

THE TRAIN SPOTTER.

AN OFFICIAL WHO IS WELL PAID BY THE RAILROADS.

The Work Which is Performed by This Class of Detectives and the Qualities For Which It Calls—Methods of the Woman Spotter.

A little over three months ago there alighted from an Oakland ferryboat a demure little woman, who passed along with the crowd, with scarcely a glance to the right or left. Her pettiness attracted some attention and her modesty more, but no one who observed the air of confidence with which she made her way to the public carriage stand would have imagined that she was a stranger and that for the first time in her life she was visiting San Francisco.

Giving a few quiet directions and entering a cab, she was whirled away from the bustling throng and driven to a hotel. Later the register contained an unassuming "Miss Waller, Chicago." Her room was No. 11. Calling a private messenger, she dispatched a message to a firm of lawyers, and that evening, promptly at 8 o'clock, a prosperous looking, well dressed gentleman entered the hotel, glanced at the register, and, ignoring the clerk's question, "Do you want anything?" passed by the waiting elevator and walked up the stairs.

That was Tuesday evening. On Wednesday morning Miss Waller might have been seen boarding a Market street car bound for the ferry, where she purchased a train ticket and crossed to the mole. She returned late on Friday evening, and Saturday morning the same messenger took a sealed letter to the same lawyers, but this time there was no evening caller. Saturday evening she left town again for a few days, and these trips were continued until one day last week, when, by the merest chance, the object of her repeated outings was discovered. On this occasion she was the possessor of a ticket to a city near the Missouri river, and she smilingly confessed that she was bidding goodby to San Francisco for some time to come.

As an illustration of the care which she must exercise in order to enhance her value to the big railway corporations in this country it is only necessary to state that in the ten years which she has devoted to the business of spotter, or, as she would probably prefer to have it called, private detective, she has doubtless made fewer friends than any one else in the country. And while she will not allow any one to get thoroughly acquainted with her, she does not make enemies. That would be ruinous.

It is an unwritten law of the railroads that every employee is open to suspicion until he has been proved guilty, and the people who take upon themselves the task of separating the two classes—those who are found guilty and those who are as yet merely under suspicion—are objects of the greatest contempt with the army of tollers who seek a living on the trains. To offset this unpopularity, however, they have the inducement of large financial returns. There is no ironbound rule governing the amount of money which they receive, but the more proficient of the class probably make from \$2,500 to \$3,000 a year.

At times a railroad will have an important case on its hand, and the services of a first class spotter will be invaluable to the company, and on such occasions, if successful, the financial returns increase wonderfully.

There is a much greater demand for this class of detectives in the east than there is here, and several reasons are given for this condition of affairs. In the first place, traffic being heavier, there are more trains run there, and more men are employed by the companies. Besides, that section is more thickly populated, and way trains are in many instances run hourly, if not oftener, but probably the truest cause for the increased dishonesty among railway conductors in the east is the low rate of salary which they receive. There is a well defined belief among



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eastern men who travel extensively that any man who has reached that degree of prosperity where he can afford to wear creased trousers is hopelessly extravagant if he pay more than one-third fare after crossing the Mississippi river. I once heard a popular actor giving his reasons for this assertion in a resort on the Atlantic coast, and, after enlightening his audience with a dissertation on the almost utter worthlessness of money in the west, so far as railroad traveling was concerned, he continued:

"Take any train on any road west of Kansas City, St. Louis, Chicago or St. Paul, and the rest is easy. Assume an air of indifference and smoke a cigar. If your conductor be seedy looking, have a beard, an old uniform with threadbare elbows and a hopeless expression on his face, pay your fare. He is an honest man. A thousand dollars wouldn't tempt him, and you are out a whole stack of dollars for getting on his train. Had you waited for the next one things would have been different. There you have a prosperous looking fellow, who spent his last hour before leaving time in a barber's chair and who, but for his uniform, would pass for a drummer or even a banker. He looks as well fed and as well groomed as a king, and you need have no fear that he will decline your invitation to divide the cost of your ride to your destination or at least to the end of his division."—San Francisco Chronicle.

His Useless Half Dime.

"It isn't safe to start out without a pocketful of pennies any more," remarked a member of the house the other day. "Yet I can remember that when I came down into this section of the country in army blue in 1863 a 5 cent piece was very small potatoes. We were camped awhile out there in Virginia, and my headquarters were in the big plantation home. A son of the house and myself became good friends, although he was 5 and I nearly 35. One day in lieu of the candy which I had forgotten to bring him from the nearby town I gave him a silver half dime. I had forgotten all about the incident, when some two weeks later he came into my room and, opening his hand, held out to me on his little pink palm the silver piece I had given him. 'Heah, Mr. Captain, you can have it back,' he said plaintively. 'It won't buy nuffin.'"—Washington Star.

The Abyssinians make a tea from the leaves of a certain plant which has such stimulating qualities that to chew a single leaf will produce all the effects of a strong cup of tea.

The man who persistently blows his own horn will sooner or later convince his audience of his good opinion of himself.—Washington Post.

If you intend to do a mean thing, wait till tomorrow; if you intend to do a noble thing, do it now.



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