

## The Tunnel

By Laurence MacDonald (Laurmac@aol.com)

Charles Pennington is not a man given to delusions or flights of fancy and those who know him would describe him as a steady and well-composed fellow. Moreover, he has never granted a molecule of credence to those who practice clairvoyance, or indeed, to any person claiming to possess powers of prediction of any sort - not even those who profess to know the morrow's weather. Until recently, he believed that the current enthusiasm for Spiritualism and suchlike had been got up by charlatans and mountebanks and for one purpose only: that of encouraging fools to distance themselves from the contents of their purses. However, his thinking on these matters changed suddenly, and in a very singular fashion, with an experience he shared with his wife Felicity. The reader may be curious, perhaps, as to what would cause a rational fellow such as Pennington to reconsider his position on psychic phenomena and it is to be hoped that what follows here will satisfy in that respect. Firstly, however, it is necessary to set the scene so to speak: not that the reader need know much save that the Penningtons had taken a suite in a Chattanooga hotel prior to commencing a journey to Atlanta. It should also be stated that, whilst what follows has not yet come to pass, any reader with the intention of planning a journey on the *Western & Atlantic Railroad* would be wise to take note of the particulars set out below.

This is not the complete story. To read further, please either register as a new reader or login now if already registered

“A railroad locomotive is a thing of wonder, don't you agree?” asked the man who had happened to sit next to them at their window table and who'd been jabbering ceaselessly ever since.

“Quite so,” Pennington replied, absently preoccupied with the plate of fried potatoes and eggs before him; then he added in an appeasing but patently bored tone, “a marvelous example of the product of human wit and ingenuity.”

“They frighten me,” remarked Felicity Pennington, a little haughtily, “and what's more, they are noisy and dirty - though I do own that horses too are noisy and dirty, and a deal slower.”

Their companion laughed and asked, “Noisy and dirty indeed Madam, but pray, why would a train frighten you?”

Felicity rejoined emphatically. “Why? I declare! All that hissing and steaming and fire and what not, I always say to my husband to take the very last carriage - to be as far away from all that as we can. I spend the entirety of every journey imagining that the ghastly thing at the front might blow-up at any moment,” she turned to Pennington, “don't I dear?”

Her husband readily attested to this: “Oh yes, indeed you do. That you find railroad journeys an