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OUR NEW ENGINEER.

A FIREMAN'S STORY.

BY WILLIAM SIMPSON.

I've been tendin' a furnace nigh upon twenty-seven years. I first on the little steamer Pearl every trip, first to last, three years to a day; and how I'm so exact as to the time, is owing to this being one of my birth days when I took her furnace in charge, and another of my birth days when I was blown up on her a few miles above Sacramento. I can't tell much about the fault of that smash-up, although I have my suspicions; but since Mr. B., our engineer, was picked up in small pieces on that occasion, I never will mention 'em out of respect to his memory.

At the time of that bust up, I am ashamed to tell that I behaved very awkward, it being the first; but I got sort o' used to 'em afterward. When a man gets blown about a hundred yards or so, as I was then, and finds himself landed about the rules on the river bank, with boxes and barrels of provisions scattered around him, enough to feed him for his natural life, it ain't to his credit to sit staring half an hour, wondering what's happened, more particular be being the fireman of the boat, and the engineer killed, together with hogs, sheep, and cattle, besides a matter of twenty or thirty passengers, big and little. It was cowardly in me that time, but I take 'em different now. You see, twenty-seven years' steady tendin' on a furnace learns a man something, his ears get educated, and he can hear it coming—I mean the bust-up. When she carries her biler on deck, I always try to get the clear sky above me at the first strange noise in the flue. It's a bad chance for me, though, when the biler is below, and the engineer careless and desperate, as was the case when I fired on the C., about fifteen years ago. I am going to tell what I know about that affair, come what may.

You see, just while I was kindling up for our trip down to San Francisco, I heard that Mr. Davis, the engineer, had left the boat sudden, in a huff, on account of the captain's saying he didn't carry steam enough to cook an egg. Now, I know Mr. Davis wasn't any coward—only very particular and careful; and I heard him say more than once he never had a bust up, and never would, and also that before he'd carry steam above his judgment anywhere, he'd give up his billet. Mr. Davis leaving, therefore, set me feeling very down at heart. It looked to me he gave up his billet too ready, being a poor man, and having a family to feed. I set it down he didn't have much faith in our biler, it being a high pressure, and about ten years old.

What made it more particular trying on me was my wife and children coming aboard to go down with me to San Francisco. Katy and the youngsters never looked brighter and more loving like than then, and I hope it's not saying more than I ought, that the mother and them smiling, rosy children might be took for the captain's, and not as belonging to the smutty fireman in the hold. I can't help the water coming into my eyes when I think how beautiful them precious ones looked plying around on the freight deck and peeping down at me through the hatchway.

Well, just before we were ready to start, the captain brought down a new engineer, Mr. Trippet, to his quarters, which was near the furnace, and I heard him say that Mr. Davis was the biggest old woman he ever saw in regard to carrying steam, and that the opposition, with their old tools, was always beating our time. Then the captain and Mr. Trippet began talking very quiet and secret-like, which set me listening close to hear what was in the wind. As the discovery of what was going on came to my ears I weakened like a baby. I ain't what may be called a cowardly man, having been in many tight places in my time, and coming out without a flinch, but somehow the pangs of Katy and the children kept passing back and forth before my eyes, and wilted all the courage out of me.

The truth to be told is, that the captain and our new engineer being desperate sports, like most all such men in them days on the river, had made the biggest kind of a joint bet, unbeknown to the owners, that we would beat the opposition on that trip; and when I

heard Trippet whispering and shaking hands with the captain, saying he would bring the C. into San Francisco ahead of the opposition, or burst her, the words sounded very heavy in my ears, out of regard to my precious ones that were aboard. I got the knowledge of all this about five minutes before the lines were cast off, and I was hoping to get a word with Katy in time to send her and the babies ashore, but just as I turned to go up the ladder Trippet caught me by the collar, giving me a savage look, and saying it was a bad time to leave the furnace. Being used to obeying orders, I turned back to my work, and before I had time to take a second thought the pilot pulled the bell to start the engine.

Just while we got under way my little ones stood peeping and smiling at me behind the hatchway rail, and Trippet, seeing me pretty often turned toward them, says:

"Whose brats are they?"

"They're nobody's brats," says I, a little sharp.

"Well," says Trippet, "you just tend to your furnace and keep down your bristles, or may be they'll be orphans before they get off this boat."

After saying which he goes up the ladder and lets down the hatch door, which shut us up alone together with no daylight except what come in through a couple of dead-light. I had been coaling very heavy just before, and was standing with my shovel in hand, measuring Trippet with my eyes, and having a very big "mud" rising in my breast, which I was trying the best I could to keep down. We hadn't now been more than twenty minutes under way when the engine was working under a full head, and the revolutions increasing every minute. The extra strain upon the joints of the old hull was setting her whimpering and groaning terribly. The play of the paddles was getting so rapid that the sound got changed into a steady roar just like thunder around in around us, and catching a peep through the dead lights, I saw the sails billowing higher and heavier than I ever saw before.

We were streaking through the water at a tearing rate, with the gauge showing twenty pounds more steam than common. While Trippet, paying no heed to that, was running back and forth to the dead lights, measuring the distance of the boat ahead. I was setting great hopes on the safety valve going off in time to take the strain from the biler, and was feeding the furnace rather moderately, when he turned on me, very savage like, and bid me cram in all the coal I could, which I did, strictly obeying orders, having a big faith in the valve.

The old boat was now flying along fearful, and I could hear a great excitement on deck, of passengers running back and forth, shouting on account of our just passing the quarter of the C., which I could see wasn't in for an easy beat, as she was having a regular young Veggie escaping out of her funnel, and was making a desperate push to leave us astern. There was just then a strange sound in the biler, which sent a tremble over me; but settled down all quiet when I found it was the safety-valve grumbling, and fixing itself to go off; but Trippet, who was wild and anxious because the other boat, for the last quarter of an hour, wasn't letting us gain an inch, grabbed a crowbar and, running up to the valve, pried it down, cursing and swearing, while the sweat was stepping in drops all over his face.

Now, when I saw this thing a-going, my feelings burst out fighting high. My shovel went out of my hand, and landed at the far side of the coal bunker, and I ran to the furnace doors, and opened 'em all wide to check the steam.

"This 'ere thing has gone about far enough," says I. "You might be willin' to take a desperate risk of h—l for a pile of shinin' dollars, and squeeze the old tea-kettle to the bursting point; but you haven't got a wife and babies aboard, like I have, and in consequence no more steam while I've got wind and muscle to hinder," says I.

Trippet's temper was a glowing in his face, while he was a-tying down the valve with his crowbar, which he had taken in a big hurry from his neck, and, before my words had got fairly out of my mouth, he sprang at me like a tiger.

coming upon me so sudden, I went down among the coals, Trippet atop, with both his big paws around my throat. He held his grip until I was as limp as a rat, and one minute more would have finished me. But he, being in such a big hurry to shut the furnace doors and set the steam amakin', left me squirming, and ran to the doors and banged them all shut.

When my senses came back to me Trippet was a-pilling in coal very heavy himself, and things around was a-roaring and straining terrible. I was half gone lony. I thought I heard my precious ones calling on me to save 'em. A new strength came to me, and I started for Trippet like a madman. I got a good clinch this time, and we both struggled awfully. My knees would'nt and with the great weight and stress upon them, but I held my feet, until, by a sudden trip, I brought him upon his back among the coals.

Grabbing one of the larger than my fist, I struck him a blow above the ear, which stunned him. He let me out of his clutches. I got upon my feet, but found myself too dizzy and faint to reach the furnace, so I staggered over to the dead-light to catch a breath of air. I saw the other boat was dropping astern, and I could hear our passengers cheering and bellowing like mad.

Just then a strange noise came to my ears like a death-knell—I saw the furnace in a scaplet-red heat, and I made a push to reach the valve. I only got two or three steps when I weakened and sank down upon my hands and knees. It was only about ten feet from me, and I was creeping on all fours to get to it. It went off! I remember the terrible crash, and my being hurled like a cannon ball, surrounded by steam, splinters and smoke.

I knew nothing about that for days. When I came to myself, lying in the hospital, they told me all about my wife and babies. I know a poor smutty fireman's sorrows and agonies is nothing to you, but I can't help saying that the worst thing done to me by that burst-up was letting me out alive to be fretting all my days about the loss of them precious ones.

A Keen Reminder.

I wish you could have known Squire Jonas Lufton—it would help you to appreciate our story. But I'll tell you as near as I can. He was a fat, flabby, heavy featured man of seventy-five, rich enough to own thousands of dollars hidden away in Savings Bank in other States; and mean enough to swear returns to the Assessors, and to pick up his kindlings in the gutters of the highways. And yet the old rat could be jolly and though now, in his old age, he was one of the main sleepers of the church, he could tell, with a gusto of the mad pranks which he had cut in his youth. He still practiced in the courts, and held great honor in being the oldest living member of the Dunlap County Bar. I say he still practiced in the courts, but his business was confined to looking after the real estate and probate interests of ancient clients.

Billy Walton kept the largest of our village stores. He was a young man just entering upon the active business of life, and from his father, who had kept store before him, he had inherited good business capacity, and had also learned many of the tricks of trade. Among other things, he had learned exactly how to estimate the value of Squire Lufton's custom. As Lufton had done in the time of the elder Watson, so he continued to do unto the latter. He would enter the store and salute the proprietor and his customers as a self-satisfied father might greet his children. Then he would get off an old joke, and expend one of his greasy, guttural laughs. Then he would go to the raising box and get a handful of raisins—then a cracker was taken from the barrel—then a slice of cheese was appropriated. And this proceeding the old rascal carried on day after day, as he had done it a long, long time; and to give the matter the color of a joke, he would often when aware that the keeper was watching him, laughingly remarked that the things he had taken might be charged to the town. "Charge this to the Town, Billy," he said as he munched away at an apple which he had appropriated. At first Billy used to look glum at the oft-repeated order; but at length a change came over the spirit of his manifestations, and

it was observed that when the old Squire issued his jocular mandate of "Charge this to the Town," Billy would go into his little counting-room and make an entry in his Day Book.

At length the day of the Presidential Election arrived, and among the first at the polls was Squire Lufton. He was an ardent party man, of the old Hartford Convention stamp, and believed in doing his whole duty to his country. As he was about to deposit his vote he was interrupted by a peremptory voice—

"I challenge Squire Lufton vote!"

He looked up and beheld Billy Walton standing by the side of the ballot-box.

"Challenge my vote?" he gasped completely dazed by the suddenness and the audacity of the thing.

"Yes, sir," said Billy, "I challenge your vote!"

"Wh-wh-wh-wh-d'ye mean?"

"I challenge the right of a Pauper to vote!"

Lufton thought he saw a joke, and he tried to laugh, but Billy cut him short with—

"Squire Lufton, you are a Town Pauper by your own act and choice. At sundry times during the past year I have furnished you with the means of sustenance, and at your own request have charged the items to the Town. I think that is sufficient to constitute a pauper."

There was hardly a man in the hall who did not at once appreciate the thing; and the uproarious laughing and stamping and clapping told how keenly it was relished. And, to cap the climax, the old skinfint did really lose his voice. Having enjoyed his joke and given his reminder, Billy would gladly have withdrawn his ridiculous charge; but Lufton could not stand the press. In the midst of the wild outburst of merriment he slunk away, and the minority on that day was reduced just one vote lower than it might otherwise have been. But the lesson to Jonas Lufton was a healthy one; and he sure the result was a very saving one to the traders of the village.

The Sage's Reproof.

Alhaken, the sage, whom all people honored for his great wisdom and his many virtues, sat in the market-place giving instruction. A youth named Seyd, who had recently inherited vast wealth, passed that way, and shared with the old teacher the attention of the multitude.

"See," cried Seyd, "how my good fortune hath lifted me in a day to claim a public attention which Alhaken hath been long years in gaining."

And he smiled proudly as he spoke. Alhaken had heard his words, and motioned for him to draw near.

"My son," said the sage, "let me speak unto thee a table. Once upon a time a gourd went itself around a lofty palm, and in a few weeks climbed to its very top."

"How old mayest thou be?" asked the gourd.

"A hundred years," answered the palm.

"A hundred years!" cried the gourd, in derision. "Only look; I have grown as tall as thou art in fewer days than that countest years!"

"I know that very well," the palm made answer. "Every summer of my life a gourd has climbed up around me, as proud as thou art, and as short-lived as thou wilt be!"

Seyd heard, and went away with his head lowered.

They tell "hard" snake stories in Kentucky. This is the latest:

A man in Butler County got very drunk on a quart of whiskey, and lay in the woods all night. The next morning a dead rattlesnake was found about three feet from him, which had evidently bitten the drunken man several times during the night, as was shown by the impression of the teeth in the flesh. The bites did no further injury than to cause a swelling and inflammation, which soon passed away, but the mean whiskey in the man's system was too much for the snake, and he is supposed to have died immediately after inflicting the wounds.

In an article on a recent fair in that city, the editor of a Macon paper, says a brother editor took a valuable premium; but an unkind policeman made him put it right back where he took it from.

Romance and Reality.

A correspondent of the Boston Traveler, at Newport, overheard the following conversation:

"No, Harry, dear, we must part. I think it is awful cruel of pa, but you know he never encouraged you. He says you are nice enough, but that a young man now-a-days must be able to support a wife in the style to which she had been accustomed, and that you know you could not do, dear. So I must give you up. That Gus Evans I fairly hate, with his little, snapping eyes and his brightly ugly little moustache—ugh! but he has a lovely pony phaeton which is all at my service, and a diamond big as a walnut on his shirt-bosom, and pa says he has lots of money, and owns real estate and railroad stocks, and I don't know what else, and he says I must be civil to him and marry him if he asks me; and I know he will, for the other night he got right to the point and was just ready to ask the all important questions when pa dropped in to look for his paper, and that ended it for the time."

"But don't you love me?" the young manly fellow at her side asked, with a twinge and a tremor in his voice; "you know you have given me cause for thinking so, and hoping."

"Why, yes, of course I do. How silly! Love you; you know I love you, and it is really too bad that I can't have my way, and marry you instead of Gus. Pa might support us as well as not, but he won't and you know I never can exist without the comforts I have always had. I must have my dresses and my diamonds, my horses and my parties, and move in the same circle of society as I do now, and those things, you know, you could never give me. No, Harry, dearest. I shall always love you, and you won't be vexed, will you; but it is better that we should part, and you won't try to see me much, will you, till after I'm married?"

"Vexed! Oh, no! not at you. But let us go in, and then I'll say good-bye to you and my hopes together."

His voice was hard, and strove to be cool and unconcerned, but it trembled a little, and his face was very white as they passed me. But her smile was as sweet and self-satisfied, and her eye as clear as though she had not wrecked a young man's happiness, and thrown him aside for a brainless jumping-jack with money, and as though her life was not to be a rapid, tiresome round of fashionable emptiness, with none of love or usefulness to sweeten it.

The Last Resort.

Two young men were overtaken by a squall in Delaware Bay while sailing in a yacht. At Nazareth Methodist church on Twelfth Street, Philadelphia, they had occasionally been present at public worship. From the way things looked, the capsizing of their boat was very inevitable.

"Bill," said one to the other, "this is a serious business; can you pray?"

"No, I can't; I've heard Joe Quinn do it, and I've listened to Bill Post, but I can't do it myself."

"Well, you can sing a hymn, can't you for Heaven's sake do something?"

"No, I can't sing here. How can I sing when this boat at any moment may drown us both?"

"Well, we must do something religious. If you can't pray and can't sing, ets take up a collection."

To this Bill consented. In his companion's hat he deposited thirteen pennies, a corkscrew and a broken-bladed knife. As he did this the wind lulled, and the boat made a successful landing.

Two women lately entered a Pennsylvania bar-room where their husbands were enjoying their needle gun cocktails any made the scene enjoyable for a few minutes. They broke tumblers, upset tables, rumped their fist through the bottom of a tin pitcher, threw a cat into the cider barrel, and put kerosene in the whiskey. After which they took their husbands by the nose and led them home. Such is to be the result of the sixteenth amendment.

A Virginia exchange says, at a concert recently, at the conclusion of the song, "There is a good time coming," a farmer got up and exclaimed: "Mister, you couldn't fix the date, could you?"

A Big Dinner.

A couple of flat-boatsmen on the Mississippi River, having made an extraordinarily good speculation—made, in fact six hundred dollars, a very large sum to that kind of folk twenty years ago—concluded that while they were in New Orleans they would for once in their lives see what it was to have a real first-class hotel dinner. They could afford it, and they would just like to see how it would go. So they went to the St. Charles Hotel, and ordered the very best dinner that that establishment could afford. When they had eaten to their complete and entire satisfaction (and the probable astonishment of the waiters,) they called for their bill. The waiter in attendance misunderstanding them, and supposing that they wanted the bill of fare, laid it before them, with the wine-list uppermost.

"Whew, Bill!" said Jerry; "here's a bill. Just look at it! Here, you add up one side, and I'll add up the other, and we'll see what the old thing comes to."

So Bill added up the prices of wines on one side of the list, and Jerry added them up on the other, and they made the sum total \$384.

"Whew, Bill!" said Jerry; "that's nigh all we've got. What are we going to do about it?"

"We can't pay that," said Bill; "it's 'ud clean us right out. The waiter ain't here now; let's jump out o' the window and put."

"No, sir-ree," said Jerry, "I'd never do sich a mean thing as that. Let's pay the bill, and then go down stairs and shoot the landlord."

Just then the waiter explained, when they paid their bill and departed greatly relieved of their temporary embarrassment.

A FAMILY TRAIT.—Hark to the experience of Barrick Offutt, of New Orleans. He could not appreciate the loveliness of his fiancée, if he did not compare it with that of others.

He was walking up Charles street, a day or two ago with a fair ballet girl, when he was suddenly confronted by his dulcinea. He had talked to her of a pretty sister, and evidently she supposed this to be the person. She stopped, smiling, expecting an introduction, but Barrick hesitated, loth to give it.

"Your sister, I believe?" said the lady.

"Ah, yes—no! Another person," said the sorely troubled swain.

"Not his sister, I assure you, interrupted the ballet girl.

"Indeed?"

"No, ma'am; I'm the young man's—"

"What?" coldly intervened the dulcinea.

"Aunt!" hastily replied Barrick; she's my aunt."

"She's very young for such a relative."

"Yes," said Barrick, "they are always young in my family."

This settled the difficulty. There were no inquiries made.

HOPE IN DEATH.—Mr. Owens visited Alexander Campbell, at Bethany, to make arrangement for their discussion on the evidences of Christianity. In one of their excursions about the farm, they came to Mr. Campbell's family burying ground when Mr. Owen stopped, and addressing himself to Mr. Campbell, said:

"There is one advantage I have over the Christian; I am not afraid to die. Most Christians have fear in death; but if some few tiems of my business, were settled I should be perfectly willing to die at any moment.

"Well," answered Mr. Campbell, "you say you have no fear in death; have you any hope in death?"

After a solemn pause "No," said Owen.

"Then," rejoined Mr. Campbell pointing to an ox standing near, you are on a level with that brute. He has fed until he is satisfied and stands in the road, whisking off the flies' and has neither hope nor fear in death."

Speaking of the dances at Saratoga, Miss Gruppy says that the "Boston" has taken the place of every thing else almost and in round dances the style of holding the lady has altered slightly being now about as affectionate as possible. The lady sticks her nose in the gentleman's sleeve where it joins the shoulder, and he rests his cheek on her fair hair, feeling the pulse of her right wrist, while she encircles his neck with her arm.