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MODERN RHYMES OF THE RAIL.

Interesting News and Notes of Railroad Affairs.

THOUSANDS OF YEARS SAVED.

Some Veteran Switchmen—More Than a Mile a Minute—A Historic Locomotive—Railroad Superintendents—Conscience Stricken.

Among the veterans who gathered at the recent Switchmen's convention at St. Louis, says the Globe-Democrat, were many notable men in the association. One was John T. Kenny, of Chicago, the oldest switchman in America. He is sixty years of age, and has been continuously employed as a switchman for forty-six years. "Uncle John's" head is as bald as a billiard ball. He began switching cars at Piermont, Rockland county, N. Y., for the New York & Erie railroad, the old broad gauge. He has since been employed anywhere but in Piermont and Chicago. He has worked for many years in the Chicago yards of the Grand Trunk. Mr. Kenny is the father of nine sons and four daughters, and has eight grandchildren. He is now employed at switching at Chicago, and "Uncle John" says he is as spry as any of them. Mr. Kenny has never been injured in the smallest particular. He has never been discharged, and has never been "kicked out" for even a day. At the time that he began switching the capacity of the freight cars was from eight to ten tons. Now they are expected to carry from 40,000 to 80,000 pound. In those early days there were no steel rails, but instead there was a heavy iron rail, connected with iron chairs and wooden straps. The heavy rail now in use weighs fifty-five pounds to the foot. In many of the yards the switching was done by horse-power. There were no arrangements between the railroad companies, and when the end of the road was reached the freight was transferred to the next company and was thence forwarded to the end of that line. Now cars travel from the Atlantic to the Pacific, and there is no breaking of bulk. Mr. Kenny has been connected with the Switchmen's Association since its organization, under President Ed. Jennings. He attributes his immunity from accident to the fact that he has always led a temperate life. "There is a great deal in many ways having his wits about him," said he.

Another of the old-timers is Mr. George F. Andrews, of Ottumwa, Ia. He is a tall man with long flowing beard, nearly white, and looks a great deal like the picture of John Brown, of Harper's Ferry fame. He is fifty-three years of age and is active and sinewy. He has worked for the Chicago, Burlington & Quincy railroad for twenty-nine years, and has been a switchman for thirty-five years. At the commencement of his career he worked on a road on which he labored was known as the Northern Cross, and afterwards as the Quincy & Chicago. It was finally incorporated with the great C. B. & Q. system. Mr. Andrews is a striker on "week" and is now in employment. Like Mr. Kenny he has never been injured.

Another of the old-timers is R. M. Shaekeford, in charge of the night force of the Chicago, Rock Island & Pacific railroad, Des. Mo., Ia. He has been a switchman since 1854, except nearly five years he spent in the army.

Frank Wells, a switchman in the Chicago yards of the Chicago & Atlantic railway, is fifty-five years old and has railroaded twenty-five years.

Colonel John B. Joyce, of Carondelet, a switchman actively engaged in the yards of the Iron Mountain railway, is fifty years of age, and has been engaged in business nearly all his life. Colonel Joyce considers considerable political prominence.

John Downey has been employed in the Chicago yards of the Pittsburg, Fort Wayne & Chicago railway for twenty-five years. He was long treasurer of the association, and is universally respected by his associates.

More Than a Mile a Minute.

A Pittsburg dispatch to the Chicago Tribune, Sept. 28, says: For some time there has been considerable rivalry between the fast trains on the Erie & Pittsburg and the Pittsburg & Lake Erie roads in the race for the about 1 o'clock in the afternoon, and numerous trials of speed have taken place between them. To-day both trains left Wampum at the same moment. At this point the two roads run side by side on the Beaver river separating them. Both engineers did all they could to get the most out of their iron steeds, but the race was neck and neck. The passengers became imbued with the excitement of the occasion and crowded the windows and platforms. Here a peculiar incident occurred. Just as the Erie & Pittsburg train were waving handkerchiefs and among them were a number of Harrison and Morton emblems, while on the Pittsburg & Lake Erie train several red bandanas were waving to the breeze. Just as Beaver Falls came in sight the Erie & Pittsburg engineer let the throttle on his engine come wide open and succeeded in drawing into Beaver Falls about a train's length ahead with the story of handkerchiefs waving defiantly in the faces of the red bandana men. The time made for the run of twelve miles was ten and one-half minutes.

A Historic Locomotive.

An Atlanta, Ga., special to the St. Louis Globe-Democrat says that the "General," the famous engine which was captured on April 12, 1862, at Big Shanty, by a band of federal raiders, has been loaned to the Grand Army of the Republic. The "General" left this morning for Columbus, O. Governor Brown kindly consented for the engine to be carried there to be run out on a track in the camping ground to be seen by all of the boys in blue.

The capture of this engine by the raiders, the raiders, her recapture by Captain W. G. Fuller, then conductor on the Western & Atlantic railroad, is a part of the history of the war of '61. As is remembered by those who are familiar with the thrilling and daring incident of the "General" and the capture of the expedition was to destroy the many bridges on the Western & Atlantic railway. This was to have been done by taking the up passenger train at the time referred to, from the trainmen while they were at breakfast at Big Shanty, run on through to Chattanooga, burning the bridges and destroying the telegraph in their rear.

There is no doubt but that the plans of the raiding expedition had been carried out on the old state road on that memorable 12th day of April, 1862, had not the raiders been pursued so vigorously by Captain William A. Fuller, who, as stated, was the conductor, and Mr. A. Murphy, who happened to be along that morning.

The story of the pursuit for miles on foot, on hand car and on engines has often been told, but is always interesting. Captain Fuller has been reported by the men in blue to be present next

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week in Columbus, O., at the reunion of the G. A. R. He will there meet all the survivors of the raid and the regiments from which they were detailed. They want to see the man who outran an engine in 1862 and defeated the raiders by recapturing the engine, the "General," together with the entire expedition. Captain Fuller leaves Atlanta by the Western & Atlantic railway on Sunday, September 9, and will be absent about one week. It is said that Jeff Cain, of the old "General," will accompany him on his visit to Ohio.

Railroad Superintendents.

Globe Democrat: The Association of North American Railroad Superintendents convened at the Southern, September 2, with J. B. Morford, superintendent of the Canada Southern and Michigan Midland divisions, in the chair. The attendance was not so large as anticipated, owing to the fact, as one of the visiting members expressed it, that the busy fall season was just opening, and the superintendents had all they could very well attend to in looking after the interests of their respective lines and systems. The summer season would be far more convenient for the meetings of the association, and some of the members manifested a decided preference for a change, in order to secure a larger attendance at the meetings. The association is not restricted to any particular state or territory, but includes the United States and Canada, and the members favorably disposed should have an attendance of 200 members at its meetings, which are held twice a year—in April and September. While the attendance was not so large at yesterday's meeting, it included representatives from some very important systems.

The object of the association is for the advancement of social relations and discussion of topics relating to the maintenance of railroads, machinery and transportation. Committees are appointed at different meetings to take inventions and improvements in the different branches of the services and submit reports on them and these reports are discussed at subsequent meetings. The chairman of several important committees was absent at yesterday's meeting and the session was consequently shortened by one day.

The committee on transportation, through Robert Blee, chairman, made a report which occupied the attention of the association throughout the day, and a discussion bringing out a number of points of interest.

At the conclusion of the days session the association adjourned to meet in New York in April next.

In the Arctic Circle.

An important engineering enterprise now in progress is a railroad in the Arctic circle. The Swedish and Norwegian railroad now building from Lulea, on the Gulf of Bothnia, to Lofoden, on the North Sea, is currently situated within the Arctic circle, and is some 1,200 miles further north than any railroad in Canada. An interesting meteorological fact stated in relation to this work is that the snowfall is found to be actually less than in some southern latitudes, while the darkness of the long winter nights has been partly compensated by the light of the aurora. The object in view in constructing this line is to tap the enormous deposits of iron ore in the Gellivara mountains, the approximate exhaustion of the ore in the Bilboa district rendering very desirable a new field of non-phosphoric ore suitable for steel rail making.

A New Switch.

In Oakland, Cal., and other places, compressed air is now successfully used for operating switches having no interlocking apparatus. The system is, in fact, very extensively used on several of our principal railways. It takes up less space than mechanical locking machinery, and the labor of working it is very light. The ground connections can be buried out of the way, and can be led out from the tower in any way most convenient.

Conscience Stricken.

Denver News: In the heavy mail that reached the office of Freight Agent Keeler of the Union Pacific, was a modest-looking envelope bearing a special delivery stamp and containing the anonymous writer, in a type-written note, begged Mr. Keeler to accept the amount as a sum due the railway for a ride once stolen by the writer over the South Park division of the Union Pacific. Keeler scanned the brief note carefully, smiled incredulously, and directed that the \$6.54 be credited to the "conscience fund" and kept as a lasting curiosity, since this is the first and only instance upon record when anyone who ever beat a railroad reported of the sin and made restitution. Frank Temple suggests that it would be a pious scheme to forward the money and accompanying note to the national museum as one of the rarest curiosities on earth to-day. When Mr. C. S. Stebbins was general ticket agent of the Union Pacific such contributions were occasionally received.

Something New.

A device that will enable the engineer, from his cab, to switch his locomotive at pleasure, while the conductor in the caboose or rear car closes the switch again, has been invented and seems to meet practical demands. The contrivance is operated in connection with the "central throw" switch, and consists in a "shoe" which is dropped from the forward and rear trucks. This strikes a crank which is overthrown and the switch closed or opened as the case may be. A switch left open carelessly may thus be closed by the locomotive while at high speed, or a train sidetracked quickly in case of danger.

Waiting For Them.

Professor Thurston says that the world is awaiting the appearance of three inventors greater than any who have gone before. The first is he who will show us how, by the combustion of fuel, directly to produce the electric current; the second is the man who will teach us to reproduce the beautiful light of the glow-worm and the firefly, a light without heat, the production of which means the utilization of energy without a waste still more serious than the thermodynamic waste; and the third is the inventor who is to give us the first successful air-ship.

The Newly-Made Widow.

Boston Post: It is said that some of the chief railroads in the country employ special persons to inform the bereaved family when an employe has been killed. Considering that every year a small army of men meet their death on the tracks, the statement is not incredible. An old railroad man at Reading, who has discharged this painful office, gives the following among other experiences: "It was only a few days ago that I went to a home and found the wife chatting and laughing with a neighbor's wife while she was at work among her rosebushes and flowers. She hadn't been married very long. I first asked whether her husband was at home. She stared at me, became white as a piece of chalk, then wricked and fell among the plants. I helped to carry her into the house. 'He's dead; my husband is dead. I know he has been killed!' 'Who told you?' I asked, when she revived. 'No one,' I only thought so. Is it true?' It was easy then to finish my errand. I once called on a woman to tell her her husband had been killed by striking against an overhead bridge. This was three years ago, near Philadelphia. The wife curled in her lip and replied: 'If he's been killed, heaven has revenged me. He abused me long enough. He'll abuse no more women now.' That was the easiest job in my line I ever had. Five minutes later the woman was in hysterics."

Six Snake Stories.

A farmer in Ashton, Miss., recently ran across a five-foot gopher snake which was pure white in color.

A horned snake eighteen inches long, with a quarter inch of horn, was killed last week in Rockwood, Tenn.

Mr. Meelie of Pittsburg caught, while fishing at Atlantic City the other day, a snake of very curious shape, strongly resembling the fabric, jubbercock. He will preserve it in alcohol for the curious future generations.

Mr. Jordan, the section boss, and his hands, while cutting the bushes from the right of way near Oceonee, Ga., killed sixty-seven moccasins. Mr. Jordan struck at the sixty-eighth and cut off his tail, remarking that it was not a good day for snakes.

Mrs. M. B. Shultis, of Rondout, N. Y., while picking some berries recently heard her little dog, which had followed her, yell and bark piteously. Rushing to the spot Mrs. Shultis was horrified to find a large blacksnake wound tightly around the dog's body. With great difficulty Mrs. Shultis killed the reptile, but the little dog remained prostrate with fear for several hours.

Bring the Children

It is time to put the boys into their Fall Suits. We can fit them with good sturdy clothes for school and play, and with a handsome suit for "Sunday best."

Children's Suits in two pieces for the small boys, and three pieces for the bigger brother.

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