

"Take the Siding"

A Warning by Which an Accident Was Averted.

By EMMA ARCHER OSBORNE
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After an absence of four years from Radnor, James Casey had returned as superintendent of the eastern division of the railroad and had married Libbie Nelson. The wedding was only yesterday, and now that it was over and they had started for the east the villagers had time to revert to the story. The Nelsons were so proud of their new son-in-law that they could not restrain themselves from telling, despite the protestations of Libbie and Jim.

Shortly after the night of the church concert when Casey heard Libbie Nelson sing that song which had something in it about "angels in charge" he commenced to think things about angels, and one day his imagination evolved an angel, or something as near like one as he could picture. When Casey's mental vision beheld it he broke into a satisfied grin. If brought forth to visual observation it would have appeared strikingly like Libbie Nelson.

Things went along quietly for two months and then something happened.

While Casey was on his way to the yards at Buffalo to board 300 for the return trip an ambulance went galloping past him. Ambulances pass people frequently in a big city, and there was nothing about this one in particular to apprise Casey that Nat Taylor, fireman for Bill Whalen, who was running 809, was inside. It was a nasty night, and Taylor had slipped on the icy tracks and broken a leg.

When Casey, with a few extra minutes on hand, sauntered into the train dispatcher's office he found that institution in voluble ferment. Of course everybody was sorry for Taylor, but a fireman with a broken leg was of small concern in comparison with the awkward situation in which he had left them.

A special, carrying the president of the road from New York to Chicago on business of vital import, was at that moment only ten miles from the station and coming at the rate of a mile a minute.

Bill Whalen, one of the best engineers on the road, and 809, the pick and pride of the roundhouses, were out in the depot yards waiting to relieve the incoming and already overheated locomotive. Whalen and 809 were ready to couple on at a moment's notice, but no substitute had yet been found for Taylor, and there were precious few minutes to spare.

Casey was not given long to ponder on the excitement of the office. He had no more than crossed the threshold when Thompson, the train dispatcher, literally leaped across the room and grasped him by the arm.

"Get out to 809 as quick as you can!" he shouted. "Hurry! For God's sake hurry! Don't stop for anything! Run! Whalen'll tell you!"

Casey peeled off his coat as he was climbing into the cab, and he had scarcely grabbed a shovel and commenced to throw coal when the special, straining and wheezing, crunched on the track alongside.

Switching and coupling were matters of seconds only, and, although the night was intensely cold, two men stood on the platform of the single coach anxiously watching proceedings. One was a large, stern visaged person. He was restless. He chewed at his short white mustache, buttoned and unbuttoned his fur coat and never took his eyes off the engine until they were getting under headway.

"Do your best, boys!" he shouted across the tender to the men in the engine as they shunted on the main track and set off. The determined nods he received in reply were assuring.

Wakeful farmers and belated villagers were puzzled by the unusual traveler as 809 with her single consort momentarily flashed on their view like a monster one-eyed demon wraith, gliding, gleaming, screeching across country.

The special had left murky Cleveland and had climbed the long west grade to the bluff land bordering the lake. The snow had turned to sleet, and everything indicated that it had been sleeting for some time in that locality. The landscape glistened, telegraph poles and fences shone like crystal specters, wires were thick with incrustations, and after a distance they were sagging, and then some were broken and dragging on the ground.

"There's no use talking," growled Whalen. "I've got to slow down some or we'll be blown into the middle of nowhere. Get away from this devilish lake, then we can make up."

He eased 809 a bit. Yet she puffed and pulled and stuck nobly to her task. "If orders to clear the tracks didn't get through before those wires went down we may be all in," observed Casey.

"You're about right," replied Whalen glumly, "but the only thing I can do is to watch for signals."

"And in a drizzling sleet like this there might just about as well be no signals," continued Casey.

They had passed Dempsey and in another forty minutes would reach Radnor. Under ordinary conditions the local was due at this point, but if no error in orders had occurred she

should be waiting now on the siding at Putnam, the station beyond, giving right of way to the president's special.

The train was beginning to tell on both men and on Whalen in particular.

Casey was turning away from coaling when he noticed Whalen lean against the window post.

"Come, take the lever for a minute," he called. "I'm feeling bad"—Before he could finish he slid to the floor of the cab.

Casey, bending over him, saw he was unconscious, but whether dead or in a faint it was impossible for him to determine in the cramped space and under the stress of responsibility which suddenly presented itself. In a flash he realized his position. He recalled afterward how he was planning what to do even as he stepped across Whalen's prostrate form and grasped the throttle lever.

The fire bed would last to Putnam, and there he would coerce some one from the sidetracked local to finish the run. Yes, he could do it—that is, if the track was clear.

Casey was leaning half out the cab window in his eagerness to watch the track and catch the signal. His dark eyes pierced into the great invisible; his head was bare and his black hair was a disheveled mass; his neck, which was bare also, despite the sleet and cold, seemed to spring out twice its usual size from his masterful shoulders. His face was tense. He had called into command every bit of human vitality he had in him to battle with the horrible possibilities he was facing and was facing alone.

Finally the signal came to view—very faintly, waveringly and indistinctly at first, then a trifle plainer until he caught its full significance.

"Clear track!" it indicated.

He reached toward the lever to throw on more speed, but instead, out in the black night and just ahead of the cab window, glided the spirit form of Libbie Nelson. She was peering intently ahead.

"Take the siding!" she motioned to Casey, and instantly his hand was impelled to the whistle and 809 was shrieking for the switch to the Radnor sidetrack.

Casey felt as if a kind of insanity had seized him, yet he slowed down and then found himself watching for the switch signal, and watching eagerly, impatiently.

He brought 809 to a full stop. He waited.

Why didn't they send the signal? Would the siding never be opened? Was it ice locked? What was wrong anyway? He asked himself a thousand questions as he grew more and more frantic with apprehension.

It seemed that he had waited there a hundred years when he finally caught the flash of the waving lantern.

Then he had to get 809 into action again. It took only a few seconds, but those seconds seemed hours.

When the locomotive moved forward Casey, pressing forward also as if to carry the great, throbbing engine with him, looked half mad with dread of the imminent—the imminence of something terrible and near.

But 809 didn't fall him. She obeyed the commanding touch which he applied to the levers.

And Casey was obeying the commands of the recognized supernatural, yet for the life of him he couldn't understand.

The special shot on the siding with not a second to spare from colliding with the local.

Then he understood, and his gray, trembling lips murmured one word. That word was "Libbie!"

When Casey staggered down from the cab he was weak, so weak that it was all he could do to stand. At first he seemed to forget who or where he was. Then gradually his mind cleared and he looked about him.

"Whalen's come to," some one told him. "Had some kind of a spell."

"They had taken Whalen into the station."

Stamping up and down in the snow and the slush was the president of the road, blustering with mingled gratitude and severity and firing questions at the dazed Casey.

When Casey fully regained his senses it was wonderful what things he remembered, things that he had scarcely noticed when they happened, even details after he gave way to the supernatural. One thing, however, he failed to mention when telling of the peculiar influence that had controlled him, and that was the name of Libbie Nelson.

"It was a premonition," he insisted. "Young man," said the president, gripping Casey's rough hand when they were parting at Chicago, "those who were responsible for that affair back yonder will be dealt with summarily."

"As for yourself, the rules of this company compel employees to run trains by orders and signals instead of by premonitions. As you have disregarded a signal, even though it would have proved disastrous if you had obeyed it, it would be the duty of your boss to dismiss you. I shall, however, take it upon myself to do that. This is your last trip. Consider yourself discharged."

Casey was weary and jaded almost to the limit of human endurance. He was the picture of woe and would have turned away, but the president still gripped his hand.

"But," he continued, with a twitching around his mouth, "there's something in you that calls for better things than firing on a locomotive. I have your name and address—here are mine," handing Casey a card. "Be at my office in New York two weeks from today. I'm in a tremendous hurry now. Thank you for your splendid run, and goodbye!"

Two weeks later Casey called on the president and received his reward.

NEW GUINEA PYGMIES.

The Spear and Bow and Poisoned Arrows Their Chief Weapons.

Our knowledge of the pygmies of New Guinea shows that in habit they are nomadic, nowhere tilling the ground, but depending for their living entirely on their skill in hunting and fishing. Their chief weapon is the bow, their arrows being generally poisoned either with the famous upas or some other similar vegetable poison. In some cases a species of strychnine. They also make use of the spear and an ingenious form of spring gun which is common to numerous other forest tribes. This is formed by setting a flattened bamboo-spear attached to a bent sapling, which is fastened to a trigger in such a way that it is released by the passerby stumbling against an invisible string stretched across a game track. These spears are really set for game, and to the initiated they are obvious enough, as their presence is always indicated by certain well known signs, such as a broken off twig placed in a cleft stick. In war these signs are removed, the removal being equivalent to the moving of buoys in a mined channel. The wounds inflicted by these hardened bamboo spears are necessarily serious. The mental qualities of the Negritoes are extremely undeveloped, none of them being able to express a higher numerical idea than three, but all observers who have met them unite in saying that they are a merry little people, with great ideas of hospitality when their confidence has been gained and provided they have not been previously ill treated. They are not cannibals and are generally monogamous. —London Times.

LIGHTNING FLASHES.

Many Things Concerning Them That Science Cannot Fathom.

A young girl in charge of two children, sheltering under a tree on Chislehurst common, was struck by lightning and killed—one of those dreadful instances of the sort of personal touch with which lightning seems to select its victim, for, though one child is reported to have been thrown down, neither apparently was injured. There are many instances, of course, of this strange selection, due in most cases probably to some accident of clothing. There is a well remembered case which happened some years ago at Cambridge, when three young men were walking across an open space of ground, and the middle one of the three was struck dead, while the others were untouched. The inquest showed that the young man who was killed had nails in his boots, whereas the others were wearing boating shoes.

The phenomena of thunderstorms have been the subject of much study in America. But if thunderstorms can be classified, they are still not thoroughly understood. We do not yet know what are the exact conditions which lead to a discharge of electricity in the form of a lightning flash from cloud to cloud or from cloud to earth. We cannot reproduce thunder and lightning in a laboratory. We do not know what is the origin of the electrification manifested in a storm. —London Spectator.

Tickling the Debtors.

John Barrett was only twenty-seven years old when President Cleveland appointed him minister to Siam. The first important task which confronted the youthful envoy was to press a claim against the Siamese government for \$1,000,000. Experienced ambassadors warned him against using threats in obtaining the money. "Be cunning; avoid arrogance," they said. "That is," responded Mr. Barrett, "you favor tickling with a straw to pricking with a bayonet." The statesmen nodded assent. When the young minister had finally succeeded in collecting the claim the ambassadors asked in astonishment, "How did you accomplish it?" "By tickling," explained Barrett. "I had to tickle them almost to death, though, before they agreed to pay it."

Quaint Remedies.

Among the members of the Greek church in Macedonia the following recipes are regarded as highly useful: To pacify one's enemies write the psalm "Known in Judea," dissolve it in water and give your enemy to drink thereof, and he will be pacified. For a startled and frightened man take three dry chestnuts and sow thistle and three glasses of old wine and let him drink thereof early and late. Write also "In the beginning was the word" and let him carry it.

Plump Birdie.

She (after the service)—You dreadful fellow! Why did you smile during the offertory? He—I couldn't help it. There was Miss Addie Pose singing "Had I the wings of a dove." The mental picture of a 200 pounder trying to fly with a pair of four inch wings was too much for me.

In Bohemia.

"How did you enjoy her bohemian evening?" "It wasn't much. Both the epigrams and the sandwiches were stale." —Washington Herald.

Sure Sign.

"How do you know they're married?" "Can't you see? He's making her bait her own fishhooks." —Detroit Free Press.

The Added Part.

Church—Does your neighbor play that cornet without notes? Gotham—Yes, but not without comments. —Yonkers Statesman.

OLD TIME PUNISHMENT.

Agony of a Day in the Stocks For a Fit of Bad Temper.

A record on file in the library of congress contains an account of the adventures of a certain Hubbard, who was sentenced in Boston to the stocks for having indulged in an unwarrantable fit of ill temper, says Harper's Weekly. When he had taken his seat for the day there came along a drove of swine, which seemed to cast upon him those leering looks that only a fat pig can bestow. A dog followed, sniffing at the prisoner's feet and making feints—unpleasantly approaching reality—of biting him. Then a cock, mounting to the very top of the stocks, crowed his derision upon the victim below, and presently a rough fellow, after indulging in ugly taunts, threw at him fetid toadstools and a dead snake.

Then an Indian appeared, who in a drunken rage, stimulated by some fancied injury, rushed at Hubbard with a tomahawk, probably intending nothing worse, however, than to give him a severe fright, which he certainly succeeded in doing.

Help came from an unexpected quarter, for at that moment an old bull came tearing down the road. His attention was attracted by the stocks, and with a roar he prepared for a charge.

Alarmed in his turn, the savage dashed off. The bull made a dash at the stocks and carried away the corner post, but without even grazing the object of his apparent wrath. Whether he was disgusted by the little he had accomplished or his animosity was thus satisfied, he started off, bellowing and shaking his head, much to the relief of the said Hubbard.

And then the unfortunate man was left in comparative peace to his own meditations and the cutting sleet of a November day.

A COURSE OF DINNERS.

It Includes Roasted Peas as a Substitute For Coffee.

In a little book called "The Economical Housekeeper," published about the year 1840, there is given on one page "A Course of Dinners For a Week." At the time of its publication the little book was most popular, as is proved by the author's preface to the second revised edition. She says:

"Encouraged by the very favorable reception that our humble labors have met in the rapid sale of the first edition of 1,500 copies in about fifteen weeks, and the demand still continuing, we have improved the time by endeavoring to make the present edition more worthy of patronage, if possible, than the first."

Therefore it is probable that the "course of dinners" which follows was considered admirable at that time:

"Monday—Tea, coffee or cocoa, with mince-meat, bread and butter in winter, bread and milk in summer.

"Tuesday—Boiled dish, with apple dumplings.

"Wednesday—Roasted or baked meat, with bread pudding.

"Thursday—Broiled steak or fresh fish, with baked rice pudding.

"Friday—Baked beans, with baked Indian pudding.

"Saturday—Salt codfish boiled, with apple pie.

"Sunday—Morning, hashed fish and coffee; noon, bread and butter, cheese, pie, doughnuts."

It is a suggestive paragraph which appears on the same page:

"Peas, roasted and ground, are an excellent substitute for coffee, and you would hardly know which is best." —Youth's Companion.

Value of the Kangaroo's Tail.

So important is the kangaroo's tail in his rapid progress that experienced hunters with guns are accustomed to fire at the point where this appendage joins the body, when, the tail being disabled for its office of balancing, the animal is as effectually stopped as if hamstrung. Hit elsewhere, except with a rifle bullet or at point blank range, the kangaroo is pretty likely to get off. One peculiarity of the kangaroo is that, after being started up, he very rarely swerves from his course, through which peculiarity he is easily "potted" by hunters, who conceal themselves while a man on horseback drives the herd toward them.

Insect Wonders.

Nothing can exceed the perfection of the minutest parts of the insect organization in general. The finest strand in a spider's web, which can scarcely be seen, is said to be composed of no less than 4,000 threads. On a single wing of a butterfly have been found 100,000 scales and on that of a silkworm moth 400,000, each of these minute scales being a marvel of beauty and completeness in itself. So thin are the wings of many insects that 50,000 placed over each other would only be a quarter of an inch thick, and yet, thin as they are, each is double.

Puzzled Tommy.

"Pa," said Tommy, "my Sunday school teacher says if I'm good I'll go to heaven."

"Well, what about it?" said his pa.

"Well, you said if I was good I'd go to the circus. Now, I want to know who's fibbing, you or her." —Lippincott's.

The Similarity.

"Lucky at cards, unlucky at love," quoted the wise guy.

"Well, either is simply a case of holding hands," said the simple mug. —Philadelphia Record.

To encourage talent is to create it.—Lessing.

Her Place

He Takes It and Wins Musical Honors.

By T. W. WINDHAM.

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Margaret Trentham, a fair Bostonian, stood in a room in a German pension. She was speaking to a young man, like herself a musician.

"You don't realize what it means to me, Mr. Tolstoy. This is my last turn here and the concert tomorrow my only opportunity of playing publicly in the Conservatoire."

"But the circumstances are exceptional," he urged. "It happens that Professor Meyerhaus is in Leipzig recruiting violinists for his American tour, and it occurred to me that perhaps he would include me in his orchestra as solo pianist."

"By engaging me Meyerhaus would save the huge fees demanded by musicians who have made a name, and for me—a pause gave additional weight to his words—"It means possibly the opening of a career. I should come before the public at once and without expense instead of returning to America to drudge at teaching, because I do not possess the means to make an imposing debut."

"But you forget," she added in self vindication, "I have rehearsed with the orchestra throughout the term, and the conductor will not approve of a change at the last moment."

"I have already obtained his permission"—he began.

"Then if he is willing for you to play why does he allow the decision to rest with me?" she broke in.

The tension of a momentary silence tried him beyond endurance. Rising, he walked to the door, pausing at the threshold.

"Forgive the intrusion. Unfortunately I misled myself with the belief that you would willingly cede a chance to a professional, being yourself an amateur and independent. I can only hope that your triumph tomorrow"—he lingered on the word in conscious irony—"will atone for the vexation of my visit."

A large cosmopolitan audience filled the Conservatoire hall for the final concert of the season.

An attendant opened the piano in readiness for the concerto as the pianist came forward, escorted by the master under whom she had studied.

She seated herself at the instrument, and a little ripple of applause broke from the balcony. Glancing upward in shy acknowledgment, she met the steadfast gaze of a man seated immediately facing her, who vouchsafed but the merest glance of recognition and resumed the study of a music score lying on his knees.

The players lowered their bow hands for several bars' rest. In the lull preceding the excerpt for the solo instrument the sound of a sharp indrawn breath struck downward through the silence.

The baton beat on steadily—three—four—

"One!"

No answering chord from the pianist. The conductor glared at her aghast, the orchestra in undisguised surprise. She started slightly, and the color flamed into her cheeks.

The baton swooped down again.

"One, fraulein!" The conductor leaned forward, half frantic. "Have you forgotten?" he hissed.

A soft, level voice prompted suddenly from the balcony, "The allegro movement, key A flat minor, extended chord."

She glanced swiftly forward with a little impulsive gesture and rose in her seat, faced the conductor, flashed a glance of swift defiance and passed with head erect through rows of thunderstruck musicians to the platform exit.

Bewildered comments were exchanged throughout the hall, and the notability in the stalls adjusted its spectacles rather irritably and awaited developments.

"These Americans! These Americans!" chafed the conductor, beside himself with rage; then he hurled an order at the doorkeeper, pointing to the balcony.

"Herr Tolstoy! Fetch him immediately!"

The man at the end had already disappeared, and in the passage connecting the platform with the cloakrooms he encountered the retiring pianist.

"Quick!" she whispered. "The conductor called for you."

His face glowed with trembling, exultant gratitude. He seized her hand and started backward conscience stricken as a tear fell glistening on her sleeve.

She rushed past him disconcerted, paced the step or two down the passage and turned abruptly to avenge her momentary loss of self control in an outbreak of reproach.

"Why don't you go? My failure gives you your opportunity. Pray don't hesitate to avail yourself."

"I'm sorry, so sorry"—he began.

"Do go!" she reiterated less harshly. "They will continue the program. It will be too late in another moment."

Though his hope of the future depended on that moment, he still stood irresolute, gazing in sheer fascination at the tear stained, imperious face.

"Do go! Do please go! It won't have been any good if you don't, and I shall never forgive myself!"

"Herr Tolstoy!"

The stentorian voice of the doorkeeper rang down the passage, and she darted through a doorway.

Her companion followed, stopped a second, and his lips sealed her cheeks. In the next the platform door closed behind him.

An echo reached her of the allegrissimo, rippling, lightening, swirling across the keys, subdued at intervals to the tumult of orchestral accompaniment, then ringing again, triumphant, quivering at the last with the rapt, exalted passion of a love song, followed by the silence that is greater than applause.

The pianist himself broke the spell, rising from his seat. The hall shook with a burst of enthusiasm. He passed unheeded through the platform exit.

The white haired notability removed his glasses with a sigh of satisfied enjoyment and turned to his colleague, his rugged Teutonic features softening into a smile.

"Your American young ladies—do they often take stage fright? But her compatriot! He is magnificent! To play that most difficult concerto without notes, without rehearsal—touch, technique perfect! Consider also his youth!"

The director broke in with adroit explanation and suggestion. The professor beamed with delighted recollection.

"It is the same, then, who offered his services? You are right, my friend, that I should change my mind, that the world should hear of him. He shall go with me on tour."

Twilight in the park, the sharp, gray twilight of late autumn. A smart electric runabout, with a lady at the lever and a chauffeur at her side, joined the stream of vehicles entering the park at the Plaza. Her features were only partially visible through her automobile veil, but an involuntary exclamation broke from a man pacing aimlessly along the walk.

"Miss Trentham!"

"Mr. Tolstoy!"

With the answering cry of recognition she drew up close to the walk, heedless of the rules of the road.

Half hesitating, Tolstoy went forward.

"So you are back in America, Mr. Tolstoy?"

"Yes." He muttered the monosyllable without raising his eyes.

"And I see from the papers that your European tour was a great success." He blurted out a second affirmative.

For the moment she was slightly nonplused; then with infinite tact she once more took the initiative.

"You are soon appearing in New York?"

"Tomorrow at Carnegie hall," he replied shortly.

Boardmen were parading Broadway with notices of the professor's concert. It humbled him that she had not noticed the large type at the foot of the boards—"Solo pianoforte, Mr. Alfred Tolstoy."

"A matinee?"

He nodded stiffly.

"Of course I shall go. It will be a great pleasure to me to be present at your debut," she continued.

"It happens to be the last concert of the series," he said lily.

"I had no idea," she began in a tone of eager explanation. "But, then, I have been traveling abroad a good deal with my parents since I saw you last. We only returned from Switzerland a couple of days ago."

The fact accounted for her apparent indifference, and his expression softened, but he stared moodily before him to avoid her eyes, and the handsome turnout in which she was seated with her liveried chauffeur somehow forced on him a sense of social disparity. When she spoke again her voice had a shy, hesitating ring.

"I need scarcely ask if you are successful?"

He produced a memorandum and read out some details—no trace of pleasure or enthusiasm in his tone, only a cynical sort of triumph in the sense of achievement.

"Tomorrow is my final appearance in New York with Professor Meyerhaus for the present. I am booked subsequently for various musical receptions; also the principal concert agents have made me very flattering offers."

"Shall I congratulate you?" she asked slowly.

"If you had congratulated me that night at the Conservatoire," he broke out resentfully, "and given me the opportunity to thank you—"

"You could not expect me to wait, to face every one after my failure. Besides"—she turned away her eyes to hide a sudden confusion—"you—you had already thanked me."

"It was not only to thank you— He was confused now, struggling with an increasing desire to make his hopeless avowal.

"I owe my subsequent success to you," he continued pedantically.

"No, indeed!" she broke in eagerly. "But—I am glad—more than I can say—that you have realized your ambition."

"I suppose I have."

His tone gave the lie to the acknowledgment.

He had fallen so pitifully short of realization. Could she but know! Despair overwhelmed the remnant of his pride and self control. He raised his eyes, a flame with his secret.

"I am still striving," he said haltingly, "for the unattainable."

She darted a questioning glance. The grim white face strained toward her through the dusk, and conviction flashed swift upon her.

She bent impulsively, with a radiant, triumphant smile. Her voice swayed with a little tremor of delight.

"I think I understand. But you are mistaken. For all you know the unattainable may be within reach."