

THE BREAKMAN.

Soon after the opening of the East Tennessee and Georgia Railroad, there came to be traveling over the line, in a car where there were but few passengers, a gentleman who was seated opposite the stove, wrapped up in his shawl and meditations. Night came on. Presently in bunched a brakeman, loudly slamming the door behind him—one of those country geniuses, who with a laudable ambition had a day or two ago abandoned the girls, the fiddle and the plough-tail, to "climb in the world," and became a brakeman. He had been the king-bee at all the neighboring frolics, at the house-raising, at the corn-shuckings, and at the cross-roads doggerel fighting ground, and now he felt sure that he was a king-bee on railroads. Strutting up to the stove he slammed down his lantern, kicked the mud from his huge boots, on the foot-board of the seat, spit tobacco juice copiously and noisily on the hissing stove, crossed his muscular thighs, took a survey of the aforesaid brakeman, with harsh leather straps, and then thought himself of the "customer" sitting opposite, on whom he proceeded to bestow a lengthened and saucy look, as though he doubted the "customer's" right to be in the coach at all. At length he sought knowledge:

"What are you guine, Mister?"
"To Dalton, Sir," responded the gentleman, quietly.
"Breaker, ain't you?"
"No, Sir, I am not; but why do you ask?"

"Oh, nothing, only I thought I saw 'Hark from the toms' sticking out all over you, like the measles. You know me, I reckon?"

"I am sorry to say that I do not."
"Well, I'll bet you're a dam; why what the devil were you raised?"

"At Marysville, East Tennessee."
"Oh! that excuses you, for if ever I hear tell o' that settlement afore, I wish I may be durned, and I know every place, I do."

"You seem to be well acquainted with the place you are now occupying," remarked the stranger, almost choking with efforts to suppress his laughter.
"What place do you mean, Mister? This yere red balnch covered with the dried skins of cows' tongues, or my office?"

"I allude to your office, and, by the way, what is your position on this road?"
"Breakman, by the jumping geminy. I thought everybody know'd that; breakman over the East Tennessee and Georgia Railroad."

"Unfortunately I did not know it."
"Well, you'd dam soon foun' the fact out if you'd cut up any shiners round yere, huggin' wimmin, or cussin', or trying to steal anybody's carpet bag, or talkin' sassy to the conductor or sish; Why, I'd a chucked you butt foremo'st thru that window, like dartin' clapboards thru the cracks on a barn, for I mean to run this yere train on high moral principles, I do. An' you did not know I was a breakman on this yere railroad?"

"Indeed I did not."
"Well, old slideaway, all I has got to say is, that for a man of your looks, you know less than any man I ever saw. How do you manage to make a livin' anyhow?"

"I receive a salary; I am President of this road; Wallace is my name; but I have not the pleasure of knowing yours; will you be kind enough to inform me?"

All symptoms of "king-bee" disappeared at this thunderbolt announcement, and in their stead were seen timid humility, crushed pride of place, a strong "git-up-and-git" expression, and a most confounded hang-dog "done-up" and "dog-gone" appearance generally. The brakeman slid—

THE SQUIRTING FISH.—The squirting fish, which is found in Texas, can direct a drop of water upon his impetuous prey so as to bring it down into the water, where it falls an easy victim. This was how this curious fish was first discovered: A hunter was sleeping on the shore, when he was awakened by large drops of water falling upon his naked breast. On looking round, he found to his utter astonishment that the sky was clear and not a sign of rain; while searching about for the cause of the phenomenon, he received a fresh discharge of water. Some flies were buzzing about him, and one of them alighted on his breast just at the moment he received a third jet. The Texan then began to examine minutely some curious little fish of strange form and color, which were swimming about quite close to the shore. They were about the size of a large black; and when several of them raised their heads out of the water he received a fresh volley of drops. There could be no longer any doubt about the fact, the water had been squirted at him by the fish. The hunter being also a fisherman and his net but not far off, he soon obtained a net and caught a few of the strange fish. Placing them in a vessel of water, he set over it a stick covered with treacle. The flies were soon attracted to perch upon this, and then each fish raising his head above the water, discharged a drop of water at his fly with the most marvelous address, bringing them down into the vessel, where they soon fell victims to the squirting fish. The Texan hunter communicated his discovery to a naturalist at New Orleans, who verified the experiment, and the species was accepted as a novelty. The fish is, with good reason, accounted to be one of the best of the Mexican Gulf, and is now to be found all along the coast of the Gulf of Mexico, in the waters of the South Atlantic, and also in the Pacific.—Ex.

LIGHTHOUSES.—The following details respecting lighthouses are from a French source:

"On the 1st January, 1887, there were in the whole world 2,414 lighthouses, of which 1,785 were on the coasts of Europe, 674 in America, 163 in Asia, 100 in Oceania, and 93 in Africa. As regards Europe, the country which possesses the most light in proportion to its coast is Belgium. She has one lighthouse for every 5 kilometres (rather more than 3 miles) of coast; next comes France, with one per 13 kilometres; next Holland, with one per 15 kilometres; then England, with one per 17; and afterwards Spain, Prussia, Italy, Sweden and Norway, Portugal, Denmark, Austria, Turkey, Greece, and last of all Russia. The last named Power has one light-

house for 123 kilometres, whilst Turkey has one for 102. The United States have one lighthouse for every 32 kilometres, and Brazil one for 140. Of the 2,414 lighthouses, as many as 2,388 have been established since 1830, and the greater part of those which then existed have had their lighting power increased. Possibly it will be said that the present epoch has manifested profound solicitude for saving lives at sea by means of the lighting of coasts, but much still remains to be done."—Ex.

WEIGHING IN THE FAMILY.—Horace Greeley says in the New York Tribune: If our farmers, mechanics and laborers would regularly weigh, when brought home, their purchases of tea, sugar, rice, butter, &c., for consumption in their households, they would not only learn to buy of those who give best weight rather than those who often falsely profess to sell cheap, but they would infuse into our retail trade an element of honesty now widely lacking. Only let it be known that customers habitually weigh their groceries, and many would give five to twenty per cent. better weight than they now do.

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