

MOONEY'S GHOST STORY

By Harold Carter

Mooney remembered me when I stepped into his cab, though it was four or five years since we had met. At that time I rode with him a good deal. I was getting up material for a series of articles upon the railroads. Now I was merely a claimant upon his hospitality for the sake of old times. I had had a longing to feel the sweep of the wind from inside of an engine-cab and see the lights flash by. And the man in charge of 64 was Mooney.

He knew me, as I said, and presently I began to recall the old route we had traversed so often. I recollected that Mooney's cottage stood two miles down the track and that his wife, a pretty young woman, and their little girl of five used to stand in front and wave to him as the train flashed past. I waited. Sure enough, the woman was there, but the child at her side could not have been four years old.

"I lost her—my little Margaret," said Mooney.

"I'm sorry," I answered lamely.

"Yes, we both felt it pretty hard even though the other came," he answered. "I guess she felt it most. We don't talk about it now, didn't much anyway — but that sort of thing hurts deep enough, especially when you don't believe in a future life."

What answer could I make to that? I did not attempt to. Mooney's state of mind must have been hopeless indeed.

"I said when you don't believe in nothing more," went on Mooney aggressively.

"Yes," I answered.

"Well, I do now," retorted Mooney sullenly, and suddenly clasped my hand. "Man, you don't know what it means to me now to think that I haven't lost her forever. It makes everything different, somehow,

"You see, the wife used to bring her down to the edge of the cutting when it was growing dark, so that I'd be sure to see them. The run, as you remember, ends seventeen miles from here and often I wouldn't get home till it was beginning to be morning. And that seeing them used to be a sort of comfort when I was coaxing the old 64 up Geddes hill and over the old wooden bridge.

"It was diphtheria took Margaret away, and after that I asked the wife



There Stood the Little Girl

not to stand at the door, because I didn't feel like seeing her alone. She understood my feelings. And so I wouldn't see her, and I'd fall to brooding as the old engine went on her way. Then the night came when I saw her again."

"Margaret!" I exclaimed.

He nodded and turned his eyes pa-