

he said gaily, "there's nothing that will change my mind about that."

For a long time Company stood silent, gazing at him, while he still held his hand. At last he spoke. "I didn't s'pose that were," he said, and dropped his hand. Then after a pause he added, with a sigh, "Well, so long."

And so they parted.

A year passed, and during it neither Company nor I had news of the other, though often over our campfire at night we spoke of him, or rather I spoke of him while Company listened; for I knew that the ache which the parting had caused had never left his heart, and that it comforted him to hear me speak the other's name. It was a momentous year for us—a year in which we saw much hard service. Side by side we fought in many a bitter battle, side by side we faced victory and defeat, and came to know what war meant; for we saw golden, glowing corn fields run red with blood, and smiling orchards torn and destroyed by brothers fighting in mortal combat.

And every battle field marked a step in Company's upward progress. From the very first he showed extraordinary military qualifications, for he possessed a gallant bravery that made him the idol of his regiment upon the field, and elsewhere a patient thoroughness that commended him to his superiors. From private he rose to Corporal, from Corporal to Sergeant. And then one summer day at the close of a hard fought battle, with all his superior officers dead or wounded, he led his company in a daring, desperate charge, that changed apparent defeat into a glorious victory. The whole country rang with the praise of that gallant charge, and the humble miner Company had risen from the ranks. His marvelous rise still continued, until he wore the uniform of a Colonel and commanded a regiment. And then to him and that regiment was given a grave duty. It was to seek and find Morgan the raider, and to exterminate him and his band.

In obedience to those orders, we—I was his second in command—rode into Kentucky, and late one evening halted and made our quarters at a farm house, which was situated about half way between Lexington and Louisville. We were met there by a courier from the General in command of our division. He brought us despatches which were of the utmost importance. They revealed to us Morgan's plans and gave us an opportunity to effect a juncture with another Union regiment and secure his capture. The opportunity offered many perils, however, and if Morgan obtained the slightest hint of our intentions, it seemed certain that he would be enabled to destroy both our regiments, and the path for another one of his raids into Ohio would be clear.

I remember as if it was only yesterday how we sat

in his room, lighted only by the blood red rays of the dying sun, and talked of this and laid plans for keeping our prospective movements a profound secret from everyone. We were still discussing the matter, when an orderly entered the room and saluted. "A lady from a nearby plantation has just driven over, and has asked to speak to you, sir," he announced.

Company stared at him in surprise. "A lady to see me?" he repeated incredulously.

The orderly bowed.

Company turned toward me.

"You had best see her," I suggested.

"All right," he answered reluctantly,—he was always painfully shy in the presence of women,—"all right, ef yo' think I'd better," he continued, and, turning to the orderly, he said, "Show her in."

A moment later she entered. As I looked at her, I sprang to my feet with an involuntary gasp of admiration. I had never before seen a woman so beautiful. Slight and slender, with great dark eyes and jet black hair that fringed a brow of marble whiteness, like the meeting of midnight and snow, she stood for a moment framed in the doorway. Although no longer a young woman, the freshness of youth still lingered on her cheeks, while to her eyes had come the wonderful serenity of maturity. Even the sad colored veil of widowhood did not mar the nobility of her appearance.

For just an instant she stood there in the doorway looking from Company to me. Then suddenly, obeying an infallible instinct, she went toward him with outstretched hands. "I am Winchester's mother," she said simply.

"Yes," he answered, "I know."

His words were a surprise to me, and raising my eyes quickly I looked upon his face. What I saw there startled me. Despite its heavy coat of tan, it was as white as the despatches that rustled and rattled in his trembling hands. Even as I looked, he let them fall unheeded upon the table, and timidly reached out and took her hands in his. So for a time they stood looking at each other in silence. Then she spoke again.

"He used to write me about you, and when he came home he told me how wonderfully kind and gentle you had always been to him. And lately, when I have seen him, he has been full of your praises, for he has heard about your marvelous career and has gloried in it. And so have I," she continued in her deep, rich voice, "and even though you are the enemy of my country and my people, oh, every night on my knees, I pray God to watch over you and spare your life!"

She paused abruptly. It had not been what she had meant to say; but the sight of him standing

there, big and gentle, had wrung the impulsive words from her lips. But since she had said it, I saw that she was glad she had. Company was deeply moved by her words. He stood looking down at her in silent embarrassment, striving desperately to speak. At last, with a great effort, he cleared his throat and asked huskily:

"Whar—whar is he now?"

"With Morgan," she replied.

At her answer the white of his face turned to a pale gray. She saw his emotion, and rightly interpreted it, but for a time did not speak. She just stood there looking up at him in silence, her beautiful eyes filled with fear. Always the picture that they made there has remained with me,—the tall, gaunt, grizzled soldier and the slender, delicate woman, holding each other's hands and gazing at each other in hopeless sorrow, while the dying sunlight drifted in through the long window by which they stood and bathed them both in its glory.

At last her grief burst its bounds. "Oh," she cried wildly, "then it is true! You are pursuing Morgan—you are to exterminate his band!" She paused, wringing her hands, and then after a time added, "God! If you should succeed—if you two should meet! Oh, my boy!"

The tragic note in her voice went straight to my heart. Involuntarily I started toward her; but his slow voice arrested me.

"Ef we do meet," he drawled, "I'll bring him home to yo'."

She looked up at him, suddenly radiant. How beautiful her face was with the coming of joy! "You promise that?" she asked.

"Yes," he answered. Just that one word—no more, but both his hearers knew that that promise would never be broken.

She did not stay much longer,—somehow, what had passed made any conversation impossible,—and presently both Company and myself escorted her to her carriage. Twilight had fallen, and it was almost dark; but as he helped her to her seat I saw that he was gazing at her in the same curious dumb way that I had seen him look at her son. Just as she put out her hand to say good by, he asked gently:

"I reckon yo-all don't remember me?"

"Have we ever met before?" she inquired, looking at him searchingly.

"Oncet," he drawled. "It were in Lexington. Yo' druve me to tne hospital."

A sudden light of understanding flashed into her dark eyes. "That was you?" she cried.

"Yes," he answered, and before she could speak again, he had motioned to her driver and she was gone. But at last I knew the secret of the mystery

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## STORIES OF RAILROAD MEN

By A. W. DUNN

WHEN I first knew Sir William C. Van Horne, he was superintendent of the Southern Minnesota railroad, a line running from the Mississippi River through the southern tier of counties of the State. At least it was intended to cross the State, but for many years it halted after being constructed half the distance. It was extended

west while Van Horne was superintendent, and he had charge of the work. Under his supervision a bridge was constructed across the Des Moines River, which was quite a feat of railroad building in those days, as the trestle was sixty feet high for more than a quarter of a mile, and was wholly of wood. Van Horne watched the progress of that bridge day after day, and was often seen walking along foot wide timbers at its extreme height, scanning first one and then another part of the structure.



A GOOD story about James J. Hill was told to a group of his friends by Norman W. Kittson, a man who was years ahead of Hill in the Red River country, and who, to use his own expression, "packed my kit from La Crosse to Winnipeg and back." This was a distance of about six hundred miles, and Kittson went on foot and traded in furs all along the route with the Indians. He was another wonderful man of the early West. Kittson became rich, as riches went, when Hill was a clerk in a steamboat office in St. Paul. When Hill began his great career by buying a railroad and extending it northward, he interested Kittson in his enterprises. Hill needed credit, and Kittson allowed him to use his name.

"I knew," said Kittson, "that I had indorsed more paper than I was worth; but I had confidence in him most of the time. Then I got scared and felt that everything was gone, and that it didn't make any difference, and I signed anything Hill brought."

It is almost unnecessary to say that the smash

never came; that Hill used Kittson's name with good effect in the East, where he was reputed a much wealthier man than he really was; and also that Kittson had a great deal more when he closed up with Hill than when they first began business together.

It was Fred D. Underwood, now president of the Erie railroad, who taught me railroad poker, a fascinating and expensive game for a man who hasn't a quick eye and comprehension. It has to be played in this way:

We will suppose that we are sitting in a private car, and a freight train is going by. Every car is numbered; most of them in five figures, some in six, or some in four, but seldom less than four. The old cars with the low numbers have been worn out. Well, as the freight train passes, each man in turn takes a car and picks out a poker hand. For instance, 14400 would be a pair of tens and fours, and 13311 would be three aces, and a pair of threes. Of course, the figures are often all mixed up and it takes a quick eye to call the hand. The best hand wins the pot when the train has passed, and the party then await the next train. Mr. Underwood in his early railroad days had experience in catching and writing down the numbers of an entire freight train as it moved past, and there are few men who can beat him at railroad poker.

He was once a brakeman on the Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul, and tells an interesting story of an experience with S. S. Merrill, then general manager. The latter was making a trip over the road in the winter, and his private car was run as a special. He was always apprehensive on the road, and feared collisions, and made Underwood stand out on the rear platform all night to warn off any approaching train. It was a bitterly cold night and an uncomfortable ride for Underwood.

"But I got even with him," said Underwood, in telling his experience. "He loaned me his seal cap and fur coat, and the burning cinders from the engine ruined them during the night ride. In the morning when I reached the end of my run I put them inside the car, and got away without seeing the old man. The next time he saw me he said, 'You're the fellow that burned my cap and coat; but it's all right.' That was the end of it."

WHEN Van Horne went to the Canadian Pacific he took with him John M. Egan. While he had been superintending the building of the Southern Minnesota, Egan was chief engineer, and the latter became superintendent of the division when Horne was advanced, and spent one or two winters trying to keep the road open. In those days the snow plow was simply a plow with a mold board on each side.

The worst blizzards Minnesota ever experienced happened about that time, and every railroad cut from the Blue Earth River of the Dakota border line, some hundred and fifty miles, was full of snow. Egan went out with the crews, and I have seen him with two engines, between which was a flat car heavily loaded with railroad iron, bucking the snow in the deep cuts. The two engines were backed away from the drift about half a mile, and then sent forward with all the speed that was possible to plunge into the drift.

The plow would throw out great mountains on each side, and the forward engine would be buried under huge piles of snow. From the cab of the engine Egan would emerge and give directions to the shovelers, and in emergencies he would seize a shovel and work like a laboring man himself.

It was Egan who rigged sails on hand cars and went out over the line when trains could not get through. The hand cars were dragged across the cuts and then the sails were set for a long run on the clear portions of the track.

After Egan went to the Canadian Pacific he was stationed at Winnipeg, and had much to do with the construction of the road westward. Then he went with Hill on the Manitoba system, and later was general manager of the organization of railroads centering in Chicago.

