

oil along the timber and laid it from the car to the ground. Then I told the men to place the rail on these skids and let it skid.

The novelty of the thing, and what might be called the childishness of it, tickled the men immensely, but more than all else the labor saved in lifting and throwing the rail was one of the most pleasing features. It wasn't long before the men were sliding the rail down the skids as if they had done it all their lives and I venture to say that that car of rail was unloaded in record time, every rail landed on a level spot, and none of them were bent by being tossed to the ground; nor was any man hurt, as I have seen men frequently injured, by someone dropping the end of a rail on a fellow workman's foot. This simple piece of ingenuity did more than anything else to make me stand well with the men.

But, when I see men nowadays slide the rail off carefully and easily, and when laying it taking its temperature and feeling its pulse, I get some idea of how railroading has progressed in the last thirty years.

In those days the rails were set about as close together as we could get them in hot or cold weather. The sun would expand them and they would buckle at the joints. This required constant vigilance, but even at that resulted in many derailments.

I have told previously of how the cold swelled the ground and would throw the track out of line, and, while of course, this was dangerous and bad, it didn't at that time cause as much trouble as buckling at the joints. But it was a long time before we got down to the point of taking the temperature of the rail and gauging the distance the next rail should be set thereby.

I had in my gang quite a few lazy, shiftless and worthless men, but I

found the best cure for these complaints was work and I tried frequently and persistently to find something for them to do and kept them doing it.

Another thing, I encouraged the men to be cheerful. It didn't hurt me to laugh at their jokes and I laughed. As result, my first gang, I believe, got along very well, and in a short while the influences of the foreman—who never came back, though he did write some time afterwards—were forgotten.

It was more than three weeks before I saw the roadmaster again, and when he finally loomed up, I must confess, that my heart jumped in my throat, for I had learned by experience and constant observation, that there were so many things that should have been done, I was afraid he would not see and know of the work we had accomplished.

This was near the end of my section, and after watching the men at work for a short while, he asked me to walk the section with him. During the walk we talked over what I had been doing in the last three weeks. He showed me a good many things I had done wrong, but he wound up by telling me that he was very well satisfied with the way I had been handling the section and that I might keep the job for a month longer at least.

As we parted he said:

"Now you have left your men by themselves for quite a while. One of the best ways to judge how you are succeeding is when you get back see how much work these men have done."

When I returned I checked up their progress, and the result took a little tuck in my pride.

Before many days passed I had settled down to the steady grind of the

section foreman, fairly well pleased with my lot and not overly ambitious to be something better. I weeded out some of the men in the gang whom I knew would not and could not deliver the goods, and, while I had a rather small force in those days, I had a good one and my section began to show it.

If we didn't have anything better to do, I put the men cleaning the right of way and cutting weeds along it. I also remembered my early experience and kept a careful lookout for the plowed lines about the fields in case of fire.

Stock claims and fire claims got to be a very serious matter with me. A claim agent dropped off a local freight one day and delivered an address to me and my men upon the enormous amount of money we were causing to be spent for claims. As I remember his address began something like this:

"See here padner, don't it strike you that we're spending too much money for live stock and fire claims around here. Don't you know that a little care—a little precaution, would save the railroads hundreds of dollars. Don't you know that's what your paid to do."

This was his start. By the time he finished I was dazed and the atmosphere about me was fairly speckled with dead cattle, burning fields and thousands of wasted dollars.

I didn't come to life again until I saw the head of that claim agent shining about half a mile down the road, and even now I can hear the echo of his pet phrase, "That's the stuff."

I've heard of Daniel Webster, Patrick Henry and a great many other orators, but I defy any of them to make as eloquent an address over a dead cow as that claim agent could. For a few weeks after he left I regarded any cow with the slightest in-

attention of getting on the right of way as my personal enemy and cherished a vindictive feeling towards the engineer whose locomotive was throwing out sparks.

This recalls to me a bit of tender verse which I believe deserves space in these thrilling reminiscences:

She sleps beneath the daisies,

That's where she's resting now;

There's always something doing,

When a freight train meets a cow.

I might add that this claim agent is still with the Frisco, and looked just as young then as he does now, and has not lost a whit of his energetic loyalty.

At one of the stations along the line there was a young fellow—whose name I will not give, but who, if he reads this, will remember it—that started in the service working around the station, learned a little of telegraphy, and finally got a job as operator.

One night the train dispatcher—like the foreman I succeeded—disappeared, and it was up to someone to find a dispatcher and find him quick. This kid, for he was but a kid then, was the nearest one available. He was routed out of bed and asked if he wanted a job as train dispatcher. He was half asleep but he mumbled out that he did and went to work. He made good and is still making good, but what always recalls this to my mind was the nerve of this kid tackling a job of that kind. If he had been a few years older and appreciated the responsibilities of train dispatching he would have refused to take the job, and if he had refused, in all probability, his chance would never come again—at least not for a long time, but being a kid and willing to tackle anything, he did not hesitate nor jump into the breach.

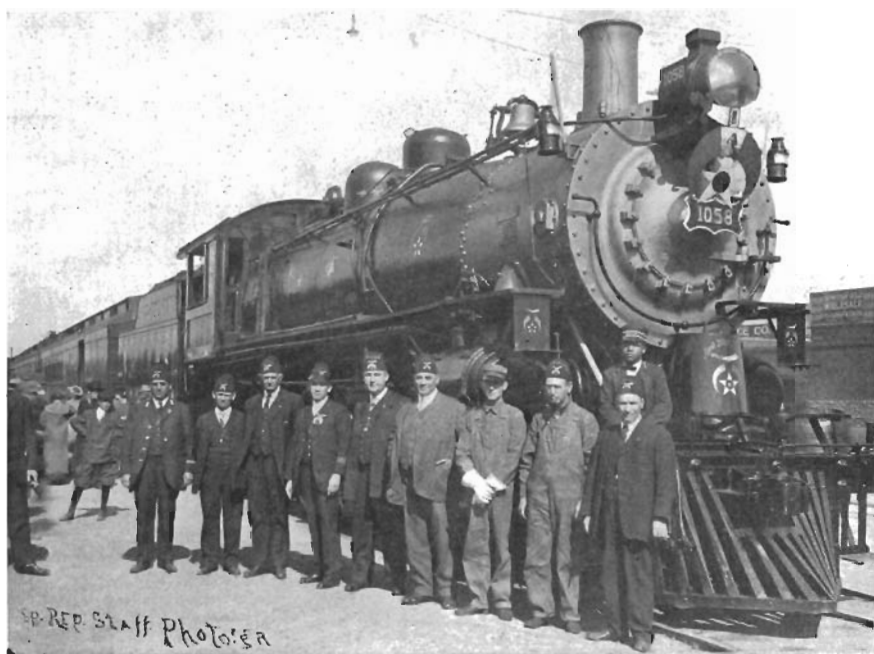
Illness in my family caused me to return home for a few days and while there I hunted up the old foreman.

I was still too much of a kid to hide my embarrassment but the old man dispelled it very quickly by his hearty greeting.

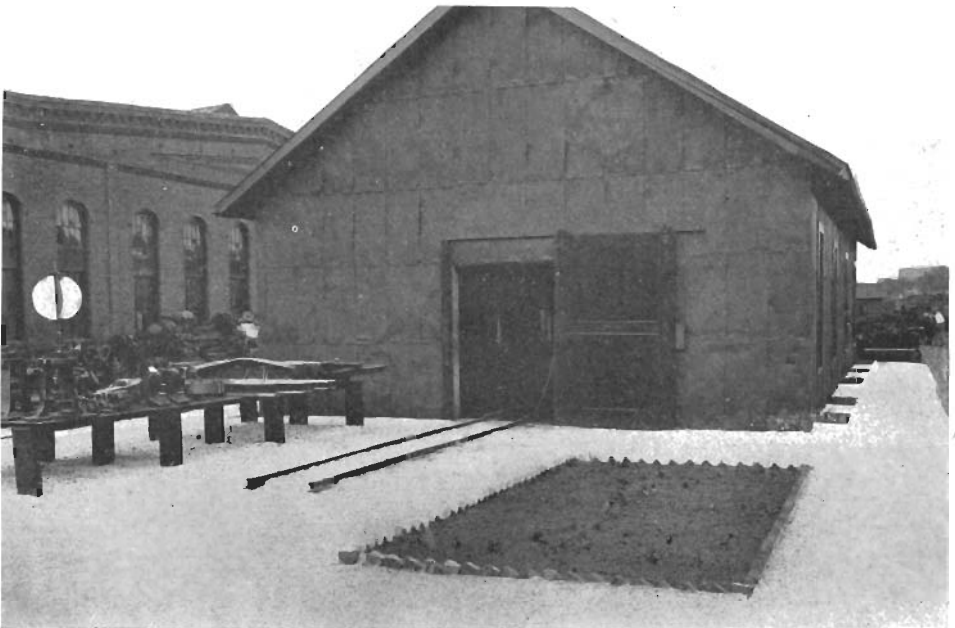
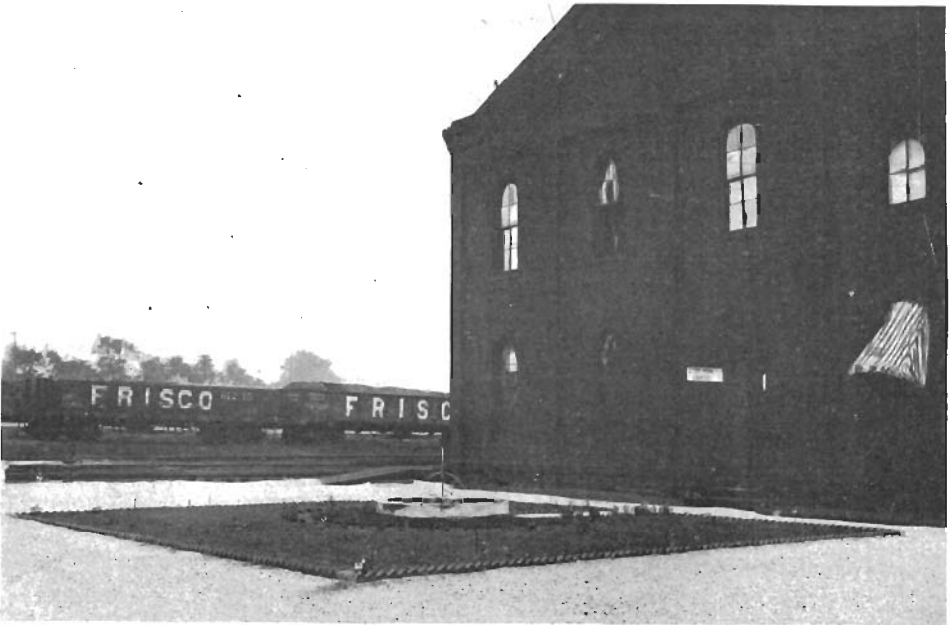
"They tell me you're a real section foreman," he said, "and I'm glad to hear it. I pride myself on the crop of section foremen I turn out. Of course, a few of them resign, but it don't matter much how they leave me, so they land on their feet eventually. Now, me boy, you are in charge of one of the most important departments of railroad service, and, though you may know all of railroadin' that there's to be learned, you'll never amount to anything unless you know how to han-

die men, and that can only be done by thinkin' a little clearer than they do and talkin' a little slower. Always pick your time to do your talkin'. Never give good advice in a bar room. Such circumstances don't fit in well with good advice, especially if you've got your foot on the rail. The telephone is the only good thing for long distance talks, and even then you don't want anyone else save the man you are talking to to hear what you have to say. Sorter side up to your man. Be pleasant with him, but if necessary admonish him with a pick; some men have to be treated that way that they may be softened for gentler measures."

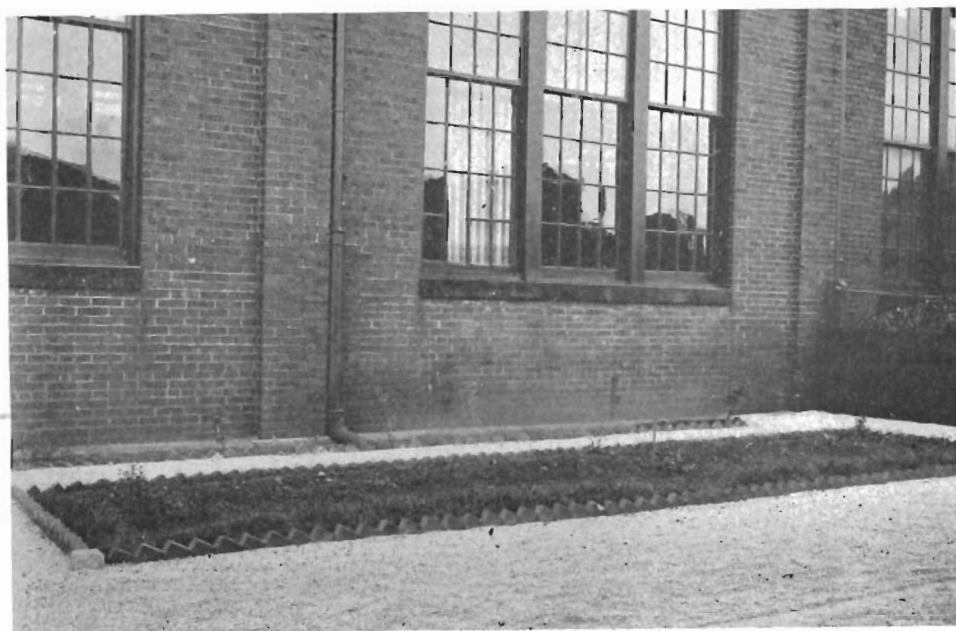
*(To be continued.)*



Engine 1058 and rear of special train Abou-Ben-Adhem, Springfield to Atlanta, Ga., May 9, 1911.



Reclaimed Spots at the



the Reclamation Plant.