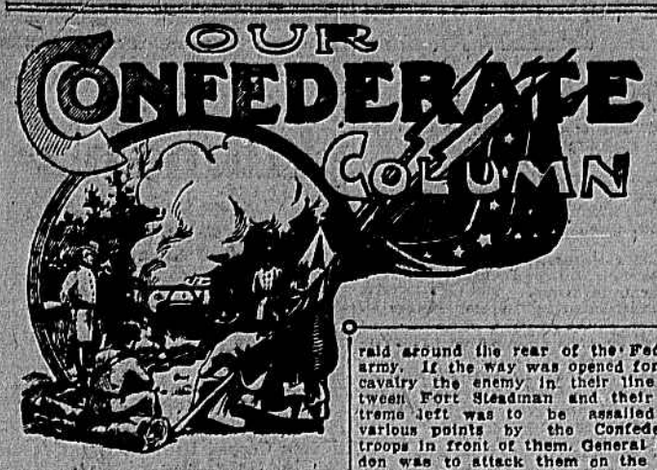

Reminiscences of Fort Steadman—So Near and Yet So Far.

The last charge made by Confederate soldiers on an intrenched position of the enemy was General John B. Gordon's assault on March 25, 1865, on Fort Steadman, a Federal redoubt near Petersburg.

Four bodies of picked sharpshooters of fifty men each made a dash upon the Federal lines in front of the fort and quickly captured them, then rushed upon the fort and overpowered the surprised garrison. The officers and men in the fort acted gallantly, and tried to form their men and make resistance, but in vain. As the head of Walker's column entered the fort all the inmates who could escape fled precipitately to the second line of forts. Eight gun detachments, under Lieutenant-Colonel Robert Stribling, carrying with them lanyards and friction primers, accompanied the sharpshooters, and several batteries to the right and left were cleared of their defenders and made ready to open fire. The two detachments that were to capture the redoubts in rear lost their way, through the failure of the guides, and did not reach the works, and the supporting columns were not in time to seize the hill in rear of Fort Steadman, which would have cut the Federal army in two at its centre. Had the plan been carried out the second line would have been surprised and taken with as small loss and difficulty as the first line and the fort. But here occurred one of those failures in combination which have caused the loss of so many battles. The breaking down of the trains and non-arrival of the supports left Gordon alone to oppose the overwhelming odds. The sun was now above the horizon, and the enemy had poured forth from their camps in rear and filled the forts and breastworks of the second line with both infantry and artillery in numbers four times as great as Gordon's entire force.

Then Fort Haskell, to the left of Fort Steadman, opened upon it a terrific fire, under cover of which General Hartranft's division of Pennsylvanians that was in reserve moved forward to recapture Steadman. Their gallant bearing on that memorable morning fairly entitled them to the commemorative honors paid them by their State on Wednesday last at Petersburg. The concentration upon Gordon then became irresistible, and about 10 A. M. he ordered the withdrawal of his troops. The space between the lines was then being swept by artillery and musketry from each side, and our loss, which had been small up to that time, now became heavy—principally in prisoners who would not run the gauntlet of the terrible fire. General James A. Walker, who commanded the division which captured the fort, in a graphic account of it to be found in Mr. George S. Bernard's book, "War Talks With Veterans," thus explains the object of the assault:

"The reader may ask what was the object of this rash sally—this seemingly hopeless attack on overwhelming numbers, strongly intrenched and supplied with every appliance known to modern warfare? I can answer the question. The situation of the Confederate army around Richmond and Petersburg was fast becoming desperate, and unless something could be done, and done quickly, the fall of Richmond was inevitable, and desperate diseases require desperate remedies. General Gordon conceived the bold and hazardous plan of surprising the enemy, piercing their lines in front of Hare's Hill, cutting off the troops between Fort Steadman and the Appomattox River, and by thus getting in their rear to compel them to cross over to the left bank of that river or be captured. Thus having opened the way to City Point, the Confederate cavalry, which had been brought up and held in readiness to act, was to dash upon City Point, capture General Grant, destroy the immense supplies stored there for the use of his army, and make a raid around the rear of the Federal army. If the way was opened for the cavalry the enemy in their line between Fort Steadman and their extreme left was to be assailed at various points by the Confederate troops in front of them. General Gordon was to attack them on the exposed right flank and rear, with the hope of compelling them to abandon the siege of Petersburg and withdraw to the north side of James River.

"The conception was worthy of Stonewall Jackson, and reflects the highest credit on General Gordon, and if his force had been sufficient to carry the enemy's second line would have proved a grand success."

We cannot close this brief story without a heartfelt tribute to gallant Tom Jones, Gordon's aide-de-camp, as fearless and dashing a cavalier as ever drew a blade. His figure looms up before me whenever my mind reverts to Gordon's battles, and especially when I recall Fort Steadman.

"When the retreat to our own works had ended," says General Gordon in his "Reminiscences of the Civil War," "a report reached me that an entire Confederate regiment had not received the order to withdraw, and was still standing in the Union breastworks bravely fighting. It was necessary to send them orders or leave them to their fate. I called my staff around me, and explained the situation and the extreme danger the officer would encounter in carrying that order. I stated to them that the pain I experienced in sending one of them on so perilous a mission was greater than I could express. Every one of them quickly volunteered to go; but Thomas G. Jones, of Alabama, insisted that as he was the youngest and had no special responsibilities it should fall to his lot to incur the danger. I bade him good-by with earnest prayers that God would protect him, and without an apparent tremor he rode away. A portion of the trip was through a literal furnace of fire, but he passed through it, both going and returning, without a scratch."

God bless you, dear old comrade of the staff! By the way, Professor Basil L. Gildersleeve, himself a member, with becoming modesty, claims that it was one of the finest "staves" in the Confederate army. I will never allow the glory of that heroic deed to be dimmed by dear old V. Dabney's humurous suggestion that you had recently been kicked by your sweetheart, and were in a peculiarly desperate frame of mind.

R. W. H.

Asking Forgiveness for General Sherman's Vandalism.

In complying with a friend's request to republish in the Confederate Column the following comments of the New Orleans Picayune upon a recent editorial of the New York Evening Post, we do so with no wish to revive the animosities of the war, or put ourselves out of accord with the era of good feeling now happily and generally prevalent among the old soldiers and people of the North and the South. Ever since we gave our parole at Appomattox it has been our constant aim, not only to observe its terms in letter and spirit, but to promote, as far as possible, friendly relations between the sections. In whatever we have said or written, while faithful to our own convictions, we have not allowed sectional lines to limit our just estimate of the valor, devotion and fealty toward the right as it was given to each side to see the right in our great Civil War. But there is a part of our war history that no true American can recall without a flash of shame. It relates to the disregard of the dictates of humanity and the usages of civilized warfare by some of the officers of highest rank in the Union army. Monuments may be erected to them, but their infamy cannot escape the avenging pen of history. It would not be right, even if it were possible, to respect the memories of such men or to teach the youth of the land to respect them. Pure and undefiled religion and our Christian civilization alike forbid it. Here is the Picayune's editorial:

R. W. H.

"Some days ago a prominent citizen, who is a Confederate veteran, remarked that the people of the Northern States are discovering that the time has come when they must ask forgiveness of the South for the outrages of the Civil War, instead, as had long been contended, that the South must do all the craving of pardon.

"It looks as if some such time had arrived, when the New York Evening Post, one of the most unyielding sectional papers in the country, editorially asks the South to forgive General Sherman. Said the Post:

"'But mention of Sherman still opens floodgates of bitterness. He was a purloiner of silver; his soldiers spared neither women nor children; he burned towns that had not offended and cities that had surrendered, and he spared not even the convents occupied by women of his own religious faith. Well, General Sherman always admitted that his was a ruthless military hand. What Sheridan undertook to do in the Shenandoah Valley, to impoverish it so that a crow flying across it must take his rations on his back, Sherman did wherever he went. He was bound that the South should know war in its worst forms, and thus bring irresistible pressure to bear on the Confederacy. When he cut loose on his march to the sea, both policy and necessity dictated his sweeping clean the country that he passed over.'

"There are now printed in the May Scribner's several letters from General Sherman to members of his family, in which he expresses himself with entire frankness about his movements and acts. In a letter dated December 16, 1864, he said:

"'I have no doubt you have heard of my safe arrival on the coast. . . . We came right along living on turkeys, chickens, pigs, bringing along our wagons loaded as we started with bread, etc. I suppose Jeff Davis will now have to feed the people of Georgia instead of collecting provisions of them to feed his armies. We have destroyed nearly 200 miles of railroad and are not yet done.'

"And, again, he writes on Christmas Day from Savannah:

"'It would amuse you to see the negroes; they flock to me, old and young, they pray and shout and mix up my name with that of Moses, and Simon and other Scriptural ones, as well as "Abram Linkom," the Great Messiah of "Dis Jubilee."

"'There are many fine families in this city, but when I ask for old and familiar names it marks the sad havoc of war. The Goodwins, Tefftts, Cuylers, Habershams, Laws, etc., etc., all gone or in poverty, and yet the girls remain, bright and haughty and proud as ever. There seems no end but utter annihilation that will satisfy their hate of the "sneaking Yankee" and "ruthless invader." They no longer call my army "Cowardly Yanks," but have tried to arouse the sympathy of the civilized world by stories of the cruel barbarities of my army. The next step in the progress will be "for God's sake spare us; we must surrender." When that end is reached we begin to see daylight, but although I have come right through the heart of Georgia they talk as defiantly as ever.'

"'If General Sherman had confined the severities of warfare to the killing and wounding and capturing of the Confederate soldiers who met him on the battlefield there would have been no word of censure justly raised against him, but in his march through Georgia and South Carolina, where he met practically no armed resistance, he burned and ravaged as he went, making war on the women and children, whom he reduced by his barbarian methods to the extremes of misery and starvation. The city of Columbia, the capital of South Caroline, was burnt to the ground by order of the vandal general, or at least with his consent and approval, and it was the constant succession of wanton outrages that marked his career in the South, when he no longer had a Confederate army in front of him, that created for him the reputation of being the most savage and cruel commander that invaded the South during the war between the sections. Of course, the South has long ago forgiven General Sherman for his success in making war in Georgia and South Carolina 'hell,' but no mantle of charity can efface from the pages of history the record of burning and devastation by which he carried out his dreadful ideal of what warfare should be."

The Scapegoat of the South.

Commenting upon the resolutions adopted by the McCoy Post of the Grand Army of the Republic, protesting against the acceptance by the government of the silver service presented by the State of Mississippi to the battleship named in honor of the State, because on one of the sixty-two pieces composing the service there was a likeness of Jefferson Davis, the Charleston News and Courier has this to say:

"On the 9th of January, 1861, Mississippi withdrew from the Union, being the second of the Southern States to take this course. In explaining to the United States Senate, of which he was then a conspicuous and an honored member, the reason for his withdrawal from that body in obedience to the command of his State, Mr. Davis said: 'This is done, not in hostility to others, not to injure any section of the country, not even for our own pecuniary benefit, but from the high and solemn motive of defending and protecting the rights we inherited and which it is our duty to transmit unshorn to our children.' 'No moral nor sentimental considerations,' as Mr. Davis said, 'were really involved in either the earlier or later controversies, which so long agitated and finally disrupted the Union. They were simply struggles between different sections with diverse institutions and interests.'

"The first threat or warning of a dissolution of the Union came from New England. It was voiced by Cabot and Pickering and Quincy, and others of the Northern statesmen. It was declared by the Hartford Convention in 1814 that 'some new form of confederacy should be substituted among those States which shall intend to maintain a Federal relation to each other.' It was emphasized in the threats of the Legislature of Massachusetts in 1844, when it declared that while the preservation of the Union was a subject of sincere anxiety, that Commonwealth would 'submit to undelegated powers in no body of men on earth,' and that 'the project of the annexation of Texas unless arrested on the threshold may tend to drive these States' (the New England States) 'into a dissolution of the Union.' All that Mr. Davis asked, and all that his people demanded, was that the rights of the States should be securely guarded in the Union of which they were a part, and when they were denied these rights they attempted to secure by peaceable separation from the Union the rights that had been denied them in the Union.

"Mr. Davis preferred a command in the field when secession had been accomplished, and in his inaugural address as President of the Confederate States he set forth in very clear and unmistakable terms, and without passion, the consideration which had moved him and the people of Mississippi and the people of the other seceding States to follow the course guaranteed to them in the Constitution of our government. 'If a just perception of mutual interest,' he declared, 'shall permit us peaceably to pursue our separate political careers, my most earnest desire will have been fulfilled. But if this be denied to us, and the integrity of our territory and jurisdiction be assailed, it will but remain for us with fine resolve to appeal to arms and invoke the blessing of Providence on a just cause.'

"There was nothing revolutionary in that; there was nothing in his course the Union party, which has pursued to excite the unrelenting hatred of him even to this day. Not all the resolutions introduced in Congress and adopted by the Grand Army posts 'shall lure it back to cancel half a line,' or 'wash out a word of it.' We stand securely upon the record as it is written, and we are proud of the record, as all other generous Americans must be. The McCoy Post of the Grand Army of the Republic at Columbus, O., adopted resolutions on Tuesday night protesting against the acceptance by the government of the silver service presented by the State of Mississippi to the battleship named in honor of that State, because this service contains the likeness of Jefferson Davis. Let the heathen rage and imagine a vain thing. It will not hurt Mr. Davis or his people, but it may serve to gratify the souls of some of the small enemies of the South, who in God's inscrutable providence are permitted to vex the spirit of peace."

Mineral, Va., May 13, 1909.

Editor of the Confederate Column:

Sir,—We are all much gratified to learn that our well-known townsman, Captain Roy Smith, was made commander of Louisa Camp, C. S. V., by unanimous choice of his old comrades at their meeting Monday last, court day.

He was elected to fill the vacancy caused by the death of their late commander, William Kean, for whom the camp is now named.

Comrades recognize the vigor, energy and untiring zeal in all Captain Smith undertakes—his reputation and success as a bulldog fighter in legal battles of late, as well as an old soldier.

As president of our Educational and Improvement League he has done much to make possible the proposed High School soon to be erected here, which will be a credit to the league and this community.

We wish the camp new life, large membership and prosperity under their new commander and his able leadership.

KELLER.

Editor of the Confederate Column:

Sir,—I received two Confederate flags thrown off of an express passenger train yesterday (Tuesday, the 28th instant) by a friend, Flavius Hempstone, who, by the way, rejoices in our cause of the Southland. One a civil flag and the other a battle flag, the first and only Stars and Bars seen in our community, and wrapped around flags was a part of copy of your paper giving description of the burning of Chambersburg, Pa., by General Early's forces. Our county, bordering on the Potomac, opposite to Loudoun county, Va., was nearly unanimous Southern, furnished many brave soldiers to the cause of our dear South, and to-day in our old Monocacy Cemetery rest fifteen gallant boys who wore the gray.

RICHARD P. HAYS.

Thirty-fifth Virginia Battalion of Cavalry, now of Dickerson, Montgomery county, Maryland.

Some Hard Fighting by Companies F and E, of the Twenty-fourth Virginia Cavalry.

Comrade James H. Harris, of Company F, Twenty-fourth Virginia cavalry (Colonel W. T. Robins's Regiment), sends us an account of some lively fighting by his company and Company E, of the same regiment, on the 16th of May, 1864, when a Federal cavalry force was advancing on Petersburg. He is naturally anxious that his command should have some public recognition of its gallantry, and we are glad to gratify him.

R. W. H.

Fredericks Hall, Louisa County, Va., May 12, 1909.

Editor of the Confederate Column:

Sir,—As I have never seen anything in print of the affair that part of Colonel W. T. Robins's command took a part in, I will try and tell you what I saw and took a part in on the morning of the 16th of May, 1861. Our company—F, Twenty-fourth Virginia Cavalry—was sent own on the Creighton Road (as I remember the road) for picket duty. We had not been there very long before the enemy made their appearance, the advance of Sheridan's men, trying to get to Petersburg. We were fighting these, then, from that time until about 4 o'clock in the evening. We would charge them and they got more men and charged us in return. About 4 o'clock we commenced falling back. I belonged to what we called the Old Guard, composed of ten picked men of our company. Our company was made up of men from a good many counties, but I am glad to say old Louisa had four of her brave men in that guard. We were, in falling back, left about 100 yards in the rear. We were falling back slowly; the enemy was in sight all the time, about 500; we did not go more than half a mile before Company E came to reinforce us, and as soon as the companies met we were ordered to right about face and charge. We were in front then, and we went at them with a vim. The guard was commanded by our first lieutenant, T. B. Anderson, one of the bravest of the brave. We charged right into them. I passed an officer, Lieutenant Lapham, of the Seventh New York Cavalry, who put his pistol over my head and ordered me to surrender, saying, "Surrender, you d—d rebel," shooting all the time. I placed the muzzle of my gun on his breast, but it failed to fire. I called Dickinson, who was on my right, to shoot him. He laid his arm across the front of my saddle and shot him through the heart. We got his horse. I put a cap on my gun; the enemy was not more than six steps off, and fired right in their faces. I turned to see where the other boys were and I found out I was the only one left. I whirled and went back, but did not get very far before I was shot. J. J. Boxley was captured, but got away. The last time I saw him he was going through their ranks firing right and left. He did not get back until after the war. I do not see how any of us ever got out; the air was full of bullets. I was the only one that was hurt, and one horse was shot. I was sent to the hospital at Chaffin's, and from there to Richmond. I got a furlough for forty days and went home, and was there when the battle of Trevillians was fought. I saw a good many of Sheridan's men go by before the battle. I stayed home about six or eight weeks before my wound was well enough to go back, and got in a fight the next day after getting back at Fuzzle's Mill. J. J. Boxley, Hamlin Dickinson and myself captured seven Yankees in the charge they made on us. Well, from that time on we were fighting nearly all the time, and after that grand old man, General Lee, had surrendered we went home to find everything destroyed by the enemy.

I hope you will publish this, for I have not seen but very little from our command, of whom we had some brave men in it. Our old captain, L. W. Allan, was the bravest man I ever saw. There are not a great many left of us, only four in this county; they have moved away or are dead.

Yours, etc.,

JAMES H. HARRIS.

Company F, Twenty-fourth Virginia Cavalry.

IT IT DISAPPEARS, IT'S ECZEMA

How to Tell Whether a Skin Affection is an Inherited Blood Disease or Not.

Sometimes it is hard to determine whether a skin affection is a sign of a blood disorder or simply a form of eczema. Even physicians are often puzzled in their diagnosis. The best way for any one afflicted is to go to Tragle's, or any good druggist who handles pure drugs, and obtain 50 cents' worth of poslam. Apply this, and if the itching stops at once, and the trouble is cured in a few days, it may be set down as having been eczema, as this is the way poslam acts in the worst cases of eczema; and in curing acne, herpes, blotches, tetter, piles, salt rheum, rash, barber's and other forms of itch, scaly scalp, and all surface skin affections.

Any one who will write to the Emergency Laboratories, No. 32 West Twenty-fifth Street, New York, can secure by mail, free of charge, a supply sufficient to cure a small eczema surface or clear a complexion overnight and remove pimples in twenty-four hours.

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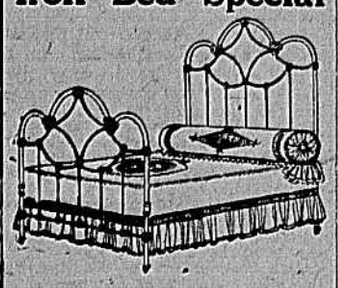

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The Scales and Babcock Test in the Dairy

By W. K. BRAINERD, Dairyman, State Experiment Station, Blacksburg, Va.

These cows are equally good in form and produce about 7,000 pounds of milk per year each. No. 1 tests 3 percent. and produces $70 worth of butter per year. No. 2 tests 4 per cent. and produces $98 worth of butter per year.

Very few people appreciate the value of a cow as measured by her ability to produce milk. In most dairy herds cows can be found giving from six to twelve quarts per day each. The prices put upon such cows seldom show a variation of more than $30 to $60. Estimating that a cow gives milk ten months in a year, one quart of milk per day would mean 300 quarts per year. At 4 cents a quart this would mean $12 per year in the producing value of a cow for each quart of milk per day. Or, estimating that a cow produces milk for five years, which is a low estimate, one quart of milk per day would mean $60 in her producing value during her period of usefulness. Therefore, if a six-quart cow is worth $30 from a producing standpoint, a twelve-quart cow would be worth $30 plus the money value in milk which she would produce during five years over the six-quart cow, or $360, which would place her value at $390. More and more dairymen are coming to appreciate the value of keeping accurate records of the milk produced by each individual cow in their herds, and then the six-quart cows are going to disappear and be replaced by twelve-quart cows.

In this change producer and consumer alike will be benefited, and the State is going to become noted for her excellent cows. Demonstrations have proved the fact that an accurate record of the milk production of a cow can be made for about 50 cents per year per cow, when the time of the milker is worth 10 cents per hour. Such a record is worth as much to the dairyman as the grocerman's accounts are to him, and the cost much less in most cases. Ever since dairy products have become commercially important there has been a demand for a simple method of determining the quality of milk. As butter fat is the most important element in milk from a commercial standpoint, the search was for a method to determine the amount of butter fat.

Early Tests for Butter Fat.

The first test proposed was the cream gauge. Cans of standard size were provided wit ha graduated glass near the top. The milk was let stand until the cream raised to the top and was measured on the graduated glass. This method did not meet the requirements because it was found that cream raised in this was not of the same thickness and hence the determinations were inaccurate. Next a specific gravity bulb, known as a lactometer, was used. This test was based upon the fact that milk was heavier than water, due to the solids which it contains. The introduction of water lowers the specific gravity, and correspondingly the reading of the lactometer. This method did not, however, measure with any degree of accuracy the amount of butter fat present, and it was soon found that milk, both watered and skimmed, if in the right proportions, showed a normal lactometer reading.

The next test proposed was known as the churn test. A small amount of each sample of cream to be tested was churned in a very small churn made for this purpose. This method was very cumbersome, and while more accurate than any previous method proposed, was not satisfactory. At this time, in the "eighties," the creamery and factory systems in the North and West were being rapidly developed, and there was an increasing demand for a simple, practical method of determining the amount of butter fat in milk.

Development of the Babcock Test.

The developing of a test for butter fat was one of the first problems attempted by the experiment stations after their organization. A large number of station chemists worked at the same time on this problem. Short, of the Wisconsin station, brought out one of the first tests in 1888. Other butter fat tests were brought out between 1888 and 1890, of which may be mentioned Failyer and Willard, Kansas station; Parsons, New Hampshire station, and Patrick, of the Iowa station. Dr. Babcock, of the Wisconsin station, however, perfected the test which bears his name, and which is now used in creameries, factories, in the home dairy and wherever milk is sold. The test is very simple, it requires but a few minutes to make a determination, and is accurate enough for all practical purposes. Dr. Babcock refused to patent the method, hence the apparatus necessary for the test can be purchased for $5, or even less.

The influence of the Babcock test on the development of the dairy interests in the United States can hardly be estimated. It has not only furnished a way of paying for milk and cream at creameries, but has been of very great value to the dairyman in improving his stock. He is able, by its use, to determine accurately just how much butter each cow in the herd is producing.

An example will show its application in this direction. Two cows in the herd are giving the same amount of milk and being fed and cared for in the same way. Upon testing the milk of each it is found that one gives milk which contains three pounds of butter fat per hundred pounds of milk and the other four pounds. This difference of one pound of butter fat for each 100 pounds of milk will make a difference during a period of five years of more than $100 between the producing power of the two cows. Very often this difference will mean in the one case a good substantial profit in the business and a corresponding loss on the other. In many States testing associations have been organized for determining accurately the producing powers of the cows in the neighborhood. Such associations have invariably increased the quality of the cows in the community. About one year ago such an association was organized by the Virginia Experiment Station among the patrons of the creamery at Blacksburg. The work is now being carried out under the direction of Dairy and Food Commissioner Saunders and promises to accomplish a great deal in the improvement of the cows of the vicinity. The establishment of other such organizations is being contemplated, and they must result in a marked improvement in the cows of the State.

How to Get On or Off Street Cars Without Accident

Always get on or off the car after it has come to a stop. Then be sure to face the way the car was going, and swing lightly to the ground with the left hand, holding the grab rail. If you will carefully observe these rules you will never be thrown to the ground or injured in alighting from the cars.

With a view of further instructing passengers of its cars in Richmond, Manchester and Petersburg the Passenger and Power Company, having posted in all its cars neatly framed lithographs showing how to get on and off its cars without accident or injury.

These signs, cards or posters are a part of the campaign of education which this company has been conducting for some time to teach its patrons how to prevent being hurt, and what precautions to take.

The way so many persons are injured is that they either alight or try to board the car while it is in motion. And then so many get off backward; that is, they swing off with their back toward the way the car is going, and they are thrown to the ground with more or less violence, depending on the speed with which the car is moving.

Ladies are more apt to get off the car backwards than men. This is due to the fact that men have more experience in riding cars. Ladies are more hampered with their skirts, and should therefore be more cautious to observe the instructions in the opening paragraph.

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In a wonderful series of word pictures the reader is carried from the slums to the aristocratic homes and gambling resorts of the American metropolis; then to the heart of London's great financial centre and through the intricate mazes of English company promotion; then back to America and across the continent to the humanizing, inspiring atmosphere of the great and virgin West. And through it all, directed by a merciless, but master hand, one runs the entire gamut of human emotions, of all the controlling passions of mankind as found in society of the present day. It is a book that will set the blood on fire; that will impress a moral on the mind of every one who reads.

The Boston Herald says of it: "The story is dramatic and of absorbing interest. No one after starting to read it will put it down unfinished. It will furnish a decidedly novel sensation to the jaded reader of modern literature."

The Baltimore American says: "The author has produced a work that will mark an epoch in virile character delineation and resourceful fertility of plot. Strong and blood-stirring in every chapter, it carries, by the force of its climax, the reader to the crest of billows. It possesses interest for the man of sedate mind and the girl who has romantic fancies. It has a moral for the moralist and a touch of human artistry for the humanist. Victor Hugo stood alone, yet this author has entered into his heritage." J. Stanley Durkee, Ph. D., of Boston, says: "It is the greatest American novel." While W. W. Bustard, D. D., of Boston, calls it "one of the greatest books ever written," and so the opinions go.

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