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The Skyscraper FRANK H. SPEARMAN Copyright, 1907, by Frank H. Spearman

It stood one Sunday morning in a group watching for her to speed around the Narrows. Many locomotives as I have seen and ridden, a new one up, even, it means so much. I hear men rave over horses and marvel at it when I think of the iron horse. I hear them chatter of distance, and my mind turns to the annihilator. I hear them brag of ships, and I think of the ship that plows the mountains and rivers and plains. And when they talk of speed—what can I think of but her? As the new engine rolled into the yards my heart beat quicker. Her lines were too imposing to call strong. They were massive, yet so simple you could draw them, like the needle snout of a polle, to a very point. Every hearing looked precise, every joint looked supple, as she swept majestically up and checked herself, peering in front of us. Foley was in the cab. He had been sent on a lay-off and so happened to bring in the new monster, wild, from the river shops. She was built in Pennsylvania, but the fellows on the Missouri end of our line thought nothing could ever safely be put into our hands until they had stopped it en route and looked it over. "How does she run, Foley?" asked Neighbor, sitting silently over the top. "Cool as an icebox," said Foley, swinging down. "She's a regular summer resort. Little stiff on the hills yet." "Well take that out of her," mused Neighbor, climbing into the engine. "If you please—to get that wheat on the high line into Chicago, and to get it there quickly. Trainers, elevator men, superintendents of motive power, were spurred with special orders and special bulletins. Farmers, startled by the great prices offered, hauled night and day. Every old tub we had in the shops and on the scrap was overhauled and hustled into the service. The division danced with excitement. Every bushel of wheat on it must be in Chicago by the morning of May 31. For two weeks we worked everything to the limit. The skyscraper led any two engines on the line. Even Dad Hamilton was glad to cry enough and take a helper. We doubled them every day, and the way the wheat flew over the line toward the lower end of Lake Michigan was appalling to speculators. It was a battle between two commercial giants, and a battle to the death. It shook not alone the country; it shook the world. But that was nothing to us, our orders were simply to move the wheat. And the wheat moved. The last week found us pretty well cleaned up, but the high price brought grain out of cellars and wells, the buyers said—at least, it brought all the hoarded wheat and much of the seed wheat, and the 28th day of the month found fifty cars of wheat sitting in the Zanovis yards. It was at Harvard working on a time card when the word came, and behind it a special from the general manager stating there was \$1,000 premium in it for the company, besides freight. If we got that wheat into Chicago by Saturday morning. The train end of it didn't bother me any. It was the motive power that kept us studying. However, we figured that by running McNeal with the skyscraper back wild we could put all the wheat behind her in one train. As it happened, Neighbor was at Harvard too. "Can they ever get over Beverly with 60, Neighbor?" I asked doubtfully. "We'll never know till we try it,"

grewled Neighbor. "There's a thousand for the company if they do; that's all. How'll you run them? Give them a ship's name, eh?" Cool and reckless planning, taking the daring chances, straining the flesh and blood, driving the steel loaded to the snapping point—that was what it meant. But the company wanted results, wanted the prestige and the premium too. To gain them we were expected to stretch our little resources to the utmost. I studied a minute, then turned to the dispatcher. "Tell Norman to send them out as second 4. That gives the right of way over every wheel against them. If they can't make it on that kind of schedule, it isn't in the track." It was extraordinary business, rather, sending a train of wheat through a passenger schedule, practically as the second section of our eastbound flier, but we took our chances on the plains. It was noon when the orders were issued. At 3 o'clock No. 4 was due to leave Zanovisville. For three hours I kept the wires busy warning all operators and trainmen, even switch engines and yardmasters, of the wheat special, second 4. The flier, the first section and regular passenger train, was checked out of Zanovisville on time. Second 4, which meant George McNeal, Dad, the skyscraper and fifty loads of wheat, reported out at 3:10. While we worked on our time card Neighbor in the dispatcher's office, across the hall, figured out that the wheat train would reach the company just \$11,000, tolls and premium. "If it doesn't break in two on Beverly hill," growled Neighbor, with a quiver. On the dispatcher's sheet, which is a sort of panorama, we watched the big train while past station after station, drawing steadily nearer to us, and doing it, the marvel, on full passenger time. It was a great feat, and George McNeal, whose nerve and brain were guiding the tremendous load, was breaking records with every milestone. They were due in Harvard at 9 o'clock. The first 4, our flier, pulled in and out on time, meeting 55, the west-bound overland freight, at the second station—Harvard. Neighbor and I sat with the dispatchers up in their office, smoking. The wheat train was now due from the west, and looking at my watch, I stepped to the western window. All at once they heard the long, peculiar hollow blast of the skyscraper whistling for the upper yard. "She's coming," I exclaimed. The boys crowded to the window, but Neighbor happened to glance to the east. "What's that coming in from the Junction, Bailey?" he exclaimed, turning to the local dispatcher. We looked and saw a headlight in the east. "That's 55." "Fifty-five? They need it?" "Fifty-five takes the long siding in from the Junction"—which was two miles east—"and she ought to be on it right now," added the dispatcher anxiously, looking over the master mechanic's shoulder. Neighbor jumped as if a bullet had struck him. "She'll never take a siding tonight. She's coming down the main track. What's her orders?" he demanded furiously. "Meeting orders for first 4 at Red-bud, second 78 at Gloucester, Great Jupiter," cried the dispatcher, and his face went sick and scared, "they've forgotten second 4!" "They'll think of her a long time down here," Neighbor growled. "Throw your red lights! There's the skyscraper now!" Her head shot that instant around the east chute less than a mile away, and 55 going dead against her. I stood like one palsied, my eyes glued on the burning eye of the big engine. As she whipped past a street light I caught a glimpse of George McNeal's head out of the cab window. He always rode bareheaded if the night was warm, and I knew it was; but suddenly, like a flash, his head went in. I knew why as well as if my eyes were his eyes and most of his thoughts. He had seen red signals where he had every right to look for white. But red signals now—to stop her—to pull her flat on her lanchies like a broncho. Shake a weather flag at a cyclone! I saw the fire stream from her drivers. I knew they were churning in the sand. I knew he had twenty air cars behind him sliding. "What of it? Two thousand tons were sweeping forward like an avalanche. What did brains or pluck count for now with 55 dancing along like a schoolgirl right into the teeth of it? I don't know how the other men felt. As for me, my breath choked in my throat, my knees shook, and a deadly nausea seized me. Unable to avert the horrible blunder, I saw its hideous results. Darkness hid the worst of the sight; it was the sound that appalled—Children asleep in sod shanties miles from earth. The two engines roared in a wron, but the heavy snarl and down on the skyscraper's little engine barely checked the skyscraper. She split it like a banana. She bucked like a frantic horse and leaped fearfully ahead. There was a blinding explosion, a sudden awful burst of steam. The windows crashed about our ears, and we were dashed to the wall and floor like lead pencils. A baggage truck, whiplashed from the platform below, came through the heavy snarl and down on the dispatcher's table like a brickbat, and as we scrambled to our feet a shower of wheat suffocated us. The floor heaved. Freight cars slid into the depot like battering rams. In the height of the confusion an old tank

in the yard took fire and threw a yellow glare on the ghastly scene. I saw men get up and fall again to their knees. I was shivering and wet with sweat. The stairway was crushed into kindling wood. I climbed out I snuck the stairs down to the freight platform. There was a running and a gro, useless and aimless; men were bent up to their knees at every step. All at once, above the frantic hissing of the buried skyscraper and the wild calling of the car tinkers, I heard the stentorian tones of Neighbor, mounted on a dented truck, organizing the men at hand into a wrecking gang. Soon people began running up the yard to where the skyscraper lay, like another Samson, prostrate in the midst of the destruction it had wrought. Foremost among the crushed men, covered with dirt and blood, staggered Dad Hamilton. "Where's McNeal?" cried Neighbor. Hamilton pointed to the wreck. "Why didn't he jump?" yelled Neighbor. Hamilton pointed at the twisted skyscraper tower; the red light still burned in it. "You changed the signals on him," he cried savagely. "What does it mean? We had right against everything. What does it mean?" Neighbor answered him never a word; he only put his hand on Dad's shoulder. "Find him first! Find him!" he repeated, with a strain in his voice I never heard till then, and the two giants hurried away together. When they reached the skyscraper, buried in the thick of the smash, roaring like a volcano, the pair were already into the jam like a brace of ferrets, hunting for the engine crews. It seemed an hour, though it was much less, before they found any one; then they brought out 55's fireman. Neighbor found him. But his back was broken. Back again they worked through twisted trucks, under splintered beams—in and around and over-choked with heat, blinded by steam, groping for the engine. Neighbor heard Dad's voice in a different cry, one that meant everything, and the wreckers, turning like beavers through a dozen blind trails, gathered all close to the big fireman. He was under a great piece of the cab where none could follow, and he was crying for a bar. They passed him a bar; other men, careless of life and limb, tried to get under and in to him, but he warned them back. Who but a man baked twenty years in an engine cab could stand the steam that poured on him where he lay? Neighbor, just outside, flashing a light, heard the big fireman say, "I'm breathing, saw him getting half up, beat the bar, and saw the iron give like lead in his hands as he pried himself out." Neighbor heard and told me long afterward how the old man flung the bar away with an impetuous and cried for one to help him, for a minute meant a life now. The boy lying pained under the shattered cab was roaring in a joy of steam. The master mechanic crept in. By signs Dad told him what to do and then, getting on his knees, crawled straight into the dash of the white jet—erased into it and got the cab on his shoulders. Crouching an instant, the giant muscles of his back set in a tremendous effort. The wreckage snapped and groaned, the knotted legs slithered and painfully straightened, the cab for a passing instant rose in the air, and in that instant Neighbor dragged George McNeal from out the vise of death and passed him, like a pinch bar, to the men waiting next behind. Then Neighbor pulled Dad back, blind now and senseless. When they got the old fireman out he made a pitiful struggle to pull himself together. He tried to stand up, but the sweat broke over him, and he sank in a heap at Neighbor's feet. "That was the saving of George McNeal and out there they still tell you about that lift of Dad Hamilton's." We put him on the cot at the hospital next to his engineer, George, dreadfully bruised and scalded, came on fast in spite of his hurts, but the doctor said Dad had wrenched a tendon in that frightful effort, and he lay there a very sick and very old man long after the young engineer was up and around telling of his experience. "When we cleared the chutes I saw white signals, I thought," he said to me at Dad's bedside. "I knew we had the right of way over everything. It was a hustle anyway on that schedule, Mr. Reed, you know that—an awful hustle on our end. I never choked her a notch to run the yards. Didn't mean to do it with the Junction grade to climb just ahead of us. But I looked out again, and by hoke, I thought I'd gone crazy, got color blind—red signals! Of course I thought I must have been the first time I looked. I choked her. I threw the air. I dumped the gravel. Heavens! He never felt it! I couldn't figure how we were wrong, but there was the red light. I yelled, 'Jump, Dad!' and he yelled, 'Jump, son!' Didn't you, Dad?" "I jumped, but I wasn't ever going to jump, and my engine going full against a red lamp. Not much." "I kind of dodged down behind the back when it struck it was big, and she jumped about twenty feet up straight. She didn't? Well, it seemed like it. Then it was buff, buff, buff, one after another. With that train behind her she had gone through Beverly hill. Did you ever get stuck through rotary, Mr. Reed? Well, that was about it, even to the rolling and heaving. Dad, want to be down? Let me get another pillow behind you. Isn't



The cab for a passing instant rose in the air.



"Son," he gasped to the astonished boy, "don't you know me?"

ing, to which her son hurried her, and they were driven rapidly to the hospital. When they entered the old fireman's room topped the nurse softly closed the door behind them. But when they went for Neighbor and me, I suppose we were the two biggest fools in the hospital, trying to look unconscious of all we gave up for the honor of Dad's bed. He never got his old strength back, yet Neighbor fixed him out for all that. The skyscraper, once our pride, was so badly stove that we gave up hope of restoring her for a passenger run. So Neighbor built her over into a sort of bar engine for short runs, stubs, and so on; and though Dad had lived long ago when unjustly condemned that he would never more touch a throttle, we got him to take the skyscraper and the Acton run. And when George, who takes the flier every other day, who takes the old gentleman aside and shoots around the yard in the rejuvenated skyscraper at a hair raising rate of speed. After awhile the old engine got so full of alkali that George gave her a new name—Soda Water Sal—and it hangs to her yet. We thought the best of her had gone in the Harvard wreck, but there came a time when Dad and Soda Water Sal showed us we were very much mistaken. Two Doctors. Almost every one has made his best about the proneness of doctors to disagree, the one prescribing exactly an opposite course from that ordered by another, but not every one has had an opportunity to conduct such an experiment as was made by the late Baron Lutts, formerly prime minister of Bavaria. The baron was once severely wounded in battle in both legs. He would in one or two weeks be in the other. It struck him that there was a chance to study the ways of the surgical profession and beguile the long hours of his convalescence. He accordingly called in one doctor and gave him change of his right leg, but he told him nothing about the wound in the other, and then called in another doctor for his left leg, keeping him similarly in ignorance about the wounded right leg. The doctors adopted a very different method, of treatment, but both wounds healed at about the same time. When the baron's legs were quite well he derived a great deal of amusement from setting the doctors together and mystifying them with questions about the way each had treated "his leg." Some Thought For Food. If people were as particular to have their food fit their bodies as they are to have their clothes fit their outside, they would be better satisfied with the world and themselves. When good digestion waits on appetite a man may either dare to love or fight. The food that fits the stomach is the food that fits the world. If you forget what you have to eat, then you may bet you won't forget what you have eaten and will continue to eat it unless your judgment is as weak as your digestion. Indigestion is the devil's workshop. Dyspepsia uncovers a multitude of sins. It's easy going when your stomach works all right. No food is sometimes good food. A meal of victuals on the table is worth two in the stomach. An overladen stomach is bound to break down. Food that won't set on the stomach shouldn't have a chance to. An overfull stomach is a pasture for nightmares.—W. J. Lampton in New York Herald. Cipher Writing. The art of secret writing, or writing in cipher, was, according to Polybius, invented by Aneas, author of a treatise on the subject, which was composed twenty methods of writing in cipher, which no person could understand, but we doubt much whether they would preserve this quality at the present day. It is a very important part of this art, so important in diplomacy, as long as couriers are liable to be intercepted, was held in abhorrence by the elector Frederic II, who considered it as a diabolical invention. Trithemius, abbot of Spheims, had composed several works to revive this branch of knowledge, and to revive this ignorant mathematician, being unable to comprehend the extraordinary terms he made use of to explain his method, published that the work was full of diabolical mysteries. Poncevint repeated the assertion, and Frederic, in a holy zeal, ordered the original work of Trithemius, which he had in his library, to be burned, as the invention of the devil. Graceless Children. Michael Minot, a French preacher, who died in Paris in 1818, was noted for his eccentricities in the pulpit and the manner with which he charged from humor to pathos, from the commonplace to the beautiful. "There were once pillories for swearers," he said on a certain occasion, "but if the law were enforced now two-thirds of the empire would be in the stocks, had there would be the child of five years and the totter of eighty who has only two teeth remaining to cling out an oath." Changing suddenly to denounce those who neglected the aged, parents who had cherished them in prosperity, he said: "See the trees flourish and recover their leaves! It is their root that has produced all, but when the branches are loaded with flowers and fruits they yield nothing to the root. This is an image of those children who prefer their own amusement and to game away their own fortunes to giving their old parents the care which they want."