search of more agreeable company. The wind has gone down, the sun is just passing from view behind the western hills, the balmy air is fragrant with the odor of new-mown hay, and all nature wears a pleasant, peaceful smile as I lock my office door, and, cane in hand, my thoughts occupied with the impressions of the beautiful surroundings, leisurely wend my footsteps eastward. I am aroused from this contemplative mood by the delightful aroma of heliotropes, pinks and roses, wafted to my senses from a flower-garden which I have approached in my ramble. I step within and hear the clear, ringing voice of little Laura on the balcony above, asking questions and making suggestions that would seem to emanate from a much older head. I am greeted by a cheerful "Good evening!" which I know is spoken by the entertaining Mrs. Hope, though she is invisible. Mrs. Hope and Laura come out into the garden, and are joined presently by the modest, thoughtful Miss Adelbert. We loiter among the flower beds, discoursing upon the respective merits of the different varieties of flowers, inhaling their sweetness and admiring their beauty, shrouded by the soft, mellow light of the moon that looks down upon us through

the transparent sky above our heads. I am the recipient of a fragrant red rose, a pair of sweet-scented, snow white pinks, and a tempting double geranium, and my happiness is complete. I ask nothing more pleasant on earth, and shall be content to gain a Heaven as beautiful and delightful.

We betake ourselves to the parlor, where stands the piano, with its mouth wide open, and its fifty tongues ready to warble us a melodious welcome. The books on the shelves in the book-case bespeak us an intelligent feast. The pictures on the walls bow their heads in smiling recognition, and the rocking-chair in the corner says: "Come to my arms and I'll embrace you as fondly as ever lover did his sweetheart, and hold you as comfortably and carefully as doting mother ever held innocent babe."

Miss Adelbert and Laura vanish. While they are absent Mrs. Hope and I attack a bungling doctor with vengeance, breaking every bone in his body, setting and resetting them, pulling and twisting them until our victim writhes and groans and shrieks with pain. Then we administer chloroform, break him all over again, and bandage and splinter him round about until he is as stiff as a mummy. We have only been favoring him with an application of the treatment he inflicts upon some of his unfortunate patients.

What is this skipping so lightly into the room, as airy as a feather? Is it a fairy? Am I dreaming? Where am I? Have I been wafted away to the land of sprites by some magic wand? No! There sits Miss Adelbert, and yonder Mrs. Hope, both as natural as ever, and here am I in the same easy rocker. Surely these have not all been transported to a land of enchantment. Then how comes this nimble creature here, in gauzy, dazzling, snow-white raiment, with long, loose silken hair extending below her fragile waist, delicate roses on her head, and yellow, golden slippers on her tiny feet. She speaks. What! Laura? Can it be possible? It is, it is! Was ever child so beautiful? Hark! she is singing. No, 'tis not Laura. 'Tis the

bluebirds thrilling notes in the trees outside. It can't be the bluebirds either. 'Tis night. It *is* Laura. I'm entranced. Now she is dancing.

Light as a fairy,
Innocent and airy,
Blushing like a rose,
Laura on her toes.

THE LAST TWO.

We now introduce the reader to the last two of Sam's productions—"Should Railroaders Marry?" and "Railroad Telegraph Operators." We will give them in his own words. They are the latest emanations from his brain, and therefore deserve corresponding consideration.

SHOULD RAILROADERS MARRY?

"Should Railroaders Marry?" In dealing with this subject I shall view it simply in a sense of right and wrong, not only to railroaders themselves, but to those whom they marry, or would marry. I do not intend to adduce theories and make assertions unsupported by facts. I do not intend or pretend to decide the question that I ask—"Should Railroaders Marry?" I shall simply spread before the reader facts that have come within the scope of my own observation, and allow the reader to deduce his or her own conclusions. The future should be molded from the teachings of the past, otherwise all experience is for naught. If I can show wherein error has been committed in the past, it ought to benefit the future. If I can show where a good deed has been performed in the past, I shall bring forth an example for the future which should benefit it. The incidents that I shall depict are truths clothed with my own language. The first witness that I shall place on the stand is

BARNEY WILLIAMS.

Barney was telegraph operator and station agent at Pleasant Vale. He was a fair operator, and attentive to

business. I say attentive to business, and so he was until the tempter came, or he went to the tempter, no matter which, the end is the same. Barney was human, and it is human to love. So far Barney was blameless. But extremes in wisdom and extremes in folly have both the same parentage, and are equally inexcusable. Love, as far as I have observed, seems to partake of the nature of electricity, at least it seems to affect operators in a similar manner. When it attacks them it gives them a shock like that from a powerful battery, not so painful to their physical organization, but more destructive to their peace of mind, at all events it is so in certain stages, particularly before it has been reciprocated.

Barney was desperately in love at first sight. Operators being manipulators by profession, and lovers by nature, ought to know how to dispatch business pertaining to their calling. Barney did. He was shortly engaged. He would be married as soon as he could purchase a lot, build a house, and furnish it in complete order. These were the conditions exacted by his fair Venus. Barney's love was unadulterated. That of his adored shows considerable mixture with things other than those pertaining to the heart. No matter, Barney knew it not. He was blind—love blind.

From the moment of Barney's conquest he began to lose interest in telegraphy, in railroading, to be absent from the office when wanted, and to be absent-minded, and neglectful of business. Not to a very great extent, but still enough to be noticeable. Barney began to study and practice economy. He denied himself the luxury of an occasional cigar; dispensed with his "eye-opener" mornings; boarded himself in the freight house, and "bunked" in the office. Money was his god, and Miss Sphinx hi goddess. Miss Sphinx, that was her name. A very hard name to love. Barney did not love the name. In time Barney bought a town lot. While the necessary coin was accumulating to build the intended house he dug a well.

Dug it himself. He managed it after this fashion. He placed a windlass over the well, attached a bucket to the rope, and lowered it to the bottom; then ran down a ladder, filled the bucket with earth, climbed to the top, drew the bucket up with the aid of the windlass, emptied it, and then repeated the operation. This he did day after day, whenever he could spare a half hour from the depot, until he had dug down thirty feet, until he opened a vein of water, and was relieved. Barney did all this for love. Gold would not have tempted him to undertake such a task.

Next the house, Barney hired the frame put up. The inside work he did himself. Up at five in the morning, and up until ten and twelve at night, working in his house; devising all kinds of pigeon holes, shelves, drawers, and brackets, with an eye single only to the pleasure of Miss Sphinx, Miss Phoebe Sphinx. One happy Saturday night the house was finished. They were to be married the Thursday following—Barney Williams to Miss Phoebe Sphinx. I say *were* to be. The Tuesday preceding this Thursday that was to bring so much happiness to Barney Williams, San Francisco office had a message for all offices on the division. He tried several times to "raise" them, but failed. Finally, he told the train dispatcher about the message, and his inability to secure the attention of the operators. The dispatcher said: "Send it here, and I will see if they will take it from me."

The dispatcher notified all the offices as he could "raise" them, to be on hand at three o'clock, "sharp," to receive a "twenty-three" message, and to watch and give "O. K.," in turn, beginning at Poverty Flat; and that any one failing to do so, would be dismissed from the service. Now, at that time, the dispatcher was a man of his word. His decrees were as irrevokable as the judgments of fate. At three o'clock every office answered promptly. The message was sent. Poverty Flat returned

"O. K.," and so did the other offices in regular order, until Pleasant Vale was reached. No "O. K." A dead silence reigned for half a minute. Every operator on the line held his breath, for he well knew what would be the fate of poor Barney if he did not "come to time." He failed. The next office was told to answer. When all the offices had given "O. K.," except Pleasant Vale, the dispatcher again called Pleasant Vale. After a short delay Barney made the customary i i. "Why did you not give 'O. K.' to that 'twenty-three' message when your turn came?" asked the dispatcher. Barney opened his key. That was a "stunner." He must have time to recover from the blow, time to consider. He tried to frame various excuses, but all to no purpose. They only made bad worse. He was notified that an operator would be sent there immediately to relieve him. That was a fearful blow to Barney Williams. What would he do? Ah! he would go to his dear Phoebe, tell all his trouble, and she would console him. Did she do it? Did she fall on his neck and say that she would marry him Thursday if there was but one cracker in the house, and nothing else, for the first meal; and if he was bareheaded and barefooted, and had but one coat to his back? Did she? No, she did not Miss Phoebe Sphinx wasn't that kind of a woman. She told the disconsolate Mr. Barney Williams, ex-telegraph operator, that he might consider the engagement at an end. Barney vowed that he would set the house on fire, and then jump into the well and drown himself.

"Do as you please," coolly replied the heartless Miss Phoebe Sphinx. "The house is yours; burn it. The well is yours; jump into it. Good day, sir," and she closed the door on him.

I will close this "o'er true tale" with the same question with which I began it: "Should railroaders marry?"

TIMOTHY PLUNGER.

Timothy Plunger "held forth" at Guillotine. Tim was a No. 1 operator, a No. 1 agent, and a No. 1 fellow. He was a favorite with all the young ladies, not to mention the widows. California is *the* home of the widow, at least more of them make their homes here than anywhere else. But I digress. Tim was admired by all of the "tender" sex at Guillotine who dared to smile upon him. But "the best laid plans o' mice and men gang aft aglee." The charms of Guillotine's fair daughters could not charm Tim. His heart seemed to them to be calloused. Their Cupid darts could not penetrate it. Alas, they did not know that he had no heart—that it was already another's. It was. Before coming to Guillotine Tim had worked a short time in the tule swamps near Sacramento. There he met, wooed, and won the heart of an innocent little seraph of sweet sixteen. Tim was twenty-six. Railroaders seem never to consider age in love affairs. Sixteen or sixty it is immaterial which. They don't know the difference, or don't care. Such was the case with Timothy Plunger. Probably it is not so with all. Tim wanted to marry right away—so did Fannie. But the laws of California say girls under eighteen years of age shall not marry without the consent of their parents. Fannie's parents would not consent. Cruel parents. They did more. They got Tim out of his situation. He next appeared at Guillotine. But Tim's heart was with his Fannie, and he was unhappy. Love laughs at laws as well as locksmiths. Tim stole his Fannie from her dear parents, eloped with her into the State of Nevada, where the law does not interfere with love affairs, and they were married, and at once journeyed back to Guillotine. From the wedding day forth Timothy Plunger was another man—in a business sense. His office call was neglected more and more. People had to wait to receive and to deliver their freight. Trains were delayed, in fact all kinds of annoyances began to take place at the Guillotine depot. Tim didn't seem to notice it—he saw only Fannie. He would

run at her bidding at any time and anywhere. He was reprimanded again and again, until finally "forbearance ceased to be a virtue," and he was "let out." I again ask, "Should railroaders marry?"

MICKY M'FADDEN.

Micky McFadden, as his name indicates, was an ardent, quick-tempered, excitable youth. Micky's red hair had been burnished by nineteen summer suns, eighteen of them California's, and one the "old sod's." Micky was a telegraph operator. He began his telegraphic career as message boy in a country town, where dispatches had frequently to be carried four or five miles into the country. Micky, true to the predilections of his ancestors, spurned a horse's back and every other mode of conveyance other than the railroad, therefore his excursions into the country on matters of business were made on foot. From being at first a task, they gradually developed into pleasant trips. They were generally remunerative also, which made them all the more relishable.

Habits contracted in youth can never be wholly overcome or changed. After Micky had charge of an office, he availed himself of every favorable opportunity to take a jaunt into the country, if for no other purpose, as he said, than to give his legs a holiday. On one of these excursions Micky espied a buxom dairy-maid,

> Her lovely brown eyes, bright, sparkling and mischievous,
> Singing merrily as the birds in the treeses,
> Her long golden hair whipping the balmy breezes,
> Her round, plump arms extracting essence of cheeses,

and he was captivated, soul and body, and stood gazing at her like one bewitched. The cheerful milk-maid noticed Micky, and thinking he wanted some milk, said: "Young man, would ye's be afther wantin' a drap o' this?"

"Thank you, kind lady, I should be very happy to accept it from your delicate hands," spoke blushing Micky, making a low bow.

After waiting a minute, the dairy-maid said: "Well, if

ye's want it, come after it. Be ye's thinkin' I'll git up an' carry it to ye's, ye's big, gawkin thing?"

In this manner the "ice was broken." Soon Miss Craghie O'Shea — such was the poetical name of the charming dairy-maid — was drowning in love, and "that same" was Mr. Micky McFadden. They didn't drown. No one was ever known to drown in that element; but it has been the cause of innumerable drownings in a watery element.

Micky and Craghie boarded the train one happy day, bound to Oakland to procure the consent of the county clerk to their union. Now, Craghie was two years younger than Micky, which made her seventeen. Micky was not a lawyer, and, moreover, he despised the law, and knew nothing about it and cared less. When the county clerk asked him the age of his intended, Craghie blushed and turned away her face, but Micky came to her defence in a "jiffy."

"And what business is that of yours," said he, "whether she be fifteen or fifty?"

"Keep calm, young man," spoke the clerk; "the law respects age, not love. If the lady of your choice is under eighteen years of age, I cannot grant you a license without the consent of her parents."

"Holy Father!" exclaimed Micky, staring at the clerk with wide extended eyes.

But Micky was quick-witted, and an idea that might overcome the difficulty flashed into his mind at once.

"Should I telegraph to her parents and get a favorable answer, would that be satisfactory?" inquired the ardent youth.

"Certainly," answered the clerk.

Micky caught his charmer's arm and they hastened to the telegraph office. Miss Craghie said she knew how to talk to her parents better than Micky, and so insisted on writing the dispatch herself. And she did. Here it is:

MR. MURPHY O'SHEA, "OAKLAND, CAL., *Aug.* 18*th*, 187-.
MRS. BLARNY O'SHEA, MOUNT ALTA:

Plase tell the clerk o' the coort that ye's want me to marry darlint Micky McFadden, an' don't be slapin' while you're doin' it, ather.

Your own darlint child, MISS CRAGHIE O'SHEA."

After waiting two seemingly never-ending hours, Micky and Craghie received a favorable reply to the telegram, and straightway hurried to the clerk's office, and were soon furnished with the coveted permit to be made man and wife, which happy event they speedily consummated.

The happy couple spent two days in San Francisco, and then returned to Mount Alta. Here begins and ends the old, old story. Micky's interest in business began at once to abate. His telegraphing after a short time was almost unintelligible, and it was difficult to make him understand anything. He became unreliable, and of course unsafe as a railroader. Result—he "stepped down and out." I repeat: "Should railroaders marry?"

MOSES HUNT.

Of all the truly clever men and out and out ladies' men, Mose Hunt surpassed any that had ever twisted a brake or punched a ticket. He would stop a long freight train at almost any crossing, house, or other place on the road to let a lady off, be it far from or near to a station. Once he stopped his train just a mile west of Poverty Flat to let a lady off, not for any good reason, but simply to gratify a whim of hers, for she was no nearer her destination there than she would have been had she stopped at Poverty Flat. In starting his train a draw-head pulled out, and the delay it caused threw him on a passenger train's time, due from an opposite direction; and had it (the passenger train) been on time, there would probably have been a collision. Such a noble, obliging young man could not remain unwedded. Moses Hunt did not. Married life increased Moses' admiration for and attention to the fair, but only to one of them in particular, and that one Mrs. Gertie Hunt. She was his constant traveling companion. Mose had been promoted to passenger conductor. When not actually engaged going through the train collecting tickets, he would be found by the side of his adored spouse. At stations where there was a pause of five or ten minutes, they (Mose and his wife)

could invariably be seen walking up and down the platform arm in arm. Too much attention in one direction curtails it in another. Such was the case with Moses Hunt. He resigned — by invitation. Once more: "Should railroaders marry?"

JEREMIAH LUDLOW.

Jeremiah Ludlow was one of those stern, sober, matter-of-fact business men who seem to chill one with their very presence. When Jerry was on duty he wore a countenance that never smiled, that never changed. No man could tell by his looks whether he was the noblest man in existence or the greatest villain unhung. He attended strictly to business in all its requirements. He was polite and gentlemanly, and conducted all his movements in so orderly and regular a manner that he seemed more like a human machine than a God-given creature. Jerry made railroading his idol until he achieved the height of his ambition — charge of a passenger train. In one respect conductors are like young men studying for the ministry. As soon as a candidate for the ministry has been ordained and becomes established in his first circuit or station, he almost invariably, within six months thereafter, takes unto himself a wife. Just so with a railroader. Not many months are numbered with the past after he has become passenger conductor, until we find him on the roll of the Benedicts.

Jeremiah Ludlow went east to the State of his nativity, and brought therefrom to the sunset land one of the fairest of the fair. Again he donned the conductor's cap, and with punch in hand, resumed his trips to and fro in his trains, stern, stolid and unreadable as ever.

Train No. 4, Jeremiah Ludlow, conductor, was to leave Sacramento at eight o'clock A. M. At the exact minute the engineer rang his bell, and looked back for a signal from the conductor to go ahead. He saw none. The conductor was not there to give it. He did not make his appearance, neither could he be found at any hotel or boarding house

in the city. He did appear, however, some time during the day, but failing to explain his absence satisfactorily, he was excused from further service by the company. May I ask the question again: "Should railroaders marry?"

LARRY BLUCHER.

Larry Blucher served a long apprenticeship as brakeman, then a number of years as freight conductor, was promoted to passenger conductor, and then what? A wife. So far good. He rented a set of rooms at a cost of twenty-five dollars a month, and boarded at a restaurant at a further cost of fifty dollars a month. He took his wife out riding in a fine "turn-out" every day that he was at home; attended theatres, balls and parties, frequented races, betting heavily and losing correspondingly. All this time he was being "shadowed" by the company's detectives, as all conductors are. No matter how much the managers of a corporation attend races and club rooms, and bet and lose; they have a right to—there is no one to say they shall not. But Mr. Conductor must look to his betting and to his pleasure-seeking, if he would preserve his laurels. Larry was a good liver—lived fast and enjoyed life. But by so doing he overstepped the bounds of railroad forbearance, and was dismissed from the service. And again the question haunts me: "Should railroaders marry?"

JOHN KEYSER.

John Keyser was thick and short, altogether unlike a railroader. No one to look at him would ever think that he was active enough or had strength enough to be a brakeman. But he had. He was small but mighty. John was good and kind—too good for his own good. He often went hungry himself in preference to seeing a fellow "twister" denied a meal. In time John was made freight conductor. That was well enough—so good that John thought he must share it with another. He did—he got married. His kind disposition got him into trouble. He would seldom deny

a poor man or a poor woman passage on his train, if he thought he or she was destitute and deserving. Charity covers a multitude of sins, but when it is some one else's charity that we are dispensing, it is not so secretive. John did not think the company were losing anything, because, as the saying is, "blood cannot be got out of a turnip." The company did not view it in that light. They put "spotters" on John's track.

A very poorly dressed, feeble-appearing, old-looking lady came to the depot at Poverty Flat one day just after the passenger train had gone west. She inquired of Sam when the next train would leave for Stockton. Sam answered, "In half an hour." She said she had missed the first train and would have to take the freight train. She did.

John Keyser was conductor of the train. The old lady told John a pitiful story in a pitifully tearful manner. She said she had been driven away from her own home—where she had lived for years—by her dastardly son-in-law, now that his wife was dead, and her poor old mother had no one to defend her; that she had a daughter at Stockton who would take care of her if she could only get there, but she had no money, and did not know what she would do if he put her off. John's heart was touched. He said: "Never mind, mother, you shall not be put off this train until you wish to get off."

"God bless you! God bless you, my good man," she joyfully exclaimed.

Now, this woman proved to be a "make-up," a "spotter." She reported the case to a higher court. This court decided that John Keyser's services as conductor could be dispensed with. "Should railroaders marry?"

JAKE HOWELL.

December 16th, 1870, it began raining in California in true California style, which is almost a solid body of water descending from the clouds, accompanied by a terrific

south-east wind. On the night of the nineteenth several land-slides occurred on the line of the Central Pacific Railroad, in the Coast Range Mountains, midway between Sacramento and San Francisco. One of these slides was a mile, and another half a mile in length. They covered the track with dirt and boulders from ten to fifty feet deep. It was impossible to build a track around these extensive slides, therefore this *debris* had to be removed. The rain continued to pour down almost incessantly. Sloughs, ponds and lakes formed everywhere. Streams overflowed their banks and spread out miles and miles over the level country, particularly in the San Joaquin valley. Communication between Sacramento and San Francisco by rail was entirely cut off. No trains ran west of Stockton.

Jake Howell was telegraph operator at San Fernando. Jake had formerly worked at a station sixty-five miles east, where he had wooed and won a dark-eyed, raven-haired, plump brunette, whose father's ranche extended for miles along the east bank of the placid San Joaquin, and whose cattle and sheep, numbering many thousands, grazed and fatted upon the rich pastures of his thousands of acres of bottom land.

Now, it had been agreed upon by Jake and his fair affianced that the eighteen hundred and seventieth anniversary of the day that gave the world a Saviour, should also give Jake a wife, and the "Belle of the San Joaquin" a husband.

Every preparation had been made at the ranch for a grand "send off" to the young couple—a wedding such as had not been witnessed since the proud days of Spanish rule. Jake, too, had got himself up in magnificent style—plug hat, white cravat, "claw-hammer" coat, tight-legged pants, and red-topped boots. Jake carefully packed his entire wedding "outfit," including the wedding ring, in a valise, and, clad only in his work-day suit, boarded the cars on the morning of December 20th, with light step and buoyant feelings, eastward bound toward the idol of his heart.

At Livermore the train was brought to a stand by a green signal displayed at the telegraph office. Here Jake learned of the damage that the track had sustained the previous night, and that there was no probability of getting a train through east inside of a month. Oh, what a bitter disappointment! He had fondly hoped in three short hours to bask in the smiles of his sweet inamorata, but now, alas, when should he see her? But love laughs at storms and floods and all the perils of land and sea. Jake was in love. He must be and *would* be at his prospective father in-law's on Christmas day. To think was to act with Jake, so prompt were the emotions of his heart. He bought a mustang. Ten dollars was the winter price. Mustangs are as hard, unyielding, and perverse as a sinner's conscience, and will outwear three docile, respectable animals. Jake wrapped his valise in rubber cloth, buckled it on his saddle, mounted, and, putting spurs to his mustang, departed eastward in the pouring rain and beating wind.

In his haste and anxiety Jake neglected to provide himself with food and stimulants for his long and fearful journey. Hunger and fatigue will dampen the ardor of even a lover, especially if it be already dampened by the waters of heaven. As the day began to draw to a close his spirits began to wane, and his stomach to chide him for withholding its regular bounteous supply of California excellencies. If he could have found a house, or even a sheep-herder's cabin, he would have put up for the night.

The summit of the coast range is barren and unproductive, affording only pasturage for sheep, and that alone in the summer season. Jake had been obliged to go out of the wagon road in order to get higher up and ford the swollen, rushing streams where they were not so deep and wide. In fact he was lost. He knew not where he was, except that he could determine the general direction of his route. He could tell that from the course of the mountains and streams. He kept his mustang's head to the east. Darkness overtook him on the brow of a hill. He was

compelled to halt. It was still raining. He was without fire, food, or shelter. Oh, Love, what strange and dangerous paths thou leadest men into! He sheltered himself from the wind as best he could by standing to leeward of his shivering mustang. The night was dark and gloomy, but not cold. The mustang, wearying of his standing position, lay down. Emergencies give us strange bed fellows. Jake and the mustang occupied one bed, each adding his warmth to the other. Jake dropped into disturbed slumber, and dreamed that he had wandered through the mountains for several days, but had finally reached his intended father-in-law's, where they had all given him up for dead. He dreamed that he was rewarded for all his privations by being once more permitted to clasp his darling to his heart.

Jake's dream was suddenly brought to an end. He awoke to find himself being jerked along over the ground at a furious rate, and finally tumbled headlong over a bank into a ravine below, whose cool waters soon brought him to a realization of his situation.

Instead of clasping his sweetheart to his bosom, Jake had thrown his arms about the mustang's neck, which frightened that animal so badly that it ran away, dragging Jake with it until he loosened his hold upon the mustang's neck and fell into the ravine. Daylight soon began to break, which permitted him to realize the full extent of his loss—a ten dollar mustang, an eighty dollar suit of clothes, and a twenty dollar wedding ring. In vain did he search the hills and hollows round about for the runaway. He could not be found—there was so much water everywhere that it was impossible to track him. Once more Jake turned his face eastward, and ere an hour had passed was made happy by the sight of smoke winding upward from a house situated low down in a little valley. Never did smoke and house and garden patch look so beautiful to Jake as now. Even the image of his heart's idol flitted from his mind for the moment, as he feasted upon the anticipated joys of a warm, cheerful fire, and a hearty meal of

strengthening food. These thoughts and feelings gave new vigor to his exhausted body, and he soon reached the door of the unpretentious dwelling. He knocked and a voice answered, "Come in!" in a tone that sounded as sweet to Jake as the song of the nightingale.

Jake opened the door. A woman stood before him with a babe in her arms. At sight of Jake's muddy and disordered figure she stepped back, with fear depicted in her countenance.

"Don't be alarmed, my good lady," said Jake, "but please allow me to warm and dry myself, and *do* get me something to eat — I am almost famished."

The tone of Jake's voice and the pitiful expression of his countenance dispelled the woman's apprehensions of danger, and she hastened to build a warm fire, and set before him a frugal but bountiful meal.

The woman's husband, who had gone up the ravine to gather wood, returned, and was greatly surprised to find a stranger in the house, who was being served with the best his larder afforded. But he was still more astonished when Jake related his adventures of the day and night preceding, and told what had induced him to undertake such a hazardous journey.

Jake's newly-made friends soothed his wounded spirit with honest sympathy, and pressed him to remain with them until the next day, which he reluctantly did.

Jake parted from his hospitable entertainers recruited in strength, revived in spirit, and well provided with refreshments needful for several days. It was still raining, but not heavily, and the wind was not as strong as on the previous day. He traveled twenty miles that day as nearly as he could calculate, and slept in a straw pile over night. He awoke full of hope and confident that he would yet achieve his heart's desire — his journey's end — in time for the nuptial ceremony on the twenty-fifth. Alas for all human calculations! They are but straws to be blown where the wind listeth. He had not proceeded a mile on his way

ere he was forced to take refuge in a barn and remain there for three days, while a storm of wind and rain raged without that defied the power of man or beast to withstand it.

Jake's feelings while he paced to and fro in his prison barn, on that eventful Christmas day that was to have brought him so much bliss and happiness, can be better imagined than described.

The morning after Christmas the wind calmed to a moderate breeze; the clouds partly disappeared from the heavens, permitting the sun to shine at intervals. Jake departed from his involuntary retreat at break of day much depressed, yet determined to press on until he achieved the goal of his ambition. We will not narrate the many privations he endured, the countless obstacles he had to overcome, the ponds and sloughs he had to wade, and the streams to swim; but suffice it to say that he reached the overflowed banks of the San Joaquin, opposite the house of his adored, and near the railroad, on the afternoon of December 31st. We will leave him here for a short time while we pay a visit to the house of his affianced, and see what has been passing there while we have been wandering with Jake.

The family carriage of Ferdinand Felix, the proud father of Myrtle Felix, the prospective bride of Jake Howell, was in waiting at the depot when the train should have arrived that was to have brought the not long since fortunate Jake. Yes, fortunate indeed, for Jake was a telegraph operator, and they as a class are not often smiled upon by good fortune, though they are generally themselves smiling, and suck the bone of contentment as happily as they would eat the pudding of luxury.

The following lines seem to be peculiarly applicable to Jake's situation at present:

"Luck's the giddiest of all creatures,
Nor likes in one place long to stay;
She smoothes the hair back from your features,
Kisses you quick and runs away."

The train did not arrive, and consequently neither did Jake. The carriage waited until evening and then drove back to the residence of Ferdinand Felix. Myrtle had worked herself into a fever of excitement and uneasiness conjecturing what could possibly be detaining the carriage. When she learned that the train had not arrived, she gasped for breath and almost fell to the floor. Could the train have run off the track and killed Jake, or badly injured him, and might he not then be lying somewhere unattended and uncared for? She wrung her hands, wept and sobbed and would not be comforted. The wires were all down, so that no news of the train or of the cause of its non-arrival had been received at the station. The next day the wires were repaired, and the reason for the non-arrival of the train made known. Telegrams were sent in quest of Jake by Ferdinand Felix. They learned that he had departed from San Fernando, and had left the train at Livermore, but no further trace of him could be found.

Christmas at the house of Ferdinand Felix was a sad day indeed. Myrtle locked herself in her room and would see no one. She sat at the window all day looking out over the now broad and turbulent San Joaquin. She saw wild ducks and geese sporting in their native element, flirting, courting, and pairing. Then she thought of Jake and herself, and laid her face in her hands and wept tears of bitter disappointment. She thought that luck had not only deserted her, but that ill-luck had favored her, and continually repeated the lines:

"Dame Ill Luck's never in a flurry,
Nor quick her close embrace she quits;
She says she's in no kind of hurry,
And sits upon your bed and — knits."

The very day, and almost if not exactly at the same hour that Jake appeared opposite Ferdinand Felix's mansion on the San Joaquin, the mustang that Jake had ridden out of Livermore returned to its former owner. This fact was quickly communicated to Ferdinand Felix, and Jake

was given up for lost. Myrtle Felix fell to the floor seemingly lifeless, when this news was communicated to her, and was with difficulty revived.

The San Joaquin was two miles wide at the place where Jake approached it, opposite Ferdinand Felix's ranch. He looked long and wistfully toward the house, hoping to catch a glimpse, if ever so faint, of her for whom he had suffered so much. It was a forlorn hope, repaid only with disappointment. One last, lingering look, and he quitted his watch, and started toward the railroad. He was hatless and coatless, and his shirt and trowsers "all tattered and torn." His hair straggled all about his head, his eyes were inflamed, and his voice hoarse from a cold. He reached the railroad—a three-mile walk, and he would be at the station. It seemed such a short distance compared with what he had already traversed, that he almost imagined he was there already. But he wasn't. A greater danger and greater obstacle than any he had heretofore encountered had yet to be overcome. The drawbridge was open. He walked to the open end of the bridge, and stood and looked down at the deep, rushing, maddening waters with such a cloud of despair and darkness resting upon him that it almost blotted out his wish to longer live, and sorely tempted him to leap into the swiftly moving, muddy waters beneath him, and put an end to care and trouble. Three different times as he was about to make the fatal spring, those talismanic words: "Faint heart never won fair lady," flitted into his mind like an encouraging spirit, and he repented of his rash determination, and turned about and walked away. Upon its third repetition he desisted altogether, took courage, and began to devise some means whereby he might reach the other shore. Suddenly a bright idea seemed to possess him, and he cheered up immediately, and hurriedly walked back over the trestle work to a place opposite a telegraph pole that stood fifty feet from the track in water halfway to its top. Jake pulled off his boots—his socks had been

thrown away days before—slipped from the trestle work into the water, and boldly started toward the telegraph pole. The current was against him, but the re-enkindled flame of love was burning in his heart, and he swam with the strength of a Hercules, reached the telegraph pole, drew himself up on the cross-arm and rested. There was one wire on each end of the cross-arm, and one on the pole about eighteen inches above. Jake stood up on the cross-arm, holding to the pole. Making a very nice calculation, he leaped astride the top wire, balancing himself by placing a foot on each of the lower wires. As soon as his bare feet touched the wires he experienced an electric shock that numbed him through and through. His feet and hands stuck to the wires like the tongue to iron on a freezing cold day. Whenever he attempted to move he was racked with shooting, torturing pains that almost drove him mad. But go ahead he must, and go ahead he did. He placed one foot ahead, then the other, and then pulled his body along with his hands. Often he parted with skin and flesh, and blood trickled from his hands and feet.

Now, the moment that Jake undertook to dispatch himself bodily over the wires, he rendered them useless for through communication according to Morse's manner of transmission. He crossed all three of the wires. Operators began putting on their ground wires to locate the trouble. As the offices near Jake put on their ground wires, shortening the lines for the main battery, the more powerful the shocks were which he experienced. His legs would straighten out as stiffly and feel as dead as artificial ones. Whenever a ground wire was put on the upper line a flash of electricity shot up Jake's back-bone, and stood every hair of his head on end. If he attempted to stroke them down with his hands, they snapped and flashed fire as though a million lightning bugs had lit on his head. The ground wires came nearer and nearer. His feet and hands were drawn around the wires like bird claws. Just

as he was cautiously, slowly and painfully dragging himself over the deepest and most dangerous part of the river, the office nearest him attached the ground wire to the top line. In a twinkling Jake was doubled up around it. In another second the wire parted, and he fell. The instant the line broke the current ceased to flow, and freed Jake from its monster grip, and with that intuition or instinct that great dangers awaken, he as quickly straightened out and fell across the two lower wires. After an hour of the most laborious and distressing toil, sliding himself along on his back, inch by inch, he reached a telegraph pole on the side of the river opposite that from which he started. But, O! what a change in his appearance. It had been frightful enough before, but now it was hideous, sickening. Clothes torn into shreds, and besmeared with blood, hands, feet, and body lacerated and bruised, and life almost extinct. As he looked upon himself in this deplorable condition he thought: "Will I be able to reach my destination, and if I do will they recognize me?"

Jake slid down from his perch as soon as he felt able, swam to the bridge, and climbed up on it with great difficulty. He must make all haste now, for daylight was folding her wings, and fast shutting out the guide to his weary feet. He would not go to the station, but only beyond the wide-reaching waters of the river, and start across the level pasture in a direct line to the house of Ferdinand Felix. He reached the place with beating heart and trembling limbs, and knocked for admittance but a few moments after the receipt of the telegram from Livermore certifying to the return of the mustang he had ridden away, and to his probable death. The door was opened by Mrs. Felix, who, upon beholding Jake, sprang back, screamed, and said: "Who are you? who are you?"

"I am Jake Howell, the affianced husband of your daughter Myrtle," answered the wreck of the once prepossessing Jake.

Myrtle heard the words, "Jake Howell, and despite the

resistance of her attendants, sprang from the sofa on which she was lying, and flew to the door. But oh! what a shock! Pointing her finger at Jake, she screamed: "*He* has murdered him! he has murdered him! Look at his bloody hands and clothes," and she swooned, and was caught in her mother's arms. The door was shut in Jake's face. With downcast eyes, and broken heart, and faltering footsteps, he dragged himself away from the house to the barn, where he lay down in the hay, and prayed long and earnestly to the Lord to relieve him from his misery. He was relieved, but not in the way that he asked.

Jake was too weary and afflicted in body to be susceptible to the troubles of the mind when once his eyes were closed. He slept soundly until the break of day, when he arose much refreshed. He betook himself to a pond, washed his face and swollen limbs, straightened his hair, cleansed his besmeared clothes, then hied beneath the window of his adored, and sang with something of his old feeling and ardor one of Myrtle's favorite love ditties.

The plaintive pleading and wooing of the lover's sweet notes greeted Myrtle's ears. She awoke, thinking she had been dreaming of the happy hours that had flown never to return. She listened: both voice and song were familiar. "It is the one that I used to love so well to hear Jake sing." She sat up and listened again, then exclaiming: "Can it be Jake?" sprang to the floor, raised the window, and looked out. Their eyes met—the story was told. Myrtle joyfully exclaimed: "It *is* Jake!" hastily robed, ran down stairs, and threw herself into his arms.

Jake was cared for like a prince. His wounds were dressed, his heart made whole by the loving caresses of Myrtle, and ere long Jake Howell was himself again. He was the "Hero of the San Joaquin," and well did he merit the title. His valise was forwarded from Livermore, and found to contain his wedding outfit unsoiled.

Jake and Myrtle were made one, spent a month's honey-

moon at her father's, and then the happy couple went to San Fernando, where they still reside as happy as the happiest. "Should railroaders marry?"

DARBY DIXON.

Now, there was Darby Dixon, at Elk Town—a little, nervous, fussy fellow, as active as a cricket, and full of talk and blow. Fine clothes, fine cigars and fine girls composed the trinity that he worshiped. He sneered at money—it was of no consequence. In fact he never had any—it was somebody's else long before he got it. If there was a party, a ball, a picnic, or a horse race in the vicinity, Darby was there by fair means or foul. His situation was continually wavering in the balance. His head escaped decapitation many times only by the breadth of a hair. He got more reprimands over the wire than all the operators on the "string." Darby had "cheek" and pluck and tongue. They are three giants that a hundred Davids cannot slay. Darby was as great a talker over the line as when face to face with his listener, if he were allowed a chance to talk. It took a pretty strong grip to "choke him off." Whatever Darby undertook he strove to accomplish with the whole strength of his body and mind. Not being with a steady pull and a strong pull, but by giving and receiving continuous determined attacks and rebounds until the task was completed or the difficulty overcome; like a fish nibbling at a hook, until little by little he wins the coveted bait. But a fisher caught him at last—Miss Carrie Fisher. She was small, she was plump, she was fair. She was neat and tidy, sprightly and vivacious, and could make as delicious biscuit as ever man ate, not to mention all the other arts of the provident housewife in which she was proficient. Darby was captivated—soul, mind, and body. Carrie was in his thoughts day and night. He got her mixed with business, with dispatches, train orders, ticket reports, and way bills. Everything was for Carrie. Now, Darby did his courting as he did everything—with spirit and impetu-

osity. He not only talked sweetly to Carrie, but he sweetened her with candies, fruits, nuts, ice cream, and soda water. He threw himself at her feet and said he'd die if she didn't consent to be his bride. She consented. They were married. Darby had prosecuted his courtship so vigorously and expensively that his salary was forfeited for a month to come, and his credit was in an equally precarious condition. That was nothing to him. He was made a husband with but a half dollar in his pocket. That was the happiest moment of his life — no money to trouble him, and a little angel wife to love him. Who could wish for more? Not he.

Elk Town could scarcely contain Darby Dixon before, but now that Darby had become a husband, he entirely obliterated the place from his memory. He obtained a situation in Sacramento in the general railroad office. There, among the head men of the road, he would be understood and appreciated; and so he was, but not according to his way of thinking. Their ideas of railroading were not in harmony with his. They were probably not so good, but nevertheless they — the general managers — preferred them to his. There was another drawback to the place, too — he couldn't talk, couldn't "spread himself," couldn't throw himself back in his chair, elevate his heels on the table, and send the smoke of a fragrant Havana curling upward to the ceiling and be happy. These annoyances of the office were never thought of when in the company of his little wife. She was the joy of his heart. He was proud of her, and well he might be, for she was a jewel.

Darby applied for a station again, and got it. It was two-thirds of the way to Ogden, at a military station in the desert. Here Darby was at home — he was in his glory. To hear him talk of wars, and battles, and sieges, explain military movements, see him handle the sword, revolver, gun and cannon, one would think him a second Wellington or Napoleon. It was marvelous. But such proceedings were hardly judicious, after all, at least so they proved. In some

of his feats of generalship he would threaten to annihilate the whole regiment, stampede the stock and burn the camp. Those were *his* tactics. The commandant applied to the Government for more troops. The Government took the matter under consideration, and as a result of their deliberations asked the railroad to remove Mr. Darby Dixon, otherwise they would be compelled to re-enforce the station to keep him down — at the expense of the company. Darby was removed — not discharged. He was transferred to a station near the scene of his former heart conquest, where he flourished for several years, prospered, and became the father of two lively boys. But his expanding wings in time overspread this town, and he departed in search of greater fields to conquer. We cannot follow him farther. His little wife is still the anchor of his hope. While she is, he is safe. May their shadows never grow less. For the last time: "Should railroaders marry?"

RAILROAD TELEGRAPH OPERATORS.

There is a line of demarkation between the railroad operator and the news and commercial operator — a boundary beyond which the one does not venture, and over which the other does not step. Generally the railroad operator does not aspire to that perfection in the profession which his commercial brother attains. The amount of telegraphic business that he transacts does not give him practice sufficient to enable him to mount to the topmost round in the ladder of telegraphy. A railroad operator, particularly a station agent, is a man of varied pursuits, and of great responsibilities. People who travel by railroad, pass stations, and see the operator sitting at his desk, or selling tickets, handling baggage or freight, or running out to the train with letters and bills, may think that he is a pretty busy man, at least for the time being. That is about all the consideration they will give the subject. Now, if the people on the train were aware that that operator had received, half an hour before, an order to hold the train in

which they sat, at his station, until a train from an opposite direction should arrive, they might take more interest in him. Amid the rush and hurry of passengers, the selling of tickets, checking of baggage, being pulled here and called there, he must ever have uppermost in his mind the train order received half an hour before. If he fails to deliver it, the train leaves, and a collision is the result. Not only in regard to these things are his responsibilities great, but he must be perfect in copying orders and messages. The altering or dropping of a single word may bring trains together, or cause serious delays and losses. He must never fail to deliver to a train even what seems to be the most unimportant message, though received hours before the train was expected. The railroad operator has the lives, comfort, and convenience of the traveling public daily and hourly in his hands, and to his credit and honor be it said, he rarely betrays the trust. By negligence he can delay one train, which will delay many others, and thus discommode and disappoint many. The prompt, efficient operator is one of the most important employés in the service of a railroad company. Does he get that commendation from the company and the public that his services and merits entitle him to? I can illustrate this phase of the subject best by giving an instance of actual occurrence.

When the "Fast Train," which made the trip from New York to San Francisco in eighty-four hours, was on the way, operators were strictly commanded to be in their offices at a certain hour, long before the train was expected. This train was expected at Sacramento at any hour between five o'clock P. M. and the morning following. Operators west of Sacramento had to be within reach of their keys from this hour until the train did pass. From the time the "Fast Train" left Ogden until it arrived at San Francisco, all offices received reports of its departure from every other telegraph office. They were thus as well posted in regard to its movements as were the superintendents, and could calculate pretty nearly the time when it would reach them.

At midnight it was still beyond Truckee, east of the Sierra Nevada Mountains. At this hour the operator at Gouge Eye stepped out for a few minutes to get a lunch, leaving several railroad men in his office. While he was absent, some one began repeating his call very "pluggishly." The train dispatcher tried to make him desist, but could not "break" him. Ground wires were put on and the trouble located between the stations next east and west of Gouge Eye, therefore it must have been the operator at Gouge Eye himself, or some one in his office, who was causing the trouble. It ceased. Then the dispatcher called Gouge Eye. He answered. He was asked where the trouble had been, and why he did not allow himself to be "broken?" He replied that he knew of no trouble; that he had been out of the office a few minutes; that the line was all right when he left, and also when he returned. He explained that he had left several railroad men in the office when he went out, but every one of them assured him that no one had touched the key. The explanation was not satisfactory. The "Fast Train" was expected every minute, though it was known to be two hundred miles away. The operator was ordered to send in his resignation by the first train.

This incident shows how close the watch kept over operators. It also illustrates the risks they run, and the consideration they receive when thought neglectful. Now we will see who got the praise from the public press. The general managers of the road received the first encomiums, next the division superintendents. They were mentioned by name, and applauded for their vigilance and watchfulness. Then the engineers and conductors were named and praised, and even the firemen. These parties justly merited the commendation they received; but was not the operator equally deserving of public notice? Was there an operator on the train's route between New York and San Francisco who saw his name in print on account of *his* watchfulness?

I am not enumerating the multiplied duties and responsibilities of railroad operators for the purpose of complaining of their situation, but simply in hopes that they may be better understood and appreciated. It must be borne in mind that they have no Sabbaths, no holidays, and cannot even make an appointment for a few hours' absence with any certainty of keeping it. Here is an instance:

A few days previous to last Thanksgiving Day, I was invited by a family living about a mile from the depot to make one of a small company who were to assemble there on the day of national thanksgiving to celebrate the day, and also to pay their respects to a roast turkey, and other delicacies. I was allowed to set whatever time for the repast would be most convenient for me. I did, and made it three o'clock P. M. Now, turkey dinners do not occur so often in Poverty Flat that one is liable to turn gobbler on account of eating thereof, therefore I earnestly hoped that I might be permitted to do justice to this one. I retired the evening before, having made up my mind to partake of but a light breakfast and nothing more until I should make my bow at the Thanksgiving Day dinner, in order that my appetite might be sharp as became the occasion. When I reached the office Thanksgiving Day morning, after having eaten a very scanty breakfast, the first salutation that greeted me was a call from the dispatcher's office, followed by the soothing (?) information that train No. 8 was in the ditch a few miles west of Poverty Flat, and that I must pay close attention to the instrument for I might be wanted at any moment. In my anguish I cried aloud: "Good bye, turkey! thou art so near and yet so far. I love thee, but cannot embrace thee."

Well, I didn't attend the Thanksgiving-Day-turkey-dinner-party. I am not particularly fond of turkey, except when I can't get it. Then I *do* want it. But to be compelled to remain at work, and suck the bone of disappointment, realizing all the while what splendid enjoyment others are having, and all because an accident must

happen on that particular day—just as if it had been set apart for such things—is crowding the agony on a little too heavily. But, as if this were not enough, when I took up the daily paper the morning after this event, what should first attract my attention but these startling words: "Grand Turkey Roast, and General Good Time among the Prisoners at the County Jail."

The paper dropped from my hands. I jumped up, vowing that I would immediately go and steal a horse, and thereby get into jail, and probably I might get some of the remnants from this year's feast; if not in time for this I would be on hand for the next. But I didn't do it. A call from the instrument demanded my attention, and when I was at liberty again my excitement had subsided, and I repented of my rash determination. I again took up the the paper—"Great Cæsar, what is this?" I exclaimed. "GREAT JOLLIFICATION OF THE PRISONERS AT SAN QUENTIN. GRAND FEAST FOR FOURTEEN HUNDRED CONVICTS!"

This was too much. I was immediately seized with a desperate desire to murder some one. The more I thought of it, the more blood-thirsty I became. I, an honest, upright citizen, working and toiling for my daily bread, am less favored by fortune than the chief of sinners. What consolation does a man have for doing right when the wrong doers derive all the profit, and all the pleasure—and all the turkey? Brooding over these things wrought my nerves up to the highest destructive pitch, and what might have happened will never be known, for again the sound, that has led me a dance for fifteen years, caused me to forget all else, and obey its voice.

And thus the fickle goddess of fortune ever deals with railroaders. Yet they are the liveliest of the lively, the happiest of the happy. There is a charm about operating, about railroading, the constant shifting, varying scenes, the rush and crush, the moving trains, the shrill whistle of the locomotive, and the general good feeling of

one employé for another, be he stranger or familiar friend, that draws one to it as if by magic, and charms him by its ever moving panorama.

And now we must say good bye to Sam Johnson. Poverty Flat is still his abiding place. He is the same good-natured Sam that he has ever been, and thus we leave him.

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