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THE GREAT NORTH SHOR ROUTE!

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The First Day.

WHICH MIGHT HAVE BEEN WRITTEN, BUT WASN'T, BY W. L. W. H. T. M. N.

Oh, my! Somebody bring the arnica and the Smith's extract! Rub it on the sore spots, quick! Don't ask me to specify—just rub anywhere, and you'll find a place that needs it.

Is that depraved thing in the cellar? Don't put it in there—leave it outside—perhaps someone will steal it.

I wish I had him here a minute—the man who said it was easy. I am the Poet of the Body and I am the Poet of the Soul; Nobody is greater than I am. Now soulness is lost in bodiness and the universal in the heresies.

First, you have to balance yourself. That's what the consummate, palpable idiot told me. So I did it—on that little step that looks like a wart on the back wheel. Then it rolled out from under my foot and slammed me into the curbstone.

That made me mad, and I tried it again. This time I sat down on the saddle, but only for a minute. That talented invention laid me flat; Stepped on me, sat on me, kicked me in the stomach with its pedals.

Skinned my nose with its handles, and left this impress on my mighty forehead. Where I do all my thinking and keep most of my gray cerebral tissue.

The man that picked me up and brought me home in his hay-cart. Said a whole lot of impolite things that he thought were funny.

I offered to lend him the bicycle, but he said he had one and could ride it—Rode it the first time he ever tried, and never fell off at all; He went on a century run the first week he had the thing.

Then he laughed an asinine laugh when he helped me up my front door-steps; Said I was geared too high—whatever that may mean.

A small boy trundled the bike, and of those diminutive fiends. There was a whole procession—enough for a very respectable funeral.

Arnica is good for sores; Or perhaps it is the Smith extract, or, stranger yet, the combination; any-how, I feel better.

I'll try it again, with somebody to help me. Suppose I do get knocked into atoms; I am bound to get even with that insensate demon.

I'll ride it if I die! Smile, oh, depraved and vicious bicycle! Wheel of the hickory rims and mud guards! Wheel of pneumatic tires, wheel with degenerate tendencies;

Wheel of the many angles, all alive and ready to hit me; Wheel of the shining spokes that do no good in particular; Wheel with the waltzing handles and strange-wobbling chain; Far-reaching and altogether eccentric wheel.

Smile! for your victim comes! —Myrtle Reid, in L. A. W. Bulletin.

THE WOMAN IN BLACK.

Traveling recently from Chicago to New York, I found in the morning, upon crawling out of my berth, that the train was standing stock still. The porter told me it had been standing thus for an hour and a half, while I had been sleeping the sleep of the just. I dressed and peeped out, and saw that we were alongside the platform of a country station. I took a good breakfast in the dining car and then went out to stroll up and down the platform.

In the cab sat the driver, or engineer, as they call him, alone, waiting. With the natural fondness of an Englishman for machinery, I stopped and gossiped with him a moment about the engine.

Then I offered him a cigar, which he took with thanks, and asked me to come in. I swung myself into his cab.

The engineer, a bright, pleasant-faced man about 40 years old, explained to me the uses of the numerous valves and levers about him. They were all as bright and shining as polish could make them, for an engineer is as proud of his engine as any housewife is of the neatness of her dwelling. I glanced at the two shining steam gauges with the clock between them, and then I noticed what seemed to be an ordinary white moth, mounted in a gilt frame, hanging against the wall of the cab.

"Is that for an ornament?" I asked, pointing at the moth.

The driver smiled. "Well, partly for an ornament," he said, "but a good deal more for sentiment. I put that moth there because it saved my life, and the lives of 250 people as well."

"How in the world could an insect save human lives?" I asked.

"Well, I will tell you, if you want to hear the story. I reckon there's time enough before we are able to get out of this."

I settled myself in the stoker's seat and prepared to listen. "It wasn't such a long time back," said the engineer; "only a year ago last spring. I was running this very train, and with this very engine—old 449. My stoker was Jim Meade, the same fellow as I have got now. You can see him over there, leaning up against the telegraph office."

"Jim's a good boy, but he's very superstitious; believes in ghosts, dreams and warnings. I used to laugh at his fancies, but I don't make so much fun of him as I did—not since we saw the 'Woman in Black.'"

"We were timed to leave M—about one o'clock in the morning, and to arrive in S—about six o'clock. On the night when the thing took place a fearful storm of wind and rain had been raging since early evening, and was at the height of its fury when I started from the engine shed."

"It was about midnight and the wind seemed to sweep clear round and through the building. It was terribly dismal. Jim was there, and the engine was all ready, so after getting my working clothes on, I ran the engine down to the station. Our train, the vestibule limited was an hour late. I gave the engine a thorough oiling, and made sure that all was in order."

"As we sat in the cab we could hear the storm raging on the outside, while the rain, driven by the gusts of wind, beat fiercely against the windows."

"It's going to be a bad run, Frank," Jim said. "I wish we were in S—safe and sound."

"I laughed. 'What makes you feel so terribly glum, Jim,' I said."

"Oh," said he, "I feel creepy, somehow. Seems like there's something terrible going to happen. I can feel it in my bones."

"I laughed again. 'You got a little wet coming over, I guess, Jim,' said I. 'And the sound of the wind isn't very encouraging, that's a fact.'"

"To tell the truth, I was a little nervous myself, notwithstanding my easy way of treating Jim's notion."

"Presently our train came in, long and heavy, consisting mainly of sleepers. It used to make me nervous to know that the lives of hundreds of my fellow men were in my keeping, but now I think nothing of it. That night I was nervous. What if the frightful storm had made a signalman careless, or if a rail had been loosened by the settling of the track somewhere? On these fast trains a man must rely on the vigilance of the employes, for in order to keep to time he must run at such a speed that often he cannot see a signal before he is upon it."

But I laughed at myself for my fears as I backed down and coupled on to the train. I set the brakes and found everything in good order.

"By and by the little gong above my head clanged sharply, and with a puff and hiss of escaping steam we were off into the night and storm, rattling over junctions, past signal lights, and between long lines of carriages till, with a roar and a rumble, we rushed over the long iron bridge and away through the hills waking their slumbering echoes with our shrill whistle."

"Then I pulled the throttle wide open and the clank and roar soon settled into a hum, for old 449 was doing her best, and we were making 50 miles an hour."

"The darkness was intense, save where the headlight, an electric device, cast its funnel of light into the gloom. Jim had a big fire, and kept steam up to a high pressure, so that we fairly flew past sleeping hamlets and still farmhouses."

"At our first watering station I made sure that all was working smoothly, while Jim inspected the headlight. The station master handed out the orders, which showed that the line was clear as far as our next stopping place. On we went."

"The darkness grew more intense, if possible, while the wind shrieked by. The rain became more blinding, till nothing could be distinguished in the gray mist which enveloped us."

"Suddenly through the mist and rain I saw looming right in front of us the gigantic figure of a woman wrapped in a long, black mantle, which seemed to flutter in the wind. She waved great spectral arms about in swift, twisting movements. As I stood looking in horror, the figure vanished with a final wave of the arms."

"I was too much astonished and stupefied even to make a movement of my hand toward the throttle. At that moment Jim had been bending over the fire. As he looked up he exclaimed:

"'Halloa, Frank. What's up. You look as though you had seen a ghost.'"

"I did not answer. My mind was too full of the strange figure I had perceived."

"We were now nearing Red Creek, where there is a bridge over a deep stream. I felt more nervous than ever. We dashed around the curve and whizzed by Rock Creek station, which is only a mile from the bridge. As we passed I glanced at the steam gauge for an instant. A cry from Jim caused me to turn quickly toward him. He sat rigid, his eyes large and staring. His jaw dropped, the very picture of terror. He pointed with a shaking finger out into the darkness."

I turned and looked, and then I began myself to shake. There on the metals was the same hideous figure of a woman outlined on the background of light from the engine, now motionless, now whirling in a witch dance, but all the time motioning us back."

"'Frank,' gasped Jim, but scarcely above a whisper, 'don't go over that bridge. Don't go, for heaven's sake! Don't go until you are sure it's safe.'"

"I suppose I was pretty badly scared. At any rate, I put on the brake for all I was worth. I couldn't have resisted the impulse to stop the train."

"As we came to a stop I could hear the roar of the water in Rock creek just ahead. I stepped out of the cab and met the conductor coming up."

"'What's the matter? What's the matter?' he asked, impatiently."

"I felt decidedly foolish. There was no gigantic woman to be seen now. Nothing could be made out more than a few feet away in the blinding storm."

"Well," said I, "we've seen something. I don't know what it is—seemed like it was a great black ghost that was waving its arms and warning us not to go forward."

"The conductor looked at me curiously. 'Are you crazy, Frank,' he said. 'I should think you were. But we're so near the bridge we'll take a look at it.'"

"We took our lanterns and went ahead leaving Jim with the engine; he looked frightened to death. But I tell you, we hadn't gone five rods before we stopped in horror."

"There at our feet lay a black chasm, filled with the roar of the river, as swollen with the spring rains, it dashed down toward the lake. The bridge was washed away."

"Only a few splinters of wood and twisted iron hung to the abutment, while now, far out over the blackness, that awful black figure of a woman danced again on the thin air, relieved against the shaft of light that the headlight threw."

"It was flinging its arms about as if in wild glee. The conductor stared at the chasm and then at me."

"Was that the thing you saw when you stopped the train?" he asked.

"Yes."

"Well, it's something more than luck that saved us to-night, Frank," said Jim.

"We went back slowly to the train, feeling very queer and thankful, too, I can assure you. Several passengers had come running forward by this time. Among them was a young fellow from Chicago about 18 years old, who was smarter than the whole of us, as it turned out."

"When he was told of the woman in black he turned and looked at the locomotive headlight. Then he ran up toward it. I looked up as he did so, and I saw a peculiar spot on the glass."

"There's your woman in black!" said the boy."

"And there it was, sure enough—that same moth miller that you see there in the frame. He was clinging to the inside of the glass. As I tapped on the glass the creature flew back and lighted on the reflector."

"That's the whole story, sir. The moth by fluttering on the glass just in front of the illuminator, had produced a great black shadow like that of a cloaked woman darting in front of us, and when he flapped his wings in his vain attempt to sail out through the glass, he gave his mysterious shadow the appearance of waving the arms wildly."

"Then when he flew back out of the direct shine of the light, the figure disappeared, of course."

"We never knew just how he got in there, but no doubt it happened when Jim went to fix the light at the pumping station."

"Anyhow, he saved our lives by scaring us with that woman in black."

"So you see why I keep the moth in the frame. It's to remind me of the way we were saved that night. Yes, you may call it accidental, but I call it providential."—Pearson's Weekly.

At the Fall of the Leaf

WHY do the leaves fall? "Bless me, I don't know," you answer; "I suppose because it is one nature's arrangements." Precisely; but why did nature so arrange? Why not have summer time always with perpetual foliage? What is the meaning of denuded branches, withered flowers, daylight fading in mid-afternoon, and winter's cold and desolation? When you find out why the leaves fall you will have discovered one of nature's deepest secrets—why men die.

Suppose we try an easier problem. Why should Mr. William Steel have written such a sentence as this:—"At the fall of the leaf every year I got into such a state that I took no pleasure in anything."

No doubt there are minds so highly strung as to feel keenly the influence of outward conditions, changes of the weather and of the seasons, and so on. But they are rare, and for practical purposes they ought to be rare. Our friend Mr. Steel, babbly for him, was not one of them. All the same he was a miserable man every time the leaves began to rattle to the ground."

Here's the way he puts it: At the fall of the leaf every year I felt languid, tired, and weary, and took no pleasure in anything. My appetite was poor, and after everything I ate I had pain and fullness at the chest and sides. Then there was a horrible pain at the pit of the stomach, which nothing relieved."

Now this sort of thing would spoil a man's pleasure at any time of year, but the oddity in Mr. Steel's case is that it always coincided with what you may call nature's bedtime."

"After a few months," he says, "the pain and distress would be easier for a while, but as autumn approached I became as bad as ever. In September, 1890, I had an unusually bad time of it. I couldn't touch a morsel of food, and presently got so weak I was unable to stand on my legs. Every few hours I had to be poulticed, the pain was so bad. I went to bed and stayed there for a week, with a doctor attending me. He relieved me a little, but somehow he didn't succeed in getting to the bottom of my ailment."

That may be, but it doesn't quite follow that the doctor was in the dark as to Mr. Steel's ailment. He might have understood it right enough, yet failed to cure it because he had no remedy for it among his drugs. That happens all the while. Still, the reader may ask, What's the good of knowing the nature of a complaint if we possess no medicine to cure it? There you have us; no use at all, to be sure."

Well, Mr. Steel goes on to say: "For some time I continued very feeble, and was hardly able to walk across the floor. If I took a short walk I felt so tired and done up I didn't know where to put myself. This was year after year for six years."

"Finally I read about the popular medicine called Mother Seigel's Curative Syrup, and made up my mind to try it. So I began and kept on with it for some time. The result was that the pain left me, my appetite waked up, and my food tasted good and digested well; and presently I was strong and hearty as ever. That was three years ago and the trouble has never returned. (Signed) William Steel, Hambleton, near Oakham, Rutlandshire, Dec. 5th, 1893."

Mr. Steel is grocer and postmaster at Hambleton, and his case is well known there. His complaint isn't hard to see through; it was indigestion and dyspepsia. But why did it come on only in the autumn? What had the fall of the leaf to do with it? Let the reader study on that point."

Meanwhile it is a comfort to know that Mother's Seigel's Syrup will cure it no matter when it comes on."

THE BOWERS TROUBLES.

Mr. Bowser Makes Another Trial With the Bike and Loses Consciousness.

The Bowers were eating their noon-day meal on their summer farm when a waggon stopped at the gate and a bicycle was handed down and left in the yard.

"I thought," began Mrs. Bowser—"I thought you—you—"

"You thought I had given it up," he interrupted. "Two or three months ago I experimented a little with the wheel. I fell in love with it, but didn't care to buy one just then. I am now going to experiment some more. In fact, I expect to become a crack rider within a week."

"You—you become a crack rider?"

"And why not? What's the matter with me?"

"When you tried the bike before you were unconscious for an hour and in bed for three days. You didn't seem to—"

"Didn't seem to what?" he shouted, as he shoved back from the table. "If I didn't quite get the hang of the thing it wasn't my fault. No one can ride a bike right off. I've got the best kind of a chance to learn, and propose to take advantage of it. I expect a fall or two, but what of it? What I want is to harden this flesh down, and all doctors agree that there's nothing like bicycle riding to do it. In two weeks I'll be kicking up my heels like a boy."

"I—I wish you'd give up the idea," said Mrs. Bowser, certain in her own mind that a tragedy would follow any experiment on his part.

"That's just like you!" he growled. "If I get a plan to take a little comfort you are always ready to head me off! I have sent to town for a bike. It is here. I propose to learn to ride it, and shall begin in ten minutes. There is no more to be said."

Twenty minutes later Mr. Bowser had the machine out on the highway. He peeled off his coat and vest, tied strings around the bottom of his trousers, and had an air of confidence about him which considerably puzzled Mrs. Bowser.

"You are not going to jump right on, are you?" she asked as he moistened his hands.

"You bet I am!" he replied. "All the trouble with new beginners is being afraid of the machine. I'm going right into that saddle as if I had been there a thousand times before, and if you see a cloud of dust ripping down the road you can hold on to your hat with both hands. Here I go!"

He went. He put his foot on the step and made two hops and a jump, and Mrs. Bowser saw a cloud of dust. It didn't go ripping down the road, however, but remained right there at her feet. It was a cloud raised by Mr. Bowser as the machine bucked him off and then fell upon him, and it was three or four minutes before he got up with red face and flashing eyes, and said:

"I didn't expect to get the hang of it the first time, you know, but I'll get there or die. Did it go down all of a sudden with me?"

"Very sudden."

"I guess I didn't find the pedals quick enough. Stand back a little and give me a show. Now, there's my foot, and here's two hops, and—"

Mr. Bowser didn't reach the saddle. There was a wild hope in his heart that he would, but he rose just high enough to fall forward, face downwards, and with a wild wobble, the machine rolled him into the wayside ditch and fell beside him.

"You didn't do it," said Mrs. Bowser, as she advanced to help him up.

"Who kicked that hind wheel?" he demanded, as he sat up and combed the dirt and grass out of his hair.

"No one. I wasn't within twenty feet of you. You'd better let me hold the wheel while you get on."

"Never—never! I've set out to get on that wheel by myself, and by the chin of my grandmother I'll do it or perish right here."

"Mr. Bowser, you know you have short legs and are naturally clumsy, and you ought to give yourself a chance."

"Short legs! Clumsy!" he shouted, as he struggled up. "Woman, get out of the road—get inside the gate! You are hoping for me to keep on falling, and perhaps break my neck, but you'll be disappointed. You just keep inside that gate till you're called upon to interfere."

Then Mr. Bowser examined the wheels. They were all there. He took a long look at the handle bar, but discovered nothing wrong with it. The pedals seemed to have been hung on at the right place, and he could find no fault with the saddle. Mrs. Bowser stood watching him over the gate, but he pretended to be oblivious of her presence and drew a long breath and made ready for another try at

it. It suddenly occurred to him that he didn't get in hops enough, and so he started out on a new plan. With his foot on the step he began hopping and jumping. His idea was to get a good headway and then rise like a bird, but at the fifth hop the machine took a shoot into the ditch, and there was another wrestling match, in which it came out on top.

"You see, you can't do it," said Mrs. Bowser, as she went out and pulled the wheel off him. You don't seem to hold the wheel right, and you hop on the sole of your foot. If I were you I'd wait till we get back to town, and then I'd—"

Mr. Bowser arose and pointed to the open gate, and so strong was his emotion that it was a full half minute before he could say:

"Am I running this business, or are you? When I don't know enough to get on to a bicycle perhaps I'll call for your advice!"

"But you haven't got on yet!"

"That's my affair. If I want to fool around a little and get acquainted with the idioms of the machine, I guess I can do it. I haven't tried to mount yet."

"Oh! I thought you had. Just practicing, eh?"

"And you will oblige me by going into the house, Mrs. Bowser. Should I require your presence, or feel the need of any more sarcasm, I'll send you a postal card!"

She went, and when she had disappeared Mr. Bowser looked the machine over again and chuckled to himself.

"I'll give the pesky thing a surprise partly the way that Thompson did! I'll act as if I didn't care whether school kept or not, and then spring into the saddle all of a sudden."

He led the machine up and down the road a few times, patting the saddle in a fatherly way and humming a tune, and by and by, after a quick glance at the house to see if Mrs. Bowser was looking, he made a sudden dash for the saddle. He got there. Just how he did it he will never be able to make out, but to his utter surprise he found himself there and his feet clanking about the pedals. His first impression was that he was at least twenty feet above the earth; his second that he was all of forty. He had a dim idea that he was speeding along like a race horse, but it didn't last long. As a matter of fact, the machine took a "skit" of about ten feet and suddenly stopped. Mr. Bowser also stopped. When Mrs. Bowser got out to him he was on one side of the road and the wheel on the other. Mr. Bowser had struck on his head and was looking into vacancy and whispering to himself. It was like a dream—someone lifting his head—his body being rolled about—a waggon coming up and two men lugging him into the house. He meant to charge Mrs. Bowser with hitting him with a fence rail—with shoving a crowbar between the spokes—to upset him—with maliciously planning his death—but the words refused to come, and while he was wondering what was the matter, he heard one of the men say:

"Oh, not at all, ma'am—glad to be of any service. He'll come to after a while and be all right again in a few days, and if you have any influence with him, you'd better advise him to ride a rail. He's no bird for the bike!"

Children Cry for Pitcher's Castoria.

THE FULLER TRAGEDY.

Case Before the Grand Jury at Boston

Boston, Oct. 15.—The United States Grand Jury was called this forenoon to listen to witnesses in the case of First Mate Thomas Brom and Helmsman Charles Brown of the barque Herbert W. Fuller, charged with the murder of Capt. Chas. J. Nash, Mrs. Nash and Second Mate A. W. Bramberg, on the high seas on the night of July 13th last. If the jury returns an indictment to the court the trial will probably be set for a date about a month hence. The hearing may possibly consume several days.

The Governor's Sanction

The Mail and Empire's Ottawa correspondent says he learns from a reliable source that Mr. Laurier knows well that the Governor-General would not consent to such a general dismissal of public servants as has been demanded by the Liberal press. Mechanics, railway and canal employes, messengers and laboring men generally who are not appointed by Order-in-Council can be disposed of without that formality, but the permanent service men are in a different position. They could not be displaced without the sanction of the Crown. Mr. Laurier, the correspondent adds, has admitted the right of the Governor-General to exercise his judgment in such matters.

—Nixon Waterman, in L. A. W. Bulletin.