FINNEGAN'S LAY OFF.

When Bartley Finnegan took No. 18 and was sent up from Scranton with the new engine, he was received by members of the Buffalo division with marked signs of disfavor. The Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers were at more natural in their feelings than many other brotherhoods, the philanthropic titles of which would seem to insure peace, good will and a fair showing to all concerned. Not only was Finnegan viewed on account of his "family cash," to which he had made his home a well formed picture of the president of the road, but his wife was duly anathed by the wives of brother engineers, and the feet were taken up in these words by the wives of firemen and brakemen.

"Well, we can stay away, if they want us," said Mrs. Finnegan, coolly answering adapting the phrase of railroad order. "I don't ask no odds of 'em. I let just exactly as good as they do, an' when I go to an engineer's wife to a conductor's or a superintendent's wife—just the one's down, you go in your the society. I've been accustomed to associate with the best of society wives, an' if they choose to set me down among workmen's an' firemen's wives they were mistaken, an' they can find it out."

"You haven't dressed much since we come away from Scranton," suggested Finnegan, as he ventured to coax.

"I'm a quiet, easy dressed man, who find so one family matters where array with the same fabulous amount with which his engine compares."

"This is the way I find 'em out," laughed Mrs. Finnegan. "When they've showed themselves a fool I'll just let on one one to friends in my 'Mine are of the 18 mens's you give me last Christmas.'"

"But you ain't done enough the square thing, Meg. If they'd known you could dress well, they would not have, when you put you, and you'd pass them on right, but as it is, they've side tracked you till they find out what you've buried alive."

"Then on your account, Bartley," Mrs. Finnegan sat down on the hard seat beside her husband and took the pot house tea cup. "They've all been nice to me, and I don't care if they do rise off their seats. You don't been proud herself, nor fellow, nor to jump and judge, nor even to speak a proper word to me."

"Maybe they think I don't cost it."

"That's the for sick. The Polar don't pass on. They've jealous." Mrs. Finnegan sighed, and sipped a little more tea.

Finnegan looked uneasily at the contents the bowl of his sweetheart with gener fun frame the.

"Don't yet them to be jealous when I've earned it by being careful. I've never had no accidents of any kind, an' I've been commended that engine for not more than I was in the car shops when they was you an' her together—every prose as perfect as it the Almighty is done it himself."

"It's a pretty proper engine, the sweet an' water in the good home," said Mrs. Finnegan enthusiastically. "I know I'd be jealous myself if I was a man an' had to earn a proper old thing like Dexter's."

Finnegan did not need to have his pride quickened. He was only too well aware that his pet was a fine piece of machinery. Every bearing worked as it should, every pressing sprocket, and the brass gleamed in shades of light as if he can daily were to be the closing exponent of adjusted parts. So polishing was to him more beautiful than the fiery rings that circled from the spouted stack when the air for miles was impregnated, so music to sedentary ear his was as the swift pulse that stirred the whole to life, and the impetuous stress that sought escape, kissing and soothing over the cold steel, and filled the lungs with quiet inhalations.

Mrs. Finnegan shared his enthusiasm. In place of children, the twins and the locomotive quite earned her heart.

Gradually the Finnegans made for themselves a position in the neighborhood in which they had settled. Finnegan had no time as accepted, though disagreeable fact, by his comrades on the road, and Mrs. Finnegan had continued her neighbors by numerous morning calls and gossips. She was always jolly and never seemed to have anything to do. There was only one family that stood out in bitterness and jealousy.

Jim Decker had been transferred to the Buffalo division shortly before Finnegan. He was a man who never gave himself, who, through unusual habits, made friends rapidly. Short, thick set, with a twist to his mouth and a twinkle in his eye, one would hardly credit him with a modicum of tit feeling, but under the guise of jeke or joi some of his sharpest thrusts were given. He had the reputation of being a free rein fellow, and was everywhere welcome on account of his rough wit and ability to raise a laugh. Some one remarked to him one day that Finnegan undoubtedly the Bills, even if he was an engineer, and then he might be invited to lead to some of the G. T. M. C. A. meetings.

"Yes," twinkled Decker. "That was the reason he got transferred, I guess. He was altogether too bible-ous."

From that remark the rumor grew that Finnegan had been a hard sinner, yet Decker was the last person suspected of having started it. He never openly assailed Finnegan of neighbor. But in his kind toward the engineer was based from a casual remark in presence of a somewhat.

"Poor as a man gets married an' has a family, he's sure bite. Take a man with no children an' he's ready to jump up like a new kite the moment anyone tells him to go. Take a man with children an' he's ready to stay down. Take a man with children an' he's ready to go. Build his fire outside, he's another. The devil of it is, when it comes to a test, he ain't started out. Nobody Some are, remember, are brighter than eagles to be this' anyone business on our whole time."

"Yes," laughed Decker, "time's just it. I was I was built for free time, but since I've such a man of family I've had to time be a worker."

A look gulfew through the laborers smoke greeted Decker's sally and followed him as he went down the steps and over the tracks to his work-house. As he turned he was footing from his cab window watching Finnegan as he tacked into the yard. He closed his door finished and his face fell down. He had been taking for some thoughts of something from the top of his dinner pail. The sight of Finnegan's freshly packed and gaily coated tea pot tated him more than ever.

"He ain't got no up for anything but that blasted engine," he growled to "Cabby," the fireman.

"Not blasted, eh?"

"Finnegan—Finnegan" ejaculated Decker in contemptuous.

Both men were coaling up their tender. Freight cars stretched in different directions across the yard. Engines moved from the round house as if joined for some purpose, then sniffed steaming back again with no apparent reason. A gang of track laborers shoveled the cinder ballast from between tracks. Gondolas, laden with the impending morrow, moved slowly off to some overhead junction around. A passenger train shooted past on its way in the city. Bells were ringing, sooty men clattering, and everything was being the accustomed movement that precedes the hall of noon.

Finnegan's engine was running down ahead to make a switch. Decker's was coming down the same track, and Finnegan, expecting him to side off to the lines, kept on his way, when a sudden and awful crash threw him violently backward. There was a shocking, scraping sensation in his back, but he felt nothing but whether in every leg, and he consciousness. The blinding of stars and the pounding of shattered wheels mingled with horrified exclamations.

"Anybody hurt?"

Decker appeared with the manner of a true man of his profession. He had lost his cap, his face was scratched and his coat torn, but he was the same.

"Finnegan's family did it."

"Where's Finnegan?"

"Finnegan?"

"Hurt? Yes, sir!" exclaimed a burly fireman. "He's in an hole. He's in safe, there to his job, an' coming to Buffalo from home! Off a student! Get out of the way, boys! Here he comes! Hi-ee, Bill! Wake up, wake up, an' tell a man if ye be dead or asleep. Dead! Take a look. It's a wonder! Wake up, Bill! Wake up! Is ye dead? Dead, I say, or be ye asleep?