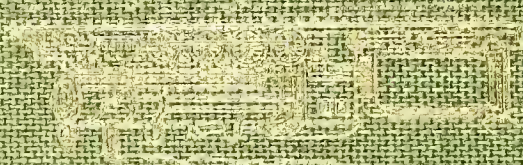


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THE
CONFESIONS
OF A
RAILROAD MAN

Todd; Charles Burr
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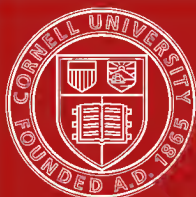
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BY WAY OF INTRODUCTION.

I left New York in December, 1903, on a Mallory liner, bound for Galveston, Texas. She bore a select company, though small—a Columbia College professor, a New York author, an alumnus of Columbia, and two Princeton undergraduates among them. Nothing brings people together like a sea voyage, and ere we reached Galveston the above named at least had become very good friends. We swapped stories of course. One day my friend, the literary man, said to me, "A., if you could give me enough of those stories with some idea of your daily life, methods, and experiences as a railroad man I could make a book that would do for the men who secure the business that keeps the great railroads moving what Kipling, Cy Warman, and the short-

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story writers have done for the trainmen and drivers of locomotives; it would be, too, a distinct contribution to American literature; it has never been done.”

I confess the proposition struck me favorably. The more I thought of it, the better I liked it, and the result was that when we both returned to New York, I narrated to him, or dictated to my stenographer, amid the pauses of business, these confessions of a railroad man.

I.

AS A KID.

Like most self-made men, I was self-made all the way up. My mother died when I was eight years old—the week Lincoln was shot—that unfortunate 14th of April, 1865—leaving four of us, three boys and a girl. My father was the second oldest photographer in Chicago, well to do, owning our home, his gallery and other interests. He hired a house-keeper to look after us children, who neglected us sadly, the result being that I ran away at nine, and entered the largest retail dry goods store in Chicago as cash boy, where I served several months at the munificent salary of one dollar and a half a week; but at last my father found me out and returned me

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to school and the tender mercies of Mary Eliza.

The most striking incident of my school days I remember was being caught in a surreptitious correspondence with Violet, a rosy-cheeked little lass on the next form, and being hung up therefor by the waistband on a nail in the school-room wall, where I hung like a flitch of bacon in sight of the whole school. What broke my heart, however, was an audible snicker from Violet while in this predicament; that so humiliated me that I ran away again and made my way to my maternal grandfather's, a farmer living near Michigan City, Indiana. There I lived contented enough until I was fourteen, when a traveling railroad man whose interest I had awakened found me a position as a bell boy at the Harper House, Rock Island, Illinois, at fifteen dollars a month and found. There

my education went on pretty rapidly, but at the end of two years I had an offer of nine dollars a week to take charge of the delivery wagons of a large retail grocery, which I accepted, remaining there two years, going to night school and saving three dollars a week out of my earnings; but after two years I had a letter from my father (who by this time had removed to Sioux City, Iowa), saying if I would come there he would make an expert photographer of me. I did so and became quite proficient in that beautiful art—but fate had other things in store for me.

I suppose I was a pretty lively youngster; I could fill this book with stories of my escapades. When I go to Rock Island now I never put up at the Harper House, lest I should meet some of the girls that the night clerk and I played such a scurvy trick on away back in '73.

After nine o'clock at night all the help had to pass through the office and dining room to reach their own rooms. One winter night all the dining-room girls were invited out to a ball or church sociable—I forget which—and the night clerk and I conspired to put up a job on them. I found a twelve-foot ladder, draped it in white sheets, and stood it against the rear wall of the dining room opposite the door by which the girls must enter; then I found a big pumpkin, cut as hideous and terrifying a death mask on it as was ever made, put a lighted candle inside of it and placed it on top of the sheeted ladder. The dining room was dark as Egypt when at three in the morning we heard the first bunch of girls coming, and I hastened to ensconce myself behind the ladder; as they opened the door I gave a most sepulchral groan. Who would have dreamed that such a

train of events could have followed so innocent an action? The first girl gave a shriek and promptly fainted; the second looked, shrieked, and also fainted; the third looked, rushed back into the office and told the clerk that the devil himself was in the dining room. Meantime the screams had aroused everybody in the house; several of the guests raised their windows and yelled "fire," which brought the fire engines on the run; while the landlord came clattering down demanding to know the cause of the uproar.

Meantime I had been having the time of my life getting ladder, pumpkin and sheets out of the room before the old man appeared. Fox, the night clerk, helped by keeping him in the office as long as possible, and I succeeded, but it was by a narrow margin. He had his suspicions and questioned us sharply,

but could get hold of nothing tangible, and after two doctors had resuscitated the girls, and the fire engines and mob of several hundred people had been sent home, quiet once more reigned in Warsaw. I was an object of suspicion, however, both to the girls and the old man, and shortly after resigned as before noted.

II.

I BECAME A RAILROAD MAN.

In December, 1876, a lad of twenty years, I was offered the position of clerk to the Land Commissioner of the Iowa Railroad Land Company, with headquarters in Chicago, the appointment to take effect January 13th, 1877. The position demanded a knowledge of both German and Swedish, of which I knew as little as of Sanscrit; however, I had six weeks in which to learn, so boldly accepted the offer, and buying two grammars, studied day and night, but admit I had forebodings on taking the train at Sioux City for Chicago. I shall never forget that ride. The thermometer was thirty degrees below zero; the Illinois Central then ran its own sleepers, the

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only way of heating them being by the old-fashioned stove; result, I sat on the woodbox with my feet on the stove all the way to Chicago with the exception of my meals.

My duties were to sit in the office and extol the value of our lands to all comers, who were mostly German and Swedish emigrants; my mistakes and theirs with our flounderings together would have shaken the midriff of despair with laughter. I had also many letters in the two tongues to write, which the commissioner with his feet on his desk would read over at his leisure while I stood trembling; fortunately, he knew neither language and I escaped.

One day he told me to answer a letter in Swedish, and added, "Be quick about it because I wish to read it over before I go home."

I sat down and wrote a letter I do not

think a Philadelphia lawyer could have read, much less the commissioner, but he looked it over gravely and passed it—needless to add it was rewritten by a man who knew the language before being sent out.

In 1881 the land commissioner died and I was appointed to fill his place—without his pay—which I did, until 1886, when the company's lands being pretty well closed out, the office was abolished; I however continued the office because of the good will, handling lands in Iowa, Minnesota and Nebraska, at the same time representing two Western railroads as outside ticket agent on a commission basis.

III.

UP AGAINST THE GOVERNMENT.

One cold day in winter, while thus employed, I was accosted by a thin, shivering, ragged, woe-begone, ex-ranchman with, "Say, partner, lend me a bit; I'm dead broke and empty as a coyote in March." I tossed him a quarter and away he galloped for the nearest thirst emporium; I met him shortly after in much better humor. "Say, partner," said he, "you're young and look as though you had ginger. I'll let you onto a scheme you can clean up a few thousands on."

"Open up," said I.

"Niobrara Valley in Nebraska is fast filling up with homesteaders. You can take up a quarter section, build a shack on it, rip up ten acres, and in six months

pay two hundred dollars and get a deed at the land office for the one hundred and sixty acres. Now, what's to hinder your taking four men up there, build a shack so that each corner sets on a quarter section, and let each man enter claim for that quarter section, get his deed and then assign to you for a little bonus; you get a section in six months. See?"

I saw, and the more I thought on the scheme, the more I liked it. Four men, six hundred and forty acres—sixteen men, twenty-five hundred and forty acres—there were infinite possibilities. By and by I broached the subject to a wealthy client of mine. He was then a power on 'Change; you'd know him in a minute if I spoke his real name, so we'll call him Grip, a mean, greedy, avaricious, grasping old man, dead long ago and the world the richer for it.

Old Grip caught at the plan; he was to furnish the capital, I the men and see the plan carried out, and we were to share the profits equally. That there was anything in it to embroil me with the government never once entered my head.

Well, I got fourteen husky young fellows together, rough and ready dare-devils, and old Grip signed contracts with them in his office, in the presence of his lawyer and stenographer, that each at the end of six months, in consideration of one hundred and forty dollars and expenses, should turn over to him his right in the acquired quarter section, said contracts being then delivered to me for safe keeping.

I took the boys up to the Niobrara Valley; it was the frontier then, on the firing line between civilization and barbarism. We loaded four freight cars with lumber and other material for

houses, with mules, milch cows, provisions, farm and household utensils, etc., and we started, reaching Bassett, the nearest station and eight miles away from our claim, on a sunny May morning. We hooked up, got to the claim and had a house framed and partly sided before noon. Suddenly, without warning, a shadow came; a chill fell on us, damping our spirits; conversation which had been brisk ceased; looking up we saw in the west a dark, funnel-shaped cloud, whirling and zigzagging in all directions, but steadily approaching with giant strides.

“Load in the corn, boys,” I shouted, “and get in yourselves, here’s a twister coming.” They did so and we stood and watched that abhorrent thing wiggling along like a monster serpent up the valley. There wasn’t the slightest chance for escape because of its erratic

CONFESSIONS OF A RAILROAD MAN

movements; now it lifted and then descended, making the dust fly. In a twinkling it was upon us, took us up in the air and carried us fully one hundred feet, then dropped us in a heap, fifteen men, twenty bushels of corn, household goods, building materials and all. The chickens were carried aloft and dropped at intervals quite dead, some with their feathers plucked more neatly than the most skillful housewife could have done. The mules turned tail, stampeded and were only recovered after two days' search; of course we had to build the house over again. We built four houses in all, covering four sections.

IV.

A TREE BEARING STRANGE FRUIT.

While the boys were at the ranch I went out to visit them at least once a month and met with adventures. The whole region at that time was infested with horse thieves, the leader among them being Dock M——, a cultivated man from the East originally. One morning as I left the little frame hotel at Bassett, where I had spent the night, a body of mud-bespattered horsemen rode up with another bound and handcuffed between them—Dock M——, whom they had just captured after a long chase and a sharp fight with his gang in their stronghold some twenty miles to northward. When I came back that

night about dusk, following the line of telegraph poles, I saw a strange sort of fruit hanging on one pole, well calculated to shake the nerves of a much more seasoned man than myself—the body of Dock M—— dangling from one of the arms.

V.

A MATTER OF A HAT.

I had a more cheerful experience with the receiver of the government land office at Valentine, where we all had to go to prove up our claims. He was a "tender-foot" from the East, wore a silk hat and dressed as people are expected to dress in the great Eastern cities. He was on the same train that I was, coming out to claim his office, and learning that I was bound for Valentine, he fell to asking me some questions about the place. After conversing a while I suggested that it would be well for him to dispense with his silk hat. He wanted to know why. I replied that there were none worn in that country and the cowboys might object to it and make it unpleasant for him; he laughed, said he didn't stand in

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any great awe of cowboys, and guessed they wouldn't molest a government official; thought he should wear in the West what he had in the East. Well, we arrived at our destination about six in the evening and started for the hotel, which stood across the street. Valentine was very liberal as to its main street, it being some two hundred feet wide. The land office was diagonally across the street from the hotel, and the new receiver was to meet his predecessor in office there at seven o'clock that evening to turn over the property. I had noticed a good deal of whispering among the cowboys on seeing the gentleman arrive in his silk hat and anticipated some fun, and there was. After dinner he started across the street to the land office, but had barely reached the center of the street when a rifle shot rang out, then another, and another, until the

silk tile had been cut as neatly as with a knife half way between crown and brim, and sank down about the man's ears. He stood a moment like one dazed, then spun around on his heels as though on a pivot, hesitated, turned towards the hotel and ran for it like a deer. I looked up and down the street—there was not a man to be seen, only wreaths of blue smoke floating up from the sides of the different cabins. It is needless to add that the new land receiver from that time on wore a soft hat.

VI.

TWO BROTHERS-IN-LAW.

In that age and country railroad conductors were selected as much for brawn and muscle as for mental qualifications. A certain conductor I knew and esteemed highly, a big six and one-half footer well known to all the cowboys and patrons of the road for his amiability as well as courage and great strength. One day on one of my journeys I was sitting chatting with him in the rear day coach when he pointed to the only passengers that the car contained—a cowboy, his wife and baby—and said, “That is so-and-so, who has a ranch twenty-five miles west of Valentine.” When we arrived at our next station, a stout, good-natured looking man got on and sat down a few seats ahead of us, but seven or eight seats

TWO BROTHERS-IN-LAW

behind the cowboy and his family. The conductor took this man's fare, came back to me and said, "You will see trouble presently. I will explain later; meantime pretend to be asleep and I will do the same."

After about half an hour, we being apparently asleep, the last arrival roused himself, looked cautiously around and seeing us asleep as he thought crept cautiously on tiptoe with a huge knife in his hand towards the cowboy, who was dandling the baby on his knee unconscious of danger. The conductor crept after the man as silently as he. When the latter got over the cowboy he cried exultantly, "Now I've got you," and raised his knife to strike. The cowboy dropped the baby on the floor as the knife descended, but it never reached its destination, for the conductor grasped the man by the arm, and paralyzed it

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by his grip so that the knife dropped to the floor, and I picked it up. The would-be murderer was hustled into the smoker, and at the next station the cowboy hurried out and sent a message to his friends in Valentine asking them to meet him there, armed, on his arrival. The operator who had sent the message wired the conductor at the next station what was up and he took measures accordingly. After arranging his check-mate he came back and gave me a history of the case. The two men it seemed were brothers-in-law, having married sisters; the would-be murderer was a government inspector of cattle, living two miles south of Valentine; when sober, intelligent, cultivated, gentlemanly, but when in his cups a brute; at such times he abused his wife shamefully, and the brother-in-law being obliged to defend her had caused the quarrel. The

TWO BROTHERS-IN-LAW

two men had fought a duel shortly before in which the inspector received a wound which had laid him up for several weeks. "I shall try and get him to drop off the train a station this side," said the conductor on leaving me. But this the inspector refused to do; he would go home, he said, though all the cowboys out of h-ll were laying for him.

"All right," replied the conductor, "but I shall slow up a mile this side of Valentine and you will jump off or I shall throw you off."

The inspector knew the conductor would do as he said, and so jumped off. Sure enough on the arrival of the train at Valentine a dozen long-haired cowboys leaped aboard brandishing knives and guns and shouting "Where is he? Show us the blankety-blank son of a coyote."

Failing to get their man, the band took

the cowboy and his family under their wing and rode off, firing their guns, and vowing to get the inspector if ever he showed up in that region. The next morning when passing down to the land office I saw seven ponies hitched outside a dwelling, and within seven men, their rifles beside them, taking breakfast. As I passed they came out, mounted their ponies and rode off toward the inspector's cabin.

“What's up?” I asked a lean, long-haired native who stood propping up a telegraph pole outside the principal groggery.

“Wal, now look here, stranger,” says he, “I've got troubles enuff of my own, an' if you think I'm goin tew be drawn into other folks' you've missed the trail an' am travelin through the wilderness.”

Without telling his wife that trouble was in the air the inpsector got up early

TWO BROTHERS-IN-LAW

that morning and set off on horseback in search of a stray cow that had been missing for several days, and by some strange fatuity wholly unarmed except for a revolver stuck in his belt. He was about a mile north of his house when the horsemen took saddle, and in full sight of them and of the town. Each party caught sight of the other at the same instant and a thrilling race ensued, one riding for his life, the others for revenge. By some strange process of telepathy or mind influence the whole town seemed at once aware of what was going on, and manned every coign of vantage from which a view of the race might be had. A glance showed the inspector that his enemies would cut him off before he could regain his house and he turned and spurred for the river, where there was cover; breathlessly we watched them sweep over the plain, the pursued

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holding his own gamely, but at last they disappeared in the bottoms and with a sigh of relief the citizens of Valentine resumed their ordinary avocations. No one attempted to go to the aid of the inspector, but simply awaited developments.

About one o'clock that afternoon the cowboy and his six friends rode slowly into the town, their horses pretty well blown; no questions were asked, but an hour or two later friends of the inspector rode out to the river bank and found his dead body under its cover riddled with bullets, and his empty revolver still clutched in his stiffened fingers, having won the goal of the true frontiersman—dead with his boots on. Next day an inquest was held and on the jury sat the men who had caused his death; needless to add the verdict was, "Shot by parties unknown."

The Register and I rode out to con-

dole with the widow—a lady of intelligence and education. We found her alone and she and we talked quite freely, but as soon as others entered she became extremely cautious and reserved. We rose to go. “Gentlemen,” said she, “I thank you for your sympathy as expressed by your call; be assured I appreciate it thoroughly.” We replied that if we could be of any assistance we hoped she would not hesitate to call on us. She assured us there would be no necessity for it as the persons who were responsible for her husband’s death would see that she wanted for nothing.

VII.

LO, THE POOR INDIAN.

My friends often laugh at an experience I had about this time with a Sioux brave named Dr. Tall Thief. He came to me with a plausible tale of his love for the white man and his desire to settle down in our vicinity and make a home for himself like the whites. So I helped him to a ranch in the Niobrara Valley where he built a house, broke up some land and I thought would really become civilized; but you can't tame an Indian any more than a partridge. One day as I was watching the boys at work he came up to me and said "Money hard a-comin here; in my country heap ponies; sell for five dollar; you give me one hundred dollar for grub, an' a boy, an' I bring you heap cattle."

Well, the old fellow had always been on the square and I thought could be trusted, so I gave him the one hundred dollars and one of my best men and they set out. That was the last I saw of the Indian or the money. Some days later the boy came back with nothing but the clothes on his back. He said as soon as they were over the river Tall Thief had said that the Indian country was highly dangerous for white men just then, and had proposed that he wait there while he went after the cattle, to which my man readily agreed. He waited a week, and then as no Tall Thief returned came back with his story. I never saw the Indian again. Some people may think differently, but I heartily subscribe to that dictum of the old plainsman, "The only good Indian is a dead Indian."

VIII.

TROUBLE AT THE RANCH.

In June I got into trouble with the boys at the ranch, not of myself but through the financial backer. Somehow the old fellow got it into his head that they weren't earning their salt, and insisted that I order the foreman to have them put up one thousand tons of hay against the coming winter. This was directly against our contract, which gave the boys full control of their time after the plowing and other government requirements were met, and I pointed out that this command would raise the biggest kind of a row; that the men would probably leave, and if not, would talk of their grievance to every one that came along and thus call public attention to our scheme—and I had learned by this

TROUBLE AT THE RANCH

time that it was desirable to keep it as quiet as possible. But Grip was as stubborn as a mule, and I was compelled to order the boys to put up the hay. Of course it created a rumpus at once; the men were fighting mad, and not only refused to cut the hay, but said if we failed to keep our contract they would also, and would not prove up their claims, or if they did would keep the land themselves. They aired their grievances to all that passed, and there was trouble for over a month, but at last the magnate was led to recede from his position and begged me to quiet the boys, which I succeeded in doing. But the government had learned what was going on, as we found to our cost later.

IX.

IN THE TOILS.

When the six months were up I took the boys to Valentine. They proved their claims, got a deed from the government, reeded the land to the financial backer and we separated, going to our various homes. I had been at home perhaps a week when I received a call from a marshal's officer who showed a warrant for my arrest.

"For what?" I asked.

"For not complying legitimately with the laws of the United States regarding the lands acquired in the Niobrara Valley," he replied. On reaching the Marshal's office I found old Grip there before me looking as if something had dropped. Well, we had our hearing and gave bonds for our future appearance at Omaha

to be tried for violating the homestead laws of the United States. The financier's bond was fixed at five thousand dollars, mine at one thousand. This was during President Arthur's administration, Brewster being Attorney General. To me my principal made light of the matter. He had influence at Washington, he said; we would go over there and have the matter hushed up. He retained ex-Senator —— of Nebraska, counsel for the Union Pacific, I ——, counsel for the B. and M. But Attorney General Brewster when approached stood firm as a rock. The case was an aggravated one and should be brought to trial, he said. The trouble was, that old Grip had been all around the capital boasting of his "pull," that he wasn't going to get hurt, etc., and the authorities had heard of it and were put on their mettle at once. The case

went over to Cleveland's administration when the financier again tried to settle it, with no better result. He then sent his lawyer to me and offered me one thousand dollars to leave the country, which I refused to do. He next came to my office himself and said, "you have the original contracts signed by the boys."

"Yes," I replied.

"I wish you would tear them up; we don't want them produced at the trial."

I did so, throwing the fragments into the waste basket. A wise old friend of mine happened to be present, and said, after the financier had gone out, "If I were you I'd keep those contracts; paste one or two together; they may be needed in your behalf." I did so and put them in my safe. From this time on the financial man was very friendly,

IN THE TOILS

coming often to my office and promising to protect my interests equally with his own. Meantime all our men had been arrested and had given bonds for their appearance in Omaha.

At last the day of trial came. I reached the city the day before with the boys, as did the financier and his witnesses. It had been my intention to give testimony as favorable as possible to this gentleman, believing him to be my friend, but on the day of our arrival he made the mistake of giving a long interview to the reporter of the leading evening paper in which I was made to appear as the tempter and prime mover of the whole matter, the magnate having advanced the money as a favor to me, without having been informed of the true nature of the scheme; he declared the contracts had never been drawn or seen by him; that they were in my

CONFESSIONS OF A RAILROAD MAN

favor and that I had willfully misrepresented conditions to him.

Next morning before Court came in, I took a copy of the paper containing this interview to the United States District Attorney and asked him if I would not be justified in defending myself in any way in view of the financier's statements. He said yes, certainly. I then showed him the torn contracts pasted together. "Capital," said he, rubbing his hands together, "capital, this is all we want to convict him. We will let him go on and hang himself with his lawyer and witnesses. All the evidence we want is yourself and these contracts."

The trial opened at ten o'clock A. M., with twelve jurymen in their seats and the learned judge on the bench, while a great crowd filled the spectators' seats. The financier's counsel opened and said that witnesses were present ready and

willing to testify as to the innocence of his client. The first he called were the boys one by one; all testified that I had engaged them to go west. Asked if they had signed contracts? Yes. Where? They could not remember whether in my office or in the financier's, nor could one of them recall whether the contracts were in my favor or his. After them Grip's stenographer, a pretty young woman of twenty-four or so, was put on the stand. She swore positively that she was a witness to the drawing of the contracts, and that they were in my favor. Lastly came old Grip himself and swore to the same thing. The brother of one of the leading judges of the Circuit Court of Illinois was then brought forward to swear to the good character and business integrity of the defendant, and the defense rested.

A sigh of relief ran around the court

room and all eyes were fixed on me as the man responsible for all this mischief. I shall never forget old Grip's face as he sat there, with its look of injured innocence bearing out the character assumed perfectly; I never saw a better imitation. But his counsel's countenance wore a worried look, for the District Attorney had not cross examined a single witness and he feared he had something up his sleeve. The latter simply sat there twirling his eye glasses and letting the defendant and his witnesses go on and perjure themselves. He now called me to the stand. I shall never forget the occasion. I wore a Prince Albert coat and felt quite warm under the collar at the perjury the witnesses had committed. I said: "Your Honor and Gentlemen of the Jury: I regret to say that perjury has been committed here to-day by a number of the witnesses, including the

defendant, and I have the proof to bear out my statement." With that I pulled out of my inside coat pocket the two torn patched contracts and asked his Honor to examine them. I could see the defendant turn pale and his attorney whirl round to question him. The contracts bore the signatures of each of the boys, together with that of the defendant, and were witnessed by the detective and by the young lady who had testified so falsely; they were all in favor of the moneyed man.

The Judge glanced over the contracts and frowned, then handed them to the jury for inspection, after which the District Attorney took them, and, asking the defendant to take the stand, desired him to examine his signature and say whether it was his or not. He did so and much against his will admitted it was his signature. The young lady was then called

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to the stand and identified her signature; the detective did the same, whereupon the District Attorney addressed the court: "Your Honor and gentlemen of the jury, it will be needless for you to leave your seats in order to bring in a verdict." The jury accordingly brought in a verdict against the defendant without leaving their seats; then the District Attorney turned to the Judge and said, "Your Honor, it remains with this young man here whether or not these people shall be arrested for perjury." I whispered to him to let the matter drop, as they were sufficiently punished, which he proceeded to do, but the Judge on account of the character and standing of the defendant reserved decision as to what punishment should be inflicted. He eventually imposed a fine which practically confiscated the lands we had secured by such sharp practice.

X.

A FORTUNE LOST.

Is it easier to win a fortune than to lose one? Cela depend, as the French say. It depends on the man. Some men are fortune's favorites from their birth; they have only to sit down and the fickle jade rains golden streams into their laps. There are others more worthy, perhaps, of equal ability, whom force of circumstance keeps poor. Two cases in point occur to me. My friend X, a brilliant writer, a charming personality, ought to have been rich from the sale of his books, but has always been poor. He once wrote a book with a prominent western public man on a western subject. The book had the most glowing testimonials from presi-

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dents, ex-presidents, judges, congressmen and others, and ought to have had a popular sale, but just as agents were put into the field with it came the financial crash of 1893, and barely an edition was sold. The farmers and business men of the West had no money for books. On the other hand, take my friend B., for years connected with the — Railroad in New York, entering its service as office boy and promoted rapidly through deaths, removals, etc., until he became Assistant General Eastern Agent at a liberal salary.

B. made the — a valuable man in New York. He was exceptionally strong with the dry goods jobbers and it wasn't long before the — was getting all the dry goods shipped to points beyond the Mississippi River. Lots of shrewd, forceful men were trying to cut into him, but the — held its own. By and by he got

so strong that he saw something better ahead. Suddenly he resigned. The ——— prayed and wept, but B. was obdurate. He then went to all the dry goods jobbers west of the Mississippi and said, "Look here, your hair is falling out from worry lest some of your rivals should get better rates than you; now you pay me so much a year and I'll agree to protect you from lower rates, rebates, or any other ills business flesh is heir to." They were glad to do it, and I suppose B. is to-day drawing a larger salary from this source than the President of the United States.

I have myself lost two fortunes that seemed within my grasp and were snatched from it through no fault of my own. While running my land office in Chicago, my attention was called to the fact that lands in the Yazoo Valley, Mississippi, could be bought at a very

low rate from the State, having been seized for taxes. Among my clients was a long, lean, gaunt Maine Yankee, with as keen a scent for the almighty dollar as one often sees, but not a bad fellow in other respects. He was in the habit of coming to me for tips as to lands which I would give, boy like, without thinking that my knowledge was worth money. He was not alone. A man who later ran for Governor of Iowa made his fortune by buying land which I recommended to him. I now proposed to the former that he join me in buying a large tract of these lands which could then be sold to settlers. Later, we took in a number of Iowa and Illinois capitalists and bought a tract of four hundred thousand acres in the Yazoo Delta adjacent to the Yazoo River for from eight to twenty-five cents an acre. Then we sent an experienced real

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estate man as our agent to England to negotiate for the sale of the entire tract to an English syndicate at five dollars an acre. A member of the syndicate with his experts came over to view the lands with authority to close the bargain if as represented by our agent. Of course we were advised of their coming and arranged to show them every attention. They came to Chicago; after that they were our guests, were dined and wined to the limit, and transportation furnished them to the lands. We spent a week in the delta looking over the proposed purchase. The Yazoo Delta, as most know, is several hundred miles in length and from five to sixty miles wide, being formed by the deposit of the overflow of the Mississippi. The Yazoo River flows through it and empties into the Mississippi a short distance below Yazoo City, the principal town of

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the valley. Jackson, the beautiful capital of Mississippi, is a short distance to the eastward.

In the spring of the year—the time we visited it—the valley is a veritable Eden. The surface is of course level, and covered with a short, green grass interspersed with wild flowers of every hue and form. There is no undergrowth and the vast forests of cypress, burr oak, red gum, overcup, white oak, and hickory form vast aisles and colonnades far more impressive than art of man can create. As we rode a red deer broke cover and jumped for the river, or a flock of wild turkeys launched themselves into the air; wild fowl of all descriptions covered the watercourses, and the singing of birds was everywhere heard.

The wonder and delight of our English friends was pleasant to see; in fact, the

expression. "What a country, doncher know," was on their lips from Chicago to Yazoo City. As may be inferred the valley's beauty and advantages were fully set forth in the words that fell from our lips. The soil was a rich alluvial, hundreds of feet deep, that could be tilled for hundreds of years without exhaustion and without fertilizing; two to three bales of cotton and fifty bushels of corn per acre were average crops. One sad drawback there was, which, however, we did not feel called upon to state—the whole country was protected by levees from the annual overflow of the Mississippi, and if one of them happened to break the mischief was to pay; these lands were then flooded with water from five to twenty feet deep. As luck would have it the annual freshet was then due—in fact was coming down the river, and we were on tenterhooks lest

the levees should break ere we could get our friends out of the country.

Each successive freshet would leave its impress in a ring on the trees showing high water mark. The Englishman noticed these as we rode along and asked what caused them. "Oh," said I, "that's made by the wild hogs rubbing their tusks against them." As we got farther in the rings grew higher and higher until some of them were fully fifteen feet above the ground. "My G-d, sir," said he, "how your wild hogs have grown," but he was so dense he did not suspect the real cause.

After a week in the valley we went back to Jackson where the Governor of Mississippi gave our friends a reception and they were introduced to the State officers and leading citizens. The lands proved eminently satisfactory to them and the deeds were made out ready to

be delivered on the following day, when the first payment of two hundred thousand dollars in cash would be paid: but man proposes and God disposes. That very night the floods came, the levees broke and the whole valley was under water. Of course the newspapers were full of it; our English friends read them and the deal was off. Nearly half a million dollars slipped through our fingers in a single night. We tried again and again to effect a sale in bulk, but without success, and the lands were finally divided and sold by each holder separately. A hoodoo seemed to follow them or me. I had held mine for several years. Had gone to Canada to live in fact—taxes and interest having brought the cost to me up to a dollar an acre, when one day I received a wire from a lawyer in Yazoo City asking what I would take per acre for the whole block—some twenty thou-

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sand acres. I replied three dollars. He accepted and wired to make out the deeds and send them to the leading bank in Yazoo City for collection. I did so, but before the deeds could arrive the levees again broke, the country was flooded, and the deal was again declared off.

XI.

TWO ADVENTURES.

Two adventures of mine while in the land office are so redolent of the soil that they could be narrated.

I arrived in Sibley, Iowa, one Summer day with a party of home seekers and took them to the principal hotel. The day had been extremely hot and sultry, the heat and humidity both ranging close to one hundred degrees. The hotel, a two story frame structure, was located on the corner of two streets. On one side was the railroad, and across the way was a large lumber yard. We had just finished luncheon when the sky suddenly became dark, and the air was filled with boards, beams, bunches of shingles and lath from the despoiled lumber yard,

while the house rocked and shook as in the grasp of an army of Titans. I rushed out into the office where eight or ten people were huddled, including the landlady. I asked her the way to a cyclone cellar. She did not know, she replied, wringing her hands. Meantime the missiles from the yard were bombarding the house like shots from a battery of artillery. One man lost his head and darted out of the door saying if he must die he would die in the open; he got out of sight so rapidly that we could not tell what form of locomotion he chose. I succeeded in keeping my people indoors and there we stood for what seemed hours, but was really less than a minute. Very little damage was done owing to the fact that we were on the outer edge of the whirl. In course of time the individual who was going to die out of doors came back covered with

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mud and bruises, his clothes torn to tatters and spitting out mud and broken teeth. After looking us over he concluded that if he were to undergo another experience of like character he would remain and take his chances with the majority.

On the day before Christmas, 188—, I was in St. Paul, Minnesota, on business and there ran across my old chum, C. He was the soul of hospitality and invited me over to six o'clock dinner with him at his sister's house, in West St. Paul, after which we were to take trains for our respective destinations—he to visit his sweetheart twenty-five miles out, I to my home in Chicago. It was late when we started, after calling on our numerous friends, and C. proposed that instead of going round by the bridge we cross the Mississippi on the ice, the temperature, thirty degrees below zero,

insuring perfect solidity, as we supposed; and yet before we had got two hundred feet from shore we both went through an air hole that had been covered, first, with a thin coating of ice and then with another of snow. Fortunately, in going down we threw out our arms and caught the solid ice, the hole being only six feet across; still we were in a bad way, for the current runs like a mill race there, and we were heavily clothed, having on rubbers and ulsters. We found it impossible to draw ourselves up; we could only hold on; no aid was within sight or sound. I shall never forget the face of my companion as we hung there between life and death, his eyes as large as saucers, and I presume I looked equally pleasing to him. Suddenly, as I kicked, my right foot came in contact with a great piece of floating ice; I launched out with both feet; the force of that kick may be

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appreciated when I say that one rubber and shoe were cut in half, but I got out. I then turned to my friend and said, "Can you hang on while I get a plank?" "No," he replied, "I am almost gone." "Well," said I, "I will pull you out or we will both go in together."

The moment my wet clothes touched the ice they froze to it, and with this purchase I drew my friend out with such force that he struck the ice twenty feet away. He then helped me to get free and we started up the steep bank. It was all we could do to reach the top, our clothes being frozen so stiff we were like blocks of wood. It was dark and no one in sight, but shouting with all our might a passing drayman heard our cry, picked us up and dumped us on his dray as he would logs of wood. We directed him to the wholesale house with which my friend was connected, and under the

stimulus of a bill of two figures his old horse made the time of his life. Arrived there willing hands took us into the engine room, cut our clothes from us and rubbed us down. Neither of us ever suffered any ill effects from our involuntary bath.

It was then half-past seven, an hour and a half after the hour named for dinner. The engineer fitted me out in a suit of his old clothes; as he weighed two hundred pounds and I one hundred and fifty, my appearance may be imagined. My friend presented an equally laughable figure, but at last we arrived at his sister's home, two hours late. Our reception was at first frigid but when she and her husband heard of our narrow escape they thawed out like an ice cake under a July sun.

But my adventures were not yet over. I had to take the 11 P. M. train for

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Chicago, and not having time to change my clothes, I went into the sleeper dressed exactly as I left the engine room. With an old soft hat on, the shoulders of my coat hanging down, the sleeves rolled up at the wrists, and my trousers turned up at the bottom, I must have presented a comical appearance. There were two prominent business men of Chicago with their wives in the car, and I saw they were trying to figure out what kind of a specimen I was. I could but notice the amusement I created, and when, on getting under way, the two gentlemen followed me into the smoking compartment and we had lighted our cigars, I explained and we became good friends. Later I was introduced to the ladies and it was nearly two in the morning ere we sought our berths.

XII.

I BECAME A TRAVELING PASSENGER AGENT

The year 1887 marks my entrance into the railroad field; I had before sustained a quasi relation to certain railroads as agent for their lands and in securing passenger business for them on commission, but this year I formed a connection with the Y. Railroad, one of the great trunk lines of the west, in which service I have ever since remained. The panic of 1886 had stopped the sale of lands and brought general business to a standstill. I had married in 1881 the daughter of a well-to-do manufacturer of Chicago. When we became engaged she was in perfect health, but soon after, by a fall, was so injured that she became an invalid; the best medical skill was

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enlisted but failed to restore her to health. Her parents and she would have released me from my engagement, but this I refused to do and we were married at her bedside. After our marriage I engaged the most distinguished specialists to treat her, but without avail. These heavy domestic expenses with the general business depression brought me to the end of my resources. One day as I sat in my office, now rarely troubled with visitors, brooding over the situation an inspiration came to me—I would go over to Canada and start anew. There was a large colony of Mennonites in Ontario, several of whom I had interested in Iowa lands and I thought that by moving into their country I could, by personal contact, interest them in the west. I therefore went to the General Passenger Agent of the Y. Railroad, and told him if he would pay me fifty

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dollars a month and furnish me with the necessary annuals over his and other roads I would go to Canada and work up passenger business for him, and that if after four months' trial my work did not prove satisfactory he might abrogate the contract. He accepted and thus in September, 1887, I became their traveling Passenger Agent, with headquarters at Berlin, Ontario.

The qualifications of a traveling passenger agent of a great railroad must be many and varied. He must have a pleasing exterior, a commanding presence, a smooth, persuasive tongue, infinite tact, ready wit, and, above all, be able to adapt himself to all classes and conditions of men. He must be able to make friends with the ticket sellers of his territory and enlist their interest and good will, keep in touch with the movements of all societies, conventions, fra-

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ternal orders, etc., be at ease in the best society in order to impress on people with the means of traveling the advantages and attractions of his particular route, and he must take and kiss the farmer's babies in order to get the farmer and his party who are going to some western town. His knowledge of the geography, soil, climate, resources, and productions of the United States must be minute, varied and accurate. I knew a Passenger Agent who was able within one hour to go out with a number of prize fighters, entertain them to their satisfaction, and secure a train load of them for a prize fight to be held in a southern city. Returning to the office he found Father A. waiting to see if he had a picnic ground that would do for his Sunday School, and was able to convince the good father of the superior attractions of his ground over several

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competitors; scarcely was the clergyman bowed out when a deputation of school teachers called en route to San Francisco to attend an educational convention there. They wished to know why they should choose his road over several others at their command, and D. sat down and told them in extenso, and succeeded in securing the whole party.

My work in Ontario brought me into close personal contact with its citizens, and a frank, honest, generous, whole-souled people I found them. There was a nurseryman whose business had made him personally known over the country, and him I engaged to take me in his buggy throughout the country distributing our folders and maps and making the Y. Railroad known generally; incidentally we talked western lands and secured several colonies for our road with

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their goods. We were never in a hurry. Stopping at a farm house we would spend a few minutes talking with the good wife, then go out in the field for a chat with the farmer himself, perhaps stay to dinner. At night we always stopped where darkness overtook us, always meeting with cheerful, unstinted hospitality. Sometimes there was only an attic available, and that already occupied by several of the farmer's sons and hired men; then we would betake us to the barn with its fragrant hay mows. Many an hour have I lain and watched the slow procession of the stars through holes in the siding or roof.

After the third month my friend, the General Passenger Agent, wrote that I was doing such good work the company would allow me an expense account. In the meantime I had heard of a large colony of people in Wingham, Ontario,

who were about emigrating to Louisiana on the line of the Southern Pacific. On going there I found that passenger representatives of other railroads had been soliciting the business, but by settling down among them and visiting the various farmers who contemplated moving I succeeded in securing the entire colony, some ten carloads, with their household goods, for the Y. Railroad. This caused ructions in the general passenger offices of the competing roads, who thought the prize was within their grasp, and their Canadian agents were kept busy explaining. E. in particular, General Passenger Agent of the X. Railroad, finding the Canadian home seekers were coming more and more by way of the Iowa Junction of the Y. Railroad instead of directly over his own road from Chicago, in spite of his repeated requests to his Canadian agent to get a hustle on and

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look after this business, at last came himself determined to find out the true cause. He first went to the city ticket agent at Berlin through whom I purchased my tickets, dividing with him the commissions I received from the Grand Trunk.

The man suggested that as I was in town I could probably explain to his satisfaction why his agent failed to get the business moving from Berlin. I was sent for and in the course of the afternoon made it clear to the General Passenger Agent that I got the business because I went out and created it, and we parted the best of friends, he being quite content to go home and receive the passengers I secured at his Iowa Junction.

My General Passenger Agent showed his appreciation by voluntarily raising my salary from fifty to ——— dollars a month, and by making me Traveling

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Passenger Agent for the entire territory of Canada.

The nature of my work now almost entirely changed. Minor details were left to my subordinates, while I traveled throughout the Dominion, forming the acquaintance of the ticket sellers in the principal cities, and of others who could be of value to us, calling the attention of the public to my Railroad and getting it interested. Among the friends I made at this time was the City Passenger Agent of one of the railroads centering in Montreal, who took quite a kind interest in me. He was then a very wealthy man, living at the Windsor Hotel, having his horses and carriages in summer and his sleigh in winter; a Director of one of the banks in Montreal and prominent in the business and social life of the city. This man often took me to ride, introduced me to the most

select circle, and aided me in many ways. Some ten years later through misfortune he lost his position with the railroad and all his wealth. Later still, when I was located in New York, he drifted to that city and it grieved me very much to have him call one day in clothes that showed he was in hard luck; in going out he asked me if I would let him have a dollar. I cheerfully gave it to him and from that time he kept coming in, invariably getting his dollar. I never refused him. What became of him eventually I never learned.

Another pleasant friendship I formed at this time was that of F., an energetic young man of Scotch parentage, who was ticket seller for the Grand Trunk in B—n. I saw that he had it in him and took great pleasure in helping him climb the ladder of success. On my recommendation he was made my suc-

cessor in Canada, and later when the company wanted a passenger representative in New York, I recommended him for that position and he filled it with credit to himself and to the satisfaction of the company.

The years I spent in Canada were very happy and contented ones. I was successful in business, I liked the people and I am sure made many friends who will not fail me in the time of need, should it ever come. But after some years my people seemed to reach the conclusion that I was a peg which would fit into a larger hole. "F.," said G., "can represent us in Canada; you are worthy of a larger field; the company has never had a passenger agent in New England; we are going to send you there."

XIII.

ARABIAN NIGHTS' ENTERTAINMENT.

English as she is Wrote.

When railroad men meet in club or private car they are fond of telling stories, some of which in point and humor will equal Mark Twain's, or even Old Abe's himself. I do not know how many railroad men have laughed over this letter which I had from some shipping friends of mine, a bicycle firm, doing business in Montreal. The letter came from a French Canadian customer of theirs:

mister T. J. Jones and companee, Notre Dame street, Montreal, P. Q.

Dear Sir: i receev de bicykel witch I by from you alrite but for why you dont send me no saddel. wat is de use of de bicykel when She dont have no saddei.

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I am loose to me my kustomer sure ting by me no having no saddel and dats no very pleasure for me. wat is de matter wit you mister Jones an companee, is not my moneys so good like annoder mans. you loose to me my trade an I vere anger for dat an now I tell to you dat you are a dam fools an no good mister T. J. Jones and companee.

I send you back at wunce your bickel tomorro for shure bekase you are no sutch a dam foolishness peeples.

Yours respectfulle

J. B. St. Denis

P. S.—since i rite dis letter i find de saddel in de box. excuse to me.

The Lady and the Porter.

Returning from one of my frequent trips to Chicago I took a Michigan Central train for Buffalo. The Pullman berths were practically all taken. I had a lower berth. The upper berth in my section was taken by a delicate looking

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little woman evidently an invalid; something in her brown eyes awakened my sympathy and as she did not go out into the dining car for dinner, on coming back I offered to get her anything she might wish at the next station, where the train stopped five minutes. She accepted the offer gratefully and I brought her some fruit, sandwiches and a pint bottle of milk. Later I told her she was welcome to my lower berth as, it was so much more convenient for her, and I would take the upper. This offer she also accepted with appreciation. I had before this charged the colored porter to awaken me at six in the morning, but I now neglected to tell him that I had exchanged berths with the lady. Next morning I awoke of my own accord, the porter having failed to call me, and meeting him I taxed him roundly for his neglect of duty.

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“Boss,” said he, “does you see any gray hairs in my haid?”

“No,” said I. “It’s as black and wooly as usual. What is the matter?”

“Well, boss, I’s e nigh skeered to death twice las night. Bout one o’clock I put my han under your berth to pull out your shoes an what you spose I hul out—a great big laig. I dropped it an didn’t stop runnin’ till I was in the next cah; there I wait until the conductor come along and I say, ‘There’s murder in de nex’ cah sure, an’ they’ve done cut up the cawpse.’ He laugh an’ say some genmen has been treatin’ me overmuch, an’ I foller him in, an’ he puts his han under de berth an’ pulls out a cork laig. Again in de mawning I puts my han on you to wake you an’ somebody screams out like a woman, an’ skeers me so I run like the devil again.” I explained the situation, we both agreed it was

worth a dollar, and the incident was closed.

A Midnight Visitor.

On one occasion a farmer whom I had sent with his family to Iowa neglected to have his trunks examined by the customs officials at Fort Gratiot, Michigan, on the Detroit River, where passengers by the Grand Trunk first enter United States territory. They were held. He wrote me from Iowa, and I took the trouble to run over there from Berlin and straighten out the tangle. It was after dark before I got the trunks off, and I was forced to stay all night in a little railroad town which, at that time, was not very inviting. The conductor I came over with took me to his hotel and introduced me to the clerk, a very stout person with an impressive air, and evidently desirous of producing a favorable

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impression. He gave me a large room on the second floor in the rear of the ladies' parlor. An electric light in the yard illuminated the room completely except one corner in which stood the bed. There was a large aperture over the door big enough for a man to crawl through, the transom having been removed. I was led to make note of these details, no doubt, because the town was infested with tough characters who might like to pay me a visit. It was not apprehension on this account, I think, but for some reason I was very restless and could not sleep. About one o'clock while tossing in my bed I heard some one moving about in the parlor, then a chair was placed softly against my door, and I heard some one climbing up it. I had no weapon, but picked up my heavy shoes and sat up in bed with one in each hand. Soon a hand reached up on the

transom, then another, and then in the glare of the electric light I saw a head and shoulders appear, and a most villainous face looked into the room. I let fly one of my shoes, which hit the door with a report that seemed to me as loud as a cannon. The man was so startled he wilted and hung there as limp as a rag; I followed with the second shoe and he dropped to the floor outside and made off like a deer. After that there was no more sleep for me; I immediately dressed, went down to the office and told my troubles to the clerk. He laughed and endeavored to make light of it.

The Bolt of Silk and the Farmer's Wife.

Canadian duties are extremely high. Like thousands of good Americans I have tried now and then to evade them; if it be a sin I hope the recording angel

will write it down lightly. On printed matter, the duty was exceedingly onerous, twenty per cent. of the cost besides a duty on the raw material. As I was distributing folders and other Y. literature by the ton, I devised a scheme by which I got a good deal of it in free. By and by H., the customs officer—a good fellow, by the way, and one of my most intimate friends—came to me, patted me on the shoulder and said, “G., I see a great many Y. folders and posters around here; in fact, the country’s flooded with them, and it has occurred to me to ask at what point you pay your duties?”

Well, I was in a quandary; if I named a fictitious place he would investigate and convict me of falsehood. It seemed a case where honesty was the best policy and I made a clean breast of it.

“I’ve been onto you for a long time,”

said he, "and thought for my own safety I'd have to call a halt, as it might be reported at headquarters and my superiors would ask why I was not looking after the government's interests."

As I had deadheaded my stuff for nearly two years I was content from that time on to pay duties. Of course my superiors did not know what I was doing.

Some time after this I was coming through Canada with our Buffalo representative and bound for the same city. "G.," said the latter, "I have here a bolt of silk for a dress pattern that you can have for a song."

"How shall I get it into the States?" I asked.

"We will sit on it," he replied.

"All right," said I. I paid him five dollars for the bolt. I made no inquiries as to how he got it, knowing it was a bargain if we could get it over the

frontier. We ensconced ourselves in a day coach with our valises in the seat in front ready open for examination, but sitting comfortably on the bolt of silk. As luck would have it, at Hamilton we met a business associate who invited us back into the dining car for refreshments; we left our belongings on the seat, carelessly throwing our overcoats over the bolt, and went back into the dining car where we became so engrossed in swapping stories that we forgot all about our possessions in front, until the train brought up with a jolt at the Suspension Bridge, where the Canadian customs officers would board us. We at once rushed over to the day coach, realizing that it was a case of nip and tuck which got to the seats first, the inspectors or ourselves. What was our surprise on reaching our seats to find the one on which the bolt of silk rested occupied by

a very fat old Canadian woman, evidently from the backwoods. The inspector was but two seats behind us opening and inspecting the bags, and our trepidation so alarmed the good old soul that she made a movement to rise. "Madame, sit down," said my Buffalo friend, and putting his hand on her shoulder he forced her back into the seat. I said soothingly, "It's all right, madame, you are not discommoding us in the least," and I obligingly opened her bag for her when the official reached us; he never once suspected that a woman of her station would have anything contraband, passed all our satchels with a cursory look, and N. and I breathed freely again. When we had crossed the bridge and were in Uncle Sam's territory, I could not resist turning to the old woman and saying, "Madame, we are a thousand times obliged to you

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for sitting on our lovely bolt of silk and enabling us to smuggle it over without paying duties on it." The backwoods folk are very patriotic and the old woman rose in horror at having aided in despoiling her own country, and went back, muttering and gesticulating, to the farthest seat in the car. The joke proved to be on me, however, for when I took the silk home it proved to be so gay that the madame refused to accept it and to get rid of it I had to give it to the servant girl. Somehow, I can't recall ever having made anything by seeking to evade the laws.

XIV.

THE NEW ENGLAND FIELD.

I reached Boston on February 28th, 1890, in readiness for my new duties, which were to commence on March 1st. I confess to some trepidation, for I had read of Boston culture and coldness. It was wholly a new field; I had never been in New England before, our railroad had never had a representative there, so I must break new ground in a double sense. J., our General Passenger Agent, and D., the Northwestern Passenger Agent, my immediate superior, came on to see me started right. My first experience in Boston on the morning of March 1st was an eye opener. I went with D. into Young's Hotel to get a shave. In Canada we had been in the habit of getting a beautiful shave with all the accessories

for a dime and no fees. Here I had several hot towels, in addition, and the check was fifty cents, with a fee to the operator. The expression of my face so tickled D.—a fat, jolly man of two hundred pounds—that he burst out laughing and continued till I feared he would split his sides. I told him if that was a fair sample of Boston prices the first thing I should do would be to apply for a raise of salary.

The first thing my two superiors did was to take me round to the various city ticket offices and introduce me. The General Passenger Agent after a day left us, but D. remained a week and we visited the large towns and cities in the neighborhood of Boston in the interest of our road.

The first office of the Y. railroad in Boston was a very modest one—simply desk room in a law office on the fifth

floor of a big office building at the magnificent rental of ten dollars a month, but the volume of business soon demanded more commodious quarters; I have always preferred to begin at the bottom and go up rather than at the top and come down. A roll top desk and three chairs comprised our furniture, a red headed boy our clerical force. After a week D. returned to Chicago and I was left to fight the battle alone. In their traveling instincts New Englanders are peculiar, quite different from the people of the west and south, or of Canada. They like to be personally conducted, a trait which has enabled clever firms like Raymond and Whitcomb to build up a lucrative business by conducting excursion parties to Florida, New Orleans, California, and even across the seas, so that the methods used successfully in the west would not work

here, and entirely new ones had to be devised.

Western and southern land booms were then at their height, and the New Englanders had become intensely interested in them, spending their money freely in any ventures promising good pecuniary returns; in fact, I consider the whole country indebted to New England for its faith in, and its part in settling, the vast unpeopled tracts of the West. My knowledge of western lands at once put me in touch with these people and contributed greatly to my success. My first excursion of note, and one that pleased my superiors greatly, was to Iowa. The crops had been good in 1890, and in September, our folks at S. opened a beautiful corn palace that was really worth seeing. Among the friends I had made in Boston was Mr. J. E., a capitalist largely interested in S.

real estate, and I now suggested to him that he work up an excursion train to take prospective buyers out to see the corn palace and incidentally his lands. He fell in with the idea at once and I secured the cost of a train of four sleepers with dining and baggage cars for a trip of ten days. A hundred passengers were found with my assistance and then, at my suggestion, he invited the leading editors of Boston, Providence, Worcester, and other cities in the vicinity as his guests. They accepted and the result was that the most distinguished party of editors that had ever left Boston accompanied our party to S. I went with the party to see that everything ran smoothly. The weather was perfect, it being the balmy Indian summer time. Our arrival at S. proved an event, as it was unusual for a delegation from Boston to visit a western city. We were

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received with open arms by the Mayor and leading citizens, given the freedom of the town, and banqueted at the clubs. The city officials even went so far as to get a band of Sioux Indians to come to town and entertain us with their war dances, etc. Needless to say we secured a tremendous amount of free advertising both before and after the excursion.

The favorite mode of railroad advertising in the early nineties was by quarter and half sheet cards which were tacked to fences, trees, telegraph poles and other conspicuous objects, as well as hung in stores, barber shops and the like. I had received a good stock and so had my special friend I., New England Passenger Agent of the M. K. & H. Our respective railroads were rivals, but we did not see why that should prevent us from starting out together to distribute and display our literature. We de-

cided to post them side by side and let the best man win. Accordingly we left Boston on a Monday morning, posted Lowell and Manchester, N. H., that day, and Concord and Bellows Falls on Tuesday. That night we had a conference and decided it would be a great scheme to stick our cards on the telegraph poles along the railroad so that the passengers could see at least the head lines as they whizzed by. Well, we walked the tracks from Bellows Falls to Burlington and pasted our cards on every pole between the two cities along the line of the Central Vermont. It took us four days to do it, and as the newspapers soon got hold of the feat it gave us a lot of free advertising as well as raillery from our railroad friends. The penchant of the New Englanders for going to Church, Christian Endeavor, Epworth League, temperance, educational and other con-

ventions threw a great deal of passenger business in our way, and was scrupulously fostered by us. It was usually necessary to go before the boards of the different bodies to secure it, and, other things being equal, the smoothest and most persuasive talker got the contract.

XV.

I ENTER THE FREIGHT FIELD.

To a casual observer the passenger traffic of a great railroad might seem to be more valuable than its freight business, but the reverse is the case. The average proportion of net revenue is one-third passenger and two-thirds freight. A passenger car costs eight to ten thousand dollars, a freight car from eight hundred to one thousand dollars. Pullman cars as a rule are run at a loss, but dead freight takes what it can get and asks no frills. Freight traffic, then, is the prize the great railway systems are struggling for; and Boston in the nineties as now was a great freight shipping point.

New England is a manufacturing section par excellence ; every valley

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is vocal with the whirl of the spindle, the hum and roar of machinery; indeed, it is almost the only resource of her inhabitants, and perhaps seventy-five per cent. of the multitudinous products of her mills is shipped from Boston and vicinity. This of course had come to my attention. As it happened, M., our Assistant Traffic Manager, in this summer of 1890, visited me in Boston. M. and I had been great friends as far back as when I was in the land business. His advent recalled an incident of the breezy prairie. One day I told him and the Asst. General Passenger Agent that if they would go with me to Nebraska I would make each of them a present of a quarter section of land. They accepted with expressions of gratitude. The land was located ten miles northeast of Bassett, Neb., and we had to drive out from

Bassett in a pouring rain storm. One quarter section had a big sand hill on it and this I had designed for K., as at that time I knew the Asst. Passenger Agent better than I did M. All the way out I was studying how I could make it appear that the sand hill was located on both sections so that there should be no appearance of favoritism on my part. At last I thought I had it. After locating the government stake I drove around the half section and finally stopping at a point where the land showed up to best advantage, I said to my friend, the Asst. General Passenger Agent, "There, K., that quarter section is yours; it takes in a part of that sand hill, as you see; now we will drive to the other quarter."

We drove a half mile farther, and I said to M, "That is your quarter."

He stood and looked it over a minute, then turning to me said with a comical

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look but very solemn voice, "A., you have given me the whole sand hill. Don't say a word now. (I didn't). I shall need it all to build my house." Some months after I was offered six hundred and forty dollars for each quarter section, and going to M. I asked him how he would like to receive two hundred and forty dollars for his sand hill. He replied, "A., that amount of money would be equal to one thousand dollars a month hence, for I am to be married to-morrow."

He signed the papers, I gave him two hundred and forty dollars, and we were both happy, as I received four hundred dollars commission. As the reader may imagine, M. was my friend from that time on and I was now to receive substantial proof of it.

One day I said to him that I believed there were dollars for our road in freight, to cents in the passenger traffic, and

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called his attention to the volume of freight business which certain western railroad competitors of ours were carrying out of New England. He seemed very much impressed, bade me good bye and took the train for Chicago. A week later I had a telegram from our Traffic Manager to come to Chicago. On arriving I called on M., who told me that our folks had decided to enter the New England freight field. I was escorted to the Traffic Manager's office, the General Freight Agent and General Passenger Agent were called in, and in their presence I repeated what I had told M. On concluding I was asked who I had in view for Freight Agent. I had had in mind L., then chief clerk in the Boston freight office of the W. Railroad, in charge of their freight interests, and now named him. I had no idea that they had me in view as I knew nothing

of the freight business, but was soon told by the Traffic Manager that, beginning September 1st, I would be their General Agent for New England in charge of both freight and passenger business with authority to hire the gentleman I had named as my traveling freight and passenger agent. I was also authorized to descend from my sky parlor and take an office on the street more in consonance with my new dignity and the business to be transacted, This I did, securing commodious offices in the S. B. A. building on the same floor with them.

XVI.

A FIERCE COMPETITION.

I confess to my heart sinking within me on my first survey of the new field. There were then over forty distinct railroads operated and managed separately in the New England States, most of them radiating from Boston like spokes from the hub; to-day the New York, New Haven, and Hartford controls everything south of the Boston and Albany Division of the New York Central, and the Boston and Maine everything north of it except the Central Vermont, the Rutland, Bangor, and Aroostook, and the Grand Trunk Railroads. There were then as now the following freight dispatch lines operating out of New

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England to all points south, southwest, west, and northwest, viz.:

Merchants Dispatch, via Vanderbilt lines west of Troy and Albany.

Color lines—*i.e.*, Red, White and Blue, via Vanderbilt lines west of Troy and Albany.

Star Union Line, via Pennsylvania Railroad west of New York.

Lehigh Valley Dispatch, via Lehigh Valley Railroad and connections.

Wabash Dispatch, via Buffalo and Wabash Railroad.

Lackawanna Dispatch, via New York and Delaware, Lackawanna and Western Railroad.

Erie Dispatch, via Newburg, N. Y. and Erie Railroad.

Central States Dispatch, via New York, Central Railroad of New Jersey, Reading, and Baltimore and Ohio Railroads.

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West Shore Line, via Rotterdam Junction and West Shore Railroad.

Hoosac Tunnel Line, via Fitchburg Division, Boston and Maine Railroad, Rotterdam Junction and West Shore Railroad.

Blue Ridge Dispatch, via New York, Central Railroad of New Jersey, Reading, Norfolk and Western, and Chesapeake and Ohio Railways.

Reading Dispatch, via New York, Central Railroad of New Jersey, Reading Railroad and connections.

Differential lines, having a lower basis of rates on account of longer distance and slower time :

National Dispatch, via Montreal and Grand Trunk Railroad.

Canadian Pacific Dispatch, via Montreal and Canadian Pacific Railroad.

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Great Eastern Line, via Portland, Me., and Grand Trunk Railroad, also via Montreal and Grand Trunk.

Rome, Watertown and Ogdensburg Line, via Ogdensburg, Rome, Watertown and Ogdensburg, and Wabash Railroads.

Rutland and Michigan Central Line, via Rutland, Rome, Watertown and Ogdensburg, and Michigan Central Railroads.

Canada Atlantic Dispatch, via Swanton, Vt., and Canada Atlantic Railroad. Also Ocean and Rail Lines.

Kanawha Dispatch, via Merchants and Miners Steamship Company, Boston and Providence to Norfolk, Va., thence Chesapeake and Ohio Railroad.

Norfolk and Western Dispatch, via Merchants and Miners, Boston and Providence to Norfolk, thence Norfolk and Western Railroad.

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Seaboard Dispatch, via Merchants and Miners, from Boston and Providence to Norfolk, thence Seaboard Air Line Railway.

Windsor Line, Boston, Providence and Fall River to Philadelphia, thence Baltimore and Ohio Railroad.

Joy Line, Boston and Providence to New York, thence all rail connections west.

Piedmont Air Line, via Merchants and Miners, Boston and Providence to Norfolk, thence Southern Railroad.

Atlantic Coast Line, via Merchants and Miners from Boston and Providence to Norfolk, thence Atlantic Coast Line Railroad.

Metropolitan Line, steamships to New York, thence all rail connections.

Gloucester Steamboat Company, Gloucester, Mass., to Boston, thence all rail, or ocean and rail.

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Savannah Line, Ocean Steamship Company, Boston to Savannah, thence all rail connections.

Clyde Line Steamships, Boston and Providence to Wilmington, N. C., Charleston, S. C., Brunswick, Ga., and Jacksonville, Fla.

And these all rail southern lines:

Southern Dispatch Line, via Virginia Gateways.

Richmond and Danville Dispatch.

Norfolk and Western Dispatch.

Seaboard Dispatch.

Atlantic Coast Dispatch.

The origin and growth of these various lines forms an interesting chapter in the history of railroading. They were formed primarily by separate but connecting lines for the securing and forwarding of through freight. Take for instance freight shipped from Boston to Chicago.

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For years the Boston and Albany carried it to Albany and there delivered it to the New York Central, which took it on to Buffalo and there delivered it to the Michigan Central to be forwarded to Chicago. But in course of time the officials of the three companies got together and agreed to form a dispatch line to be known as the Merchants Dispatch, to secure and forward all freight business originating in New England and destined for points west of Buffalo and Chicago. This company has its own officers from President to solicitors, with a manager in charge of the latter, and its expenses are borne jointly by the companies in interest. By this plan the necessity of each of the three railroads maintaining its own staff of solicitors for the same business is done away with—in other words, one man does the work of three.

Each of the above-named lines had its commercial agent in Boston to look after its interests, and it was necessary for representatives of the great trunk lines to keep in touch with them all in order to be favored with a share of the unconsigned freight they controlled. Competition, as has been said, was intense, indeed, the very air was charged with it. To complicate the situation rate cutting was going on at such a rate that a general agent never knew "where he was at." Previous to the Interstate Law, which became effective in 1887, tariffs to competitive points were used by a number of lines simply as a basis from which to cut rates; after the law went into force rates were in fairly good shape for a year or more, but familiarity soon bred contempt; the traffic managers of the so-called weaker lines could not resist offering concessions in order to

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secure business moving via the stronger lines at tariff rates. At length the Interstate Commission got after the traffic manager of a St. Louis west line and punished him by a fine. This had a good effect for a time, but rates were more or less demoralized all over the United States. It was not until the Elkins Bill became effective in March, 1902, that rate conditions became better, but this was due not so much to the law—although that has had a good effect—as to the prosperous commercial conditions obtaining in the United States.

It is a fact that the principal railroads of this country have been unable during the past two or more years to get sufficient rolling stock and locomotives to move business offered, and this in spite of the fact that the railroads were increasing their rolling stock as fast as car builders all over the country could

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turn it out. For example, the Y. Railroad increased its freight cars by ten thousand in 1903, and its locomotives by one hundred and three, yet in the face of this increase it has been all it could do to satisfy its shippers.

By frequent conferences and mutual confidence in each other the traffic managers of all the railroads south of the Virginia gateways, the Ohio River and east of the Mississippi have perfected an ideal rate condition. In all that region cut rates are unknown in this year of grace, 1904. Manufacturers are satisfied, for they now know that rates are to be depended on. On the other hand, traffic officials are always willing to listen to complaints of shippers, and if found just and reasonable to grant their request. This rate condition applies also to the New England States, and to the so-called trunk line territory east of

Buffalo. The Central Traffic Territory from Buffalo and Pittsburg west to and including the country east of St. Louis, and north of the Ohio—all of Illinois and Michigan—is not in as sound a rate condition due to the concessions offered by a number of so-called weak lines, but even there they are in a better condition than ever before. The country west of St. Louis—the territory of the Western Freight Association—is in much the same condition—the weak lines cutting rates, the strong lines maintaining them; but this is a digression.

At the time I was made General Agent I received a deal of good advice and instructions from my superiors, but the details of the freight business I had to find out for myself. Experience is a great teacher; I now have the experience.

As a passenger agent the value of a

dollar in securing a patron never stood in the way; naturally I carried the same tactics into the freight business. The first move I made was to visit the traffic manager of a great wire manufactory who was daily shipping tons of wire goods to the south and west. I found it necessary to pay two cents per one hundred pounds to secure a share of his business as others were doing it. Two cents at that time did not seem to me a very large sum; so I consented and business began to move from that manufactory at once via our road to various western competitive points; I also went to New York City and made a similar deal with the traffic manager of a large corporation owning plants in New York, Pennsylvania and Massachusetts for business to move from the Massachusetts plants to western competitive points, and the Y. Railroad began to receive

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business never before carried by them. Well, everything ran smoothly for several months, when a certain railroad man—who would have been willing to fill my position—got it into his head that I was buying business, and doing it so badly that he could not afford to stand by and see such a big company's revenues wasted. Believing that the company was paying rebates he went to Chicago and interviewed several of our traffic managers, who, however, paid no attention to his tale of woe. At last he got an audience with the Vice President (who had but recently come to the road), having complete control of operation and traffic. This gentleman listened to his story, sent for the traffic manager and asked him as to the truth of it. The latter replied that he had given no one authority as to refunds, the result being that I received a wire to

come on to Chicago, where I was met by my General Freight Agent, who enlightened me as to my good New England friend.

The Y. Railroad is one of the most conservative in the country and has that standing with the Interstate Commission. On entering into an engagement it lives up to it, and only on absolute proof being presented of broken faith on the part of competitors will it consider meeting conditions. I was well aware of this and now went to the Traffic Manager and asked him if I had ever made any demand for moneys other than my expense account. He said no. I added that I had no intention to make any demands for rebate claims, knowing it to be against the company's policy.

“Well,” said he, “come up and see the Vice President.” He led me to the throne room, I feeling very much like a

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school boy being led to the Principal for punishment. I was introduced to the great man, and the Traffic Manager explained the facts as given to him. Like a school boy I was dismissed and returned to my field of labor resolved to sin no more.

On reaching Boston I called on my freight traffic friends for a statement as to my indebtedness and received in due course a couple of itemized statements about a block long, showing the number of cars received and the amount of my I. O. U. It nearly took my breath away; I have every reason to believe that the moment my eyes rested on that sum total my mustache began to turn gray and my hair to fall out; who would have thought that two cents ten thousand times repeated would have grown to dollars in three figures. It took me several years to settle my accounts

from my salary—for I never admitted my serious mistake to my superiors. One claim I settled in full, but when my New York City Traffic friend discovered my position he kindly waived a large portion of his claim, for which I have ever since been grateful; but from that time on I became a firm believer in the maintenance of rates, and hailed with delight the efforts of the Western Freight Association to put them on a solid basis; I regret to say, however, that they never were firm during my stay in New England.

XVII.

HOW WE SECURED FREIGHT.

A Big Hearted Manufacturer.

A business friend, hustling agent of one of the Differential Lines, got a tip that a large paper mill in Western Massachusetts, seven miles out of North Adams, had a big lot of jute butts for shipment to St. Louis, and together we took the first train for the bustling Hoosac Tunnel gateway city. Arriving there about eleven A. M., we found there was no train in four hours on the branch road the paper mill was located on, and I told my friend we would have to count the ties *piéd a piéd*, as the French say. He protested, being fifty pounds stouter than I, but finally yielded, and we set out and reached the mill after two hours

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of strenuous endeavor. By good fortune we found one of the owners at home, who, after receiving our respective cards, inquired how we came. We told him; he was so pleased that he said, "Any man who will walk seven miles in the interest of his company in order to secure business is entitled to receive it." We thanked him for his kindness and started to leave; it was then about one o'clock. "Hold on, boys," said he, "You are going home with me for lunch." It is needless to say we enjoyed our luncheon, and when it was concluded, to still farther show his regard, he had his coachman hitch up a pair of spanking bays and drive us to North Adams. The result of our trip was that we secured twenty-one car loads of the jute butts, and from that time on received more or less freight from the same concern to points we could jointly handle.

Bearding the Lion in His Den.

The — Manufacturing Company, with huge mills one hundred and fifty miles outside the city, was one of the most extensive shippers in Boston to points west and southwest; naturally there was a great struggle for its business among the competing lines out of Boston. The General Manager of this company controlled its shipments, but the other lines longer in the field than we had him hard and fast. I heard of this company quite early in my career as a freight agent and determined to get my share of its business, but how? Repeated attempts to see the great man resulted in failure—my card was sent back each time with the laconic message “Too busy to see you.”

At length after long study I hit on a plan that I thought would work. This company had agencies in Memphis and

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New Orleans for the sale of their goods to cotton growers. As it happened I knew a New Orleans business man who handled the line of goods this company had to sell; he had called on me the summer before and left his card. This I now hunted up and taking my athletic friend, the N. E. Agent of the U. Railroad, to protect me in case the General Manager should take my intrusion too seriously, I presented myself at his office one sunny afternoon, and sent in the card of my New Orleans friend. We were admitted at once, my heart beating like a trip hammer, as it seemed to me. He saluted me pleasantly and I introduced my friend, giving his true name. He asked me how the weather was down in New Orleans, what the prospects of the cotton crop were, and we had a very pleasant heart-to-heart talk of half an hour about things generally in the

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south—fortunately I was pretty well informed as to conditions there and was able to answer his queries without exciting suspicion; but whenever I glanced at my friend I was afraid he would undo me, for his mouth was working and it was evidently all he could do to restrain his laughter.

Finally the General Manager said, "What can I do for you, sir." The crucial moment had arrived. I braced myself with a supreme effort and said: "Mr.—, what I have to say I know will surprise you, but I beg you will listen till I get through." This introduction *did* surprise him, but he was still more surprised when I told him I was not what I had represented myself to be, that I was in fact so and so—at the same time handing him my business card. His face flushed with anger, but he soon controlled himself, looked me over a mo-

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ment in silence and then asked my reason for presenting myself in such a manner.

I told him I had called a dozen times and had always been told that he was too busy to see me. He finally took the matter in good part, listened to my story regarding our route, rang his bell, called in his assistant and told him if my rates were the same as our competitors to give me some business. From that time on I secured a good share of his freight consigned to the southwest. My railroad friend never forgot that visit and we have enjoyed many a laugh over it since.

Seeing the Clerks.

The billing clerks of the New England railroads received from thirty-five to fifty dollars a month, according to the importance of their stations; at the time I write of considerable freight went for-

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ward unconsigned and it was the practice of many representatives of western roads in Boston to pay these clerks a bonus to send their unconsigned freight over the roads they represented; at the end of each month the clerks would send in a copy of the bills of freight so sent and receive their honorarium therefor. It took me some time to get on to this, but when I did I joined the procession at once and was soon at the head—in fact some of the clerks got into trouble by diverting to my road freight that had been consigned to other roads, and I had to call a halt in what was at best an undesirable practice. At one time I had fifteen of these men in my interest scattered all over New England on the lines of the Boston and Maine, Connecticut Valley, Fitchburg, Boston and Albany, and New York, New Haven and Hartford Railroads.

I might say here that nine-tenths of the commercial representatives of railroads are loyal to their companies, serving them far better than they do their homes and families. Not unfrequently they pay from their own salaries money required to secure business, being without authority from their superiors to offer it. A case in point: There was a manufacturer of wooden ware on the Fitchburg Railroad who permitted his driver to attend to his shipping. This driver was the son of an old farmer living near the factory, which was located some two miles back from the village depot. One of the fast freight line boys discovered this green Jeems and told me of him. Together we waylaid him on his way to the depot with a load of wooden ware, and invited him to take lunch with us at the village hotel, first giving him a bracer or two as an appe-

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tizer. After lunch, lighting our cigars, we proceeded to business and secured all of his shipments to St. Louis for our respective lines for one dollar a car load. We held him for several years, the fast freight line man and myself pro-rating the dollar on the basis of earnings; my proportion was slight. Whenever the boy had a car for some point other than St. Louis I would receive a postal card from the postmaster, "Come over by first train."

A Box of Huyler's.

I have in mind a comely young lady who served a couple of brothers as book-keeper. The brothers were simple, uneducated men, but shrewd and alert in their line of business. I do not dare mention their commodity, for as it is I fear some of the New England railroad men will recognize them. Their plant is located about thirty-six miles out of

Boston. This young lady had charge of all correspondence, and to a great extent controlled routeing of freight. I used to call about once a month and bring with me a box of Huyler's candy, and by making myself agreeable to the young lady secured a fair share of the firm's business. I have also in mind another charming young lady who acted as bookkeeper for a lithia water firm in the same town. Some of the solicitors of other railroads as well as myself, when calling, always had a box of candy for the Miss. We lost her just as we began to think we had her solid so far as business was concerned—she married one of the proprietors.

The Friend of the Agent.

The U. Railroad (now merged in the New York, New Haven and Hartford) was a free lance and a source of annoy-

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ance to its powerful rivals, due to its methods of pleasing the shipping public. Rubber goods are a specialty in New England, and the General Freight Agent of the U. Road was noted for securing more than his share of rubber goods moving to western points. At times, when the rate situation was bad in the west, my superiors authorized me to meet conditions by joining some one of the Boston roads in making through rates. Armed with this authority I went one day to the General Freight Agent (whom I knew well socially) and told him he could add a portion of the Y. Road to his own and name through rates to competitive points in Illinois. This pleased him; my competitors previous to this had called and arranged that when he found anything moving to points they were interested in he should call them up on the 'phone. The result was

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they were never called on for rates to points I could reach. Through this deal I secured a big business to St. Louis and other points and at a better revenue for my company than could have been secured had it dealt directly with shippers.

Another time one of the strong lines got tired of traffic agreements that were made one day only to be broken the next, or sooner, and decided to punish the rate breakers. The freight agent of this company (a business friend) came to me and said, "Go out and get business; any rates you make to Chicago I will protect." I wanted nothing better, got a hustle on, and within a few hours closed with over twenty large shippers for business going to points the Y. could handle, we receiving our full regular revenue. I had absolute confidence in my friend, the Agent. Had

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he failed to meet his verbal obligation I should have been ruined as a railroad man, as he was not known in the transaction; but standing by each other is characteristic of railroad men, and when the claims came in they were promptly met.

XVIII.

IN NEW YORK.

In 1897 I was appointed General Eastern Agent of the Y. Railroad, with headquarters in New York. Here we had maintained an agency for nearly fifty years, I being the third representative in that period. The agency controls all business in New York State, all of Pennsylvania east of Harrisburg, all east of Washington, D. C., and north of Richmond and Norfolk, Va., including the cities named.

The General Eastern Agency is considered by most railroads the most important commercial position they have to offer. The reason for this is easily explained. There are over one hundred corporations located in New York City, with capital ranging from one million

dollars to hundreds of millions, but whose works or manufactories are located outside the territory of the General Eastern Agent. These companies maintain in New York traffic managers who command large salaries, ranging from five thousand to twenty thousand per year, due to their practical railroad experience, knowledge of rates, etc. Previous to the passage of the Elkins Bill these men were able to save their companies sums ranging from twenty-five thousand to one hundred thousand per year. This of course is not now the case—rates are maintained—but they are still a necessity to their employers in looking after details—such as tracers, claims caused by overcharges, loss or damage, and appearing before the classification committee from time to time to readjust what they consider grievances; so that the vast business of these

great corporations scattered throughout New England, the Middle West, Utah, Montana, and the Pacific States can be transacted with their representatives in New York. Again New York is the commercial and industrial metropolis. Although Pittsburg leads in gross tonnage sent out—eighty-eight million tons—it is largely coal, steel and iron, the heavy weights of the industrial world. New York's million and a half of tons, on the other hand, comprise beside the heavier manufactured goods, world products—the silks, satins and laces of France, Italy and the Far East, shawls of Persia and Cashmere, the tea, opium and spices of China and Japan, fruits of the tropics, and that vast body of imports which have made her one of the chief commercial cities of the world, and which from her wharves are distributed to the remotest corners of the country,

and whose value bears no relation to their gross weight. Again, the competition is fiercer in New York than in any other city. Five great steamship coastwise lines, the Old Dominion, the Clyde, the Ocean, the Southern Pacific and the Mallory Steamship Companies, bid against the railroads for the carriage of western and southern freight, and the struggle is fierce and continuous.

There are six great railway trunk lines out of New York—the Pennsylvania, Erie, Baltimore and Ohio (over the Central Railroad of New Jersey) Delaware, Lackawanna and Western, Lehigh Valley, New York, Ontario and Western, and New York Central and Hudson River to the west and south, and the New York, New Haven and Hartford to the east and north, and beside the dispatch lines mentioned as operating out of Boston, the Ontario, operating over

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the New York, Ontario and Western Railroad; also during the season of lake navigation the following railroad and lake lines:

The Western Express, over the New York Central to Buffalo and through the lakes.

The Union Line, via Eric Railroad and lakes.

Lehigh Valley Lake Line, Lehigh Valley Railroad and lakes.

Lackawanna Lake Line, Delaware, Lackawanna and Western Railroad and lakes.

Anchor Line, via Pennsylvania Railroad and lakes.

Canada Atlantic Lake Line, via People's Line to Albany, and Canada and Atlantic Railroad and lakes.

Rutland Transit, via Murray Line to Albany, Delaware and Hudson Canal and Rutland Railroad to Ogdensburg.

The character of the commercial representatives of the great railroads in New York has changed one might say in a remarkable degree from what it was ten or more years ago. Then it was usual to invite the out-of-town shipper to take a drink almost on his first entrance to the office; this is not the case to-day. The bar-room habit has almost entirely disappeared, business being conducted as it should be. The visiting shipper of importance after a chat in the commodious office of the Agent is usually invited to lunch at the—Club. This is one of the largest and most select of the business clubs of the city, having a membership of over seven hundred bankers, merchants, manufacturers, railroad representatives, etc., and occupying the two upper floors of one of the great bank buildings on lower Broadway, with a cuisine and service equal to that of

the great hotels. If liquor is indulged in at all it is taken with the lunch and in moderation. I do not recall one General Eastern Agent among over fifty on Broadway who may be called a drinking man, although the spirit of good fellowship exists among them. They fight each other for business, but socially they are on the best terms with one another.

The traveling freight agent I had appointed in Boston had several years before my going there been promoted to the New York agency to travel in the wider field at a larger salary. I found him there and he is still with us, and probably will be until Gabriel's trumpet calls him home.

Pretty much the same methods obtain in the larger field as in the smaller. Quickness to act on the first hint of a big shipment, promptness in replying to shippers' letters, looking after their ship-

ments, tracing them to destination and advising them—is appreciated and brings good returns.

I have in mind a shipment of eighteen car loads going from a plant in New Jersey to Denver, Colorado; the shipment was supposed to be controlled in Denver. I accordingly wrote our agent there to secure a routeing order. He wired back saying consignee favored a rival line for satisfactory reasons. We saw the shippers and begged them to give us the first car, as our route might be so satisfactory that the consignee would not object to letting the rest move our way. Fortunately the car made fine time; our commercial agent wired us of its arrival and we in turn notified shippers; result, we carried the eighteen cars much to the surprise of our Denver Agent.

XIX.

A FEW MORE STORIES.

A Trying Experience.

It is rather trying to a solicitor of a religious turn of mind to receive a call from two up-state shippers who have come to New York bent on seeing the tiger, but there was no escape—I had to gratify them or lose their shipments. Accordingly I sent a wire home saying I was called out of town, and telephoned a steamship friend, a jolly good fellow, to meet us. We went to the Little Hungary, where we had dinner and all kinds of cheap wines. Before we finished our dinner a Boston railroad friend, accompanied by the Traffic Manager of a large manufacturing corporation, came to our table and joined our party. After din-

ner our Boston friend proposed that we visit the —, a large concert hall. This proposition seemed to suit all concerned and about 10.30 P. M. we arrived at the hall, which was crowded with men and women. Unluckily for us, a few nights previous, a state senator had had a row with a waiter there who claimed he had given short change, and so caused the house to be raided the night we were there. My attention was first called to the fact that something was wrong by a pretty young woman coming to me and saying, "They won't let us out; please, sir, protect me."

I gave her my seat while I went on a tour of investigation, to find the door closed and several officers in charge. One whom I knew told me the women would first be taken to the police station in the patrol wagons, kept all night and fined in the morning; that the men would then

be taken and let off on their promise not to go to the place any more. I asked him if he would let me and my five friends out? He said he would let me go but not my friends, as so large a bunch would attract attention, and the captain and inspectors were outside. This offer I could not consider, as I had to stand by my shipping friends. I therefore went back to the table and whispered to my associates that we would all have to ride in patrol wagons to the police station. The Boston railroad man had bought his sleeping car ticket for the midnight express; I told him he could get a refund but no express for Boston that night; this did not trouble him so much as the fear that his company would get wind of his arrest. The girl who asked my protection got it; I escorted her to the door and handed her over to my detective friend, and she was one of the first to

ride in the patrol wagon to the station. I had noticed a refined-looking woman of about thirty-five clinging to a red-haired, ministerial-looking person; she now exclaimed, "O, John, how could you bring me to this dreadful place? What will our friends say when we get home?" "They must never know," he replied. "Keep quiet, dear wife; the Lord will help us out in His own way." The poor woman was separated from her husband despite his frenzied efforts to explain the situation and rode to the police station with her frail sisters. I tried to imagine her feelings—a stranger in a strange city alone in such company.

My interest was aroused, and going up to the poor man, who was near collapsing, I told him to keep cool, to tell his story without reserve to the captain at the station, and he would get off all right, and to stay in our company. He did

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so; we were among the last to go out. My steamship friend wore long Dundreary whiskers; the street was packed with spectators watching the patrol wagons going off with their loads, and the moment their eyes fell on the whiskers of our steamship friend they shouted, "Hallo, Whiskers! Hallo, Lilacs!" Of course our hats were pulled down over our eyes and our coat collars up to our ears to disguise us as much as possible. After a ride of a few blocks we arrived at the police station. The women, about two hundred of them, were crowded into one room, the men in another. The latter were first brought out for examination in groups of eight or ten, the minister being just ahead of me. The captain, a big, red-faced giant of two hundred and fifty pounds, asked him his name, residence, and occupation, which were given by the minister, who then told

him of his predicament, making a clean breast of it, as I had advised. "Sargeant," called the captain, "go with this man and let him pick out his wife from the bunch."

Our party of six then gave our names, residences and occupations; we were six brothers of the name of Smith; we all hailed from Maine, and we were brakemen attending a labor convention, and working on the Washington County Railroad.

A Valuable Trunk.

There is no form of loss or peculation so difficult for railroads to guard against as claims for loss of baggage or freight. Two examples that occur to me may be narrated here. A New York theatrical man, a Jew, lost his trunk on our road and came to me wearing a heavy fur coat with a diamond stud in his shirt

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front, and put in his claim for one thousand dollars—five hundred dollars for a valuable manuscript, balance for fine underwear, etc. Some two months later his trunk was found and forwarded to my care, as the actor was a New York man, and had put his claim in the hands of a New York lawyer. In the presence of witnesses I had the trunk opened and found everything there as invoiced, but the total value of the goods did not exceed seventy-five dollars. The manuscript we examined particularly and judged by its dilapidated condition that it could not have been very highly valued by its owner.

I sent for his attorney and on showing him the contents he threw up his hands and said his client was a scamp. Result, actor came and took his trunk and canceled his claim.

Again a New York firm lost a box of

furs intended for a customer on our road in Tennessee. After our failure to locate the box within reasonable time they put in a claim for seven hundred and twenty dollars, giving invoice and describing the goods, but before the claim could be adjusted the box was located and sent to me. The owners refused to accept it, claiming the season was over. On opening the box I found a lot of cheap furs, got two experts to examine and appraise their value (wholesale) which was done, two hundred dollars being the total value. I requested their lawyer to call and look the goods over, together with the expert's appraisal, and told him I would recommend a settlement on the basis of two hundred dollars, or we would settle in court; we finally compromised for two hundred and twenty-five dollars. I afterward sold the goods, consisting of furs and muffs, to the rail-

road boys and secured the company from loss.

A Practical Joke.

Every now and then a practical joker tosses a bomb into the railroad camp. The funniest I ever knew landed twenty freight solicitors, my own among them, in the Kings County Insane Asylum. One day my man received a business-looking postal card inviting him to call at noon next day at the Kings County Hydraulic Machine Works, Kingston Avenue and Winthrop Street, Brooklyn, and "name the lowest rate to Omaha on two hundred tons of machinery."

He spent nearly all of that evening figuring on the rate. Twenty other freight agents unknown to him were figuring on the same thing, having received similar cards. That portion of Brooklyn inclosed by Kingston Avenue

and Winthrop Street was then saved from being a wilderness by a large building that looked like a factory, by a small blacksmith shop, and several shanties. Next morning at half-hourly intervals well dressed men hopped nimbly up the stone steps of the big building, and asked the man who answered the bell if that was the Kings County Hydraulic Machine Works. They were told that it was the Kings County Lunatic Asylum, and after a time some of them became so violent that the man invited them in. The Superintendent, however, soon satisfied himself that their expletives were only what might have been expected under the circumstances, and discharged them; then they went over to the blacksmith shop to see if the blacksmith had two hundred tons of machinery concealed in his place. After the tenth man had called, the blacksmith

began running them out of the shop. Two of the agents climbed over a fence surrounding a shanty and leaped down on a huge boar, half concealed in the mud, who raced them to the door of the shanty, which was opened by a buxom Irish widow. In reply to their inquiries she said the only machinery about the house was used by her daughter to make shirts. It was dark before all the agents got back to the city.

I will close with something more serious—an incident of the Spanish-American war—showing what a Railroad President did for the boys in blue.

One day in September, 1898, about three p. m., my President called me up on the 'phone, requesting my immediate presence at his office. On arriving there I was ushered in and introduced to two officers of the First Regiment, Illinois National Guard, several companies of

which had been recuperating in the hospital camp at Montauk Point after arduous service in the trenches and battles before Santiago. Some thirty of them were employes of the Y. Railroad when they enlisted. The men were to leave from the freight yards of the — Railroad next morning at eleven o'clock.

My President said to me, "I give you *carte blanche* to supply the companies with whatever dainties the men would enjoy after their long battle with canned goods; also to entertain these officers at dinner and afterwards to take them to any good play they may select."

The President bade the officers a pleasant good afternoon saying he would go to the train next morning and see them off. I requested the two gentlemen to accompany me to my office and we proceeded to business. "How many men have you, gentlemen?" I asked.

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“Nine hundred, going in two sections.”

“Well, now, what would the men like best?”

They did not know—would leave it to me. “Fresh milk?” Yes. “New cheese, Uneeda biscuit, light rolls, deviled ham, plenty of fruit?” They were sure nothing would suit the men better.

The first thing was to call up the — Railroad and ask where the train was to be made up and the time of leaving. This done, I called my friend Taylor, of Borden’s Condensed Milk Company, and he promised to have a wagon load of fresh milk on hand at the freight yards next morning—the milk was to be half cream and iced in such a manner as to keep it sweet and cool for hours. I next called up Acker, Merrall & Condit, who supplied crackers, fresh cheese, and twenty cooked hams. A down town baker was next told to furnish five hun-

dred fresh loaves of bread and a fruit man promised to send down five hundred watermelons. Other light foods were ordered down by telephone in less than an hour.

I took the officers to my club for dinner which they enjoyed fully after months of the field commissariat, then to the theatre, where one of the popular plays was running. We had a conspicuous seat; the presence of two officers in uniform was quickly noted; their pale, thin, sunburned faces told that they were but recently from the front, and they attracted more attention, especially from the ladies, than the players. It was the only time in my life that I envied the soldier boys. After the play I gave them a lunch at a fashionable restaurant, and bade them good night.

The first thing in the morning my assistant, Mr. D., who had aided me the

night previous, went over to the yards, where at our request the railroad people had provided two baggage cars—one for each section. Everything went like clock work; team after team arrived with the things ordered, there was not a hitch anywhere; we divided the goods half for each car and showed the officers the best way to serve it from a train point of view. After we got through and had a chance to look around we found our President and a group of officers waiting the arrival of the troops. Soon they came, tired and hungry, after the ride of a hundred and twenty miles from Montauk. Most of them were physical wrecks and barely able to walk. One sergeant came up to me and said, “You don’t know me but I know you; I worked with your brother in Chicago.”

After the train pulled out I noticed on the wharf a whole train load of loco-

motives being shipped from Reading, Pa., to Vladivostock for the Siberian Railway.

I then returned to my office and asked the different firms to send in their bills, which on footing up I found to amount to nearly one thousand dollars.

I had nervous prostration on my way to the President's office, not knowing how he would view his liberal instructions of the previous day. He looked the bills over, said I had done well, and thanked my assistant and myself for our efforts in carrying out his instructions.

XX.

CLIMBING TO THE TOP.

Most of the railroad men whom I know holding responsible positions to-day are self-made. I am moved to tell the life story of a few of them for the instruction and encouragement more especially of the young men who may read these pages.

D., the General Northern Passenger Agent whose feats are described in earlier pages, was of Irish extraction, though born in Chicago, his father being a genuine character of old Ireland, who enjoyed his clay pipe and did not hesitate to use it in any company. D. entered the Y. Railroad service in Chicago as office boy, was rapidly promoted to be stenographer and Chief Clerk to the General Passenger Agent, thence General Northern Passenger Agent, thence to be

Assistant General Passenger Agent, with headquarters in a large southern city. There he soon became a great favorite with the leading merchants and shippers. By and by the annual banquet of the Board of Trade was held, and D. was invited as their guest, but did not sit at the guest table, preferring a place with the ordinary members on the floor. As honorary members were the President and Vice President of his Road.

After the substantial menu had received due justice speech-making became the order, with singing, story telling, etc. The Toastmaster turning to the President and Vice President said, "I am now going to call on one of our brightest young men, who has only been with us a short time, but has already won his way to our hearts; he will sing us a song."

D. arose and sung one of his jolly songs, receiving great applause; he followed

it up with a capital story and practically won his way into the heart and confidence of the Vice President. Not long after he was made General Freight Agent—one of the few passenger men in the United States—I think the only one—who was promoted from Assistant General Passenger Agent to be General Freight Agent of a large system. Through his all round merits and ability he has at this time reached the position of Assistant Traffic Manager. He is still a young man in the early forties with bright prospects ahead.

A Southern Pacific Brakeman's Sudden Rise to Wealth.

Five years ago M. called stations on the local passenger trains between Los Angeles and San Francisco. One of his mates wanted two hundred dollars to bridge over a deficiency, and M. let him

have it, taking as security a silver watch and a mortgage on a forty acre tract of land. When the money became due his associate was unable to pay, the mortgage was foreclosed, and M. was forced to buy it in to protect his interests. He tried to auction off the land, but without success, as no one wanted it. One day while on his run a little man whom he had noticed watching him for some time tapped him on the shoulder as he stood on the platform and asked, "Is your name M.?"

"Yes, sir."

"You own forty acres of land in such and such a county?"

"Yes, sir."

"I will give you five thousand dollars for it."

The amount was so large it staggered M., but he was a cool, shrewd fellow and told the man he would take his offer

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under consideration. A few hours later the man came to him and said, "See here; I'll tell you what I'll do; if you will give me a bill of sale now I will pay you ten thousand dollars."

That settled it. M. made up his mind that the forty acres contained something of value. He told the stranger that under no consideration would he sell then, but would decide in a few days. On arriving at the end of his run he got two days leave of absence and went to his farm, where he found that a big oil gusher had broken loose. The result was, he left the railroad, organized a company, retaining a controlling interest, and is to-day worth several millions.

Three years ago I invited him to lunch at my club. He told me then he was having a private car built by the Pullmans that for comfort and luxury would be the finest ever built by them. The

other day (March, 1904), he called on me again, being on his way to Washington with a party of ten in his private car and thence to Havana, Cuba. During his visit he showed me a canceled check for one hundred and nineteen thousand dollars that had been through the clearing house, showing he had paid the Southern Pacific that amount for freight and private car service.

From Clerk to Vice President.

Coming back from Pittsburg, a party of us were invited into the car of the Vice President of one of the largest western railroads as his guests and treated with that whole souled hospitality characteristic of the prairies. By and by we began swapping stories of our own careers. "My rise was due about equally to good luck and my own gall," said the Vice President. "I began as clerk and

in five years by a series of lucky chances—deaths, removals, etc., became General Passenger Agent of my road. One day my Vice President came to me and said, ‘N., our General Freight Agent has been shifted up higher and we want another just as good. O. and P. have been recommended to me; which is the best man?’

“‘O. by all odds,’ I replied; ‘but I know a better man than either of them, one more conversant with your business, with better business connections.’

“‘Who?’ asked the Vice President.

“‘N.,’ I replied, giving my full name. Well, my bluff won; I got the place with large increase in salary.”

Started Out for Himself.

When I first knew Q. he was soliciting freight agent for the Y. Railroad in New York. He handled largely the business

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of export cotton piece goods running from the eastern and southeastern states to China, Japan, and other eastern countries. He secured a large tonnage for his company and thought he was entitled to more money than he was receiving. His superior, the General Eastern Agent, appreciated his value and tried hard to secure an increase for him but without success. Q. decided to leave and go into the brokerage business for himself, his only capital being a few hundred dollars in money, good health and confidence in himself.

To-day he has the entire floor of a large down town office building, with an office force of from sixty to seventy men, offices in Chicago, San Francisco, China, Russia, and London. It is a common thing for him to charter space in the large steamers leaving the various Pacific coast ports for Hong Kong, and

filling them with all kinds of commodities. He also sends steamships and sailing vessels from New York to various European and California ports. He has passed beyond the experimental stage and is now reaping his reward.

The second Vice President of the —— Railroad is a self-made man, starting as a section foreman of an eastern railroad, leaving it for four years' service in the civil war, and after his discharge re-entering it again. He began at the foot of the ladder and went up step by step, learning every detail of construction, engineering and operation, and finally reaching the position of General Manager. This position he held with three different railroads, one in the north, two in the south, until he was induced to enter the service of the —— Road in his present position, with full control of operation and traffic.

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A book might be filled with similar instances of men now high in the service of the great railroad systems who began at the lowest round of the ladder and fought their way up by force of character and by making themselves indispensable cogs in the machinery; but enough has been said. The stories point their own moral.

THE END.

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