

and the judges would be sure to give her a second division rating. It was almost time for Anne's turn. Mrs. Allen took the special record to the judge. Anne, smiling to herself, decided exactly when in her routine she would drop the baton.

At last the dreaded day was over. Mrs. Allen had taken the shock fairly well. When they got into the car, she cried a little, but she soon recovered. Even Anne shed a few tears to make her disappointment seem convincing. Anne had a few pangs of conscience on the way, but they were not very painful.

Mr. Allen looked very serious when he heard that Anne had dropped her baton at the contest. Soon after dinner Mrs. Allen went to bed, and Anne and her father went out for a soda. "Daddy, can I stay home from Florida this summer?" asked Anne.

Mr. Allen nodded his head, winked solemnly, and said, "I think that that too can be arranged."



## A Railroader's Vocabulary

Jack Sleeth

**A**rgot, the picturesque language of shop, factory, and profession, finds some of its most colorful idioms in the language of the railroader. This I say to all those who would champion the claim of the college student to first place in the use of fresh and vigorous metaphors. When I started to work at the railroad shops last summer, I was completely baffled by such slang expressions as the "jerks" and the "hoggers." As time went on and I assumed my place among the workers, I found myself with a new vocabulary, which is known only to railroaders. I finally learned that "jerks" are the men in the shops that dismantle the railroad cars and that "hoggers" are the men that fire the locomotives.

Day by day new expressions became known to me. I learned that a "hoodlum," to a railroad man, is not a rowdy disturber of the peace; it is a work train. I learned that a "donkey" is not an animal but a crane that carries heavy materials from one end of the shop to another. "Wreckers" are the car-men, having acquired their name from other workers who believe that the car-men do more wrecking of cars than repairing of them. "Grease monkeys" are the men that oil and grease the cars before they are ready to leave the shops. The railroaders have borrowed the slang word of "big brass"

from the army and navy, applying it to the foreman or the superintendents of the shops.

Each morning before work, the group of "wire benders" meets at the "iron bar." The men who are so named are the electricians. The "iron bar" is a long steel bench at which the electricians do various kinds of small work such as repairing the regulators. In front of this steel work bench are several high, wooden stools, and on the wall behind the the bench hang several pictures of the kind preferred by men. It is not hard to see from what characteristics the "iron bar" received its name. In its environs the mood is relaxing; everything from politics to John Doe's baby girl is discussed there.

My own work as stock-boy at the shops was to keep plenty of materials in stock and to keep the tools where the workers could find them. To get the materials I would either call for the "cootie" or wheel the "iron tank" to the supply room. Unless the materials were exceedingly heavy, I would take the "iron tank," which is the slang word that I originated, in keeping with the spirit of the place, to refer to the three-wheeled, steel pushcart that weighed a ton even before it was filled. But if the materials were too heavy, I would call for the "cootie," which was an old model-T truck that had no fenders, no top and no windshield. Sometimes, if it did not start, I even wondered whether it had a motor.

This winter, when, as a college freshman, I am weighted down with books, I sometimes long for the "iron tank" and the "cootie;" and in my odd moments of relaxation, I am sometimes nostalgic for the talk over the "iron bar." The slang of the college has not completely drowned out the argot of the railroad shops.