

THE FIREMAN'S STORY.

Coal dust, cinders, oil and smoke usually make firemen on duty rather grimly looking personages. Perhaps few among the thousands of passengers who ride in the railroad cars behind us would care for our acquaintance. But we are useful—very useful, perhaps, as any other class of men, and certainly we have our full share of the hard, disagreeable things in life, including frequent peril and much exposure to weather.

Working up from fireman to engine driver, or "conductor," as we are usually called in this country, is often a slow process. There are men on our line—the Hudson River Railroad—who have been firing eleven years with no promotion yet, though they are no doubt fully competent to run an engine. For promotion depends almost wholly upon vacancies occurring, or some special influence at headquarters.

A man ought to become thoroughly familiar with a locomotive in eleven years. I thought that I knew every screw in mine after firing two years. Yet it takes a good deal of time to learn to fire well, so as to get the most steam out of the least fuel, and to have the highest pressure at the grades where it is most needed. To do this a man should know the road, every rod of it, as well as the engine.

Then comes the oiling. An engine requires a great deal of oil, as well as coal and water. The fireman has to keep in mind all the places where the things which oil has to be applied. Between oiling, shoveling in coal, shaking and stirring up his fire—to keep it steady and hot—and looking to his stock of coal and water, he is kept busy. He must never let the engine stop, for a man gets these duties well fixed in his head in time.

It is while "firing" that the practical knowledge of running an engine is gained. A fireman is the grower, so to speak, of the "iron horse." He must, morning or evening, have the engine polished, "fired up," and ready for his superior, the engineer, to step into the cab and start off. Usually the engineer does not make his appearance till the moment of starting with the train. Between the engineer and his fireman there generally exists an easy-going and friendly relationship, though I have known cases where the two men detested each other.

When I began to fire under "Doc," Simmons, I scarcely knew enough to build a good fire in a cook-stove, and could not have found a quarter of the oil caps. I must have been a trial to him the first night. But "Doc" never gave me a sharp word, though he often had to tell me things over and over again.

"Doc" was the railway men all called him—was a good fellow, and I soon knew every pound of metal in a locomotive; just where it lay, and how much it was good for. He was one of those men who seem to feel just what there is in a locomotive the moment he touches it, and the levers and starts up. He was a good-hearted fellow, and always had a pleasant word, or a joke, all along the line; and it is generally the case that such men do not fall the company, or the public, at a critical moment.

I went home and told my mother like a baby the day "Doc" was killed. If it had been my own father I could not have felt half as badly. I actually wished that I had gone to the bottom of the river with him.

It was the night of the 6th of February, and fearfully cold. We had "No. 117" then, and took out the Pacific Express, as it was called, from New York City, up the line to Albany. It was a bitter night, and the line was frosty and slippery.

The express was always a heavy train. That night we had three baggage and express cars and eight passenger coaches; and we were late out of New York to begin with—about fifteen minutes, I think.

Such cold weather is always demoralizing to a railroad. It is much harder to make time; all metal works bad; and though the fire appears to burn brighter, it takes more coal to make steam. The train seems to hang to the line. Then, too, the cutting wind is enough to freeze the marrow in a man's bones.

It might have been mostly fancy on my part, but I thought "Doc" had an odd look on his face that night. He never got into the cab. He was more serious than usual, for we both knew that we had a hard run before us, and a cold one. Both of us were muffled up in fur caps and overcoats.

"Shove in the coal, Doc," he said, and she down smart. We went every once of steam to-night," says Doc. "Fifteen minutes behind and eleven cars on! Those sleeping coaches are as heavy as a whole block of ice. I'm sick of the double track line and all clear ahead."

We pulled out, and from the way Doc handled her I knew that he meant to pick up that fifteen minutes, if it was the old machine to do it. I suppose we made thirty miles in an hour, perhaps forty on the level stretches.

On we went, reeling off the dark, bleak miles, with the sharp wind cutting into the cab, and New Hamburg Station, where they then crossed Wappinger Creek on a trestle bridge which had a "draw" in it. It was a comfort to think that the draw would certainly not be open on such a night, for the creek was frozen, and there would be no delay there.

Ah, if it were permitted to train men to know just what is ahead on the track on these black, bitter nights! But we can only see what the headlights show us; and "I'm sick of the signal shows us only in fog, or in the driving rain and snow."

One of those always possible "breaks," which may not occur for years, but are yet constantly liable to happen, had occurred that night. One of the south-bound night freight trains, running down to New York, broke an axle and got one of its middle cars off the rails before reaching the bridge.

"Shan't you jump, Doc?" I cried. He stood with his back to me, looking ahead, but turned when I called out. I never shall forget that last look he gave me. He did not speak, but his look seemed to say, "Yes, you may as well jump, but I must stick to my post."

He barely looked round to me, but made no answer, then looked ahead again. Then I jumped—went heels over head along the side of the embankment leading to the bridge, rolled over and over, and landed down on the ice of the creek, near the abutment, which I had scarce touched when I heard the crash, as our engine struck the oil-car.

With the collision came a sudden, brilliant flash of light! Everything above me, the whole bridge and the cars on it, seemed wrapped in a blaze of fire.

At the same instant, too, there is a dull, tearing crash! The trestle had given way beneath the strain. Down came our engine, the three baggage cars, a passenger car, and I don't know how many freight cars of the other train, on the ice. The whole wreck, as it fell down, seemed enveloped in flames; for the oil had splashed over everything, and the blazing coals from the fire-box exploded it on the instant.

When the engine struck the ice it broke through and with a hiss went to the bottom of the deep water there; and the engine came tumbling down all the other cars.

For a moment following the crash there was almost a complete silence; then agonizing screams and prayerful cries for help from the imprisoned passengers.

We who were not disabled did what we could. The seven rear cars did not run into the chasm, but two of them burned on the track, along with a number of freight cars. One of the passengers were killed outright, and a still greater number were injured.

As we worked there in the noise, heat and awful confusion of that night, I cast many an anxious glance round for Doc, hoping and half expecting that he had got clear and would be at work with us, trying to get out passengers. But I saw nothing of him, and by daybreak I felt sure that he had gone down with his engine.

The locomotive was not hauled up out of the chasm till the next week. Then we found his body jammed down under the engine on the bed of the creek. His hands, face and clothes had been scorched; but whether he was drowned, or burned to death, we could not tell.

He had met death at his post of duty; gone out of the world with his hand on the lever; giving his own life that the lives of others might be saved—a man of whom any people may be proud.

W. C. Prime in Harper's Magazine. When a young lawyer in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, he was engaged to be married to a young lady to whom he was devotedly attached. The biographer has given us in a brief but deeply interesting sketch the history of this episode. A "lovers' quarrel," originating in the gossip of village girls, separated them. Trifles are causes in the philosophy of life, as in nature, which sometimes produce convulsions, catastrophes. Young girls of the past generation in a country town were marvelously like young girls of the preceding and of the present generation. The gossip of thoughtless children, scarce grown to womanhood, produced effects which they little imagined. The lovers were parted. The separation would have been only temporary, perhaps, but for her sudden death. In a very touching and eloquent letter he begged to be allowed to see his dead love. In this he said: "My prospects are all cut off, and I feel that my happiness would be ruined by her in the grave. It is now no time for explanation, but the time will come when you will discover that she, as well as I, has been much abused. God forgive the authors of it! My feelings of resentment against them, whoever they may be, are buried in the dust. I have now one request to make, and for the love of God and your dear departed daughter, whom I loved infinitely more than any other human being could love, deny me not. Afford me the melancholy pleasure of seeing her body before its interment."

Perhaps to the unsentimental reader this is but a trifling incident in a human life. But, after all, the mighty forces which move humanity are the forces which come from the affections rather than from the cool intellect. Men have died, and women have eaten them, and this for love. He who endures the moral and intellectual part of man or woman, and who ridicules what we call sentiment, leaves out the most important element in the whole subject of consideration. When in later years Mr. Buchanan became a public man, political antagonists, according to the accepted American style of political campaigns, raked out of the history of his youth this incident, misrepresented and falsified it. The vile politician who knew better than any man in America how to meet and reply to all the attacks and accusations, true or false, of opponents, never allowed the solemn sacredness of this memory to be tarnished by any allusion to it on his part. Once he told a trusted friend that there were among his papers letters and relics which when he was dead, would, if necessary, set this history truly before all who were interested. It was never made before his decease, but came to the conclusion that the story of his love belonged alone to himself and to her, and that it mattered little what was said here when he and she should talk it over where there are no gossips and scandal-mongers. His executor found a sealed package endorsed with directions to burn it unopened, and they obeyed the direction.

The course of true love, says our biographer, in terms of very simple language, ran in this case pure and unbroken in the heart of the survivor through a long and varied life. It became a grief that could not be spoken of, to which only the most distant allusion could be made; a sacred, unceasing sorrow, buried deep in the breast of a man who was formed for domestic joys; hidden beneath manners that were most engaging, beneath strong social tendencies, and a chivalrous old-fashioned deference to women of all ages, and all climes. His peculiar and reverential demeanor toward the sex, never varied by rank or station or individual attractions, was doubtless in a large degree caused by the tender memory of what he had found or fancied in her whom he had lost in his early days by such a cruel fate.

The immediate effect of this sorrow was to change the course of his life. He had previously determined not to enter political life. He now sought excitement and associations with men, and accepted a nomination and election to Congress. The village gossips who parted the lovers are responsible for a vast deal that has since occurred in the history of the United States.

"Well, what's the show for a spiny paper to-morrow," said the chief of a Western paper to the city editor. "I don't know yet, boss; but I've got a couple of men out killing a stray, and I think we'll dish up a few scraps for you before midnight," replied the energetic and enterprising executive. New York Journal.

The Earliest Woman's Righter. Margaret Brent, said John E. Thomas in a lecture before the Maryland Historical Society, was the first woman in America to claim the right to vote. She landed in St. Mary's City on the St. Mary's River in 1638. She was connected with Lord Baltimore's colony by blood or marriage. Leonard Calvert, Lord Baltimore's brother, suddenly prostrated on his death bed, and not having time to make his will, said to Margaret Brent: "Take all and pay all!" Then he died, and she received his dying words. She took the Governor's house and lived in it. As Leonard Calvert was agent for Lord Baltimore, she claimed control of all rents, issues, and profits of Lord Baltimore. The court confirmed her in this position. She claimed that she had the right to vote in the Assembly as the representative of Lord Calvert, and also of Lord Baltimore. She claimed, not one, but two votes. One January 21, 1648, when the legislators assembled at Fort St. Johns, she demanded her right to vote as a member of the General Assembly of the State of Maryland. It was denied her.

A TALL RABBIT.—Excepting the Irishman's hare, which was no hare at all, but a donkey, the polar hare is the largest of the long-eared tribe. It equals the fox in size, and will sometimes reach the height of a man's knee. The golden eagle and the snowy owl are both particularly fond of the pretty creature, but it is a fondness which the hare has no desire to encourage, and therefore, when it spies one of these great birds sailing through the air, with its sharp eyes searching about for something to devour, it instantly sinks upon the snow as motionless as if dead, and thanks to the whiteness of the fur, it can hardly be distinguished from the material it rests upon.—St. Nicholas.

It has been a standing announcement in the telegraphic columns of the press that, "War between China and France is inevitable." War is a bad and unwelcome thing, and he deplored, but it would be a relief to have China and France shut up, put up, go to fighting, or quit, and not be eternally braucing up to each other, and darning the other to "knock a chip off my shoulder." It begins to look as though there was a faint, but not a "darned" one.

An exchange says: "The Goddess of Justice which for so many years held the scales above the old Capitol of New York, having been put out of the way in a corridor of the Capitol, was mistaken for a spook recently by one of the colored orderlies who had been out almost all night and had taken too much pie!" There are a good many places in this world where a sight of Justice would be taken as a visitation from the grave.

"Eastern capitalists," says an exchange, "are going to bore for oil with a few miles from Cincinnati." The scheme may be successful, but the dollars to chips they will tap beer before they do oil.

Prof. Nordenskjöld says that all the time he was in the interior of Greenland he saw only two living creatures, and they were ravens, neither of which was a candidate for president. Remarkable country.—R. J. Burdette.

One of the meanest cases ever played on a postoffice clerk was recently perpetrated in Connecticut. A young man wrote doctors, messengers, collectors on a postal card and sent it through the mail.

MICHIGAN CENTRAL RAILROAD—MAIN LINE. Time table taking effect Dec. 9, 1883.

STATIONS.	Mail Express	Day	Night	Mail Express	Day	Night
Chicago	dep. 6:45	arr. 10:15	arr. 10:15	dep. 6:45	arr. 10:15	arr. 10:15
Springfield	dep. 7:15	arr. 10:45	arr. 10:45	dep. 7:15	arr. 10:45	arr. 10:45
St. Louis	dep. 7:45	arr. 11:15	arr. 11:15	dep. 7:45	arr. 11:15	arr. 11:15
St. Paul	dep. 8:15	arr. 11:45	arr. 11:45	dep. 8:15	arr. 11:45	arr. 11:45
Minneapolis	dep. 8:45	arr. 12:15	arr. 12:15	dep. 8:45	arr. 12:15	arr. 12:15
St. Cloud	dep. 9:15	arr. 12:45	arr. 12:45	dep. 9:15	arr. 12:45	arr. 12:45
Brainerd	dep. 9:45	arr. 1:15	arr. 1:15	dep. 9:45	arr. 1:15	arr. 1:15
Grand Rapids	dep. 10:15	arr. 1:45	arr. 1:45	dep. 10:15	arr. 1:45	arr. 1:45
St. Joseph	dep. 10:45	arr. 2:15	arr. 2:15	dep. 10:45	arr. 2:15	arr. 2:15
St. James	dep. 11:15	arr. 2:45	arr. 2:45	dep. 11:15	arr. 2:45	arr. 2:45
St. Peter	dep. 11:45	arr. 3:15	arr. 3:15	dep. 11:45	arr. 3:15	arr. 3:15
St. Cloud	dep. 12:15	arr. 3:45	arr. 3:45	dep. 12:15	arr. 3:45	arr. 3:45
Brainerd	dep. 12:45	arr. 4:15	arr. 4:15	dep. 12:45	arr. 4:15	arr. 4:15
St. Cloud	dep. 1:15	arr. 4:45	arr. 4:45	dep. 1:15	arr. 4:45	arr. 4:45
St. James	dep. 1:45	arr. 5:15	arr. 5:15	dep. 1:45	arr. 5:15	arr. 5:15
St. Joseph	dep. 2:15	arr. 5:45	arr. 5:45	dep. 2:15	arr. 5:45	arr. 5:45
Grand Rapids	dep. 2:45	arr. 6:15	arr. 6:15	dep. 2:45	arr. 6:15	arr. 6:15
St. Cloud	dep. 3:15	arr. 6:45	arr. 6:45	dep. 3:15	arr. 6:45	arr. 6:45
Brainerd	dep. 3:45	arr. 7:15	arr. 7:15	dep. 3:45	arr. 7:15	arr. 7:15
St. Cloud	dep. 4:15	arr. 7:45	arr. 7:45	dep. 4:15	arr. 7:45	arr. 7:45
St. James	dep. 4:45	arr. 8:15	arr. 8:15	dep. 4:45	arr. 8:15	arr. 8:15
St. Peter	dep. 5:15	arr. 8:45	arr. 8:45	dep. 5:15	arr. 8:45	arr. 8:45
St. Cloud	dep. 5:45	arr. 9:15	arr. 9:15	dep. 5:45	arr. 9:15	arr. 9:15
Brainerd	dep. 6:15	arr. 9:45	arr. 9:45	dep. 6:15	arr. 9:45	arr. 9:45
St. Cloud	dep. 6:45	arr. 10:15	arr. 10:15	dep. 6:45	arr. 10:15	arr. 10:15
St. James	dep. 7:15	arr. 10:45	arr. 10:45	dep. 7:15	arr. 10:45	arr. 10:45
St. Joseph	dep. 7:45	arr. 11:15	arr. 11:15	dep. 7:45	arr. 11:15	arr. 11:15
Grand Rapids	dep. 8:15	arr. 11:45	arr. 11:45	dep. 8:15	arr. 11:45	arr. 11:45
St. Cloud	dep. 8:45	arr. 12:15	arr. 12:15	dep. 8:45	arr. 12:15	arr. 12:15
Brainerd	dep. 9:15	arr. 12:45	arr. 12:45	dep. 9:15	arr. 12:45	arr. 12:45
St. Cloud	dep. 9:45	arr. 1:15	arr. 1:15	dep. 9:45	arr. 1:15	arr. 1:15
St. James	dep. 10:15	arr. 1:45	arr. 1:45	dep. 10:15	arr. 1:45	arr. 1:45
St. Peter	dep. 10:45	arr. 2:15	arr. 2:15	dep. 10:45	arr. 2:15	arr. 2:15
St. Cloud	dep. 11:15	arr. 2:45	arr. 2:45	dep. 11:15	arr. 2:45	arr. 2:45
Brainerd	dep. 11:45	arr. 3:15	arr. 3:15	dep. 11:45	arr. 3:15	arr. 3:15
St. Cloud	dep. 12:15	arr. 3:45	arr. 3:45	dep. 12:15	arr. 3:45	arr. 3:45
St. James	dep. 12:45	arr. 4:15	arr. 4:15	dep. 12:45	arr. 4:15	arr. 4:15
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Grand Rapids	dep. 1:45	arr. 5:15	arr. 5:15	dep. 1:45	arr. 5:15	arr. 5:15
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Brainerd	dep. 2:45	arr. 6:15	arr. 6:15	dep. 2:45	arr. 6:15	arr. 6:15
St. Cloud	dep. 3:15	arr. 6:45	arr. 6:45	dep. 3:15	arr. 6:45	arr. 6:45
St. James	dep. 3:45	arr. 7:15	arr. 7:15	dep. 3:45	arr. 7:15	arr. 7:15
St. Peter	dep. 4:15	arr. 7:45	arr. 7:45	dep. 4:15	arr. 7:45	arr. 7:45
St. Cloud	dep. 4:45	arr. 8:15	arr. 8:15	dep. 4:45	arr. 8:15	arr. 8:15
Brainerd	dep. 5:15	arr. 8:45	arr. 8:45	dep. 5:15	arr. 8:45	arr. 8:45
St. Cloud	dep. 5:45	arr. 9:15	arr. 9:15	dep. 5:45	arr. 9:15	arr. 9:15
St. James	dep. 6:15	arr. 9:45	arr. 9:45	dep. 6:15	arr. 9:45	arr. 9:45
St. Joseph	dep. 6:45	arr. 10:15	arr. 10:15	dep. 6:45	arr. 10:15	arr. 10:15
Grand Rapids	dep. 7:15	arr. 10:45	arr. 10:45	dep. 7:15	arr. 10:45	arr. 10:45
St. Cloud	dep. 7:45	arr. 11:15	arr. 11:15	dep. 7:45	arr. 11:15	arr. 11:15
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St. Cloud	dep. 3:45	arr. 7:15	arr. 7:15	dep. 3:45	arr. 7:15	arr. 7:15
Brainerd	dep. 4:15	arr. 7:45	arr. 7:45	dep. 4:15	arr. 7:45	arr. 7:45
St. Cloud	dep. 4:45	arr. 8:15	arr. 8:15	dep. 4:45	arr. 8:15	arr. 8:15
St. James	dep. 5:15	arr. 8:45	arr. 8:45	dep. 5:15	arr. 8:45	arr. 8:45
St. Peter	dep. 5:45	arr. 9:15	arr. 9:15	dep. 5:45	arr. 9:15	arr. 9:15
St. Cloud	dep. 6:15	arr. 9:45	arr. 9:45	dep. 6:15	arr. 9:45	arr. 9:45
Brainerd	dep. 6:45	arr. 10:15	arr. 10:15	dep. 6:45	arr. 10:15	arr. 10:15
St. Cloud	dep. 7:15	arr. 10:45	arr. 10:45	dep. 7:15	arr. 10:45	arr. 10:45
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St. Joseph	dep. 8:15	arr. 11:45	arr. 11:45	dep. 8:15	arr. 11:45	arr. 11:45
Grand Rapids	dep. 8:45	arr. 12:15	arr. 12:15	dep. 8:45	arr. 12:15	arr. 12:15
St. Cloud	dep. 9:15	arr. 12:45	arr. 12:45	dep. 9:15	arr. 12:45	arr. 12:45
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St. Peter	dep. 11:15	arr. 2:45	arr. 2:45	dep. 11:15	arr. 2:45	arr. 2:45
St. Cloud	dep. 11:45	arr. 3:15	arr. 3:15	dep. 11:45	arr. 3:15	arr. 3:15