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The Engineering Trip.

On Monday, the 2d of May, 1887, with all the "pomp and circumstance" called for by the solemnity of the occasion, seventeen handsome and accomplished engineers left the shades of Athens on the usual "Engineering Trip." At exactly 12 o'clock, on the 5th day of May, seventeen wilted but happy engineers, for the last time on earth, threw their stakes in one common heap, and shared a common joy—for the survey was over. It was exactly 12 o'clock when Elkan dropped the compass in the soup pot, and John Moss pulled it out, and Johnson said "dammit"—and the survey was over. You could tell by the way that McCarrel began hunting for chickens that it was all over. You could tell by the way Barnett smiled, that his work was done. You could look at Ben Franklin's contented face and tell at once that the survey was finished. You could even tell how far they had come, if you had looked in Elkan's pocket, for there were in said pocket eighteen large pebbles and one small one—which by McCarrel's measurement, meant exactly eighteen miles and one half. You could tell when they started, from the faded impression of the last Sunday's sermon. You could tell they were happy, and that the trip was finished.

Monday—a long to be remembered Monday. A Monday of tramp, tramp, tramp. A Monday of dust and stakes and levels, but the dinner was good, and the supper was splendid. Then, Tuesday, Elkan found his shoes—and fell into a ditch. Kennon succumbed and said Sunday School words—while Oscar Davis forgot to whistle and ate more than anybody. Wednesday—very exciting. Whitehead only three chickens behind McCarrell—Barnett invents a new method of adding departures, and Elkin challenges John Daniel to mortal combat—then nightfall on the outskirts of Jefferson. Then seventeen jolly young students—then one small police—then one mayor—ah!

Then John Daniel "jaws" the mayor—and finally seventeen scared and dusty engineers lay down to dream of blue-coats, and brass buttons and fines, Bill Crawford borrows Milner's handkerchief and weeps, and the scanty form of Cobb tosses in troubled anticipation. And that run away marriage, and Whitehead and Daniel were best men—and didn't the bridegroom look funny?—Elkan made a mistake and congratulated Chas. Ed—, and the whole thing was romantic out there in the moonlight—with the Katydid and Crickets for the band, and the railroad track for a platform. And then Thursday—and that banquet—Wells and Stovall beat the record—and the Doctor gives them soothing syrup—and then the good bye to Jefferson and the return to Athens. It was an awfully long way there—but it was not so long coming back—and that midnight ride wasn't the worst we'll live to take. And now, when you look back on it, and think of the fun, and forget the work and trouble, you regret that the trip is all over, and find yourself wishing that Jeffersons were more numerous—and, run away marriages and bouquets were not so scarce. You even have a vague impression that maybe you wouldn't hide Elkan's shoes if you could only live it all over—and that you wouldn't mind driving a few stakes now and then—and that those dusty tramps didn't hurt your appetite so much after all. Oh, well! Good times can't last always—maybe it is best just as it is. But when I am an old man—and maybe with children—or grandchildren, to mirror out my young days—I shall often think with fond recollections of our "Engineering Trip."



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