

THE TABLE.

The years have fled since first I led
You to the table, dear,
And you sat over there alone
And I sat smiling here.

A year or two flew past and you
No longer sat alone;
A little one was in your arms,
Your darling and my own.

And then another year or so
And some one else was there,
And "Willie" sat near me, you know,
While "Tottie" claimed your care.

The years have sped since first I led
You to the table, dear,
And you look queenly at the foot
And I felt kingly here.

Today as I look down at you
On either side I see
A row of hungry little ones
All gazing up at me.

We've added leaves, one after one,
And you are far away—
Yes, thrice as far my dear, as on
That happy, happy day.

But though we sit so far apart—
You there and I up here—
The rows of hearts from my fond heart
Stretch down to you, my dear.

Thank God for every extra leaf
The table holds today,
And may we never know the grief
Of putting one away.

—ANON.

As the Despatchers Saw It.

If you can recollect the blizzard that Roscoe Conkling went down in one March day in the streets of New York, it will give you the date, maybe call to your mind the storm. I had the River Division then, and we got through the whole winter without a single tie-up of consequence until March.

The morning was still as June. When the sky went heavy at noon, it looked more like a spring shower than a snow-storm; only, over at the Government building I noticed the black flag splashed with a red center flying. I hadn't seen it before for years, and I ordered plows on everything out after two o'clock.

Even then there was no wickedness abroad; it was coming fairly heavy in big flakes, but lying quiet as appleblossoms. Towards four o'clock I left the office for the roundhouse, and got just about half-way across the yard when the wind veered like a scored semaphore. I had left the depot in a snowstorm; I reached the roundhouse in a blizzard.

There was no time to wait to get back to the keys. I just telephoned orders back from the house, and the boys burnt the wires, east and west, with warnings. When the wind went into the north that day at four o'clock it was murder pure and simple, with the snow sweeping the flat like a shroud and the thermometer water-logged at zero.

All night is blew, with never a minute's letup. By ten o'clock half our wires were down, trains were falling all over the division, and before midnight every plow on the line was bucking snow—and the snow was coming harder. We had given up all idea of moving freight, and were centering everything on the passenger trains, when a message came from Beverly that the fast mail was off track in the cut below the hill, and I ordered out both the rotaries and the wrecking gang for the roudown.

It was a fearful night to make up a train in a hurry—as much as a man's life was worth to work even slow in the yard a night like that. But what limit to set to a switchman's courage I never have known, because I've never known one to balk at a yardmaster's order.

I went to work clearing the line, and forgot all about everything outside the train sheet till a car tink came running in with word that a man was hurt in the yard.

Some men get used to it; I never do. As much as I have seen of railroad life, the word that a man's hurt always hits me in the same place. Slipping into an ulcer, I pulled a storm-cap over my ears, and hurried down stairs buttoning my coat. The arc lights, blinded in the storm, swung wild across the big yard, and the wind sung with a scream through the telegraph wires. Stumbling ahead, the big car tink led me on facing the storm to where, between the red and green lamps, a dozen men hovered close to the gangway of a switch engine. The man hurt lay under the forward truck of the tender.

They had just got the wrecking train made up, and this man, running forward after setting a switch, had flipped the tender of the backing engine and slipped from the trestle-board. When I bent over him, I saw he was against it. He knew it, too, for the minute they shut off and got to him he kept perfectly still, only asking for a priest.

I tried every way I could think of to get him free from the wheels. Two of us crawled under the tender to try to figure it out. But he lay so jammed between the front wheels and the hind one, and tender trucks are so small and the wheels so close together, that, to save our lives, we could neither pull ahead nor back the engine without further mutilating him.

As I talked to him I took his hand and tried to explain that we should have to jack the truck up to free him. He heard, but his eyes, glittering with shock like the eyes of a wounded animal, wandered uneasily while I spoke; when I had done, he closed them to grapple with the pain. Presently a hand touched my shoulder; the priest had come, and, throwing open his coat, knelt beside us.

He was a spare old man—none too good a subject himself, I thought, for much exposure like that—but he didn't seem to mind. With both hands in the snow he got on his knees and put his head down behind the wheel close to the man's face. What they said to each other lasted only a moment, and all the while the boys were keying at the jacks like madmen to ease the wheel that had crushed the switchman's thigh. When they got the truck partly free, they lifted the injured man a little back, where we could all see his face. They were ready to do more, but the priest, wiping the water and snow from the falling man's lips and forehead, put up his fingers to check them.

The wind, howling through the strings of freight cars all about us, sucked the guarded lantern flames up into blue and green flickers in the globes; they lighted the priest's face as he took off his hat and laid it beside him, and lighted the switchman's eyes looking steadily up from the rail. The snow, curling and eddying across the little blaze of the lamps, whitening everything alike, tender and wheel and rail, the jack screws, the bars, and the shoulders and caps of the men. The priest bent forward again and touched the lips and the forehead of the switchman with his thumb. Then, straightening on his knees, he paused a moment, his eyes lifted up, raised his hand, and, slowly signing the form of the cross through the blinding flakes, gave him the sacrament of the dying.

I have forgotten the man's name. I have never seen the old priest, before or since. But, some time, a painter will turn to the railroad life. When he does I may see from his hand such a picture as I saw at that moment—the night, the storm, the scant hair of the priest blown in the gale, the men, bared, about him; the hush of the death moment. The wrinkled hand raised in the last benediction.—Frank H. Spearman, in the New York Outlook.

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The Bell Wolf.

A settler on the upper Mattawa River, Canada, caught a wolf last winter. He had read that ships were sometimes cleared of rats by fastening a bell around the neck of one of them. And the idea occurred to him, says the New York Sun, that in a similar manner he might clear the adjacent woods of wolves. He therefore fastened a bell on the wolf's neck and released him.

After the snow had nearly disappeared, he allowed his flock of sheep to exercise their lambs in the fields near the house. While he stood watching the gamboling of the lambs the sheep pricked up her ears as if intently listening. Then, with much bleating the whole flock raced to the woods.

Wondering at this strange freak on the part of the animals, the farmer went about his work. About an hour later the sheep returned, but it was soon discovered that one of the lambs were missing.

The next day the same thing occurred, and again a lamb failed to return. The children tried to keep the sheep in the fields, but when they could not do this followed them into the bush. They reported that they had distinctly heard a bell tinkling in the distance.

Then it dawned upon the farmer that the bell he had fastened to the neck of the wolf was the same which had been borne by the father of the flock in the previous summer. The quick-eared sheep had recognized the sound of the bell, and true to their instincts has hastened to join their last year's companion. They found not exactly a wolf in sheep's clothing, but a wolf with a sheep's bell attached to him, and ready to dine on spring lambs.

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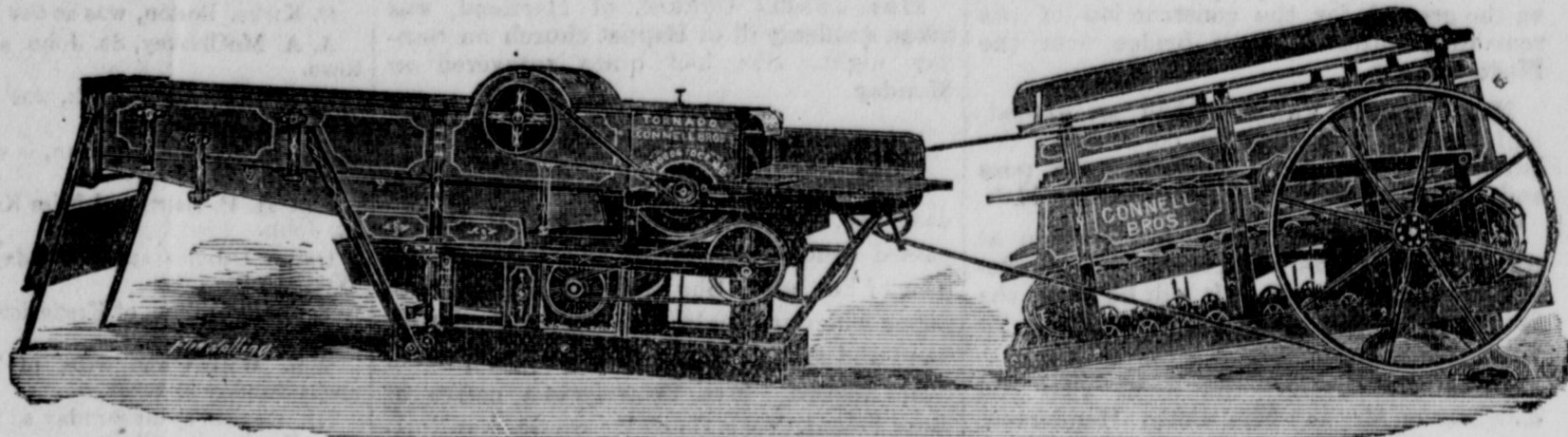
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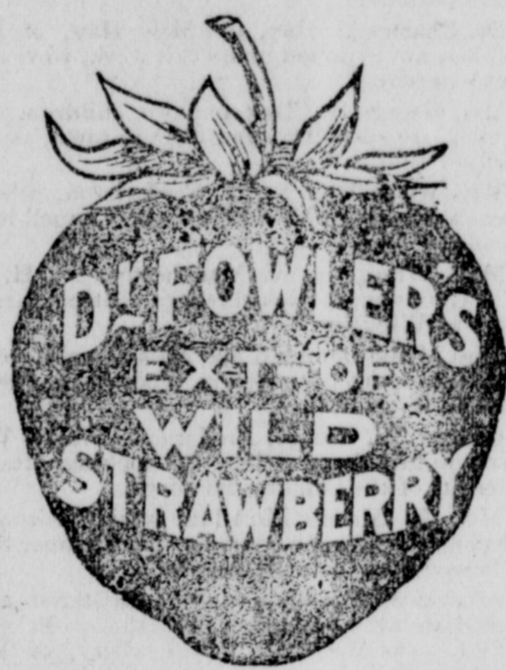
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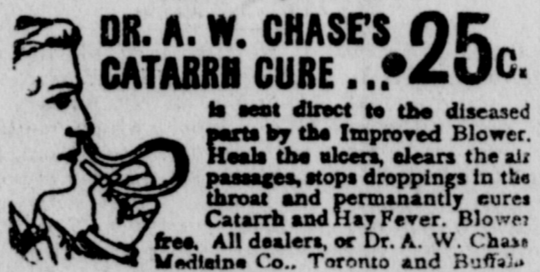
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integral a part of London civic banquets. Claret is the basis, but the blending with other liquors and flavouring with spices is a secret only the Mason House butler knows. There is no written recipe, but the mystery has been passed from generation to generation through the centuries. The mixing of the hock-cup which figures at Court balls and concerts is a secret unknown outside Buckingham Palace.

Many a culinary recipe scrawled on a sheet of paper is more to be preferred than landed acres. The recipe for Worcester sauce had lain for centuries in the stillroom archives of a country family before a butler sold it for a handsome sum, to the sharpening of the whole world's appetite. Ten thousand pounds was paid by a bacon firm some years ago for the Elizabethan recipe for curing Bradenham hams, which secret is most jealously guarded.



Some gentlemen sitting in the smoking-room of an hotel at Wiesbaden were discussing the best forms of government. One of them was an enthusiastic Republican, and declaimed aloud his faith in the rights of the people and the advantages of Democracy. Near by, a tall, grey-bearded man, attracted by the loud voices, seemed to follow the conversation, and indulged in an occasional smile. The Republican, noticing this, presently turned to the stranger, saying in fashion: "My arguments do not seem to convince you, sir. I suppose you are a Monarchist. Perhaps you would be good enough to favor me with your reasons for preferring that form of government?" "Oh, I have the most excellent reasons," was the reply. "The first and foremost among them is that I am the King of Sweden."



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