RIDING ON A FAST TRAIN.

VIVID DESCRIPTION OF A THRILLING RIDE

On An English Locomotive, In Which Father Time Seemed Left Behind, and the Progress of the World Appeared To Be Surpassed By An Engine's Swiftness.

I have ridden in the engine cab of one of England's very fastest trains, the "Flying Welshman," the fame of which has extended around the globe, writes a London correspondent. It is rarely that a newspaper man is permitted on an engine in England and as this is the first record of impressions of how it feels to whirl over the rails behind this fast engine, I give them for what they are worth for the benefit of people who may have the pleasure some day of being pulled behind this celebrated engine.

I stepped upon the up platform of the long station at Newport, Monmouthshire, on a certain morning lately, armed with an "engine pass," to ride upon the footplate of one of the finest express trains in the world. The hour was 10 a. m., the London express was not booked to depart for another 18 minutes, and the station was almost deserted.

I had learned, however, that the engine upon which I had permission to ride picked up the train at Newport, on its arrival from Cardiff, and even while I was making inquiries as to her whereabouts, the magnificent locomotive came leisurely gliding up the middle way of the station, and halted directly abreast of me, with the safety valve blowing off furiously, and the whole massive shape thrilling with the Titanic forces pent up within it.

My delighted gaze was cut short by the driver waving his hand in recognition and beckoning me to come on board. Somewhat hesitatingly, and with a vague sense of penalties "not exceeding 40 shillings and costs," I dropped onto the line, and, stepping over to the engine, climbed up onto the footplate.

Here the poetic element was immediately dispelled, and the aspect of things became exceedingly practical. Several tons of damp coal were heaped into a big round mound in the tender at my back; the ruddy furnace roared in muffled thunder betwixt the half-open doors; the water bubbled and seethed in the gauge glass, the injector, which at that moment was on, uttered deep, resonant, racking groans; the steam from the safety valve, that was blowing off at a pressure of 160 pounds on the square inch,

HISSED DEMONIACALLY

Everything looked business like. Slowly at first, with rhythmic beat, and measured puffing from the short funnel, we slipped along, crossing the bridge which spans the Usk, and leaving the smoky Monmouth town behind us. Then the pulsation began to increase as the driver opened out the throttle; the low burr of the wheels rose gradually into a muffled roar; the engine commenced swaying with an occasional quick, sidewise lurch as she rounded a curve; the loud hissing from the safety valve ceased, or was drowned in the quickening blast of the exhaust; the shingled track began to spin by, and the passing sleepers to grow indistinguishable, and within five minutes of leaving Newport Station we were rushing over the levels and whizzing through the grassy cuttings at a speed which was swiftly rising to 60 miles an hour.

I ensconced myself in a comfortable corner of the cab, where I was well sheltered from the wind, and at the same time out of the road of the fireman and driver. Through the spectacle glass I could command a clear view of the line ahead, and took notice of the curious effect produced by the endless vista of rails rushing to meet us, as though the train was swallowing up leagues of track.

Signal cabins, telegraph posts, bridges, wayside stations, all flashed past with a elocity which speedilgy past with a velocity which speedily grew bewildering to my unaccustomed eye. We were approaching Severn Tunnel Junction, when suddenly Evans applied a brake, and shouted to me to hold on tight. I heard the grinding of the flanges; then the engine seemed to swerve violently, and in a manner which would certainly have flung me from my feet but for the timely warning.

The fireman now lighted a lamp in the cab in readiness for our passage through the tunnel. Already we were running down the cutting with

A REVERBERATING ROAR.

Coming back from the gradually heightening banks on either side; and as far off as I could see through the circular field of the window, where the arrow-straight line seemed to converge into a point, was what looked like a tiny blot upon the reddish face of the cliff, so ridiculously small in perspective, that the notion of our train passing through it seemed about as practicable as for the traditional camel to go through the eye of a needle

"There's the longest tunnel in England, sir," said Evans, pointing. "Over four miles from end to end."

"And how long will it take us to go through it?" I asked.

"Well, we never run at full speed and, as there's a stiffish climb after we pass the middle, we seldom get through much under eight or ten minutes."

We were now close upon the black aperture, tearing down the incline which led to it at headlong speed. Evans blew a prolonged blast of the whistle, and while the resonant shriek swelled into many shrill and wild echoes from the high banks we plunged into the gloom, and in a breath the daylight was eclipsed. The effect in the tunnel was strange, weird and impressive. The darkness seemed full of flying shadows; the ruddy gleams falling slantwise through the chinks betwixt the furnace doors and the feeble glimmer of the lamp in the cab, tinged the piles of coal heaped up in the tender, with blood-red hues.

The figures of the fireman and driver showed in vague, shadowy shapes. Not the faintest glimmer came from the train in our wake, occasionally a little galaxy of sparks would vomit forth from the invisible funnel and sweep like a flight of fireflies into the blackness behind. At intervals we flashed past lamps affixed to the damp walls, and once we passed a little band of men working by torchlight, and showing like demons in the wavering glare. Somewhere about the middle of the tunnel another train passed us, spinning by in a long undulating

STREAK OF LIGHT,

with pale clouds of steam dimly visible.

The roar and rattle raised by our passage was deafening, yet shrill above it all rose the reverberant scream of the whistle, which the driver continually blew. Once the fireman flung open the furnace doors to stoke, and I was startled by the sudden and unexpected rush of effulgence from the white hot glow within in the yellow haze of which the sooty arched walls of the tunnel leapt out plain to view, glistening as they rushed under the rounded, stooping roof. On we swept in thunder through the darksome cavear, but what they were I could not catchc. I pretty well guessed at what he had said, however, by taking notice through the tornado-like sounds of the deep and heavy panting of the engine, making me think of the labored breathing of an asthmatic giant. We had passed the middle of the tunnel, and were ascending the bank at the other end of it.

Looking through the glass in the cab, notwithstanding the dew-like moisture, which obscured it, I could dimly perceive a tiny far off point of light shining like a star through the impenetrable gloom. For a long while it appeared to hover quite stationary; then it appeared to slowly, but surely, approach, enlarging and gaining in brightness; a kind of sickly green faintness came stealing into the blackness, and a moment later, the engine, puffing like a creature nearly spent with its exertions, emerged into the daylight again, with the driver holding his watch in his hand and shouting out to me, with a triumphant expression: "Seven minutes and a half."

The frequent shoveling had made great inroads into our supply of coal by this time, and it is about half gone. Occasionally the fireman puts the long hooked poker

BETWIXT THE FIRE DOORS

and adroitly piles it. I notice that he doesn't stir the flaming mass about, but always draws it toward him. Inquiring the reason of this I am informed that it is impossible to maintain steam in a locomotive unless the corners of the fire box are kept free and that the most effective results are produced by heaping the furnace into a glowing cone in the centre of the grate. So that even the apparently simple task of stoking requires knowledge and experience.

We slip through West Drayton, and although the sky is beginning to wear, that indescribable sallow appearance which betokens that we are nearing London, while the clear, frosty atmosphere takes a faint tinge of murkiness. Woodruffe leaves the furnace doors wide open and closes the damper, so as to draw down some of the ardor of the glowing mass, for the heat of the furnace is so prodigious that I find it impossible to look straight into the opening. Yet, notwithstanding this we whirl through Southall, and Hanwell at a speed which renders it quite impossible to decipher the names upon the station boards. It is down hill now all the rest of the way to Paddington—

A GENTLE GRADIENT,

it is true—and the drop of the pressure gauge from 150 pounds to 130 pounds on the square inch makes no appreciable difference in our velocity. By this time I am in a deplorable condition of grime and oiliness, and beginning to experience a slight singing sensation in the ears from the ceaseless modulated roar of the train. And yet the interval since we steamed out of Newport Station, nearly three hours ago, seems to have gone amazingly fast which is no doubt due to the novelty of all I have seen.

As we glided through the crescent-shaped station at Westbourne Park the vacuum brake begins to squeak and grind against the tires. The backs of the houses with their dingy windows, feebly catching the pale, watery sunshine, which struggles through the yellowish haze, look uncommonly squalid after the freshness of the leagues of open landscape across which we have been whirling; but, then, London houses always look squalid from the railway.

The wide span of Paddington Station opens before us, and we run smoothly in, and as the splendid locdriver points triumphantly up at the hands of the big clock which indicate 1:12.

"Three minutes ahead of time, sir!" he exclaims. "I know what they always say when they see the Courier' arrive: 'Here comes that little Welshman, again before he is due!' Are you going back with us? We shall be working the 3.35 express down to Bristol."

THE POPE'S COURT.

The court of Pope Leo XIII. comprises 1,000 persons. There are 20 valets, 120 chamberlains, 300 extra honorary chamberlains, 130 supernumerary chamberlains, 80 officers of the Noble Guard, and 60 guardsmen, 14 officers of the Swiss Guard and Palace Guard, 7 honorary chaplains, 20 private secretaries, 10 stewards and masters of the horse and 60 doorkeepers.

HOW TO KILL THE FLIES.

SOME OF THE CURIOUS METHODS WHICH ARE USED.

A Checkered Apron Does It—So Do Two Shingles—Or Even a Husband's New Silk Hat.

At an evening party recently the gentle art of fly-killing was the main topic of conversation. One of the gentlemen said: "I never see a housewife doing battle against an army of flies without thinking of my good mother, and the ancient farmhouse, with its stuffy little kitchen, in which she laboured early and late to keep a small regiment of ravenous boys and hired men from chronic starvation and to make them comfortable. There is not a picture of her in my memory so vividly characteristic as that which recalls her armed with a big checkered apron and advancing upon the invading army of flies. O fcourse all o fthe winarmy of flies. Of course all of the windows were darkened and only one door was left light to attract the flies to the point of exit. The modern wire screen door was unknown in those days but we had a screen door just the same. The frame was a clumsy, ramshackle affair built on the workbench in the barn. Over it was stretched blue mosquito netting. Wildly waving her apron, mother made a daily round-up of the flies. When they were all massed against the netting of the door, the latter was opened and the winged fugitives driven into the freedom of the open air. So many scores of times have I seen mother engaged in this peculiar task that my memory holds a distinct picture of her flushed face as she stood behind the blue netting with that old familiar apron in her hands."

AN OLD TIME TRAP.

An old gentleman contributed this: "Two broad shingles were hung together at their thick ends, the edges being rounded at the point of contact. This made an appliance in the general form of a partly opened book suspended by the back. The inside of this clapper was smeared with a thin coating of molasses and the affair was hung in the woodshed just outside of the kitchen door. The two wings of the clapper always stood a little open and whenever a member of the household passed that way he reached forth his hands and smacked the shingles together with a sharp blow. A general massacre of hundreds of the small pests was the result of each contact of the shingles."

SHOT DOWN IN COLD BLOOD.

"The first money that I ever earned," said another guest, "was the wages of fly-killing. Every man who has spent a boyhood in the country is familiar with the use of the elder gun. From a section of elder, cut from beside the pasture brook, the pith was punched, leaving a smooth bore. About in the centre of the hollow stick a slot was cut to the depth of half the thickness of the stick. This allowed the insertion of a steel spring from a discarded hoopskirt. Tiny pine sticks about an inch in length, were the ammunition of the elder gun, the strong steel spring of which discharged the little billets of wood with considerable force.

"When I was offered a penny a hundred for all the flies killed with this weapon I felt that an easy way to fortune was opened up to me. A little sugar on the uncovered table attracted numerous victims and I waged a long and relentless warfare of crosstable shooting, which resulted in placing many coppers in my little tin bank. My savings from this source were expended for delicious squares of brown and sticky gingerbread.

HIS NEW SILK HAT.

"Not very long ago," said a young matron, "my husband won a silk hat on an election bet. It was decidedly unbecoming to him and I made so much fun of his appearance when he had it on that he only wore it two or three times and then stowed it away in a closet where it remained unused.

"One day while attempting to rid the house of flies a brilliant idea occurred to me. I at once brought out the silk hat, which I thought had been permanently discarded. Placing it over the end of a long window stick, I drove a tack through the centre of the crown into the tip of the handle. Then I began to exterminate the flies which had taken refuge upon the ceiling. Each upward dab of the hat brought down a victim or two, and I was rejoicing in the success of my clever invention when my husband entered the room. What he said I shall never repeat. But he succeeded in giving me the impression that he had not thrown away that hat and had come home to dress for a social function to which he had intended to wear the tile. The result of my fly-killing venture was the expenditure of $8 for a new silk hat."

CAUGHT GRANDPA.

When the laughter which followed this narration had subsided another woman joined the symposium, contributing the following experience:

"The most exciting episode that ever occurred in our family was the result of an ambition to clear the house of flies. The pests became insufferable, and we determined to make a desperate effort for comparative freedom. At night we removed all the furniture from the dining-room and the hardwood floor was covered with sticky flypaper. All members of the family were warned to keep out of the room. This caution was repeated with especial emphasis to grandfather, who was given to prowling about at night. He was also possessed of a strong temper which could not be safely crossed.

"Very early in the morning we heard a terrific outcry. Hastening downstairs to the dining-room, we found grandfather in a terrible rage. To his bare feet were stuck huge balls of the flypaper, and his hands and garments were decorated with the same material. He had entirely forgotten our warning and had gone into the dining-room to obtain a drink. The only condition upon which he would consent to remain in the family, after the sticky sheets had been carefully removed from him, was that not another particle of the stuff should be brought into the house so long as he lived. He was certainly the most enraged person I ever saw, but the spectacled which he presented—plastered from head to foot with the adhesive squares of paper—was so ludicrous that we were convulsed with laughter when we first saw his unhappy plight. 'Flypaper' is a forbidden word in our family."

THE BICYCLE SHELL.

A Strange Parisian Creation—The Sextuplet Viewed With Favor by Many Bicycle Dealers.

Paris has a new fad, and it belongs to the summer girl. It is a strange creation and partly amphibious. The name given it is the bicycle shell, for, while it is impelled after the fashion of a bicycle, that part of it which comes in contact with the water is constructed after the lines of a racing shell.

It is a sextuplet affair, and the six girls who ride it have the jolliest of times. The ordinary bicycle boat has done very well, when, with all the impetus the riders could give, it made four miles an hour. This latest invention has done 15 miles an hour, and there is no indication whatever that the limit has been reached. In fact, those who have become expert in its use say that beyond question there are possibilities in the sextuplet bicycle shell which will in time be a source of amazement.

Some of the young ladies who have tried to learn the art of mastering this peculiar sort of cycling have had some very undignified falls, for the bicycle shell like all marine contrivances is very apt to tip over if sufficient impetus from one side or the other is given.

The shell steers by the action of all six of the riders, and not through mechanism controlled from the stern. It is, therefore, absolutely necessary that the riders work in unison. And the captain of the ride tells the other riders what to do, just as the coxswain in a regulation shell gives directions to the stroke oar.

The boat is very buoyant and not at all cranky. The idea in constructing it was to make it as safe and simple as possible. If the riders care to train as people always train who row in a boat together—not for proficiency so much as unanimity—there would be no danger whatever. The pedalling motion by the young women acts as the power to move a steel propeller shaft which starts at the stern of the shell and stops a little short of the bow. There is no danger whatever of its becoming twisted or out of order, for the main object of the inventor has been to preserve it from all twisting sidewise motion which might easily bring about disaster.

The balance wheel of the mechanical part of the shell is located in the center and carries the propeller over the necessary point without any difficulty. Every time the pedals of the bicycle gearing make one revolution the propeller at the stern makes five. To understand exactly what this means and gain a correct idea of the speed of the shell just watch how many times a minute the pedals revolve when a rider is moving at an ordinary rate of speed. Then multiply this by five and you will have the exact number of the revolutions of the propeller per minute. It is a well-known fact that so many revolutions per minute of a propeller of a certain size means a given degree of speed, and in that way the exact time which the shell can make can be calculated.

The ordinary motion of the shell, at the rate of speed generally used, is just sufficient not to tire the riders in the least, and yet, if the weather happens to be warm, sufficiently rapid to create a breeze that cools and invigorates

Instead of afternoon teas and luncheons the Paris girls are now organizing bicycle shell parties. While the manufacturers of the new invention are doing the best they can to fill the orders that have come to them, they find it impossible to fulfil the demand.

While this is really a summer fad the bicycle manufacturers are looking at the matter in an altogether more serious light. They say that the reason of the success of the shell is that the public wants something new in the bicycle line. Everything has its day, they declare, and the reason for the bicycle's great popularity is that it gave people constant opportunity for change. Now the time has come when they wish some method of locomotion on the water, and genius has twisted the bicycle into that form.

Bicycle dealers say that there is no question but that the shell is one of the coming fads of everybody. Just the moment people are convinced thoroughly that they can enjoy a trip on the water in one of these with perfect safety, that moment will the bud of promise bloom into the flower of realization. The chances are that the aquatic bicycle is the wheel of the future.

ON THE KLONDIKE.

There's a lot of shootin' goin' on over there at Alaska Dick's saloon. Are the boys havin' fun with the tenderfeet that blowed in last night?

Fun nothin'! The boys is shootin' to kill. They're fightin' like hungry tigers over a raw onion they happened to see in that tenderfoot's baggage.

KING OF PICKPOCKETS.

HE ENDS HIS CAREER MISERABLY IN LONDON.

Led a Princely Life in Paris—Wonderful Feats Performed Daily By Means of His Dexterous Gloved Hands—He Was An Accomplished Rogue.

Fred, the king of European pickpockets, is dead, and, as a king surely deserves an obituary notice, here is Fred's.

At the start a grave difficulty confronts us. Thousands in every European capital knew Fred, but no one seems to have known aught of his parentage or as to the events of his earlier years. He was known simply as "Fred," and no one ever thought of questioning him as to his antecedents. An ordinary pickpocket may have to undergo many a crucial cross-examination; a king of pickpockets is rarely subjected to such an ordeal.

Fred first appeared in Paris early in the eighties, and in a short time he was one of the most conspicuous figures on the race courses and at all other fashionable resorts near the capital. He was considered an expert judge of horses, and he thought nothing of betting 500 louis d'or on a single race. His advice was eagerly sought by racegoers, and his "tips" were regarded as of considerable value. As a rule, he was successful in betting, and after a good day he squandered his money like a lord.

An elegant gentleman he seemed, and, no one had the slightest suspicion that he was a thief. Tall, dark and slim, with black eyes, and a carefully trimmed mustache, he looked every inch the idle, wealthy man about town. He dressed in the latest fashion, with a gardenia in his buttonhole, and he invariably wore spotless pearl grey gloves. These gloves never left him, not even when he thrust his hands into some one's pocket. He possessed, indeed, the skill of a prestidigitateur. The pearl grey gloves did not hinder him in the slightest degree; on the contrary, they helped him, for no one would think of making a charge against an elegant gentleman who habitually wore such faultless gloves.

HIS LUXURIOUS HABITS.

Fred's life in Paris was that of a dandy. His home was in a hotel near the St. Lazare station, and from it he would issue in the morning and drive or stroll slowly to the station. There, he would mingle with the crowd after the train had come in, and in nine cases out of ten he managed to pilfer two or three well filled pocketbooks from the passengers. With these he would return to his hotel, and then, after carefully attiring himself, he would spend the rest of the forenoon in visiting his friends, among whom were some of the best known men and women in Paris.

The afternoon would be spent at the race course, and there this fine dandy obtained his best plunder, hardly a day passing that he did not relieve some one of his purse. In the evening he usually went to some theatre or cafe chantant, and after the performance his rule was to invite a few friends of both sexes to a champagne supper. Royally he lived while his reign lasted.

His evil days began during the Exposition of 1889. It happened that Storr, one of the richest jockeys in England, went to Paris to ride a race, and he took with him a small bag, containing nothing but a change of clothing and his jockey cap. Fred saw this bag and, assuming that it contained some of the jockey's bank notes, he appropriated it. Storr made a great fuss over his loss, and the detectives, who had been suspecting Fred for some time, seriously thought of arresting him. Fred, however, anticipated them. Before the race began Storr received from an "unknown hand" his cherished bag, undercloths, cap and all.

CAUGHT AT LAST.

Some weeks later Fred fell, for the first time, into the hands of the police. It was at the Vincennes race track. He had stolen a large sum of money from an officer and, unfortunately for him, a lady had seen the theft. Fred knew that her eyes were upon him as he thrust his hand into the officer's pocket, and, hoping to save himself, he stepped up to the officer, and, handing him his purse, said, most politely:—"Here, sir, you have lost some money." The officer stammered his thanks, but the lady raised an alarm, and Fred was arrested and taken off to jail. For this offence he was sentenced to two years' imprisonment.

This closed his career in Paris, and for the next few years he confined his operations to Nice, Monte Carlo and other fashionable pleasure resorts. He continued to pick pockets as of old, and he was several times arrested and imprisoned. Finally, he left France and settled down in London. There, the story goes, he once robbed the Prince of Wales, the incident occurring at Epsom while His Royal Highness was intently watching a race. The story may not be true, but it is certainly characteristic of Fred's sang froid and skill.

We are also told that he tried to rob the late Baron Hirsch on one of the English race courses, but that the Baron, who had known him in Paris, whispered, with a smile, "My dear Fred, you have come too late, I have just lost all my money on the favorite. I was sure it would win, whereas it came in last. Come some other day—before the race begins."

"All right," replied Fred, coolly, lifting his hat with all his old time politeness and again mingling with the crowd.

Fred's last days were very mournful, and he was poverty stricken when death came to him at last in a miserable London garret. The joyous days of his early manhood, when he lived like a king in Paris, were ever present to him, and to the last he never forgot that he had once been the boon companion of gentlemen and ladies.