## ANDIVER. AILROADER By Arthur K. Akers

a different source than we were accustomed to at Damascus Junction. And perhaps that is one of the reasons that our

opinion of him had to be revised so radically in the end. Generally the new recruits reached us after somewhat lengthy terms as fourth assistant station agents at Podunk Corners or similar places where they had been allowed to sweep the depot, make out reports, smash trunks, load chicken-crates, and talk to the engineer on number Sixteen. In the midst of these privileges they managed to pick up a fair idea of telegraphy and railroading, and after being duly frightened to death and examined by Bancrost, the chief despatcher, they rose at once to the imposing rank of night operator at various little "o. s." towers along the road. But Jimmie was no common clay. He descended from the vestibule of a Pullman and with all the insignia of scholastic life still upon him-trousers at half-mast, pipe in mouth, little rah-rah cap clinging precariously to the northeast corner of his head, and his whole personality radiating that splendid cock-sureness that comes only of a brand new diploma, framed and reposing in the bottom of one's trunk. "Stubby bultivan, who was hanging around waiting quarrel with McKelly about the coal they had been getting lately, caught sight of Jimmie as he was sending his card in to Bancroit. "God help that if it's ever

the sentiments of others. or the chief to persuade Jimmie that Way Department, you know." the General Manager was really giving sat- In the months that followed we heard sfaction, that the Superintendent was a little more from Jimmie, except that we human element'?' man of family and needed his job, and that knew he was good-naturedly enduring the Master of Trains was kin to the Presi- merciless chaffing and snubbing and had dent and couldn't be removed without fric- forgotten so much nonsense that he was call you when you go wrong some night and mie began to feel an unusual warmth in tion. However, if Mr. Vandiver still really getting into a position to n some- send a train to the scrap-heap and its crew the room and catch a slight whiff of burning wanted to become a railroad man, he had thing useful. And in less than a year a new or passengers to the cemetery. You prob- wood an engine in the yards set up a frantic a letter from Mr. McKelly (who had for- Jimmie, though he still clung to his pipe and ably don't know that folks haunt you after whistling. Others took it up. The hoarse merly worked on a section with Jimmie's his explosive socks and neckties, came up you've killed them. But they do. . . voice of the shop whistle boomed out the at Winchester, needed a helper around the as a full-fledged operator. Bancroft re- the dream where you've seen all over again rang insistently, shrilling high above the station and that it would be a great chance membered the cap and the previous cut of the two trains hit and heard the crash, the clamor without. Glancing out of the winfor Jimmie to learn the rudiments of rail- his pants and made it a stiff one, but Jimmie roar of the steam, and the screams. You dow, Jimmie saw a glowing flickering light toading. It was a bitter pill for Vandiver, passed with flying colors. The second day see them crawling out of the wreckage and on the long lines of freight cars standing on junior, who it seems had been of much after found him installed as agent at Knob the cold white faces of the dead in the moon- the tracks below. At the same instant the consequence at college, but he swallowed it Rocks where he was monarch of a ten-by- light.



caught out on the yard after dark!" said spoke of his former employment on the Stubby fervently to himself, and he voiced section as "when Mr. Vandiver was connected with the W. G. S. System. Some length he went on in the slow, soft voice that The dry varnished wood smoked, then About ten minutes was all it required responsible position in the Maintenance of

(ather) suggesting that Dan Reagan, agent to be examined preparatory to graduation And you rise up in your bed shrieking from fire alarm. Downstairs a telephone bell

business, he already had his heart set on a struggle of another day. despatcher's chair at Damascus Junction. In one of the dark and silent offices in the in charge, he went.

of his desk.

"Yes, sir," said Jimmie. brilliant tie and said nothing, while Jimmie of flame ran up the ceiled wall beside the twisted uncomfortably and grew red. At basket. Another followed, and another. held all the biting sarcasm of which the caught fire and burned on unnoticed. Soon to be a despatcher, eh? Ever hear of 'the glass and it fell tinkling outward, admitting

Jimmie had not.

nerve's gone now and he sees things. Gave out quick before the stairs go!' a lap order along about daylight one morning. In God's mercy they saw each other emotion had no place in the traditions of on the straight track in time, but Terrell his craft. He was a despatcher now and he isn't a despatcher any more. Works a way wire for the Western Union at sixty a month. Then there was Bill Anglin-Bill's grave is the third from the gate on the he said to the loyal Petey, who still stayed right as you go in up there on the hill. He by for orders. "Then come back after the used to be a despatcher here. Shot him- quad. instruments if you can." self out under the coal chutes one Christmas Eve night after he found he'd miscalculated. They do that sometimes, you know; not an order to give Seventy-six at Nortondale caught it and mounted high through the His mind went back to a mile race of his often, but the price is so high when they do. or there'll be a head-on. Hustle those files At best it's their peace of mind; at worst now!" their lives or their reason.

"Still want to be a despatcher?" And Jimmie, all unshaken, declared that

he did.

"All right, my boy," replied the chief. "I've been watching you pretty closely and I reckon there's good stuff in you. Anyhow, we'll see. You can begin 'copying' here to-morrow night and it won't be long before you'll have a chance at a train-sheet. There's a bunch of promotions ahead that's going to make some vacancies around The perspiration dripped from Jimmie's

Thus came Jimmie Vandiver, A. B., Freshwater University, '08, to the dingy old and again he clicked off the "9" of the headquarters building at Damascus Junc- despatcher's call, but from "ND" there Jimmie Vandiver, Railroader and Man. tion where he was weighed in the balance came no answer. and found not wanting in a way that still forms the theme for the stove committee Petey on his third trip with the typeat the roundhouse when college men are in writers. "It's too hot. You better come

anywise under discussion. Never since he led the rooting on the football field had Jimmie worked as he did now night after night in his new place. Always the sounders clicked and sputtered yards, driven by the wind that had sprung and, unless he was busy copying orders on up. Switch engines shot up and down the the train wire, one office was no sooner ladder tracks, bumped into long strings of through "sending" to him than another cars, and bore them out of danger with clangbegan. Before long the third trick des- ing bells and great puffing and whistling. In patcher was leaving him at the sheet in the the glare he saw a lineman on top of a telewee hours of the morning while he stole graph pole in front of the depot pouring downstairs for hot coffee with his lunch. water on it from buckets which were being And at such times Jimmie strove to appear passed up to him by comrades. On their nonchalant while feeling a vast elation. Once he sent an order that was correct in all its details and he began to be very sure of that the city firemen would let the poles his ability to handle the division when the burn down rather than run the risk of throwbulletined. Come they did, at last, and crossed with others of a fatal voltage. Johnson, first trick despatcher, went to Clinch River as chief; Vinson, second trick, got a much-desired berth in the passenger som cracked with the heat and the strandepartment, and Jimmie found himself third trick despatcher on the South End, working from midnight to eight A. M.

After an hour in which all had gone well

MMIE VANDIVER, the She had married James, senior, on the ities he was removed to Winchester, where light and practically everything was run-IMIE VANDIVER, the She had married James, senior, on the ities he was removed to Winchester, where light and practically everything was runson of rich but honest correct guess that he would become a richer he succeeded his old instructor, Dan Reaning on schedule. Seventy-six, a through spoke on in a sort of brazen whisper. This smoke was slowly suffocating the desson of rich but honest correct guess that he would become a richer he succeeded his old instructor, Dan Reaning on schedule. Seventy-six, a through spoke on in a sort of brazen whisper. This smoke was slowly suffocating the desson of rich but honest correct guess that he would become a richer he began to make use of his freight, southbound, would be a little late meant that the fire had reached the local patcher. "The air's better down where he parents, came to us from man than his nearest rival, and she always gan. Here he began to make use of his freight, southbound, would be a little late meant that the fire had reached the local college education. In some manner known getting out of Eighteenth Street because of batteries in the next room. only to himself he employed his calculus in waiting for three cars of dressed beef com"Thank heaven, the main line is still the prostrate form of the other. His watch selling coupon tickets, geometry in boosting ing in from Chicago over the O. & C., but working," Jimmie muttered to himself, and told him that Seventy-six was four minutes the weights on salt, hides and butter, and he would provide for her against third Latin in talking to the guineas on the dou- Seventy-five later on. At two o'clock ble-tracking work. Old George Amhorn, Jimmie was almost alone in the dimly while oiling around one day, was heard lighted building. In the office with him grumbling to himself about the sad estate was only Petey Ferguson, who copied on to which railroading had fallen, with es- that trick, and "the Fathead," staying pecial mention of "that young pup down at after hours to memorize the rules, was in a Winchester. Next thing," he continued, corner droning over his book. In the next "they'll be requirin' M.A.'s for wipers, room was the North End despatcher, while Ph.D.'s to fire engines, and the whole down below were the ticket agent and a few damned alphabet before a man can run baggagemen, some of them napping during one." It developed afterward that Jimmie the dullest hour of the night. Except for had sprung a French adjective on George. a half dozen through freight and passen-But the boy, who was now quite an ger trains the Clinch River Division slept, operator, could not content himself with snatching a few hours' uneasy slumber beway-stations. Barely two years in the fore waking to the turmoil and fierce

> From time to time he made known his am- third story a rat stole timidly out from his bitions, but Bancroft only said wait awhile, hole, scurried across the room, and took or recommended Mrs. Winthrow's Soothing refuge in an unemptied waste-basket. On Syrup. Finally, however, the day came the second floor, at the far end of the long when Jimmie received summons to come up building, Jimmie called for some belated to headquarters, and leaving a relief agent "o. s's" and entered them on his sheet. The Fathead yawned sleepily, rubbed his "So you're the youngster that wants to eyes, and went home. Quiet, broken only be a despatcher?" was the chief's greeting by the ticking of the clock and the muffled when the operator was seated at the corner chattering of a sounder in the next room, settled down over the big depot.

> Overhead his ratship made a hasty exit "M-hmmm-" and for three solid from the waste-basket. A faint odor of minutes Bancroft gazed at the aspirant's burning paper arose, and then a tiny tongue dried-up little chief was capable. "Want the heat about the window cracked the more air. The flames ate through a partition, shot up into the attic, and roared "Well, that's what the newspapers will along under the metal roof. Just as Jimlight.
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> "You don't remember Terrell; he was before your day. Good man once, but his shouted. "The building's all on fire. Get

But Jimmie refused to be excited. Such proposed to act according to his own notions of one.

"B-but ain't y-you going, too?"

"Not now," snapped Jimmie. "I've got

The mad whirring clatter of gongs and the sound of galloping hoofs on frozen ground came up faintly from below as the despatcher, all alone in the upper part of the depot, began calling Nortondale. The fire had caught him with an uncompleted order out that made it imperative for him to reach Number Seventy-six with a second order at that point. But the Nortondale operator, usually prompt to answer, seemed to have left his key for the time being. forehead as he called, "ND, ND, ND, DI." The ceiling was beginning to smoke. Again

"I ain't coming back any more," panted on out while you can."

"In a minute," replied Jimmie, and he went on calling.

Firebrands sailed blazing across the efforts depended the safety of the wires. With a sinking sensation he remembered long-delayed promotions should finally be ing water from hose on wires that might be

is," thought Jimmie dully, looking down on

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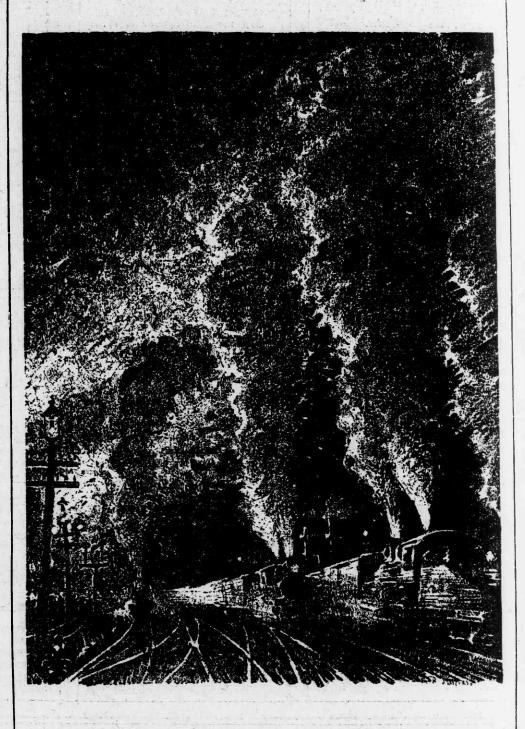
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SWITCH ENGINES BORE LONG STRINGS OF CARS OUT OF DANGER

cinated. Unless Nortondale answered now the pole, and most bitterly of all the operator at "ND." But with that moment there dis-

He swung the water-cooler above his head and the heavenly coolness that poured over him calmed and strengthened him. With a new spirit he took up once more his heartbreaking task. Then, with grimly set jaw, he called the South Tower. Six times he sounded it, but the operator did not hear him, so once more he pinned his faith on Nortondale, the only other office that could

help him. man and the end of a ladder appeared

framed in the casing. "Come out, you fool!" bellowed the man, but Jimmie merely lifted his smoke-reddened eyes a second without ever ceasing to call Nortondale. The would-be rescuer seized him roughly and made to drag him clothing smoldering; hair, eyebrows, and forward.

"Hands off!" snarled Jimmie. "I've got to catch a train down the line.'

"You'll be catchin' trains in hell in one minute more if you don't come away," "Keep it up, keep it up!" prayed Jimmie, shouted the fireman in his ear, making an-and even as he spoke the glass in the tran-other effort to drag him toward the window.

With one smashing blow between the gling smoke came drifting in. There were eyes that broke a bone in his left hand only a few minutes left, not time enough Jimmie dropped the man to the floor, and for him to make a dash for the South Tower continued to call. The crackle of the South Tower before Ninety-one wants in the yards and reach it before Seventy-six flames now almost drowned out the faint orders at Bristolville." click of the widely-playing armature of the "ND, ND, ND, DI, 9, 9," he called. relay. The heat was scorching the very own eyes forevermore by fainting.

"Get the files and the typewriters out," he dropped face downward on the floor to overdue at Nerter cale and he wondered if get one great precious breath of clean air she had run past. If so, all his bitter fight before bending over the key again. Out- had been in vain. His flesh seemed shrivside the linemen were forced to abandon the eling up and cracking apart in the awful pole and they fled hurriedly, leaving it to heat, but until the train was reported by its fate. Almost instantly the flames there was a hope, and he must stand by it cross-arms. Jimmie watched it burn, fas- college days when his lungs were fairly bursting within him and he had forced himself over before the copper wires fused and parted no the last hundred yards to victory by willearthly power could save the two trains. power alone while something in his reeling His very impotence was an agony. The brain repeated like an automaton, "One utter helplessness of him! He could only more step-one more step." So now in the call—call until the circuit failed or the fire same way, dazed and but half-conscious, he drove him out scorched and blinded and held himself at the key with, "One more call choking. A huge rage seized on every fiber -one more call." The whole world seemed of him and for one insane frenzied moment one vast agony in which wires, trains, he cursed all things—the relentless flames, responsibilities, hopes, fears, and that tortured him more and more, the unre- misery of soul and body blended and merged sponsive wire, the linemen who had deserted into a formless writhing horror from which for eons yet to come he could never escape. And just beside him a fiend hammered a appeared forever the last vestige of the cal- huge brazen gong that seemed to boom out low immature boy and in his place stood ceaselessly, "Call ND." At last, after countless centuries, the circuit broke and I, ND, I" answered him.

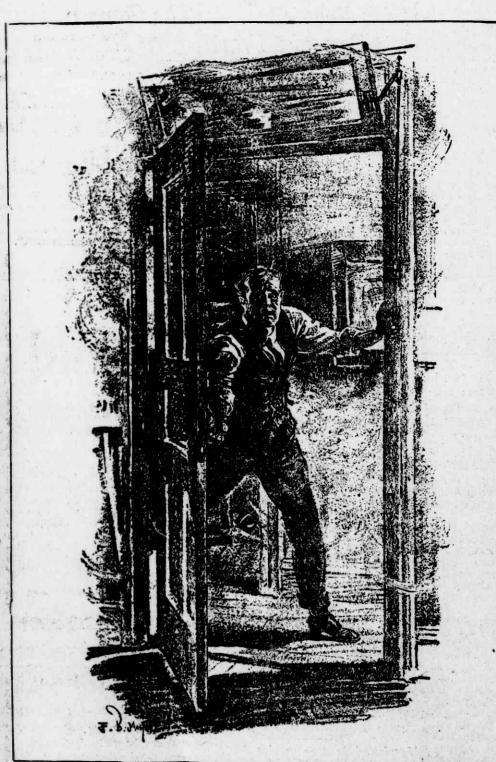
"Is 76 by?" asked the despatcher.

"Not y-"Hold her," he sent, but got no further. With a roar the fire burst through the inner wall, which tottered and fell, and Jimmie barely had time to seize the train-sheet and drop to the floor before a wave of flame swept the room. How he reached the window and the ladder, with the sheet under An outer window crashed in and a fire- his arm and dragging the slightly revived fireman with him, no one ever quite knew, least of all Jimmie himself. But the watchers below saw him pause on the ledge and heave the other man on to the ladder, where he slid down until caught by the hands that awaited him. Then Jimmie, his eyelashes singed almost entirely off, and his left hand hanging useless, scuttled painfully down the ladder. For a moment he drank in great breaths of the cold keen air,

then he started for the South Tower. 'Hold on there, man; you're hurt!" called McKelly after him.

"Hurt nothing!" responded the despatcher over his shoulder as he staggered along the tracks. "I've got to get to the

And then Jimmie disgraced himself in his



"HEY, YOU FELLOWS! THE BUILDING'S ALL ON FIRE"

like the man that he afterwards proved to twelve depot and literally "the whole be under all the tinsel on top and said he works"-operator, ticket agent, baggagewould take the job Jimmie's father was master, and porter rolled into one. When on his first night he had gained almost the was due at Nortondale. dead and his real trouble was his mother. Knob Rocks proved too small for his abil- confidence of an old-timer. The traffic was