

WHEN SHE COMES HOME.

When she comes home again, a thousand ways I fashion, to myself, the tenderness...

A WILD RIDE

It Was Made by a Veteran Engineer and a Fireman.

It was in Colorado, on one of the wildest and roughest railroads I know of.

I was fireman on 67, which was used in the passenger service. She had the largest drivers on the road, and they only measured forty-eight inches in diameter.

Sixty-seven had just been housed after a run. I was filling the oil cans and Matt was hauling off his overalls when Mr. Fox, the superintendent, climbed into the cab.

After a few commonplace remarks he said abruptly: "Matt, there's been a big mistake made in the higher offices—and that is not for us to criticize—and there is but one way to rectify it."

Here the superintendent's voice dropped to a whisper. "One hundred and fifty thousand dollars in gold has got to be in B— before midnight, to connect with the eastern express, and you are the man selected to take it through."

Old Matt showed his astonishment with his eyes, but never opened his mouth. The superintendent merely glanced at me and, turning to Matt, continued: "A lone engine might create suspicion, so we'll make up a wild freight. They'll all be empty. Back down to the offices before you couple on, and we'll put the safe under the coal in the tender."

That was all. He jumped off and disappeared. For some time Matt and I sat staring at each other. Then he slid off his seat and said:

"This won't do! Supper, Harry; supper! We haven't much time to lose. It only lacks a few minutes of 6. Be back before the quarter."

The wind was whistling among the cars, whisking the dust and papers about, while in the south a big black cloud was coming up, resplendent with chain lightning. Altogether the night promised to be unusually bad.

I was back on time, but Matt was there before me. He had lighted the shaded steam gauge lamp and stood scanning a small piece of pasteboard.

"What do you make of this, Harry?" he asked as I climbed up beside him. "I found it pinned to my cushion."

On it was scrawled with a lead pencil the words:

Danger! Don't pull the wild freight tonight if you value your lives. A TRICK FRIEND.

"I make it that some one beside the superintendent and us knows of it," I replied, the cold shivers beginning to chase each other up my spinal column. "There's danger ahead!"

"Aye, there is danger ahead, my boy," and old Matt spoke softer than I had ever heard him before. "If you want to—"

"I'll go where you lead," I replied quickly, knowing what he was going to say.

"Then we'll go through if it takes the wheels out from under! Ring up the wipers!"

And, without waiting for the hostler to run the engine out, old Matt backed her on to the turntable, where the wipers swung her around, and then we backed down to the offices, where four trusty men soon had the square safe under the coal.

A few minutes later we were coupled on to a half dozen empty freight cars and a caboose.

"There's your orders!" cried Jimmy O'Connor, the conductor, showing up the yellow sheet of tissue paper.

Old Matt looked them over, and we began to move out of town.

"We've got a clear track," he said, looking across at me, and then he drew up the corners of his mouth, and I looked for a quick run.

Before we reached the outskirts of the town the rain began to come down in a perfect deluge.

Great drops fell, mixed with hail, and in such quantity that the dry drains were soon transformed into raging creeks.

The wind howled and shrieked above the rumble of the train and threatened to lift 67 off the rails. When the telegraph poles began to snap off, Matt's face began to lengthen.

"Good night for wash overs," he said, "and wash overs are as bad as wash-outs!"

It was all down grade, and all the steam used was to run the air pump. I had only to keep the fire alive.

Eight miles down we ran past a small station where a freight train was side tracked. It had perhaps a dozen cars.

Just before we reached it I saw a man dart in between two of the cars to escape the headlight.

I thought him either a trainman or a tramp, but have since changed my mind.

We were half way down the Haversnack grade, with a straight stretch of track and a long curve before us, when Matt looked across and said: "I'm afraid the little pasteboard was only a scare. If—"

There was a flash of light behind,

A POSTAL DELIVERY.

AN INCIDENT OF REVOLUTIONARY DAYS IN CONNECTICUT.

A Letter From the Front That Came and Went and Came Again to Stay. The First Rural Free Delivery in Mansfield Town.

The arrival of the first batch of letters after the establishment of rural free delivery in Mansfield, Conn., recalled to an aged lady of that town a postal incident remembered in her family for 120 years.

"My mother always cried when she told the story," she said.

"When my mother was a little girl, the narrator went on, to have one's letters regularly brought and handed in at the door would have seemed a miracle of privilege, and to get them without paying postage would have been another. Mails were so slow and uncertain that the safe arrival of an expected letter by any means was an event in a country family, with the postoffice miles away.

Sometimes the delivery was helped along by volunteer carriers—a farmer going home from the grist mill, a housewife returning from market town with her bargains of lamp oil, West India molasses and green tea, or even a passing peddler with his load of tinware and corn brooms.

In the old war-time the army had post riders, but they were few and far between.

My grandfather was a soldier of the Revolution, and grandmother kept the home fire burning here, and provided for their three children as well as she could while he was at the front.

All summer she had heard no word of him, and when one autumn day a man in a military cloak rode to the door on a white horse her heart beat quick.

"Does Ruth Fuller live here?" he says, holding a thick letter in his hand. "Yes, I am Ruth Fuller," and grandmother reached eagerly for the letter, for she saw the address in her husband's handwriting.

"The postage is 2 shillings," Grandmother's countenance fell, for there wasn't so much money in the house.

"Guess you don't know me," remarked the man, opening his cape and tipping back his cocked hat, but still holding the letter. She knew him then—an enemy capable of a mean revenge.

"Ah, yes, you remember Tom Turner and how he asked you to marry him and you give him 'No, I thank,' and took John Fuller. I wasn't good enough to marry ye, but I'm good enough now to bring ye letters from the man that did, and I'm good enough to charge ye a steep price for going out of my way. So hand over your 2 shillings and take your letter."

The poor woman told him she had no money. To be held up in this heartless and insulting way was a bitter hurt to her. Her grief was deeper than her resentment, but she was too proud to let the cruel fellow see her weep.

"I will get you a good dinner," she said, "and feed your horse and give you a pair of nice long stockings."

It was a humiliation to plead with Tom Turner, but she could do no less. "Money or nothing," he says, and he put the letter in his pocket and rode away.

Grandmother went into the house and sat down and cried, and her children, clinging about her, cried too. During her long months of waiting, at odd hours she had spun and woven cloth and sewed garments and knitted woolen stockings for John's winter comfort, trusting to find some way to send them to him.

Now the messenger had come and gone who could at least have carried word, and he had refused even to give her his husband's letter.

"Ma, God knows what the bad man did," sobbed one of the little ones. "He knows what nice things you've made for pa, and he'll send a good man next time."

The baby's thought relieved the mother's despair, and the three lonely hearts prayed and waited anxiously for the "next time," and, sure enough, before winter came they saw the same white horse galloping toward the house. "He's brought the letter back!" they all cried out together, for they believed the rider to be the same man.

Grandmother rushed from the door with all her children. The horseman held out the same letter, and as he gravely put it into her hands she glanced up to his face and screamed for joy.

"John! It is you!" It did not take her husband long to tell the rest of the story. Tom Turner had returned to headquarters, and one night, made talkative by an extra ration of rum, he had bragged how he "got even" with an old sweetheart who jilted him. His exploit reached the ears of his commanding officer, who took away his commission and put my grandfather in his place. The new post rider had brought his own letter to his wife. It was the first rural free delivery in Mansfield town.—Youth's Companion.

Cupid's Guide. "In all my life," she said, with a sigh, "I have seen only one man that I would care to marry."

"Did he look like me?" he carelessly asked.

Then she flung herself into his arms and wanted to know what secret power men possessed that enables them to tell when they are loved.—Chicago Herald.

The education of a child cannot be shifted to the shoulders of teacher or educator. The responsibility rests, first and foremost, with the parents.—Ladies' Home Journal.

It is almost as presumptuous to think you can do nothing as to think you can do everything.—Phillips Brooks.

Writing a Book.

The following confession of a novelist as to the method in which he wrote one of his books is not without interest.

He had had the story outlined in his notebook for a long time and ought to have been able to write it, but did not feel able. Then one day he happened to think of it again and saw, almost as if it had been a stage scene, the little tableau with which the book was to close—one of those ends which are also a beginning.

So he began to work and in a short time had completed the first three chapters. Then, for no reason that he can give, there was a jump, and he wrote the chapters which are now numbered XXI and XXII, the last in the book. Then he went back and wrote straight on from IV to XVII.

The story had been with him so long that it was the easiest thing in the world to write it, and so he got through this part of the work with remarkable celerity. In the eighteenth chapter nothing happens. Every day for a fortnight he rose, breakfasted and tried to write that chapter; every night he tore up a big pile of manuscript which he knew to be hopelessly bad. Then he got desperate. The chapter should be written and should stand, whether good or bad. He wrote it and left the house because it was bad and he had resolved not to tear it up. Next day he wrote chapter XIX, and on the morning he rewrote chapter XVIII and somehow or other contrived to get into it all that he had failed to get before. Then he wrote chapter XX, and the book was completed.—London Post.

Obedient Orders. An old Yorkshire farmer was walking out one day looking very grim and miserable. He was a typical Yorkshireman, and he dearly loved a joke, but jokes seemed a long way off just then, and the old man was thinking deeply when he was accosted by a tramp, who made the usual request for a night's lodgings and something to eat, as he explained he had had nothing for two whole days. The effect upon the farmer when he said this was magical.

"Why, man," he said, "I've been looking for you all day."

And then without more ado he knocked him down and walked on him from one end to the other. The tramp got up, looking very staggered, and asked him why he had done that.

"Well," said he, "my doctor has ordered me to walk on an empty stomach, and now that I have fulfilled his injunction I can go and have a good feed, and you can come with me."—London Answers.

Bathing in Salt Lake. "Salt lake is a remarkable sheet of water in many ways, and bathing in it possesses features which are unique," says a Utah man. "It is very invigorating and refreshing, to be sure, but it takes some time to become accustomed to the extraordinary buoyancy of the water. It is quite impossible to sink or to drown in the lake, but many people have been killed by the water. When there is a breeze and spray is dashed upon bathers, the water is so densely impregnated with salt that the liquid portion evaporates very quickly and leaves a deposit of salt on the skin. On several occasions people have drifted out while bathing or been wrecked and thrown overboard and afterward found dead on top of the water, choked to death by the accumulation of salt in their mouths and nostrils."

Child Baptism in Early Days. The following from the early court records of York county, Me., we give verbatim in literature: "At a general court held at Saco Sept. 17, 1640, it is ordered by the court that the Worshipful Thomas Georges and Edward Godfrey, councillors for this province, shall order all the inhabitants from Piscataquis to Kennebec, which shall have any children unbaptized as soon as any minister is settled in any of their plantations, they bring their said children to baptism, and if any shall refuse to submit to the said order at the next general court to be holden in this province."—Lewiston Journal.

No Reciprocity. "Brownly thinks he has the smartest child in the world."

"Yes," answered the morose man. "That illustrates the ingratitude of life. There isn't one chance in a thousand that that child when he grows up will go around declaring that he has the smartest father in the world."—Washington Star.

A Woman Balancing. When a woman stoops over to pick up something on the floor, why does she always balance herself on one foot, extending the other outward and backward as a counterpoise? This question, not new, never has been satisfactorily answered.—New York Press.

The Equality Line. "All people," remarked the earnest citizen, "are born equal."

"Perhaps," answered the deliberate friend, "but they don't stay equal any longer than it takes for their parents to provide them with clothes and playthings."—Exchange.

Of More Immediate Value. Miss Emerson (of Boston)—I presume yours is not one of the Mayflower families.

Miss Triplex (of Minneapolis)—No, indeed. Ours is one of the famous Minnesota flour families.—Chicago News.

He Loved Lawyers. It is said that Peter the Great, after witnessing a contest between two eminent counsel at Westminster, London, remarked: "When I left St. Petersburg, there were two lawyers there. When I get back, I will hang one of them."

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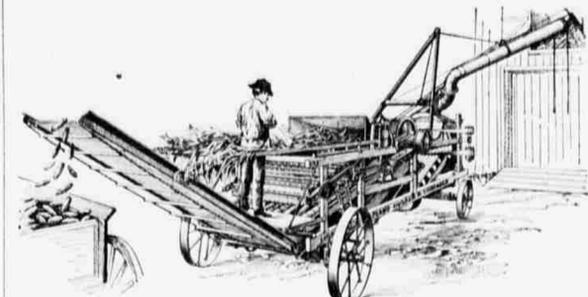
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