



A WEEKLY NON-PARTISAN PAPER FOR THE HOME, FARM, SCHOOL, FACTORY AND FIRESIDE.

Address all communications to THE FARMER AND MECHANIC, Raleigh, N. C. JOSEPHUS DANIELS, Editor.

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A ROCKING TRAIN.

The whole country is familiar with that species of criminal idiot which amuses itself occasionally in rocking a train. Just what prompts that crude and vicious bid for notice is hard to explain except upon the idea that the culprit, shying his missile from his hiding place along the bank, feels vaguely that he has ventured out from his obscurity and made a stir in the world. Unless he is caught, which is the last thing he intends to happen, the train rocker can in few cases ever hope to know what he has accomplished, or whether he has accomplished anything. His rock may have gone in a window and killed a child; it may have rebounded harmlessly from the side of the car. A man who throws a bomb has a higher form of pleasure at the price of greater danger. He can see the smoke, hear the crash, observe the panic. The sneak with a rock, however, merely lets it fly at the rushing train and goes away to gape and speculate. He has no object to accomplish, no hate to subserve, no hope of plunder. It is the poorest kind of an anarchism—this train rocker!

But Rowan county has produced something new, a rocking train. Says a Salisbury paper: "Henry Howard an old negro man was hit on the head by a rock yesterday morning by some unknown person on the Southern's northbound passenger train No. 36 and was rendered senseless for several minutes. The old man, who lives about three miles south of Salisbury, was standing near the edge of a bank when the train passed. A rock suddenly shot from one of the vestibules and Howard dropped into insensibility. The old fellow is not seriously hurt."

Now that is something new, indeed! We can imagine the petty wrath of the train rocker, if we cannot sympathize with him in his anger. There is something very superior about an express train rushing along at its sixty miles an hour. It makes one alongside the track feel small. It seems to put on airs. It is quite within reason that a weak minded man or a pert child should wish to rock it just to show it what's what. But this mauling of a helpless old negro walking along the track by someone well-enough to do to ride on a vestibuled train is the limit. Besides, the fact itself implies premeditation. What was a rock doing in the traveler's pocket? Did he bring on board a suit-case full of brick-bats and amuse himself as he went sailing through the country by taking pot shots at objects along the way? Did he hit the old negro by accident, or had long practice perfected his aim? Maybe he was one of the big league pitchers South for practice and trying his arm. Glad that his victim was struck where he was instead of in a vital spot, we can only hope that the traveler with a magazine of rocks is not only an innovation but a permanent anachronism; time when the rich took gun practice at wayfarers had we thought passed with the Russians in China. If there should start a war between the train rockers and the rocking trains, modes of travel would be set back a century. Let us have peace.

CARRYING FREE PASSES MAKES POWERFUL FRIENDS FOR RAILROADS WHEN THEY SEEK TO WRONG THE PEOPLE.

The danger of allowing railroad companies which are essentially monopolies to carry on their business and exercise, without restraint, the powers and privileges that are conferred upon them by the State, is illustrated by the course the Southern Railway Company is undertaking to pursue in its litigation with the city of High Point.

It will be remembered that the Southern Railway Company brought suit in the United States Circuit Court at Greensboro to enjoin the city of High Point from working High street. Within 100 feet on each side of the center of the main track of the North Carolina Railroad there are two streets in the city of High Point; one on each side of the track. These streets, the people of High Point say, have been kept open and worked by the city since the town was incorporated in 1859, and are as much used as any other streets in the town.

Fronting on these two streets are some of the handsomest residences in the State, and a large hotel, and these streets are the only convenient means of reaching the business part of the city. It is proposed by the Southern Railway Company to close up these streets. It is a high-handed proposition that the railroad company lays down in this case. That in order to save itself the trouble and expense of making its shifting yards elsewhere, it will destroy a large part of the value of the property facing on High street and Broad street, in the city of High Point, by taking these streets for a railroad yard. If it were true that it would be more convenient and cheaper for the Southern Railway Company to establish a yard for shifting trains, at this point, rather than at a point out of the business section of the city of High Point, it nevertheless, shows an utter disregard for the rights and conveniences of the people of High Point for the railroad company to propose to do this. Under the law the railroad cannot carry out its plan unless it be necessary. It does not own 100 feet of right of way on each side of the railroad company's track; but if it has acquired rights in 200 feet at all it can exercise for the public good, and when the necessities of the case demand it. It is hardly probable that any court would decide that it is necessary that the Southern Railway Company should do what it proposes to do in this case. If it has the power to do it under the law as it now is, then this bid argues that the law should be changed so that this unbridled power to destroy property in this ruthless and unnecessary manner shall not be vested in any railroad corporation. The right of eminent domain and the power in railroad corporations to condemn property is necessary, but it should be exercised with some regard to the rights of the private citizen, and particularly should it be exercised with some regard for the rights of the public.

Some of the citizens of High Point take the position that the Southern Railway Company can be trusted to deal fairly with the people, without legislation to control it. It will be remembered that Mr. J. Elwood Cox went to Washington some time ago to testify before the Senate Committee that the railroads treated shippers fairly, and to oppose a bill conferring upon the Interstate Commerce Commission the power to fix freight rates, or to declare rates fixed by the roads unreasonable. The News and Observer at the time called attention to the fact that Mr. Cox was not a fair witness, and that he carried passes which he held by the grace of the Southern Railway Company, and that this might account to some degree for his friendly feeling towards the railway company and his bias. This same Mr. J. Elwood Cox appeared as a witness for the railroad company in the case of Southern Railway Company vs. City of High Point. It will be interesting for the public to know just how Mr. Cox and one of his associates, Mr. R. F. Dalton, feel towards the Southern Railway Company on account of their being recipients of free passes. Their testimony illustrates what most people believe and maintain, but what a few deny: that the custom of railroad companies in issuing passes is an unmitigated evil, and that the railroad companies practice the evil because, directly or indirectly, they find it profitable for them to do so. Note how Mr. Cox and Mr. Dalton view their position towards the Southern Railway Company by reason of their having free passes, and the following is quoted from the testimony of these two distinguished and influential carriers of free passes. We do not mean to say that either of these gentlemen are corrupt, but merely to say that the man who carries a free pass is apt to be a friend of the railroad that issued it, and that the railroad companies ought not to make friends in this way. The only kind of friends the railroad companies are entitled to are those they make by rendering fair, honest and efficient service to the public without discrimination in favor of one person or place against another.

J. Elwood Cox being duly sworn testified in part as follows: Q. Have you ever heard, prior to this investigation, of any claim on the part of the city that the railroad company did not have that 100 feet as its right of way? A. No, sir. Q. What has been your understanding as to the use of that territory by the city being permissive? A. A permissive use of the right of way as they had not use for it themselves, and allowed the town to use it, is what I have always understood. Q. In cross-examination the witness said in part: Q. It is still your understanding that the city of High Point uses what is called High street at the pleasure of the railroad? A. Certainly. Q. And the same thing is true, I suppose, of Broad street? A. Yes, sir. Q. And again: Q. I believe you also are interested in the Southern Railway or some of its branches. A. I have a small amount of stock in one of the branches. Q. Which? A. The High Point. Randleman, Asheboro and Southern. Q. How much? A. I have forgotten; I think it is three or four shares. Q. Who did you get that stock from? A. I obtained it from the company. Q. Was it issued to you from the treasurer? A. It was issued to me from the treasurer at the time that I bought and paid for it. Q. When? A. When the road was built. Q. Are you a director in that road? A. Yes, sir. Q. What dividends do you get on that? A. I have never received any. Q. Do you get any emoluments or privileges by reason of your being a director? A. Yes. Q. What do you get? A. I have a pass. Q. A pass over the High Point, Asheboro and Randleman road? A. Yes. Q. Does it pass you anywhere? A. It passes me on part of the Southern. Q. What part? A. From here to Washington. Q. From High Point to Washington? A. Yes, in North Carolina and Virginia. Q. It passes you all over North Carolina, Virginia and on to Washington? A. Yes, sir. Q. Do you use your pass much? A. Occasionally I go. Q. How often? A. I cannot tell you; I have occasion to travel some in my business. Q. By reason of your having stock you are given a pass, and by reason of your having a pass the stock is very valuable to you, is it not? A. Yes, sir. I should have stated to you that I got the stock from the company before it was acquired by the Southern, when the road was first organized. I was made president of the original company. Afterwards it was transferred to the Richmond & Danville. Q. How long have you been given a pass over the Southern? A. I have had that ever since the Asheboro road was built. Q. How long is that? A. I do not recollect the year. I think it is some dozen years or more. Q. Do you know why the Southern Railway gives you a pass to Washington, because of your directorship in the road to Asheboro? A. It is customary to give directors passes, I believe. Q. Do you know why that custom is established between the roads and the directors? A. I do not know that. Q. Can you give us any reason why the Southern Railway should furnish you transportation to Washington and Charlotte? A. No, no more than they do for others. They do the others the same way. Q. Do you understand that the Southern Railway Company extends the same privilege to others as well as to yourself? A. It is the custom, I suppose, of the road. Q. Do you know why they make that custom? A. No, except that it is just the custom of the road. Q. Can you imagine any reason why they established the custom, not only in your case, but generally? A. It is a custom that is followed, I suppose, by all railroad companies. Q. Do you ever know a man who held a directorship in a small road and had a pass over the Southern Railway, as you have, that was not friendly to the Southern Railway? A. Well, I suppose they are likely to be friendly, if they are directors in the road they are very likely to be friendly. Q. Don't you think that the reason they give passes is to get friends scattered about over the country? A. Possibly so. Q. This is not the first time they have called on you as a witness? A. I think I have never been a witness before. Q. They have had some little agitation recently in Washington about some freight rates suggested by a man by the name of Roosevelt, I believe? A. Yes, sir. Q. There is a great deal of talk going on about it? A. Yes. Q. I believe you must know the fact that public sentiment is very strong with Roosevelt on his proposition to give some legal body power to regulate freight charges. A. There is a great difference of opinion about that. Q. You do not think there is much doubt about where public sentiment is? A. I question whether all the sentiment is with Mr. Roosevelt now. Q. I mean a majority. A. I question whether the majority is. Q. I believe you went to Washington as a witness before the Senate Committee? A. Yes, last spring. Q. Who communicated with you in regard to your being a witness, Mr. Cox? A. I do not know that I can recall who first communicated with me about this. I was interested enough to give my opinion as a business man. Q. Did you go to Col. Andrews's investigation? A. No, sir. Q. Did he communicate with you about going? A. No, sir. Q. What official of the Southern Railway did? A. I had some talk with some of the freight agents about it. Q. Who?

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Q. I think Mr. Shaw, for one. Q. Where does he live? A. At Birmingham. Q. What is his position? A. He was at that time Commercial Freight Agent. Q. Mr. R. E. Dalton, another carrier of the free pass gives his views upon the subject in part as follows: Q. Are you in any way connected with the railroad? A. I ride on a pass. I am a director in a railroad from here to Asheboro. Q. How often do you use your pass? A. I used it three times today. Sometimes on Sunday I do not use it. I use it pretty regularly. Q. You stop only on holidays and Sundays? A. Yes. Q. How much stock do you own? A. I do not know—it does not pay a dividend, and I do not know how much I own. Q. Do you know how much you bought? A. No, really I do not know how much I bought. I do not think I have opened it since the day I bought it and paid for it. Q. You own one share? A. I own as much as one share, yes. Q. At \$50 a share? A. I suppose so; I own as much as one share. Q. How long have you had your share? A. Since the railroad was built. Q. You know that you have one share? A. I have said enough to get a pass and I enjoy it. Q. When a fellow has got a pass he is all right with the Southern? A. And the fellow that ain't got a pass he generally kicks. Q. He is bound to be pretty friendly with the road when he gets a pass? A. I suppose so. Q. And if he is not friendly they put him out? A. I do not know anything about that. Q. You never heard of their putting a fellow out for not being friendly? A. I have heard tell of their putting him out. I have heard some talk about putting me out, but it has never gone that far, I am glad to say.

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