

HOW WOULD YOU LIKE TO BE---

A TOUGH HIDE AND CLEAR EYE

"No Man Sticks to Throttle
If He Can Jump," Says
Veteran.

"Heroic engineer sticks to his throttle. Saves his train and comes through alive," says a headline. Your friend, the engineer, with the dark blue rubber collar, sits up on his box at the right side of the cab and chuckles.

"It is to laugh," he comments. (He saw a little railroading in France with Pershing.) "This hero stuff is pure bunk." He hitches around in his seat and looks down at you in the gangway. "Self-preservation is the first law of life and I'll bet you there ain't an engineer alive that would 'stick to his throttle' if there was any chance at all to jump. The fellow who 'sticks to his throttle' either didn't know it was coming or else he was traveling so fast that he thought he had a better chance for his life by staying on the engine.

Paid \$75 a Week.

"But even then he wouldn't 'stick to his throttle.' He would get down behind the boiler head and take a chance of not getting crushed or burned to death."

Thus does the engineer with the blue rubber collar strip a popular picture, the engineer hero, from our national gallery.

But if all engineers are not heroes, they at least are hard-working, clear-thinking, tough-minded citizens who take more flesh and blood responsibility into their hands every time they make a run than the head of the biggest corporation in the city. They not only take this responsibility, which is based on a knowledge of mechanics, electricity, physics, a vast volume of rules and a maze of signals, but they go to bed and get up at all hours, maintain their homes at one end of the division and rooms at the other, eat, wash, and get ready for work at the time, see their families somewhat less than half the time and go up against the wildest extremes of weather, engine temper and nervous tension all for a weekly wage ranging from \$50 to \$75 if they are lucky enough to have a run, or anything down to one-fifth less than nothing if they are spare men in slack seasons.

"Oh, yes, an engineer is subject to rheumatism and bad kidneys and worn-out eyes and such things that go along with the eternal jouncing and sudden changes of temperature," says your friend with the dark blue rubber collar, "but after all, where can a man of my education earn a better living?"

Fast Trains Are Helpless.

It is true that every passenger engineer does carry great responsibility as he sits on his padded box on a 200-ton locomotive skimming around curves and over-labyrinths of switches and out through hill and dale, but the main responsibility for the safety of the lives of passengers lies largely with train dispatchers in green eyeshades at the ends of the divisions, track repair men with humped shoulders all along the line, the strength of steel, the accuracy of electric signals and the grace of God. The engineer of a speeding train is as completely at the mercy of circumstances as the frailest woman riding seven cars back of him in a Pullman.

If a cross-over has been carelessly left open in front of him, he couldn't see it until he had struck it and probably plunged his train into the ground. If an obstruction had been laid on rails by wreckers he would never see it until it was too late to stop. At night, even with the medium bright electric headlights used on New England fast trains, he can't see more than a train length ahead of him. Thus the main responsibility upon him is to remember his orders and keep his eyes open for signals.

How It Feels to Ride Engine.

"Sitting in your automobile and watching a fast passenger tear through with a goggled 'eagle eye' riding the right hand side of the engine cab makes you think the business of running that train is a high-tension job full of electric moments. Suppose you had a chance to ride in the engine of a fast train to see. It's against not only a federal law, but a standard rule on every railroad in the country. But just imagine you were doing it. There is no law or rule on imagination.

Let us say that you were some dark night all toggled out with overalls and a bandanna around your neck meeting an engineer friend in the yards half an hour before the 2:09 pulled out.

"Anyone would think you were a traveling engineer," your friend the engineer observes.

"What's a traveling engineer?" you ask him, resolved to learn all you can in one night of railroading.

"Why he's a sort of locomotive doctor or veterinarian. When an engineer has trouble and is losing time on his run, the traveling engineer is sent for to diagnose the trouble. It may be the engine needs some overhauling at the shops, or sometimes the engineer needs a dose of advice as to how to run it. The traveling engineer usually tries making the run himself with the regular man along watching him. If he finds the engine cranky and can't get the work out of it, then he knows it isn't the engineer's fault. But if he makes the run in regular time without a hitch, the blame rests with the driver."

You order some breakfast from a sleepy-eyed waiter at a quick lunch counter and hurry to the roundhouse. Then you fish in your pocket and offer your companion a cigar.

About Smoking on Duty.

"Thanks," says he as he steps in a doorway to get a good light and then hurries on. "I never smoke except when I'm off duty. Some of the boys do, but I always maintain

The Locomotive Engineer?



68,400 or 1,000 tons if it's a passenger.

"Now, then, stop to consider what it means to drive a piece of machinery developing 1,000 horsepower and train weighing 800 tons at 40, 50 or even 60 miles an hour and you get some idea of the terrific smash that's going to come if anything goes wrong.

Rocky Road to Right in Cab.

"You quicken your step and soon come in sight of the roundhouse. 'Yes, driving an engine is an honest-to-God man's job,' he continues thoughtfully. 'The regulations on this run require that a lad shall fire for four years before he takes his examinations to qualify as an engineer. Then he is given three of them, mighty stiff ones, too. First, he takes his machinist's examination, and if he passes that he tries another on airbrakes. His last one is on train rules. After all this he is ready for an engine of his own when a vacancy comes. But he probably will have to wait several years before he gets such a promotion.'

"He begins his work as an engineer in the freight service, because, if he makes a mistake there the consequences are not so serious. Before he is given charge of a passenger train, he must cover the minimum qualification mileage required by his road, which is perhaps 64,000 miles or so. Only the best fellows get that far."

Into the Roundhouse.

You stumble across some tracks in the darkness and enter the dimly lighted roundhouse. The roar of the engines that are getting up steam is so loud that conversation is impossible. The air is full of smoke and coal gas. You have an overwhelming sense of your own diminutive size and weakness beside these monstrous engines that tower above you, belching out smoke from their stacks into holes in the roof. The sharp hiss and shriek of the steam as it bursts into the pop-

off valve of a too-high pressured boiler gives an idea of the giant's power that is imprisoned within. You feel confused and a little timid amid such a din. Your guide nods to some of the grimy-faced, black-garbed mechanics who are working about the locomotives, looking like, diminutive gnomes as they stand beside the great driving wheels, some of which are higher than their heads. The engineer grasps your arm and makes a trumpet of his hands, shouts something into your ear. The engine before you is his.

You Climb Into the Cab.

You climb up the four ladder steps that lead to the cab. He introduces you to his fireman. By now your ears are growing accustomed to the noise in the roundhouse and you can hear what your friend tells you.

He is showing you how simple the controls of the engine really are. In easy reach of his left hand as he sits in the engineer's seat on the right hand side of the cab is the throttle, the lever that controls the flow of steam into the cylinders, it which run the great pistons that drive the engine. In front of him, and at one side, is the large reverse lever. Close at his side are the two airbrake valves, with handles like the air handle on a street car, one controlling the brakes on the entire train, and the other the independent brake for the locomotive alone. A hostler climbs in to back the engine out, but your friend shoos him away.

"That's all there is to it," says the engineer as he finishes and shows you the fireman's seat on the left hand side of the cab. He pulls a rope, which starts the bell to ringing. While he had been showing you about the cab the turntable in the middle of the roundhouse had swung around opposite your track and the man who ran the table had thrown an iron plate where the tracks met to lock them securely.

Pass Out of the Roundhouse.

Very slowly your friend opens the throttle a little way. The heavy engine glides onto the turntable with uncanny ease. He closes the throttle but lets her roll on slowly until the

turntable delicately balances, so as to place all of the engine's 200 tons on the pivot in the center. A little donkey engine revolves the turntable about, the engineer opens the throttle again and you pass out into the yard.

To you this is a mass of lights and switches and you cannot see why an engineer does not get lost in it all at this ungodly hour of the night. You get a confused view of switches, men with swinging lanterns, freights on the sidings, and once a passing train rushes by with a roar. You draw near the station, and presently stop and switch over onto the track on which your train is waiting. You wonder how the engineer can estimate his distance from the train as he moves backwards to make the coupling. But somewhere, in spite of the darkness, he does the trick with scarcely a bit of jar.

You step down into the gangway and across the cab, lean out and look back at the long line of sleepers. Near the middle of the line someone is waving a lantern. "That's the conductor. He's giving the signal to start." The engineer releases the airbrake and a sigh issues from his tank along the train. He pulls open the throttle a ways, and the night express is off.

"He doesn't give her much steam at first, 'cause that would make the drivers spin and lose their grip on

the track," the fireman explains. "We got seven coaches on, besides a baggage car and a mail car. Now's where my job begins."

You gain speed rapidly. Instead of a huge black bulk of steel and iron the engine suddenly becomes like something animate. Every part of it pulsates with power and it seems to fairly leap forward on the rails that lead away into the dark. Within the fire-box the draft and heat roar like a blast furnace. The vibration increases as you reach full speed till it seems more than ever as if you are riding on some ancient reptilian monster of a past geological era, for the great parts of steel tremble violently, more like great muscles straining under a mammoth load than like inanimate mechanism. Pissit, bing!

The fireman flings open the air-operated doors to the furnace and a hot breath of air scorches your face. He plunges a long forked poker deep into the monster's fiery bowels again and again to break the crust on his fire and get the most intense heat out of it. When he draws it out, the poker glows a cherry red in the darkness. Then he begins shoveling in coal, accurately, every shovelful hitting the exact spot for which it is intended. The flaring light from the furnace gives his face a fierce, savage look and makes

his skin appear as red as an Indian's. Pissit, bang! The fire doors slam shut.

"Eagle Eye" Scans the Track.

The engineer never utters a word, but puts his whole attention on the track ahead. Once or twice he glances in at the steam gauge. Occasionally he pulls open the injector valve forcing water from the tender into the boiler by steam pressure with a loud metallic shriek. That is all. For the rest he sits motionless with his hand on the throttle and his eyes peering through the darkness ahead to catch the signal lights.

The fireman explains the block signals to you. Green means all clear ahead; yellow, caution and slow up, and red, stop, danger. It is too dark to see distinctly, but he shows how the lights correspond to the three positions of the semaphore arms, horizontal, all clear; 45 degrees, caution, and vertical, danger. "How fast are we going?" you ask, looking around for a speedometer.

"About 40, I guess. There's nothing on the locomotive to tell. You've got to figure out by your watch and by where you are," says the fireman. "We're going pretty slow because the grade is heavy here. That's the top of the mountain."

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that a fellow has got all he can take care of to catch all the signals and run his engine without having a pipe or a cigar to occupy the edge of his attention. That's one thing about running an engine that it takes a long time to learn. A man has got to pay attention to business every second he's in the cab or he's taking big chances that may mean a wreck.

"Why, I could tell you all the actual mechanical part to making an engine move along the track in about five minutes. It's really simpler than running an automobile. But the job isn't as easy as all that, not by a jug full. Instead of an engine that has 40 horsepower to put it fairly high and a car that weighs maybe two tons you've got an engine that develops 1,000 horsepower or more and total weight of engine and train together, perhaps



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