

## THE FREIGHT TRAIN.

How I love to watch the local  
Winding up around the hill  
In the sunrise of the morning,  
When the autumn air is still!  
And the smoke like loosened tresses,  
Floats away above her back,  
And to hear the chuka, chuka,  
Chuka, chuka of the stock.

The man who rides these mountains,  
Whose fiery steed of steel  
Drinks at nature's flowing fountains,  
Must inevitably feel  
A divine and peerless painter  
Spread the scenes along the track,  
While he hears the chuka, chuka,  
Chuka, chuka of the stock.

In the solemn hush of midnight,  
When his pilot glows the gloom,  
From a hundred hills wild roses  
Send their subtle, sweet perfume  
To the weary, weary watcher  
Whose lamps light up the track,  
And a hundred hills give back the  
Chuka, chuka of the stock.

Oh! how I miss the music  
Of the whistle and the bell,  
And the drumming of the furnace,  
More than any tongue can tell!  
And the mighty massive mogul  
Always seems to call me back,  
With her chuka, chuka, chuka,  
Chuka, chuka of the stock.

N. Y. Sun.

## THE OLD MILL MYSTERY

By Arthur W. Marchmont, B. A.

Author of "Miser Hoadley's Secret," "Madeline Power," "By Whose Hand," "Isa," &c., &c.

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CHAPTER IV.

SAVANNAH MORBYN.

The days that followed were days of trouble and doubt. Gibeon Prawle's influence with the men prevailed; the strike was determined upon, and the notices were given in.

After the scene in Mary's cottage there was no longer room for doubt in Tom's mind as to which side he would take, and he declared strongly and angrily against Gibeon.

This brought about much ill-feeling, and Tom was threatened more than once with what would happen if he turned "knobsticker." Others, however, more cautious and friendly, urged him to leave the place and not fly in the face of the majority.

"We must obey the vote of the majority," said they, "no matter what the cause may be. This giving in by the minority is the very life-blood of all trades unions."

"Then I'll have no more to do with trades unions," answered Tom, resolutely. "What I say is that I'll never be a party to championing such a fellow as Gibeon."

"But it isn't championing him, but standing by the union, lad, that you're got to think of in this matter."

"Then let the union take a sensible line and act justly. D'y think I haven't worked for the union? Nay, you know I have, and that there's no firmer believer than I in the right of the men to stand or fall together when the cause is just. But not to protect such fellows as Gibeon Prawle. If the cause were a good one, I'd starve till every blessed ounce of flesh wasted off my bones before I'd give in; but not for a skunk like that."

And they could not move him.

They went to Mary to see whether she would influence him; for after the time when he had rushed in to protect her, he had let it be known that they two were to be married; but Mary would not hear a word against Tom. She thought he was doing the right thing and said so.

Reuben Gorringe went to Tom some few days before the notices expired, and spoke to him.

"What are you going to do in this matter, Tom?" he asked.

"I'm going on with my work," he said.

"But you're local secretary of the union."

"I was. I've resigned. I've left the society—at least they as good as turned me out, when I wouldn't strike."

"Come to the office, I want to speak to you," and when they were alone, he said: "Have you no influence to stop this folly?"

"No, none. I have tried, but the men are determined to stand by Gibeon," said Tom.

"They are fools, and that's the long and short of it. What about the women?"

"I don't think many of them will go out, if any do. I've heard one or two talk about giving in a notice, but I don't think they will. They know what strike pay means too well to quarrel with their victuals for a shifty scoundrel like Gibeon Prawle."

"They can't beat me," said the manager, resolutely.

"What about Gibeon?" said Gorringe, after a pause. "What's your candid opinion about him?"

"I don't want to talk of him. He's a scoundrel and a cowardly frightened of women," said Tom, his eyes brightening with anger.

"What do you mean? Is it because he is the man concerned that you stand by me and against the society?" asked Gorringe, looking searchingly at the other.

"Yes, that's about the size of it," answered Tom. "If he came back to the mill we should leave."

"We?" said Reuben Gorringe, quickly and suspiciously.

"Yes. Mary and I have settled that. We'd neither of us work where he was. We're going to be married, you know, when this trouble's passed over a bit."

The manager had bent over a drawer at his table while this was said, and made no answer for quite a minute, seeming to be searching for something he could not find. At last he got up from his chair, and continued the search with his back to Tom.

"Oh, are you?" he said, in a voice meant to be indifferent.

"We shall wait till after this business of the strike," said Tom, all unconscious of the effect likely to be produced by his words.

Reuben Gorringe was a long time searching what he did not find, and when at length he turned to Tom he said:

"I wanted to show you a sample of

shori-stapled stuff that I think we can use; but I can't put my hand on it now. You must come in presently. If you hold by me in this bother you understand it'll be for your good. I shall want to have some one to depend upon."

Tom thought as he went out that the manager was looking unusually worried and bothered. And he might have thought the master still more serious had he seen Reuben Gorringe directly the latter was left alone. The manager locked the office door and gave himself up to deep thought; a set, hard, desperate look fixing all the muscles of his face in a rigid, thoughtful, malignant expression.

But Tom saw nothing of this, and thought so little of what he seen that when he told Mary what had passed at the interview he scarcely deemed it worth while to mention to her that he had spoken of their coming marriage.

But Mary was thoughtful, and though she said nothing to Tom she recalled Reuben Gorringe's words, and was vaguely uneasy for a day or two.

At the end of that time, however, Reuben, looking haggard and troubled, went to her, and finding her alone spoke to her about the marriage, and his words were kind.

"I heard the news from Tom," he said, "and I was—was glad that it was no other man. I thought I should like to see you alone for a minute and tell you I was glad."

Mary smiled very sweetly at the implied praise of her lover, and thanked Gorringe for his words.

"I thought, too," he continued, speaking not without some effort, "that I should like just to tell you that I am sorry for what I may have said the last time we—we were together. I can't tell you that my feeling for you is changed in one respect," he said, smiling sadly: "perhaps it would be a good thing if I could. That feeling will never change, Mary, but I will bury it and hide it, and play at pretending that it's dead. Tom and you are acting well by me in this strike bother, and I'll do what I can for you both. I'll show you that if I'm not to be chosen before another man, at least I can be man enough to bear no malice toward him. Give me your hand, my lass," he took it and pressed his lips to it. "God bless you, and make you as happy as I wish you to be."

The girl said nothing—could find nothing to say, being touched by his words; but let her hand rest in his for a moment and then drew it gently away, saying after a long pause:

"I hope we shall be friends;" nor had she even the faintest spark of suspicion that he was not absolutely sincere in all his words.

"Yes, we shall be friends, and there is something I can ask you to do as a first proof of it. You can do it, I think. It is something connected with this business of the strike. I have arranged, as you know, for the places of some of the men who are going out to be taken by women whom I am bringing to Walkden Bridge. There may be a little difficulty in getting some of them housed, and I want to know if you can take one of them here."

"Oh, yes, easily," answered Mary, readily. "Who is it? Where does she come from?"

"She is a weaver, named Savannah Morbyn; and she comes from the other side of the county."

"When will she be here?"

"To-morrow evening, so as to be ready for the next day."

"Do you know anything about her?"

"Her character, I mean?" asked Mary.

"I know her to be a good hand, steady and reliable. A good girl, I believe," and then he left.

Tom was pleased when Mary told him as much of the interview as was necessary to explain the reason of the new hand coming into the cottage, and drew from it a good omen as to their future relations with Gorringe.

He on his side also had good news, for the manager had offered him a better position in the mill, to act partly as overseer and partly to find employment in the office, position showing trust and confidence and bringing better wages.

Mary looked on this as a further proof of Gorringe's sincerity in wishing to show his friendship, and was both glad and grateful.

In the evening, therefore, she set to work with a light heart to make the cottage ready for the visitor, and the next day as soon as the day's work was done she hurried to the cottage and found the stranger had already arrived.

"Are you Savannah Morbyn?" she asked, looking curiously at the girl she found sitting with her hat and jacket still on.

"Yes; and you, I can see, are Mary Ashworth. I knew you at once from the description given to me."

The stranger got up from her chair and went holding out both her hands to Mary, who placed hers in them, confidently and readily, and looked into the other's face.

As she touched the girl's hands and met the gaze of her eyes, Mary felt herself shrink as if with instinctive distrust.

In truth there was not much heart in the quarrel. The men had obeyed the call of the society in coming out; but they all knew that Gorringe had been a fair employer, while many had received such services as that he had twisted the man Grant with having forgotten.

After Gorringe had left them, there were a few mutterings and murmurs, and some of the men even talked about going home, when messengers came up the street saying that the strikers were to go together in a body to the mill gate before the time for opening their.

The group to whom Reuben Gorringe had been speaking walked down the main street to where the other men seemed to be collecting, and joined them. When they all got together they seemed more satisfied with the line they had taken—there is always comfort in numbers. And they buoyed up each other's spirits and courage with much talk about the justice of their cause and wisdom of their action.

"And is this Tom—your Tom?" said Savannah, rising and smiling to Mary.

She put her hand into Tom's and clasped it firmly in her own while she looked at him fixedly out of her deep violet eyes.

"Come on, lads," cried Gibeon

at her, devouring with his eyes the ravishing and voluptuous beauty of her face, and the full, rich, graceful form, he felt that such a woman as this had never before stood clasping his hand in hers, and reading his very soul with eyes that seemed to burn into every nook and cranny of his mind.

He stood holding her hand, and felt as though he could not turn away from the eyes that riveted his, holding him as in chains which he had no wish to loose, until she herself released him.

There seemed some subtle power in the woman that he had never met with before; it maddened him, and even the pained and scared look which he saw on Mary Ashworth's pale face did not serve to recall him wholly to himself, nor make him conscious of anything except a strange, fierce, passionate pleasure in the company of this wonderfully beautiful creature. He was like a man intoxicated.

But the men were neither enthusiastic nor angry—only rather curious to see who had been brought over to the mill.

They had not been long at the gates before a little commotion showed that some of the workers were approaching. Two or three women weavers and a couple of half-time lads and lasses were the first to come in sight; but when they saw the crowd and the long line of strikers and their friends, they hesitated, stopped, and then turned back. At this there was a great burst of cheering. It was the first victory.

But it was not to last long.

The cheer had not died away before the heavy gates were swung back, and Reuben Gorringe stood in the way as calm and collected as if it was an ordinary day and he were waiting to greet the workers. At sight of him a groan was raised. He took not the slightest notice of it and walked forward between the rows of men and women to the roadway. When he reached the road he waited for the first workers—not those who had before appeared and retired—and when they came he spoke quietly to them, as if no one were present but themselves; and walked with them until they were inside the gate.

Tom, who was much cooler and more collected in the morning than he had been with Savannah Morbyn on the previous evening, was out very early, as he had promised to be with the two girls.

About half-past five, all the people in the village turned out and began to form little knots of talkers here and there in the street, gradually drawing nearer and nearer to the mill.

Presently there was some little hooting and hissing heard and a number of people ran to see what was the cause. It came from a small group of the strikers who were standing together; and the noise was intended as a demonstration against Reuben Gorringe, who had passed on his way to the mill, and was looking after some of the new hands.

He turned up the men at once and went up and spoke to them.

"Why do you hiss me and hoot at me?" he asked, in a loud ringing voice. "What man among you all, or in the whole of Walkden Bridge, can say I have ever done him anything but good? Haven't I always paid good wages? Can any man say with truth that I haven't tried to make the place comfortable? Can anyone of you say that I ever discharged a man, woman or child without full and sufficient cause? Why, then, do you hoot me?"

"Can't we do as we like with our own tongues? You ain't boss of them, I should think," cried one of the men; and the others laughed a little.

Gorringe faced him in a moment, and addressed him by name.

"That's not the tongue you spoke in last fall, Dick Grant, when you were away two months and a half, and I paid your wages all the time. I'm not boss of your tongue, it's true; and, so far as you're concerned, I'm not boss of your gratitude either."

"What do you want to go against the society for?" asked another, after a pause.

"Put yourself in my place for a moment, Silas," answered Gorringe. "Supposing you were running the mill and were paying me the wage of a tacker and I was earning that of a tenter for you, would you go on doing it because I perhaps happened to be popular with the union?"

"Aye, aye; that's it," chorused one or two.

"Then it must come," said Gorringe. "But it's you are forcing this fight, not I. And some of you know well enough to be able to tell whether I'm likely to give in. If you hold out, your places will be filled up; and I've more offers of hands than I've places for."

"They won't be allowed to work," muttered one man. "We don't mean having scallywags here."

"Then if you win, it'll mean the shutting up of the mill; that's all. I don't know whether you think that's likely to do you any good. It'll harm Mr. Coode and me a bit, no doubt; but I'll go back to the loom again before I'll give in. And now, look here. I'll give you all a word of advice." He spoke excitedly. "If you mean violence by what you say about scallywags, I tell you this: I'll meet you with your own weapons. Two sides can carry on that sort of play, and you'll find that I can be as much in earnest in protecting those who stick to me as I can in opposing those who turn against me."

With that Reuben Gorringe went on his way; and now no sound followed him. His will had for the time conquered them; and more than one of the men were sorry that any dispute had arisen.

In truth there was not much heart in the quarrel. The men had obeyed the call of the society in coming out; but they all knew that Gorringe had been a fair employer, while many had received such services as that he had twisted the man Grant with having forgotten.

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"Come on, lads," cried Gibeon

Prawle, "let's get up to the mill and see what sort of scallywags old Gorringe has bought. We'll give 'em a bit of Walkden Bridge greeting, eh?" and as he laughed some of the others joined.

But the men were neither enthusiastic nor angry—only rather curious to see who had been brought over to the mill.

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