

# ASHEVILLE NEWS.

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WHOLE NO. 339.

## THE CRAZY ENGINEER!

[From the Report of a Prussian Conductor.]

My train left Danzig in the morning generally about 8 o'clock, but once a week we were compelled to await the arrival of the steamer from Stockholm. It was the morning of the steamer's arrival that I came down from my hotel and found that my engineer had been so seriously injured that he could not run. A railway carriage had run over him and broken one of his legs. I went immediately to the engine house to procure another engineer, for I knew that there were three or four in reserve there; but I was disappointed. I inquired for Westphal, but was informed that he had gone to Steegen to see his mother. Gondolph had been sent to Koinigsberg on the road. But where was Mayne? He had leave of absence for two days, and had gone no one knew whither.

Here was a fix. I heard the puffing of the steamer on the Neufahrwasser, and the passengers would be on hand in about fifteen minutes. I ran to the guard and asked them if any of them felt competent to run the engine to Bromberg. Not one of them dared attempt it. The distance was nearly a hundred miles. What was to be done?

The steamer stopped at the wharf, and those who were going on by rail came flocking up to the station. They had eaten breakfast on board the boat, and were all ready for the fresh start. The baggage was checked and registered; the tickets bought; the different carriages pointed out to the different classes of passengers, and the passengers themselves seated. The train was in readiness in the long station house, and the engine was steaming and pulling away impatiently in the distant fire house.

It was past nine o'clock. "Come, why don't we start?" growled an old Swede, who had been watching me narrowly for the last fifteen minutes.

And upon this there was a general chorus of anxious enquiry, which soon settled to downright murmuring. At this juncture some one touched me on the elbow. I turned and saw a stranger at my side. I expected that he was going to remonstrate with me for my backwardness. In fact, I began to have strong temptations to pull off my uniform, for every anxious eye was fixed upon the glaring badges which marked me as the chief officer of the train.

However, this stranger was a middle aged man, tall and stout, with a face expressive of great intelligence. His eye was black and brilliant—so brilliant that I could not, for the soul of me, gaze steadily into it, and his lips, which were thin, seemed more like polished marble than human flesh. His dress was black throughout, and not only settled with exact nicety, but was scrupulously clean and neat.

"You want an engineer, I understand," he said, in a low cautious tone, at the same time gazing quietly about him, as though he wanted no one else to hear what he said.

"I do," I replied. "My train is all ready and we have no engineer within twenty miles of this place."

"Well, sir, I am going to Bromberg—must go; I will run the engine for you."

"Ha!" I uttered, "are you an engineer?"

"I am, sir, one of the oldest in the country; and am now on my way to Berlin to make arrangements for a great improvement I have invented for the application of steam to locomotion. My name is Martin Kroller. If you wish, I will run as far as Bromberg; and I will show you running that is running."

Was it not fortunate? I determined to accept the man's offer at once, and so I told him. He received my answer with a nod and a smile. I went with him to the house, where we found the iron horse in charge of the fireman, and all ready for the start.

Kroller got upon the platform and I followed him. I had never seen a man betray such a peculiar aptness amid the machinery that he did. He let on the steam in an instant, but yet with care and judgment, and he backed to the baggage carriage with the most exact nicety. I had seen enough to assure me that he was well acquainted with the business, and I felt composed once more. I gave my engine up to the new man, and then hastened away to the office. The word was passed for all passengers to take their seats, and soon afterwards I waived my hand to the engineer. There was a puff—a grunting of the heavy axletrees—a trembling of the building—and the train was in motion. I leaped upon the platform of the guard carriage, and in a few moments more and the station house was behind us.

In less than an hour we reached Dirshua, where we took up the passengers which had come on the Koinigsberg railway. Here I went forward and asked Kroller how he liked the engine. He replied that he liked it much.

"But," he added, with a strange sparkling of the eye, "wait until you get my improvement, and then you shall see travelling. By the soul of the Virgin Mother, sir, I could run an engine of my construction to the moon in twenty-four hours!"

I smiled at what I thought his quaint enthusiasm, and then went back to my station. As soon as the Koinigsberg passengers were all on board, and their baggage crate attached we started on again.

As soon as all matters had been attended to connected with the new accession of passengers, I went into the guard carriage and sat down. An early train from Koinigsberg had been through two hours before reaching Bromberg, and that was at Little Oseeu, where we took the western mail.

"How we go!" uttered one of the guards some fifteen minutes after we had left Dirshua.

"The new engineer is trying the speed," I returned, not yet holding any fear.

But ere long I began to be fearful that he was running a little too fast. The carriages began to sway to and fro, and I could hear exclamations of fear from the passengers.

"Good heavens!" cried one of the guard, coming in at that moment, "what is that fellow doing? Look, sir, see how we are going!"

I looked at the window and found that we were dashing along at a speed never before traveled on that road. Posts, fences, rocks and trees flew by in one undistinguished mass, and the carriages swayed fearfully. I started to my feet and met a passenger on the platform. He was one of the chief owners of the road, and was just on his way to Berlin. He was pale and excited.

"Sir," he gasped, "is Martin Kroller on the engine?"

"Yes," I told him.

"Holy Virgin! didn't you know him?" "Know him?" I repeated, somewhat puzzled. "What do you mean? He told me his name was Kroller, and that he was an engineer. We had no one to run the engine and—"

"You took him!" interrupted the man.—"Good heavens, sir, he is as crazy as a man can be! He turned his brain over a new plan for applying steam power. I saw him at the station, but I did not then recognize him, as I was in a hurry. Just now one of the passengers told me that all your engineers were gone this morning, and you found one that was a stranger to you. Then I knew that the man I had seen was Martin Kroller. He escaped from the hospital at Stettin. You must get him off some how."

The whole fearful truth was now open to me. The speed of the train was increasing every moment, and I knew that a few miles more per hour would launch us all into destruction. I called to the guard, and then made my way forward as quick as possible. I reached the after platform of the after tender, and there stood Kroller upon the engine board; his hat and coat off; his long black hair floating wildly in the wind; his shirt unbuttoned at the throat; his sleeves rolled up, with a pistol in his teeth, and thus glaring upon the fireman who lay motionless upon the fuel. The furnace was stuffed up till the very latch of the door was red hot, and the whole engine was quivering and swaying as though it would shiver in pieces.

"Kroller! Kroller!" I cried at the top of my voice.

The crazy engineer started and caught the pistol in his hand. Oh! how those great black eyes glared, and how glassily and frightfully the face looked!

"Hal! hal! hal!" he yelled demoniacally, glaring upon me like a roused lion.

"They swore I could not make it! But see! I made it! I made it!—and they were jealous of me! I made it, and when 'twas done they stole it from me! But I have found it. For years I have been wandering in search of my great engine—and they swore it was not made! But I've found it! I knew it this morning when I saw it at Danzig—and I was determined to have it. And I've got it! Hal! hal! hal!—we're off to the moon, I say! By the Virgin Mother! we'll be in the moon in four and twenty hours! Down, down, villain! If you move I'll shoot you!"

This last was spoken to the poor fireman, who at that moment attempted to rise; and the frightened man sank back again.

"Here's little Oseeu right at hand!" cried one of the guard.

But even as he spoke the buildings were at hand. A sickening sensation settled upon my heart, for I supposed we were gone now. The houses flew by like lightning. I knew, if the officers here had turned the switch as usual, we should be hurried into eternity in the fearful crash. I saw a flash—it was another engine—I closed my eyes—but still we thundered on. The officers had seen our speed, and knowing that we could not haul

up in that distance, they had changed the switch, so that we went on.

But there was sure death ahead if we did not stay. Only fifteen miles ahead was the town of Schwertz, on the Vistula, and at the rate we were going we should be there in a few minutes, for each minute carried us over a mile! The shrieks of the passengers now rose above the crash of the rails, and more terrific than all else arose the demoniac yells of the mad engineer.

"Merciful heavens!" gasped the guardsman, "there's not a moment of time to lose; Schwertz is close by! But hold," he added, "let's shoot him!"

At that moment a tall, stout German student came over to the platform where we stood, and we saw that the madman had his heavy pistol aimed at us. He grasped a heavy stick of wood from the tender, and with a steadiness of nerve which I could not have commanded, he hurled it with such force and precision that he knocked the pistol from the maniac's grasp. I saw the movement, and on the instant that the pistol fell I sprang forward, and the German followed me. I grasped the man by the arm, but I should have been as a mere infant in his mad power, had I been alone. He would have hurled me from the platform, had not the student at that moment struck him upon the head with a stick of wood which he caught as he came over the tender.

Kroller settled down like a dead man, and on the next instant I shut off the steam and opened the valve. As the freed steam shrieked and howled in its escape, the speed began to decrease, and in a few minutes more and the danger was passed. As I settled back entirely overcome at the wild emotions that had raged within me, we began to turn the river, and before I was fairly recovered, the fireman had stopped the train in the station house at Schwertz.

Martin Kroller, still insensible, was taken from the platform and as we carried him to the guard room, one of the guard recognized him, and told us that he had been there about two weeks before.

"He came," said the guard, "and swore that an engine which stood near here was his. He said it was one he had made to go to the moon in, and that it had been stolen from him. We sent for more help to arrest him, and he fled."

"Well," I replied with a shudder, "I wish he had approached me the same way. But he was more cautious at Danzig." At Schwertz we found an engineer to run the engine to Bromberg, and having taken out the western mail for the next northern train to take along, we saw that Kroller would be properly attended to and then started on.

The rest of the trip was run in safety, though I could see that the passengers were not wholly at ease, and would not be until they were entirely clear out of the railway. A heavy purse was made up by them for the German student, and accepted with much gratitude, and I was glad of it; for the current of gratitude to him may have prevented a far different current which might have poured upon my head for having engaged a madman to run a railway train.

But this is not the end. Martin Kroller remained insensible from the effects of that blow upon the head nearly two weeks, and when he recovered from that, he was sound again. His insanity was all gone. I saw him about three weeks afterwards, but he had no recollection of me. He remembered nothing of the past year, not even his mad freak on my engine.

But I remembered it, and I remember it still; and people need never fear that I shall be imposed upon by a crazy engineer.

## The Flight of Time.

Faintly flow, thou falling river,

Like a dream that dies away;

Down to ocean gliding ever,

Keep thy calm unruffled way;

Time with such a silent motion,

Floats along, on wings of air,

To eternity's dark ocean,

Burying all its treasures there.

Roses bloom, and then they wither;

Cheeks are bright, then fade and die;

Shapes of light are wafted higher—

Then, like visions hurry by;

Quick as clouds at evening driven

O'er the many-colored West,

Years are bearing us to heaven,

Home of happiness and rest.

**The Press—The Pulpit and Petticoats.** These are the three ruling powers of the day. The one spreads knowledge, the other morals, the third, though last not least—spreads considerably.

**It requires 2,200 full grown trees, or the matured crop of forty-four acres of woodland, to furnish timber for a seventy-four gunship.**

## Cuban Sugar Plantation.

A correspondent of the Syracuse Courier gives the following interesting account of one of the largest sugar plantations in Cuba:

"This estate is very properly called the 'Flor de Cuban,' (Flower of Cuba.) There are other estates as large and larger, but none that have such perfect machinery, and which have laid out so much money for that, and on buildings. There are about 1,000 acres of land, nearly three quarters of which are under cultivation with sugar cane, the balance being devoted to grazing the plainland fields. The produce of this estate, of course, varies with different years; thus, last year, owing to the rains they could not cut all their cane and it fell short, but its present average crop is 10,000 boxes and 1,000 hogheads of sugar, and its gross income at present prices will be from \$320,000 to \$350,000. Of this enormous sum, about one half is absorbed by interest on its debt and by its annual expenses. There are 650 hands—350 negroes and 250 Chinese. The rest are overseers, cartmen, coopers, engineers, &c. There are 80 ox carts forwarding the cane to the mill, and 600 oxen, four being used to every cart, and they are relieved twice a day. There are many buildings in this village, for it is almost like one. Besides the sugar house, there are the dwelling houses for the owners and the overseers, the drying houses, the hospital, the baracoons for the slaves, and even a nursery for the children of the slaves.

"The sugar house here is the principal attraction, and it is an enormous affair. It is all one floor and covered by a single roof, and its interior is somewhat similar to that of some of our large sugar refineries in N. York. There are two large rolling mills for crushing the cane, each with three rollers six feet long, and placed on the top of two, the cane feeding itself and passing under one and over the other two rollers, it comes out squeezed almost dry, and as thin as a sheet of paper, the juice running down into troughs. These rollers are set very close, within an eighth of an inch of each other, and the pressure is enormous. To drive these rollers, there is an engine of fifty horse power. The juice then is carried by pumps to a set of fourteen kettles, where by steam it is condensed, and then it runs through a body of carbon or burnt bone in another set of cisterns; it is then carried to a vacuum pan, where it is evaporated, then over a set of copper pipes for condensation, again through the charcoal for decoloring, then into another vacuum pan, where it is boiled to a crystallizing point. It is then carried off to another part of the building, and by copper ladles is emptied into the sugar moulds, holding about sixty pounds each, where in another day it is ready for claying. This process is only followed where it is intended to make box sugar, which is always clayed, while that packed in hogheads is called muscovado, and is packed into the casks in a green state, where it is then allowed to purge itself for fifteen or 20 days, and is then ready for shipment.

"On the estate they make mostly clayed or box sugar, and the process of claying is this: The moulds containing the green sugar are placed on a long floor, in a room holding from 800 to 1,000 moulds; the point of the mould is below the level of the floor, which is made with square holes for their support; after the sugar has set in the mould the plug at the bottom is taken out, and on the base or upper flat surface of the sugar is placed a quantity of black pasty clay, which has the property of distributing the water very equally through it. This clay is wet and the water filters slowly through the body of the sugar, carrying with it all color and leaving the base of the cone perfectly white. This process is repeated several times, and the sugar is kept in this house for about twenty days. It is turned out of the moulds into large open, flat, wooden trays, and the different layers of strata of sugar is divided by a negro with a large cleaver into white, brown and yellow—that nearest the point is still colored with molasses and not very dry. These several classes are all kept by themselves, and the sugar is then dried either by the sun or by ovens, and then packed into boxes holding about 400 pounds each. These are then nailed and strapped by pieces of green cowhide in narrow strips, the boxes weighed, branded, and ready for market."

**A young woman who was brought before the Boston police, alleged in defence of her respectability, that she was acquainted with all the lawyers in New York! She was committed for six months.**

**LOOK OUT.** Counterfeit \$50 bills on the Bank of Georgia, and \$10 bills on the Bank of Georgetown, S. C., are in circulation.

**The quickest way to make "eye water" is, to run your nose against the lamp post.**

## [From the Charleston Courier.] Life in Washington.

WASHINGTON, Feb. 11.

The stranger visiting the gallery of the House of Representatives, will not fail to notice a compact, elastic figure, with regular features, and a keen blue eye, which seems in perpetual motion, as one of the most bustling and important personages in that busy scene. His look—his *tout ensemble*—are those of an 'active' member of the House.—In his dress there is more attention to fashion than is usual among the busy members, but then this gentleman has always been a person of mark in ladies society, and said to exercise much influence in drawing-rooms—indeed, it is whispered that he has withstood as many sieges as the "Rock of Gibraltar"—and they do say that he counts the names of our loveliest belles one by one, on his fingers, and hangs their locks of hair on his *paletot*, after the Indian fashion.

You perceive at once that he is a prominent member; and if you follow his movements, you will not fail to discover his competency, his business-like habits, his acuteness, his fluency of thought and language, and above all, his versatility. He seems to go daily through a quantity of business which would be sufficient to wear down an ordinary constitution, and you naturally suppose that the remaining portion of the day must of necessity be devoted to repose; but here you will be mistaken, for should you feel disposed to drop into any one of the levees, receptions or parties that are almost nightly held here, to a certainty you will find this gentleman there before you, acting a conspicuous part in the festivities of the evening.

Any one who has seen this active, multifarious person we have been describing, has no occasion to inquire his name, he may be assured that he is, and can be no other than the indefatigable member from North Carolina, (MR. CLINGMAN.)

This gentleman has for some years held a prominent station in the "House," and established there a character for business efficiency. There is not, we apprehend, a single member less liable to be taken by surprise upon any unexpected point. He is evidently quite at home on all the subjects that come into daily question. Cool, ready, armed and defended on all points, he seems to begrudge no labor, however weighty, for the good of his constituents. For the technical details of Representative business, he is, perhaps, the most competent on the floor. He has all the requisites from nature—singular clearness, promptitude, and acuteness.

We were unfortunate in having heard only the conclusion of a prepared speech delivered by this gentleman during the past week.—Strong, cogent reasoning—plain, but deep sense—were the distinguishing features of the portion we heard. In speaking, he is not so glowing or so imaginative as Col. Keitt, but is more sober in style. He makes every now and then a noble leap, and then subsides into a quiet and deliberate pace. Soaring and imagery is seldom introduced, except to press the reasoning or to illustrate it; he by no means rejects ornament, but he uses it severely and sparingly. The contrast between the dull sameness—the tame language, and too often silly tone of ordinary speechifying; and the energy, the grasp, and freshness, and the boldness of this gentleman, is immense. In his extempore remarks on the floor, he is prompt, orderly, correct and fluent.

**SECRETARY DOBBIN.**—The generous conduct of this gentleman towards the veteran Commodore Stewart, of our navy-yard, has deeply endeared him not only to the friends of the Commodore but to all classes of society in Philadelphia.

There is, perhaps, no one of the retiring cabinet that leaves his high office with as many friends and as few enemies as Mr. Dobbin, and will carry with him into his retirement the sincere love of so many thousands of our countrymen in every section of our Union.

Although in feeble health, no person could have exceeded him in his indefatigable discharge of the laborious functions of his responsible department. Under his administration our flag has been seen in every sea, and our commerce has been protected on every shore.—Under his vigilant eye merit had been promoted in the service, and important reforms been made under his recommendation. When duty has demanded of him stern exercise of discipline, he has tempered it with such a gentle bearing that even the offended left him with impressions of regard and respect. We hope that his health will be invigorated by repose from the cares of office and the healthful breezes of his native climate, and that a long career of future usefulness yet awaits him. He has many friends in Pennsylvania.—*Pennsylvaniaian.*

**Four millions of dollars have been spent in the search of the unfortunate navigator, Sir John Franklin.**

**LIFE IN NEW YORK.**—New York is just now a skittish place to live in. The "reign of terror" is upon us, but the terror is in the hearts of the people. The rich and affluent do not dare to go out of nights. Night keys are out of use. The up-down gentlemen ring at their own bolted doors. In many cases the servant girls will not go to the door at all, but men are employed; and when the bankers and brokers, the cashiers and presidents go home, they have their front doors thrown wide open that it may be seen that no garrotters are lurking in the dark. Chamber doors are kept locked all day; families do not go to bed without a general search under the beds and an energetic poking in the closet with a cane or poker. The murder of Dr. Burdell, the street stabbing and robbery, the choking and garroting, which are pastimes of our city for the present, deter the theatre goers the pleasure seekers from their usual pastimes. The houses of public play acting are almost deserted, and the actors in most of our theatres are like disabled soldiers—on half pay. Some talk of vigilance committees; some call for a public meeting. The Mayor does all that he can do. He cannot do more with the force he has. But some aid must come from some source, or the people will be universally armed.—*New York Letter.*

**RUSSIAN JUSTICE.**—The Paris correspondent of the New York Times tells a story which serves to show the rapid manner in which the Russian government does an act of justice.—Eighteen months ago, Miss Ward, of one of our Southern States, was married at Florence to a Polish Count. After residing with her three weeks, he took French leave, taking with him his wife's jewels. He left a letter stating that the marriage was invalid, from the fact that no Russian subject could be legally married except by the Greek service. Of course the lady was in great consternation; and at the time of the coronation of the Czar she with her mother went to St. Petersburg. Mr. Sala, the principal writer for Dickens's Household Words, drew up a petition for her to the Russian government, and it was presented to Mr. Seymour the American Minister. The case was laid before the Emperor, and an order was issued to the Russian Minister at Naples, where the Count was living, for his arrest. He was seized by the Neapolitan police, at the expense of Russia carried to Warsaw, where the lady and her friends were waiting; marched into the church by a posse of policemen, and was there compelled to stand up before the altar and be married in due form. His wife, then the Countess, turned to him as soon as the ceremony was over, and made a formal bow, and bade him adieu forever. The Count was sent to Siberia, his property confiscated, his wife retaining one third by law. The family immediately left for Italy, where they are spending the winter.

**BETTER LATE THAN NEVER.**—The Pee Dee (Cheraw) Herald says that Wm. Godfrey, Esq., received on last Tuesday, (5th instant,) a letter which was mailed to him on the 18th January, A. D. 1838, at the Post Office called Clio, in Marlborough District. The distance is 90 miles, and the letter has been thirteen years and twenty-four days on the way, and contained a twenty dollar bill on the Merchants Bank, at this place, with the request that Mr. Godfrey would return twenty dollars in United States Bank Bills. Just think of it, twenty miles in nineteen years, it beats the telegraph. To those of our subscribers who do not receive our paper regularly, we say be patient, your grandchildren will receive the benefit of your subscription.

**DAMAGE TO THE CIGAR TRADE.**—Some lady, who has more reverence for the inspiration she draws from Helicon than for that imported from Havana, comes down after the following style upon the patrons of the weed: Let her prayer be answered, and large dealers in cigars must ledge on Maccoy of cave in:

"May never lady press his lips,  
His proffered love returning,  
Who makes a furnace of his mouth,  
And keeps its chimney burning!  
May each true woman than his sight,  
For fear his fumes might choke her;  
And none but those who smoke them  
Have kisses for a stroke!"

**Small-pox was raging among the Indians at Pombina, Minnesota, on the 15th of December, and about sixty had already died.**

**Post Offices.**—The Post Office in the United States, on the 30th of June last, amounted to 25,565.

**Eight thousand eight hundred and twenty females are employed in the Lowell mills.**