

Iron County Register

BY ELI D. ABE.
IRONTON, MISSOURI.

THE NOBLE KING.

King numbers in his palace set secure,
Whom were the monarchs, the first one
The noblest and noblest of the first one
For rich and noble from the place had fled.
The second came from Forderne, where
They had the races and feasts.
Something to drive away a sovereign's care—
And so they begged the king's guests
might be.

Quick through the electric wire the monarch
spoke in his spirit by the city's woe:
"At Forderne's messenger they make;
They die at Naples; I to Naples go."

Through stricken Naples soon a whisper
spread
That spread to language, leapt from
tongue to ear.
"Not let alone with misery and our dead;
One heart has sympathy—the king is
here."

The helpless widow with her babe at breast,
Mourning her husband lost, took heart
again,
And said: "God in the end will stay the
past;
The king has come who loves his fellow-
men."

The loathsome beggar in his rags arrayed,
Waiting his hour to feel disease and die,
Thrust back his head, and with a thankful
smile
said: "Afar our nobles; but the king is
nigh."

In but and noble, in the noisome lanes,
Where pestilence in its shaft malignant sped,
The sick momentary of his care,
The king will come" each to the other
said.

And turning on their pallets when they
heard
The king was there, within each sore-
-ached
And prayers ascended coupled with his
name.

He came, with gracious mien and kindly
word,
Made all alike the object of his care,
He cheer'd the living and he bled the
dead,
And hope inspired where all had been de-
-spair.

And when his voice's sympathetic tone
Fell musical upon the people's ears,
Some, their joy with face transfigured
showing
In a deeper feeling loosened tears.

On rich men who had left the poor to die,
On noble who had left the poor to die,
Fell sudden shame; taught by example high,
Their new-born kindness could neglect re-
-fused.

It was not now, perhaps, a little thing,
With more of courage than a battle needs;
But it conferred upon the kindly king
More fame than could a thousand martial
deeds.

And when in future ages men shall write
Of the noble monarch whom "Relieved"
they call,
If more or less be in letters bright,
Be sure that Humbert's name shall lead
them all.

What man makes it but ill-made at the best;
What God makes lacks no jot of perfect
plan.
Man's will a claim of birth-right, and the
rest
Here made a sovereign; God had made the
man.
Thomas Dunn English, in N. Y. Ledger.

THE ENGINEER'S STORY.

His Thrilling Experience on the Track Under a Fire-Box.

The following is a translation of a story by the late Baron M. M. von Weber, who in his preparation for his profession as an engineer served for a year on a locomotive.

It was New Year's eve in the locomotive engineer's room at the engine-house in the German town of Birglitz. An old locomotive engineer, retired on a pension, was brewing a bowl of punch at the table, which in honor of the New Year was spread with a clean cloth. In from the cold, snowy air entered a number of locomotive runners wrapped up to their eyes, covered with snow, pulling and stamping.

"Bad weather for running this New Year's," said the newcomers, shaking off the snow and stripping off overcoats, wraps, jackets, caps and overshoes.

"Little do you know, nowadays, of bad weather for running an engine; in the glass parlors that the companies have built over your foot-boards, on engines that rock you on their springs as a nurse rocks a child in its arms. You ought to have stood with me about 1839 and 1840 on the little engines that ran so hard and pelted so that you felt every rail joint from sole to crown, and that couldn't stir when the snow was ankle deep over the rails. And there we stood night and day, with no sign of shelter except our overcoats and furs, through December storms and July heats, and in the heart of winter, when it was tough work. What do you know about it? And for that matter, what do your hardest work compared to what Hennig has had to go through to-day to finish up his year, in standing his examination for locomotive engineer. In the open air the engine God is with us; but, in the school-room, there is the Devil. But here comes the boy that has been running the gauntlet. Hurrah for him!"

Six hoarse voices repeated the welcome, and six right hands were stretched toward the young man in his black Sunday suit, with blushing, open countenance, and with that clear, far gaze in his blue eyes which is peculiar to sailors or to men who have been at sea, who entered, somewhat hesitatingly, and answered their greeting.

"Now how did you get through? Did they make it hot for you? Did the master mechanic try your eyes?"

Let's sit down and have our punch," said the engineers, as they gathered round him.

"Keep still now," said Zimmermann, the old retired engineer. "You shall have no punch until Hennig and Frank come in with the freight train. The telegrapher told me it was twenty minutes behind time, and it must have got here by this time."

"Well," said the young candidate, wiping off the sweat which the bare stand on his brow, "they tortured me fearfully. I was examined according to the new regulations. A row of gentlemen a rod long sat around me, not one of whom, except our Master Mechanic, had I ever seen on a locomotive, or in a shop. And our foremen were not the worst ones. They questioned me very sharply, to be sure, but you could understand them and give them sensible answers. But I didn't understand more than half of what the other examiners—learned men in high positions—asked me. They didn't talk railroad language, and what they wanted to know I had only learned out of the books the foreman had lent me, just for the purpose of passing the examination. I never had come across them in practice and had never used them, and probably never will as long as I live."

"And what were they?" a comrade began to ask, lighting a cigar, when the door of the room suddenly opened

and in poured a cloud of snow, out of which emerged two new arrivals, the engineers of the belated freight trains. "Just in time," was the cry; "now pass round the punch and send to the restaurant for the New Year's Eve dinner."

"Here is some game to add to it," said one of the new-comers, holding up a half-roasted rabbit by the hind legs. "Who did you get that? What is the matter of it?"

"The little fellow was going to dish himself up for the feast, but was in a little too much of a hurry, and got roasted with his skin on," said the owner of the rabbit. "The red light on my engine passed him on the edge of his hiding-place in the snow, and he began running a race with the train. For two or three minutes I saw the little fellow by the light of my fire flying over the snow alongside the engine, on the other side of the road. He was so fast, which scared him so that he ran ahead, gave a leap, got under the red light of the lamps, which probably blinded him, and then doubled in front of the engine as he would in front of a dog, across the road. I looked on to see if he would come in sight again, but he did not, and I supposed he had been run over or passed by, and forgot him. But when they were cleaning out my grate at Seestadt, the fellow with the poker called me from the ash-pit. 'Hennig, Hennig, you have brought a roast with you!' I thought the man must be crazy, and got down and looked. As sure as I am sitting here, there lay my rabbit of the Birglitz woods in my ash-pit, swinging round and round. The fellow must have caught him as he was making a jump. He must have been in a hurry to get roasted."

The story of the young engineer was received with loud laughter.

"Laugh away over the poor beast," I said, "but you are laughing at the wrong man, filling the glasses meanwhile. 'You don't know how bad it feels to lie under a fire-box.'"

"And do you know how it feels?" said several voices in tones indicating great interest.

"I know all about it, as you fellows very well know, and I have gone through all the experience there can be between the bottom of the rails and the top of the smokestack," answered Zimmermann, who had draught from his punch glass, and then continued:

"I heard him again call out 'Ease ahead to my comrade, heard the safety chains rattling, and then a sound—like what? I thought you ever heard a butcher cut through a piece of meat, and then I heard a stifled scream, and then again the clatter and rattle of the buffers coming together. A cold chill ran through my bones. Then I got the signal to run forward, and I was off, no delay. I was soon far from that place at the other end of the yard, where no one could know what had happened."

"But now I did my work as if I were dreaming, and when, half an hour later, we were through, the foreman said to me: 'Do you know, Zimmermann, that the drillmaster's helper Porges has been killed—crushed between the buffers?' I did not ask many questions, but my heart was as if it were torn out of me. I was so far from home I don't know. As I passed the station platform I saw a crowd standing with lanterns and something lying on the snow covered with a cloak. I had no question in my mind, but I trembled like a leaf, and I can tell you, boys, I don't know what I would not have given if I had not called to him half an hour before to go to the devil. It was a hard task to drive that out of my head, but I did it, and I meant—a way of talking that we rough fellows got into the habit of."

"With you young fellows it is still worse, and it would cure you if you had felt the remorse that I felt then. Well, finally I succeeded in getting my way to the bright, warm room at home, with the fella slippers and Louise and the baby and the cat and the tea-kettle singing on the stove, and the bottle of arrack and the sugar bowl and the emons of arrack, and gradually I could see it all plain."

"You may imagine that I did not pay much attention to wind or weather or road with all this thinking, and I only noticed that the wind was still whirling in the city, as if it were about to be married. You know the station in a miserable place for running. Which ever way the wind blows it catches you there. The road enters the city through a narrow cutting, and one of the two tracks always gets blocked before the snow has been blowing an hour. Just beyond the cutting, in the third house on Gardner street, behind the old oil mill, which we cursed so often because we had to cut off steam on the road, there was a fire-box, and the shingle roof on fire. Just behind this mill I lived with my Louise and my eldest boy Frank, who is now foreman in Rudrich's shops."

"So on New Year's Eve in 1845 I came to Birglitz with a freight train, having been standing fourteen hours on the engine, with the thermometer near zero and the snow and sleet blowing. I was stiff with cold, and was anticipating enjoying my New Year's Eve in the city, when I was awakened dark when I came in, and through the station with its hundreds of lights on the platforms and switches, as if it were a great Christmas festival. Sorry cheer was there for me. On account of my long absence, the five or six hundred cars had collected at the station, and they all had to be made up into trains in order that they might be returned immediately after New Year's."

"Hardly had I got off my engine in the round-house when the yard-master came up and said: 'Zimmermann, Hauser has been taken sick. You will have to take the third switching engine in his place.' 'Jerusalem,' said I, 'but I hope it won't take till midnight. I must be home by that time, or the new year will be unlucky.'"

"Nonsense," said the yard-master; "you stick to it till you get through, and away through with the snow. I took it to heart more than it deserved, but the chill which came over me when I came out with the engine I ascribed to the fearful storm that blew in my face. The whole air was full of powder, snow and mist, and when the white snows drove across the track, I could hardly see the smoke-stack."

"Of the lamp signals you could only get now and then a glimpse of red, white or green; and of the horn and mouth whistle signals, the signals are sometimes given by blowing horns or whistles on German railroads), what with the howling of the wind among the cars and the singing of the telegraph wires and the rolling of the cars and the whistling of the engines, you could hear only just enough to be sure that you didn't understand them. Of the Yard-master's calls you could understand absolutely nothing except that he was calling."

"In the midst of this some two hundred cars were being pushed in every

direction at the same time by three different engines; everywhere they emerged like great shadows from banks of mist and snow, and then disappeared again, and the deep snow and darkness; you could not hear them pass nor come nor go. The poor switchmen and yardmen sprang back and forth between the moving cars, wet to the skin, knee-deep in the snow. You know pretty well how the drilling yard looks in a winter night! It is a special Providence that men are not all crushed to atoms, and all my life I have wondered that I have not heard every other morning of some one's being killed. And when anything happens, high and mighty gentlemen get around me, and I am in a warm room, and take the Book of Rules out of their pockets! Well, so it goes, and it will; but if you would just once in their lives go outside and look on, they might learn something."

"So it was a bad night then, and perhaps some of the boys were anxious to get to their New Year's punch, for the drilling was done in a terrible hurry. The cars fairly flew back and forth, and the lights passed like lightning, and everywhere was the creaking and rattling of the buffers as they came together, and the men crept under and between the cars as if the wheels were ginger cakes and the buffers feather pillows. From that night on, I was a little, ugly Drill-master's helper—I never could bear the fellow, for he once cut me out when I was courting—but I had to wonder at his activity when I saw his signal lanterns everywhere, swinging round and round. He was a hard man, and he had a sharp voice calling through the storm."

"I had just called to this man when I saw him dodge between two cars again. I told him he ought not to be so outrageously bold in such a dangerous place, when he could hear nothing, and moreover might slip down any time. But he laughed in my face and shouted back: 'You mind your own business, Zimmermann, and not me. We must get through here midnight or else, and when I have to go to the devil, I'll shout after him, and these words I shall not forget as long as I live, and shall repeat them on my dying bed.'"

Here the old engineer paused, wiped his forehead, took draught from his punch glass, and then continued:

"I heard him again call out 'Ease ahead to my comrade, heard the safety chains rattling, and then a sound—like what? I thought you ever heard a butcher cut through a piece of meat, and then I heard a stifled scream, and then again the clatter and rattle of the buffers coming together. A cold chill ran through my bones. Then I got the signal to run forward, and I was off, no delay. I was soon far from that place at the other end of the yard, where no one could know what had happened."

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us has gone into our engines. But, boys, in that moment which happened between my push and my falling flat on my face I did more thinking than I ever did at any other time between Easter and Whit Sunday."

"First thought of home, the warm room and everything in it, and the New Year's bell-ringing, and the New Year's church in the morning—well, we won't speak of that; then on the Drill-master's helper, who was lying under a cloak on the snow, and then I calculated concerning the train that was running over me as clearly as if I had it to make up. Why it was coming up the wrong track in which I was walking—the down track! And immediately I understood what I had forgotten in my reverie while walking home. At noon I had seen the up track covered deep in snow, and that was why the train went out on the track. Then plainly saw the train standing; there could not be more than ten or eleven freight cars in it, all our company's cars; they were all high above the rails; they would do no harm—I was lying flat enough because I did not see the engine, the ash-pans of the engine? 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