THROWING THE SWITCH NOT SO EASY AS LOOKS

Big Responsibilities of "The Human Scrap Heap" of Railroading—Average Pay Only About $50 Per Month—A Day in the "Shanty."

By Graham Romeyn Taylor.

"Regular B. & O., No. 6, the right main!" shouted Switchtender Griffin through the telephone. It was a verification of the order he had received and the little shanty by the side of the track seemed almost to burst with the volume of his tones. Any one who spends 12 hours of the 24 in a railroad switching yard must accustom his voice to a never-ending contest with a bedlam of whistles, bells and rushing steam.

Jamming the receiver on its hook and opening the little door, Griffin bent his six-foot frame through the opening. His lantern swung from the stump of his right arm, which had just enough of an elbow to make a hook for it. Successive bars of yellow light at every slant and angle glinted in the darkness as the reflection came from one track or another in the tangle. He picked his way across them and stopped to throw the switch. Scarcely had he straightened up, when out of the night rushed "No. 6." It clattered past the shanty, thundered over the high iron bridge and then like a spent skyrocket it could be seen slowly bending its stream of light around the curve before the last straight stretch into the white glare of the train shed.

Right and Wrong.

"You see," said Griffin, as he shoved the door shut and gave the stove the only housekeeping attention which the shanty demanded of him, "there's two o' them mains. One's the right main and the other's the wrong main. They're the two tracks across the bridge. The right main goin' toward the depot is the wrong one coming out. But sometimes if the right one is blockaded we have to send the trains in or out by the wrong main."

"Suppose," said I, "another train was coming out on its right main at the same time you might be sending B. & O. No. 6 in its wrong main. Wouldn't something happen?"

"Sure. They'd clean it up with ambulances, and you'd hear the kids yellin' extry. That's just the thing we've got to look out for."

His frankness was a relief. It showed one thing certainly, that Griffin was keenly aware of his responsibility. In fact, I felt a sense of assurance in discovering Griffin's motto nailed to the wall beside a Sunday supplement picture. There was an element of dead certainty about its strong language. It read, "Live every day so that you can look any damn man in the face and tell him, 'Go to hell,'" a vigorous way, to be sure, of saying, "Be sure you are right," but one, nevertheless, that gave you a comfortable sense of double riveted security, with error not even among the possibilities.

Important Job.

"Job important? Well, you can size it up for yourself. The magazines have had a big lot of hot air about the engineer. All their railroad yarns tell about the trainload of passengers whose safety rests with the man in the cab. What in heaven's name would he do, I'd like to know, if we fellers didn't keep the switches right? Guess the lives of the trainloads depend on the man in the shanty, too."

I was not in a mood to dispute the statement, as Griffin caught sight of a light in the distance, which rapidly swelled to a full moon. "Great Western, No. 3," he was hollering through the phone. "All right, Tom, the wrong main for her," and it seemed as if he had scarcely gone outside of the shanty when the full moon, backed up by 80 tons of pounding iron, and clouds of choking steam, rushed by, trailing half a dozen sleepers that looked like one elongated car.

As I accustomed myself to the surroundings, however, I began to think of the things to find out which I had stumbled down the wet and rickety steps from the viaduct and made my uncertain way across and along the tracks. I had heard that a large proportion of switchtenders were crippled. I wanted to finds out how they came to be so, how they got their jobs, what their wages were and what, if any, efforts were made to better their conditions. Already I had become impressed with the fact that a switchtender must be "all there" all of the time, even if his "all" did happen to include less than the normal total of limbs and digits.

The Scrap Heap.

"Sure, we're the human scrap heap in this business. There's about as many of us maimed as able-bodied. Look down that row of white lights to the right of the nearest track. Each one of 'em has a shanty and a switchtender. There's me and Bill Williams—he's my day partner—in this shanty. Both of us lacking a right arm. Dave, in the next shanty, he's got no left hand. Next feller's all sound. But the two after him—neither of them can count more'n about six all told on his fingers. Out of 20 in this yard there are seven maimed, and among the 700 or thereabout in the city, I expect there's between a third and a half handicapped. Dunno how you would find out for sure."

"How did we get chopped up? Well, mostly all about the same way. You see, we're all of us trained and experienced railroad men. This is the only kind they can use in this job. No fellder that's maimed outside the railroad service could work in. Fact is, most of us were regular switchmen—the boys that ride around on the engine footboards and couple cars. Some day or other it happened to the rest of them just about the way it did to me. I lost that there hand making as good a coupling as ever bumped together. Just put my hand in, and when I went to pull it out the train had it 'stead of me. Done so slick I never knew how it happened."

Must Be Posted.

"Don't you never call us cripples, young fellow. We're down and out so far as the wages go. We may be human scrap heap—they pay us as if that was the company's thought anyway. Don't you know they've got to have men posted on railroading for these jobs? If they didn't take us, they'd have to pay the switchmen's regular scale, 37½ cents an hour. But they have us handicapped—all we can do is to take what's coming to us and look wise. We get somewhere between $45 and $60 a month for 12 hours a day, seven days a week. I just had a raise from $47.50 to $50. That was when the switchmen got their last increase.

"Fifty dollars is mighty little for a man with a family. But it comes tough for those of us who have been used to twice that sum—and nearly all of us maimed chaps have. There's Jim, he's the president of the union we're just forming. Jim's getting $55 and a few years ago out west he was yard superintendent, drawing $200 a month. Of course, when the accident comes, we usually get a lump sum settlement from the road, but that only makes a nest egg for the time when we'll have to quit altogether."

"How, then, do you get these jobs?" I asked, interested to learn if anything like a bureau for the handicapped was maintained by the industry responsible for the injuries. It proved to exist in the human kindness of an individual.

Experienced Man.

"The yard superintendent kind o' has a lookout for us fellers. He knows that if a chap has one arm off that's no reason why he's not likely to keep his head on his shoulders even better than an ordinary chap. So the boys know they stand a good show by just going around to see him. In fact, he told me yesterday if I knew any feller that had been up against it, but who was steady and had had experience in the ways of the road, to send him around and he would take care of him."

The telephone bell rang sharply. "B & O. No. 4 is 30 minutes late," repeated Griffin in verification. "Sure, Tom, I'll look out to send her down the right main." I left the shanty wondering by what process of divination it was possible to pick the headlight of "No. 4's" engine from the maze of lights and signals in the distance. As I made my way toward the viaduct and its rickety steps I heard Griffin's voice call after me: "Drop in and see a feller whenever you chance to be down this way."

SEWING MACHINE REVOLUTIONIZED

Man Who Perfected His Invention While in Prison Will Get Fortune.

Boston, Mass., June 13.—Nearly half a century ago Calvin P. Graves of North Hancock, Maine, began to work out the idea of improving his mother's sewing machine. While working on his invention he was convicted of the murder of two men and received a life sentence. During the 19 years he served before being pardoned he perfected the device. At the age of 64 he started for New York today to collect $100,000 offered him for his invention by a combination of sewing machine companies.

The invention is not only an improvement but a revolution in sewing machine construction. It is an attachment that can be placed upon any machine, whether for factory use on heavy material or for the housewife in the home. It abolishes the bobbin and takes the thread right from the spool and makes a lock stitch. It is so arranged that from a row of spools of different colored silk or thread any one can be used at will by using small levers.

The invention also abolishes many of the devices on the present machine.

KOSHLAND BROS. BUY LARGEST WOOL CLIP

(Special Dispatch to The Journal.)

Pendleton, Or., June 13.—Charles Green, representative of Koshland Bros., of San Francisco, announced today that he had purchased the 300,000 pounds wool clip of Lee Bros. of Baker City.

This is one of the largest individual clips in Oregon. The price paid is not given out.

Freewater Strawberry Crop.

Freewater, Or., June 13.—It is estimated that the strawberry crop for the present season in the Milton and Freewater country will amount to $50,000. The bulk of the crop has already been marketed, and a half dozen different fruit concerns have been handling the berries. This year the berries are lasting longer, and with somewhat larger acreage are producing more berries than a year ago.

Ex-Governor Myron T. Herrick of Ohio and Congressman William B. McKinley of Illinois are mentioned as candidates for treasurer of the Republican national committee.

Notes From the Labor World

Boston Cigarmakers' union has levied an assessment of $5 on each member to advertise the union label.

Union bakers in St. Paul have obtained an increase of $1 a week in their wages.

The French Railway Workers' union numbers 45,000 men and has an annual income of about $30,000.

The Amalgamated Window Glass Workers of America will hold its annual convention next month in Buffalo.

Over 80 national and international unions of laborers and farmers have decided on a plan of political action to protect the interests of wage-earners.

That a labor union is liable for damages if it calls its men out because a workman is not a member of the union is a decision just rendered by the courts in Victoria, British Columbia.

Applications for the organization of divisions in South America and in the canal zone have been received by the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers.

Union coppersmiths at San Francisco have been informed by the employers that the latter will insist on a nine-hour day in future, instead of eight, as now exists.

The supreme court of Nevada has rendered a decision that boycotts in all forms are illegal, and makes it possible for parties injured to recover damages from any party, individual or corporation, instituting a boycott.

The labor assembly of St. Paul did not send delegates to the convention of the Minnesota State Federation of Labor this year, believing that the money could be used more advantageously in local organization work.

The union labor men of Memphis, Tenn., are planning again to have representation in the Tennessee legislature. It is likely a plan similar to the one adopted two years ago will be adopted again this year, in order to secure the choice of organized labor as to who shall represent it in the legislature.

A movement has been started in Sonoma county, California, to have all producers form an organization for the protection of mutual interests. This movement has for its purpose the securing of a place in San Francisco, where all products can be shipped direct and be disposed of without having to pay a commission to the middle men for handling the goods.

An order issued by the Pennsylvania railroad to discharge all foreigners and employ none but American citizens has attracted much public attention. The order affects only the laborers, as the office force, operation and mechanical departments have always been operated by English-speaking men. The Pennsylvania system, when operating to its full capacity, employs about 180,000 persons.

Suit for $50,000 damages against a labor union, in which it is sought to obtain judgment against the property of individual workingmen, has been brought by the Citizens' alliance of Denver on behalf of a marble company, on the ground that members of the Marble Workers' union held up the construction of a large building in Denver by a strike for higher wages. The American Federation of Labor will assist in defending the suit.

The enormous profits required by West Side Furniture Dealers to meet excessive rents is best illustrated by the special sales advertisements of the Big Price Boys. It is not unusual to find $100 articles specialed at $50, and $50 articles marked down to $25, while you will sometimes see a $10 piece of furniture going at $3.35.

Granting that some specials are even put on at cost, what do you think of trading regularly with a firm that must ask three times the wholesale cost of goods in order to do business profitably? You may take the special bargain, but you will fight shy of everything else.

It is actually impossible for us to reduce anything 35 per cent without throwing it under cost. Therefore every day is special bargain day with us. Investigators have found this to be true, which accounts for the enormous business we have been doing. Others cannot compete with us because

Others Pay Rent, We Collect Rent on Half Our Own Building Who Can Sell the Cheapest?

You will add to your happiness if you can induce your husband to

Keep Away From Those Big Price Boys

They are expensive companions. If they furnish your home your husband will soon learn how much too much he paid for furniture, will always feel sore, and will never take the interest in his home that he would if M.-A. had furnished it at no-rent bargain prices.

Will be a big item in furnishing that new house you are building. We actually save you from 5 to 25 cents a yard on carpets. It's a big saving. "M.-A." knows you won't overlook it, either.

Rockers

A fine new line of Mission Rockers. See them for genuine bargains.

VICTOR

"When the Song of Love Is Heard"

Happy indeed is the home where "Love's Old Sweet Song" is ever heard. But tired husbands and care-worn wives forget to repeat the "old, old story," and sometimes feel irritable, even "scrappy."

A Victor Restores Harmony

It cheeerfully sings the old songs that thrilled you when love was young. Depressing clouds lift. Your hearts are filled with love and joy and life seems worth living.

Can you afford to be without a Victor? Remember "M.-A." give terms to suit all pocketbooks.

Refrigerator Weather

You simply must have a Refrigerator; there is no use talking, but you don't have to buy it from the Big Price Boys.

"M-A" Will Save You From $1 to $10

Refrigerators from $8.00 up.

Acorn Ranges

We have secured one of the oldest and best line of Steel Ranges made in America—the celebrated Acorn. There is no range on the market that excels the Acorn. The new fuel-saving fire box is found only in the Acorn. It saves 25 per cent in fuel.

Others Pay Rent, We Collect Rent on Half Our Own Building—Who Can Sell the Cheapest?

W. L. MORGAN GEO. T. ATCHLEY S. H. MORGAN

81-83-85 GRAND. AVE. CORNER E. STARK

MORGAN ATCHLEY & M. A.

FURNITURE CO.

Solid Oak Dressers $11.00

(Not like cut.)

We have one of the largest assortments of Dressers in the city and can save you from $2 to $10 on a Dresser.

WATERMELONS SOON TO ARRIVE IN CARS

(Hearst News by Longest Leased Wire.)

San Francisco, June 13.—The local wheat market has been monotonous for some time, and will continue so until the new crop begins to arrive at Tidewater in quantities. Prices were unchanged today and the market was dull and easy. The receipts were 12,320 centals and included 12,920 centals from Washington.

Cargoes on passage were in sympathy with American advances. The English country markets were quiet and the French was dull. Liverpool was firm for spot and higher for futures. Paris declined.

Barley was quiet and unchanged for spot, with receipts of 4,940 centals, and including 1,880 centals from Washington. December advanced ¾c per cental.

The receipts of oats were only 880 centals and all from Oregon. A slack demand and there being some timid holders who have been anxious to realize have given the market the appearance of being very weak. The reported sales at reduced prices, however, have consisted mostly of the lower grades. Choice and fancy white oats were held at the quoted prices, and all white have to come from the north. There were no receipts of beans, corn or rye, and these articles were nominally unchanged in prices.

Receipts of flour were 2,927 barrels, including 1,319 barrels from Washington and 250 barrels from the east.

Extra eggs advanced 1c per dozen with sales on change of 20 cases at 23c and 30 cases at 23½c. All grades of California closed steady and eastern seconds were firm. Butter was steady for all grades of creamery, and firm for packing stock. On change 2,500 pounds of cube butter sold at 23½c per pound. Cheese was unchanged, closing weak for California flats and firm for Young America. The steamer Mariposa for Honolulu today had good quantities of butter and cheese.

The steamer Governor for British Columbia, and the steamer Mariposa for Honolulu took out good quantities of fresh and dried fruits. On regular steamer days fine and specially packed fruits for shipment usually command a premium on regular market quotations. Berries were weak all round. Cherries had about the same general range as on Friday. The market was still glutted with apricots, the arrivals having for some days been much in excess of the demand. Peaches were slow, even for best quality. Cantaloupes were in liberal supply and cheaper. A carload of watermelons is about due from Coachella valley.

The river boats were late, causing no little annoyance to trade, especially early buyers, who were looking for special lines of fresh goods. Most of the asparagus available in the early part of the day was taken by canners. String beans and green peas were weaker. Lima beans were on sale, but the trade did not take them. Rhubarb has been somewhat neglected of late. Cucumbers and tomatoes were in better supply.

Ode.

To the man who's always gruntin'
And a-grumblin' and a-kickin',
The world don't owe a livin',
But a thunderin' big lickin'.
—From the Boston Transcript.