

RAILWAY SIGNALS

"Fireworks" That Serve as Train Protectors.

CODE OF TORPEDO AND FUSEE

Messages These Audible and Visible Danger Signs Convey to the Engineer—The Use of Pyrotechnics as Signals in the Naval Service.

"Pop, pop," or perhaps a single "pop," sharp and distinct like that of a giant firecracker heard not only on the Fourth of July, but on every day in the year, Sundays included. What did it mean? And on almost any night as I look out of my window I see the edge of the wood or the fields lighted up by red or yellow fireworks. Why this strange illumination?

As all these queer happenings took place on the railroad a few rods from my house I made inquiries of the railway officials, and here are some interesting facts about the use of these curious "fireworks."

The general superintendent of the New York, New Haven and Hartford railroad explained as follows:

"Our rules provide for the use of detonators, commonly known as torpedoes, as audible signals and of 'fusees' as visible signals."

"These torpedoes are attached to the top of the rail on the engineer's side of the track by two small flexible metal strips, which are easily bent around the ball of the rail, as shown in the picture, and hold the torpedoes securely in place until exploded by the first train passing over this track."

"The explosion of one torpedo is a signal to stop; the explosion of two, not more than 200 feet apart is a signal to reduce speed and look out for a stop signal."

"The fusees are of similar construction to the well known Roman candle used for fireworks celebrations, except that they burn a steady flame without explosions. A sharp iron spike at the bottom end will usually stick in the ground or in the cross tie when thrown from the rear of a train and holds the fusee in an upright position, where it is more plainly visible."

"A fusee must be lighted and left by the flagman whenever a train is running on the 'time' of another train or behind its own time and under circumstances which call for such protection."

"A fusee on or near the track, burning red, must not be passed. When burning yellow the train may proceed with caution when the way is seen and known to be clear. Standard fusees burn red for three minutes and yellow for seven minutes and can be seen for quite a distance."

"You will gather from the above explanations that the red glare of a flaming fusee on or near the track warns the approaching engineer that a preceding train has passed over his track less than three minutes ahead of him, and under no circumstances must he pass this signal while burning red. When the flame turns to yellow he may proceed with caution, only as the way is seen and known to be clear, keeping in mind that when the fusee changed from red to yellow he was exactly three minutes behind a preceding train, which may have stopped within a short distance or may be proceeding at an unusually slow rate of speed."

The superintendent of the Shore Line division, another branch of the same railroad, gives this additional detail regarding torpedoes:

"When a train stops upon the main line and requires protection against a following train the flagman goes back a specified distance and places one torpedo. He then continues a farther distance back, placing two torpedoes. As soon as the train he is protecting is ready to start the engineer blows a specified whistle signal, which is a notice to the flagman to return to his train. On the way back he picks up the one torpedo, leaving two on the rail to warn the engineer of an approaching train that another train is a short distance ahead and to give the flagman time to run back and get aboard of his own train."

Of the use of fireworks as signals in the navy the chief of the bureau of construction and repair of the navy department, Washington, makes the following statement:

"All modern ships are fitted with electric signals, and the use of such signals is general in the naval service. In the case of small vessels having no electric installation and also for use in case of the failure of the electric signals the navy has a system of colored stars in connection with rockets for the purpose of signaling."

"These are in no sense the ordinary commercial fireworks, but are manufactured by the service for naval use exclusively."

"There are no photographs of this system of signals for distribution. The apparatus consists of a specially designed pistol from which are fired cartridges containing the colored stars that are used in the service code."—New York Mail.

Mighty Arcturus.

Arcturus is one of the most brilliant stars that we can see in the heavens. Its diameter is 62,000,000 miles. The light that comes to us from it is over 200 years old when it enters our eyes. The sun is distant 93,000,000 miles. Then compare eleven minutes with 200 years.

Truth is as impossible to be soiled by any outward touch as the sunbeam.—Milton.

THE KING'S CHAMPION.

Westminster Hall, Where His Challenge Used to Be Uttered.

Westminster hall, in London, was built originally by King William Rufus (1056-1100) and tradition goes that the oak of its ceilings was brought from the forest of Shillelagh, in Ireland, timber which possessed peculiar properties rendering it hateful to spiders and their webs. Richard II. transformed the hall. Leaving the old walls standing, he buttressed them strongly and raised over them the magnificent roof of oak which is still extant and intact. It is ninety-two feet high. The length of the hall is 290 feet, its breadth sixty-eight feet. It was large enough for mounted men to enter in order to challenge any who would dispute the rights of the king, a ceremony that is quaintly described as follows on the occasion of the coronation of Richard III. and Queen Anne in 1483:

"In the afternoon the King and Queen entered the hall, and the King sat in the middle, and ye Queen on ye left side of the table, and on every side of her stood a Countess, holding a cloth of Pleasance when she listed for to drink. And on the right hand of ye King sat ye Archbishop of Canterbury. The ladies sat all on one side in ye middle of the hall, and at the table against them sat the Chancellor and all the Lords. And at the table next the cupboard sat ye Mayor of London. * * * At the second course came into ye hall Sr. Robert Dimmock, the King's Champion, making Proclamation that whoever would say that King Richard was not lawful King, he would fight with him at the utterance, and threw down his gauntlet, and then all the hall cried King Richard."

"And then one brought him a cup of wine covered, and when he had drunk he cast out the drinke and departed with the cupp. * * * At the end of the dinner the Mayor of London served the King and Queen with sweete wine, and had of each of them a cup of gold and a cover of gold. And by that time that all was done, it was darke night, and so the King returned to his chamber, and every man to his lodging."

The last time that the hall was the scene of the challenge of the king's champion was at the coronation of George IV.

Bell With the Wail of a Child.

A queerly shaped gong which occupies a position of honor in the center of the city of Seoul, Korea, is said to be one of the largest in the world and is called "the bell with the wail of a child in its voice." When first cast the bell sounded with a harsh and cracked note, and the superstitious emperor, fearing an ill omen, consulted with his magicians. These gentlemen held a long confab and finally stated that the bell would never sound right until a live child was given to it. The mass was then melted again, and a live baby was thrown into the molten metal. The wail of agony uttered by the little tot as the bronze engulfed it seemed to be repeated every time the bell was tolled, and today the Koreans still claim that the wail of a child can be heard in the voice of the metal.

But She Wasn't Satisfied.

Lady Jekyll, who was fond of puzzling herself and others with such questions as had been common enough a generation before her, in the days of the "Athenian Oracle," asked William Whiston of bermed name and eccentric memory, one day at her husband's table, to resolve a difficulty which occurred to her in the Mosaic account of the creation.

"Since it pleased God, sir," she said, "to create the woman out of the man, why did he form her out of the rib rather than any other part?"

Whiston scratched his head and answered: "Indeed, madam, I do not know, unless it be that the rib is the most crooked part of the body."

"There," her husband said, "you have it now! I hope you are satisfied."—Southey's Doctor.

The Ignorant Patriot.

A very raw recruit was being put through an examination in geography wherein he proved himself astonishingly ignorant. At last, after a failure on his part of unusual fragrance, the examiner scowled at him and thundered:

"Idiot, you want to defend your country and you don't even know where it is!"

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Mr. and Mrs. W. C. Lacy are up from Portland. Mr. Lacy is very much interested at the present time in getting his share of the big wheat crop to town from off the farm where he once labored so diligently, and before becoming infested with the "hookworm" and joining the never-sweats-down Portland way. Levi Morgan has had the farm rented the past two years, and as the fates favored him especially this season and sent rain on his crop just at the right time, an abundant harvest of good grain has been gathered, for all of which Brother Lacy is very thankful.

F. C. Marquarisen and wife departed for Payette, Idaho in their auto this morning. After a short visit there they will proceed on to Buhl where they will live in the future and look after their land interests and raise fruit as well as sell merchandise. Their household goods and mercantile stock was all shipped the first of the week. Heppner people are indeed sorry to have these excellent people leave us; they have made many friends here who hope for their abundant success in the new field.

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