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Letter From O. S. Sprout to Alfred L. Shoemaker, November 11, 1948

O. S. Sprout

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433 Nevin Street,
Lancaster, Pa.,
Nov. 11th, 1948.

Dr. Alfred L. Shoemaker,
Franklin & Marshall College,
Lancaster, Pa..

91-1

Dear Dr. Shoemaker:.

Your column in the New Era has been read with considerable pleasure on our part, creating a sense of nostalgia for that part of our heritage which is too rapidly disappearing, along with the "field" cemeteries, and which we can ill afford to lose.

This evening you invited us to reciprocate with an "all" story. Here are two which we suppose you have never heard, since they had their genesis in a social group with which, we imagine, you have never come in contact; viz, that of the "high iron."

Over at the station one morning a group of Amish people were awaiting a train, with their prolific broods. Meanwhile one of those hundred car freight trains went down the middle track, affording a basis for much argument among the younger ones. After the entire consist was past, the argument continued until one of the lads, feeling the need of a father's opinion to gain his point, came over and said to one of the older men ", Ain't Pop, when the little red house, (the caboose) goes by the train's all."

The other occurred when Columbia yet held a place in the sun as a transportation center. A trainman desired company on a fishing trip on the river and sought the home of a friend, whom he thought was "off," or off duty. Upon arrival at the friend's home he was informed that the man in question was "down the road" or on active duty. "Why," he said ", I thought he was off." To which the daughter replied ", Oh, Pop's off's all." In plain English she meant that her father's permission to be off duty had expired.

Now, while we have your ear-or eye-may we ask your opinion of the value of a book we have here, printed in German, since you have mentioned your interest in such publications. It seems to be such a strange thing to be printed in a foreign language. But-let the title page tell the story. "Kranken und Spionen-Dient fur die Unions-Armee. Abenteuer und Erfahrungen eines Frauenzimmers in Hospitalern, Lagern und auf dem Schlachfelde. Von C. Emma E. Edmonds. Mit Abbildungen." Nur auf Subscription herausgegeben von W.S. Williams & Co., Hartford, Connecticut. Jones Bros. & Co., Philadelphia & Cincinnati. J.U. Stoddard & Co., Chicago, Ill., 1865. It contains 384 printed pages and many illustrations. Aside from the uniqueness of the story, would this book have any particular value. It is a half-century since we "took" one year of German under the Rev. George Kern at Columbia and we are sorry to say not very much of that "stuck."

Awaiting your pleasure, sir, we remain,

P.S. No publicity, please.

Sincerely Yours,
O. J. Sprout.