

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 stack.

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 stack.

In the solemn hush of midnight,
When his plot plows 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 stack.

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 stack.

—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. Gibbon Pawle'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 Gibbon.

This brought about much ill-feeling, and Tom was threatened more than once with what would happen if he turned "knobstick." 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 living 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 Gibbon."

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

"Then let the union take a sensible line and act justly. D'ye 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 Gibbon Pawle. 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 Gorringer 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 Gibbon," 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 Gibbon Pawle."

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

"What about Gibbon?" said Gorringer, 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 Gorringer, 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 Gorringer, 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 Gorringer 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

short-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 matter still more serious had he seen Reuben Gorringer 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 had 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 Gorringer'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 Gorringer 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 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 Gorringer. He on his side also had good news, for the manager had offered him a better position in the mill, to act partly as overlooker and partly to find employment in the office, a position showing trust and confidence and bringing better wages.

Mary looked on this as a further proof of Gorringer'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 whom 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.

"You are cold," said the newcomer, who tried to draw the girl closer to her.

"I am tired, I think," said Mary, moving away from her. "The work has been very hard and—I want my tea." It was a lame conclusion, but the girl could not explain nor account for the feeling which took possession of her.

She took Savannah up the narrow staircase and left her in the bedroom she was to occupy, while she herself went to that in which her mother and herself were to sleep, and tried to shake off the feeling that oppressed her. They had tea, and when Tom came in to speak of the arrangements for the next morning he found them together.

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

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

And as he held her hand and gazed

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 wondrously beautiful creature. He was like a man intoxicated.

CHAPTER V. THE STRIKE.

Next morning the whole of Walkden Bridge was early astir, and the greatest excitement prevailed everywhere as to what would happen at the mill, what course the strikers would take, and whether there would be any disturbance.

Tom, who was much cooler and more collected in the morning than he had been when 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 Gorringer, who had passed on his way to the mill, and was looking after some of the new hands.

He turned on 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.

Gorringer 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 Gorringer.

"Supposing you were running the mill and were paying me the wage of a tackler 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?"

"You can't go against the union," replied the man whom he had addressed as Silas. "It's like letting the spindle run when the yarn's broken—only waste 'll come of it."

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

"Then it must come," said Gorringer. "But it's you are forcing this fight, not I. And some of you know me 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 will, 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 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 Gorringer 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 Gorringer had been a fair employer, while many had received such services as that he had twitted the man Grant with having forgotten.

After Gorringer 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 gates before the time for opening them.

The group to whom Reuben Gorringer 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.

"Come on, lads," cried Gibbon

Pawle, "let's get up to the mill and see what sort of scallywags old Gorringer 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.

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 lane 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 one of the heavy gates was swung back, and Reuben Gorringer 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.

No attempt had been made to interfere with the women as they passed through, and others, seeing this, came forward at once, and, hurrying between the rows of men and women, entered the mill gate. The first really hostile demonstration was made when the first strangers—half a dozen women and three or four men—came in sight and were led by Reuben Gorringer into the mill.

At first an attempt was made by the pickets to intercept and speak to them. This was foiled, however, by Gorringer. Then one or two cries and a little hooting followed, and a few muttered exclamations.

"No knobsticks! down with all scallywags! Ugh, blacklegs! What do you want to come here and take honest folks' work, for?" and questions of that kind, especially from the men's wives, were heard amid excitement.

The strikers grew more angry as the number of new hands increased, till talk of violence began to be heard from men and women alike.

The excitement had reached its height just when Tom Roylance came in sight with Mary and Savannah; and his appearance seemed to fill the whole crowd with anger.

"Knobstick! Scallywag! Blackleg!" resounded on all sides and in all keys of angry-voiced men and women, with hoots and yells, and some threats; while fists were clenched and shaken, and the whole crowd surged about excitedly.

Tom walked in front with Mary, and he passed deliberately through the angry, flushed and gesticulating crowd, casting a glance now and then over his shoulder, as if to assure himself that Savannah Morbyn, who was following close behind, was safe.

Savannah seemed almost to enjoy the scene. She held her head erect and faced the crowd with a smile as she passed through them. Her tall and stately figure, drawn up to its full height, and her beautiful face brought upon her the eyes of many, and some of the younger men would have pardoned her for her acts on account of her pretty looks. But not so the women, whose scornful, angry comments were loud and voluble.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

Rather Unlucky.

"Ever sit down at a table where there were just thirteen?" asked the man in the shaggy ulster.

"Once," replied the man with the white spot in his mustache.

"Well, you never observed that any bad luck followed it, did you?"

"Why—haw—yes. Bad luck for most of the thirteen."

"Any of them die?"

"Not that I know of. Never heard of any of them dying."

"Not enough victuals to go around?" queried the man with the snub nose.

"Who's talking about victuals? There wasn't any victuals."

"I thought you said you sat down to a table where there were thirteen persons?"

"That's what I said. The table was in a lawyer's office. It was a meeting of creditors. There were twelve of them. I was the other man."

There was a long pause, and then the man with the baggy trousers inquired:

"In what way did the meeting prove unlucky, if I may ask?"

"None of 'em ever got a blamed cent out of me," answered the man with the white spot in his mustache, heaving a deep sigh.—Chicago Tribune.

Light Wanted.

The professor of the chair of political economy had talked to the class an hour and a half.

"I have tried to make this whole question of the tariff perfectly plain to you," he said, wiping the perspiration from his glowing face, "and I trust I have succeeded. Still, if there should be some among you who desire further light on this matter I am ready to answer any questions you may ask."

"I think I understand the most of your lecture, professor," spoke up a deeply interested young man on the front seat, "but I'd like to know whether this ad valorem you've been talking about is a man or a woman."—Chicago Tribune.

With or Without Blinds.

The supreme court of Indiana has decided that saloonkeepers can pull down the blinds, notwithstanding local laws prohibiting it. The court holds that where municipal corporations pass ordinances they must be reasonable and that the use of blinds, shutters, colored glass and screens in business houses and dwellings is one of the conveniences of civilized life, almost as necessary as the houses themselves.

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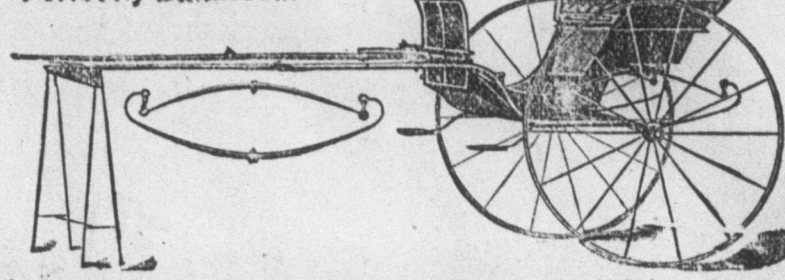
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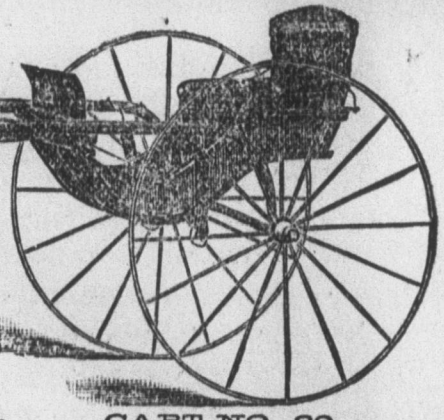
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