

MUSINGS ON A LOCOMOTIVE

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Musings on a Locomotive by J. Wheeler Heylmun

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J. WHEELER HEYLMUN

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A LOCOMOTIVE**



J. Wheeler Heylman

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compost

TO THE
BROTHERHOOD OF LOCOMOTIVE ENGINEERS
AND
ORDER OF RAILWAY CONDUCTORS
THIS
LITTLE VOLUME
IS
RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED

I expect to pass through this world but once; any good thing therefore that I can do, or any kindness that I can show to a human being, or any word that I can speak for the good of others, let me do it now. Let me not neglect nor defer it; for I shall not pass this way again.—*Anonymous.*

PREFACE.

DEAR READER: I wish to say that I have not been weighed in the literary scale and balanced with the educational weight; therefore you will possibly pardon my intrusion in submitting for your perusal this little volume. You will please consider that the majority of my school-days were spent where the side-hill forest was my school-room, the overhanging hemlocks and maples my roof, a mall and wedge my spelling-book, an axe my pen, the sweat of my brow my ink, a ten-foot pole my arithmetic, and a pile of wood eight feet long, four feet wide and four feet high my lesson when time to recite. When you place my faults in the scale of criticism, touch the beam gently and remember the circumstances which surrounded my early life.

J. WHEELER HEYLMUN.

As this volume will come into the hands of his family and some personal friends of his, the author may be pardoned for introducing here some data from a brief biography of himself which recently appeared in a Williamsport newspaper:

J. Wheeler Heylmun lives at Marsh Hill, Pa. All of his poems were composed while he was in the cab of his locomotive stand-

ing on sidings waiting for signals. In the *Railroad Conductor's Monthly*, and other journals to which he has contributed, Mr. Heylman was known as "Joe Canthook." He is the youngest of ten children, and was born near Ralston June 10, 1848. His boyhood days were spent on his parents' farm, where he chopped cordwood, made shingles, and helped clear a large portion of woodland. He acquired a common-school education, such as is obtained in the country districts. Mr. Heylman served his country as a soldier in the late war, having been honorably discharged from service February 4, 1864, at Camp Stoneman Hospital. In 1867 he went West, engaging in steamboating with his brother, Captain D. W. Heylman, of Eau Claire, Wis. Not being able to stand the climate, he returned to Pennsylvania in 1870, resuming farming with his father until 1873, when he engaged as a locomotive fireman on the Northern Central Railway. By the faithful discharge of his duties he was promoted to the position of engineer in 1879, which post he filled until February 19th last, when he was compelled to resign, owing to impaired health. During the time he served as engineer he received two thousand and fifteen train orders and never made a single mistake, nor had an accident on account of his own negligence.



TO A LOCOMOTIVE.

Proud chariot of the iron rail,
With golden stripes and glittering bands,
Without me soon thy strength would fail—
I hold thy life within my hands.

With iron lungs and heated breath,
Thou 'rt always willing to obey,
But many men have met their death
While speeding on their midnight way.

O, mighty monster warm with life,
May Heaven guide thy ponderous feet
And wheel me back to my dear wife
And little children, pure and sweet.

But if the all-wise Providence
Should choose to wreck my swift-winged train,
I still must take life's narrow chance
And at my post perhaps be slain.

Brave engineers, take up the Book—
That book which God on high designed,
And in the book of Nahum look,
There "chariot" you will surely find.

You'll see the second chapter treats
(In verses numbered three and four)
Of "chariots raging in the streets"—
A fulfilled prophecy of yore.

