

THE TARNISHED MEDAL

BY NATHAN D. UBNER.

Turning old keepsakes over,
In aensive mood one day,
I chance on a tarnished medal
Whose plating had worn away,
Showing the brass beneath it,
Beneath of the bright disguise
Which it falsely wore when, years before,
It had formed my boyish prize.

With festive preparations
The country school was a-whirl,
And a beautiful silver medal
Was offered the boy or girl
Who the greatest number of tickets
Should among the neighbors sell;
And my striving hard for that bright reward
I yet can remember well.

Early and late on my mission
I wandered from door to door,
Oft meeting with naught but failure,
After trudging a mile or more;
But buoyed by the hope of possession,
That was ever before my eyes,
Till mine at last was the victory,
And mine the glittering prize.

My joy in my schoolmates' envy,
As I wore it before them all,
I can still with a blush remember,
But I never can recall
My bitter humiliation
When the medal proved, alas!
But a worthless toy of the worst alloy—
A bauble of silvered brass.

And now there comes the reflection
Of how often in latter life
Do the prizes shrink that we toil for
Through many a weary strife;
And how well it is to make certain,
Before we expend our strength,
Of the real worth of the things of earth
That we hope to attain at length.

ONE BRAVE ACT.

BY W. H. S. ATKINSON.

Steamville was just a large railroad town in the West. Deduct the shops and yards of the Grand Transcontinental and New Orleans and Idaho Railways, with their necessary adjuncts, from Steamville, and nothing remained. Indeed, at the time of which we are writing very little did remain in a business way—for a great strike was in progress.

The shop doors were closed on cold forges, silent hammers and deserted benches; the round-houses were filled with dead locomotives; no freight trains moved in or out of the yards or depots. Altogether, Steamville, for the time-being, ill deserved its name.

It is not necessary for us to inquire into the causes which led up to the strike. Whether real or imaginary, a number of the Grand Transcontinental employees declared they had grievances which must be adjusted; so the District Assembly K. of L. ordered out all the freight trainmen of the Grand Transcontinental Railway, together with several of its tributary lines. This, with all subsequent orders emanating from the District Assembly, was signed "JOHN HEADFORD, Master Workman."

General Superintendent Mansel sat alone in his private office, at Steamville headquarters. His duties had altered somewhat in the last few days. Instead of devoting his time to telegraphing the President of the road, in Chicago, and interviewing detectives, he was worried a good deal. The fact was, he wished to do the right thing by the men, and at the same time, he was not the man, at this critical time, to fail the directors, who trusted him implicitly.

One man—a man he had never seen—General Superintendent Mansel cordially disliked, and that was none other than John Headford, the Master Workman whose name appeared at the foot of all the District Assembly documents. It is hardly surprising, perhaps, that the Superintendent (who was a good-hearted, whole-souled man in the main) bore no great love to any labor organizations. The Knights of Labor, District Assembly 2002, with its Master Workman, he absolutely disliked. "Lot of damned scoundrels fire-bugs and train-wreckers, those labor agitators and wire pullers," he would say; "trying to make questionable points for the workmen, and a few dollars for themselves at the same time. There were all our boys working away and well satisfied with everything until along came these Knights of Labor with their master workmen, and secretaries, and every other kind of grand high monkey work. I'd just like to meet this fellow Headford, who is so fresh with his general orders. Nineteen to one he's a cowardly sneak, ashamed to show his face in Steamville, judging from the way he hides himself in his own town all the time. If I ever get near enough to him I'll tell him what I think of him and his loafing crew, sure as my name is Tom Mansel." At the end of which, or similar remarks, the General Superintendent would stretch himself out to the full length of his seventy-three inches.

It was 2:15 p.m. when the General Superintendent sauntered into his office and took his seat with an air of relief.

Once more No. 14, the fast express carrying the mails for the far West, had been started out of Steamville without any mishap. So far the strikers had interfered with none but freight traffic; but there was no telling when the more reckless of them might take upon themselves to impede the progress of passenger trains. Therefore the officers always felt better as each succeeding train carrying passengers departed in safety from Steamville, where the strikers were more numerous than at any other point along the line.

The Superintendent had just lighted his cigar when a man entered the office, closing and locking the door behind him. He was a detective in the employ of the railroad company.

"Number 14 has just left, Mr. Mansel. Where is her first stop?"

"She will stop at Prairie Flower, fifty-five miles west of here. Why?"

"That train will be wrecked at Running Creek, which is, I understand, ten miles this side of Prairie Flower. I have just learned that a gang of men went down on a hand-car this morning with tools, to loosen all the bolts and fastenings of the trestle over the creek. I'm afraid it's too late to prevent a fearful accident."

"But there is a telegraph station two miles this side of the creek," said the Superintendent; "I will send a message and have the operator flag Number 14. There is plenty of time; she is not due to pass that telegraph cabin until 3:25. It is now just 2:25."

"It is too late, Mr. Mansel," said the detective. "The arrangement was made to cut the wires immediately after the departure of Number 14 from Steamville. But have your operator try what he can do."

The operator was instructed to call all the offices between Steamville and Prairie

Flower. In a few moments he reported that he could obtain no response.

"Good God!" exclaimed the excited Superintendent; "there is only one chance to save that train, but I'll take it."

Rushing down to the yard he found the engine which had brought in Number 14 from the east. It was the only locomotive which had steam up, and the fireman was already commencing to rake out her fires.

"Hold on!" shouted the Superintendent to the fireman; "fire up, for God's sake. Do as I tell you—it's life or death—and I'll pay you five hundred dollars in cash to-night!"

To the excited Superintendent every moment seemed an hour. In six minutes they had on a full head of steam and plenty of coal aboard. Mr. Mansel backed the engine on to the main track. But a crowd of angry strikers had gathered around, and, seeing the chief official of the road with his hand on the throttle, began to think some scheme was afoot to get ahead of them. Few, if any, of their number knew of the wrecking scheme; but, having allowed the passenger train to proceed unmolested, they would permit no "extras" to move.

"Great heavens, boys!" shouted the frantic Superintendent, "we must save life. Number 14 will be wrecked if we cannot overtake her. Burn the round-house and smash every stick of property in the yard, if you will, but for God's sake let me go on!"

But the men would not listen. They thought it was a ruse to get a locomotive outside the town limits and move some freight cars from the west yard, two miles away.

They dragged Mansel and the fireman from the cab, while a number of them took possession of the locomotive and prepared to take her back to the round-house. It was useless for the Superintendent to protest or struggle; he had to give in.

But, as he thought upon the terrible loss of life which must shortly occur, he saw a quiet and unassuming man step from the crowd and board the locomotive. As he did so every other man on the engine climbed down, not one of the crowd interfering. As this man started the engine he called to Mansel, "Don't you worry about the wreck until you hear from me."

One hour passed—two hours—three hours. About sundown Number 14 came back into Steamville. She was uninjured. All the passengers and all the trainmen were safe. But upon the floor of the baggage-car, covered with a couple of overcoats, lay the dead body of the man who had saved the train.

He had got away from Steamville all right, but in passing through the west yard a dozen different pistols had been emptied into the cab of the locomotive, forced to slow somewhat to go by the many switches in safety. There was no time to stop and explain to the men. Forty miles must be made in as many minutes, so the engineer, bleeding from half a score of bullet holes, kept ahead, and was soon bounding along the track at a terrible speed.

Less than a mile from the rocking trestle he signaled Number 14 and brought the train to a standstill. He just had blood and breath enough left to tell the conductor about the scheme for wrecking the train, and with a parting injunction not to blame the Knights of Labor for such mean and dastardly work, the man died.

General Superintendent Mansel was the first to view the body of the dead man after it was lifted tenderly from the baggage-car. And this was his first meeting with JOHN HEADFORD, Master Workman (for it was none other). He had said he would tell this John Headford what he thought of him the first time he saw him. But it was useless telling him anything now. If he could hear, the Superintendent would say (for Tom Mansel does not think it unmanly to acknowledge a mistake)—"Will you shake hands? You are a brave man."

John Headford's heroic death had a good deal to do with bringing about a reconciliation between the railway company and its employees.

Travelers over the Grand Transcontinental Railway may now see, at the eastern end of the new iron bridge over Running Creek, a tall marble shaft, erected by the passengers on Number 14 and the railway men of Steamville. Near the base is chiseled this inscription:

JOHN HEADFORD,

MASTER WORKMAN, K. OF L.

"Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends."

Behind the Scenes.

It is the first night of the season.

All is in readiness for an opening night's representation. The company's members answer to well-known names upon the "stock lists." They have been engaged with much care and due consideration of properly supporting the eminent and world-renowned actress who gives her name to the stage.

Upon the stage, the first scene is set, every rope, every slide is in place. The carpenter has ceased his hammering and the paint-pots are at rest. There must be no waits on this first night. Faint and soft from beyond the heavy curtain may be heard the orchestra playing the opening overture. There is a subdued palpitation in the atmosphere which indicates nervous anticipation and restrained excitement.

The ladies and gentlemen have patiently submitted, during the last month, to multitudinous rehearsals, eagerly availed themselves of all new "business" the efficient stage manager has suggested, and to-night, as well as themselves, is to be put to the test, and they can not tell how they will do until it is done. The oldest veteran loses confidence.

In the dressing-rooms above the stage, on a level with the flies, all is bustle. The star's room is sacred from intrusion, but in the ladies' general room the gas jets glare and flash within their globes of wire, rouge-pots, powder-boxes, pencils, wigs, etc., litter every available spot. The "old woman" is padding out her young, slim hips; the "leading lady" is drawing in her rather matronly waist, and the "maid in waiting" is assorting some stage jewelry.

A knock at the door, and it is unceremoniously pushed ajar by the "first walking gentleman," who imparts the valuable information that if they will "put a small round dash of black just below the lower lid, at the outside corner of each eye, it will make them look as large as saucers."

It is received with disdain, and he is permanently ordered out, vowing he will never give them another point. A bell sounds, the curtain rises, and all is quiet around the

stage as the play proceeds. Shortly upon the narrow stairs leading from the dressing-rooms, the "old man" buttonholes a young reporter and is giving him "copy."

"I have appeared in all the principal cities, supported the most noted stars," he said, "but I'll pay you five hundred dollars in cash to-night!"

"I am letter-proof in Iago and Claude Melnotte; and" assuming a heroic, tragical tone of voice—"if I can not play Othello better than Mr. Bustup, you may take this"—tapping his forehead lightly—"from this," at the same time throwing out his broad chest and loudly slapping himself on the region of his heart.

The reporter disappears, apparently in a state of collapse caused by the bare idea of such a possibility, no one can tell which possibility.

The play moves on, a door opens and closes above, light steps sound near the stairs. It is the "soubrette," a pretty, modest, young girl. She has had some experience in slightly abbreviated skirts, but this is her first appearance in tights. To-night she takes the part of a page.

She has made her toilet with elaborate care. There is not a wrinkle in the fine silk webbing that encases her round, straight limbs. Every ribbon is in place. The plume in her little cap waves gracefully erect.

Reaching the steps, she hesitates, then runs back, and you might hear her murmur, "How can I ever go down?" The audience does not alarm me, but those people on the stage, how will they criticize me?" Presently she reappears, wrapped in the Newmarket cloak she has worn to the theater. She descends with a painful assumption of indifference.

It is some time before she must go on; she has come down early to become accustomed to it. She stands around in the flies. "How can I ever take off this cloak?" is her mental cry.

But here comes "the star," regal, dazzling, and panting with excitement. Her most trying scene is just finished. She is RECALLED AGAIN

and again. At last she turns back for the last time. Her sharp eye catches sight of the little "soubrette." She comprehends the situation with a glance, and, holding out her hand, says:

"Ah! my dear, let me see how you look."

The bright girl takes the cue instantly. She throws off the cloak, doffs her cap, drops on one knee, and kisses that friendly hand.

The lady, raising her, exclaims:

"Beautiful! Magnificent! You look just like a prince!"

The embarrassment is all passed. The queen has spoken. There is now no need to be afraid.

One of her smallest but most appreciative audiences has had a glimpse of the kind, generous woman hidden beneath the robes of the stage artist, the star.—*Chicago Ledger*.

A Flirt's Confession.

"I do not think that I ever flirted with the hope or intention of seriously winning men's hearts. It was fun to receive their attentions and to be able to lure them away from other girls, and especially was this the case when the men were married or engaged. In most instances I think they went back to their own and their own received them. Why did I do it? Well, I think the reason was this: I really liked all agreeable men and anything that looked like lack of appreciation on their part was so exceedingly distasteful to me that I straightway strove to overcome it. The young fellows just coming out came into my net as a matter of course for several years, but older men heard of me before being presented, and fought shy. I did not understand this then. I thought they disliked me, whereas it was probably caution or disapproval, and I set myself forthwith to disarm the caution and change the disapproval to liking. It was simply unpleasant to me to have anyone indifferent. I have cried time and again on my way home in the carriage, simply because some one whom I wanted to please seemed indifferent. Several times I was actually caught with tears on my cheeks by those of whom I was thinking, and I always managed to let them guess the reason of my tears. That was always effectual. It never failed to bring about the desired end, but I declare solemnly that I never did it on purpose—cried, I mean—and I never intended to be caught in tears. I suppose that most men will refuse to believe this, but it is true. I was simply at my wits' end with wretchedness, because I thought some one had taken a dislike to me."

John Headford's confession is all that I can tell you about this man.

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It Is to Be.

In the history of nations, and of men, the works of the fittest seem likely to survive the longest. They may be lost sight of for a little season, but like the flowers of June they come again and prove their right to admiration and renewal.

Passing over the events in cyclopedia from the wars of Alexander to Grant, from the pyramids of Egypt to the Brooklyn bridge, and noting the drift of sentiment in art, religion and invented improvements, we are forced to conclude that, with all of the crime and suffering of the races on the globe, we know but little after all of the cruelty of war, the baseness of passion, or the utter degradation of man in the present as compared with the past.

The past was bloody, revengeful, stupid, cruel, and barbarous in war, reaching to the hand-to-hand contest for kingdoms by poison or by intrigue, while the present consents to battle only as a last extremity, and treats the vanquished with becoming regard for their humanity. The past gloried in blood and torture to men and women over religious contentions, the present grows more and more tolerant of personal belief. The past aimed at the promotion of rulers, the present would improve mankind. It mattered little in the past that whole nations were subjugated as serfs; to the present the intellect of sages is bent on humane dealings between all conditions of life.

That the fittest seem surviving in a material as well as a social sense is shown in the progress of educated nations. England, America, Germany and France, these are the progressive people of the world in thought and science; the restlessness invention enjoyable by the masses who govern themselves by new and original methods, and instead of saying with Alexander that we fight them, because two cannot govern the same country, we compete with them proudly and celebrate their advancement in fairs and expositions with rejoicing, because we see in them an element of profit and friendship.

There may be times when political leaders look on the misfortunes of neighboring nations with Alexander's greed of conquest, or Caesar's desire for their gold, but it is not the sentiment of our time to foster such ambition. Men are learning to like each other for selfish reasons if for no other. And this is one of the surest elements of universal progress—a desire to create commerce by friendship. The signs of the times to-day indicate that the four great Christian nations, with several more lesser ones in influence, would cheerfully unite in a treaty of perpetual peace or an agreement to arbitrate every national difference hereafter.

With this sentiment comes a deep feeling of security, a love of home, and a desire to command commerce by deserving it. The people of the West are hurrying their grain to far-away markets in islands on foreign shores, while those of the East are taking interest in farm lands and large ranches to bring them into greater production.

The people of the North and South are busy in their forges and their forests fitting and preparing the tools and timber to be used by those who, in ancient times, would have been enemies.

And what does all this argue—for the scroll seems unrolling and the marching armies and tortured prisoners and chariots falling from precipice rocks, and martyrs burning at the stake, and kings enjoying the combats of wild beasts in the arena, and rulers plotting the destruction of cities, while vast armies, fording streams, are met and murdered without truce or mercy, seen rising in the Eastern back-ground, and industries with their palace loads of grain and bloodied cattle are flying back to meet them from the West—what does it mean, this startling sentiment of men?

It means that a union of the good is before us. It means that the implements of modern warfare are to be forged in the friendship of nations, that the war is to be a war of commerce, its battles to be fought with skill and enterprise; that instead of destroying productions we are learning to applaud every means that will increase trade, cheapen good living, supply luxury, and benefit mankind.—*J. W. Donovan, in the Current.*

BOSTON'S FASHIONABLE FOIBLE.

"Where have you been, dear?"

"Down to the Science Matinee."

"Did you like it, dear?"

"It was just splendid. Prof. Bottles gave a lecture on 'The Advisability of Prolonged Anæsthesia.' It was simply lovely; and Dr. Nester's paper on 'The Haemostatic Properties of Ambrosia Artemesiaefolia' was just too sweet for anything. You must be sure and come down with me next week."

—*Puck.*

IN THE SANCTUM.

A man entered an editorial-room and saw a Shapeless Mass sitting on the Journalistic Tripod. The visitor asked: "Where is the editor whose great powers have made him known far and wide as The Thunderer?" To this the Shapeless Mass replied: "But yesterday I might have claimed that honor, but since the Vigilant Compositor edited my copy I have been compelled to appear in the role