mind to walk back to the last station; the chance of an accident seemed so great.'

"Then the President *was* mad.

"'Why, good heavens!' said he, 'my wife and family were on that train. Mr. Superintendent, go and draw your wages to the first of next month, and leave the road *now!*'

"But sometimes a conductor is put in such a position that the rules won't guide him. Then the responsibility is very great. I remember once being so placed, and I thought at the time that my hair ought to have turned white that night with anxiety.

It was when the Hudson River Rail road was just built. There was no telegraph along the line then, and every thing was quite primitive compared to what it is now. The flagmen were on a sort of strike about those days, too, so that you trusted to luck for safe running. I was running a sort of way train between New York and Poughkeepsie then. Running an 'express' is much pleasanter than running a 'way,' you may easily imagine. An express sometimes don't stop for an hour at a time, and, after you've 'worked' your coaches once, you have nothing to do but to sit down and earn your money that easy way. Then when you reach the next station, if your brakemen mind their business, they can tell you how many passengers have got into each coach, and then you are always able to pick them out, because they haven't the *settled* air of the old passengers. But a way-train conductor has much harder work.

Well, I ran the train out of New York one afternoon, and had for the driver of the train a man who was famous for the accurate way in which he would come up to his stations. He would stop any named coach almost to a foot where he said he would; but on this occasion he appeared to have very poor luck. He ran past his stations and had to back down, and then again he would stop so short that the engine would be in front of the station and the rear coach an eighth of a mile back, and it raining hard, too. Then he'd start up again, just as the passengers were getting out. So we kept running behind time all the while. There was a sort of lightning express came out of New York about an hour after us, and we were gradually working back into *its* time.

We got near Fishkill, and, having made an awful bad shot at a depot, I said to the baggage-master: 'Mack has bad luck at making his stations to-day. Wonder what's the matter?'

The baggage master turned round on me quickly and said:

"If you want to know what I think, I think Mack is drunk!"

It can't be says I, I never saw him touch a drop of liquor or smell of it in any way.

"That's so," said the man, "but I think he's drunk to-day. He was in the car here a little while ago, and picked up all the brakemen's lanterns and slung them in a bunch at me. I dodged, and they went back to the engine."

I didn't like the idea of a drunken engineer, but had to laugh at the fate of the lanterns. If I had known how I was going to groan over their fate soon, I wouldn't have laughed then.

When I got above Fishkill, I thought I'd let those who got on at one of the little stations ride free to the next, while I rode on the engine and investigated.

So I got on the 'Corning,' and Mack looked black enough, instead of as civil as usual. I joked him about his bad luck in making his stations, and he growled out a curse. I asked him if he knew how nearly he had got back into the lightning express time, and he said he knew his own business. The man was evidently drunk and surly. I happened to put my hand down under the cushion of the seat, and felt a bottle. Pulling the cork out, I smelled whisky, and quietly threw it overboard. But Mack saw me and cursed me for destroying his property. "What did you throw that bottle away for; it wasn't your rum!" he said, at the end of an awful swear.

I'll tell you why, said I; I'm conductor of this train, and you are too drunk to do your business right, and you'd get worse and worse if you had a bottle.

Then he grinned a savage sort of a grin, and quieted down into a silent state, but he looked dangerous about the eyes.

"You're conductor of this train, are you? I'll show you how much you have to do with running it," says he, and began to 'slow up,' and we behind time already, you know. I didn't know exactly what to do—we were getting dangerously near the lightning express time—and while I was debating, he suddenly 'blew brakes,' with a fiendish chuckle, and stopped at a station that the train never stopped at before. I looked at my watch, and determined to send a brakeman back with a lantern, and stop the express. Just then a thought struck me that made my hair stand up on end. *There wasn't a lantern on the train*—the drunken beast had smashed them all—there wasn't a soul at the station, which was miles away from its village; the express didn't stop before it reached Poughkeepsie, so that I couldn't leave word to caution, and just then I heard its whistle a mile or two back. The engineer heard it too, and laughed a diabolical laugh.

That decided me. I caught up a wrench and hit him back of his ear, and he dropped like dead. I dragged his body (I didn't know then whether I was handling a corpse or not) off the engine, and threw it down by the road-side and jumped on the engine.

Jimmy, said I, the express is after us. Mack smashed all the lanterns—so we can't stop her. Our only chance is running away from her—so cram in the wood, and I'll open everything.

I knew, by observation, how to open and how to shut off, but of course couldn't graduate the speed like a professional. I 'opened everything,' you may be sure, and away we jumped. It was a curious chase. To be hunted by a locomotive don't fall to the lot of every one. Our engine was not so powerful a one as the express engine, and our train was quite long, so we crammed in the fuel and depended upon high pressure for our salvation. Of course, I never thought for a moment of stopping that side of Poughkeepsie; so we speeded past the stations, all lighted and filled with wondering faces.

Just after passing the second, the gong on the engine struck—some one had pulled the safety rope. The fireman's hand went instinctively to the whistle to 'blew brakes,' but I caught it. It was the most anxious minute of my life. If I did not mind the signal, and something was wrong and an accident should occur, I should a'ways be blamed, even if I didn't blame myself. But, if I stopped, the express might—probably would—run right into us. The pull didn't sound professional—like a brakeman's. It probably was a jerk at the rope by a passenger, who had been carried by his station—so I'd chance it.

All this went through my mind like lightning, as you may imagine—one thinks quickly on such occasions—and I caught the fireman's arm. He had never heard of such a thing as disobeying the gong, and stared. I was too excited to speak, but pointed to the fire, and he put in more wood quietly.

Well, to make a long story short. I never 'blew brakes' till the engine was opposite the station. Then I shut off, blew one whistle, and went sliding up the road. Just as we stopped, the express, whose station whistle I had heard just behind me, came up to the depot, and stopped where the trains usually do. If I had minded the gong or stopped in front of the depot, I'd been smashed.

You see there was no way to do but to run for it. We hadn't a red light for the rear car; we hadn't a lantern, nor couldn't get one to send back to signal; the flag men were on a strike, and the express didn't stop anywhere till it reached Poughkeepsie, and she had got so close on to us when the engineer cut up as he did, that we couldn't stop at a station and send a man back.—Before he could have got far enough away, they'd have been so close that they couldn't have 'broke up' in time, but would have come into us.

I didn't know whether I'd killed Mack or not, and took the 'owl train' back, and found him all right as regards death, but very sick from the dip I'd given him.

The company gave me this watch when they heard of it.—*New York Clipper.*

A JAPANESE EXECUTION.—While we had been making our tour of inspection the doomed culprit had been unlashed and dismounted from his horse at the gate. But when set on his feet he was unable to stand, owing to weakness and the constrained and painful position in which he had been kept so long, and his guard was obliged to carry him into the precincts of the prison. Here an ample breakfast had been provided, of which he ate heartily, and with evident enjoyment. After a full half hour it was intimated to him that his presence was expected. With the assistance of an attendant on each side, he walked slowly into the execution ground and was placed, kneeling and sitting on his heels (in the universal Japanese posture) behind a small hole dug out for the reception of his head. Some ten yards in front of him, and separated by a rope running across the square, sat the presiding yakonin and the prison authorities, calmly fanning themselves; and beyond these again were the six or eight foreigners who had been admitted.

The prisoner's arms were then pinioned behind his back; but before the cloth was tied over his eyes, he requested that a minute's grace might be allowed him. This being granted, he raised a weak, quavering voice to its highest pitch, and screamed out, "My Friends!" Immediately an unearthly chorus of wailes answered the poor creatured from his friends outside the walls, none of whom could be seen from the interior. This was followed by "Syonara" (good-by) and by a deeper and more prolonged wail from the crowd outside. The prisoner then signaled to his guards that he was ready, and submitted quietly to the operation of blindfolding; the executioner stepped up, and carefully adjusted the victim's head a little on one side, so as to hang exactly over the hole prepared to receive it, signified that all was ready: the word was given, when, without raising his weapon more than a foot above the neck of the condemned, the executioner brought down his heavy blade with an audible thud which severed the head instantly from the body.

Immediately the head fell it was seized, carefully washed and cleaned, the precession was reformed as before—except that the horse previously ridden by the deceased now carried the executioner in charge of the lifeless dead—and wended its way to a raised mound at the side of the highway a quarter of a mile distant. Here a kind of gallows had been erected, and on this was placed the dead man's head, supported in its position by clay, there to remain for six days, in sight of all passers-by, and warning to all evil doers.—*in Harper's Magazine for August.*

C. M. ALLEN

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