

RAILWAY MAIL SERVICE

(Continued from page 2)

crew of five men. My salary was \$1400 a year which was raised to \$1700 where it remained. At the present time it is \$2700 for a clerk in charge of a car. The department retained 2 1/2 per cent of our salary for a retirement fund. The postal law provides that the R. M. S. clerks shall be retired at the age of 62 years. All other employees of the mail service are retired at the age of 70. Like people in every walk of life I had various experiences and saw many changes. In the old days the mail cars had steps both on the front and rear ends. Night after night men and boys would steal rides upon them. Trainmen would chase them off, but they would get back on when the train began to move. It was always a dangerous practice but it became doubly so after the installation of the track tank. These tanks are about a foot wide of equal depth and 80 to 200 rods long and are placed in the center of the track. Water is pumped in to them from a stream or well and they are always full. When the locomotive is directly over the tank the fireman presses a lever and a scoop drops down and forces the water into the tender. With the fast trains making 50 miles an hour or more this is done very quickly and very often there is a large amount of water raised after the tender is full. This causes a slop over the outside of the mail car is drenched. A person riding out there would be soaked. One bitter cold night as the fast mail pulled into Niles one of the train men saw an object on the end of the mail car which proved to be a man. He was middle aged, thinly clad and cold in death. When the train took water at Lawton he was drenched and perished in the zero weather before the train reached Niles.

In my 37 years on the road I was in only one wreck. At Marshall, September 13, 1895 while going at about 20 miles an hour the locomotive left the track partially and tipped over. Our mail car came along and struck the tender forcing the truck of the latter up through the floor of the mail car where I usually stood while working paper mail. The side of the mail car was crushed. I with the other clerks was in the latter end of the car. None of us were hurt. The engineer died of injuries sustained when the engine toppled over onto him. I saw many improvements made by the Michigan Central in train

service and equipment. When I went there in 1886 there were six trains daily each way. They have been increased to double that number. Then double tracked to Jackson only, now all the way to Chicago with a complete block system and a road bed and rolling stock that is excellent. At that time their fast train consumed eight hours in making the 285 miles from Detroit to Chicago. Now there are several that do it in seven hours, one in six and one in five and three quarters. The Detroit that leaves Detroit every evening for Buffalo and points in the east is one of the fastest trains in the world, making the first 115 miles from Detroit to St. Thomas in about the same number of minutes. Not so fast as the train on the Great Northern R. R. that the brakemen told about. James J. Hill built that road and he is recognized as one of the greatest railroad builders that this country ever produced. One day he was out on the line and decided he must be back in St. Paul at a certain hour. Orders were given by him to make the train clear and the special given the exclusive right of way. The engineer knew what he was expected to do and he did it. The brakeman said he had rode many fast trains but never did he ride like that. She crashed through cities and towns as if they were not in existence. Most of the time he held on to the coach seat in mortal fear. Hill seemed to enjoy it and smiled when St. Paul was reached. Now a queer thing happened. They backed the cars out into the yard and the brakeman looked up the track from where they had just came and saw something coming with great speed toward him. He said, "What do you think it was? Why it was the shadow of that special train trying to overtake us. We had ran away from it."

(To be continued next week)

Rats Like Grapefruit

Rats have acquired the habit of eating grapefruit for breakfast. They formerly paid no attention to oranges, lemons and grapefruit, apparently believing them fit only for human consumption. Now they were converted is a mystery, but when the packing-house people of the California citrus belt began to find their fruit opened and despoiled of their seeds they had to admit that the rodents had adapted themselves to a new diet.

Proof That There Is

Something in a Name

When Sarah Bernhardt was living in the Rue Fortuny she happened to be very hard up. Sarah told her friends of her temporary impecuniosity and the artful Arthur Meyer said: "Sell your jewelry, my dear."

"But I have none," replied Sarah. And it was true, for she never cared for jewelry and so never had any. "Never mind," said Arthur, "all the better, in fact. Leave it to me. There is no jeweler in Paris who won't be pleased to have some of his stock sold at auction as having belonged to you."

So very soon Paris was much interested to know that a great sale of jewels belonging to the famous actress was about to take place. Many years later I met at Deauville an American lady who told me the chateleine she was wearing had belonged to Sarah and that her husband had bought it at this sale in the Rue Fortuny.—From "More Uncensored Recollections"

Hopi Indian Pottery

for the Smithsonian

An earthen effigy jar in the shape of an animal said by the Hopi Indians to represent an antelope was one of the most curious objects unearthed recently near Flagstaff, Ariz., by Dr. J. Walter Fawkes, ethnologist of the Smithsonian institution. It was found buried on the abdomen of an Indian priest. The surface of the jar was elaborately decorated, and the jar was undoubtedly used for religious purposes, Doctor Fawkes said, and probably as a container for holy water or sacred meal. A collection of pottery, numbering more than 300 unbroken vessels as well as many curious fragments, was obtained from the site of an ancient Indian cemetery near the pueblo. He also gathered rings, bracelets, turquoise, shells and other ornaments. Doctor Fawkes regards his summer's work at Elden pueblo, six miles from Flagstaff, one of the most successful of his career.

Steeple Pat to Odd Use

The 80-foot steeple of the old Unionville (Conn.) Congregational church was a study for a naturalist last summer. At the top, which is covered with a brass cap, clustered a swarm of bees. Twenty-five feet below, growing in a crevice in the east wall, was a sunflower in full blossom, its stem three feet long. The seed was blown there by the wind or dropped by a bird and took root in the crack, where there was sufficient moisture and soil.

Favored by Fortune

From gooseder to impersonating Gretchen in the film presentation of Goethe's "Faust" is the career of Camilla Horn, German movie actress. Miss Horn was tending geese, as was her wont, on her father's farm in southern Germany, when the staff of a moving picture company passed by. The regisseur and the head photographer gave each other a significant look, then walked in on the farmer and signed up the daughter for world fame.

Public Money Wanted

Official writers of the government, including members of congress, cost Uncle Sam over \$220,000 last year by changing their minds after their writings had been set in type, says the Pathfinder Magazine. This expense of revising proofs of articles and speeches was disclosed in the annual report of George H. Carter, the public printer. Mr. Carter said this was about \$54,000 more than for the previous year.

Thrives on Simple Diet

Buttermilk and potatoes was the diet upon which a woman of Holy-cross, Thurles, Tipperary, lived, and to it she attributed her longevity. She died recently aged one hundred and four. Two days before her death she dug potatoes and carried them to the house. She could read her prayer book and thread a needle without aid of glasses. Her own family of nine, the eldest aged seventy, are all alive.

Piano Wire for "Movies"

Manufacturers of piano wire are now putting out a special brand for use in motion-picture studios. It has a million uses, mostly in comedy scenes where articles of furniture or actors are hoisted about the stage, mice are made to run across the floor, windows must bang open, lamps fall off tables, etc.

The Girl on Smoky Top

By H. LOUIS RAYBOLD

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SHE was a source of great interest to the people in the valley below—that unknown girl who had taken possession of the old Clark farm set aslant on old Smoky Top's slope. Farmers harvesting their crops would pause and glance curiously at the thin spire of smoke traveling skyward above the treetops and wonder why she was there.

Especially young John Hayes who had recently inherited his father's broad acres, on which he and his mother lived alone.

"Your turn will come," his mother frequently prophesied. "And I dare say Kitty Weatherby will suit me as well as anybody."

At which her son would clumsily shift the subject. Oh, he supposed he'd marry Kitty ultimately, but for the present he had no wish to settle his fate too definitely. Had his mother known that since the day he drove to town and parked next a dusty little runabout, his mind had been filled with visions of a slender, brown-eyed girl with sun gold curls clustering under her felt hat, she herself would not have felt so sure of being mother-in-law to Kitty.

As fall drew near, one might indeed have been pardoned for leaning on the pasture bars and gazing at Smoky Top, whose sides were a colorful mass of reds and greens and browns, set off by the more somber evergreens. And, as the season progressed, without rain, John would so loathe the bars. But sometimes he would frown and think of fire.

"Just a spark and she'd be set off like silt shingles," he muttered one day.

Then one evening, out driving with Kitty Weatherby at his side, he suddenly swung off from the main highway onto a hard-packed dirt road that wound in sharp, foliage-hidden curves up the mountain.

"This is exciting," giggled Kitty. "Haven't been up there since I was a kid. Besides, I'd like to catch a sight of that city girl, Jim Lawrence," she paused, catching John's quick look, then continued defiantly—"well, he's been working for her, although why he should, with his big farm—anyhow, he says she's poor as Job's turkey. That her uncle left her the place, and it's the only home she's got, and she's got to make it pay, but Jim says it wouldn't grow enough to feed a starving cat."

Her companion's thoughts were a jumble of speculations. So the stranger girl wasn't a rich young lady riding a hobby. So Kitty was still seeing Jim, his old rival.

"What Jim says seems to carry considerable weight with you," he remarked coldly. "Just when—" he paused abruptly. "What's that?" he cried. "Smoke!"

The car shot forward beneath the pressure of his foot, while Kitty clutched his arm in terror, both at the mad swerve with which they rounded curves and at the thought of fire.

"Can't you turn?" she managed to gasp.

John shook his head. He hadn't thought of turning—only of going forward to find out just where that fire might be. If it were well above the farm, the wind might carry it by, or a well-planned back fire or trench repel it. At the best he could get the girl and bring her down to safety. His heart glowed within him and he was not conscious of Kitty's grasp on his arm.

"John, where are you going? See how smoky everything is and—oh, do you hear that?" she fairly screamed. Sounds of crackling came to them through the acid, darkening atmosphere.

Then as they swung around the bend, they saw the fire. It was the farmhouse itself, and John's expert eye saw at once that, set as the old house was in the very center of the clearing, there was little likelihood of the surrounding forest catching.

Two hurrying figures were moving to a safe distance what few pieces of furniture they had evidently been able to take from within the building.

John, followed by Kitty, leaped to the ground.

"No use trying to save the house," yelled Lawrence. "Let 'er burn. My wife here—"

"Your wife!" both Kitty and John cried the word.

"Married only this afternoon," shouted Jim, still busy juggling chairs and tables. "Chimney must have caught while we were gone. Sparks on the roof did the rest. Makes no real difference. Going to live at my place, of course." He threw a teasing, protective glance at the girl who seemed lovelier and even more desirable than John remembered her. "The old tinder box might as well go one time as another."

And so it did, burning clear to the ground until only the blackened, smoldering embers were left. And it seemed to John as if, hidden in the debris, were the ashes of his little dreams. Idle because he had made no effort to bring them to fruition.

"You seem dreadfully quiet," complained Kitty as they drove homeward.

For answer, John resolutely put his arm about her plump waist. Then, "It's about time you and I thought of our own wedding," he said. "Mother's been expecting it this long while."

After all, realities are better than a dream. Perhaps.



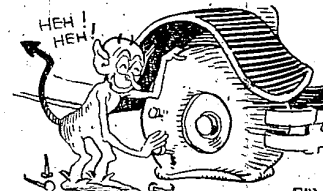
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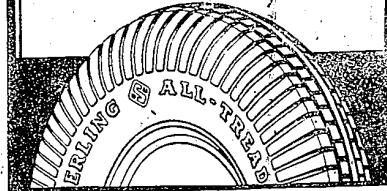
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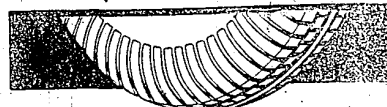
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