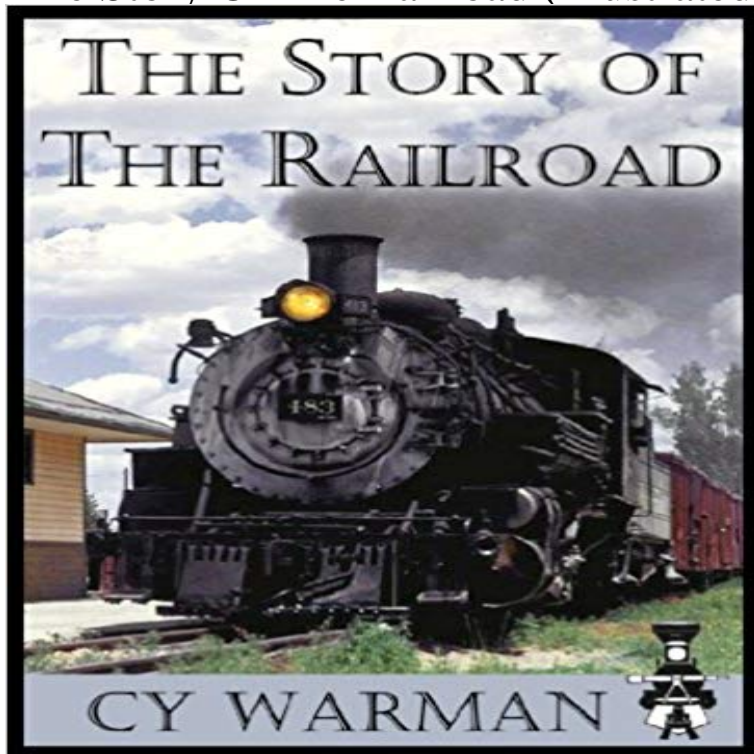


The Story Of The Railroad (Illustrated)



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From the Editors Preface: The Story of the Railroad, like other volumes in the Story of the West series, is the story of the strange life which began with and accompanied the building of a transcontinental highway. Surveyors, engineers, superintendents, foremen, bosses, track layers, shovellers on the dump, and their companions of rank high and low, all toiled together to clear a way across the buffalo preserves of the Indians and through the secret places of the mountains. It was a series of titanic labors, man pitted against Nature in the instant shock of contest, and it is here, I think, that we find the typical figure in the engineer who sought out the way and built the road. It was the engineer who traced the route, making his painful progress across the wild plains, sometimes guarded by soldiers, sometimes trusting to Providence and his gun. It was the engineer who climbed over the ice of mountain streams, who was let down from crags by ropes, who crawled along trails known only to the mountain sheep, and, daring storms, starvation, and the vengeance of the red men, penetrated the mountain fastnesses rarely entered even by his predecessors, the trappers, hunters, and scouts of the heroic age of the West. His mission was a practical one, but none the less romantic. No one could fail to see the romance of transcontinental pathfinding, the heroic aspect of the men who led the way. They were the soldiers of civilization, opening a way that peace might follow. Some of them passed from reconnaissances and preliminary surveys to the work of construction, ruling armies of men in wild camps which were constantly moving onward. They were responsible for the expenditure of fortunes. Their followers knew little other law than their word, and there were times, as in the early history of the Union Pacific, when no authority

seemed to avail against the recklessness of life at the head of the rails. Whatever their fate, their mission was a great one, an historical epic which Americans should preserve. Mr. Warman has drawn his illustrations of the life of railroad builders from the inner history of several of the earlier transcontinental lines of the West. The result is a general view of characteristic phases of this life which has a completeness not realized before. That is not a life to be described by hearsay or at arms length, and the vividness of Mr. Warman's descriptions shows him to have been a part of that which he records in his book. His book is dedicated first of all to those whose backs above the desert bent, who set the stakes to mark the trail.

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