"PUT ON MORE COALS."

ll, gentlemen, if you wish it, I'll tell you the story. When I was a youth of nineteen and lived with my parents in a Pennsylvania town, I had a taste for railroading and a boyish ambition to become a driver, although I had been educated for loftier pursuits.

During my college vacation I lounged about the station almost constantly, making friends with the trainmen, and especially with a driver named Silas Markley. I became much attached to this man, notwithstanding he was forty years old and by no means a sociable fellow.

He was my ideal of a brave, skillful, thoroughbred driver, and I looked up to him as something of a hero. He was not a married man, but lived alone with his old mother. I was a frequent visitor at their house, and I think they took quite a fancy to me in their quiet, undemonstrative way.

When Markley's fireman left him I induced him to let me take his place during the remnant of my vacation. He hesitated for some time before he consented to humor my boyish whim, but he finally yielded and I was in great glee. The fact was that in my idleness and the overworked state of my brain I craved excitement as a confirmed drunkard does liquor, and, besides, I had had such longing dreams of the fiery ride through the hills, mounted literally on the iron horse. So I became an amateur fireman, and liked it exceedingly, for the excitement more than compensated for the rough work I was required to do.

But there came a time when I got my fill of excitement. Mrs. Markley one day formed a plan which seemed to give her a good deal of happiness. It was her son's birthday and she wanted to go down to Philadelphia in his train, without letting him know anything about it, and there purchase a present for him. She took me into her confidence and had me to assist her. I arranged the preliminaries and got her into the train without being noticed by Markley, who, of course, was busy with his engine.

The old lady was in high glee over the bit of innocent deception she was practicing on her son. She enjoined me again and again not to tell Silas, and then I left her and took my place.

It was a midsummer day and the weather was delightful. The train was neither an express nor an accommodation, but one which stopped at the principal stations on the route. On this occasion, as there were two specials on the line, it was run by telegraph—that is, the driver has simply to obey the instructions which he receives at each station, so that he is but a machine in the hands of one controller who directs all trains from a central point, and has the whole line under his eye. If the driver does not obey to the least tittle his orders it is destruction to the whole.

"Well, we started without mishap and up to time, and easily reached the first station in the time allotted to us. As we stopped there the boy ran alongside with the telegram which he handed to the driver. The next moment I heard a smothered exclamation from Markley.

"Go back," he said to the boy; "tell Williams to have the message repeated, there's a mistake."

The boy dashed off, in ten minutes he came flying back. "Had it repeated," he panted. "Williams is storming, at you, says there is no mistake, and you'd best get on." He thrust the second message up as he spoke.

Markley read it and stood hesitating for half a minute. There was dismay and utter perplexity in the expression of his face as he looked at the telegram, and then at the long train behind him. His lips moved as if he were calculating chances, and his eyes suddenly quailed as if he saw death at the end of the calculation. I was watching him with considerable curiosity. I ventured to ask him what was the matter and what he was going to do.

"I'm going to obey," he replied, curtly.

The engine gave a long shriek of horror that made me start, as if it were Markley's own voice. The next instant we rushed out of the station and dashed through low-lying farms at a speed which seemed dangerous to me.

"Put in more coal," said Markley."

I shoveled it in, but took time.

"We are going very fast, Markley."

He did not answer. His eye was fixed on the steam gauge, his lips close shut.

"More coal," he said; I threw it in.

The fields and houses began to fly past half seen. We were nearing Dufreme, the next station. Markley's eye went from the gauge to the face of the timepiece and back. He moved like an automaton. There was little more meaning in his face.

"More!" he said, without turning his eye. I took up the shovel—hesitated.

"Markley, do you know that we are going at the rate of sixty miles an hour?"

"Coal!"

I was alarmed at the stern, cold rigidity of the man. His pallor was becoming frightful. I threw in the coal. At least we must stop at Dufreme. He told me that was the next hault. The little town approached. As the first houses came into view the engine sent its shriek of warning; it grew louder—louder.

We dashed into the street, up to the station, where a group of passengers waited, and passed it without the halt of an instant, catching a glimpse of the appalled faces of the waiting crowd. Then we were in the fields again. The speed now became literally breathless, the furnace glared red-hot. The heat, the velocity, the terrible nervous strain of the man beside me seemed to weigh the air. I found myself drawing long, stertorous breaths like one drowning.

I heaped in the coal at intervals, as he bade me. I did it because I was oppressed by an odd sense of duty, which I never had in my ordinary brain work. Since then I have understood how it is that dull, ignorant men, without a spark of enthusiasm, show such heroism as soldiers, firemen, and captains of wrecked vessels. It is this overpowering sense of routine duty. It's a finer thing than sheer bravery in my idea. However, I began to think that Markley was mad—laboring under some frenzy from drink, though I had never seen him touch liquor.

He did not move hand or foot, except in the mechanical control of his engine, his eye going from the gauge to the timepiece with a steadiness that was more terrible and threatening than any gleam of insanity would have been. Once he glared back at the long train sweeping after the engine with a headlong speed that rocked it from side to side.

One could imagine he saw the hundreds of men and women in the carriages talking, reading, smoking, unconscious that their lives were all in the hold of one man whom I now strongly suspected to be mad. I knew by his look that he remembered their lives were in his hand. He glanced at the clock.

"Twenty miles," he muttered. "Throw on more coal, Jack, the fire is going out."

I did it. Yes, I did it. There was something in the face of that man I could not resist. Then I climbed forward and shook him by the shoulder. "Markley," I shouted, "you are running this train into the jaws of death."

"I know it," he replied, quietly.

"Your mother is aboard the train!"

"Heavens!" He staggered to his feet. But even then he did not move his eyes from the gauge.

"Make up the fire," he commanded, and pushed in the throttle valve.

"I will not."

"Make up the fire, Jack," very quietly.

"I will not. You may murder yourself and your mother, but you shall not murder me."

He looked at me. His kindly gray eyes glared like those of a wild beast. But he controlled himself in a moment.

"I could throw you off this engine, and make short work of you," he said. "But, look here; do you see the station yonder?"

I saw a faint streak against the sky about five miles ahead.

"I was told to reach that station by six o'clock," he continued. "The express train meeting us is due now. I ought to have laid by for it at Dufreme. I was told to come on. The track is a single one. Unless I can make the siding at that station in three minutes, we shall meet in yonder hollow!"

"Somebody's blunder?" I said.

"Yes, I think so."

I said nothing. I threw on coal; if I had had petroleum I would have thrown it on. But I never was calmer in my life. When death actually stares a man in the face, it often frightens him into the most perfect composure. Markley pushed the valve still further. The engine began to give a strange panting sound. Far off to the south I could see the bituminous black smoke of a train. I looked at Markley inquiringly. He nodded. It was the express! I stooped to the fire.

"No more," he said.

I looked across the clear summer sky at the gray smoke of the peaceful little village, and beyond that a black line coming closer, closer, across the sky. Then I turned to the watch. In one minute more—well, I confess I sat down and buried my face in my hands. I don't think I tried to pray. I had a confused thought of a mass of mangled, dying men and women—mothers and their babies.

There was a terrific shriek from the engine, against which I leaned. Another in my face. A hot, hissing tempest swept past me. I looked up. We were on the siding and the express had gone by. It grazed our end carriage in passing. In a sort of delirious joy I sprang up and shouted to Markley. He did not speak. He sat there immovable and cold as a stone. I went to the train and brought his mother to him, and when he opened his eyes and took the old lady's hand in his I turned away.

Yes, gentlemen, I have been in many a railway accident, but I have always considered that the closest call I ever had.

"What was the blunder?"

I don't know. Markley made light of it ever afterward and kept it a secret, but no man on the line stood so high in the confidence of the company after that as he. By his coolness and nerve he had saved a hundred lives.

Preaching Under Difficulties.

A curious case of the pursuit of preaching under difficulties came under my notice. In a country church in the remote districts of the West of England a swarm of bees had taken up their quarters in the oaken woodwork at the back of the pulpit, to the dismay and discomfort of the weekly occupant of that structure. During the discharge of his peculiar function he was not only annoyed with the busy, sullen roar of the hive, but his fear of arousing their animosity by the loud challenge of his tones, or by the vibration of the pulpit, was stimulated by the light skirmishers which used to come out and perform all sorts of minatory manœuvres within measurable distance of his nose. The annoyance at length became intolerable, and orders were given to smoke out the bees. This was effectually done; but, unfortunately, the clerk in smoking out the bees set fire to the church, and it was burned to the ground.—Chambers's Journal.

Becoming Too Valuable.

Land in many parts of California is becoming too valuable for wheat growing, and large tracts are passing into orchards and vineyards. It is expected that before many years have passed the bulk of the wheat growing lands of to-day will be more profitably used.—Chicago Herald.

Be Kind to the Children.

Wallace says the mind of man is so great that henceforth his "selection" will replace the primæval power of "natural selection," so that it is possible the earth will bear only cultivated plants and tame animals; and Frederica Bremer thinks man may possibly create "an ennobled race of animals" by the education of a kind and gentle treatment. With what potency, then, comes this truth to the education of children. Here, indeed, is the richest reward of kindness. And how is it possible to look on a child without being touched by the pathos of its helplessness? How fearful harshness is, or cold neglect, and how dreadful are angry punishments to those little beings who cling to us like clusters on a vine! It is by our good juices they must be ripened, and if the vine be bad, what hope for them? And, as before, I have said that there is great vanity and conceit in unkindness, so the kindness of the love of parent or teacher will root well in humility. For who can look on a child without awe, or compare its needs and his own attainments without a fear?—"J. V. B." in St. Louis Globe-Democrat.

Leveling Effect of Frost.

A low ledge in western Norway marks the spot on which an extensive promontory story stood until 1717. During a a thaw in that year the crevices in the rock were filled with water, which was quickly frozen to a sudden change to cold. The result was the rending of the rock, and its projection, with its cultivated fields and farmstead from a height of 1,500 feet in the neighboring ford The fall raised a great wave, which not only destroyed all the fishing boats within two and a half miles, but swept away a church fifty feet above the water a mile away from the promontory.

A Jail Bird's Good Luck.

If Whittington's cat can not be placed among well authenticated Felidæ, many a man has attained the glory of lord mayorality in ways fully as romantic as those of Whittington in the nursery tale. Stephen Foster was a debtor confined in the Ludgate which once stood over the gate on the hill, a very little way west of St. Paul's. There was a gate at which every day a prisoner was allowed to sit to collect alms for his fellows, and here one day Foster sat. A wealthy widow passing by gave him money, inquired into his case, and took him into her service. He saved his wages, traded successfully, married the widow, and in due time became Sir Stephen Foster, lord mayor of London. In his prosperity he forgot not the days of his adversity, and founded a charity for prisoners which was long kept up in the jail of Ludgate and commemorated in his epitaph.—Century.

How Few Are Rich.

It is probable, to say the least, that fully 90 per cent of the whole body of the people spend nearly all that they can earn; of this 90 per cent a portion may be setting aside a moderate part of their small earnings, become the owner of a house, or become depositors in a savings bank, or insure their lives in a moderate way. Of the remaining 10 per cent a part save enough to protect themselves against want in their later years, and a very small part may become rich, and then need not work unless they choose. —Forum.

Electric Condensation of Steam.

A variation of Dr. O. J. Lodge's experiments on the electric deposition of dust has been tried by M. Soret of Geneva. Steam submitted to electric discharges was instantly precipitated; and when the pole of the electric machine was sufficiently near the surface of the water—the other pole being attached to the platinum cup used for the boiling—the steam was condensed as rapidly as formed, presenting the anomaly of steamless boiling water.

Mr. Curtin's Luck.

Chicago (Ill.) Evening Journal, Nov. 21.

On the application of Richard Keating, an injunction has been granted by Judge Tuley restraining the Adams Express company from paying to Edward Curtin $15,000 collected on a lucky Louisiana State Lottery ticket. Keating claims that just before the last drawing he and Curtin each bought a ticket with the understanding that if either of them won anything it should be divided. Like nine-tenths of the patrons of such schemes, Mr. Keating drew a big blank—there wasn't a dollar within shooting distance of his ticket. Curtin on the other hand, was something like a man who falls into the river and gets out without a wetting—he was so lucky that he couldn't believe the report that he had won $15,000 until the express company notified him that the money was ready for him. Keating, it is claimed, reminded him of his promise to "divey," but was rudely repulsed. Mr. Curtin was winner and didn't propose to throw away any of the prize on a man who couldn't pick out a lucky ticket. Hence the injunction and the danger, that if the matter rests much longer unsettled, the lawyers will fatten on the $15,000, and what they leave will be so small that both Curtin and Keating will be ashamed to quarrel about it.

Didn't Care to Change.

The other evening a steady, faithful old Swede who occupies a place in the packing room of Marshall Field & Co.'s wholesale establishment, where he has been for years past, dropped in during a North side stroll at a barracks of the Salvation army. He did not quite understand the proceedings, but he enjoyed singing, and he paid strict attention to what was going on. During an interval in the regular services he was approached by a uniformed officer of the army, who tapped him on the shoulder and said, familiarly: "My friend, would you not like to go to work for Jesus?" "Naw, I gaze nod," answered the old Swede, as he rubbed his chin; "I haf goot chob an Marshall Fielt, an' I gaze I vork fer him yet avile."—Chicago Herald.

Scranton, Pa., is to have a silk mill to employ 600 hands.

A woman at Worcester, Mass., recently gave birth to four girl twins.

The Catholics of Australia have sent $1,000,000 to the Pope.

A woolen mill is to be started in Salem, Oregon, if the people will give $50,000.