

LIFE ON A LOCOMOTIVE.

Down the Mountain on the Julia M. Collier.

The Heights Above and the City Below.

A Dark Night and a Fearful Grade Before.

The races were over at Caledonia last evening as the train steamed in from Jarvis on its way to Hamilton. It was sharp on time and the platform was crowded by an anxious, impatient body of people, who soon thronged into the cars and filled every seat, and even made the aisles impassable. Our reporter stepped aboard the locomotive, and on making his profession known and expressing his intention to sketch the run over the mountain, was cordially received by Engineer Henry Taylor, one of the best and most experienced drivers on the line. The locomotive was the Julia M. Collier, and as she steamed up to the tank she seemed to tremble with delight as Connolly, the fireman, poured a cool stream of water into the tender. He came back and heaved wood into the churning furnace below. Engineer Taylor took his seat, one hand on the rope connecting with the throttle valve, the other on the lever. His eye ran swiftly over the nuts and steam gauges and cocks; he looked sharply ahead, on either side, at the air gauges, and waited. The great engine shook and trembled as if impatient to be gone. The steam went hissing through the pipes like burning blood through the veins of some monster, and the furnace churned and roared like a volcano. All was ready. Conductor Dick stepped out upon the platform and glanced with pardonable pride along his train. Then he waved his lanterns and gave a sharp shrill whistle. The fireman looked at his boiler gauge and folded his arms, the engineer touched a lever, and the train drew out, quick, pausing, impatient, restive. The night was very dark—the station seemed to leap spasmodically back into the gloom. The semaphores darted past, the lights of the village vanished, and we were thundering through the dark, lonely woods, at the mercy of the still, watchful, grimy man, with one hand on the bell rope and the other on the lever. Faster, and faster! With a noise that waked the owls far and near, that set farm dogs baying by many a cottage door, and with a sound like the swift advance of an army of demons through an Arabian night. Faster yet! The engine is not satisfied and the huge machine under our feet leaps and pants passionately and with throbbing sinews that stiffen and twang every instant. Faster, faster! His hand is on the lever, his face sets harder, his head is bent forward, and his intelligent eyes peers sharply ahead into the night. And such a night! Black as a lie, and every where like liars, it hangs overhead like the wing of an evil spirit. But the head-light pierces it like fire darting through a paper wall, and illumines the sparkling rails and leads hopefully on into the future of night beyond. Look out! A bridge ahead. But surely it has fallen. It seems to be lying on the rails before us. The train can never pass under it! It leaps suddenly upwards into the gloom, stands firmly on creaking pillars, and the next instant is far behind, crashed in a cloud of steam that clings to it fondly. Faster, faster! The locomotive rocks from side to side. The mighty wheels below clang and roar frightfully, and every fib in the mighty machine quivers with a frenzied fury. Our reporter looks ahead on the shining track of two rails, and into the blackness of darkness ahead. He says, "Suppose a man were to tear up the track ahead and we could live to see him captured!" The fireman opens the furnace door and flings a block of wood into the roaring hell of flames below, and then looks up with a glittering eye and compressed lips. Faster, faster! The very earth seems to be flying from under our feet; the trees on either side crash by, and—look behind! Sparks from the smoke stack rain down in a cataract behind. A fierce, hissing, fiery steam, whipping itself against the wind, and losing itself in an ocean of night, ahning for an instant and then dying like good thoughts in a bad man's brain. Faster, faster! The great volume of steam winds round the train like a transparent snake, crawling everywhere and licking the windows with its wet, hot tongue. We near the mountain. The train comes to a dead stop and the breaks are tried. The engineer and fireman inspect the works and quickly make preparations for the run down the terrible grade before them. The whistle is sounded, Taylor "lets her out," Connolly looks into the furnace, and the next instant we are thundering through the quarries. The head light of the locomotive illumines the hard, slimy rocks that tower far above with an unearthly glare, and as one looks into the deep cut, the mountain seems to open and divide its stony bosom to receive the rushing demon of fire and iron that dashes into its midst. We are out of the cut and on the edge of the mountain. The rocks tower far above on one side, and the city lies far below on the other. With the motion of the locomotive its ten thousand lights seem to sway and move to and fro and fall like a sea of fire. The headlight divides the gloom like lightning, and the loud train, like faithful thunder, follows after, shaking the mountain side like an earthquake. The train swings round a great pile of rocks, and turns its burning face towards the city below. The houses seem to leap to one side and shrink into the gloom, leaving a clear, shining track. The mountain melts away like a dream, the rolling ocean of light suddenly lifts itself and is lost in the milky way, and in an instant we find ourselves gliding smoothly along a gas-lit street, aglow with common-place shop windows, and thronged with pedestrians who do not seem in the least surprised to see us. The bell rings, the train pulls up at the King street station, the engineer and driver shake hands with our reporter, and their words of "good-night" are lost in the chorus, "First bus for the St. Nicholas," "This way for the Dominion Hotel," "Take a kerriage for the American," etc., etc.

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A TALE OF WOE.