

THE IRON WAY

A TALE OF THE BUILDERS OF THE WEST

BY SARAH PRATT CARP



ILLUSTRATIONS BY AL. WILLIAMS

SYNOPSIS.

The story opens during the Rocky "Overland Mail" through the Trip of the mountains. Uncle Billy, stage driver, Alfred Vincent, young man, and Phineas Cadwallader, introduced. They come across the remains of a massacre. Later at Anthony's station they and the redskins have carried their destructive work there also. Stella Anthony, daughter of Anthony, engineer of station, is introduced. Anthony has been killed. Vincent is assigned his work in unearthing plans of enemies of railroad, being built. Vincent visits town where railroad men are working on road and is taken of esteem from Stella. The old stage driver decides to work close to town in order that he may be able to keep fatherly watch over the young woman. She is engaged as a tutor for Viola Bernard, daughter of land lady. Vincent visits society circles of enemies of the Central Pacific railroad and learns their secrets. He returns to Stella, showing signs of love for the other. Phineas Cadwallader, pushing a railroad opposing Central Pacific, reaches mining town. She writes to Alfred Vincent his boat. Flying his attention Cadwallader insults her and she is rescued by Gideon, her father's servant. In turn he proposes marriage, is rejected, leaves her. He will return the sort of a man she will love. Vincent "shows up" San Francisco and Washoe road and is praised by governor and heads of Central Pacific. Being known as C. P. he decides to retire to position of a brakeman for a short time. Stella hears from her lover, Gideon, and of his phenomenal success. Finds letter of importance involving plans of opposition road.

CHAPTER X.—Continued.

"Some deviltry to our company. Say! You know everything; maybe you can figure it out. And say! Mum's the word. I ain't supposed to let any one see what goes over the wire, you know. So long." He handed her a bulky envelope and turned.

"Is it all this?" Stella began, when Alvin broke in:

"Oh my work's in there, too. Say, Miss Stella, you're a bully teacher! My brains are growing so fast my skull aches. I must skip on my chief! Call me before I get back, and that'll mean—" He drew his finger across his throat, laughed merrily and almost closed the door when he turned back; a sheepish face and in a voice to match said: "There's a note to Vi in there; would you—would you—"

Stella laughed. "Oh, yes, I will; but I'll tell her mother, too."

"Ye—s, I s'pose that goes, O. K., too. Good-bye. I'm gone."

Stella heard him stumping off down the street, watched him through the dim light climb the muddy hill to the little box where he was jailed with the "clicker" 24 hours a day, save the three—sometimes only two—short respites the chief operator in Sacramento gave him for meals. Stella thought of the eerie nights, thought of Alvin's social nature and sighed. No wonder his predecessor had been discharged for drunkenness. But Alvin was made of better stuff.

To-night the budget went unopened. Stella extracted the note addressed to Viola, carried the rest to her home-made desk in grandpa's room and went to supper.

But Yic Wah's best efforts were unappreciated. She toyed with her food, listening tensely for a herald of the stage and was gladdened at last by the shout that announced its coming.

Doors were flung open and anxious eyes peered into darkness, watching a black object embody itself from the night and labor up to the lamp-lit express office. Stella saw a rigid form on the box and ran down the sidewalk to learn for herself if it was really Uncle Billy. He did not move; only a feeble voice testified to life.

"Some one take the lines, I—I can't open—my fingers," he said, as kind hands held her whisky to his lips. "Don't mind me yet." The words came thickly between swallows. "Take the 'po' fellows out from where they stand, won't you? Boys, you all take hold—those hosses played a lone hand—don't make 'em pull the ole—wagon up that muddy hill—to-night. Po' Snortie! It's good-bye for him—I reckon. He's—"

His words dwindled to a whisper, and the huddled figure, relaxed from the long strain, drooped lower and lower.

"Boys, he'll fall! Some o' you lift him down!" called Sally B. sharply. "Be keerful! Don't straighten his fingers too quick!"

"And some of you bear me also to my downy couch, won't you? I too, am a frozen wayfarer." Sally B.'s Phineas climbed out of the coach and stepped up to Sally B. with proffered hand.

"Oh, you git!" she said, half vexed, though she laughed. "Why didn't you set on the box an' spell Uncle Billy with the lines, you skunk? You are younger'n him."

"I ain't driving Charley Crocker's stage. I'm his passenger."

Sally B. hustled him aside and cleared the way for the men who carried Uncle Billy, protesting feebly, to her best chamber, where the two women took him in charge.

But their ministrations and the sight of Stella's pitying face, roused him for a minute only; he was soon in the vision-laden spaces where trickles make fest of human travail. For long hours, under a wearying conglomeration of angles and curves that grandpa called a "dream of the night," poor Uncle Billy tossed and moaned, fought over again his lonely battle with the storm.

"Keep it up a little longer, boys. Lights ahead—no, lights out! Fly, boys! The mountain's falling! Po' Snortie, down again! Git up, boy! Pull up, there! Now, altogether! Uncle Billy must stick—by the stage, live—or die—save the treasure—don't, Stella, dear! The old man ain't worth a teah from—yo' sweet—good-bye, little one. Uncle Billy can't go any—"

Stella's tears fell unheeded on the stiff blistered hands while the story of the awful drive grew out of his fevered babblings. Towards morning he was quieter. Stella declared she could not rest, but Sally B. drove her

to her room; and nature and youth soon prevailed. She awoke late in the morning, depressed by a dread her rest had not banished. Her first thought was of Uncle Billy; her next was of Phineas; and from him her mind flew to the strange dispatch. She dressed hastily and ran downstairs, attacking it at once. Fruitlessly she searched for a clew. Some presence of its importance holding her to the task heedless of breakfast and of Uncle Billy. Suddenly the significance of the paper she had picked up on the hillside after her encounter with Phineas flashed upon her. She found it and began her work anew, rewarded at last by a message that whitened her cheek, unsteady her hand. Waiting for neither breakfast nor wraps, she flew up the hill to the station.

CHAPTER XI.

Tracked.

Alvin saw Stella coming and sprang to the door. "Heard the news?" he



Alfred's Eye Was Caught by the Gleam of a Crescent of Burnished Gold

shouted before she could speak. "Virginia & Truckee railroad's a go this time, sure. No sardines behind it, like before, but men; money, too. They'll build from Virginia to Reno, and we'll meet 'em there. It'll help us like sixty."

All this was poured out impetuously as she came toward him, her mind scantily comprehending the import of his words, though a mental flashlight told her that the complexion of the roads would make forever unnecessary such drives as Uncle Billy's latest stormy trip.

"Oh, Alvin," she panted; "that cipher dispatch—it means—it means death! What shall we do? If the chief knew you showed it to me—"

"No matter what happens to me! Tell me, quick, what's in it?"

"But I mustn't get you discharged, Alvin!" She had the woman's mind, that delays, protects, conserves; and she hesitated.

But Alvin had the masculine courage that destroys boldly to build again boldly. "The discharge of one or more two-bit operators don't count long-side of this matter. Mr. Vincent's done on the extra in a minute. He's O. K. for company's inside business if he is only a brakeman."

"Every minute's precious," Stella said. "What if the train's late? If Mr. Vincent is not—" A whistle interrupted her.

"There she is!" Alvin exclaimed, turning toward the rock promontory that hid the train, though the reverberating whistle sounded from across the gorge.

"I'll start back," Stella said. "If Mr. Vincent's not aboard—they may have transferred him—wave to me when I come in sight under the hill!"

The train puffed in. Alvin gave the dispatch and translation to Alfred with a whispered explanation, and Stella saw no hand wave from the doorway. It needed little time for him to read the center of the two messages first. "D. N., San Francisco. To be called for. Buy G. & C. at any price, contingent yet if possible. Big strike. Secret codes. C. P. 2 & 4."

Alfred scowled. "Secret information for favored buyers. When did you get this?"

"Wednesday morning before daylight." "What were you up to at that time in the morning?" "Nothing. The stuff waked me going through, it was so queer. The minute I heard the signature I smelt a mice."

"What do you mean?" "C. P. 2 & 4 is Blowhard Cad's sig-

nature, I'm sure. I heard it once before."

"Those initials are ours."

"Sure, they're Cad's, too, backward. That's why he uses 'em, so anything crooked he does will be charged to us." Alvin grinned, but was quickly serious again. "There's worse—the wire's been tapped."

"How do you know that?" "Cause I asked every operator clear down the line from Virginia if he heard any Chockast going through, and not one clobbered of here had it. At Sacramento the night man heard it, but paid no attention to it."

"It's a state's prison offense." "Oh, yes; but Cad won't go to prison. You'll see! How'll they catch him? And, anyway, the fellers he's working for in San Francisco'll save him. They'll have to, if they save their own skins."

Alfred was heedless. He was reading the second dispatch. "A. C. & O., San Francisco. To be called for. Everything fixed. Flora leaves Friday at ten, with five hundred tons iron. P. Q. undertakes the job for price we offered. No mistake. Timed for the straits. Don't let her take passengers. C. P. 2 & 4."

"Good heavens!" Alfred cried, dropping into a chair by the desk and reaching for slip and pencil. "This is Friday, and—" He took out his watch. "Nine-five! Got a San Francisco paper, Al?"

"Yes; but it's several days old." "No matter! Find out quick what dock the 'Flora' leaves, then get to your key. We must beat lightning today!"

The two were silent, Alvin nervously turning the paper, Alfred scratching dispatches. Evidently the "Flora" was

the two men, oppressed with their death-laden secret, watched the clock feverishly.

The minutes dragged as intolerably for Alfred, though he wore his mask more easily than Alvin. Would they be in time? Would they catch the little steamer before she left port for her fate? Even then, would they find the infamous secret before its fateful moment arrived? What would it be? Powder? A slit in the hull? A cunning injury to the boiler?

At last San Francisco called. Alvin sprang to the key. The steamer had started, had been hailed, had waited for a small boat and the message, and had gone on her way.

Alfred rose, as stiff with the tension as if minutes had been hours. "That's all we can do at that end. Keep your eye and ear busier than your tongue, Al, for the rest of the day. I'm off to settle with his nibs, Phineas Cadwallader. By the way, couldn't you contrive some way to get him left? The train reported late in leaving, false report, something like that?"

Alvin nodded. "Guess I can think up that trick in four hours."

At the hotel Alfred took only time to don riding boots and to find Stella for a hurried word. "Get Sally B. to hold Cadwallader here over train time, if it's possible," Alfred said before his good-bye. "It may mean everything to the company. I'll return to-night if I can."

A swift horse took him to the "Front" where he found the superintendent riding his beat. Alfred told his story briefly and asked if there was a lineman on the force.

"Jupiter! You can't track that man, Vincent! The snow's come and gone since that Heetz's job was done."

"But Mr. Gregory, he'd have to cut the wire, and he'd have to climb a tree or a pole to do it. Could that be done without leaving a trace?"

"What then? How can you prove it unless I try?"

"Linemen don't show up often in my district. I'll ask Bennett, his section begins here."

Inquiry discovered an intelligent man who had worked on the line. His climbers were at camp near by; and Mr. Gregory's resourcefulness provided horse and saddle. The two men set off without delay. They rode fast till within nearly five miles of Dutch Flat, Alfred judging that, since Phineas took the stage there, his exploit must be in that neighborhood.

The afternoon was past its half when they began to inspect each pole and wire-trenched tree with close scrutiny. "We'll work east over these five miles to Dutch Flat," Alfred said. "If we find nothing we'll have to stay over night in town, go east a short distance in the morning, and then take it west from here."

For the first two or three miles their search was unrewarded by any sign. Just at sunset, in a windy little vale, the linemen's practised eye caught a peculiar piecing of the wire, and he climbed nimbly to inspect it. It was not a joining made by the regular force, but a recent cut. The marks of the climbers were also fresh.

"Is there anything about it to distinguish it from regular work?" Alfred asked.

"You bet! Any chump could tell, if he see it close, that it was the work of an amature by the way the wires are tied."

That was something gained, but not enough. "How did the man get up there?"

Before the man could reply Alfred's eye was caught by the gleam of a crescent of burnished gold. Lying half imbedded in the wet remains of a snowdrift, its upper surface washed clean and shining, he found a cuff button of a peculiar design—a star within a crescent, the two free points tipped with diamonds. He knew it, he knew who owned its fellow! Turning it over he saw the engraved initials, P. C.

"Good enough!" he called. "We need no more evidence. You can go on to town for the night, or back to camp, as you choose. I'll ride too hard for you, perhaps."

The man chose to turn back. Alfred arranged for payment for the extra work and again rode east.

In a few minutes he arrived at the Dutch Flat office and telegraphed Alvin, asking of Phineas. Five minutes later he was reading the reply:

"C's here, pacing the platform like a mad gobbler. We did the leaving trick for the regular train O. K. But he thinks he's going on the special in spite of fate."

"Let him go in peace," Alfred wired back; and immediately sent a message to the sheriff at Auburn that was answered after two hours as follows: "Sheriff's office, Auburn. P. C. walked into my arms as unsuspecting as a lamb. He had no time to destroy incriminating evidence. Is now resting noisily in the cooler."

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Do Hornets Stand Guard

Experiments Seem to Show that They Have Sentinels.

Is a hornet's nest guarded by sentinels, after the manner of ant hills? It is not so easy to decide, for their private habits do not invite familiar approach. But some experiments seemed to point that way. No noises, however near or strident, had the least effect upon the workers. Blow on divers instruments as loudly and shrilly as I would, they poured in and out of the gate or labored on the walls, intent wholly upon their own affairs. But at the slightest jar upon the window or shutter, out flew a bevy of irate insects and flung themselves against the wire window screen with an angry "bump" that showed how good was their intention, at least, to defend their home. It was always so; a squad of workers, free and ready for aggressive duty, seemed to be lurking near the gate, prompt to sally forth upon alarm. Even at night a few kept nearby, and although their port had lost its vicious swing and they moved about with a sluzzish pace, like

sleepy watchmen, as doubtless they were, left upon the observer the impression that they were on sentry service, in which the community was never lacking.—Harper's Magazine.

Advice to a Young Man. "What do you say to a young lady at a dance?" queried the youth who was about to attend his first ball.

"Oh," replied the society man, "talk to her about her beauty."

"But suppose she hasn't any?" said the youth.

"In that case," rejoined the s. m., "talk to her about the ugliness of the other girls present."

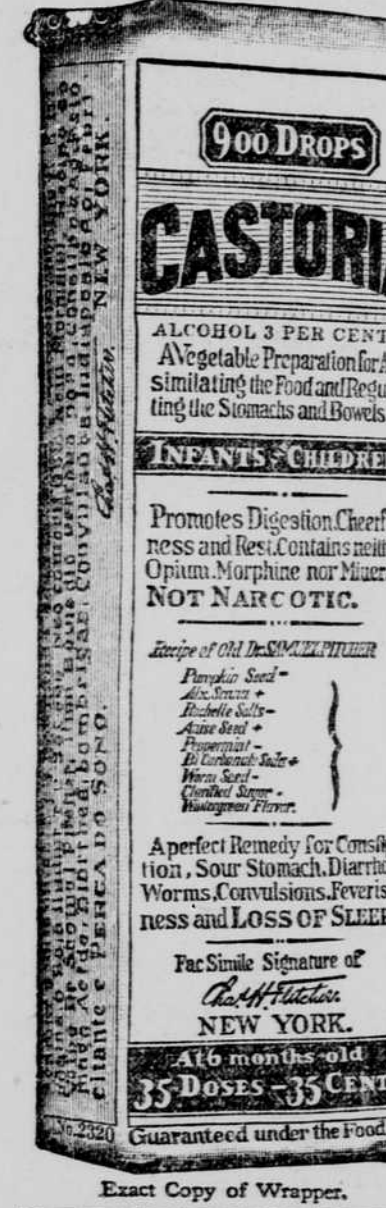
Prolonged Duties. "I would like to see the sheriff," announced the visitor in the county courthouse.

"He's out," replied one of the clerks. "When do you expect him back?" asked the visitor.

"I don't think he will be back for a week at least," answered the clerk. "A watch factory failed, and he's winding up its affairs."—Harper's Weekly.

Don't Poison Baby.

FORTY YEARS AGO almost every mother thought her child must have PAREGORIC or laudanum to make it sleep. These drugs will produce sleep, and **A FEW DROPS TOO MANY** will produce the **SLEEP FROM WHICH THERE IS NO WAKING.** Many are the children who have been killed or whose health has been ruined for life by paregoric, laudanum and morphine, each of which is a narcotic product of opium. Druggists are prohibited from selling either of the narcotics named to children at all, or to anybody without labelling them "poison." The definition of "narcotic" is: "A medicine which relieves pain and produces sleep, but which in poisonous doses produces stupor, coma, convulsions and death." The taste and smell of medicines containing opium, are disguised, and sold under the names of "Drops," "Cordials," "Soothing Syrups," etc. You should not permit any medicine to be given to your children without you or your physician know of what it is composed. **CASTORIA DOES NOT CONTAIN NARCOTICS**, if it bears the signature of Chas. H. Fletcher.



Letters from Prominent Physicians addressed to Chas. H. Fletcher.

Dr. J. W. Dinsdale, of Chicago, Ill., says: "I use your Castoria and advise its use in all families where there are children."

Dr. Alexander E. Mintie, of Cleveland, Ohio, says: "I have frequently prescribed your Castoria and have found it a reliable and pleasant remedy for children."

Dr. J. S. Alexander, of Omaha, Neb., says: "A medicine so valuable and beneficial for children as your Castoria is, deserves the highest praise. I find it in use everywhere."

Dr. J. A. McClellan, of Buffalo, N. Y., says: "I have frequently prescribed your Castoria for children and always got good results. In fact I use Castoria for my own children."

Dr. J. W. Allen, of St. Louis, Mo., says: "I heartily endorse your Castoria. I have frequently prescribed it in my medical practice, and have always found it to do all that is claimed for it."

Dr. C. H. Glidden, of St. Paul, Minn., says: "My experience as a practitioner with your Castoria has been highly satisfactory, and I consider it an excellent remedy for the young."

Dr. H. D. Benner, of Philadelphia, Pa., says: "I have used your Castoria as a purgative in the cases of children for years past with the most happy effect, and fully endorse it as a safe remedy."

Dr. J. A. Boardman, of Kansas City, Mo., says: "Your Castoria is an splendid remedy for children, known the world over. I use it in my practice and have no hesitancy in recommending it for the complaints of infants and children."

Dr. J. J. Mackey, of Brooklyn, N. Y., says: "I consider your Castoria an excellent preparation for children, being composed of reliable medicines and pleasant to the taste. A good remedy for all disturbances of the digestive organs."

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An Indignant Editor.
Last Saturday evening after sewing two patches on our Sunday trousers and cleaning and pressing them we hung them out to dry. An hour later we found that they had been stolen. This will explain why we were not in our accustomed place in church on Sunday. The human being who will deliberately steal a pair of trousers from the editor of a weekly paper, and knowing that they are his only pair for church-going, deserves a worse fate than our indignation will allow us to mention. It seems to us as if civilization had been turned back half a century.—Hometown (Pa.) Banner.

The Soft Answer.
Senator Tillman at a banquet in Washington said in humorous defense of outspoken and frank methods: "These people who always keep calm fill me with mistrust. Those that never lose their temper I suspect. He who wears under abuse an angelic smile is apt to be a hypocrite."
"An old South Carolina deacon once said to me with a chuckle: "Keep yo' tempah, son. Don't yo' quarrel with no angry pussion. A soft answer am allus best. Hit's commanded an', furthermo', senny, hit makes 'em maddah'n anything else yo' could say."

Selfish Etiquette.
Some rules in an old book on etiquette seem to encourage a practice commonly called "looking out for number one." Here are two of them: "When cake is passed, do not finger each piece, but with a quick glance select the best."
"Never refuse to taste of a dish because you are unfamiliar with it, or you will lose the taste of many a delicacy while others profit by your abstinance, to your lasting regret."—Youth's Companion.

DR. TALKS OF FOOD

Pres. of Board of Health.

"What shall I eat?" is the daily inquiry the physician is met with. I do not hesitate to say that in my judgment a large percentage of disease is caused by poorly selected and improperly prepared food. My personal experience with the fully-cooked food, known as Grape-Nuts, enables me to speak freely of its merits.

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Ever read the above letter? A new one appears from time to time. They are genuine, true, and full of human interest.

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When the Lord makes a fool, the devil gives him a tongue.—Life.

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