

# Iron County Register.

BY ELI D. AKE.

TRONTON, MISSOURI

## THE PASSING OF THE ENGINES.

Hark! high over the rattle and clamor and clatter of traffic-filled streets, did you hear that loud noise? And pushing and rushing to see what's the matter? Like herds of wild cattle go pell-mell the boys.

There's fire in the city! The engines are coming! The bold bells are clanging: "Make way in the streets!" The wheels of the horse-carts are spinning and humming in time to the music of galloping feet.

"Make way, there! Make way, there! The horses are flying. The sparks from their swift hoofs shoot higher and higher. The crowds are increasing—the gamins are crying: "Hooray, boys! Hooray, boys! Come on to the fire!"

With clanging and banging and clatter and rattle the long ladders follow the engines and hose. The men are all ready to dash into battle. But will they come out again?—God only knows!

At windows and doorways crowd questioning faces. There's something about it that quickens one's breath. How proudly the brave fellows sit in their places. And speak to the conflict that maybe, means—death.

Still faster, and faster, and faster, and faster. The great chargers thunder and leap on the way. The red feet a yonder, and may prove the master.

"Turn out there," bold traffic. "Turn out there, I say!"

For once the loud truckman knows oaths will ruin in his horse, and yields to his fate. And engines are coming—let pleasure-crowds scatter. Let street-car, expressman and mail-wagon wait.

They speed like a comet—they pass in a minute. They follow on like the tail of a kite; The commonplace street has but traffic now in it. The great fire engines have swept out of sight.

## AT THE THROTTLE.

### A Plucky Young Engineer's Perilous Undertaking.

"Crooked Ben" was called by everybody in the little Colorado town without thought of disrespect. The hunchbacked boy bore the nickname, too, without thinking it other than a common title. Few who saw him moving about, with his misshapen shoulders and undersize form, would guess that he had talents; but the brilliancy of his large eyes, the breadth of his forehead and the pleasant intelligence of his pale face did much to redeem his deformity and proved him, what he really was, a genius. He was noted for his constructive skill. Mechanics was his passion and for making tiny water-wheels to whirl in the foaming mountain stream he soon progressed to a study of the engines in the roundhouse at the railway station. It was the end of a branch road and many a dark monster was stabled in the sooty building. He pondered over them with an enthusiastic patience and an artist's zeal until he knew every part perfectly and was often allowed to sit up with the engineers on short runs and even to handle the throttle during the switching about the yards.

Alpine Junction was at the head of a canyon. In the autumn day the mayor of the little city at the foot, looking out on the plains to the east, visited the town joined to his own by the railway running close to a mountain stream, often crossing and recrossing it. In the afternoon the wind changed, clouds came scurrying over Pike's peak and a big storm threatened.

About three o'clock a telegram was received for the mayor of the lower town. Not twenty minutes after the operator had, with a grave face, copied it and sent off a messenger, a covered carriage came hurrying through the wind and rain, and a young engineer in a moment was excitedly asking the agent: "When does the next train go east?"

"At six o'clock."

"That will not do. I must go at once. How many miles is it to the springs?"

"Sixty."

"I couldn't get there in five hours by horse. I must have an engine. A riot has broken out between the townsmen and the workers in the smelting works. I ought to be there now."

"The telegraph superintendent," said the agent, "there is an engine here but it is against orders to let it go. It will cost you considerable, sir."

"I don't care what it costs. Hurry up the message."

The agent flew to his instrument. The indicator gave no answer. The wires left the station and the Springs were down. Either the storm had broken farther east or the rioters had cut them. He explained the situation to the mayor.

"Well, let me go. Hire up your engine and let me go. It is for the public good and I must go."

The agent thought a moment. "There is hardly a chance. The man who runs the Pilgrim, Edward Forester, is sick."

"Then who can go with it?" asked the mayor's host.

"I had thought," said the agent, hesitatingly, "that as the track is cleared and will be for two hours that—if you can get Forester's consent—that maybe Ben might do it."

The gentleman clapped his hands. "The very one," he exclaimed, "a moment he was away in his carriage to fetch the boy."

When he reached the station and the mayor looked at the fragile, hump-backed form and the frail face he hesitated.

"Have you ever run an engine, boy?" he asked.

"Yes, sir, a little ways. But I understand it as well as anybody."

"Then you think you can make this run?"

"Yes, sir."

But the mayor hesitated to trust himself to Ben's hands, and it was not until the young engineer's sharp-tongued voice stopped them: "Stop! he cried, 'don't move! Stay here or you will be killed.'"

The weakened bridge settled and creaked, but it did not sink. The locomotive did its duty nobly and swept across the trestles like a whirlwind.

ing against the windows of the depot, and the hills were hidden in mist and a dismal gloom overspread everything. In the midst of it all there was a rumble and jar and the Pilgrim stood shaming at the platform. Crooked Ben was in the cab with his hand on the throttle while a sturdy fireman stood behind him.

The mayor looked again at the boy and hesitated.

"He'll take you through all right," said the agent. "Climb up to the fireman's seat and keep the bell ringing."

The mayor thought of the scenes of bloodshed, perhaps, taking place in his own town. He stepped into the cab. "See here," said he to the young engineer, "if you take me through in seventy minutes I'll give you a hundred dollars, but if you feel uncertain about your ability don't try it. What do you say?"

"I'll go, sir."

The passenger reached for the rope and the bell's clangor sounded through the howl of the storm. Ben tried the water gauges, looked at the fire, and with his slender white hand drew the lever to let the steam into the cylinder.

On she sped, faster and faster, down the inclined track, clacking over the switches with a noise on the two wheels of steel that skirted the edge of the mountain side against which the storm was beating.

The mayor sat very stiffly upright, and the fireman was perched back on the tender, while little misshapen Ben, with his hand on the throttle, was piercing through the rain and mist, guiding the whirling wheels.

The watchers at the station looked after the locomotive until they saw it shoot into the black opening of a short tunnel, a half mile down the canyon. Then they saw the puff of smoke on the other side and knew that the train was soon they had returned to their duties and had forgotten the trio taking the long and dangerous flight.

The old Pilgrim went thundering on down the road. Two miles, five miles, ten miles. His honor grew nervous. Never in his life had he run at such a speed that crooked mountain road now on one side of the stream and now on the other, now into a tunnel's darkness and now out on a trestle over the water.

But Ben was calm. The roar of machinery and chattering tread of the wheels prevented them from talking and the locomotive bounded and swayed as they rolled fiercely over the track.

The Pilgrim seemed to exult in a conscious power and many admiring gazers watched it speed through the little mining towns that afternoon.

For tourists that crooked mountain road now on one side of the stream and now on the other, now into a tunnel's darkness and now out on a trestle over the water.

Ben's thin, white hand clinched the lever and his sharp eyes scanned eagerly the track ahead and the machinery below. Town after town and then came Woodlawn, an incipient summer resort for tourists, just half way. Here they stopped for water. The men's faces were black with cinders.

"Shall we get to the Springs in time?" asked the mayor, looking at his watch. "We have come this far in thirty-five minutes. Can we do the other half in thirty-five?"

"Yes, sir," said Ben, cheerily, "in less time than that."

"Then you shall have two hundred dollars."

Ben secretly determined to get to the Springs in thirty minutes—but he failed to do it.

"They rushed on again. Cascade was passed. Manitowish Park—they were now only fifteen miles from the city. The mayor grew more and more anxious as they approached their destination. In his mind's eye he saw the city in the hands of a mob and fearful battle being fought in the street.

"Ten miles!"

"Eight miles!"

In the region through which they were now passing the storm had raged most fiercely of anywhere on the route. Although the clouds had now passed away, except for a few hanging about the hoary head of Pike's peak, the roaring stream showed how great had been the volume of water poured down by their force.

Just after they passed Longmont there was a long descending grade. At the bottom, the little stream, now swollen into a river, which they had been following made a sharp turn, crossing the railway's course, gurgling under a long bridge one hundred feet from side to side and supported on piles driven into the earth of the canyon and the bed of the river.

Down the grade toward the bridge went the engine with fearful velocity, the cab swaying from side to side until it seemed that it must throw the three passengers out.

All at once Ben, straining his eyes toward the flying perspective of rocks and track ahead, perceived something that made his heart leap into his throat. The water on the lower side of the bridge was thick with mud. This was evidently from the banking behind the piers of the structure. Was it possible that the bridge was giving way?

To stop the engine was now out of the question. Ben made up his mind in an instant. With a quick, nervous jerk he pulled the lever and let on a full head of steam. The Pilgrim sprang forward like a frantic creature. The mayor turned and gazed at his frail engineer. Ben was leaning forward with flashing eyes, scanning the danger. His lips were set firmly and the concentrated intensity of his look made the boy almost afraid. He said nothing. He was bent upon rushing the engine across the bridge before it had time to sink, even if the abutments were already giving way.

In a moment they were upon it. Ben saw the mud water boiling below. The little mountain stream could be very fierce when so disposed.

The bridge shook, the engine rocked and staggered as it flew along. The mayor leaped down from his seat with starting eyes, and Terence, the fireman, uttered a frightened cry.

But Crooked Ben remained cool. His very excitement seemed to nerve him into a desperate calmness. There was a sensation of sinking and Ben saw that several timbers had started. The mayor and the poor fireman prepared themselves for a flying leap into the river. But the young engineer's sharp-tongued voice stopped them: "Stop! he cried, 'don't move! Stay here or you will be killed.'"

The weakened bridge settled and creaked, but it did not sink. The locomotive did its duty nobly and swept across the trestles like a whirlwind.

It kept the track to the end—passed the bridge—and rolled upon solid ground again. Instantly Ben reversed the machinery and motioned to Terence to put on brakes.

After running some distance they stopped. The lower span of the bridge had fallen behind them! Speechless for a moment, with the thought of the fearful peril they had passed, they looked back at the ruins and watched the swaying timbers and broken joists as they yielded one by one to the foaming flood. On the opposite side part of the span still stood, so that a passenger could cross. The fireman was sent back to flag the express, and in a moment they were speeding on, and the remaining four miles to the Springs were run in nearly that number of minutes. The mayor sat through the trip dazedly gazing at the little engine with admiration for his gallantry, nerve and high intelligence.

The people were astounded to see the single engine rush into the depot with a little hump-backed boy at the throttle and a tall smoke-begrimed gentleman pulling the rope.

A thousand questions were asked. The superintendent of the road came in, and in reply to the mayor's questions said that the riot had been suppressed and the city was quiet. But he wanted to be told of the engine's trip.

And he was told. Ben found himself a hero and discovered that it was considered a remarkable thing for a boy to understand an engine, and that it required uncommon courage to run it and have one's rear thoroughly at command.

Ben's reward was not alone in consciousness of a duty well performed and ample gifts of money and honor from influential friends in the mayor and officials of the road, who helped him and are still helping him to high places in the business and industrial world.—Charles Moreau Harger, in Yankee Blade.

INDEPENDENCE DAY.

An Opportune Time for Recalling the Early History of Our Republic.

The chief element of value in any country is the story of its past sacrifices in behalf of great and noble objects. The remembrance of the willingness of the colonists to deprive themselves of the necessities of life, the necessary articles of food and clothing—of their bravery, of their voluntary poverty, of their heroic endurance and pluck, of their hope and fearful discouragements, of their self-denials and sublime perseverance—is fitted to stir our souls to new and more noble deeds of patriotism. Nor is this all. It is an opportune time to take counsel of their farsighted wisdom. The various documents framed by the colonists in the rational assertion of their rights in explanation of the duties existing between the citizen and the state, in defending the just basis of liberty, will be read and reread with every return of this day. They will kindle a new flame of enthusiasm in every American heart. When William Pitt saw them he cried out, with irrepressible eloquence: "For myself, I must avow that in all my reading—and I have read a good deal, and I have studied and admired the master states of the world—for solidity of reason, for sagacity and wisdom of conclusion under a complication of difficult circumstances, no nation or body of men can stand in preference to the fathers of our country. Philadelphia. The histories of Greece and Rome give us nothing equal to it, and all attempts to impose servitude upon such a mighty continental nation must be vain." Nor has the judgment of one of their great English statesmen been reversed by posterity. "The American constitution is, the most astonishing effort ever struck at one time from the brain and heart of man."

Look back, O reader, to those wonderful pages which record the political theories as well as the self-sacrificing struggles of the fathers, and you will find your minds enlightened as well as souls refreshed with a baptism of wisdom and patriotism.

The example of such men ought to make us better citizens—more zealous for the nation's weal, more unflinching in striking down bribery at the polls, more determined and watchful in holding office bearers to a conscientious discharge of their trust, more willing to labor in manifold directions for good government and public virtue.—Christian Work.

## THE PLANET MARS.

In All Essential Points It is Startlingly Like the Earth.

The first sight of Mars through an observatory telescope is almost terrifying, even for a person of good nerves. It is as if one saw the whole earth, with its icy poles, as a solid globe, floating overhead. One distinguishes clearly the dark blue seas and the brilliant, beaming, many-hued dry land, and on this the dry beds of a multitude of lakes, bays, gulfs, streams and canals, these latter being either parallel to each other or crossing one another at right angles.

As you continue to look you note the variations of color and of light and shade and further that the outlines on the edge of the disk pass out of sight, while on the other the landscape expands; you see that Mars revolves on its axis, and that the ends of the earth, the frozen poles, as with us. There is a further resemblance in the inclination of the axis, which provides that on this planet also the seasons follow each other in regular succession. The ice crust at the poles diminishes in summer, and that the ends of the earth, the frozen poles, as with us. There is a further resemblance in the inclination of the axis, which provides that on this planet also the seasons follow each other in regular succession. The ice crust at the poles diminishes in summer, and that the ends of the earth, the frozen poles, as with us. There is a further resemblance in the inclination of the axis, which provides that on this planet also the seasons follow each other in regular succession. 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