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UNDER THE TRAIN.

BY LAWRENCE J. YATES.

One summer afternoon when I found myself obliged to wait 45 minutes at the station for my belated train, I fell into conversation with a big, athletic young fellow in oily jeans, who was sitting next to me in the row of seats just outside the waiting-room door.

He was a brakeman, I soon learned, on the freight-train which was "lying over" in the siding opposite. I said something about the dangers common to the life of railroading, which led him to tell me of a peculiar and most perilous experience that he had gone through while switching cars in the yards at a neighboring village.

The following is the story, given as nearly as possible in the young brakeman's own words:

One morning in the early part of last December, when I was a middle brakeman on the local freight running from De Ruyter to Easton, our crew was given some extra switching to do in the yards at Hamlin. In the course of the work we had occasion to shift a dozen empty box cars from a siding just below the station to another, known as the "emergency switch," beyond the limits of the yard nearly a mile from the first.

I was handling the switches at the time; and when this string of "empties" was pulled out on the main line, I threw the lever over and signaled for the engine at the rear to back the cars down and begin the run to the siding.

Then, after I had locked the standard and was stepping leisurely forward to be in a position to catch the side irons on one of the cars as they went by, my eyes fell upon one of my mittens lying in the snow on the other side of the main track, about ten yards away, where I must have dropped it as I came over to open the switch.

The train was coming on at a very moderate speed, not more than half as fast as I could run, and I started to dodge across just ahead of it, intending to run down the track, pick up the mitten, and then catch on from that side.

Under the circumstances this was a reckless thing to attempt, for there had been a combined sleet and snowstorm during the night, which had coated the ground with a glazing of ice and then covered the ice with three or four inches of damp, heavy snow, making very treacherous footing. But as I had gone all the morning without the slightest mishap, I had ceased to think of the danger that might lie in an unwary step. And now my punishment was at hand!

On stepping over the rear rail my right foot slipped out sidewise, and down I went, right in front of the oncoming truck of the first car, falling heavily on my side, nearly parallel with the rails and midway between them.

For one moment I was so bewildered with the shock of the fall and with the terror which it inspired that I could not move; and then, when I did turn and raise myself on my hands in an attempt to get out of the way, I found that it was too late. Already the forward axle of the truck had reached my feet!

I looked quickly over my shoulder at the end of the superstructure above for something which I could clutch. But there was nothing within reach. On came the truck, and in an instant the upper part of my body was forced down into the snow tight by the revolving shaft.

Fortunately for me, this truck was constructed with its center beam well up between the axles, and there being a 15-inch space between that beam and the road-bed, I was passed over safely, although the end of the brake-rod,

hung just below the axles and the beam, raked along the back of my coat and nearly caught in the cloth. Then as I turned on my back and looked up at the moving car floor overhead, the realization of my terrible situation came to me.

While the truck had been passing all was confusion, but now my mind was thinking clearly and with the rapidity of lightning. In the twinkling of an eye I understood how it was that I had momentarily escaped, and what was now to be my fate.

The cars were moving too fast to allow me to crawl out between the trucks. It seemed that the whole train must pass above me, and that if my life were not first torn and ground out by the low-set brake rods and center beams—which most trucks have, although those of this car that was passing did not—I must surely be crushed by the pilot of the engine at the rear.

To shout would not do any good. I knew; for the train could not be stopped in time to save me, even if the others of the crew on the engine should hear above the rumbling of the wheels. I was utterly helpless and hopeless, and most vividly in my mind's eye I saw myself a terrible, torn, mangled and bleeding thing.

Just at this instant the rear truck began to pass above me, and I was further horrified to think that the one so close behind it might be low enough to catch my body. But on shooting a quick side glance ahead I could see that the clear space under the next truck was fully as high as the one under the one before it.

The second truck was not long in passing, and in quick succession the third rolled by. Then I caught a glimpse just before it reached me of a low-suspended flat wooden bar, about an inch in thickness by three in width, which ran crosswise beneath the center of the second car, as a support between the couplings of the truss rods.

At the sight of that bar a newborn hope thrilled every fiber of my being, for in that strip of oak I thought I saw a possible chance to save myself by grasping it, and pulling my body outward over one of the rails.

But in my eagerness to seize this means of escape I lost my head; and much as a drowning man will clutch blindly at the first thing within reach, I threw up my hands and caught the bar at the center as it came even with my shoulders and about 18 inches above, never thinking of what an advantage it would have been if I had reached out, either one way or the other, as far as I could.

Instantly I was jerked smartly forward; then with only the lower part of my body touching, I dragged along over the snow-covered road-bed in a very unpleasant manner, and with an intense strain upon my arms. I at once realized how difficult a feat it would be to move my hands along the bar without losing my grip.

The thing to do was to shift along to one side and try to throw myself outside the rail beyond reach of the wheels as quickly as possible; for the speed was increasing rapidly, and I was beginning to thump more roughly over the uneven surface of the road.

I chose the left side as a little the nearer, nerved myself for a struggle, and began to work my hands along the bar, moving quickly first one hand and then the other five or six inches at a time.

It was desperate business, for every time I threw my weight entirely upon one arm it seemed as if the fingers would surely be torn from their clasp upon the wood. In fact, my hold would have been broken had not the ice and the snow so smoothed and padded the road-bed that, under the circumstances, my body slipped over it with the least possible resistance and jar.

And thus, after nine or ten perilous shifts, my hand reached the outside truss-rod, while at the same time my left thigh began to rub against the rail.

Here I stopped my heart-breaking exertions to rest—if clinging resolutely to the bar, as I thumped and pounded on faster and faster, may be called rest—for the final effort which was to mean life or death to me.

At last, when I had gathered all my reserve energy, I took hold upon the truss-rod with my left hand, drew the upper part of my body out over the rail a little, and with repeated twists and contortions, tried to throw myself over.

But it was as I had begun to fear. So rapidly was I drawn at arm's length that I could not get leverage enough to raise the middle part of my body even that little distance, although I succeeded in getting one foot over, for a moment, at five or six different times.

And in a few seconds the vain struggle so exhausted my strength that I was obliged to give up the attempt and lie back inert, barely able to maintain my hold upon the bar and the rod, with my side scrubbing against the rail, and with my legs pounding along viciously just inside.

I felt that my doom was sealed now; that I had failed for once and all; and I cannot describe the extreme horror in which I spent an indefinite period following, nor can you imagine it unless you have yourself been powerless in the face of an awful death.

On and on went the cars, still gaining speed until I thought that the train was going at the velocity of the "Black Diamond" flier; and on and on I dragged, jarring and jolting in a frightful way.

The feeling was all beaten from my legs; but the pain in the strained muscles of my arms and shoulders was intense—no old time torture-rack could have inflicted much worse suffering. Yet I held on with a tenacity of which I had never supposed myself capable.

As I have said, all hope of ultimate escape was gone, for it was only a matter of seconds for my failing strength. But the knowledge that I should go down across the rails to instant death beneath the wheels the moment I relaxed my grip made me struggle to keep my fingers tightly clinched.

Flesh and blood can stand only about so much, and I realized that I was near the limit of my endurance. I had lost all sense of time and distance. In unbearable agony I seemed to have been clinging to the bar and the rod for hours, trying to keep ahead of those murderous wheels, whose rhythmic clatter on the rails, swelling louder and louder, was beating in upon my ears with the roar of an angry sea.

And now at this moment a long drawn metallic scream mingled with the thundering noise in my ears; yet whence it came or what it meant, I did not realize. But after a seemingly long interval, when a sense of slower motion became evident, my dulled mind then understood that the train was stopping.

I was on the verge of collapse; yet how I fought to keep my grip, while the speed of the cars continued to decrease with irregular jerks! I thought the train would never stop in time. But at last the wheels ceased to turn, and at that instant I dropped down full length, with one arm across the rail, too far "gone" to stir until some moments had passed.

Then, as my strength came back a little and my reeling brain righted itself, a fear that the train would start again quickened me to action; so I crawled out over the rail just as the head brakeman and the fireman of the crew, followed by a section-hand, came panting up beside the car.

In answer to their eager questions I told them, while I yet lay upon the ground, unable to stand on my numbed legs, what had

happened; and they in turn explained how it was that my danger had become known on the engine just in the nick of time.

The section-hand, returning from his daily trip of inspection of the track in his division, had seen me dragging along under the car as it passed him; and catching on the engine when it came by, he had given the alarm. Until that moment the crew had supposed me to be riding safely on the bumpers somewhere between the cars.

When the numbness had left the lower part of my body, I found that, thanks to the cushion of soggy snow, the long drubbing over the road-bed—it was nearly a thousand yards from the place where I fell to the point where the car stopped—had inflicted no worse injuries than a few painful bruises.

I finished the rest of the day's run as a passenger; but the next morning I went to work as usual, although my arms were extremely lame and my legs very sore.—Youth's Companion.

FASHIONS IN STARCH.

Queen Elizabeth Responsible for Its First Vogue in England.

Starch is the stuff that helps to keep the human race solid inside and stiff outside. Half the food we eat, potatoes and grain products, contain a large amount of starch, which in this form has, of course, been of importance to man since the earliest times. The other use of starch at the hands of laundresses and careful housewives began about 350 years ago, and is said to have originated in Flanders, says Youth's Companion.

It came into popularity in England in the reign of Elizabeth whose courtiers and ladies wore ruffs of cambric too large to stand firm without artificial stiffening. The starch of the Elizabethans was like that of modern times except that it was colored—red, yellow, green and blue—and gave delicate tints to the huge linen contrivances of Sir Flash and Lady Fritol.

Before Elizabeth's time ruffs were not of cambric, but of fine holland, which required no stiffening and was very costly.

It is recorded that when the queen had ruffs made of lawn and cambric for her own princely wearing, none in England could tell how to starch them; but the queen made special call for some women who could starch, and Mrs. Guiliam, wife of an official of the royal household, was the first starcher.

In 1561 a Flemish woman, Frau Vanden Plassee, came to London and established there a school to teach starching. The school succeeded, and the Frau of Flanders became rich. She charged £5 a lesson, and 20 shillings extra for a recipe to make starch out of wheat flour, bran and roots.

Among the nobility the favorite color was yellow—rather odd when we remember what we modern housekeepers think of yellow clothes. The ultrafashionable folk preferred green. Appropriately enough, our Puritan forbears used blue starch, although many of them did not approve starch at all. They classed it with the idle trumperies of life, and dubbed it "a certain kind of liquid matter . . . wherein the devil hath learned them to wash and dive their ruffs, which, being dry will then stand stiff and inflexible about their necks."

Humble Heroes.

When statues are erected to military heroes, it is generally to successful generals. In France the idea has been realized of commemorating in marble even the exploits of individuals in the rank and file. One such case is that of Sergt. Robillot, to whom a monument has just been erected, and the town of Tulle has now followed the example by voting a municipal monument to Sergt. Lowy who in March last fell while leading a few French soldiers against more than 200 Arabs in Algeria

HAS WILLIAM A CASE OF CANCER

Court Physicians Declare Their Patient's Condition Good.

EMINENT THROAT SPECIALIST

Declares the Public Concern About the Emperor Unwarranted, But the Fate of His Father and Mother is Recalled.

Berlin, Nov. 10.—A bulletin concerning the condition of Emperor William, who was operated upon Saturday for the removal of a polypus from the larynx, was issued Monday morning at the new palace, Potsdam. It is as follows:

"Inflammation, which naturally follows as a reaction from the operation already is diminishing. We can, therefore, be satisfied with the appearance of the left vocal chord. Nevertheless, the sealing of the little wound probably will require another week.



EMPEROR WILLIAM OF GERMANY. "The emperor's general condition is good, his temperature and pulse are normal."

[Signed.] "VON LEUTHOLD, SCHMIDT, ALBERG."

The court circular states that the emperor, Monday morning, personally heard the report of Herr Von Luemann, chief of the civil cabinet. Prof. Bernard Frankel, the eminent specialist of Berlin university, in an interview with a press correspondent, said: "The public concern about the emperor's condition is unwarranted. The facts are absolutely as stated in this morning's bulletin. The people are only agitated because they remember that the first reports about Emperor Frederick did not disclose his true malady, but this time the bulletin is correct. You can reassure America."

THE HEREDITARY TAIN.

The Fate of Emperor William's Father and Mother Recalled.

New York, Nov. 10.—Information contained in a private dispatch received here shows that the operation on Emperor William is similar to the first one performed on his father, and consequently causes concern to his household. The official statement issued by the surgeons fail to reassure, because it is well understood that for reasons of state the emperor would be given the benefit of any doubt as to the true character of his disease.

It is recalled that the surgeons at that time made nothing of the first operation on Emperor Frederick. There is anxiety because both Emperor William's father and mother died of cancer, and his grandmother, Augusta, also was so afflicted. The emperor's aunt, the grand duchess of Baden, as is well known in Germany, is suffering from the same malady.

It will take months to decide whether the fears now entertained are unfounded. At present the whole weight of scientific authority, which is in attendance upon the emperor, affirms that he has not cancer.

TOKENS OF SYMPATHY.

The Emperor Says It's Worth Being Ill to Receive Them.

Berlin, Nov. 10.—The story of the day concerning the emperor is not the story of the bulletins, of the telegrams from foreign sovereigns, nor of the sympathetic inquiries of the ambassadors, but of the regret and concern of the people.

"It is worth being ill to receive a thing like this," the emperor is reported as saying, when some chrysanthemums sent to him by three working women were handed to him.

Several similar indications of regard were made by poor persons at Potsdam.

The emperor makes light of his indisposition, and has asked the members of his family to act precisely as heretofore. He feels the change from his uncommonly active life to forced quiet, but he declines to be relieved altogether of the routine business of state, and received in audience the heads of his private cabinet and the chancellor, Count Von Buelow.