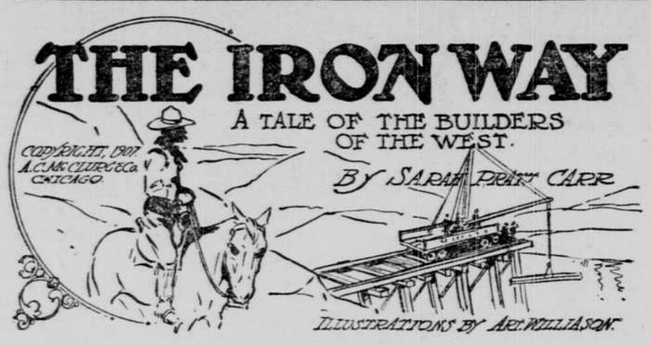
THE IRON WAY

A TALE OF THE BUILDERS OF THE WEST.



SYNOPSIS.

The story opens during a trip of the "Overland Mail" through the Rocky mountains. "Uncle Billy" Dodge, stage driver, Alfred Vincent, a young man, and Phineas Cadwallader, introduced. They come across the remains of a massacre. Later at Anthony's station they find the redskins have carried their destructive work there also. Stella Anthony, daughter of Anthony, keeper of station, is introduced. Anthony has been killed. Vincent is assigned his work in unearthing plans of enemies of railroad being built. He returns to Stella, each showing signs of love for the other. Stella hears from her lover, Gideon, and of his phenomenal success. Finds letter of importance involving plans of opposition road. Plot to destroy company's ship Flora is unearthed and incriminating evidence against Cadwallader found. Phineas Cadwallader faces prison on charge of wire tapping. A perfect chain of evidence connects him with plot to blow up "Flora." Banquet in railroad town is scene of monopolization of Alfred by a Miss Hamilton. Mrs. "Sally" Bernard announces riches. Gideon makes threat against Alfred's life. Quickly leaves town on best procurable horse in search of Vincent. Race to beat opposition company's stage a success. Stella falls to hear of Gideon. Stella receives a letter: "Promise to marry Gideon Ingram or Alfred Vincent will die." After conference Stella decides to flee. Years pass. Stella becomes known as Esther Anthony, becomes a rich woman, educates herself at Vassar and steps into highest San Francisco society. Kidnaping changes Alfred greatly and when he and Stella meet in 'Frisco society, she passes him without recognition. Stella's love for Alfred and his for her is revived. However, neither shows recognition of the fact to the other. Anthony romance is unfolded, showing Gideon, who loved Stella, to be her own cousin. Alvin Carter, Viola's lover when the Bernards were poor, visits them and Sally B. consents to their marriage, despite the fact that several sons of rich sires are asking the girl's hand. The Bernards lose their riches and Sally B. again becomes a housekeeper. Viola, marrying Alvin Carter. Stella visits Sally B. and sees "Uncle Billy." Decides to cease waiting for Alfred and says she will devote her life to charity. Stella is held up by vagrant she befriended, but succeeds in escaping. Train bearing iron, which was to be the salvation of the Central Pacific, is wrecked. Alfred and Stella are reunited, when former acts the hero in wreck of iron train. Alfred tells tale of being disowned by father for befriending schoolmate.

CHAPTER XXXII.

In the Little Spot Where the Posies Grow.

"Stella, dear, Gideon's dying!" Sally B. said solemnly as Esther walked by her side to the hotel. "Come to him quick's you can. He ain't done nothin' but call fur you."

Speechless, Esther hurried upstairs close behind Sally B.

"They found him with a bullet in him down by Big Bend Cut," Sally B. went on, as she led the way to Gideon's room. "Some o' the woodmen found him. His horse bucked when that cuss fired at you. That's how he got the drop on Gid; that, an' Gid's fear at first that he'd hit you."

"Is he conscious?" Esther whispered.

"Yes. Mind's clear as a diamond. Jest wants you. He ain't sufferin' none, honey," she added hastily as she saw Esther's cheek pale. "Hunt yer pluck, child, fur Gid's sake." She clasped Esther in a warm embrace and left her at Gideon's door.

The physician, who had been summoned by special engine from Elko, came out to meet her. "Miss Anthony?" he asked. "I'm glad you've come. Hope you can grant his desire, whatever it may be. To see you, to speak with you, seems his only wish." Esther's strained face touched him. "Don't give way," he said kindly. "He doesn't suffer. I've done what little I could to relieve him. He'll go without pain. I—"

"Oh, must he—is there no chance for—" she hesitated anxiously.

"None, Miss Anthony. And there are only minutes. Go in—give him his wish, if you can. I'll stay near; call me if you need me."

She entered, and he shut the door, leaving her alone with Gideon.

He turned his head feebly at her step.

"Moppett!"

She was down beside him, tears falling unheeded.

"Don't cry, Star! I'm not sorry. I'm glad to die."

"Oh, Gideon, don't say that! You must live—must—"

"Little Star!" His voice was tremulous with weakness. "I wasn't—you'll be happy. I won't have to see him—" Each word was more difficult and he waited for strength. "Is Vincent here?"

She nodded.

"Call him, Stella."

But when she moved to obey, his weak fingers closed over hers detainingly. "No, no! I can't do it!" he cried out with sudden strength. "After you rode out of town yesterday, I watched you a while through the glass, then went that way, Star—out that way—in time! Yes, in time! And before I saw you enter the cut—" he was silent an instant, his waiting soul in his eyes; "and ever since, too, I've said—I'd tell Vincent myself—"

"Gideon! Don't! It's past. You need not—"

"Sweet Star!" The tenderness in his faint words smote Esther. "I can't tell him. I can't spare the time from you—you've been so long—coming! But you'll tell him, Stella, won't you? Tell him that I—I—tried to be white—at last; but I'm only—oh, Stella! only an Injun! Oh, Star!" The last word was a despairing cry, almost inarticulate.

"No, no, Gideon! You've atoned. You've been brave and—"

His face was turned away. His eyes were closed, and Esther leaned closer, listening for his waning breath. Was this the last? She must call—no, he breathed more deeply. She laid her hand on his forehead, kissed his cheek softly.

At that he opened his eyes and smiled. "One promise, Stella. Will you?" He reached feebly for her hand.

She nodded. "If I can."

"Bury me—bury me out here—out—"

"Oh, Gideon, don't ask that! It's so far, so lonely!"

"No; it's—I love it! No mummery, only a little song and some words from the Book. In that spot where the posies—where you sat yesterday—only yesterday," he moaned faintly.

"Gideon, dear, how can we—" She took both his hands in her own.

"Promise, Star."

She bowed her head, her tears falling fast.

"Don't, Stella! I can't dry—" He paused, a new thought claiming him. "El Rancho Guerrero is yours."

She shook her head.

"Yes. Your father's brother was my—you must. You'll love it?" He searched her face anxiously.

She remembered the doctor's words, and acquiesced. "Yes, I'll love it—love it for your sake, Gideon, for the sake of the old times."

His eyes warmed almost to smiling.

She freed one hand and gently smoothed back the dark hair; and for a time he was quite still, content.

"The little arrow, did you—ever wear it?" he asked faintly. "I wish I could—see it in—your hair." The whispered words came with more effort.

"Did you send it, Gideon?" Her face lighted. "It is so beautiful!"

He smiled his reply, and his satisfaction.

"My room is next to this. Shall I get it?"

"Yes. But don't let—any one come. You—alone—I want."

Esther rose, wondering at such a fancy at such a moment; wondering if she ought to leave him. In a second she was back. Even as she went, she tossed her hair loosely on top of her head, as Gideon had liked it, and shot the glittering shaft through.

He watched her with fond eyes as she came to the bed and knelt down.

"You are very beautiful, Moppett," he whispered, as she took his hands again in hers.

Long he gazed into her face.

She kissed him on cheek and forehead, at last lightly on the lips.

"Mine! Mine for this hour!" he said with a breath of his old passion. His eyes grew deep and darker with their strange, cryptic flash. "Oh, Star!" he whispered; "I tried—I—" He lifted his eyes to the ceiling and whispered faintly, "A life for a life."

A shaft of light struck the arrow.

"The sun!" He barely breathed the words.

He was very still after that, though his eyes came back to her face. The hands in hers grew chill, and she stirred.

"I must call—" she began, but he shook his head ever so little.

"Only you." His lips formed the words she scarcely heard.

The stillness crept on, and on, over all the room, over the face before her, into her own heart—the stillness that was death. Only once his lips moved; it was to frame the old childname, "Moppett."

The shaft of brilliance crept down from the gemmed arrow, down through the stillness, touched Gideon's night-black hair with light. And Esther saw that last, spent, outward breath that has no indrawn follower.

With the "little song," and words from "the Book," as he had asked, rough yet reverent men and women gave Gideon's beautiful earth-garment to the warm desert's keeping, to the posies, to the wide silences he loved.

He Watched Her with Fond Eyes as She Came to the Bed and Knelt Down.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

Gregory's Victory.

The cruel strain of the days just past told upon Esther. Still, Alfred was there—not by means well, yet needing only rest, care and Esther. This saved her from illness. Poor, loving Gideon, dying half happy with his hand in hers, her kiss on his lips, had not even in that moment rivaled Alfred. She turned to him now, her own ills forgotten in happy service for him; and by the bed he kept for a few days, she was spared the little town's excitement over the murder, the unsuccessful hunt for the criminal, the wreck, the sending away of the wounded man to be mended by man, the burial of the poor body whose soul had gone to be commended of God.

Days they toiled to rebuild the trestle that cunning hands had so secretly cut. One by one they carried heavy rails up the bank and piled them ready for loading. As Alfred recovered, Esther regained poise and strength; and together they went on to the Front, where they rejoiced the Harmons with their story.

At last the iron! The little left when the train was wrecked had carried them by the Kelton flats, where Gregory had planned his great day's work. Now they must lay over rougher road—over culverts, trestles, and grades that must be climbed.

For days the men had been idle. And Gregory had listened, with impatient replies, or in more impatient silence, to reports from the Union Pacific.

Uintah! Through the canyon!

"A holiday in Salt Lake City for every man, if the west-bound tracklayers can overtake the graders before the Central Pacific arrives!" was the bribe the Union Pacific people offered their men.

"Their work is sham! The government will never accept it!" enemies of the same road averred. And Gregory prayed that this might be true. But it was not true. The Union Pacific road stood inspection, was accepted; and on they came.

Ogden! Still no iron for the Central Pacific! Red sparks scintillated in Gregory's sleepless eyes. Ogden! He might have been there now if the iron had come! His company might have tapped that rich valley, fetched and carried for the thrifty Mormons. Now that would be the juicy plum of the Union Pacific. And the Central Pacific must squat in this desert spot, beside the dead, blue lake, whose shores gave no promise, whose flanking hills had been forgotten of God! Gregory fumed over the unknown wretch who had wrecked the iron train. Poor Gregory! Little he knew that, merited though it might have been, the reproof his own boot had given had delayed the precious freight, had lost Ogden for his company, and 30 miles of road.

Idle men make no muscle. Gregory knew it, and chafed still more, as he fretted about the camp, keeping away from his guests and his anxious-eyed wife. And now the welcome whistle once again. Preparations so carefully made were reinspected. The camp awoke. Idle men stretched themselves; lazy ones regretfully, honest ones gladly. Buttons, straps, buckles, shoes, hats tobacco—all were made ready, for every one knew that to-morrow would spare no moment for broken gear, for longing tongues.

To the very tip-end of the last rail the construction train had been pushed, the iron train close behind it and iron dropped in piles beside the track, when both trains had backed to the rear. The little, low car that moved the iron was loaded; every foreman charged his gang, looked after his tools; every man set his teeth for to-morrow's work.

Long before daylight the camp was aroused. The cooks' calls followed quickly, and breakfast was taken a gulp. With the first dawn-glow that could show a hammer head where to find a spike, the ringing racket began Men on the trot pushed the little iron car—little, yet how heavy!—back and forth over the newly laid rails, dropping a fresh supply at the track end, each time the previous load had been spiked a few rods to the eastward.

Another tooting of whistles, and the trains moved up. The rails rang loud upon one another as they fell to the ground, half a mile ahead of the morning camp. The foremen urged, encouraged, inspected, hurried. Faster and faster the rails dropped into place! Blow upon blow, spikes and bolts were driven home. And so on through the hot, late April day. Every boss was alert. Every man did his best; perhaps was sworn at for not doing better. Only Bennett, calm, unhurrying, held his men to their task with neither curses nor bluster; and Bennett's gang had the brunt of the fray.

Mrs. Gregory and her guests watched unwearyingly the great work-drama unfold; the miles, rail by rail, banded together in the glorious iron way. At what cost was it done! Yet how great was the result!

"Is it always so?" Esther asked, looking up at Alfred. "Must the road to great achievements be always by way of the sweat of the face, the heart's blood?"

His look was tender, comprehending. "Are they not worth the cost?"

"Yes, yes; I must believe they are." Yet she turned away, her eyes blurred with tears. She was thinking of Gideon alone under his posies.

Dinner was a farce for time, if not for quantity. And all the afternoon men with pails and dippers marched up and down the sweating line, serving to the thirsty incredible quantities of warm, brackish water that was nectar to the sweating men.

A short pause for supper, and at it again! Night came on, and a moon Eastward they could see the camp fires of their oncoming rivals. They answered with their own huge bon fires, bulit to reinforce Luna's pale ray.

On and on, hour after hour; there was no talking, not even the desultory interjections of the day, or the raucous orders of the foremen. Muscles moved automatically. Hammers struck as rhythmically, but more slowly. Each man bent to his task with grim endurance, too weary to protest. Some sank down and were allowed to crawl away.

All day Gregory, pale and tense, had raged up and down the line, directing, crying orders far and near, calling for the impossible, often getting the unexpected. He hurried men, scored individuals, anathematized tools, earth, iron, heat. He was impatient, fiercely eager; yet, with it all, not far from every honest heart there; for he was fighting for the company—and success. Dearer to him it was than any enterprise of his own ever would be. The men knew this, and honored him, bore with him, respected him, for the achievement, which many declared no other man could have made.

In the dead of night, when the air was chill upon wet, weary backs—when men were dropping from fatigue, and others, more dogged, were working on, praying silently for relief—at last, down the line came Gregory's jubilant cry.

"Rozel!"

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

WOULD TRY IT ON THE CAT

Irishman Had Cheaper Form of Analysis in His Mind.

Expert testimony may be valuable from a scientific point of view, but there are often cheaper ways of establishing a certainty, as the hero of the following anecdote decided at the last moment. An Irish laborer entered a drug store, and drawing a paper bag from his pocket, poured on the counter a number of very sticky and unattractive looking lozenges.

"Can ye examine this candy?" he asked.

"It looks queer. What is the matter with it?" asked the druggist.

"Pizen, Ol'm thinkin'. Did ye iver see such stuff? Dinnis Daly give them to me b'y, and Dinnis is no frind of mine."

"Well, I can make an analysis."

"All right. Ol'll come in to-morrow on me way from worruk."

The Irishman had reached the door, but he suddenly stopped with his hand on the latch.

"And how much will thot 'nalysis be costing me?" he inquired.

"Five dollars," was the answer.

The man walked over to the counter and swept the lozenges into the bag, which he replaced in his pocket.

"Niver moind," he said. "Oi'll feed wan to the cat."

MR. BOGGS KNEW THE AMOUNT.

Possibly He Had Often Computed the Water He Carried.

It was by no means a holiday task for Amos Boggs to carry pail after pail of water from the old well through the orchard and across the henyard to the kitchen, where Mrs. Boggs washed for the family and a dozen or so of customers. Therefore he was in no mood to enjoy questions.

"How many years have you been at this sort of things?" asked the elderly person of wealth, on whose white skirts Mrs. Boggs was then expending her energy and the heat of a heavy iron.

"Ten years," responded Mr. Boggs, striding on with his pails.

"Dear, dear!" said the woman, in a commiserating tone. "Why, how much water do you suppose you've carried in that time?"

"I've carried all that's been in the well during that time, and isn't there now, ma'am," and Mr. Boggs entered the kitchen and set the pails down as near a thump as the nature of things would permit.—Youth's Companion.

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Prisoner Altogether Too Deliberate for Life in Arizona.

Arizona Judge (to defendant in an assault-and-battery case)—You say the complainant called you a liar and horse thief at least a dozen times before you knocked him down, eh?

Defendant—Yes, sir.

Judge—He said you were a coward and quitter?

Defendant—He did.

Judge—All right. I'll let you off on the assault charge; but—don't be in a hurry, mister—I reckon I'll have to fine you jest about $50 for not knocking him down sooner! The sheriff will take you in tow and see that you cough up the dust before you pass out.—Illustrated Sunday Magazine.

SPORTING TERMS ILLUSTRATED.

Two to one; bar one.

Nobody Else Loved Her.

In her new autumn gown she regarded her complexion complacently in the long glass.

"I must confess," she said, "that I am in love with myself."

"Then you should be happy," said her chum, tartly, "for you haven't a rival."

How often do smart clothes excite shabby remarks!

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Pa Twaddles—How's that?

Ma Twaddles—He's spending his last days on the island.—Cleveland Leader.

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His Job.

"Yes, he doesn't do anything but pick up pins all the time."

"Well, well, that's a queer superstition."

"Not at all. It's an occupation. He's employed in a bowling alley."

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Immunity.

Satan had just ordered more coal thrown on the fire.

"By Tuminous!" he cussed, "but that last arrival is a tough proposition. The more I try to roast him the more he smiles."

He called the chief stoker.

"Well, what luck?" asked Satan.

The stoker shook his head.

"He's still smiling," he answered.

"Where's he from?" cried old Nick, out of patience.

"New York. He used to be a baseball umpire in—"

"Sulphurous serpents! Why didn't you say so before? Take him down; we can't fease him."—Bohemian Magazine.

Where Great Writer Lived.

Craigenputtock, where Carlyle's "Sartor Resartus" was written, has just been the scene of a notable wedding. The bride was Miss Mary Carlyle of Craigenputtock, a grand-niece of Thomas Carlyle, and the bridegroom James Carlyle, a farmer of Pingle, Dumfriesshire, a son of Thomas Carlyle's favorite nephew. Pingle is about four miles from Ecclefechan, Carlyle's birthplace, and this village is the original of the Entuphl of "Sarto Resartus."

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Reason.

He that will not reason is a bigot; he that cannot reason is a fool; and he that dares not reason is a slave.—Henry Drummond.

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Whether life shall be desert depends on the springs in your heart.

It is a proof of nobility of mind to despise insults.—Latin proverb.

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Obedience is better than sacrifice.—Latin proverb.

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All's to be feared where all's to be gained.—Byron.

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