



# DRIVER BY Edmund Burton- DUNN

A TALE OF THE IRON ROAD

*Illustrated by Harry Lane*

## THE FIRST CHAPTER

Bill Dunn

THE huge locomotive backed slowly away from the water-tank, moving down the line with ever-lessening speed until her buffers kissed those of the first coach in the long train standing beside the platform at Millchester terminus.

So beautifully handled was she that scarcely anyone amongst the big complement of passengers was aware of her linking up, until her gentle pressure pushed the cars a few inches back. Then, with couplings secured, the 8.40 waited for the hands of the station clock to reach the scheduled minute ere commencing her night journey to the north.

Jack Prescott had almost attained the limit of his ambition; he had, only a week before, reached the footplate of the great four-coupled "No. 339"—"Rushing Rosie," as she was affectionately called by the employes of the company. He was now her fireman, second in command to Bill Dunn, the driver, whose hand had controlled her mighty machinery ever since the 8.40 was put on the time-table.

Jack had, of course, started his railway career in the usual way—as a cleaner—but so keen was he upon his work that he quickly attracted the attention of his foreman, and in a remarkably short space of time had

worked his way to his present position, with only Dunn between him and full control of the system's best loco.

But Bill Dunn, though frequently sour-tempered and morose, was a star driver with a fine record of service behind him. He had driven the 8.40 night after night for years, and never was he known to have dropped more than a few seconds on the journey. That train was his pet; he knew every turn of the wheels, every creak of a piston, every sigh from the big slide-valve cylinders that sucked the steam from the engine's huge boiler.

Yet it was small wonder that Bill was morose; he had his troubles—more, perhaps, than the rest of us. His affections in life were at one time equally divided between his wife, his kiddy, and his engine—until the terrible occurrence of just two months before this story opens, when little Bill had strayed too near the fire at home, with fatal results. His night-shirt had caught the blaze, and his mother, in her frantic efforts to save the child, had also sustained such severe burns that she succumbed a few hours after the poor little fellow, leaving Dunn Senior with but one remaining love to occupy his affections—the great iron horse that drew the 8.40.

There is no exaggeration here, let me tell you. It is common knowledge amongst railway folk that a driver will grow to love a particular

engine as though it were living flesh and blood. You see, it becomes part of himself, as it were, and a long-service man gets specially fond of the machine he has driven regularly from the time it leaves the builders until the day when it is condemned to the scrapping shop.

But Bill Dunn had been a good husband and father before that sad affair, and even "No. 339" was only an engine after all. Proud though he was of his charge, he now merely drove her mechanically—he never showed the great enthusiasm of late which had formerly been a by-word among his colleagues. The cheery Bill of a few short weeks before had developed into a short-tempered, sour, taciturn being who would scarcely even nod when a fellow-driver said, "Mornin', mate!"

And another thing—a *very* serious thing where an engine-driver is concerned—Dunn had recently been suspected of acquiring a taste for "strong waters." He was never actually intoxicated, but his visits to the local inn had been sufficiently numerous to draw forth a strong censure from his superiors on two distinct occasions already. They all knew what was wrong, and sincerely pitied the poor chap, but they also knew that the 8.40 was one of the most important trains running, and invariably carried a full load of passengers! Dunn, star driver though he was, would have to be superseded unless these disquieting signs quickly disappeared.

And this evening Jack Prescott had not been many minutes on the footplate ere he noticed, to his regret, that the driver did not seem to have heeded those warnings; for Jack was really fond of his companion, and felt as deeply for him as did the rest. Therefore, it was with inward dismay that he realised how strongly Bill's breath smelt of liquor, which, accompanied by a slight thickening of the speech, left no doubt in his mind that the driver would be better sleeping it off than conveying a big load of human beings over practically the whole length of the line. Yet, despite these signs, the man was certainly not actually intoxicated.

The guard's whistle presently sounded, its feeble note being quickly drowned by a sudden shriek from "No. 339's" whistle; then, with a tightening of couplings, the long

train pulled out of Millchester, clattering over the innumerable points until the iron way, clear and unbroken, lay like an interminable ribbon ahead.

Prescot stoked up when necessary, all the time keeping a covert eye on his companion, but Bill Dunn seemed quite capable of performing his duties. Indeed, nothing of any account happened during the first ten miles or so—until they were approaching Carlea, a small wayside station where all drivers were directed to reduce speed in order to take a sharp curve immediately beyond.

Jack had expected Dunn to follow the usual procedure, but evidently the drink he had imbibed had dulled the man's memory, for he completely ignored the rule.

"I say!" shouted Prescott, "we've passed the mark, Bill! Slow her, quickly——"

But Dunn, instead of complying, turned away from the levers—swung round until he faced his companion; and Jack backed away, for the moment unnerved by what he saw.

He knew the driver had taken drink, yet what he now beheld was not the result of liquor; for the other's face was dead white, relieved only by two glowing eyes that blazed madly into his own.

"Dunn! For Heaven's sake——"

The words were drowned in a cackle of insane laughter, as the man reeled nearer across the rocking cab-floor. His outstretched hands gripped the fireman's shoulders.

"Slow her! He, he, he! Slow her, ye say," he chuckled. "Not this trip, son! Thirty years I've worked for 'em—thirty year, man an' boy—an' now they'd like to fire me. Ho, ho, ho! *Me*—Bill Dunn—the best driver on the system——"

"You lunatic! Take your hands away!" gasped Prescott in panic, as he saw the lights of Carlea platform rushing towards them. "We'll be over, you mad fool!"

"Mad fool, am I? Well, small wonder, laddie. I've had enough to make me mad—a wife an' kid—no, ye don't!" as Jack tried to slip past him. "This engine's runnin' all out, I tell ye! I'll give 'em somethin' to sack me for—more'n takin' a drop of drink to kill my troubles."

Prescot had a swift mental picture of a

huge train piled in a mass of twisted wreckage upon the steep embankment beyond Carlea curve—hearing the agonising groans of the injured, and seeing the stretcher-bearers carrying their grim, white-sheeted burdens, illuminated by the fierce glow of the blazing coaches.

Poor old Dunn! It was easy to understand what had happened. His sorrow had bitten him too deeply, being still further increased by his threat of dismissal unless he gave up the only thing that made him forget his grief. His brain had not proved equal to it, and this was the result.

Carlea Station flashed by in a blur of light as the 8.40 rocked and roared between the platforms. Beyond—less than half a mile beyond—was the sharp curve that meant certain destruction at such a suicidal speed. It had got to be done—now or never.

Realising that he had a dangerous lunatic to deal with, even though Dunn's condition might be only temporary, Prescott saw that he would require to act both quickly and craftily. Feinting a spring to the right, he suddenly stepped the opposite way, darting past the driver and seizing the lever in front. But Dunn, with a howl of rage that could be heard even above the roar of the wheels, was after him like a cat, locking his arms round

Jack's waist just as the latter moved the handle across.

"Let go! Leave that alone, I tell ye! Ye young cub!"

Prescot got one hand under his adversary's chin, and pressed it desperately back. It is always a good move in a game like that, but the driver, with a madman's cunning, kept his head well down on his chest. To and fro they swayed, from the cab to the tender, then back

again—but the good work had been accomplished; the speed was perceptibly slower as the first few yards of the bend were rounded in safety.

Dunn was a powerful man, heavy, and tough as iron, and Jack felt as though every ounce of breath were being forced from his body. He pressed hard again at the other's chin, and at last the driver's head went up with a jerk; yet he still gripped



Jack shot out his hand, madly clutching at the rail, missed it by a foot as the weight of the other's body pulled him aside, and together they flew through space. (See opposite page)

his companion tightly, endeavouring to drag him aside.

They reeled back once more, Prescott's foot suddenly slipping on the steel plates, which threw all his weight against Dunn. The driver's grasp loosened for a moment; then, as he felt himself falling, he made a frantic grab at Jack, which the latter had no time to avoid.

The madman's fingers gripped and held; somehow even in his demented state he seemed to realise what was about to happen. They

had swayed opposite the gap between tender and cab, scarcely six inches of floor plating separating them from the open. Jack shot out his hand, madly clutching at the rail—missed it by a foot as the weight of the other's body pulled him aside, and together they flew through space, to strike the grassy embankment with a concussion that flung them apart.

And on through the night rushed the 8.40, the passengers in her comfortably-lighted carriages blissfully unconscious of what was happening in the darkness outside—unaware that the great engine which drew them was dashing to destruction like a mettlesome runaway, without a hand to control her!

## THE SECOND CHAPTER

### A Race Against Odds

**B**ILL DUNN was dead. Being underneath when they fell, he had landed with fearful force, and Jack saw at once, by the now brilliant moonlight, that nothing could be done for the unfortunate fellow. The fireman staggered to his feet, shaken and bruised, staring as though fascinated at the triangle of red tail-lights disappearing away up the line.

"Great Heavens!"

The words suddenly hissed through his lips in a half-strangled gasp. It was bad enough at *any* time, in all conscience—but to-night of all nights! Jack had just remembered something which, in the headlong rush of recent events, had slipped his memory till now—something that chilled his blood, and almost caused him to sink back weakly again upon the grassy slope.

Usually the 8.40 had a clear, unbroken run from Carlea curve to Donthorpe, over fifty miles away; and, going as she was now at moderate speed, it was barely possible that a swift engine could overtake her before she covered the distance, when, by running alongside, a cool-headed fellow might essay crossing from cab to cab. It had been done before under similar circumstances, Jack had read, and he himself would be quite willing to risk it, considering what was at stake. But to-night utterly prevented any such plan being carried out, for the 8.40 was due to be held up at Croftbury Junction—the next place of importance on the route.

A royal party had been visiting the big manufacturing centres, and their train was scheduled to enter the main system from a branch line at Croftbury about the same hour as the express would reach that station. All traffic was to be suspended until the "Special" had passed; the points would be closed, and the signals against the 8.40; but, like a mad dog that rushes blindly ahead, she would keep to her headlong course—and Croftbury was less than twenty-five miles off!

Jack's teeth gritted together as he dashed down the embankment and into the four-foot way between the two lines of metals. Was there any hope? During his fight with Dunn he had had no chance of stoking, therefore "No. 339" had not received her usual regular "feed"; yet the fire was good, and would probably take her the fatal distance at half speed. What was more, the line unfortunately had a slight downward gradient for several miles.

Scarcely knowing what he wanted to do, he sprinted back towards Carlea like a man possessed. He must see the stationmaster; something *must* be attempted, no matter what.

Suddenly he gave a gasp, springing quickly aside. A huge six-coupled goods engine was coming towards him down the line, presently pausing and shunting back again—evidently to link up with some trucks in a siding at the station further on.

She was a fast-looking brute, capable of doing forty or fifty "all out," and in a flash Prescott decided what he would attempt—as a drowning man seizes a straw.

Putting on a spurt, he overtook the engine—springing up the steps to the footplate, and gasping a few breathless words into the driver's ear. The man's face blanched, but he was a cool hand, and kept his wits about him.

"It's goin' to be a race, kid!" he said shortly, gripping the lever. "She's got a big start, but this old woman will catch her if anythin' can. I know her inside out."

The huge engine seemed to spring forward like a restive steed, as soon as the dangerous curve was rounded; then on through the moonlight she tore, her wheels literally hopping across the rail joints, where every

succeeding chair and fishplate clicked beneath them like the tap-tap-tap of a drum.

Flames spouted from the funnel as her stoker fed the furnace every few minutes, and Jack hung out over the cab-side, breathlessly watching for the first sign of those triangular tail-lamps ahead.

On they clattered, under bridges and over them, shooting on and on, until a loud shout from the driver reached Prescott's ears, even above the din and clash of the machinery.

"Only five miles now to Croftbury, an' nary a sign of her! She's goin' faster than ye thought, lad-die!"

Ahead the track took another curve, but it wasn't sufficiently sharp to make any slowing down necessary. The goods engine buzzed round it, and then Jack uttered a yell of exultation.

"There she is! Good lord! Shut down, or we'll be into her!"

The driver's grimy hands flashed across the levers, then gripped the brake, and the wheels seemed to scream along the metals. Ahead three tiny red stars gleamed—four miles from Croftbury!

### THE THIRD CHAPTER

#### Touch and Go!

BEAUTIFULLY handled and her speed regulated to a hair, the big goods loco. gradually overhauled the distant 8.40.

In another mile, the space between pursuer and pursued had diminished by half; yet another saw the rear buffers of the express scarcely three yards from the forward ones of the second engine. Then Jack slipped from the cab; the fateful moment had arrived which was to mean complete success or utter failure of his plan.

Holding on like grim death, the rush of wind almost blinding him, he crawled slowly along the side of the engine, passing round to her

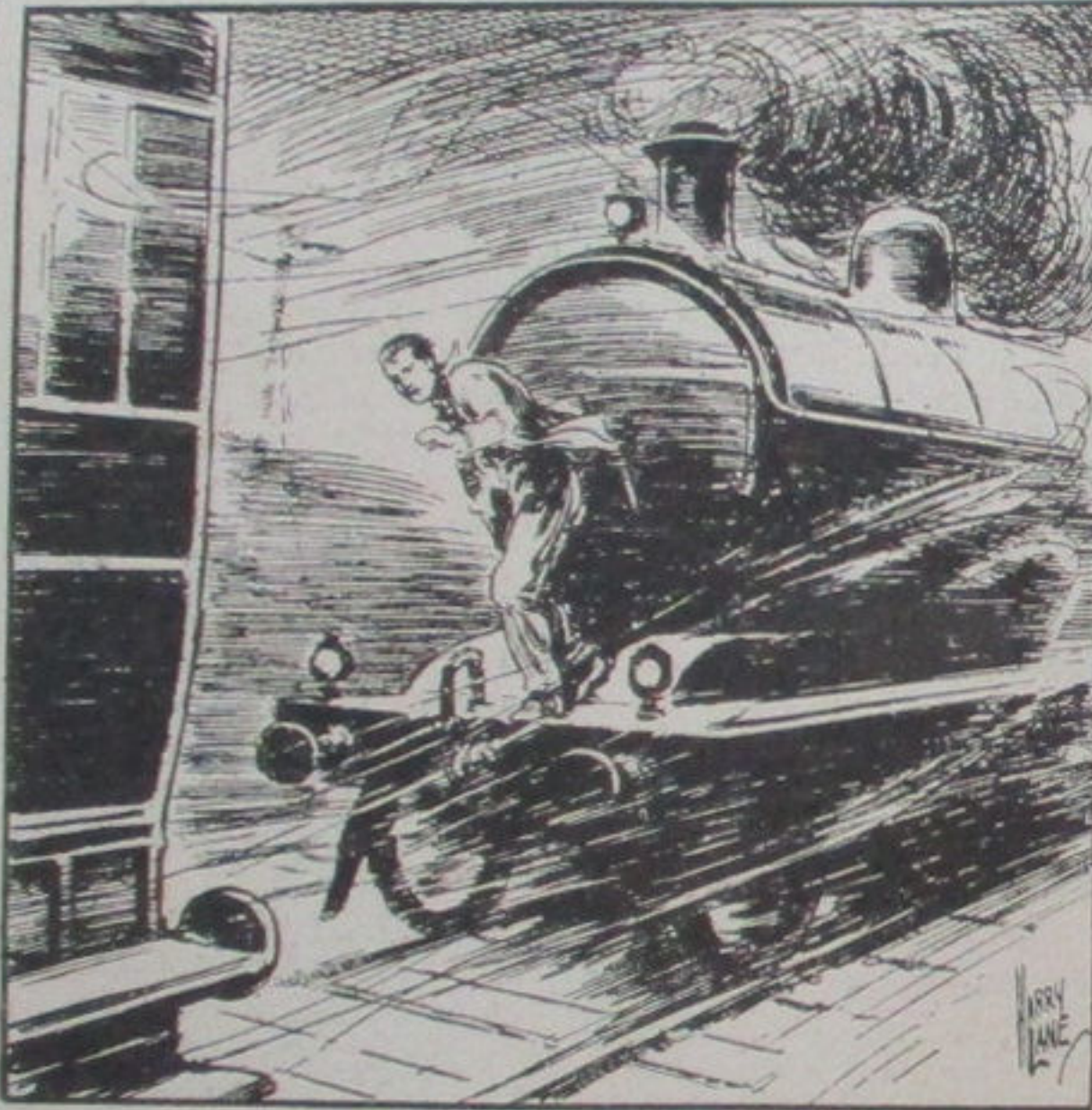
front, and crouching there with his gaze fixed upon the rear coach of the 8.40. The goods loco. crept still closer, until it seemed she was about to crash into the express from behind, but she was carefully regulated by an experienced hand, and never quite touched the other.

Slowly Prescott rose, every nerve braced for the most risky part of his plan. If

he sprang either too far or too short it meant certain death, and to make matters worse, the moonlight was now becoming clouded.

His eyes were upon the semi-circular hand-rail above the lamplighter's ladder—the half-dozen metal steps which one sees bolted to the ends of many railway carriages. Then, as the buffers almost kissed, he sprang.

It was but a second, but it seemed an eternity before he felt the cold steel of that rail sink into his palms; and there he hung



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like a fly until his foot found one of the steps beneath. Then he swung himself cautiously upwards to the roof of the coach.

High overhead gleamed a red danger disc, and away in the distance a cluster of brighter lights—Croftbury Junction—but Jack tried not to see them, as he crawled along the rocking roof on all fours.

With his heart pounding like a steam-hammer whenever he crossed a gap between the coaches, he worked his way slowly forward, almost slipping more than once, but at length reaching the tender in safety. Here he risked a further glance ahead, and drew his breath in sharply.

The lights of Croftbury were almost upon them, whilst, away to the left, something else, brilliant and moving, met his horrified eyes—the royal train approaching from the branch line!

He slid like a madman over the coal, sprang across the cab, and shut off steam. Then he braked down, the handle fairly buzzing round, until he realised with a thrill of exultation that the express was surely slowing. Presently she came to a standstill, and Prescott leaned from the cab.

But what he saw there made him gasp afresh. Not fifty yards ahead half a dozen brilliantly lighted carriages were crossing the down-line at an angle—coming from the branch to the main up-track. Two minutes delay on his part would have spelt chaos!

The royal train flashed past with a roar, fast disappearing into the night, and Fireman Jack took the express slowly into Croftbury, when the red lights before him had changed to green.

“Rushing Rosie” has a new driver now, who nightly controls the 8.40 on her northward run. But it's scarcely necessary to mention his name; you will have guessed that for yourselves long before this paragraph is written.

THE END

## Sports and Sportsmen

No. 11.—SHOOTING



“Nap” ranks as a delightful name  
In many a youthful fool's eyes;  
But sportsmen worthy of the name  
Delight in scoring bull's-eyes.  
They love to view the solid butts,  
And hear the crack of rifles;  
Whilst all the slackers and the “nuts”  
Indulge in aimless trifles.

See Harry Wharton taking aim,  
How cool he is, and steady!  
A liberal wealth of shooting fame  
Our skipper's won already.  
Few “shooting stars” of Greyfriars School  
Can hope to come out winners  
Against this “crack,” who, as a rule,  
Scores only bulls and inners.

Against the rival schools around  
We have keen competition;  
And side by side, upon the ground,  
We take up our position.  
Then comes the steady “Crack!” and “Zipp!”  
And bullets fly before us,  
Until the victors cry “Hip, hip!”  
And vanquished groan in chorus.

Here's to all lovers of the sport!  
From those who shoot a “grizzly,”  
To those who, every season, court  
Big shooting wins at Bisley.  
That this is quite a splendid game  
There's really no disputing;  
Then let us boldly strive for fame  
And skill in rifle shooting.



## Ballads of Famous Schools

no. 3

# Rookwood

GOD gave us Hampshire from of old,  
And crowned her woods with glory;  
He gave her stalwarts, strong and bold,  
To shine in song and story.  
And in this splendid southern shire  
Stands Rookwood's situation;  
Its noble walls, its stately spire,  
Compel our admiration.

Majestic buildings greet our gaze,  
One ancient, and one modern.  
Within these walls, the highest praise  
Both Silver and young Dodd earn.  
One leads the "Classics," one the "Mods,"  
In quite a firm and fair way;  
When fighting foes, it's any odds  
That victory comes their way!

George Bulkeley, strong and sound of limb,  
Is Rookwood's gallant leader;  
The juniors all look up to him,  
His ways delight each reader.  
A Trojan on the playing fields,  
A mighty man of knowledge;  
Small wonder Rookwood never yields  
To any rival college!

Between the rival Sides exists  
A feud of ancient standing;  
And fast and furious fights with fists  
Keep growing and expanding.  
But when against a common foe  
These factions are united,  
They battle side by side, and show  
How wrongs may all be righted!

Of Jimmy Silver be it said,  
That he's a sturdy Briton;  
No cunning foe does Jimmy dread,  
By him they're often smitten.  
He is a boy whose exploits rank  
With those of Harry Wharton;  
The leading light in every prank,  
Or when there's any sport on!

Long flourish Rookwood! May she stand  
Erect and strong for ever;  
And may her sons, on every hand  
Be spurred to high endeavour.  
No boy can read without a thrill  
Of her advancing glory;  
And may her gallant exploits still  
Be told in song and story!

E. E. BRISCOE