

Asleep On the Rail

By CY WARMAN
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High Henry Bahenberg was not a bad man. He was kind hearted, honest and brave. He was one of the very best runners on the road. He was 6 feet 7 and might have been taller had he not stooped slightly. He was so high, Degan said, that if ever he fell down it would kill him. He had a quick, nervous step and an apologetic smile. Unfortunately for himself and his friends, he had an uncontrollable temper. People said he lost it often. Henry often wished he could lose it permanently. He was likely when suddenly angered to do things which caused him unhappy days and sleepless nights of regret.

But if a man said calmly and dispassionately: "Henry, I don't care for you, I hate you for the long, hungry road that you are. You delight to punish people, and I think I can climb all over your bent and bony frame"—

"Stop, stop!" Henry would exclaim. "Don't say another word." And he would prepare for the fall.

Having agreed to fight fair, Henry would not break his word, though his wrath might choke him.

On the eve of a presidential election Henry entered a little hotel after a hard run with the general manager's special and found a party of workmen talking politics. When Henry had traced his long name in a long band across the board book that lay upon



"I DON'T SEE NOTHING," SAID NOAH.

the counter, a big Irishman stropped up, smote the page with his hand and yelled: "O'm a Dimmyrat!" "So'm I," said Henry. "Shake!" "O'm an Irishman." "I'm not." "You're a d— Dutchman!" "Well," said Henry, smiling and blushing like a schoolgirl, "I'm a Dutchman."

"An' O' kin lick anny Dutchman that walks." "I side most of the time." "Thin O' kin lick anny Dutchman that rides." "Well, I guess that means me."

The night clerk came out from his little box and locked the door. Those who were to take the part of non-combatants began to pile the chairs up around the stove which stood in the sawdust floor and had just been fired up that day to take the November chill off the air.

It was understood that there should be no kicking or biting, but that the fight would not necessarily end or even lag with a knockdown.

The men fought silently. When they had been at it ten minutes, the Irishman was perfectly sober, and Henry had recovered from the fatigue of a two hundred mile run. Five minutes later Henry lay under the Irishman, but holding both of his wrists.

"You're licked," said Henry. "O' kin know it. So're you." "But I don't know it." "The more fool you."

The men tried to laugh, but they couldn't make much of a success of it in view of the way their mouths were disarranged.

"Will we git up?" "Just as you say."

saw, but, darn you, if you ever go to sleep on this engine again I'll break you in two."

Poor Noah was shaking like an aspen, for he knew how High Henry was tempered, and he promised never to nod again.

About 4 o'clock one morning they were coming down the mountain on freight. It was a warm spring morning. The frost had gone out of the earth and left the dumps and fills (the road was comparatively new) soft and springy. They had been on the road, doubling the hill, for forty-eight hours, and Noah was making the effort of his life to keep awake. The three brakemen were sitting at intervals along the top of the train, looking like black crows on a fence. The time card gave them two hours and twenty minutes to make twenty miles, and all you hear is the clackety clack of the idle wheels, the squeak and cry of the brake shoes on the smoking wheels and the low measured noise of the airpump, and that sound will put you to sleep like the patter of rain on a roof or the sound of horses munching hay when you're lying in the haymow. Noah had nodded once or twice, and Henry once had yelled at him.

They had crawled down within five miles of the foot of the hill when Noah broke the stillness: "Wope, wope! Look out there! Stop'er, stop'er!"

Henry hooked the engine over, put the air on full, screamed for brakes to warn the trainmen, and the 400 set against the train as a mule sets back at a bad bridge, her wheels going round the other way and a flood of fire going out of her stack.

"Well," said Henry when they had come to a stop, "what is it?" "I don't see nothing," said Noah, peering through his window.

"Well, didn't you say stop?" "I never said nothing."

"Noah, do you want to die?" "No, sir."

"Sh'matter Henry?" shouted the head brakeman from the top of the train. "I don't know. Did you see anything?" "No."

"Did you hear anything?" "Yes, heard Noah yell to you to stop."

"Come out of there, Noah!" "I won't come out, Henry, cause you'll kill me. I won't take a lookin' when I ain't done a-thin'."

Henry passed his bony hand over his eyes as a man will when not quite sure of himself. He looked ahead where the headlight shone on the two thin threads of steel that turned three cars away and disappeared round a high rock. By this time Henry's wrath had cooled down, and without another word he put the lever forward, released the airbrakes, and the train moved forward again. When the big black engine put her nose round the curve, which was to Henry's side, the engineer saw a great black gap in the track, over which the rails sagged, holding the cross-ties.

"Look out! Jump!" It was Henry's voice this time, and Noah, being wide awake, went out into the night. In the meantime 400 was holding and straining against the heavy train that kept shoving her nearer and nearer to the gap that yawned in the grade.

At last she stopped, with the soft earth oozing away under her pilot. She could not move the fifteen loads that were behind her that had climbed the hill with the help of two other engines—so there she had to stand until help came and pulled the cars back to a sidetrack.

A little stream of clear water had been trickling down the mountain side for days and days and soaking into the grade. Finally the fill became mushy, and when the two light engines that had helped Henry up the hill went by they shook the grade, and the mush slid out and down to the bottom of the gulch 200 feet below.

When the trainmen and engineers had come down and stood at the edge of the break, little Tim Grady crossed himself.

"Noah, you dirty faced devil," said High Henry, "come here an' let me hug you."

Hawthorne's "Cursed Habit." It would be easy to explain Hawthorne's peculiar temperament after the modern fashion by reference to heredity and environment. No doubt there was a strain of eccentricity in the family. He himself tells of a cousin who made a spittoon out of the skull of his enemy, and it is natural that a descendant of the old Puritan witch judge should portray the weird and grotesque aspects of life. Probably, too, his native tendency was increased by the circumstances that surrounded his youth, the seclusion of his mother's life, his boyhood on Lake Sebago, where, as he says, he first got his "cursed habit of solitude," and the long years during which he lived as a hermit in Salem.

LEGAL BOOKS BY THE YARD

Contents Are Waste Paper, but the Bindings Impress Clients. "Legal fillings at all prices, in sheepskin or calf." That is an advertisement that you may occasionally see in the catalogue of dealers in legal books.

The term "legal fillings," says a writer in *Stray Stories*, is applied to well bound volumes that contain nothing but an odd assortment of worthless price lists, old reports and sometimes cut newspaper pages. The covers are handsome but the pages are merely so much waste paper.

The volumes are sold to young solicitors who wish to impress their clients by a formidable looking library, and, as they have a studied legal appearance, they have their effect upon the visitor.

A cheaper line of these "books," made of blocks of wood covered with cloth or calf, handsomely tooled and bearing a title in gold, can be bought at prices varying from \$2.50 to \$4 per dozen.

One secondhand bookseller in London has made a small fortune by having old books of all kinds that might be worth about a penny or two pence apiece rebound in handsome style. He has a title printed in gold on the back, indicating that the book is some learned work upon medicine or chemistry. These he sells to young doctors at about 20 cents each, which leaves him a good profit.

The books make a good show in the consulting room and help to give the impression that the young medico is a deeply read man.

Three Curious Bells. There is a curious legend connected with the bells of Messingham church. It is said that a long, long time ago a traveler was passing through Messingham when he noticed three men sitting on a stile in the churchyard and saying, "Come to church, Thompson, come to church, Brown," and so on. Being very much surprised, he asked what it meant and was told that, having no bells, they called folks to church in this way. The traveler remarked that it was a pity so fine a church should be without bells and at the same time asked the men if they could make three for the church, promising to pay for them himself.

They undertook to do this. They were respectively a tinker, a carpenter and a shoemaker. When next the traveler passed that way, he found the three men ringing three bells which said, "Ting, tong, pluff," being made respectively of tin, wood and leather.—*London Tit Bits.*

A Story of Mark Twain. "I met Mark Twain on a river steamer when he was a very young man," said an aged westerner. "At that time he was rather a quaint young fellow, with sleepy southern manners and a drawl peculiar to the river town in Missouri. Something in my appearance attracted his attention for he stared intently at me whenever we met. It so happened that I wore on one foot an Indian moccasin, having been injured shortly before."

"Finally I demanded, with some irritation, whether he had ever seen moccasins before. He looked me over and drawled: "Well, your face is familiar." Then he dropped his eyes to the deck, with a troubled frown. "But I—can't recall—your feet."

Why Mountains Never Grow Smaller. The mountains are always moving down into the valleys. When spring-time comes, every stream will run turbidly in its course. At this rate all the soil from the hills would soon be gone were not this soil being constantly replaced. Water soaks into the crevices of the rocks, and when it freezes it swells with almost irresistible force. That a very little of it can crack an iron pipe most of us have found out to our cost. Thus the rock is split, and the pieces made in this way are again broken into finer and finer fragments until new soil is made to take the place of that which is so rapidly moving down to the lowlands.

Professor S C Schmeucker in *Ladies' Home Journal.*

Street Car Straps. It is not entirely prudent to put your hands in the straps furnished in the street cars for overflow passengers. Turn one of these straps in any car not fresh from the shops inside out, and the reason will be plain. Handies as they are by all sorts and conditions of men, they are really carriers of disease. The abraded skin of your finger may touch an infected spot, and dangerous bacteria may adhere to it, which at the next movement of the hand may be transferred to the delicate tissues of the mouth or eyes.—*Exchange.*

Things Not to Say to Baby's Mother. Here are some of the things you should never say to the baby's mother. When will it begin to look intelligent? Goodness! I believe the child is really taking notice!

Do you think of raising it? Do you feel any attachment or affection for it yet?—*Minneapolis Journal.*

Cutting. A Scotch lawyer was well reprieved when, seated by a lady fully aware of her own plain looks, having bowed to his hostess in giving the toast, "Honored Men and Bonnie Lassies," she rejoined, raising her own glass, "We may both drink that toast, since it refers to neither of us."

His Fierce Expression. Photographer—Look pleasant, general. Remember this picture is for your friends. The General—A soldier should have no friends, sir. This picture is for my enemies to look at.—*Chicago News.*

DIFFERENCES IN FOGS.

Sea Mist and London Gloom Have Nothing in Common. The fog of London and the fog of the sea alike discommodate traffic, and omnibuses and steamships alike have had to lay to for safety. But while the London fog gets into your inmost room and baffles even the electric light—though the candle comes out triumphant curiously—the densest fog at sea does not disturb the saloon or the stateroom. Why is that?

The word "fog" has not been traced farther back than the sixteenth century, but the thing was known in the early years of the fourteenth. The commons, with the prelates and nobles visiting London for the parliaments and on other occasions, united to petition Edward I. to compel the burning only of dry wood and charcoal, as the growing use of sea coal corrupted the air with its stink and smoke, to the great prejudice and detriment of health. In 1399 the king prohibited the use of coal. Heavy ransom and fines were inflicted for disobedience. In the case of recalcitrant brewers, dyers and other artificers the furnaces and kilns were destroyed. But the restriction was evidently removed, for in 1508 \$250—probably equal to about \$4,000 now—was paid from the exchequer for wood and coal for the coronation of Edward II.—*New York Commercial Advertiser.*

The Game Destroying Locomotive. Said a railroad engineer: "The average man has no idea how many animals and birds are killed every year by the cars. If you will walk along a railroad, you will see toads, frogs and snakes almost every mile that have been cut in two by the engine."

"But these are not the only forms of animal life that suffer. I have run down woodchucks, raccoons, squirrels, hedgehogs and pretty nearly every other sort of small animal. Once I saw a ruffed grouse sitting on the track. It waited and did not seem at all afraid. When at last it did get up, the engine was so close that it struck the bird and tossed it to one side, dead."

"But the strangest experience I ever had was in the south. I was running an engine on the Queen and Crescent road, which goes through Lake Pontchartrain on a long trestle. Ducks and other water fowl were numerous on the lake, and the sight of a headlight seemed to attract them, just as the light in a lighthouse attracts many birds. One night we struck a flock of ducks that smashed into the engine and cut as though it were raining them from the clouds. They broke the forward windows of the cab, and we gathered up enough ducks for two good, big game dinners."

Kindred Vices. The Rev. Justus Forward, settled in Belchertown, Mass., a hundred years ago, once reproved a workman for swearing while he was plowing a new field. "Swear!" said the man. "I guess you'd swear."

Mr. Forward took the plow and hurried after it, indignantly denying the charge. Then, as the field became more impassable, he began panting: "I never did see the like! I never did see the like!" When he had gone once round the field, he stopped breathless and said:

"There, you see I didn't find it necessary to swear!"

"No," drawled the other man, "but you've told more'n fifty lies. You said you never did see the like, and you saw it all the time I was plowin'."—*Youth's Companion.*

Usefulness. It is a great satisfaction at the close of life to be able to look back on the years that are past and to feel that you have lived not for yourself alone, but that you have been useful to others. You may be assured also that the same feeling is a source of comfort and happiness at any period of life. Nothing in this world is so good as usefulness. It binds your fellow creatures to you and you to them; it tends to the improvement of your own character, and it gives you a real importance in society, much beyond what any artificial station can bestow.

Baleful Ignorance. Little Willie Paw, where is th' isthmus of Panama? Father—Th' isthmus of Panama? Willie, do you mean to tell me that you have been studying grammar two years and you don't know where the isthmus of Panama is? If you ain't able to conjugate the isthmus of Panama for me by tomorrow night, I'll make you go to bed at 6 o'clock.—*Ohio State Journal.*

A Query. Professor (lecturing)—Oxygen, gentlemen, is essential to all animal existence. There could be no life without it. Strange to say, it was not discovered until a century ago, when— Student—What did they do before it was discovered, sir?

He Wasn't Surprised. "See here! I found two pebbles in the milk bowl yesterday!" "I'm not surprised, ma'am. The water is very low just now in the brook where the cows drink."—*Cleveland Plain Dealer.*

Hit or Miss. What is the difference between a flirtatious man and a poor tennis player? One courts the misses and the other misses the courts.—*New York Times.*

Reading about success is an incentive, but without action it is just about as useful as steam in a kettle.—*Saturday Evening Post.*

Faith in your own ability is two-thirds of the battle.—*Chicago News.*

Officially Reconsidered

By HERMINE SCHWED
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"There's one thing certain," said young John Sylvester, "we won't take that nigger postmaster back, no matter what the inspector says."

The words met with instant approval from his indignant fellow townsmen, who had assembled in the postoffice of the southern village to explain matters to the inspector sent by the government. Every man in the room was stern and each face was set and armed as Terrell, the inspector, appeared in the doorway.

Terrell was old in the service, though fairly young in years, and had been sent to the defiant little town because of his wide experience. He had tried to refuse the case, though he did not deem it necessary to confide his reason to his superior officer. Inopportunely enough, he was ordered to leave by a morning train, whereas he had intended to call on the girl that evening. She was a visitor in Washington, and he feared she would be gone before he returned. Now, it is unwise for a post-office inspector to have personal inter-



"THIS MATTER CANNOT BE DECIDED AT ONCE."

ests, for the government expects him to have none but the government's own.

However, Terrell had been obliged to take case No. 2523, and he had contented himself with writing a rather striking and lengthy note to Miss Deane and ordering a box of violets to be sent with it.

"Therefore here he was the next day in Battletown in no patient mood with the obstreperous southern hot heads. He was greeted by a label of voices:

"We've driven that nigger out of the state!" "The assistant's in charge now?" "The nigger's afraid to come back!" "What are you going to do about it?" Terrell stood unmoved.

"One moment, gentlemen," he said quietly. "I can't listen to you all at once. Besides, there are too many young fellows here. Suppose some of you older men come with me into the next room. Then we can discuss this matter calmly and," smiling, "with less noise."

"That's reasonable," said young John. And forthwith old John Sylvester and four others, fathers in the community, retired with the inspector, to convince him that there was but one thing to do—to appoint a white man in the negro's place.

"Is there anything against the black man's character?" asked Terrell. "We don't concern ourselves with the character of niggers," answered Sylvester majestically. "Jones is a nigger, and that in itself is enough against him."

Terrell, who saw that he might as well have talked to the younger men, said but little until he had heard all sides of the question. When he returned to the main room and noted the determined faces before him, he made his decision promptly, but privately.

"It will teach them a lesson," he thought to himself, "and, besides, I want to get back to Washington." "Gentlemen," he said aloud, "this matter cannot be decided at once. I shall have to explain the situation at headquarters. In the meantime my instructions are to remove your post office to the county seat."

dependent upon the behavior of the citizens of the town."

When Terrell reached his hotel after a three days' absence from Washington, he found a letter, the handwriting of which made his heart beat faster. His face was a study as he read:

My Dear Mr. Terrell—I left Washington unexpectedly the same day you did, though by the afternoon train. Did I never tell you that I lived in Battletown? When I reached home, just fancy my surprise when I heard that you had been here, gone away and taken our postoffice with you. How could you be so cruel? I felt very indignant with you, especially so this morning, because I had to drive eight miles for my mail. But just now, when I was handed your violets, which my hostess sent after me, my indignation cooled perceptibly, and now I want to tell you how much I appreciate your kindness. The violets are still fresh and lively.

In your note you ask that I write you an occasional letter from my southern home. Under ordinary circumstances I should be pleased to do so, but consider, I am writing this eight miles from home for convenience sake and must come as far for an answer.

Cousin John Sylvester says this state of affairs may not last long. Do give us a nice white postmaster, Mr. Terrell, and then I shall send you the prettiest note of thanks I can write. Cordially yours, GRACE DEANE.

First Terrell laughed, next Terrell frowned, then Terrell thought hard and tore up his carefully worded report. He rewrote it quite as carefully and wound up with, "In view of the foregoing facts and circumstances I have the honor to recommend that the present incumbent be removed and a white man be appointed in his stead."

"After all," he said to himself apologetically, "it is far the simpler way."

The Indian Hit. During a football game at Cambridge between the Harvard eleven and the Carlisle Indian school team Malcolm Donald was playing opposite a splendidly built Indian. The play was exceedingly rough, and Donald had in the course of the play landed some pretty hard elbow blows on the slower moving Indian.

Presently the Indian began to take notice of the punishment he was receiving and during a pause between plays walked slowly over to Donald and said with a certain note of remonstrance in his voice:

"You hit me three times. I think I shall have to hit you."

Donald thanked him for his courteous warning and resolved to be on his guard, but during the heat of the play he wholly forgot the little matter. Presently, at the end of a scrimmage, while Donald was standing watching the crowd, the Indian strode up to him and deliberately dealt him a blow over the head which stretched him out.

With difficulty Donald picked himself up and resumed the play. At the end of the game the Indian came up to him again and said rather apologetically, "I hit you."

"So I noticed," said Donald, rubbing his head ruefully. "Well, I guess we are square now, Shake!"

And the Indian stretched out a brawny fist.

The Decadent London Tailor. Do you want some clothes made in London? You go to a first rate tailor and are elaborately measured and cross measured. The cloth is excellent, the price moderate, as compared with New York. You are requested to call and try them on in three days. You come to be tried on and find that the clothes are basted together and that the fit is merely a preliminary one. The basting is all ripped open, and you are pinned up again. The tailor expresses no surprise that his work is badly done. He does not know that it is a wretched job.

You call after a long interval and try them on again. The sleeves are an inch too long, the collar fits as though it were made for a horse, the jacket is tight across the chest and obviously intended for a fat man around the belt.

You ask if he did really take measurements in the first instance. The tailor complacently rips up all his seams again and once more proceeds to make chalk marks all over you and insert a number of pins.

You are inclined to use profane language, but curiosity masters your other feelings, and you wonder how any establishment can succeed when so much time can be wasted over one suit of clothes. Poultney Bigelow in *Independent.*

Intelligence in Mice. The organs of hearing and smelling in mice are very efficient, but their eyesight is, we believe, poor. Their intelligence is, we should think, low, as might be expected from the paucity of convolutions in their brains. We suspended a tin of flour at such a height from the ground that our little friends could not quite jump into it, though the smell of the food made them very persevering in their endeavors to do so. We then arranged a string so that by a detour they could get at the good stuff that way.

One mouse by following that course attained to the desired goal, but eventually by chance, for being startled out of the tin it continued for a long while to make futile efforts to recover its lost position by jumping up, never again seeking the road which had led it before to the object of its desire. For hours we have lain in bed watching mice trying in vain to spring into the tin of flour, none of them ever perceiving that there was a feasible road leading thereto.—*Chambers' Journal.*

A Vermont Epitaph. The following epitaph is found on a tombstone in an old cemetery in Vermont:

In silence his body must molder to dust. Till death's iron bondage his spirit shall bust; Then in heaven's bright regions with seraphs divine The untimely lost Frederick forever will shine.