

How Polly Marshall Saved The Night Express.

KANE CREEK was a railroad crossing on the S. & C. C. Railroad, about two miles from the division terminal at Mercer. It was in the midst of a scrubby pine forest, with a sandy road crooking out from the trees on one side and into the trees on the other. There were only two or three houses, a little general store with a porch like the visor of a military cap, and a school house, all arranged in a straggly row along the railroad track. The dusty red depot was an oasis in the midst of a cinder desert, with a great many telegraph wires slinging overhead.

A dozen trains whirled through Kane Creek every day with only a shriek of greeting and a whipping wake of fine sand. Only two of them paid the slightest attention to the girl in a blue gingham dress who stood in the little observation window. One of them was the way freight which stopped at Kane's every time it came along while the conductor handed the girl a bundle of yellow papers and received another like it in return. The other was the night express, westward bound from St. Paul, and running at forty miles an hour. It was a splendid train—ten cars, with the finest engine on the road, big No. 600. As its glaring eye flashed around the bend in the direction of Mercer the girl in the gingham dress often thought of the great train as a powerful and ferocious beast snorting and roaring westward on a race with the sun. It was a beast, but it was well trained, and she knew the hand that trained it. When the train was a mile away there were always two blasts on the whistle. Every one else in Kane's thought they meant simply, "Wake up, look out!"—for that is what all locomotives say at every crossing—but the girl in the gingham dress heard "Hello, Polly," and darted out on the platform and waved her handkerchief. As the great train thundered nearer a hand was thrust from the engineer's window, and although it was usually dark, she could see the flutter of something white, and oftentimes as the engine darted past the station she heard the blurred sound of a voice and caught the glimpse of a grimy face and a blue jean jacket. And then she went back to her place in the little station with a sigh of deep contentment.

For it was a moment of great joy to Polly Marshall when her father's engine went through. Polly was the station agent at Kane Creek—any one could have told that a woman presided in the little depot, for was there not always a bouquet in the window and dainty pictures surrounding the grimy time tables on the walls, and a kitten curling upon the doorstep? At 17 Polly had gone in as assistant to learn telegraphy and when Clark, the agent, was called to Mercer the company had left the independent girl in charge. She and her father lived in one of the wooden houses a stone's throw back from the depot, and since Polly's mother died they had been everything to each other.

Engineer Marshall was a big, silent man, and his companions, some of them, thought him gruff and ill tempered, but to Polly he was always tender as a kitten. Often when she was a little girl he took her down with him to Mercer on his engine, and while she sat on his black leather seat at the cab window, clinging on with both hands, he explained to her how the big black creature under them was started and stopped, what this brass crank was for, and how, when the engine squeaked here or squealed there, a little oil was needed in this cup or in that crevice. And Polly had learned to know an engine as well as she knew the neat little pantry in the house at home. Indeed, she had more than once managed the levers and the throttle, although it was very heavy work for a girl to do.

It was one night late in the fall that Polly Marshall had need of all her knowledge of engines. She was sitting at her desk in the little observation window, a shaded light throwing its rays down on her telegraph instruments and the sounder clicking sleepily. Suddenly she was startled by the sudden call of her number. Instantly her fingers sought the keys, and she gave the answer that signified that she was all attention.

"Look out for —" clicked the sounder, and then it suddenly ceased, and try as she would Polly could get no further communication with the station next to the eastward. What could the trouble be? What was she to look out for? Polly sprang to her feet, remembering that the night express, of which her father was engineer, was the next train due. Could anything be the matter? She ran out on the dark platform to see that her lights were all in place and that the switches were properly set, so that the express would slip past the station without an accident. Then she went back and called up Mercer.

"Can you get Pinckney?" she asked. Pinckney was the station which had sent her the warning dispatch so mysteriously interrupted. She knew the operator at Pinckney well—every night he told her of the approach of her father's train, and whether or not it left his station on time.

"Pinckney quiet; can't get answer," was the report of the wires. "What's the trouble?"

Polly answered as well as she could, and Mercer made another attempt to arouse Pinckney.

Her father's train was now due. It should be whistling cheerily at the lower bend. Polly stepped out on the platform and peered up the track. Yes, there was the familiar headlight—she would have known it among a hundred. Then came the whistle, "Hello, Polly," and Polly ran back into her office much relieved and sat down to warn Mercer. At that instant she heard a peculiar cracking sound that sent her heart quivering deep in her bosom. Then there was the shrill scream of the locomotive whistle, suddenly interrupted, as if the hand that had drawn the lever had been struck from its place. Polly knew it was a cry of distress. It seemed to say, "Help," in a long, tremulous wail. Instantly Polly darted outside and flew up the track. Already the express should have thundered past the station, but she could see its headlight a hundred yards or more away. The train had stopped.

With a hundred terrifying questions flashing through her mind, Polly ran on through the gloom. When she was almost within range of the big headlight she saw a half dozen armed men swarming around the engine, she heard fierce oaths, and then the engine started up again. She saw in an instant that it had been cut free from the train. In the cab window, where her father usually stood, there was a big, unfamiliar figure managing the lever and throttle. Terrified, Polly sprang to one side into a clump of bushes. As the locomotive passed her on its way up the track she saw that the man in the cab wore a black mask on his face, and then she knew what had happened. She understood why Pinckney had tried to warn her and failed. Robbers had held up the train and were preparing to rob the express car.

For a moment Polly was torn with doubt and terror. Had they shot her

engineer's side of the cab, threw back the reverse lever and opened the throttle steadily. The big steel wheels began to turn, very slowly at first. Farther and farther the throttle opened and faster and faster turned the wheels, and yet they did not go half fast enough to suit Polly, who was now glancing fearfully over her shoulder.

Suddenly the depot door was thrown open and she saw the robber darting up the track. He had his pistol in his hand. He was pointing it at her and shouting for her to stop. But the engine was now going at good speed, and, run as he would, the robber could not catch it. But he stopped and fired, the bullet ripping through the cab cover above Polly's head.

The engine was now tearing down the track at full speed. Polly knew that it must be fired or it would not go far, and so, leaving the throttle open, she sprang to the coal pit, flung open the fire hole, and with the heavy shovel in her small white hands threw in load after load of coal. When she returned to her place she could see the first signal light of Mercer already blinking into view. She pulled down on the whistle cord and the engine shrieked its distress.

Five minutes later Polly strained at the heavy reverse lever, turned hard on the air brake and brought the great iron horse to a sudden standstill. How she ever managed to stammer the story she never knew, but in a few minutes the engine was headed back with half a dozen armed men aboard of her. Behind them came another load of men on a switch engine and two men were racing up the street of Mercer calling the alarm.

They heard firing before they reached Kane Creek, but it ceased soon afterward. The robbers had gone. They had taken with them much plunder from the passengers, but they had not been able to get into the express safe, although they were at work drilling it open when relief came.

From the time that the engine stopped Polly was missing. When the rescued and excited passengers and express messengers began to crowd around and inquire the Mercer men remembered her. A party of them went out to find the girl who had brought help to the beleaguered train.

In a little clump of bushes they heard a man moaning, and an instant later they saw Polly kneeling in the sand, with her father's head in her lap, crying bitterly. And they gathered up the brave engineer and his daughter and



"HE STOPPED AND FIRED, THE BULLET RIPPING THROUGH THE CAB."

father? She knew that he never would submit to have his train captured without a struggle. Should she go to him? Then she remembered her station and the telegraph, and without a moment's delay she was flying down the track toward the depot. She would send for help to Mercer. But squarely in front of the little depot the locomotive stopped and the black-masked man sprang from the cab window and darted across the platform. Hardly thinking what she was doing, Polly ran up on the other side, the fireman's side of the engine, and, raising herself up, peered into the cab. She had half expected to see her father's dead body lying on the floor, for she had heard much about the terrible doings of train robbers.

Through the cab window she could see the robber sitting at her own little desk in the depot sending a message. It flashed over her all at once that he was wiring Mercer that the express was delayed, thus preventing any alarm. The robber had pushed up his mask and she saw him plainly.

What should she do? She dared not enter the office, and she, a mere girl, could be of no service where the robbers were making their attack on the train. If only she had the little revolver that lay in the drawer of her desk—she set her teeth as she thought what she would do with it.

At that moment three shots rang out, clear and distinct, from the detached train. The man at the telegraph instrument sprang to his feet and ran to a side window in the waiting room and looked up the track.

Now was her chance. Hardly thinking what she did, Polly sprang to the

carried them down to the train, cheering all the way.

Engineer Marshall was not badly hurt, and he was able to be in Mercer when the general manager of the road thanked the blushing Polly officially and offered a new and better position in Mercer. And of course all the passengers and express messengers heard about Polly's brave deed and said a great many pleasant things about her, but Polly, being a sensible girl, only blushed and said that she had to do it, and that any other girl would have done the same under like circumstances—which no one believed, of course.

Later, when the robbers were captured, Polly was able to identify one of them positively—the one who had run the engine—and through him the entire party was convicted and sentenced to the penitentiary.—Chicago Record.

Over Half a Million for a Book. The highest price ever offered for a single volume was tendered by a number of wealthy Hebrew merchants of Venice to Pope Julius II. for a very ancient Hebrew Bible. It was believed to be an original copy of the Septuagint version of the scriptures, translated from the Hebrew into Greek in 277 B. C. The sum mentioned to Julius was \$600,000, but the Pope declined the offer.

Equine Sagacity. Every soldier knows that a horse will not step on a man intentionally. It is a standing order in the British cavalry that if a trooper becomes dismounted he must lie still. If he does this the whole squadron is likely to pass over him without doing him injury.

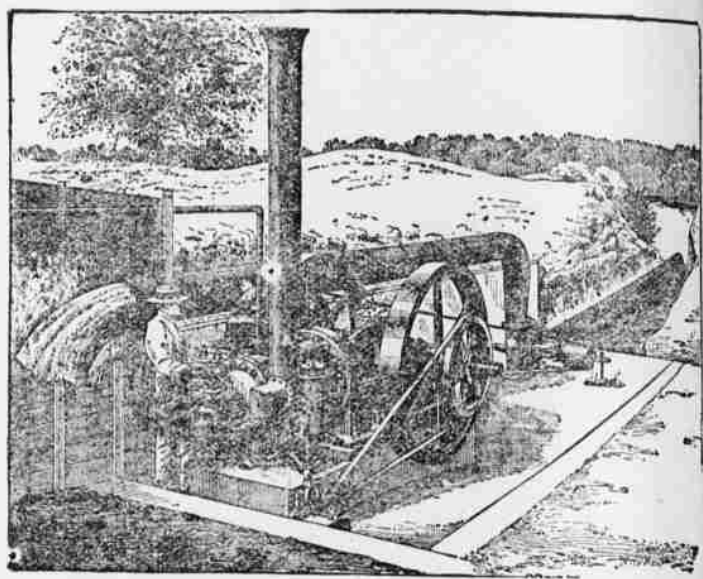
A GIANT PUMPING PLANT

Packer's Great Irrigation Enterprise a Success.

Hundreds of Acres of Wheat Land Along the Sacramento River Supplied With Water.

Pumping plants have been so improved in the last few years as to lead one to hope that in that direction lies the solution of the irrigation question. George F. Packer, although considered one of the most conservative men in the county, has led off in a number of things. Some years ago he checked off some land and put in a flume for winter irrigation and planted alfalfa. He made a survey himself to determine the practicability of taking the water out of the river below Stony creek to water the river lands, and wanted the co-operation of some of the farmers to build the canal. He opposed both the Colusa and the Central districts because he did not believe in that plan—and time has shown that he was wiser in that than many of us. He wanted to know who was to manage.

Again he comes to the front. The Hercules Gas Engine Works of San Francisco has just completed, on his



home place, the largest gasoline pumping plant in existence, which will be used for pumping water from the river with which to irrigate several hundred acres of land.

This plant consists of an 80-horse power, horizontal single cylinder, Hercules engine and a Krogh Manufacturing Company's 15-inch centrifugal pump, guaranteed to raise 6,000 gallons of water per minute 27 feet high. There is also a smaller pump of 400 gallons a minute capacity driven by the same engine. This is for tank purposes.

The engine is arranged to use either gasoline or distillate oil, and as the latter is very cheap it will no doubt be the fuel selected for use. The 20-inch suction pipe, made of No. 10 steel, passes through the levee, on an incline, into the river, and at its lower end is a large foot valve weighing 1,200 pounds.

A 20-inch discharge pipe carries the water from the pump to a head box 22 feet square and 6 feet high. For the foundation of the machinery an excavation was made and filled with concrete. The first test made showed a much larger pumping capacity than the contract called for, the flow of water exceeding 7,200 gallons a minute or 432,000 gallons an hour, or 10,368,000 gallons per day of 24 hours—enough water to cover 384 acres an inch deep, or 38 acres 10 inches deep every day of 24 hours.

A very important part is the exceedingly small cost of the fuel, it being only one-eighth gallon per hour for each horse power actually used, and

the price of the fuel is less than 10 cents a gallon. If the whole farm should be used, there would be eight gallons an hour, or less than 10 gallons a day of 24 hours. The fuel item then is less than \$20 for covering 38 acres 10 inches deep with water—less than 60 cents an acre. If wheat, one sack to the acre will pay the expenses of putting 10 inches of water on it just as it is wanted most.

This pumping plant, destined to revolutionize agriculture in the Sacramento valley, was put in operation Friday, August 6.

Early in the morning a party of Colusians drove to the ranch of Mr. Packer, which is on the river below Princeton, to see the great pump make a trial of its strength. The air was cool and the drive most pleasant, though dusty. Arriving, they found the engine placed in a concrete oblong, square basin, sloping towards the cut in the levee that leads to the river and the great 28-inch iron pipe extending from a 22x22 foot reservoir down the concrete basin, on through the cut in the levee and river bank into the water. The machinery was all clean and bright, and G. W. Tibbetts and Arthur Pope were on hand to put it in motion. John E. Doak of San Francisco, having the work in charge, was there, and as the engine started, the great belts moving

slowly at first, and increasing in velocity, the water began to come with force into the reservoir. It gushed in awhile, when one of the smaller pipes of the engine became clogged, and it was stopped for arrangement. Just then, as all stood still, there was a splash and a wild shout came from those who had climbed upon the edge of the reservoir. All rushed up and found Mr. Stice, of Red Bluff, who is here buying fruit, floundering around in the water, having lost his balance and tumbled in. There was much merriment at his expense, and it had a healthy action on the crowd, bringing laughter and good will all around.

Again, the engines started, and forcing 7,200 gallons to the minute, the great reservoir was soon overflowing, and all pronounced it the grandest of successes.

The success of Mr. Packer's enterprise will show conclusively that it will be immensely profitable to irrigate even wheat lands that are at all favorably situated. Who would not give a sack of wheat an acre for the privilege of 10 inches of water at will? It would make a difference, one year with another, of five to ten sacks; there need be no summer-fallowing. A certain crop every year. But then there comes in a more profitable crop—alfalfa and sugar beets.

This plant was put in for Mr. Packer for \$3,500, but the head of the company informs us that this was an inducement and that another would cost higher.

—Colusa Sun, August 6, 1897.

Queer Petition for Pardon.

James Johnson, a convict in the Missouri penitentiary, has petitioned the governor for a pardon on the ground that he "wants to go to the Klondike gold fields."

Italy's Cotton Manufactures.

The growth of the cotton industry in Lombardy, according to consular reports, has been remarkable—that is, the number of spindles in Italy is stated to be nearly 1,800,000; also some 70,000 power looms, besides a very large number of hand looms; and of all these about half are credited to Lombardy, and, as a large proportion of the spinning mills work day and night, the spindles may be calculated as equivalent to 2,500,000 in countries where only day work prevails. All kinds of raw cotton are used, but chiefly Indian and American of medium quality. Until recently the yarns were almost entirely confined to the lower counts, even the general average being 20's to 22's, but many spinners are turning their attention to the finer counts, which have hitherto been imported from Switzerland and England, while no insuperable difficulty has been encountered either on account of labor or the climate. Calico printing has also become a business of considerable importance and the amount is considerable, both of yarns and cloth, which is now sent to Tunis, the Levant, South America and the Balkan States.

Wind Stopped Trains.

The violence of the wind on the Grampian hills is so great that on several occasions it has brought to a standstill trains traveling from Perth to the north.

ITEMS OF INTEREST.

A Minneapolis genealogist reckons up four billions of persons between William the Conqueror and one of his descendants now living.

The finished portion of the new congressional library of Washington has about forty-four miles of shelving, which will accommodate over 2,000,000 volumes.

Artificial rubber is being sought by Mr. Berthelot, the French chemist, who predicts that his product will be better and cheaper than the natural product of Para.

A new industry has been started in Michigan. Blocks of sawdust stacked with resin are made and sold for fuel, and it is said that for a quick, hot fire this has no equal.

Several French and German dentists have lately made investigations which convinced them that hollow teeth are favorite breeding places for tubercle bacilli and microbes.

A drunken Polander in New York was found sound asleep the other night while his leg was burning with a big blaze. The leg was wooden and put against a coal stove.