

## THE RAILWAY PAY CAR

...ance That Hung About It in the Good Old Days.

### WATCHING FOR THE YELLOW

The Appearance of the Brightly Var-nished Gold Colored Palace on Wheels Always an Event on the Road—The Present Check System.

"Railroading isn't any fun any more. Hard commercial folk in Wall street, with never an idea in their noggin but to invest money and make it pay dividends, have improved all the romance out of life on the rails," writes a correspondent of the American Magazine commenting on the present system of paying off railway employees.

"Ah, no! Railroading isn't what it used to be. But if those Wall street money grubbers had only left us the pay car all else could have been forgiven. Do you remember how in the good old days the decrepit jokes about what was to be done when the pay car came were taken out of the moth balls along about the 10th of the month and dusted off and put through their paces? How, toward the 15th a feeling of sprightliness gradually stole over every one from the wipers in the roundhouse to the lucky dogs who had passenger runs? How this exuberance swelled in volume as anticipation became more keen until toward the 18th everybody went about with a broad grin and nerves all a-tangle, the way you feel when the orchestra is playing the creepy music to accompany the villain's midnight assault with intent to kill? How, still later, everybody drifted down to the depot about four times a day to ask the station agent if he had heard anything about the pay car until he grew as crabbed as a sitting hen? How, about the 22d, the water girls at the depot hotel would give you a saucy wink and bring you a great, juicy, melting, extra special wedge of pie you didn't order for dessert, along with the ice cream and nuts and raisins and fruit and pudding and shortcake you did order? These girls knew how to work a fellow for tips about pay day, didn't they?"

"At last, one day as you were letting 'em down the hill into the junction, the operator pulled his train order signal on you. Your heart leaped into your throat because you knew—well, you just felt it in your bones. You went down the side of the car without knowing how you did it and sprang for the switch to head 'em in on the passing track and then flew to the station on winged feet, leaving the engineer to hold 'em with the driver brakes or let 'em run out at the lower end, as he chose. And the grumpy old curmudgeon stopped 'em beautifully, without so much as saying 'boo,' when on any other occasion he would have unleashed a torrent of vituperation that would have set the ties on fire, and would have followed it up by heaving a monkey wrench at you if you had been in range.

"There behind the counter was the old man, looking over the shoulder of the operator, who was spelling out the order without breaking oftener than every second word:

"Train No. 7, Conductor Flatwheel, Engineer Poundem, will meet pay car special. Conductor Linkenpin, Engineer Moriarty, at Emerson."

"Such an air of nonchalance as Old Man Flatwheel did assume as he turned away to discuss with the blind man the advisability of making a switch of that through car of corn next the engine, to get it behind the way cars, so we wouldn't be bothered with it at Lyons in doing our work on those heavy grades, and affected to forget that he was getting orders until the operator called him over to sign them. He was so slow about his signature that before the dispatcher's O. K. was received you looked out of the big bay window and saw the section gang that was working just beyond the Y throw down their shovels and run down the track like a herd of stampeded steers.

"There, just coming around the curve, was a glittering vision of brass and varnish, half hidden in a nimbus of smoke and dust. Two short blasts on a whistle greeted the gang; the vision hesitated for a minute, while the section men disappeared in the nimbus and reappeared as suddenly as if they had been shot out of a gun, and here came the vision gliding up to the platform, with bell ringing and pop valve sputtering 'sotto voce,' like a young lady trying to suppress a ticklish cough. It was the pay car. At this point you lost consciousness.

"Complotted to the engine was a wheeled palace built on graceful lines in freshly varnished yellow paint which rivaled the brasswork on the engine in brilliance. The plate glass windows were etched with bright hued brocade. Not a speck nor a flaw was to be seen. Even the yellow wheels bore only so much dust as had been gathered on the day's run. Through an open window came fragrant odors, while in the background a white jacket, surmounted by a black face, vibrated at intervals.

"All this time Old Man Flatwheel was heading a little procession bound toward the rear platform of the pay car at a gait which he assumed but once a month. Flatwheel had conscientious scruples against undue exertion. He always had the caboose stopped at the station platform so that without dissipating his energies he could saunter in to gas with the agent until the blind man announced that the work was all done and that we were ready to go. Then he would get his

orders or a clearance and tell the blind man to give 'em the sign and saunter back to the caboose before they got to rolling. But to have seen the animation with which he swung himself aboard the pay car would have created the impression that he was the only working railroad man on the division.

"At his side stalked Panhandle Dan, the engineer, his face actually wreathed in smiles. Panhandle Dan had a chronic grouch from 12:01 a. m. Jan. 1 to 11:59 p. m. Dec. 31, except for three minutes once a month. On the way to the pay car he always perked up a bit and was even known to crack a joke with Old Man Flatwheel. After these two came the blind man talking incessantly with the fireman. Charles always was talking that way. He had an automatic tongue, which never ran down. Half the time he didn't know he was talking. His was what the doctors would diagnose as a reflex conversation. Frank, the fireman, was the only sober one. He, poor fellow, was doing sums in arithmetic, trying to figure out how on earth \$58.90 could be made to pay all necessary bills for a helpless father and mother, a wife and four kids, besides board bills for a man who was obliged to be away from home half the time.

"Then there was the operator in shirt sleeves and careworn air hoping he could get back to his key before the dispatcher lost his temper; the agent, placidly smiling, and the two coal heavers from the coal shed with an expression of almost human intelligence struggling up through numberless strata of grime and whiskers. After thirty days of humping over a scoop shovel in a choking smother of dust they were now about to be recompensed with thirty seconds of bliss in which they could fondle real money with their own hands. After that the storekeeper would do the fondling and feel bad because there wasn't more.

"You had presence of mind enough to float into the pay car in the wake of others. There were nine in the little party, and you knew by experience that the average time required to pay nine men was sixty seconds; also that Moriarty would have 'em rolling before the last man had scooped his allotted coin into his trembling palm. But in the presence of death or the paymaster one may live an eternity in sixty seconds. How glad you were that you had not been rude and rushed in ahead of anybody, even the coal heavers!

"From the lithographs of Caroline Miskel Hoyt on the wall to the little hollows in the hard mahogany counter worn out by the attrition of the \$128,000,000 in wages the paymaster had plunked down on that spot since this first pay car ever built had been commissioned, you kept on absorbing details until your name was called. A still greater rush of blood to your head caused you to gulp violently. Mechanically you lifted your hand to touch the pen as the others had done and turned to go.

"Here! Come back and get your money!"

"When you came out of your trance you were standing in the middle of the track, your eyes wandering from some yellow objects in your hand to a nimbus of smoke and dust which was just tipping over the hill to the accompaniment of the diminuendo flutter of Moriarty's exhaust.

"But now! Oh, well! After you have washed up on a certain day in each month you trudge drearily down to the station all alone, walk in, and lolling on the counter affect to look indifferent and say, 'Hello, John' And the agent, after going over a column of figures three times, replies, 'Hello, Bill!' and gets up and goes to the safe and fumbles over some papers and hands you—

"A check! No jokes, no infectious sprightliness, no uncertainty to put a wire edge on anticipation, no fleeting vision of brass and varnish and opulence wreathed in a halo of romance to leave a golden taste in your mouth for a day, nothing but a measly old check handed over a commonplace counter by a man who lives next door to you.

"Why couldn't they have left us the pay car?"

**Letter Carriers and Tuesday.**

"There's one good thing about carrying mail," said an old letter carrier, "and that is that the hardest day of the week is followed by the easiest day. That sort of even things up. Monday is ordinarily the heaviest day of the week, leaving holidays or days following holidays out of consideration. The reason is, of course, that the great bulk of Sunday mail is not delivered that day. Then Tuesday has the lightest mail of the week for the simple reason that few letters are mailed on Sunday, and many of those mailed Monday have not yet reached their destination for delivery. By Wednesday the mail is about normal, and it runs along practically the same the rest of the week until Saturday. It is just a trifle heavier Saturday because a good many business men try to get some of their more important letters off in time for delivery before the week ends."—Cleveland Plain Dealer.

**As Named.**

The haughty youth had just arrived at the tiny north Wales railway station, and the porter had fetched from out of the guard's van a store of luggage, which included many portmanteaus, a camera, fishing and golf tackle and—oh, far worse than all besides—a particularly ferocious bulldog.

"Aw, portah," commanded the haughty one, "just put—aw—my portmanteau, cameraw, etceteraw, on a cab, will yaw?"

The porter surveyed the forbidding looking bulldog dubiously.

"Yes, sir," he said slowly. "Er—Et-ceteraw won't bite, will he, sir?"—Chums.

### Hunting the Maribou.

Hunting the maribou is attended with great difficulty, as the bird possesses wonderful cunning and often contrives to outwit the most skillful hunter. With laughable dignity it measures the ground between itself and its pursuer and takes very good care not to exhaust itself by too rapid flight. If the hunter moves slowly the bird at once adopts an equally easy pace, but if the hunter quickens his steps the bird is off like an arrow. It is very difficult to get within gun range of this calculating creature, but the natives adopt a novel means of capturing it, which the bird, with all its astuteness, is unable to comprehend and falls an easy victim. A tempting morsel of meat is tied to the end of a long stout cord, which the skillful hunter flings to a great distance, as he would a lasso, the bait falling as near the fleeing bird as he can aim it. He then conceals himself hastily behind a bush or crouches low on the sand. The maribou, which always keeps its eye on the hunter, seeing him vanish, quietly stops and devours the bait, when it is easily secured by the hunter, who runs toward it, colling the rope as he goes.

### Carlyle's Recipe For Shirts.

Here is an extract from a letter of Thomas Carlyle, in which he asks his sister to make him some shirts and sends the measurements. How many women could make a shirt after them? "My Dear Jenny—\* \* \* In the meanwhile I want you to make me some flannel things, too—three flannel shirts especially. You can get the flannel from Allex if he has any that he can well recommend. You can readily have them made before the other shirts go off. I have taken the measure today and now send you the dimensions, together with a measuring strap which I bought some weeks ago (at one penny) for the purpose! You are to be careful to secure the flannel first, after which process the dimensions are these: Width (when the shirt is laid on its back), 22½ inches; extent from wrist button to wrist button, 61 inches; length in the back, 35 inches; length in the front, 25½ inches. Do you understand all that? I dare say you will make it out, and this measuring band will enable you to be exact enough."

### Began With "D" Anyway.

"An' when they gits to Italy," goes on Bill, growin' quite enthusiastic, as you might say, over th' idee, "he'll have th' time of his life rumblatin' roun' them old palaces of the dogs."

"Dogs!" I gasped. "Palaces of the dogs?"

"Doggles, then, I s'pose you might call it," says he, "if you're so blamed pertiklar, though it ain't spelt that way. It's spelt dogs, only with the 'e.'"

"Bill Gladox," says I, "for an uneducated man you are th' most ignorant I ever see. Do you mean to tell me you ain't never hear of th' dodges of Venice that has been mayors of th' town for th' last hundred years or more?"

"No, I ain't," says he, "an' no one else neither. Ther' ain't any such folks there. Dodge ain't an Eytalian name nobow. It b'longs in Connecticut. Not but what ther's a few mebbe in New York an' Rhode Island, but not in Italy, not by a derned sight."—American Magazine.

### The Bullfight.

We went to a bullfight and wished we had stayed away. It is quite as unpleasant as people say, and the cruelty to the horses turns one sick. If it was merely an affair between the men, who are undoubtedly very skillful, and the bull, which is probably so mad with rage as to be past feeling much pain, one could shrug one's shoulders at the queer game and find some excuse, but for the torture of those poor old blindfolded screws there can be no shadow of palliation. After three bulls had been killed we had seen more than enough, especially as the horses in the third encounter had already been badly gored in the second, and the third bull was not killed neatly, but ran about bellowing for awhile with the espada's sword sticking out of his shoulders.—Blackwood's Magazine.

### Forest of Natural Columns.

There is in Bulgaria a group of natural columns much like the Giant's Causeway in Ireland. On the edge of a plateau in the open country rises this forest of natural columns, which gives the impression of an antique ruin. The columns, which are about fifteen to twenty feet high, are absolutely cylindrical, and they are often as much as three feet thick. The stratification of the rock resembles joints and vertical erosion due to rain has formed Doric futings.

### No Use For a Label.

Shopman (to undecided customer come to purchase a dog trough)—Would you like one with "Dog" painted on it, madam? Customer—N-no. You see, the dog can't read, and my husband doesn't drink water!—London Punch.

### The Glad Ring.

The ideal state of love will never come to pass until the wooer can use the glad ring in his voice and save the price of a diamond toward provisions for the first year in a flat.—Spokane (Wash.) Spokesman-Review.

### He Didn't Like a Crowd.

Mrs. Gotrox—Mabel, dear, are you sure Mr. Woodby loves you for yourself alone? Mabel—Yes, I'm sure he does, mamma. He is always so restless when you are in the room.—Exchange.

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