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JOB PRINTING Talking to Himself A Scotchman, when asked why he always talked to himself, replied: "In the first place, because I like to talk to an intelligent man. In the second place, because I always like to hear an intelligent man talk." We talk out loud for the Scotchman's reasons. Would rather talk on P-r-i-n-t-i-n-g than on any other subject. We don't say a word about prices—it goes without saying that prices are right. And our work—if it's not right, send it back. Try us. We Print anything. Observer Printing Office Moro, Oregon.

McWilliams Special FRANK H. SPEARMAN Copyright, 1907, by Frank H. Spearman

It belongs to the stories that never were told, this the McWilliams Special. But it happened years ago, and for that matter McWilliams is dead. It wasn't grief that killed him either, though at one time his grief came uncommonly near killing him. It is an old sort of a yarn, too, because one part of it never got to headquarters, and another part of it never got from headquarters.

How, for instance, the mysterious car was ever started from Chicago on such a delirious schedule, how many men in the service know that even yet? How, for another instance, Sinclair and Francis took the ratty old car reeling into Denver with the glass shattered, the paint blistered, the hose burned and a tire sprung on one of the Five-Nines drivers, how many headquarters slaves know that?

Our end of the story never went in at all—never went in because it was not deemed well, essential to the getting up of the annual report. We could have raised their hair; they could have raised our salaries; but they didn't, we didn't.

In telling this story I would not be misunderstood. Ours is not the only line between Chicago and Denver. There are others, I admit it. But there is only one line, all the same, that could have taken the McWilliams Special, as we did, out of Chicago at 4 in the evening and put it in Denver long before noon the next day.

A communication came from a great La Salle street banker to the president of our road. Next the McWilliams Special, as we did, out of Chicago at 4 in the evening and put it in Denver long before noon the next day.

Why have you turned down a Special to Denver this afternoon? asked the president. "McWilliams, you're crazy. What on earth do you mean?"

The talk came back so low that the wires hardly caught it. There were occasional outbursts such as, "Situation is extremely critical." "Grave danger." "Acute distress." "Must help me out."

But none of this would ever have moved the president had not Peter McWilliams been a bigger man than most corporations, and a personal request from Peter, if he stuck for it, could hardly be refused, and for this he most decidedly stuck.

"I tell you it will turn us upside down," stormed the president. "Do you recollect," asked Peter McWilliams, "when your infernal old pot

of a road was busted eight years ago— you were turned inside out then, weren't you? And hung up to dry, weren't you?"

The president did recollect. He could not decently help recollecting. And he recollected how, about that same time, Peter McWilliams had one week taken up for him a matter of two millions floating with a personal check and carried it eighteen months without security when money could not be had in Wall street on government bonds.

De you—that is, have you heretofore supposed that a railroad belongs

with a sort of "There now, you fellows! Are you any good at all on the West End?" And we thought we were. Sitting in the dispatcher's office, we gazed her down the line like a swallow—Harvard, Oxford, Zanesville, Ash-ton—and a thousand people at the McCloud station waited for 6 o'clock and for Foley's muddy cap to pop through the Blackwood bluffs, watched him stride in the valley nuzzles with a stream of white and black, scream at the Junction switches, tear and crash through the yards and slide hissing and panting up under our nose, swing out of his cab and look at nobody at all but his watch.

We made it 5:50 a. m., Central time; the miles, 186; the minutes, 121. The schedule was beaten and that with the 136 miles the fastest on the whole 1,020. Everybody in town yelled exultantly. He asked for a chevron of tobacco and, not getting one handily, bit into his own piece.

While Foley melted his weed George Sinclair stepped out of the superintendent's office—his was done in a black silk shirt, with a blue four-hand streaming over his front—stepped out to shake hands with Foley as if another backed down with a new skyscraper, the 509.

But nobody paid much attention to all this. The mob had swarmed around the ratty, old, blind eyed baggage car, which, with an ordinary way-car, constituted the McWilliams Special.

"Now, what does a man with McWilliams' money want to travel special in an old photograph gallery like that for?" asked Andy Cameron, who was the least bit buffed because he hadn't been marked up for the run himself. "You better take him in a cup of hot coffee, Sinker," suggested Andy to the lunch counter boy. "You might get a ten dollar bill if the old man isn't feeling too badly. What do you hear from Denver, Neighbor?" he asked, turning to the superintendent of motive power. "Is the boy holding out?"

"I'm not worrying about the boy holding out; it's whether the Five-Nine will hold out."

"Aren't you going to change engines and drivers at Ardenburg?" "Not today," said Neighbor grimly. "We haven't time."

Just then Sinker rushed at the baggage car with a cup of hot coffee for Mr. McWilliams. Everybody, hoping to get a peep at the capitalist, made way, gazed, and the McWilliams Special, which were washed to the platforms and pounded on the door. He pounded hard, for he hoped and believed that there was something in it.

But he might have pounded till his fingers were numb, for the impression it made on the McWilliams Special, which was the man trouble enough without tacking your chimney?" sang out Felix Kennedy, and the laugh so discouraged Sinker that he gave over and sneaked away.

At that moment the editor of the local paper came around the depot corner on the run. He was out for an interview and, as usual, just a trifle late. However, he insisted on boarding the baggage car to tender his sympathy to McWilliams.

The localities bothered him, but he mounted them all and began an emergency pound on the forbidding door. Imagine his feelings when the door was gently opened by a sad eyed man, who opened the hall by showing a rifle as big as a pinch bar under the editorial notes.

"My grief, Mr. McWilliams," protested the interviewer in a trembling voice. "Don't imagine I want to hold you up. Our citizens are all peaceable."

"Not if you can get across before the bridge tumbles into the river," returned Sinclair.

"You don't mean you'd try it?" "Would it wouldn't it? You know the orders. That bridge is good for an hour yet. Pat, if you're game I'll run it."

"Bridge burning ahead there." "Bridge burning?" he cried, looking anxiously forward. "Well, that's a deal! What you going to do about it?" "Run it. Are you McWilliams?" "McWilliams? I wish I was for just one minute. I'm one of his clerks."

"Where is he?" "I left him on La Salle street yesterday afternoon."

"Just plain Ferguson." "Well, Ferguson, it's none of my business, but as long as we're going to put you into Denver or into the river in about a minute I'm curious to know what the blazes you're hustling along this way for."

"Me? I've got \$1,200,000 in gold coin in this car for the Sierra Leone National bank—that's all. Don't you know that five big banks there closed their doors yesterday? Worst place in the United States. That's what I'm here for and five hunkies with me eating and sleeping in this car," continued Ferguson, looking ahead. "I'm not going to tackle that bridge, are you?"

"We are and right off. If there's any of your hunkies want to drop out, now's their chance," said Pat Francis as Sinclair called his men. The five, with their rifles, came cautiously forward.

"Here's a bridge abutment ahead. These hunkies are going to try to run it. It's not in your contract, that kind of a chance. Do you want to get off? I stay with the special, myself. You can do exactly as you please. Murray, what do you say?" he asked, addressing the leader of the forces, who appeared to weigh about 200.

"What do I say?" echoed Murray, with decision, as he looked for a soft place to alight alongside the track. "I say I'll drop out right ahead. I don't mind train robbers, but I don't tackle a burning bridge—not if I know it," and he jumped off.

"Well, Peeters," asked Ferguson of the second man coolly, "do you want to stay?" "Me? I've got Peeters, looking ahead at the mass of flame leaping upward. "Me stay? Well, not in a thousand years. You can have my gun, Mr. Ferguson, and send my check to 459 Milwaukee avenue, if you please, Gentlemen, good day." And off went Peeters.

And off went every last man of the valiant detectives except one lame fellow, who said he wouldn't as he had been as alive anyway and declared he would stay with Ferguson and die.

Sinclair, thinking he might never get another chance, was watching sharply for orders. Francis, breathless with the news, ran forward.

"How many?" Twelve hundred thousand. "Where?" cried Sinclair. "Swing up, Pat. We're off." The Five-Nine gathered herself with a spring. Even the engineer's heart quailed as they got headway. He knew his business, and he knew that if only the rails hadn't buckled they were perfectly safe, for the heavy truss would stand a lot of burning before giving way under a swiftly moving train.

Only, as they drew nearer, the blaze rolling up in dense volume looked horribly threatening. After all, it was only a bridge, and it was only a hundred feet high. It was only a great monkey along the writhing steel. So quick, so black, so hot the blast and so terrific the leap, she stuck her nose into clean air before the men in the cab could rise to it.

There was a heave in the middle like the hunch of a sea-steak steamer, and with it the Five-Nine got her paws on cool iron and solid ground, and the Mattaback and the blaze, all except a dozen tongues which licked the cab and the roof of the baggage car a minute, were behind. George Sinclair, shaking the hot glass out of his hair, looked ahead through his fringed eyelids and gave her a full head for the western bluffs of the valley; then looked at his watch.

It was the one hundred and ninety-ninth milepost just at her nose, and the dial read 8:55 a second. There was an hour to the good and seventy-six miles and a water to cover, but they were seventy-six of the prettiest miles under ballast anywhere, and the Five-Nine reeled them off like a cylinder press. Seventy-nine minutes later Sinclair whistled for the Denver yards.

There was a tremendous commotion among the waiting engines. If there was one there were fifty big locomotives waiting to charter the McWilliams Special. The wires had told the story in Denver long before, and as the Five-Nine sailed ponderously up the gridiron every mogul, every consolidated, every up-to-the-wheeler, every hog, every switch bumper, every air hose screamed an uproarious welcome to George Sinclair and the skyscraper.



The door was gently opened by a sad eyed man.



A tremendous arrow shooting through a truss of fire.

190 minutes out of McCloud, and, looking happy, crossed Mr. McWilliams a little and gave her another haul of steam.

It is getting down a hill, like the hills of the Mattaback valley, at such a pace that pounds the track out of shape. The Five-Nine lurched at the curves like a mad woman, shook free with very fury, and if the baggage car had not been fairly loaded down with the grief of McWilliams it must have jumped the rails a dozen times in as many minutes.

Indeed the freeman—it was Jerry MacElroy—twisting and shifting between the tender and the furnace, looked for the first time grave and stole a queer glance from the steam gauge toward George.

But yet he didn't expect to see the boy, his face set ahead and down the track, straight as suddenly up, sink in the level, and close at his instant the air. Jerry felt her stumble under his feet—caught up like a girl in a skipping rope—and, grabbing a brace, looked, like a wise stoker, for his answer to the man who had just hundred out of his window. There far ahead it rose in hot curling clouds of smoke down among the alfalfa meadows and over the sweep of willows along the Mattaback river. The Mattaback bridge was on fire, with the McWilliams Special on one side and Denver on the other.

Jerry MacElroy yelled. The engineer didn't even look around, only whistled an alarm back to Pat Francis, eased her down the grade a bit, like a man bent and stooped with his hand on the throttle and a hand on the air, the glass crashing around his head like hail. A blast of fiery air and flying cinders burned and choked him. The engine, alive with danger, flew like a great monkey along the writhing steel. So quick, so black, so hot the blast and so terrific the leap, she stuck her nose into clean air before the men in the cab could rise to it.

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"What the deuce have you bit into?" cried the depot master as the Five-Nine swept splendidly up and stopped with her battered eye hard on the depot clock.

"Mattaback bridge is burned. Had to crawl over on the stringers," answered Sinclair, coughing up a cinder.

"Where's McWilliams?" "Where's your dinner?" "Just plain Ferguson."

"Well, Ferguson, it's none of my business, but as long as we're going to put you into Denver or into the river in about a minute I'm curious to know what the blazes you're hustling along this way for."

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