

DOWN AMONG THE COACHERS

Where and How the Union Pacific Makes Its Gilded Flyers.

THE EVOLUTION OF THE LOG.

The Rise, Progress and Decline of Old No. 7—How a Lost Car was Found After Having Been Appropriated.

Down on the bottoms, at the foot of Cass street, enclosed by a high board fence, which is painted a dull, cheerless brown, there is a beehive of industry, the interior of which is but little known to the ordinary citizen who daily plods along the busy, bustling thoroughfares of the business portion of Omaha.

This is the shops of the Union Pacific railroad, and to reach them you must pass inspection at the outer gate, where you are turned over to John Wilson, assistant superintendent of motive power and machinery. After being ushered into his presence, if your business is of a legitimate nature, you are given a passport, which allows you to go from department to department, where you can see the workings of the ponderous and intricate machines which manufacture everything from the drivewheel of a locomotive to the smallest tool used in upholstering a car seat.

Probably in this great workshop, where hundreds of skilled mechanics toil, there is no place of more interest than the car shops, located in the extreme northwest corner of the grounds occupied by the shops.

Looking at them from the exterior these buildings, which are painted the same dull color, present a cheerless and forbidding appearance. But when once inside the scene is changed and it is a pleasure to watch the rough lumber, as it passes from hand to hand until, at last, it is in the hands of human hands, you observe a beautiful car, capable of carrying its load of human lives in perfect safety.

The working force of the car shops, 414 men, is divided into seven gangs, over which A. M. Collett has general supervision, and that he understands his work they can see, but little doubt, as he has been with the company twenty-two years, and twenty years of that time he has occupied the important position of foreman.

Each gang of men is in charge of a foreman, J. M. Rice having control of the carpenters; J. Stout, the painters; J. W. McCune, the woodworkers; J. Strattan, the upholsterers; R. Anderson, the repairers; George Andrew, the silver-platers; and Jacob Neff, the truck and airbrake men.

In building a car, J. W. McCune goes to the lumber yard, selects his timbers for the frame work and has them taken into the shops, where his men work them down to the proper dimensions, and then they are turned over to the carpenters, who are under the directions of J. M. Rice.

These men have a more difficult task to perform for they have to cut, frame and put together the car, and as soon as this is done, everything is turned over to the painters, who are under J. Stout and in a few days the freight car, it has taken on a brown color, its white letters, which comprise the words "Union Pacific," familiar from the Atlantic to the Pacific coast.

While all this is going on, if it be a passenger coach that is being constructed, Jacob Neff and his men are busy on the upholstery, the trucks and airbrakes in place, and Andrew's men are doing the silver-plating to be followed up by Strattan's force of upholsterers.

This is not accomplished in a day, nor is it in a week. To build a coach requires from three to four months, and in the meantime it is so perfect that it is sent out on the road without having to be tested, though in other shops cars are frequently tested for weeks before being put into service.

Until a few years ago most of the freight cars and a large number of the passenger coaches, together with the mail, baggage and express cars, were built in Omaha, since the system has been constructed its new lines the business has become so enormous that most of the cars have been built on contract in the east, and the work of the shops has been entirely in the nature of repairs and rebuilding the coaches which have grown old in the service or been damaged in wrecks.

In the past three years, from 300 to 400 passenger coaches have passed through the shops monthly. Many of them that come out of wrecks are practically new cars, and when they again leave the shops they are virtually new cars.

A passenger car as regards style is like a lady's bonnet. It will wear out, but its style will change to such an extent that it will be useless in the passenger traffic and must be put to some other use. The history of old No. 7 best illustrates this.

In 1867 the Omaha shop turned out No. 7, its first passenger coach. In those days the coaches were painted a bright yellow, and this coach, with its gaudy exterior, its elegant interior and its low "deck" was the envy of all eyes. It carried George Francis Train to the east, and was always at their service. At last, however, the "high-decks" became fashionable and No. 7 was put on as a motor car for a time performed its duty in this capacity.

The next thing complaints commenced to come in and there was a crying demand for a better car. The Omaha shop, however, at that time, and even second class passengers kicked for better accommodations. The next move was to take the car into the shops, give it a thorough overhauling, and send it to the mountains to run on some of the new branches, where its style was satisfactory to the regular passengers in that locality and objected to its passing through the towns. The old relic was then put into the migrant service, where for a few years it was considered good enough. Once more, however, there was a kick, and even the people from the other side of the ocean refused to ride in the old pioneer, and it was accordingly turned over to the working crews, where it is now being used.

The history of this car is the history of all other cars, and thus it is readily seen that a coach goes out of style long before it wears out.

Freight cars go through about the same experience. Several years ago standard cars had a capacity of ten tons. Now they are considered useless and the car with a carrying capacity of 500,000 pounds is the standard. Baggage and express cars go on forever, the style never changing and many of the cars that went out on the first overland trains are in use today, though they have been repaired and repainted times without number. It is not generally supposed that a car can be lost, so perfect is the system of tracing, but such is the case. Twelve years ago a passenger car was turned out of the shop and in one of the boards on the side there was a knot that when dressed down represented to some extent a human face. This car was sent out on an overland train and in some manner, in switching in Salt Lake City, was left out of the train. A hunt was at once instituted, but it could not be found. Tracers were sent over the entire system, but the car failed to show up and in the company's office it was charged up as lost. It having been supposed that it was caught in a wreck and burned. Five years later, as Mr. Collett was walking down the yards, his eyes caught a peculiar figure on a car that belonged to an eastern road. It was a copy of his old-time men about him, that he at once decided that it was the car that had been lost for so many years. It was at once confiscated and upon a careful road being notified, no demand was made for the return of the car.

The pattern room of the shops is a most interesting department. It is situated on the second floor of the building the farthest east and in it, in miniature, is every portion of every style of car that has been built in Omaha since the shops were established. In the rear of this, one finds the silver plating department, where George Andrew and his twenty assistants labor.

To be a skillful plater, requires a man to know something of chemistry, as chemicals in certain proportions must be used in the electro-baths, which consist of huge tubs filled with solutions. If silver plating is to be used a sheet of pure silver one-sixteenth of an inch in thickness is suspended in a copper tank near the side of the tub, while from another rod of similar material the article to be plated is suspended. The electric current is then turned on and in a few hours the plate

THE LORD'S CHOSEN PEOPLE.

Some of the Things They Have Been Doing Recently.

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The operating table stands covered with its white oleothol and towels, a melancholy sight, in the middle of the operating room. Here at the side is the water table with its array of tin basins and towels. An abundance of light comes through the north windows. The room is bare of furniture, an oleothol mat and the doctors' high stools complete the outfit.

To return to the hall one must pass through the apartment of Mrs. Moore, the matron. This is a more cheerful place, though occupied but a small part of the time by its owner, who continually busies herself elsewhere. The reputation this place enjoys is due largely to its matron and attendants, who are all practical nurses and delightful women.

Directly across the hall is the parlor or waiting-room, furnished plainly with an abundance of easy chairs. The wall hangs a half-length portrait of Bishop Clarkson. The center table is furnished with books and papers, and a large tray is filled with the cards of visitors.

Up the stairs on the second floor are the six rooms given to older patients. Three are occupied. The cots stand with coverlets tucked up, waiting for expected newcomers. Each room has its several chairs and dresser and little table. The iron cots with brass trimmings are made up entirely in white. Immense ward closets are in evidence, all through the building is an air of cool cleanliness and the disagreeable odor of drugs gives way to that pleasant one of abundance. The patients on the floor are all doing well, as with two exceptions, is the case throughout the hospital. The patients amuse themselves by reading or visiting each other. Patients are introduced by the nurses or become acquainted among themselves and call upon each other to gossip. It is surprising how much they know of what is going on "indoors," as they are given no information by the nurses, who answer every inquiry about another's health with "He is better, whether he is so or not. They will tell you that Mrs. T. is to be operated upon when the nurse are the only ones supposed to know it. They pick it up from accidental remarks of the nurses and compare notes when together.

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On the first floor where, as he climbs the hill, one often catches a glimpse of him, a boy in a white gown, perhaps of a bare arm or leg as they throw doll clothes at each other, are two girls perhaps six years old and another. One girl was once in bed today, but the other sat by the window bathing her sick doll.

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Frederick Frayer is two and a half years old and afflicted with cerebral palsy. He died, the matron, who unselfishly devotes all her spare time to him, says that it is but a question of time till he will die. He has a sad face. His parents are both in the hospital, the mother in the east room and the father in the west room. All are provided with toys and the kind nurses often read to them.

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