

TWO MINUTES TOO LATE.

With his good bye ringing in her ears Drucie Miller reentered the little telegraph office and dropped into the chair before the clicking instrument. Glancing at the clock above her head, she noticed that it was almost time to close the office for the night, and seek her humble home at the foot of one of the darkened streets of the village.

The rumbling of the train which had just left the station was growing fainter and fainter, and the girl listened to it as though it was the voice of a friend who was leaving her for a long time.

She did not expect any more messages that night, the engine breathing heavily from its great iron lungs on the track near her window, would not move until the night express had moved up, and the engineer, knowing this hand sought his sweet home who lived in the village.

Tom Gray, the engineer of the train just departing, was Drucie's lover, and his intimate friends knew when the wedding was to take place. He had not known her long, but that did not matter since he was a true fellow, who loved her with all his heart, and with all her's she loved Tom.

The rumble of the train at length died away, and Drucie was about to shut off current and leave when a message came. She started, for the first word drove the color from her cheeks, and standing over the instrument she heard the message.

"Number ten switch at Colby till number six passes. Six just starting!" "Six just starting!" My God, they will meet!" cried the operator, starting from the table. "What what can I do to save him—"

And with her eyes staring at the clock she stood in the center of the room, thinking of the two trains approaching each other through the mist that almost hid the moon. The real situation, enough to blanch a young girl's cheeks, was appalling.

The order for the train which had just left Fletcher to switch at Colby could not be obeyed now. The telegraph could not stop it, for there was no light office at Colby. It was an unusual matter for six to leave Fort Wayne, and for ten to arrive at Colby, but as the latter train was some twelve minutes behind time at that particular night, six, anxious to leave on time, to save its connections, telegraphed the message to Fletcher which so startled Drucie Miller.

From the arrival of number ten, Drucie made a double track, which when finished to Fort Wayne, would obviate the trouble of switching and prevent accidents.

When Drucie recovered her self-possession she started from the table, and in a few minutes she had arrived at the engine house, and was driving her engine ahead and thinking of the girl he had lately kissed. He knew that it was known in Fort Wayne that he was married, and he thought that according to custom the express waiting there would not move out until he arrived.

But let us return to Drucie Miller. She saw the freight engine standing on the new track as usual, and caught a glimpse of the young fireman asleep on his box.

A determined resolution entered her head, and the next moment she was in the engine room, with her hand on the boy's shoulder. "That you, Miller?" said the boy, rousing himself with a yawn.

"Laws a mercy!" "Get out and uncouple that freight!" she cried. "Tom's moved out and if he doesn't switch at Colby everybody will be killed. We must catch him!"

"The boy with a cry of horror left the engine, and a minute later the freight cars were standing idly on the track, while the engine and its tender were moving out, gaining momentum at each revolution of the wheels."

"What! Dick say when he comes back and finds his engine gone?" "What Dick's loss to the precious lives on these two trains?" "Jim, how fast can this engine travel?"

"About two miles a minute!" "She's the swiftest bird on the road. But I don't think that we can catch number ten; we might if we had Dick with us. He knows how to manage the 'bell.'"

"And so do I. Wood up, Jim! Fill the furnace chuck full. We must catch Tom this side of the track's terminus, or we will lose the girl passed and looked at the pale boy."

"Or what, Miss Drucie?" "Or blow up the engine?" "That's what's the matter!" said Jim, catching her spirit. "And we'll catch him, 'Wood!' wood! There's the furnace is catching fire. Golly-whizz! how we are going!"

Drucie smiled faintly at the boy, and noticed the hand of the gauge. The engine had received new momentum which momentary increased, and at once Jim, who had been trying to pierce the haze, said:

"Two miles a minute I'll bet, Miss Drucie. If it was daylight the telegraph poles would resemble a fine tooth comb."

But the girl could not reply. She stood before the gauge, wishing that she could urge the engine to greater speed. She had calculated that the trains would meet in a gulch that embraced the curve about six miles below Colby. It was a terrible place for a collision, and the loss of life there would be great. The hands of the gauge would prevent the engineers from signaling each other, and the collision was inevitable.

The train, which seemed to have broken loose, rushed madly on, with Jim looking at Drucie, whom he was inclined to believe mad. The whistle slowly turned to a drizzle, was occasionally blown against his face by the wind; it served to cool his heated temples, and to make him think calmly of his situation and the old folks at home.

As they were moving that they seemed to slide over the rails, scarcely touching them in the mad career, and when Drucie told Jim to listen for the sound of Tom's train ahead, the boy poked his head out of the window and held his breath.

"Charles Reads in Private Life." Charles Reads is in private life amiable and lovable; nevertheless, from disregard of Talleyrand's maxim, *survive point de vue*, he was perpetually quarreling with friends. Not even Walter Swann Lander could have excelled him in wrath and ornate invective when he was mathematically an opponent of his pet crochets. He forgot what he had said as soon as his indignation was past, but these were his faults, and yet the very tongue or bespattered by his sarcastic pen had sometimes more retentive memories.

In his intercourse with ladies he had much of that refined politeness and old world gallantry which are customary among foreigners, but less so with us; and yet the variability of his temper would sometimes make him descend with startling and amusing rapidity from the lofty tone of a Grandison to the very high style which distinguished the work of Mr. Chucks, the boatswain, in "Peter Simple." Not that Mr. Reads ever indulged in exactly the same kind of language as Mr. Chucks; but, for instance, when he was on the stage superintending the rehearsal of one of his plays, no actress could for a moment find ground for his objections if she did not "without a word of dissent accept all the commands he issued as to her playing and even to her dress. With actors he was quite as despotical, and this sometimes led to sharp words, and once, when he was in the first place because he was not the man to yield, and in the next because his advice to players was, *in sum*, as good as Charles Reads. But when all has been said of his faults, it must be repeated that he was a man of great energy, and that most of his faults, literary or personal, and these were venial ones at the worst, came from wishing to do too much good and struggling to do that much too quickly.—London Times.

The Sign Hangs Out. Detroit Free Press. There is nothing more touching than the sincerity and good faith which your salted and pickled politician displays when severely tested. The sign is still up. "Stors to Let."

"Yes, it's Tom!" she cried, to encourage

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The possibility of obtaining illuminating gas from cow manure, connecting the primary of an induction coil to it and to three Bunsen cells, the secondary of the coil being in circuit with a nine-cell Leclanche battery and the line. Two persons standing in a distance room held the ends of the wires in their hands, and the words of the transmitter, being heard by one of them when the other pressed a gloved hand firmly against his ear, although the sounds transmitted were so feeble that speech could only be partially understood.

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SCIENTIFIC MISCELLANY.

BRITISH FISHERIES.—The important services rendered by science to the fisheries of the United States and other countries have at last produced quite an impression in Great Britain. The London Fisheries Exhibition of last year has been followed by the establishment of a Royal Commission on the Fisheries, and a society of eminent scientists is now being organized for the study of British food fishes and mollusks, and all other animal and vegetable resources of the sea.

The new body is to be known as "The Society for the Biological Investigation of the Coasts of the United Kingdom," and Prof. Huxley is its first president.

CONSUMPTION FROM STREET DUST.—Mons. P. Regnard has communicated to the Academie des Sciences the results of some experiments on the germs of consumption which lurk in the dust of rooms or streets, as he has proven that the bacilli in the matter expectorated by consumptive patients are not destroyed by being repeatedly dried and moistened, and dust containing such matter may be an agent of contagion to persons predisposed to the disease, or in whom the bacilli find suitable soil for propagation. A guinea pig inoculated with the matter in the condition in which it is likely to exist in the streets died in three months from genuine consumption.

LIFE UNDER GREAT PRESSURE.—Mons. P. Regnard has communicated to the Academie des Sciences the results of some experiments on the germs of consumption which lurk in the dust of rooms or streets, as he has proven that the bacilli in the matter expectorated by consumptive patients are not destroyed by being repeatedly dried and moistened, and dust containing such matter may be an agent of contagion to persons predisposed to the disease, or in whom the bacilli find suitable soil for propagation. A guinea pig inoculated with the matter in the condition in which it is likely to exist in the streets died in three months from genuine consumption.

THE WASHINGTON MONUMENT.—The work of laying stone upon the Washington monument at Washington has been resumed after a winter's rest. The monument is now 410 feet high, and it is expected that at the rate of progress that was made last year it will be completed by the close of 1885, having then attained the dizzy height of 555 feet. When finished, it will be a unique piece of architecture, and something of a triumph of engineering skill, and yet, after all, it will be but a "stun spike," a useless, meaningless, and unwhimsical obelisk. The only argument in favor of its completion is that it would illustrate, in a visible, having begun it, to leave it unfinished. "It having been begun and built to such a height," writes a resident of Washington, "it should be completed to a height never before attained, and on it should be placed an electric light that would illuminate the whole district. The idea is likely to be realized. It will be eighty-seven feet higher than the Strasburg cathedral, forty-four feet higher than that of Cologne, one hundred and seven feet higher than St. Peter's, two hundred feet higher than the Washington national, and seventy-five feet higher than the pyramid of Cheops was when it was new. The elevator which is used to hoist the stone to the top is the highest in the world, and better than anything else is, that not only gives the stone to the top, but also gives the government undertook the work, when it had reached the height of 150 feet—if indeed any will be lost at all. On the top will be a platform some eighteen or twenty feet square, and at the bottom probably a room for the use of the electric light, which was displaced from the top of the monument this spring with a fine effect. The cost of the monument will be about \$800,000.

THE HAND AS A TELEPHONE.—An experiment in South Holland has discovered that the gloved hand may serve as a receiving instrument when it is placed in a telephonic circuit. He made use of an Adair microphone as a transmitter, connecting the primary of an induction coil to it and to three Bunsen cells, the secondary of the coil being in circuit with a nine-cell Leclanche battery and the line. Two persons standing in a distance room held the ends of the wires in their hands, and the words of the transmitter, being heard by one of them when the other pressed a gloved hand firmly against his ear, although the sounds transmitted were so feeble that speech could only be partially understood.

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