

A SUBSTITUTION.

OR, HOW I BECAME AN OPERATOR.

BY G. K. TURNER.

I am afraid I am always a little envious of Harry Williams. He was so much quicker than I at every new thing that the undertaker...

I was a plodder by nature, I suppose, and I had to get the whole of a thing or nothing. Sometimes I felt that in spite of Harry's quick start, he never got thoroughly acquainted with a subject.

But people said that when Harry got out of school finally and into work had become sobered up by the responsibilities of real life, he would take a continued interest in matters which he didn't have at school. It was consequently, a little disconcerting for me when at last we did get through our schooling to find that we had both chosen the same line of work. We both started to "learn the telegraph."

It was interesting work to both of us, and we started in almost as soon as school was over. We were both with the operator as much as we could be, and for a time we practiced together over a line we put up between our houses. But finally Harry gave this up. He told me he didn't think it was very good practice; but he didn't hesitate to say outside, what was the truth, no doubt, that I was too fast. Harry always sent very fast over the line from the first, and I was compelled to leave him repeat very often. I couldn't understand him at all, and I could not get the operators on the regular line, which was natural, of course, because his sending wasn't so perfect, while mine was, and he was merely "hazy" to me, probably.

In some six months, by some coincidence, it came about that the operator was called to go somewhere else on the line. It seemed pretty hard luck to me. "If he had stayed a little longer," I complained to Harry, "one of us might have had his place."

"I mean to get it now," he answered. "If there is any such thing, I'm going to New York tomorrow to try for it."

His assurance took my breath away. "Why, I haven't more than half learned it," I said. "I should think you would be afraid."

But Harry Williams would not be deterred. He merely said something about not judging others by himself, and went on. He was a most disagreeable competitor, I thought. But Harry Williams was not a man to be trifled with. He had passed all right and would begin work next week. "What you want, old fellow," said he, "is confidence."

But, although he seemed so satisfied about his examination we heard from one of the telegraphers, who had been called to the office, that he had a rather hard time passing. He had considerable difficulty in taking the messages. But his confidence took him through, and he was called to the office, to having so many other instruments in the room as there was at the central office and that he was called to the office and finally they let him pass.

As I remember those days it seems hardly possible that the railroad company should have run the course of telegraphers with so little a hand as it did. But a long series of accidents have made the railroads over the country now exercise the greatest care and adopt elaborate systems of fixing responsibility on the individual, which weren't practiced at all then. We, ourselves, were scarcely more than boys, and it doesn't seem possible that we would be given such responsibility now as we had then. The line through our town was not a very busy one, but it was a single track at the way, with the exception, of course, of the side tracks at all the stations, and any mistake would have been very likely to cause great damage and very possibly death.

I don't think that Harry Williams could realize this at first, or indeed, until he had been acting in his new position several days. At first he seemed to me to be a little nervous, for I still went down to the station every day to listen to the instrument. There was just the same regular business of the road, and almost as usual, and of course one nearly learns by heart the messages for the routine business. Whatever uneasiness Harry may have had was quieted by the ease with which he worked and instead of preparing for what he should have known must come, by learning everything he could about the instrument, he spent his time loafing about and cultivating a general air of proprietorship of the station.

II. MAKING THE ROSE BED. In about a week or two the business of the road began to grow, and they started in one or two extras. This, it seems to me, made the new operator a little trouble, though he wouldn't admit it, of course.

around and noticed me for the first time, he sort of collapsed. I never saw such a nervous man in my life. "O, Billy," he said, "come in here quick and take this instrument. I'm in an awful fix. The whole thing's gone from me. I don't know anything more about it than a baby about the extras," said he, speaking as if I didn't know what I've done already; maybe I'll be manslaughter with me, like with Billy Chase, down at Evansville, when he let the freight get by him."

He was the most terrified human being I ever saw. And when I went into the office to take the instrument I was pretty frightened myself, though I knew I couldn't be so serious as he imagined, because if any accident was going to happen, it would be the train on top of the station, and nothing had happened there so far.

"But what have you done?" said I. "I've been in hot water all day with the train on top of the station, and if someone had been doing him a personal injury, I got through this morning all right and I look like a man on the track here, but I was getting more and more excited all the time, and since then everything has become all jumbled up. They told me something to release something and to hold something—and I thought that I knew what they wanted, and I O K'd them. And then I saw the train on the track, and I sent me something else and I O K'd that, like a fool. I don't know how many of what kind of things I O K'd. And ever since then I have been waiting around the office, waiting for something to happen and trying to think, with the trainmen running in and out of here to ask what their orders were, and I have been chattering away like mad, without my understanding a word. But, O, for heaven's sake, Billy," said he, "hurry up and see what they want."

"I said I was waiting for the telegraphers on either side were asking frantically what had happened, and it was work enough for me to understand their excited messages without trying to answer anything at all. It was getting dark, too, and I hated to take up matters there, in spite of the necessity for something to be done. However, I made up my mind to do what I could."

But just at this time we heard a rumble and shriek of a whistle at the west, and saw the train on the platform, and it was coming in from the west. For a moment Harry and I started at each other in silence; then with a wild yell he jumped up and out of the station and was running down the road.

And there I was in a deserted telegraph station, and the operator chasing for dear life to get away from his responsibility. I could hear the shrieks of the locomotive for brakes and the shouts of the brakemen, and the banging of the cars in the long train, as every effort was being put out to stop it, and all the time I was waiting for the crash to come.

"If it didn't, after all, for the brakemen at the rear of the train before the station had got back far enough to just give the incoming train time to stop, and there was nothing more than a scare. But when it was all over all the train men made a rush for the station, half filling the little waiting room."

"Where's the operator?" yelled the big engineer of the train before the station. "He's gone," I said. "Where?" two or three shouted. And when I told them several booted for the door to follow him.

"O, here," said a conductor, "don't chase him. He's no good anyway. He's too scared to telegraph. And besides, here's the fellow that does his work for him. Ain't you?"

"I said I had done it sometimes. Well," said he, "will you take it now?" "I'll try," I said.

"And so I went to work. He had left things in a terrible state. I found the side track to the east had accumulated a couple of trains, which they couldn't send on and there were all kinds of rumors of wrecks, because the train on the side track didn't come along. But finally I got our eastbound train started and the tangle began to unwind itself.

for the latter. My roses are never troubled to any great extent with insects. The flowers should all be cut when they begin to fade, if left on the plant, they not only look unsightly, but check the production of flowers. Weeds or grass should never be allowed to grow about the plants, for such he evidently was, sat with drooping wings and head, and still guarded.

Then began a great noise. Each crowd seemed to be trying to outtalk every other. This continued for about ten minutes. I should think, when with one accord, they all started to sing. The crowd on the left pitched on the unfortunate prisoner and pecked him to death, after which they dispersed as quietly as they had come.

I afterward went on, viewed the remains and wasted considerable time in vain speculation as to the Omaha which the unfortunate bird could have committed against the laws of croton and its among have been the result if the jury had disagreed.

WISE OLD CROWS. How They Solved the Jam-Opening Problem and Anticipated the Future. A few pastimes are more interesting and instructive to a person living in the country than observation of the habits and peculiarities of the common birds and animals which he sees. You may read the observations of others with a great deal of pleasure, says a writer in Youth's Companion, but there is a singular fascination in becoming a discoverer on your own account.

Of all the birds that I have watched I think none has repaid me more richly than the crow. It is a bird of great sagacity, is notorious, and from some things that I have myself observed it would almost seem as if he must be endowed with something near the human intellect.

On one occasion, while I was living in New Jersey, near Long Branch, I was one day attracted by the loud and excited cawing of a number of crows down the shore of the Navesink river, which ran only a few yards from my door. Curious to know what all the excitement was about, I sought my way to a window to watch them. It was just after the equinoctial storm in September, and I soon found that they were disputing about the best way to deal with some shells which had been washed up from a sandy shore.

These clams, of which crows are very fond, are oblong in shape, about four or five inches long and two inches wide, and much thicker than a mussel, but still too hard for a crow to break with its beak. From one end of the shell protrudes a long neck, sometimes more than an inch long, which the crow, through which the clam sucks its food.

For half an hour or more the crows argued noisily; they did this, they did that, it was evident that they had arrived at some decision which they were about to put to the test. Almost immediately one crow, which had been the chief speaker in the discussion, picked up a clam by its long neck and flying up in the air some distance let it drop. When it struck on the stony shore all the crows, about fifty or twenty in number, flew to learn the result of the experiment.

That it proved the soundness of their reasoning was evident for each crow who possessed himself of a clam, flew up into the air with it, let it drop on the stones to break its shell, and then ate its contents with great gusto and satisfaction. This continued until they had eaten as many as they wanted and then they flew away.

At another time I saw something which convinced me that they have some sort of government among themselves, and that an infringement of their laws is followed by punishment. This happened in Virginia, which, by the way, is a perfect paradise for crows, with its immense corn and peanut fields. I was sitting at an upper window of a window to watch them. It was a broad field toward the James river, three about seven miles wide. The field had been newly plowed and harrowed, ready for planting, and was quite smooth. This was a fine sight for a crow, and he was seen to fly about the field in a space perhaps fifty or sixty feet square.

They were very quiet, which is unusual where many of them are together, and it was evident that they had met for some purpose. Presently one flew up in the air some little distance, appeared to be looking for something, and then returned. This was repeated several times, but I was before three crows appeared, flying very low, at the sight of which the assembled crows manifested considerable excitement, though they made very little noise. The three were flying in a line, one behind the other; the middle one a dejected looking bird, was unobtrusively guarded by the others. They alighted a few yards from the others, and the prisoner, for such he evidently was, sat with drooping wings and head, and still guarded.

Supreme Court Syllabi. Van Pelt against Gardner. Appeal from Douglas county. Reversed. Ragan, C. J. A corporation creditor's cause of action against the stockholders thereof, to subject their unpaid stock subscriptions to the payment of his debt, accrues when the exact amount justly due the creditors from the corporation has been ascertained and the corporate property exhausted. (Section 4, article 10, M. C. Constitution 1876.)

Epithemism of "Jerks." Singular Epithemism-Southern Revival Mystery. Religious history, so full of anomalies, nowhere chronicles anything stranger than this epidemic of "Jerks," says a writer in Godey's Magazine. It began at Red River Station in Robertson county, Tenn., about 1802 and spread thence in every direction. So did the revival, of which it was an accompaniment rather than a manifestation. If the influence, whatever it was, came forth with vigor, the most hardened sinner was not exempt. Sometimes it affected barely one foot; sometimes it took both; again it seized the entire body, and the arms and legs were thrown into the air, and the attack and it drew violently from side to side with fixed features and glassy, staring eyes. The most hardened sinner was not exempt. Sometimes it affected barely one foot; sometimes it took both; again it seized the entire body, and the arms and legs were thrown into the air, and the attack and it drew violently from side to side with fixed features and glassy, staring eyes.

Weak Men Cured and Brought to Perfect Health. The present constitution not only determines the liability of a stockholder in a corporation for the corporate debts thereof, but it admits this liability, and it is within the power of the legislature to extend it. The liability of a corporation to its stockholders, except he be a stock subscriber of a banking corporation, is limited to the amount of his unpaid stock subscription.

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